

Inner Work Guidebook
ACTIVITY: LECTIO DIVINA
Description and Detail of Activity

What is it?

- A form of “spiritual reading” that represents a method of prayer to promote communion with God
- A time set apart to be quiet and reflect on the word of God and how it affects your life
- A form of prayer dating back to A.D. 220 practiced by Catholic monks, and widely used today among Christians. The roots of Lectio Divina probably reach back into “Old Testament” days. In the years following Vatican II it experienced a resurgence across Christian denominations. This growth continues in our own present time. Lectio Divina is comprised of four prayerful movements: lectio, meditatio, oratio, and contemplatio.

Why to do it?

- Deepen your spiritual life
- Learn to listen to the voice of God
- Affectively connect with the scriptures

How do it? Alone or in small groups:

1st Movement – Lectio...Select some scripture to read. Get settled, assume a comfortable position and set your intention to be with God during this time of prayer. Begin to read the scripture slowly and hear it as if you were hearing it for the first time; imagine that it is God speaking to you. Do not think about the words...just simply allow the words to be heard. Read until you reach a word or verse that strikes you in any way...challenge, new understanding, insight, etc. If you are in a place where it is possible, read aloud.

2nd Movement – Meditatio...Continue to repeat the words/verse over and over to yourself or aloud, if possible. Do not evaluate or analyze the verse...simply repeat it and pay close attention to what “movements” are occurring within...feelings or emotions that are evoked. Remember...it is as if God were speaking to you. Be with the words until you feel that responding would be appropriate.

3rd Movement – Oratio...In this movement, give response to God from your heart...simply speak your response as you would speak with a close friend or loved one. You may even converse... “hearing” God speaking further with you, and you giving further response.

4th Movement – Contemplatio...Having finished with your response to God, you now move to “resting in God.” In this movement, God is still “communicating” or “working on you”...it is just beneath the level of your awareness. You renew your intention to simply be present with God at this level, beyond words.

Suggested Resources for this Activity

www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/Christianity/Catholic/2000/08/How-To-Practice-Lectio-Divina.aspx

www.osb.org/lectio/about.html

www.gotquestions.org/lectio-divina.html www.sacredspace.ie www.contemplativeoutreach.org

Click on Lectio Divina tab on the left Covey, Michael. Sacred Readings; Hall R.C., Thelma, *Too Deep For Words*