

Lectio Divina: Spiritual Reading for Transformation

- A spiritual practice of engaging scripture for spiritual transformation.
- Reading not for information, but for formation/transformation.
- The intent in approaching scripture in this method of holy reading is to receive God's word like a love letter from God. To be open and available to God in the reading and listening.
- It is engaging scripture for God's word not just through the intellect, but also through the heart and soul. Listen to hear God's word to you.
- In line with Samuel, Lectio Divina approaches God through scripture saying: "Speak LORD; for your servant is listening."

Hebrews 4:12 (CEB) – "God's word is living, active, and sharper than any two-edged sword. It penetrates to the point that it separates the soul from the spirit and the joints from the marrow. It's able to judge the heart's thoughts and intentions."

The Lectio Divina Process: Read, Reflect, Respond, Rest, Resolve.

1. Begin by getting yourself in an open, receptive position: feet flat on the ground, back erect in a chair. Perhaps spend the first minute doing deep breathing with your eyes closed to center yourself before turning to hear scripture.
2. (*Read*) Read aloud the scripture chosen. In the first hearing of the text, you are listening for a word or phrase that strikes you or sticks with you. You are not trying to figure out the word, nor are you trying to explain to God why you don't want that word or phrase. Remain in silence for 3 minutes while you just *savor* the word or phrase that strikes you.
3. (*Reflect*) Read aloud the same scripture again. This time, you will be listening for how your life is touched by the word or phrase that stood out for you – or where it connects with your life today. Remain in 3 minutes of silence while you listen for the response that arises.
4. (*Respond*) Read aloud the same scripture again. This time, you will be listening for God's invitation to you so that you might respond to God in the silence that follows. Whatever that invitation is, just listen and then respond. Spend 5 minutes in silence this time hearing what arises from you back to God as you receive God's invitation to you from the word or phrase that initially struck you.
5. (*Rest*) Again return to reading aloud the same scripture, then sitting in silence for 3 additional minutes. After this fourth reading and listening, simply rest yourself in God in the silence.
6. (*Resolve*) As you get ready to bring your experience of Lectio Divina to a close, resolve to live out the word you have received. Throughout the day, ponder what it means to live in response to the message you have received from God in your Holy Reading. Keep listening as you go about the routine tasks of your day. Keep yourself open to continuing to hear from God as you resolve to allow God's word to you to *live* in you.
7. (*Continuing the Process*) Return to the same or another text this week when you return to Lectio Divina. You may even want to keep a journal of what you heard in each step of the Lectio Divina process while you are doing the process. Or, you might want to record what you heard after the Lectio Divina step of resting yourself in God.
8. (*Review*) Overtime, consider what you are noticing about yourself: how your faith is deepening, what overarching theme you are hearing from God, how you are living out the gift of the messages given to you. Note if your joy has increased, if you find yourself at peace more often, or if you sense deeper trust growing in you.

(~ process above outlined and adapted by The Rev. Dr. Jule M. Nyhuis)