DOING LECTIO AS A GROUP

Jan Johnson [www.JanJohnson.org](http://www.JanJohnson.org) *Meeting God in Scripture*

Here’s how I do this when I work with classes and how I’ve outlined the steps in *Meeting God in Scripture*.

1. Study the passage first. Are there any words people don’t understand? Any cultural gaps? How does fit with the context of the Bible book? With the entire Bible?

(Reflect section of *Meeting God in Scripture*)

1. Help participants settle in. Americans/Westerners tend to do two things when they are quiet: fall asleep, chase a wandering mind. To help them, try these things:

* Ask them to take a deep breath and set aside distractions.
* Light a candle and place it in the center of the group.
* Use the “Be still” exercise we have used.
* Ask a simple question related to the main idea of the passage. (Refocus and Relax of *Meeting God in Scripture*)
* With a seasoned group, begin with five minutes of silence.

1. Leader reads aloud the passage. Short Pause. Read the passage aloud again. (*lectio*)
2. Leader asks meditative questions, such as these, but modify as you think the Spirit leads (Reflect on the invitation, Reflect a little further in *Meeting God in Scripture).* (*meditatio*)

*Narrative passage:*

**REFLECT on the Invitation**

Read the passage aloud again. Picture what the scene might look like, as if you were a movie director planning a movie. Hear the words clearly in your mind.

* As you watch the action unfold, what do you see?
* What moment or idea in the story or probably thought or feeling by Sarah or Abram stands out to you and resonates with you?

Participants can either write down their word or phrase, the connection and the prayer OR hold onto it within themselves

* Why do you think that is? What significance might this have for you?

**REFLECT a little further**

* How is your life touched today by this passage?
* Is there some idea, feeling or intention you need to embrace from it? If so, what?
* What might God be inviting you to be or know or understand or feel or even do?

Be open to the quiet, but don't feel pressured to come up with an answer.

*Discourse/teaching passage or psalm*

**REFLECT on the Invitation**

a little further son?race more? Perhaps God is offering you an invitation in this passage to enlarge your understanding about something. What might that be? Read the passage again and then sit quietly for a few minutes, pondering these questions:

* What word or phrase or idea stands out to you?

Participants can either write down their word or phrase, the connection and the prayer OR hold onto it within themselves

* Why do you think that is?

**REFLECT a little further**

(You may wish to read the passage again.) Then consider:

* Is there something God might be inviting you to think about, even dream about? What kind of possibilities might God be offering you?
* With what feelings do you walk away from the passage?

Be open to the quiet, but don't feel pressured to come up with an answer.

Optional: Read the passage aloud.

4) Ask participants to take a few minutes to tell God how they responded to the idea in this passage that stood out to them. They may wish to thank God for this invitation and a future of possibilities. (*oratio*)

Optional: Read the passage aloud.

5) Invite participants to soak in the presence of God, perhaps to worship God or to bask in what God has told them, to simply “hang out” with God. (*contemplatio*)

Group Reflection

6) Reconvene as a group with group participation.

Small group guidelines apply as with other groups.

**Be an active listener.**

Listen without trying to figure out what someone is going to say (mind reading).

Avoid cross-talk: interrupting, talking to others while someone else is sharing.

**Focus on what God is saying to you *about you*.**

Discuss areas where you need to change, not what others are struggling with.

**Accept where others are in their journey.**

Do not try to “fix” people’s problems and don’t give advice to others unless it is requested.

**Be Compassionate and Non-Judgmental.**

Don’t criticize or look down on others—even if only in your mind.

Avoid anything that communicates that crying is not okay.

Always maintain confidentiality: Do not repeat what is said in the group.

**Let Go of Control and Hidden Agendas.**

Be careful not to dominate the discussion.

It’s preferable that everyone participate, but it’s also OK to simply say “Pass” at times.

**Practice and Encourage Honesty and Openness.**

Be as honest and vulnerable as the safety level of the group allows.

Avoid presenting an image of looking “okay” and “together.”

**Respect confidentiality.**

Do not repeat to others what is said in this group.

Do not discuss with other participants later what someone said in the group.

7) Ask participants to share the word or phrase, whatever else they wish to share, the prayer if they wish.

8) If using *Meeting God in Scripture,* ask participants to talk about their "incarnatio" if something has come to them.

If you have a particularly contemplative group, you may wish to do modify it this way:

After asking them to listen for the word or phrase that stands out to them, ask them to share their word or phrase aloud with each other with eyes closed, not in a discussion or sharing sort of way.

Have them return to their contemplative space and then do the same with why they think the word or phrase stood out to them.

During oratio/respond, you may wish to have them pray for each other.

If the group is not used to contemplative things, this will turn out to be a discussion instead of meditation, which is why I find the earlier method works much better.