



ILLUMINATING ADVENT

Illustrating Scripture using Lectio Divina in the Season of Advent



Welcome to the season of Advent!

Church of the Incarnation has prepared this brief guide to illustrating scripture for the season of Advent using the practice of Lectio Divina.

This guide is, ideally, meant to be used within a community of faith or with members of your household. Others help us to see dimensions of faith that we haven't experienced, ourselves, which has a lovely broadening effect on our spiritual lives. Not to mention, we are more likely to commit to a practice when we know others will be joining us. Together we can share and complement each other's experiences of dwelling with God in scripture.

To that end, I invite you to join with the Incarnation community during Advent as we take up this practice together. Information on how to join us by Zoom is available at incarnationatx.org.

This guide can also be used for your personal spiritual practice during Advent. If using on your own, I encourage you to read the passages of scripture out loud at each step of the process so you can hear the words, in addition to reading them.

However you prepare yourself to welcome the Christ child as Christmas, I pray that you will be richly blessed as you await his coming.

Yours in Christ,
Brin+

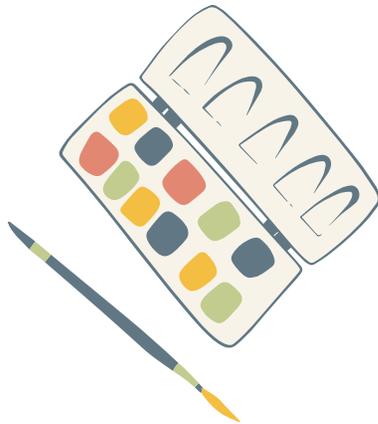
LECTIO DIVINA

Lectio [lec.ti.o] *v.*

to read, esp. to read aloud

Divina [di.vin.a] *adj.*

of, from, or like God; divine, holy, sacred



Lectio Divina, or sacred reading, is a spiritual practice from the Early Church of reading the Bible not as a static text but as a living word with sacred and spiritual meaning. Through the four-part process of reading, meditating, praying, and contemplating a short passage of scripture, the reader is drawn into a vibrant and multifaceted experience of dwelling with God.

Add to this ancient practice the ordinary act of sketching, doodling, or drawing your thoughts, and scripture is further illuminated by adding color, imagery, and texture as you illustrate what you hear, imagine, and feel.

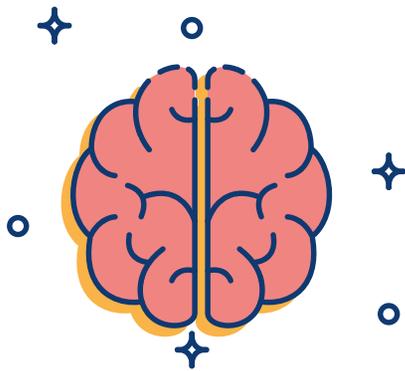
This guide provides one scripture passage a week from the Advent lectionary as well as a blank space to illustrate the passage as you move through the process of reading, meditating, praying, and contemplating how God is speaking to you through it.

In addition to this guide, you will need some pens, pencils, colored pencils, crayons, markers, or whatever you like to draw or write with. This time is about letting God's word take shape in your imagination; it's not about creating a masterpiece or demonstrating your artistic skills (or lack thereof) so be free with your creative tools and let the Holy Spirit guide you!

THE STEPS

*Reading seeks,
meditation finds,
prayer asks,
contemplation feels.*

Guigo the Carthusian



Begin and end your time with prayer.

Step 1 | Lectio / Read

Listen to the passage read the first time. On the outside border of your page, write down all the words or passages that stick out to you. Leave some room along your border to fill in more words at the end of the exercise.

Step 2 | Meditatio / Reflect

Listen to the passage read a second time. This time listen for a single word or phrase that catches your attention. Write that word or phrase, or an image that represents it, in the center of your page. Spend several minutes illuminating your word, phrase, or image by embellishing the letters, drawing images that illustrate the word, or just writing the word(s) several times in different colors or styles.

Step 3 | Oratio / Pray / Respond

Listen to the passage read a third time. This time start to make connections to the word. This is where we enter a conversation with God through the scripture, asking God to help you see how this passage is connected to you, personally. Spend time drawing all the connections that can be made by illustrating those, too.

Step 4 | Contemplatio / Contemplate

Listen to the passage read a fourth and final time. As you listen to the scripture and look at what you have drawn or written, identify those thoughts and feelings that surfaced during this time and simply offer them to God. Write or illustrate these thoughts and feelings along the remaining border of your page.

THE LORD BE WITH YOU



As you begin your practice, invite the Holy Spirit to enliven your mind and your heart as you seek an encounter with the living God.

Come Holy Spirit and fill the hearts of your faithful people, kindle in us the fire of your love, send forth your Spirit upon us that we might be made new as you renew the face of the earth through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

At the end of your time, use one of these prayers to ask for Christ's continued presence in your life.

For Quiet Confidence

O God of peace, who hast taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and confidence shall be our strength: By the might of thy Spirit lift us, we pray thee, to thy presence, where we may be still and know that thou art God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For the Presence of Christ

Lord Jesus, stay with us, for evening is at hand and the day is past; be our companion in the way, kindle our hearts, and awaken hope, that we may know you as you are revealed in Scripture and the breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of your love. Amen.

A Prayer of Self-Dedication

Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to thee, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly thine, utterly dedicated unto thee; and then use us, we pray thee, as thou wilt, and always to thy glory and the welfare of thy people; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Illuminating Advent

Week 1

The Book of Mark, Chapter 13

Jesus said, “In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

Illuminating Advent *Week 2*

The Book of Isaiah, Chapter 40

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries out:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

Illuminating Advent

Week 3

The Book of John, Chapter 1

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?”

He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, “I am not the Messiah.” And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” He answered, “No.” Then they said to him, “Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?”

He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’” as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, “Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?” John answered them, “I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.”

Illuminating Advent

Week 4

The Book of Luke, Chapter 1

The angel Gabriel came to Mary and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you. Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

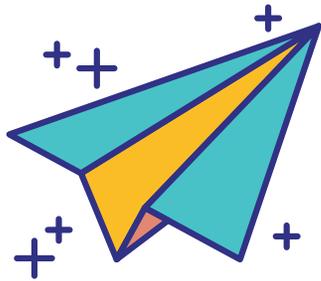
Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.

Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.”

RESOURCES

*Lord, make us
instruments of
your peace.*

St. Francis of Assisi



To learn more about the practice of Lectio Divina, visit one of these helpful sites:

A comprehensive guide to the origins and current use of Lectio Divina, <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/253799/1-What-is-Lectio-Divina.pdf>

Wikipedia has an informative overview of the history of Lectio Divina, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lectio_Divina

For a book length treatment of the topic, [Lectio Divina: Renewing the Ancient Practice of Praying the Scriptures](#), by M. Basil Pennington is very thoughtful.

To learn more about creative or artistic engagement with scripture, check out Sybil Macbeth's many great resources, including her book, [Praying in Color](#), at <https://prayingincolor.com/>. Our thanks to her work for its inspiration for this guide.

Macbeth's own guide to using Lectio Divina to pray through scripture is available here, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/oB2X6uTHtFUruWDlIcXluVmFfLUo/view>