

# Lectio Divina - Additional Variations

While the basic form of *Lectio Divina* as *lectio*, *oratio*, and *contemplatio* is pretty simple to layout and begin to practice, this spiritual discipline has many, many variations. Try one or more of these suggestions and see how you like them:

- As you read a passage multiple times, focus on an image or character rather than a word. Hold that image or character in your mind throughout the day. How might that apply to your everyday life?
- Read the “book” of your own body as the subject for *Lectio Divina*. Take a few moments. Focus on each of your five senses. For five breaths are so, really concentrate on what you see before you? How do you take it in? How do your eyes feel? Then, move on to hearing...smelling...touching...tasting. What word or image or feeling is God speaking to you through your senses?
- Take the five senses approach to the word that stood out from a Scripture passage. What would that word “look” like, “sound” like, “smell” like, etc.?
- Look to your memories. Today, when you remember/are reminded of a specific event from your past, stop to ponder. Rehearse the event in your mind. Ask God what the past has to teach you about him. You might be surprised at how much a little attention can change something as simple as remembering a past event.
- Ponder-wander-wonder. Take a word or phrase that stands out to you in a scripture or other spiritual reading. *Ponder* how that word can ground you in your own experience right now. Then, *wander* into the uncomfortable place of how that word or phrase might unsettle your comfortable routines and call you to something deeper. Finally, let your mind *wonder* at what new and amazing place God might be drawing you toward by pointing out that word or phrase to you.
- Do you like to write? Try journaling with the word or phrase that stands out to you. You can connect it to your own experience and journal about your thoughts and feelings, or you can let your imagination go wild and use that word or phrase to create an entirely new story. It doesn't have to be tied to the original scripture passage or spiritual reading. Remember that the act of creation is inherently spiritual. It doesn't have to be limited to religious subjects.
- Do you like to paint? draw? sing? dance? compose poetry? Take your word or phrase as a beginning point to create through any of these media.
- *Lectio Divina* can also be done by “reading” images or music, not just holy books. For instance, a traditional subject of *lectio* is an icon or image of Christ or a holy person. Sit before the image, preferably in an environment where you can concentrate. Don't be in a rush. Take 10-15 minutes or longer just to sit there and look. What shapes and colors do you notice? What draws your attention? What action(s) is being portrayed? Is there an obvious “lesson” to be learned from the scene or person depicted? Don't feel limited to any “traditional” interpretations of the image. How might God be inviting you to walk with him through the event/person depicted? Try to sit there for a while holding that insight in your mind.
- What about TV or movies? Before sitting down to watch, pray a short prayer like “God, show me something about your truth in what I watch.” Then, pay attention as you watch. What might God be telling you through a character, sequence of events, setting, symbol, or snippet of dialogue? God works mysteriously, and he might even get our attention through the most unlikely ways.
- Look at other people. Friends. Family. Co-workers. Each person is also a book of what God is doing on earth. Listen to them. Really pay attention. God may speak to you through them...and you may be the word of God that they need to hear too.