



LEADING LECTIO DIVINA

Before you begin

Choose a short passage from Scripture; approximately 10-15 verses.

Ask one or more people to take turns reading the passage you have chosen. Let them know that you will prompt them at the appropriate time.

Light a candle, if possible, to indicate the light of Christ in the room.

Silencio - Prepare the mind and heart

Ask the group to quiet their minds and bodies – to be aware of ambient sounds, relax their bodies, and slow their breathing. Sit in quiet for at least 30 seconds.

Invitation to the Spirit

Prepare the group to receive the guidance of the Holy Spirit through an appropriate opening prayer (examples are included at the end of this document). Invite participants to either close their eyes or sit quietly as they listen to the reading with their hearts.

Step One - Lectio (Reading)

Announce the passage that is to be read. If the leader is knowledgeable, and it seems appropriate, he or she may give some brief background to the scripture passage (i.e. where the story took place, the context and audience, etc.). Direct them to listen for verbs that indicate action or emotion, or nouns that invoke a particular image.

Read the passage slowly and thoughtfully, pronouncing each word carefully. Allow for 2-3 minutes of silence, then ask "what word or phrase attracted your attention?" Give each person a chance to share a single word or phrase with no elaboration.

Step Two - Meditatio (Meditation)

Invite a second person to read the passage again. Tell them that this time they will be asked to share how the word or phrase speaks to them in their current situation. What thoughts or feelings does the word or phrase invoke? Do they relate to a particular person in the text? After the passage has been read a second time, allow for a 2-3 minute period of silence, then give each person a chance to briefly share any thoughts or feelings they have. Members of the group do not respond to, or rebut, the sharing.

Step Three - Oratio (Pray)

Invite a third person to read the same passage. Tell the group that this time they will be asked to share in more detail what the word or phrase inspired: What action or attitude God may be calling them to, or what gift they should ask for? Allow 2-3 minutes of silence, then invite participants to share their thoughts about what God is calling them to do, or who God is asking them to become.

Step Four - Contemplatio (Rest)

After everyone has shared, allow for a period of silence during which participants are able to rest in the presence of the God who loves them, and who has just spoken to them.

End the time with prayer.

Summary

- Opening prayer
- Step 1 - Lectio: Read the passage; have participants share one word or image.
- Step 2 - Meditatio: Read the passage again and ask people to expand on how the word or image speaks to their current situation.
- Step 3 - Oratio: Read the passage again and ask participants to share what action they think God might be calling them to or who he might be asking them to become.
- Step 4 - Contemplatio: Rest in the presence of God.
- Closing prayer

SAMPLE PRAYERS TO RECITE BEFORE ENGAGING IN READING SACRED SCRIPTURE

Prayer of Origen 184–253 AD

*Lord, inspire me to read your Scriptures and to meditate upon them day and night.
I beg you to give me real understanding of what I read,
that I in turn may put its precepts into practice.
Yet, I know that understanding and good intentions are worthless, unless rooted in your graceful love.
So I ask that the words of Scripture may also be not just signs on a page,
but channels of grace into my heart. Amen.*

Prayer of St. Augustine - 354–430 AD

*Let your Scriptures be my chaste delight...
O Lord, perfect me and reveal those pages to me!
See, your voice is my joy. Give me what I love...
May the inner secrets of your words be laid open to me when I knock.
This I beg by our Lord Jesus Christ in whom are hidden all the
treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col 2:3)
These are the treasures I seek in your books. Amen.*

Prayer of St. Benedict of Nursia 450-543

*Gracious and holy Father,
give me the wisdom to discover you,
the intelligence to understand you,
the diligence to seek after you,
the patience to wait for you,
eyes to behold you,
a heart to meditate on you,
and a life to proclaim you,
through the power of the spirit of Jesus, our Lord. Amen*

(more prayers on the next page)

Prayer of St Anselm of Canterbury - 1033-1109

*Teach me to seek you,
and reveal yourself to me as I seek:
For unless you instruct me
I cannot seek you,
and unless you reveal yourself
I cannot find you.
Let me seek you in desiring you:
let me desire you in seeking you.
Let me find you in loving you:
let me love you in finding you. Amen.*

Prayer for the Spirit - Author Unknown

Lord Jesus, Send your Spirit to help us to read the Scriptures with the same mind that you read them to the disciples on the way to Emmaus.

In the light of the Word, written in the Bible, you helped them to discover the presence of God in the disturbing events of your sentence and death.

Thus, the cross that seemed to be the end of all hope became for them the source of life and of resurrection.

Create in us silence so that we may listen to your voice in creation and in the Scriptures, in events and in people, above all in the poor and suffering. May your word guide us so that we too, like the two disciples from Emmaus, may experience the force of your resurrection and witness to others that you are alive in our midst as source of fraternity, justice and peace.

We ask this of you, Jesus, son of Mary, who revealed to us the Father and sent us your Spirit. Amen.