

Lectio Divina

The practice of Lectio Divina is grounded in the Christian tradition from about the 5th century, as well after the Protestant Reformation beginning with John Calvin.

What you will need:

- **A passage of scripture.** It can be any length. You can start with the Gospel, Psalms, or use a Scripture passage from the pastor's most recent sermon; it can tie in with a Bible study or devotional. Psalm 46:1-11 is an example of a longer passage. You will read the Scripture passage three times. You may want to read it out loud all three times or just once if it's possible. You may also enjoy using Biblegateway.com or a Bible app on your smartphone to read it out loud for you.
- Pen and journal/notebook for notes during or after Lectio Divina (optional)

Distractions: Distractions are a common experience for everyone. When you become aware that you are distracted, be kind to yourself. Simply note that you are distracted and return your attention to the practice of being still. Write down any distractions you feel are important to remember so you can return to prayer.

Silence: We live in a world of sound and noise. Silence, for many of us, is a new experience that requires practice. We practice silence for two primary reasons: First, to place ourselves intentionally before God so that He may work in us and we grow in Christ. In the silence, we learn to tell God what we most need and to listen to God's response. God's response is often beyond words, emotions and feelings. We may not realize God's response until days/weeks/months later when we have a new understanding, a new behavior. Silence encourages a conversation between God and us where we listen to God more than we speak.

Secondly, we practice silence in order to allow a place of silence to grow inside us. A place that we are able to carry into our busy and demanding worlds. A place to center in the midst of difficult conversations, hard decision-making, times of anxiety/uncertainty/joy. While engaged in any of these situations, we can respond from a place of peace and calm that has been cultivated in the practice of silence before God.

[optional] Relaxation/Bringing the Body into Prayer:

Once you are in a comfortable posture in your seat, this an optional centering prayer to start your time with God.

Breathe in the breath of God

Breathe out your cares and concerns

Breathe in the love of God

Breathe out your doubts and despairs

Breathe in the life of God

Breathe out your fears and frustrations

We sit quietly before the One who gives life and love to all creation,

We sit in awe of the One who formed us in our mother's wombs

We sit at peace surrounded by the One who fills every fiber of our being

Breathe in the breath of God

Breathe out your tensions and turmoil

Breathe in the love of God

Breathe out your haste and hurry

Breathe in the life of God

Breathe out your work and worry

We sit quietly before the One who gives life and love to all creation,

We sit in awe of the One who formed us in our mother's wombs

We sit at peace surrounded by the One who fills every fiber of our being

Adapted by Cathy White from Idlewild Presbyterian Church at:
idlewildchurch.org/assets/1351/facilitator_instructionsbeginning_group_leading_lectio_closing_discussion.pdf

Centering Breath Prayer: <http://godspacelight.com/2009/02/16/a-breathing-prayer/>

The Practice of Lectio Divina

Before you read the passage, prepare yourself to note:

- What parts of the passage catch your attention?
- What words, phrases, or images do you hear as though for the first time?

SAY: The Word of God...**[First Reading:** Read the passage, slowly. After pausing a few seconds, read the passage a second time. **Second Reading]**

[Pause for 1-2 minutes.]

- If you haven't already done so, was there a word, phrase, or image in the passage that caught your attention?
- Examine why you felt drawn to this word, phrase or image. What does it remind you of? What meaning does it hold for you? What might God be saying to you?
Lord, help me understand...

[Pause for at least 1 minute of silence]

For the final reading, be open to whatever God might have to say. Is there an invitation for you? Listen and respond as the Holy Spirit leads.

Third Reading: read the passage, slowly

Rest in God's presence for at least one minute of silence. Then close by lifting to God the thanksgivings, concerns, and intercessions that this meditation on Scripture has called forth. Rest deeply in God's loving presence knowing that He has you and your prayers in His capable hands.

I thank you God for Your peace and this time to be still and know that You are God. In Jesus' name, Amen.