

## Facilitator Instructions: Guiding Lectio Divina in a Group

### Materials:

- Pens and paper for notetaking during or after Lectio Divina (optional)
- **A passage of scripture.** For larger groups, it can be helpful to keep the passage short (4-6 verses); it can also be 7-14 verses in order to get the fullness of the passage. New groups can start with the Gospel, Psalms, or use a Scripture passage from the pastor's most recent or upcoming week's sermon, Bible study or devotional. Psalm 46:1-11 is an example of a longer passage.

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

We will read our Scripture passage 3 times. [facilitator can read all three times or, in experienced groups, ask others to help with the reading].

Before we begin, let's talk about distractions as we practice being still.

**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. We have paper/pens today so you can take notes as we go or write down any distractions you feel are important to remember so you can return to prayer. As I read the passage, it is often helpful to focus on the word/phrase/image that catches your attention during the first reading of the Scripture. I'll guide you to do that as we go along.

**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.

---

Adapted by Cathy White from Idlewild Presbyterian Church at:  
[idlewildchurch.org/assets/1351/facilitator\\_instructionsbeginning\\_group\\_leading\\_lectio\\_closing\\_discussion.pdf](http://idlewildchurch.org/assets/1351/facilitator_instructionsbeginning_group_leading_lectio_closing_discussion.pdf)

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

Time for Discussion: As time allows, we will have a short time for discussion at the end of praying with the Scriptures. *This is intended to be a safe place without judgement or the need to fix things for ourselves or others. We can trust the Holy Spirit to be our guide and to speak what our hearts and minds need to know. What is shared in here should be treated confidentially but if you wish to share with others about your own personal Lectio Divina experience in the days and weeks to come, we'd love for you to do that.*

Are there any questions before we get started with our centering prayer? If not, let's begin with prayer....

### **Relaxation/Bringing the Body into Prayer:**

I invite you to make yourself comfortable in your seat. I will guide us through a [centering prayer](#) that focuses on our breathing. Now let us seek and find the Peace of Christ available to all:

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](http://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 Group Lectio Divina**

SAY: Listen silently as though hearing the passage for the first time. What parts of the passage catch your attention? What words, phrases, or images do you hear as though for the first time?

SAY: And now hear the Word of God...

**First Reading:** Read the passage aloud, slowly. After pausing a few seconds, read the passage aloud a second time.

#### **Second Reading**

[Pause for 1-2 minutes of silence]

[You may want to keep your eyes closed to help everyone stay centered] SAY: If you wish to do so, what word, phrase, or image in the passage caught your attention? We'll examine "why" next. For now, I invite you to simply share what stood out to you as we listened.

[After time has passed for all to share as they felt led...]

SAY: Let's move on and 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? Let's be still for a minute before I invite anyone who wants to share to do so. Lord, we ask You to help us understand...

[Pause for at least 1 minute of silence]

SAY: If you wish to do so, I invite you to share 1-2 sentences in response to *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?

[After time has passed for all to share as they felt led...]

SAY: For our final reading, as you listen, be open to whatever God might have to say. Is there an invitation for you? Listen and respond. Repeat your listening and responding as the Holy Spirit leads you.

**Third Reading:** read the passage aloud, slowly

[After 1 minute of silence...]

SAY: Let us spend a minute in a silent prayer of praise. I invite you to lift to God the thanksgivings, concerns, and intercessions that this meditation on Scripture has called forth.

[After 1 minute of silence...]

SAY: As we close out time together, I invite you to simply rest in the silence. Rest deeply in God's loving presence knowing that He has you and your prayers in His capable hands.

[Allow 1-2 minutes of quiet, or longer if comfortable.]

SAY: For those of us who are ready, let us close in prayer. I thank you God for Your peace and this time to be still and know that You are God. In Jesus' name, Amen.

**SHARING: Lead the group in reflecting on the experience of Lectio Divina.**

If time is short, you may invite participants to simply **share one word** that describes/expresses his/her experience. Remind members that sharing is completely optional but God can use this time of sharing to minister to one another in powerful ways. Responses may include words, such as restful, surprised, grateful, uncomfortable, anxiety provoking. Let each person's choice of a word stand without comment.

If time allows, suggested questions:

What did you find most helpful about the process?

What did you find obtrusive or unnatural?

Do you see how the same approach can be used in times of personal reflection as well as with a group?

**Close the Group in prayer** and pray for God to lead others to the next group meeting; for His will to be done in our lives; and that we may tell others of God's power and peace when we practice being still.