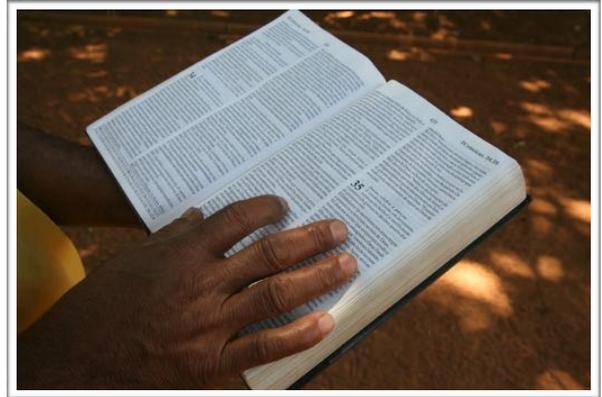


Household Bible Reading with Lectio Divina *by PJ Hobbs*

Why is this faith practice important?

In our often busy and active lives, it can be very difficult to set time aside throughout the week to nurture our faith in our homes, with members of our family or even quietly by ourselves. Slow, intentional reading of the Bible punctuated by times of silence, prayer, and contemplation marks *Lectio Divina* (translated “sacred reading”).

Bible Reading with Lectio Divina is intended for use in homes, regardless of the size and form of the household (e.g., singles, friends, couples, children, teens and parents).



What materials are needed for this practice?

A Bible or the scripture reading printed out. Try to find a translation that is accessible for all members of the group. NIV, NRSV, ESV (just to name a few) are all excellent. Online scripture resources such as Biblegateway.com provide all of these translations.

How to do it

Choose the time: There is no right time of day. Some folks may want to use the early morning, others after the evening meal or before bedtime. Some may discover a routine time, while others prefer various times throughout the days and weeks.

Choose a format: Following a strict format may be helpful for some and less so for others. What is most important is time spent in communion with God by means of a slow reading of Scripture. Some households after a reading of Scripture may move into a time when they are silent and thoughtful, perhaps by engaging in various activities like doing household chores (e.g. dishes, tidying), drawing a picture, or writing a prayer, poem, or note to a loved one. Others may practice *Lectio Divina* during, or following, a household meal.

Read and be silent: While the format on the next page is very useful, it is good to keep in mind that *Lectio Divina* is a spiritual practice with a very simple pattern:

Read a Bible passage... Be silent... Read it again... Be silent... Read it again... Be silent...
Say a prayer.

Resources for this practice

Lectio Divina – A simple guide for group use (may be easily adapted for individual use)

Select a passage from the Bible, often one of the readings to be read in church next Sunday. Realize that the passage will be read four times, so choose accordingly.

- Silence:* Participants sit in silence for approximately one minute.
- First Reading:* A member of the group reads the passage aloud slowly, twice. During the reading, each person identifies a word or a phrase that reaches out, touches, or strikes him or her. Silence is kept for two/three minutes as the word or phrase is pondered. After the silence, each person may voice their word or phrase, without explanation.
- Second Reading:* Another person reads the passage through once. Silence is kept for two/three minutes. After the silence, folks are invited, though no one must, to complete the phrase: “Today I have seen or heard Christ as...”
- Third Reading:* Another person reads the passage again. Silence is kept for two/three minutes. After the silence, folks are invited, though no one must, to complete the phrase: “Today God is calling me to”
- Prayer:* Folks are invited to pray silently for the person sitting to their left.
- Sharing:* Time permitting, a time of open discussion can commence.
- Closing:* Conclude by saying together the Lord’s Prayer or the Doxology, or both.

A Word about the Bible

We believe that the Bible is Sacred Scripture, revealing to us the Word of God. It can bring us comfort, direction, and guidance. It can also challenge us and call us to new ways of being. Sometimes the Bible can be confusing and difficult to understand. With *Lectio Divina* we give ourselves permission to let the Bible be what it is. Questions will undoubtedly surface. If you like, search for the answers. Seek out conversations. Or simply let the questions be.

Learn More

To learn more about *Lectio Divina*, check out www.valyermo.com/ld-art.html

About the author

Peter John Hobbs (PJ) is the Director of Mission for the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa (Canada) and an Instructor in D.Min Studies at the Virginia Theological Seminary. PJ and Diane are raising and/or launching three daughters: Hannah, Mary Grace, and Rachel.