

Grade 7: Prayer Session 3

Two Types of Prayer and Reflection—Lectio Divina and Examination of Conscience

January 18

Opening Prayer

Holy Spirit, be with us now. Lead us. Teach Us. Help us follow you. Open our minds and hearts to new ways of reflection and prayer that we find new ways to be closer to you. Amen.

Lectio Divina

Hand out the Worksheet for Lectio Divina. Please answer the questions on the worksheet.

Today we are going to look at two different ways to pray and reflect. The first is Lectio Divina, which is a different way of reading the Scriptures. It's more interactive and for some people really helps them better understand the Scriptures and make them more meaningful.

The words "Lectio Divina" are Latin for "Sacred Reading" and it's been used by Catholics for more than 1000 years. It's a form of prayer that helps you put yourself into the story when you're reading the Bible.

- Have you ever had a conversation with a friend that afterward you think about over and over again?
- Do any of you find yourself playing back the conversation in your head, remembering what was said, what you wish you had or hadn't said?
- Do you ever remember a conversation and remember what you were wearing or where you were or what music was playing?

Thinking about things that deeply is called "contemplation." Lectio Divina is something like that; it's a slow and intentional way of praying the Bible while talking to God. It is designed to help you become more contemplative. So what you do is take a passage of Scripture, usually it's good to start in the Gospels, and follow four easy steps:

1. Lectio (reading)
2. Meditatio (meditation)
3. Oratio (praying/speaking)
4. Contemplatio (contemplation)

BUT since you don't speak Latin, it's easier to remember the steps as:

1. Read
2. Reflect
3. Respond
4. Rest

Pick a Gospel Story (you can choose from the list below or one that you may like) and work through the four steps.

The Baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17)

The Calling of the Disciples (Matthew 4:18-22)

Multiplication of the Loaves (Matthew 14:13-21)

1. READ

Read the passage slowly. Figure out the "who, what, when, where, why and how" of it. Read it more than once, if necessary.

2. REFLECT

Imagine yourself as an observer and retell the story from your perspective, including giving your reactions to what is happening. *This can be written, in pictures or perhaps acted out.*

3. RESPOND

This is where you and God speak together. If you're doing Lectio Divina alone, this is where you can ask God questions in your prayer:

- What stood out to you in the Scripture Passage?
- What did you like about it?
- Was anything confusing?
- What challenged you?
- How does this passage relate to our lives today?

If you're doing this prayer alone, this is a good time to spend a few minutes in silence listening to God. Listen to God speaking, either with your heart or through other people.

4. REST

During this final step, you just rest. This might be difficult for some people because we are used to being on the go, doing something, talking to people, or watching or listening to things. Be sure during this step you are removed from screens and noise. It might take some practice, to sit in silence with God and just let Him love you. Close your eyes and picture God. Imagine Him telling you how proud He is of you. Let Him remind you how much you mean to Him.

Examination of Conscience

- How many of you have done an Examination of Conscience in the past?
- When did you do this? *(should have done this for reconciliation)*

In order to make a good confession, and sometimes just to evaluate your life and your relationship with God, it is important to take time to do an Examination of Conscience. It is designed to help you recall those time when you maybe fell a bit short and is a good reminder of how God is calling us to live. Take a few minutes to read through the Examination of Conscience worksheet.

(if you have some soft music on your phone, this is a good time to play it)

Closing Prayer

Pray the *Our Father*.