

Divine Reading – A Lesson Plan on Lectio Divina

This Divine Reading lesson plan on Lectio Divina will help youth understand the importance of prayerfully reading the Bible to understand how God is speaking to each of us personally through His word.

For background material to prepare for this lesson plan, read the article on [Lectio Divina](#).

Opening Game for Lectio Divina Lesson Plan

Start by playing Charades. Use gospel stories as the choices.

Follow up with a couple of questions:

- Do you know some of the Gospel stories so well that you find your mind wandering off when they are read? Why do you think this happens?
- Do you think God is speaking to you through Scripture? Or is it more like watching a movie or reading a book?

As Catholics, we believe that God uses scripture to speak to us. That is why the first part of Mass, called the Liturgy of the Word, is dedicated to the reading and interpretation of scripture.

We also know that Jesus paid a lot of attention to the Old Testament, which was the whole Jewish scripture. He frequently quotes it and refers to it.

Scripture Reading for Divine Reading

Read the Gospel:

[Luke 1:1-4; 4:14-21](#) (Jesus Reads from the Prophet Isaiah) – the Gospel Reading for the [3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year C](#)

Since many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as those who were eyewitnesses from the beginning and ministers of the word have handed them down to us, I too have decided, after investigating everything accurately anew, to write it down in an orderly sequence for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may realize the certainty of the teachings you have received.

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news of him spread throughout the whole region. He taught in their synagogues and was praised by all.

He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet

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Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind

to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.

Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him. He said to them, "Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."

[Luke 1:1-4; 4:14-21](#)

Discussion about Lectio Divina

This reading starts out with the first few lines of the Gospel of Luke. St. Luke explains that he has carefully compiled an account of the life of Jesus Christ. Why? In order to strengthen our faith. We are meant to study the Gospel to grow in understanding.

Then we jump ahead to Jesus in his hometown synagogue. This would be the equivalent of his parish. Jesus was a faithful Jew. We are told he went to "church" every Sabbath. He would have heard readings from Scripture. And he would have considered what they meant.

But it seems he isn't just looking at scripture from a historical context. He doesn't just talk about what this passage from Isaiah would have meant to the people of the time when it was written. Instead he is considering how it applies to his own life.

So in this gospel, Jesus provides a model for how we should read scripture. The Bible is not just a bunch of stories from long ago. Through scripture, God is speaking to us now, and giving us instructions for today.

There is a method of reading scripture called Lectio Divina, or Divine Reading. This provides a framework for more than just reading Bible stories. It helps us read scripture as a form of prayer, listening for God's voice in the words. Here are the basic steps:

For more detailed explanation of the steps below, see the article on [Lectio Divina](#). There is a [printable handout](#) there which you should give to them to follow along.

1. First put yourself in God's presence. Slow down your breathing and try to quiet your thoughts. Ask the Holy Spirit to join you. Simply saying "Come Holy Spirit" is a good start.
2. Read the scripture passage. Read for the whole story. Then read it again, even more slowly. See if a particular word or phrase stands out. If not, try reading it again, even more slowly. When you get to something that catches your attention, stop.
3. Think about the word or phrase which caught your attention. Let it roll around in your mind. Maybe you know why you were drawn to it. Maybe not. If you get distracted, try to decide if your distraction is somehow related to the reading. If so follow it, if not, go back to thinking about the word or phrase.

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4. Listen to God. Is the word or phrase significant to your life right now? What sort of emotions are being stirred up? Is there something here which is making me feel close to God? Or do I feel a distance?
5. Contemplate what God might be calling you to. Perhaps you are being called to make a change. Or maybe you are being called to a deeper sense of gratitude or joy. If appropriate, make a commitment to take action based on what you are hearing.
6. Close with a prayer of thankfulness with this time spent with God.

If time permits, let them pray with scripture immediately using the [printed guide](#). Have some Gospel passages printed out. They can all do the same or you can print a variety and let them pick one they are drawn to. Here are some suggestions:

- [The Healing of Bartimaeus, the Blind Beggar](#)
- [You Are the Light of the World](#)
- [The Judgement of the Nations](#)
- [The Good Samaritan](#)
- [The Prodigal Son / Forgiving Father](#)

Reflection Questions for Lesson Plan on Lectio Divina

- Can you think of a time when a Scripture reading really had an impact on you?
- Do you think it might be possible to read the same passage a year later and be focused on a different word or phrase? Why?

Challenge for Divine Reading

This week, pray with scripture at least once using this practice. Set aside at least 15 minutes when you won't be interrupted. You can pick a reading you are interested in or just go with one of the [readings of the day](#).

Prayer

Conclude by offering petitions and praying [this prayer](#) asking God our Father to send the Holy Spirit to enlighten us through Scripture.