

The Steps of Lectio Divina:

If you'd like to try lectio divina for yourself, I encourage you to read through the steps below and start with a story from the gospels: Stories provide a great way for beginners to get started.

Prepare (Silencio):

Take a few moments to quiet yourself, get in a comfortable position, and become aware of God's presence. You might say a simple prayer, inviting the Holy Spirit into this time. (Try a few deep breaths with the prayer "Come, Holy Spirit, Come.") I often take a quick inventory of my body, mind, and heart, asking God to quiet each of them in turn.

Read (Lectio):

Read the passage slowly, out loud if possible. In this reading, you want to familiarize yourself with the basic meaning of the passage, what it says to everyone. Avoid analyzing and simply savor the words, letting them sink in. Listen for a nudge: What words or images is the Spirit drawing you toward today? Is there a character you identify with? A moment in the story that captures your attention?

Mediate (Meditatio):

Re-read the passage, lingering over the person/word/phrase that captured your attention. Let your imagination engage the story/text. What do the characters experience/feel/think? Or consider the phrase or image you noticed: Reflect on how it might intersect with your life today. What (or who) does it bring to your mind? Notice the feelings this passage evokes in you—is there attraction, or resistance of some kind? Invite the Spirit to reveal how this passage might be speaking to your life today. (You might find it helpful to journal some of these reflections before continuing.)

Pray (Oratio):

Read through the passage another time, allowing the Scripture to lead you into a prayer/response to God. Talk to God about what has come to mind, and how he might be inviting you to respond. Are you feeling led toward a prayer of praise? repentance? a plea for help or healing? (Again, it might be helpful to focus your prayer by journaling.)

Contemplate (Contemplatio):

Rest in the awareness of God's presence, remaining open to anything else the Spirit might stir in your heart. If your mind wanders, gently redirect your thoughts toward God. Simply be still. Expect nothing. Enjoy a moment of fellowship with God that goes deeper than words. Relax in this moment to be with God, and know you are loved.