

Lectio Divina

A six-session course featuring the foundations and practice of Lectio Divina

Welcome!

This series of practice sessions is designed to introduce you to Lectio Divina, prayerful reading of the Scripture, also called holy reading or divine reading.

Lectio is an ancient monastic spiritual practice. In a nutshell it is a way of reading Scripture--slowly, openly, meditatively--and listening to what it says to us on this day, in this place in our lives. Though it is helpful to read *about* Scripture, Lectio is *not* Bible study. Although a practice of Lectio will lead to remembering Scripture passages, it is *not a memorization* exercise. Lectio *is* lingering over the word of God, slowly musing about what the words mean to you, as you are reading, in that particular time and place in your life. Benedictine Scripture Scholar Demetrius Dumm explains it this way.

From [Cherish Christ Above All: The Bible in the Rule of Benedict](#), by Demetrius Dumm, OSB:
This "prayerful reading" of the scriptures was not just reading for familiarity through memorization, much less for mere information. Rather, it was a slow, deliberate and meditative murmuring of the sacred text with generous pauses to allow for prayerful response to the word of God. The end result of years of such prayerful reading was a monastic person whose subconscious was so filled with biblical words and phrases that they would bubble to the surface on the slightest invitation.

The sessions presented here will briefly introduce you to Lectio by allowing you to practice it as well as read about it from selected texts. The assumption is that the reader is not familiar with Lectio, but even those familiar with the practice can benefit from working through the sessions.

Overview of Lectio Divina Practice

Lectio is a slow reading of the same passage several times, each time with a different purpose. We could call those several readings moments. The four moments would then be *reading*, *reflecting* on what we have read and its meaning for us, *praying* about what we have seen in the scripture, and *resting* in the Word.

Reading: Read the passage through slowly, aloud, just letting it flow over you. Notice if any word or phrase stands out, if some word or phrase resonates within you. Then just sit with it for a few moments.

Reflecting: Read the same passage again, slowly, aloud, giving more thought to the relationship between the word or phrase and your life situation. Let the passage bring its wisdom to your present moment.

Praying: Read the passage aloud again, then let your heart speak as it will to God, addressing yourself to what has arisen in your reading.

Resting: Read the passage for the last time and simply sit with it in silence. Let the readings, reflection and prayer soak in as you rest in God.

For the six sessions online, readings have been chosen already. But in your own private practice, **choosing a passage** can be done in several ways. You might decide on a book of Scripture and read it in short sections each time you practice. Or you can follow the Daily Lectionary of the Church and read the passages chosen for the day. Or you could dedicate your Lectio time to the Sunday Lectionary and read the scripture before you go

to Church, in preparation for hearing it proclaimed. You can also use a book like Thelma Hall's *Too Deep for Words: Rediscovering Lectio Divina* which has suggestions for passages and has them arranged thematically. Similarly, *The Bible as Prayer: A Handbook for Lectio Divina*, by Steven Hough, aids the practice by excerpting the bible. Both volumes are small enough to be easily carried in a tote bag or briefcase.

Overview of the Sessions

Each session is roughly divided into three parts.

1. Reading about Lectio--expanding our understanding from those who have written about Lectio.
2. Practicing by actually reading the scripture from your own bible, getting into the rhythm and flow of the four moments.
3. Commenting or journaling about what has resonated within you from that reading.

Though all sessions are built on the same pattern, each also expands some part of the Lectio process. Our hope is to give you many examples and ideas so that from them you can form your own practice with what suits you best. It is recommended that you print out each session to read up to the Scripture passage. Then use your own favorite Bible translation for the Scripture passages. Return to the printed session to conclude your practice.

What you will need to Participate

- A Bible
- Thelma Hall's book titled *Too Deep For Words: Rediscovering Lectio Divina*. (optional, highly recommended) or some other resource for Lectio. A Selected Bibliography follows session 6.
- A notebook for journaling (optional, very helpful)

Notes:

- An annotated bibliography follows the last session (http://www.saintandrew.org/v4/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/cp_lectio_s6.pdf)
- For a more detailed explanation of the history of Lectio, see the article by Fr. Thomas Keating: *The Classical Monastic Practice of Lectio Divina* (http://www.saintandrew.org/v4/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/cp_lectio_FrKeating.pdf)
- Start as simply as you can within your own schedule. Make a small commitment and stick to it. For example, every Friday morning you might read the gospel for the next Sunday as a Lectio practice. It needn't be a long time, just a focused time. As the Spirit moves within you, you might allow more time for the practice. However, you can fit the practice into your own schedule, it is sure to enliven Scripture, and to enrich your reading of the Word.

Lectio Divina--Session 1

http://www.saintandrew.org/v4/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/cp_lectio_s1.pdf

Back to Centering Resources

http://www.saintandrew.org/v4/centering_prayer_resources/