



Lectio Divina

"divine reading"

>> Practicing Lectio Divina with Groups

adapted from *the Youth Ministry and Spirituality Project*

http://www.ymsp.org/resources/practices/lectio_divina.html

Lectio divina refers in Latin to the practice of "divine reading." This form of spiritual reading originated in the Benedictine tradition and involves a deeply personal and prayerful encounter with the presence of God through Scripture. *Lectio divina* invites us to listen individually and collectively to the Word of God with our whole being.

Before beginning *lectio divina*, pray together as a group or individually. This might include spoken prayer to God to be open more fully to the Spirit, a gentle relaxation process that focuses on breathing or simply a few minutes of silence to empty persons of thoughts, images, and emotions.

Choose a passage to use. Virtually any passage from the Bible may be used. Ideally it should be short enough to "get your head around." Here are some passages from the Gospels to get you started: Matthew 4:1-4; Matthew 5:13-16; Matthew 11:28-30; Mark 1:35-37; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 3:10-15; Luke 9:1-6; Luke 21:33; John 3:16-21; John 15:15-16; Luke 3:10-15; Luke 9:1-6; Luke 21:33; John 3:16-21; John 15:15-16.

1. The passage is read aloud twice in a prayerful and unhurried way. Pause for a couple of minutes between readings and read the passage more slowly the second time. (*lectio*)
 - Invite persons in the group to simply take in the passage during the first reading and allow it to "register." (*ruminatio*)
 - For the second reading, invite persons to listen for a word or a phrase or image that "shimmers" or reverberates in them. What is the word that attracts, touches, or even disturbs? (*meditatio*)
 - After the second reading, ask each person to share the word or phrase that has touched them. Allow this to be a slow movement with ample time between the speaking. (*oratio*)
2. The passage is read aloud a third time (perhaps by a second person)
 - Invite the persons in the group to think about maybe why this word/phrase connects to the context of their life at this moment. Consider how it relates to what they have seen and heard this day? How does it speak to what is happening at home, at work, in their leisure time, in their community, in the world? (*meditatio*)
 - Briefly share with the whole group what you have heard or discovered. (*oratio*)
3. Close with an extended time of silence, simply resting quietly in the presence of God. A spoken prayer or blessing may complete the silence. (*contemplatio*)

The Most Important Thing

The most important thing to remember about *Lectio Divina* is that it is simply a method that enables us to experience the Living Christ. He is always in our midst, but we get so busy or get so much sensory overload that we feel estranged from him and do not hear his voice.

Lectio Divina allows us to find Jesus in his Word, in the silence and in our lives. When we reconnect with the Lord by listening to him, our lives take on new power. - Donald L. Hughes