

Guidelines for Group Lectio Divina

Lectio divina, or “sacred reading,” is an ancient practice from the Christian tradition, dating from the early medieval era when they studied scripture in monasteries. *Lectio divina* is a slow, quiet, and thoughtful encounter with spiritual texts. Reading and responding to such a beautiful text *three times* provides time and space for a deeper reality to move from our lips and into our minds and hearts.

Based on the image of Jacob’s ladder, a twelfth-century Carthusian monk named Guigo II described four steps of *lectio divina*: *lectio* (reading), *meditatio* (meditation), *oratio* (prayer), and *contemplatio* (contemplation). Through these four steps, the inspired words sink ever deeper into our embodied consciousness and the field of presence that lives within and between us.

- ❖ Make yourself comfortable as you settle in for a time of silence. Breathe deeply to settle your body and your mind, becoming aware of the living field of consciousness that we are sharing together.
- ❖ Listen to the first person read the *lectio divina* text aloud. Stay a few minutes in silence
- ❖ Listen to the second person read the *lectio divina* text aloud, Reflect in silence and listen for a word or phrase that speaks to you in a deep way.
- ❖ Share aloud the word or phrase that spoke to your heart. It is perfectly fine if someone else has already spoken that word or phrase before you. It is also fine if you don’t want to speak.
- ❖ Listen to the third person read the *lectio divina* text aloud. Stay in meditation for the rest of the hour.

*“Listen with the ear of your heart.”
—Rule of St. Benedict, Prologue 1*