

# Lectio Divina

Lectio divina, an ancient practice, is a slow, contemplative prayerful reading of a portion of Scripture, allowing it to speak directly to our hearts and lives. This method of praying is particularly loved by the Benedictine tradition of monasticism. The pattern followed is that of Reading (or listening), Meditation, Prayer and Contemplation. Feel free to use whichever Scripture passage seems appropriate – perhaps work through part of a Gospel or use appointed readings for the day. Can be used individually or within a group.

## Lectio – Reading

Read twice, slowly and attentively, listening for that ‘gentle whisper’ that is God’s word or phrase for today, using this or an alternative reading.

*‘His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.’ (Luke 1:50-52)*

## Meditatio – Meditation (2-3 min)

As Mary sang those words in the company of Elizabeth, so we repeat these words silently and let them sink into our hearts, interact with our day, our thoughts and concerns... God’s word becomes our word for today.

(Group – allow time for those who wish to share the word, image or phrase that has touched their heart.)

## Oratio – Prayer

As we turn to prayer, so God invites us to respond to the word or phrase that has spoken to us. In the quietness or aloud we bring to Him those words, images or people that God has placed on our hearts, and how we might put those words into action.

(Group – allow time to pray for the person on your right.)

## Contemplatio – Contemplation

We spend a minute or two in silence, enjoying the experience of God’s presence and love embracing us.

*Glory to the Father,  
and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Spirit,  
Three in One.  
Amen.*

# Visio Divina

All Visio Divina, or 'Divine seeing' requires of us is a few minutes of quiet, while we look at an image, what the artist might say to us, even putting ourselves into the artwork, and allowing God to speak to us.

The four stages of Visio Divina, assuming we are relaxed, quiet and with a copy of the picture in front of us, are listed below the image.



*Joseph and Mary arrive at Bethlehem, William Hole, 1906*

1. Look at the picture slowly, noting the colours, people, places, and things. Start in one corner and work your way around it. Remain with the image for one to two minutes. If you would like, jot down a few words about what you see, particularly anything you missed at first glance.
2. Take a second, deeper, look. Where is there movement? What relationships do you see? Engage your imagination. Where might you be within the picture? What do you see from that perspective? What deeper meaning emerges?
3. Respond to the image with prayer. Did the image remind you of an experience, person or issue for which you'd like to offer thanksgiving or intercession? Offer that prayer to God.
4. Be still. Breathe deeply. Relax your shoulders, arms, and legs. Rest in this quietness and let God speak.