

“DO WHAT YOU CAN AND PRAY FOR WHAT YOU CANNOT.”

“REJOICE ALWAYS. PRAY WITHOUT CEASING.”

“PRAYER IS A SURGE OF THE HEART.”



# lectio divina

BURNING HEARTS

## RESOURCE GUIDE: LECTIO DIVINA

Dear Learner,

Prayer is communication with God, but often it is a one way conversation. Especially in today's busy and noisy world, it can be difficult to calm our hearts and minds enough to be able to hear God speaking to us. Rest assured, He is speaking to you! And it doesn't take years of meditation practice in ancient monasteries to be able to hear his voice.

There is a reason we refer to the Bible as God's Word. The Scriptures are one of the easiest and clearest places to hear God speaking to you. The resources in this Guide can help you dive into a new level of prayer - into a deeper relationship with God. Our prayer is that you can experience true encounter with the Lord in His Word, and that this encounter transforms you.

As you continue to grow in intimacy and friendship with God, know that we are praying for you. If you have questions, concerns, or find that the resources here aren't exactly what you need, please don't hesitate to contact us.

*Maureen & Steve Anderson  
Kristin Bird*

Burning Hearts Disciples Founders

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# PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE



## SIX SIMPLE STEPS



Lectio Divina (Latin for “sacred reading”) is a process of prayer by which we encounter God through his Word and respond to his grace. It was developed in ancient times for Benedictine monks, but it is not just for monasteries. God desires to speak to each of us through His Word.

*Follow the steps below and marvel at the intimate, personal message God has hidden in his Scriptures for you.*

### Step 1: Silencio (Quiet Yourself)

Find a comfortable and quiet place, and take a moment to allow yourself to become silent. Say a prayer inviting the Holy Spirit to be with you and guide you before choosing the passage to focus on for your prayer.

### Step 2: Lectio (Read/Listen)

Turn to the text you have chosen and read it slowly. Take some time to understand the text as you read.

- ▶ *Who are the characters?*
- ▶ *Where is the location?*
- ▶ *What is the historical context?*
- ▶ *Is this text a story, a song, a poem?*

Feel free to use maps, footnotes, and concordances to help you understand if you are struggling, but don't feel like you need to have a Biblical scholar's knowledge of the text. Read to understand, paying attention to any word or phrase your mind keeps coming back to.

**Answer the question: What does the text say?**

### Step 3: Meditatio (Meditate/Reflect)

Read the text again. This time, really focus on a word or phrase that stands out to you. As you read, really “chew on” that word or phrase and consider how it might apply to you personally.

Don't be afraid of thoughts or memories that seem distracting during this step. God may be pulling up these memories or thoughts in order to speak to you through this Scripture.

Consider how the text you've read applies to the memories, thoughts, situations or relationships that come into your mind. Consider how the word or phrase that stood out to you might apply specifically to your life right now.

**Answer the questions: What does the text say to me? How does this text apply to my life?**

### Step 4: Oratio (Speak/Pray)

Speak to God using words, ideas, or images--or all three. Ask God about the message he has for you. Talk to God about the thoughts or memories that popped into your mind as you read. Share with him what you have discovered about yourself, about Him, and/or about your life.

Take the time to listen to what He says in response. Have a conversation with God: ask petitions of him, give him thanks, give him praise, express contrition, and listen.

**Answer the questions: What do I want to say to God about this text? What does He want to say to me?**

## Step 5: Contemplatio (Contemplate/Rest)

*So shall my word be  
that goes forth from my mouth;  
It shall not return to me empty,  
but shall do what pleases me,  
achieving the end for which I sent it.*

*Isaiah 55:11*

God sends His Word into our hearts so that it might have effect. If we are open to a true encounter with the Lord, His Word will change us - it will transform us.

This is a quiet time to allow God to connect the dots in your heart. Hold all the reflections you had in steps 2-4 in your heart and offer them to the Lord, asking him what part of your life needs to be transformed by his grace. Use this time to humble yourself and open yourself up to transformation and conversion.

**Answer the question: What conversion of heart, mind, and life is the Lord asking of me?**

## Step 6: Actio (Act)

When hearts are transformed by God's grace, our lives reflect that transformation in big and small ways.

*"You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by the works."*

*James 2:22*

Decide what difference your prayer experience with this text will make in your life. Having received God's love and grace, go forth to serve others out of the love you have been given. Decide to make a specific, measurable change in your life. Carry your prayer throughout your day reflecting back on it moments of quiet.

**Answer the question: What difference will this text make in my life today?**

## Suggested Scripture Passages

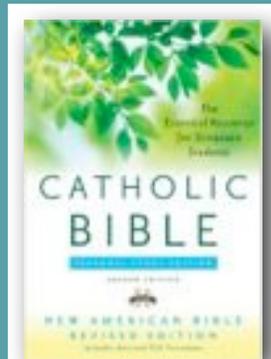
1. The Sunday readings
2. The daily readings
3. The Psalms
4. Proverbs
5. Your favorite Gospel Story
6. The words of Jesus from any of the Gospels

## Materials Needed

### 1. Catholic Bible

Not all Bibles are created equal! Be sure that the Bible you are using is a Catholic Bible. We recommend a New American Bible Revised Edition (NABRE) because it is the same translation from which our Mass readings are taken.

We also recommend that you get yourself a print copy - don't rely on the Bible app on your phone or the USCCB website for your prayer (see below).



**Catholic Bible, Personal Study Edition (NABRE)** Oxford Univ. Press.

Available on Amazon

### 2. Fine tip pen or pencil

Despite what your second grade religion teacher may have told you it IS okay to write in your Bible.

When you have an actual physical Bible, you can highlight words or phrases that stand out to you and make notes in the margins to help you remember the focus of your prayer.

The pages of most Bibles are thin and the margins are small, so a soft, fine-tip pen or pencil usually works best.



**Bible Marking Kit**

Highlighters and fine-tip felt pen that won't bleed.

Available on Amazon

### 3. Prayer Journal

Many people find that it's easier to listen to God when they write down their thoughts and insights. Those who are new to Lectio Divina may find it helpful to write down the steps in a prayer journal to help focus and guide their prayer.

Jot down the date and the Scripture passage you are using for your prayer. Then use your journal to write down any insights that come from your prayer. Do not worry about grammar or spelling - this journal is just for you.

Also consider writing down your Actio commitment as a way to hold yourself accountable to the effects of the transformation you've experienced.

# Lectio Divina Tips

## Don't Worry About Doing It "Right"

If you have a desire to grow in your relationship with God and are open to being transformed by His Word, you are doing it right. Just as your life and experiences of God are unique to you, so too will your prayer and transformation be unique to you.

## Make an Appointment

Find a regular time and a regular place to do your prayer. Schedule it into your daily routine at a time that works for

you. Scheduling prayer into your weekly calendar can help you avoid the temptation to over schedule yourself to the point that you don't have time for prayer.

## Persevere Through Distractions

Give your distractions over to God. Ask your Guardian Angel to take care of it or write it down. Sometimes what feels like a distraction is God's way of directing your prayer to a certain relationship or situation. Consider how He may be speaking in the distractions.

## Use your Mind

God desires to speak to you and show

you things, but you have to participate. Use your mind and open your imagination to God. Remember that He often speaks gently and softly – so do not be discouraged if you have a hard time 'hearing' what he has to say the first few times.

## Dealing with Boredom

Sometimes, after many attempts, people still don't "feel" God. Sometimes this is a result of God stretching us. Often, though, we can take certain steps to improve our prayer experiences:

- ▶ Pray at a time of day when you are most alert.
- ▶ Pray when you have at least 20 minutes, so you don't feel rushed or hurried.
- ▶ Don't pray when you are hungry, or just after eating a large meal.
- ▶ Turn off or completely silence all electronic distractions. Even a blinking notification light or vibration may be a distraction.
- ▶ Go to confession.

"There could also be some unresolved sin hanging over your head, which you haven't acknowledged. If you let a lot of junk sit around in your heart for a long time, it can be harder to pray. Examine your conscience and ask for forgiveness regularly" (Evangelical Catholic. *Guide to Lectio Divina*).



## Practice, Practice, Practice

The stage of contemplatio can be particularly difficult because it depends on stillness and openness. We live in a noisy world, but you can learn to be comfortable with and even appreciate silence with practice. Spend time outside of prayer turning off the radio, TV, and cell phone. Practice being aware of God's presence without the noise.

## Less Is More

Do not feel as though you need to use an entire chapter for your prayer. God can do more with your heart with 2 or 3 verses than He can with 2 or 3 pages.

## How Much Time Does It Take?

*There are no hard and fast rules for how long Lectio Divina prayer should take, but it doesn't need to take long. Consider the timeline below as a general guide - but feel free to take longer or shorter as the Spirit moves on any given day!*

1. *Silencio* (5-10 seconds)
2. *Lectio* (1-2 minutes)
3. *Meditatio* (3 - 4 minutes)
4. *Oratio* (4-7 minutes)
5. *Contemplatio* (4-7 minutes)

**Total: 11 - 20 minutes**

# Lectio with Children

You can use Lectio Divina as a tool to help your children read, understand, and connect the word of God to their own lives. The simple steps of this prayer can be modified for even preschool aged children.

## Silencio

*"Let's quiet our hearts, minds, and bodies before we read this story." Pause for a few seconds of silence and say a short prayer together such as "Come Holy Spirit."*

## Lectio

Read the passage aloud to your children, perhaps even doing different voices for any characters. Provide a written copy for children to read along. Give any background that helps with understanding. Use maps, artwork and pictures to help answer questions they may have about the story.

## Meditatio

Reflect on the passage aloud together. Take turns sharing how you think the passage might apply to your life, or what message you think God has for you today. Ask, *"What do you think this means?"* or *"What do you think God wants you to pay attention to in this reading?"* or *"What words or phrases did you notice? Why?"*

## Oratio

Pray aloud, naming the ideas your child shared in step 3 and asking God for further understanding. Encourage your child to pray aloud as well, telling God what he noticed in the passage and how it applies to his life.

## Contemplatio

Allow 30 seconds or so for silent prayer telling your child, *"Let's keep praying quietly while we let God into our hearts to change whatever needs to be changed."* After a period of silent prayer, say, *"Amen."*

## Actio

With your child's help, come up with a challenge for the day that connects to the discussion you had. Some examples:

- ▶ Make note of "God Sightings" to share next time you pray.
- ▶ Pick one thing to do nice for another person today.
- ▶ Forgive someone who hurts you today.
- ▶ Make the Sign of the Cross anytime you see someone who needs Jesus' help.

## Other Ideas

Draw a picture of the story - what do you think it would have looked like? (*Lectio*)

Have your child keep a journal where she writes down the words that stood out to her from this passage. (*Meditatio*)

Craft a Tweet (140 characters), Facebook status, or Instagram picture that explains the insights you had today. (*Meditatio*)

Write a diary entry as if you were one of the people in the story describing how you felt during these events. (*Meditatio*)

Imagine you are in the story. Use all your senses to describe what you can see, hear, smell, taste, and touch in this passage. (*Meditatio*)

Write a letter (or email) to one of the people in the story. Tell them how the story made you feel. What would you want to tell them? What questions would you ask them? (*Meditatio / Oratio*)

Write (or tell) a dialog of your conversation with Jesus about this passage. Write what you say, then what you think he says in return. (*Oratio*)

Write a thank you letter to God for what he told you in this prayer today. (*Oratio*)



**"TRAIN UP A CHILD IN THE WAY HE SHOULD GO"**



**"LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY"**

# LECTIO DIVINA RESOURCES



Lectio Divina (Latin for “sacred reading”) is a process of prayer by which we encounter God through his Word and respond to his grace. It was developed in ancient times for monks, but it’s not just for monasteries! Anyone can benefit from these basic steps for praying with Scripture.

God wants to speak to you through His Word. He is just waiting for you to open the ears of your heart to him. Check out the resources below, and take the first step toward making your prayer with God a two-way conversation!

## Video Resources

### Word Youth Day Talk: What Is “Lectio Divina”

Length: 5 minutes <http://youtu.be/YWPLTYceDgw>

*Addressing the attendees of World Youth Day 2013 in Rio de Janeiro, Father James Martin walks the viewer through the practice of "lectio divina." He presents the four easy questions of "lectio divina" to help you meet God through the Bible and provides an example with a passage from Scripture.*

### EWTN Live - Fr. Jacques Phillippe - Lectio Divina

Length: 56 minutes [http://youtu.be/\\_2VU7QeToeA](http://youtu.be/_2VU7QeToeA)

*Fr. Jacques Phillippe discusses how the spiritual life, Lectio Divina, contemplation and silent prayer help us to find the peace and love of Christ.*

### The Lectio Divina Steps

Length: 4 minutes <http://youtu.be/a4U8pF-wK0A>

*A quick and straightforward introduction to the steps of Lectio Divina.*

## Audio Resources

### Lectio Divina: Introduction to a Person (MP3)

by Mark Hart [www.bit.ly/LDMarkHart](http://www.bit.ly/LDMarkHart)

*Have you ever tried to read the Bible but didn't really know how or where to start? In this talk, Mark Hart beautifully explains how to read, meditate on, and bring to life the Sacred Scriptures through Lectio Divina. Find out how this form of prayer can help you enter into a deeper and more prayerful experience with the Lord.*

### Pray as You Go (Podcast)

[www.bit.ly/PAYGWeb](http://www.bit.ly/PAYGWeb) (Web) [www.bit.ly/PAYGiTunes](http://www.bit.ly/PAYGiTunes) (iTunes)

*Pray as you go is a daily prayer session to help you pray whenever you find time, but particularly while traveling to and from work, study, etc. A new prayer session is produced every day of the working week and one session for the weekend. It is not a 'Thought for the Day', a sermon or a bible-study, but rather a framework for your own prayer. Lasting between 10 and 13 minutes, it combines music, scripture and some questions for reflection.*

## Lectio Divina: Divine Reading for Transformation (CD & MP3)

by Sarah Christmyer [www.bit.ly/LectioAscension](http://www.bit.ly/LectioAscension)

Scripture is more than a “how-to guide” for the Christian life. It is a living word that has power to change us from the inside out. Learn how the ancient practice of lectio divina (“divine reading”) can help you hear God speak to your life through Scripture; receive that Word deeply into your heart; and bear his fruit in your life.

# Print Resources

## Conversing with God in Scripture

by Stephen J. Binz

In this practical and inspirational book, Stephen Binz shows how we can read and reflect on Scripture in ways that enable us to hear God speaking to us in our thoughts and hearts. He explains how to converse with God in prayer, which will lead to contemplation and life-changing action. With a clarity that all will welcome, Binz explains the elements, characteristics, and benefits of lectio divina. This book is suitable both for beginners and those seasoned in prayer as well as for those in faith-sharing and Bible study groups.

## Lectio Divina: How to Pray Sacred Scripture (pamphlet)

by Br. Daniel Korn

Learn about the history of Lectio Divina and how to pray with sacred Scripture in this pamphlet. We invite you to consider this prayer form and use it through prayer and study as you grow in wisdom and understanding of the word of God.

## Sacred Reading: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina

by Michael Casey

A practical guide as well as a theological and historical introduction. His application of traditional imagery of a spiral journey into the depths of Scripture is illuminating as a guide to reading sacred texts. Written more for those with some experience with Lectio Divina who want to take their prayer to the next level, it includes suggestions on other holy Church texts that can be used for prayer as well.

## WRAP Yourself in Scripture

by Karen and Lawrence Dwyer

WRAP is an acronym that stands for Write, Reflect, Apply, and Pray. The goal of WRAP is to foster a personal encounter and conversation with Jesus Christ through the Scriptures. The book contains instructions about how to use this Scripture study method, as well as a WRAP worksheet and suggested Scripture passages to use for reflection.

*“Diligently practice prayer and lectio divina. When you pray, you speak with God; when you read, God speaks to you.”*

*- St. Cyprian*

# Web Based Resources

## Lectio Divina for Children and Teens (PDF)

[www.thereligionteacher.com/lectio-divina-children-teens](http://www.thereligionteacher.com/lectio-divina-children-teens)

The Lectio Divina for Children and Teens handouts enables teachers, catechists, and home-schooling parents to guide their youth through a lectio divina process with very little instruction required. The simple, easy-to-use format of each handout invites students and young people to engage personally with the word of God. After introducing and practicing each activity, students will be able to come back their favorite handouts again and again for many different Bible passages throughout the year.

## Start Praying Lectio Divina (Web)

by Fr. Ed Broom

[www.catholicexchange.com/lectio-divina](http://www.catholicexchange.com/lectio-divina)

Pope Benedict XVI encourages us to go deeper in our prayer life by using a classical method—Lectio Divina. The retired Pontiff strongly exhorted followers of Christ to utilize the Word of God as fertile ground for delving into the depths of prayer. This short article offers the steps the Holy Father suggests and a touch more to motivate us to never tire in growing in our union with God through a deeper prayer life.

## Opening the Word (App)

[www.openingtheword.org](http://www.openingtheword.org)

Opening the Word helps you unpack the meaning of the Sunday Readings and explore how they connect to your life. It includes

- ▶ video reflections so you can gain insight from dynamic Catholic scholars like Dr. Edward Sri, Dr. Tim Gray, and Dr. Mary Healy,
- ▶ a Personal Prayer Journal with guided Lectio Divina prompts to help you apply the readings to your own life in a personal way—complete with Bible verses, prayers from the Saints, and references to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and
- ▶ daily Reminders to help you on your faith journey.

## Carmelite Lectio Divina (Ebook)

[www.bit.ly/LectioCarmelite](http://www.bit.ly/LectioCarmelite)

The Order of the Brothers of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel offer daily Lectio Divina readings and prompts in an ebook format so readers can download to their mobile and tablet devices and read them offline. The Daily Lectio Divina eBook is published monthly, and users can subscribe to be notified when each new ebook comes out.

*I would like in particular to recall and recommend the ancient tradition of "Lectio divina": "the diligent reading of Sacred Scripture accompanied by prayer brings about that intimate dialogue in which the person reading hears God who is speaking, and in praying, responds to him with trusting openness of heart" (cf. "Dei Verbum," n. 25). If it is effectively promoted, this practice will bring to the Church -- I am convinced of it -- a new spiritual springtime.*

*- Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI*

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Visit [www.burningheartdisciples.com](http://www.burningheartdisciples.com) for more resources or to submit your favorite prayer resource.

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