



SPIRITUAL FLIGHT NIGHT

Youth explore the spiritual practice of Lectio Divina in this lesson.



ENHANCER OF JOY

Scripture

DURATION

60 minutes

LESSON DEVELOPED BY

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GOAL

An Evening of Group Lectio Divina

TIPS TO PREPARE

- Invite students to the event.
- Practice leading aloud the Lectio Divina meditation.

MATERIALS CHECKLIST

- Name tags and sharpies/pens
 - Votive candles or tea lights
 - Snacks and drinks
 - Print out of Lectio Divina meditation
 - If you want volunteers to read, select them ahead of time and provide them with the readings
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SETTING THE ATMOSPHERE

Set up a sacred space (sanctuary, chapel, fellowship hall) with low light and votive candles or tea lights.

SCRIPTURE FOCUS

Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.



Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
my whole life long.

Purpose

This event allows students to experience the spiritual practice of Lectio Divina in their regular youth group setting.

Objectives

In this session, youth will be lead through a modified Lectio Divina practice.
Youth will be exposed to familiar, bedrock piece of scripture in potentially a new way.
Youth will have the opportunity to debrief with peers and leaders.

Further Study

If students are receptive, consider adding spiritual practices to your youth group calendar more regularly, or creating a secondary group that wants to engage these practices weekly. (See Quest for the Spirit Curriculum)

This exact exercise could be done with other Psalms or John 1:1-18.

Gather

Gather [5 minutes]

Greeting One Another:

- Gather in a space adjacent to the one you've set up for meditation.
- Have name tags out, snack, allow for your regular gathering routine.
- Make sure your adult and student leaders are working the room to greet new and returning members.



- Then gather for your opening prayer and introduction of the session.

Opening Prayer:

"Dear God. We gather tonight to try something new, to see if we can encounter you through the words of your scripture and the words of one another. Help us to be present to you. In your name we pray, Amen."

Introducing the Session:

It is likely many of your participants do not engage in regular spiritual practices like Lectio Divina. Explain what sacred reading is and why it's been a staple of the faithful for centuries. Help your group rise to the challenge of trying something new, something that might stretch them. Encourage them to take it as seriously as possible, that they might encounter something wonderful if they are open to the possibility.

Engage

Engage [30 minutes]

Activity 1: Move Into the Space

- Move into the sacred space in silence.
- Make sure each person has a hand out with the quotes, the scripture and the questions.
- Each person should take or sit near a candle so they can read. Have participants spread out so they have their own personal space and won't distract one another. Have your leaders spread out too.
- Go over the quotes below, either read them or have a few volunteers selected ahead of time to read them.

"Listen with the ear of the heart" The Holy Rule of St. Benedict

"Prayer is when you talk to God; meditation is when you listen to God." Diana Robinson

"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Hebrews 4.12-13

"Read with a vulnerable heart. Expect to be blessed in the reading. Read as one awake, one waiting for the Beloved. Read with reverence." Macrina Wiederkehr

Activity 2: Centering Down

- Have the group find a relaxed sitting position.
- Invite them to close their eyes and focus on their breathing. Cue them through a relaxation

exercise that will help them focus on their breath and let their minds slow down. Consider a progressive muscle relaxation technique where they are prompted to tense muscle groups from their feet to their face and then slowly let them relax, finding each body part heavier and more relaxed than when you began.

- After 5-7 minutes of deep breathing and centering down begin with the rest of the sheet.

Leader: In a minute we will turn together to a story of scripture you may be familiar with. We will read it together.

I will read a portion aloud and stop. See if within that section of text if there is a particular sentence or phrase or single word "lights up" or "rings a bell," if it seems striking or inviting then repeat it back aloud.

If any words or phrases need to be said with a different emphasis or with other words, read those aloud too. Choose as many words or phrases as you'd like. Don't be worried about why you're called to certain words, don't be worried about waiting for someone else to be finished, let the words or phrases layer upon each other and add to the chorus of the ages.

When the chorus within that section of text dies down someone else will pick up the reading where we left off and read for as long as they are moved and we will repeat the lectio exercise and then another person who feels moved will read a section of text. We will continue until we have finished the text and offered back any words or phrases that strike us.

Psalm 23:

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Reflect

Reflect [20 minutes]

Activity 3: Asking the Questions

Once the group Lectio has run its course say "Amen" aloud and then invite participants to get into small groups with a leader to debrief. Have them work through the following questions.

- How did centering down go for you? What was easy and what was hard?
 - What struck you from the reading? Had you heard this text before and if so was it different read this way?
 - Why should we read this scripture today? Does it offer us anything?
 - Individually, reduce the entire psalm down to three words, share them with the group.
 - As a group, can you collectively come up with three words that encapsulates the reading?
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Send Forth

Send Forth [5 minutes]

- Gather the small groups back into a single large circle. Ask if anyone has any reflection for the group at large.
- Close by opening up a prayer where you invite each person to lift up a single word or phrase about their experience as you move around the circle. For instance after cuing the group you open with: "Dear God, thank you for night to experience your Word in a new way. Thank you for the chance to hear scripture from you and from each other. We thank you that through your text you show us.... "green pastures" "you are with me" "mercy" "peace"" Amen.