

# Ignatian Meditation- with Scripture

## Overview

Ignatian meditation is a mediation method that uses visualization and the imagination and is based on the style of prayer that St Ignatius of Loyola used in his spiritual exercises.

St Ignatius lived in Spain in the 16th century and founded the [Jesuit order of priests](#). He believed that our imagination can help us to enter into the events of Jesus' life.

Take a scripture passage and then imagine you have the opportunity to dialogue with the teacher in the story (God, Jesus, Isaiah, Paul, James etc.). This can be about what has just been taught or said: be it a law, a parable, an aphorism, a judgment, or an exhortation, seeking further clarification or meaning.

You imagine, during the meditation, what you would ask further and say, and even what the speaker would say in return!

## Preparation

- Assume the posture for meditation. (Sitting upright; feet on the floor; body relaxed and comfortable)
- Begin to regulate your breathing to slow your metabolism and empty your mind of distracting thoughts.
- Recite your mantra prayer: Maranatha ("Come Lord Jesus"); or "Speak to me, Word of God"; "Speak Lord, I am listening"; or one of your own.
- **Listening/Reading**

When you are ready, either listen to or read a chosen text from the Sacred Scriptures. This should not be long - a short paragraph is best. Read it (or have it read to you) slowly, pausing slightly at the end of each sentence.

Listen to the reading for anything that interests you, challenges you, excites you, puzzles you, even angers or upsets you.

## **Imagination**

Think and formulate some questions, comments, statements you would make in response to the speaker in the text. What would you ask, say, challenge, protest about?

Imagine that you are 'in the story' and that you have the opportunity to be with the speaker of the text: be it Jesus, or St Paul, or one of the prophets, or God.

In your imagination, ask the speaker about what they meant, or who they intended this teaching for, or whether it applies to you, or what impact it would have on you.

State your opinions, feelings, attitudes, emotions on hearing this text. Do you agree with it? Can you accept it? How does it make you feel? Is it asking something too hard? Is it relevant for people today?

Hear what the speaker, in their wisdom, might reply. Recognise that what God wants and what you want may be different. What is God asking of you through this speaker? Hear that God is patient and that God loves you as you are.

## **Pray**

Ask God's help, in prayer, for whatever you need.

For the last time, read or listen to the passage and at the end, rest in silence.

Return to your breathing and your mantra for a few minutes, clearing your mind of all thoughts. You may wish to turn the word or phrase you have been reflecting on into a mantra.

## **Journal**

At the end of the meditation, you might like to spend a few minutes journaling whatever comes to mind; or go for a walk, reflecting on the experience, or noting any reflections or responses you had to the text.

You may wish to write a prayer to use on other occasions, or even construct a mantra from the word or phrase you heard today with the ear of your heart.

Source:

<https://catholicidentity.bne.catholic.edu.au/prayer/SitePages/Ignatian-meditation.aspx>

## Visio Divina Suggestions

- ▶ Prepare your heart – close your eyes, breathe, clear your mind, and ask God to enter into this time of prayer with you. Ask God to speak to you through this image.
- ▶ Open your eyes and spend a minute gazing at the image. Let your eyes pause and focus on the whole image and then perhaps the part of the image they are drawn to. What do you hear/feel God saying to your heart through this image? What thoughts or questions is this image raising?
- ▶ Prayer – Respond to God through words, images, emotions, questions, and thoughts that are now on your heart.
- ▶ Rest and Reflect in God. As you again gaze upon the image, rest in God's presence.

So <https://beingbenedictine.com/2023/03/04/lectio-and-visio-divina-during-lent/>



## Shepherds Field Nativity Painting

A painting at the Franciscan Shepherd's field church in Beit Sahour in Bethlehem district.

### Guided Imagination

Directions:

Project the image of the *Shepherds in the Field* Nativity Painting

*Direct students to study the painting. Ask them to notice all the details:*

Mary's presentation of Jesus, Joseph's posture, the two animals next to Joseph peering over the fence, the kneeling man, the boy with a lamb, the man playing an instrument, the doves and earthenware on the top right, the light piercing the darkness, the stars and halos.

*Ask the students to pick one of the characters, animals or objects.*

Which do you feel drawn to?

*Once they have chosen their person or object, ask students to close their eyes. Direct the students to take three deep breaths. Direct them to Breathe in, Breathe out. Breathe in, Breathe out. Breathe in, Breathe out.*

Imagine yourself as part of the painting. You are in a cave. There is a chill in the air. Although surrounded by people and animals it is very quiet. Deeply peaceful. There is a feeling of excitement and wonderment in the air. Allow yourself to drop into the quiet and peace of the scene.

*Pause then proceed slowly with the following questions. Pause between each question so students have a minute to imagine the scene for themselves.*

Who are you in the scene?

What is it like to see the scene from your perspective?

What do you see?

What are you thinking?

What are you feeling? Are you feeling excited, scared, tentative?

If you could say something, what would it be?

If you could ask Mary a question, what would you ask?

If you could say something to the baby Jesus what would you say?

*Give students a few moments to remain in the meditation. A clue to when the students are becoming restless is they will begin adjusting in their seats. When about 4-5 students begin to get restless say ...*

Begin to bring your awareness back to your present surroundings. Taking all the time that you need, only when you feel ready, open your eyes.

Process Ideas: Have students write a short paragraph about their experience.

Process it as a class. Some possible questions might be:

Were you able to enter into the cave with Jesus?

Which character, animal or object did you choose?

Why?

What was your character thinking?

What question did you ask Mary or Jesus?

Did Mary or Jesus respond?