

Week 2: Read (Lectio Divina)

Opening Exercise: The Examen

Steps:

1. **Become aware of God's presence**
Take a deep breath. Remember that God is here.
2. **Review the day (guided meditation)**
Call to mind the events of the past 24 hours.
3. **Notice your highs and lows**
 - Where did you feel gratitude, joy, or connection?
 - Where did you feel frustration, sadness, or distance?
4. **Notice God's presence**
Where might God have been with you, in both the high and the low?
5. **Look ahead with hope**
Prayerfully offer today to God. Ask for what you need.

Opening Question: Introduce selves, then what came up for you in this exercise?

This week's Faith 5 practice: Lectio Divina

Brief history: Lectio Divina, Latin for “*divine reading*,” is an ancient Christian practice of prayerfully reading Scripture in order to listen for God's voice. Rather than studying the Bible for information, Lectio Divina approaches Scripture as the *living Word* through which God speaks personally and relationally.

The roots of Lectio Divina reach back to the early church, especially to Origen in the 3rd century, who taught that Scripture should be read with Christ as the key to its meaning. He believed God's Word was alive and capable of shaping the reader's life. These ideas were passed on through leaders such as Ambrose of Milan and Augustine of Hippo, embedding prayerful Scripture reading into Christian spirituality.

Lectio Divina took clearer form within Western monastic life. In the 6th century, St. Benedict made slow, prayerful reading of Scripture a daily practice in monastic communities, alongside prayer and work (*ora et labora*). Scripture was meant to be read not for mastery, but for communion with God.

In the 12th century, the Carthusian monk Guigo II formally described Lectio Divina as a four-fold movement of prayer: Lectio (reading), Meditatio (reflecting), Oratio (praying), and Contemplatio (resting in God's presence). This pattern became foundational for Western Christian spirituality and influenced monastic and mystical traditions for centuries.

Although Lectio Divina was long practiced mainly in monasteries, it experienced a renewed emphasis in the 20th century, especially through the Second Vatican Council, which encouraged all Christians to engage Scripture prayerfully. Pope Benedict XVI later affirmed Lectio Divina as a source of spiritual renewal and deeper relationship with God.

Today, Lectio Divina is practiced widely across Christian traditions. It remains a simple and ancient way of slowing down, listening deeply, and trusting that God still speaks through Scripture.

The Four Movements of Lectio Divina:

1. Lectio – Read Read the Scripture slowly (aloud if possible). Read it twice.

On the second time, notice a word or phrase that catches your attention.

2. Meditatio – Reflect Sit with that word or phrase. *Why might this be speaking to you today?*

What is happening in your life that connects to it?

3. Oratio – Respond Read text a third time. Speak to God from your heart.

Offer a prayerful response, bringing your word or phrase to God, listening for how God is speaking to you through it.

4. Contemplatio – Rest Rest quietly in God’s presence.

Practicing Lectio Divina: Luke 5:1-11 5 Once while Jesus[a] was standing beside the Lake of Gennesaret and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, 2 he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets. 3 He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. 4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.” 5 Simon answered, “Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.” 6 When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to burst. 7 So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. 8 But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’s knees, saying, “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!” 9 For he and all who were with him were astounded at the catch of fish that they had taken, 10 and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.” 11 When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

Using These Practices at Home (Faith Five)

For individuals/adults:

- Choose **one Scripture** for the week (next week’s Gospel reading is Luke 24:13-25)
- Practice lectio divina with it 2–3 times this week
- Notice how the meaning deepens or shifts with each study

For households with children:

1. At bedtime, ask: **What were your highs and lows today?**
2. Read a short Bible story aloud (Spark Story Bible is great for kids)
3. Ask: What do you like about this story?
How might this story connect to our life?



PRACTICING FAITH AT HOME AND IN THE WORLD



SHARE



READ



TALK



PRAY



BLESS