

49 Ways to Provide Spiritual Care When There is No Chaplain

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1. Volunteer groups from local churches providing worship experiences.
2. Volunteers providing one-to-one room visits
3. Volunteer clergy providing regular Bible Study
4. A community hymn sing
5. A display of paintings from local senior center
6. Mini-concerts from local school of music
7. A religious heritage day where residents share their personal heritage
8. Celebration of religious holidays of all residents in the facility for all to share
9. Life review that evokes reflection and meaning-making that is more than reminiscence
10. Finger painting (or abstract collage) expressions of abstractions such as forgiveness, death, life-beyond-death,
11. Hosting meditation prayer groups
12. Encourage resident led devotions
13. Publishing a "I Met God When..." Booklet of resident experiences
14. Fostering the development of ethical wills
15. Hold a "Celebration of Aging" festival using local speakers
16. Have a tai-chi class
17. Develop a ritual for celebrating the life of a resident who has died.
18. Develop a ritual for welcoming residents to their new home
19. Provide prayer cards appropriate for differing religious traditions for the meal tables
20. Give staff the overt freedom to talk about religion and faith (without proselytizing)
21. Provide a dedicated space for worship and/or prayer
22. Ensure that residents are not only asked but are provided the means of attending religious experiences held on campus.
23. Make one's spirituality a part of the intake assessment
24. Have at least one TV in the facility tuned to religious programming when appropriate
25. Mail a letter to local faith groups inviting them to partner with the facility
26. Take residents for a walk in the park
27. Provide a variety of devotional literature (often available free through faith groups)
28. Videotaped presentations of stories "with a meaning" (Don't forget to discuss its meaning afterwards)
29. Provide audio and video tapes of sermons from local faith groups for resident usage
30. Hold a workshop for residents and families on choices at the end of life including advance directives.
31. Sponsor a grief support group
32. Hold an agenda-less "Caring and Sharing Group" for resident discussion led by a person oriented towards discovering the meaning in life events.
33. Ask a local synagogue to sponsor a Passover Seder
34. Encourage local faith group choirs to sing (they often have 'concerts' at their facilities during special times of the year and are looking for a place for a 'dress rehearsal'.)
35. Hold a "religious expression festival" and invite local clergy from differing faith groups to participate.
36. Secure from residents the names of the clergy of their faith groups and invite them to extend their ministry to your facility.
37. Provide in-service training for staff on spirituality and make spiritual care one of the expectations of their work.
38. Ask residents to write a "This I believe" article for your facility newsletter
39. Have a Chinese New Year celebration
40. Develop a policy on Spiritual Formation and Pastoral Care that gives guidelines for participation of clergy and faith groups from the community.
41. Have a concert using local talent (high schools, elementary schools, churches, individuals)
42. Identify and use existing staff who have been trained within their own faith traditions to provide spiritual care and development.
43. Guided imagery into a painting
44. Discuss the meaning found within favorite TV Programs
45. Develop a 'meditation walk' with pictures, thoughtful sayings, poetry, Bible verses
46. Have volunteer residents become a phone friend to 'home-centered' persons
47. Have residents volunteer to fold and 'stuff' bulletins for local synagogue
48. Make and use "Memory Prayer Beads"
49. As a group, write a poem describing something common to resident life i.e. "Ode to a Walker"