

PRACTICE: A Method of Lectio Divina for Community Prayer (with a brief sharing after some steps).

Opening Prayer: Read one together. It is helpful to begin Lectio Divina with a short transitional prayer based in Scripture, followed by a silent pause. Perhaps one of these examples will give you an idea:

- Dear Lord, as we begin this time of Lectio Divina in your holy Bible we open our hearts to listen to you. We know that even a child can hear voice. We pray with the little boy Samuel, "Speak Lord, for your servants are listening" (1 Samuel 3:9, 10).
- You are the Potter, O Lord, and we are the clay in your hands. As we meditate on Scripture may your words form our hearts to be more like Jesus Christ. (Inspired by Isaiah 64:8 and Psalm 33:15).
- Lord Jesus Christ, "You alone have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68). You are the Word made flesh (John 1:14). We come to you in this time of Lectio Divina, eager to hear from you.
- Dear God, when you speak you impart life (Genesis 1). Your words are living and active (Hebrews 4:12). All of Scripture is inspired by you and useful to train us to become more like Jesus (2 Timothy 3:16). We ask you to speak to us through this Bible passage and help us to apply your grace and truth to our lives today.

Centering ourselves to prayer: (Known as the "Jesus Prayer" or "Prayer of the Heart") Simply repeat to the rhythm of breathing the phrase, Breathe IN: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Breathe OUT: have mercy on me a sinner." In time, the prayer was shortened to, "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy" or simply, "Jesus, mercy."

Begin with gentle breathing:

1. Close your eyes and recall the line "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). Be still, calm, peaceful, open to the presence of God.
2. Breathe IN slowly: Lord Jesus Christ Breathe OUT slowly: have mercy
3. Breathe IN slowly: Lord Jesus Breathe OUT slowly: the cares that weigh on your heart. Just let them float away. Feel the stillness, calm and peaceful joy of being in the presence of God.
4. Breathe IN slowly: Jesus Breathe OUT slowly: Mercy

Lectio: (Listening to the Word of God or Reading God's Word)

1. As we listen to the Word of God for the first time I invite you to be aware of any word or phrase that catches your attention - a word or phrase.
2. Read the passage slowly with appropriate pauses.
3. Allow 1 minute of silence for reflection.
4. Ask the listeners to share out loud to the whole group, if so moved to do so - what was the word or phrase that caught your attention in the reading?
5. After the sharing, allow a few moments of silence so that what was heard may sink deeper within.

Meditatio: (Reflecting on the Word of God)

1. As we listen to the Word of God for the second time I invite you to be aware of any reflection or thought that you become aware of as you listened - a reflection or thought.
2. Read the passage slowly with appropriate pauses.
3. Allow 1/2 minute(s) of silent reflection.
4. Ask the listeners to share out loud to the whole group, if so moved to do so - what reflection or thought that you became aware of as you listened?
5. After the sharing allow a few moments of silence so that what was heard may sink deeper within.

Contemplatio: (Resting in the Word of God) - Contemplation

1. As we listen to the Word of God for **third** time I invite you to just sit with the Word of God and allow God to speak to you in the silence of your hearts. God's first language is silence.
2. Read the passage slowly with appropriate pauses.
3. Allow 4 - 6 minutes of silence.

Oratio: (Responding to the Word of God) - Affective Prayer

1. As we listen to the Word of God for a fourth time I invite you to be aware of any prayer that rises up within you that expresses what you are experiencing in this Word of God.
2. Read the passage slowly with appropriate pauses.
3. Allow 3 - 5 minutes of silence for reflection and journaling.
4. Ask the listeners to share out loud to the whole group, if moved to do so - a prayer that expresses what you are experiencing in the Word of God.
5. After the sharing allow a few moments of silence so that what was heard may sink deeper within.

Action (Sharing the gift from the Word of God with others.)

1. What is an action that we would like to take because of our time with the Lord.
2. Think of someone that you could share the fruit of our time together.

Closing Prayer: The following closing prayer maybe read, or one member of the group may choose to pray in their own words a closing prayer for the group.

Almighty God thank you for the gift of your Word. May we take the word or phrase that spoke to us, the thought that we became aware of and the prayer that came from our hearts, into the activity of our day as a reminder of our genuine desire to consent to your presence and action in our lives. We offer this prayer through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen