

How to Practice *Lectio Divina*

First Movement – *Lectio*: Settling & Shimmering

Begin by finding a comfortable position where you can remain alert and yet also relax your body. Bring your attention to your breath and allow a few moments to become centered. If you find yourself distracted at any time, gently return to the rhythm of your breath as an anchor for your awareness. Allow yourself to settle into this moment and become fully present.

Read your selected scripture passage or other sacred text once or twice through slowly and listen for a word or phrase that feels significant right now, is capturing your attention even if you don't know why. Gently repeat this word to yourself in the silence.

Second Movement – *Meditatio*: Savoring & Stirring

Read the text again and then allow the word or phrase which caught your attention in the first movement to spark your imagination. Savor the word or phrase with all of your senses, notice what smells, sounds, tastes, sights, and feelings are evoked. Then listen for what images, feelings, and memories are stirring, welcoming them in, and then savoring and resting into this experience.

Third Movement – *Oratio*: Summoning & Serving

Read the text a third time and then listen for an invitation rising up from your experience of prayer so far. Considering the word or phrase and what it has evoked for you in memory, image, or feeling, what is the invitation? This invitation may be a summons toward a new awareness or action.

Fourth Movement – *Contemplatio*: Slowing & Stilling

Move into a time for simply resting in God and allowing your heart to fill with gratitude for God's presence in this time of prayer. Slow your thoughts and reflections even further and sink into the experience of stillness. Rest in the presence of God and allow yourself to simply be. Rest here for several minutes. Return to your breath if you find yourself distracted.

Closing

Gently connect with your breath again and slowly bring your awareness back to the room, moving from inner experience to outer experience. Give yourself some time of transition between these moments of contemplative depth and your everyday life. Consider taking a few minutes to journal about what you experienced in your prayer.

© Christine Valters Paintner – excerpted from *Lectio Divina—The Sacred Art: Transforming Words and Images into Heart-Centered Prayer* (SkyLight Paths Publishing) – feel free to share this with attribution