

**FRESH**

**OUTLOOK**  
BIBLE STUDIES

**BREATHE**

SAMPLE



**THE PRESBYTERIAN OUTLOOK**

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# Session 1

## Heart

### Leader Prep:

Read: [“How to Lead Lectio Divina Groups”](#); [“The Christian Contemplative Tradition”](#); [“Practice: Lectio Divina”](#)

Watch: [“What is Lectio Divina?”](#); [“How to Practice Lectio Divina - Tiahna”](#); [“Be still and know that I am God”](#)

### Supplies:

Nametags, pens  
Candle, lighter  
Contemplative music  
Prepared newsprint, marker  
Bibles or Bible apps  
Media clip and equipment

nametags, pens

### 1. Prepare

Welcome everyone according to your community’s practice. Pass out nametags and pens.

Invite participants to pair with another person.

Ask pairs to introduce themselves. Have them name their understandings of or experience with “spiritual practices” and any experience when they felt connected with God.

Ask everyone to introduce their partners to the group.

*Talking point: “Breathe” introduces different spiritual practices over four gatherings. Spiritual practices or habits help us see, hear and feel the work of the Spirit in calling us to a deeper understanding of who we are in Christ and what we are called to do.*

*Talking point: The ancient words for “breath” and “breathing” are closely connected to the words “wind” and “spirit.” Spiritual habits help us connect with the breath of God, the Holy Spirit.*

candle  
lighter  
contemplative music

## 2. Breathe in, breathe out

Light a candle. Invite the group to a time of prayer and breathing. Play contemplative music.

Ask participants to sit in a comfortable position with their eyes closed and hearts open to the movement of the Holy Spirit. Read [John 20:21-22](#).

For three to five minutes, lead the group in spiritual reading:

**Choose a simple prayer, such as “Spirit, come.”**

**Inhale deeply while silently meditating on your prayer’s first half (“Spirit”).**

**Exhale slowly while meditating on the second half (“come”).**

Continue the breath prayer for three to five minutes.

prepared newsprint  
media clip  
media equipment

## 3. Introduce *lectio divina* (spiritual reading)

Write the words “read,” “reflect,” “respond” and “rest” on newsprint. Post the newsprint sheet.

*Talking point: Lectio divina is an ancient Christian way of prayerfully reading and rereading Scripture, helping us attend to the Holy Spirit’s inspiration. It is related to the Hebrew method of studying Scripture called haggadah, “learning by the heart.” We listen to God’s word “with the ears of our hearts.” It has four steps: reading, reflecting, responding, and resting. Some add a fifth step, action.*

Watch [“How to Practice Lectio Divina - Tiahna”](#) or [“What is Lectio Divina?”](#)

Discuss:

- How do you feel about *lectio divina* after watching the video?
- What challenges/discoveries do you anticipate?
- What questions do you have?
- How can we assure each other that this is a safe space to practice *lectio divina*?

Bible or Bible app  
contemplative music

## 4. Practice *lectio divina* (spiritual reading)

*Talking point: Lectio divina is not Bible study. It’s a conversation with God through the text, opening ourselves to listen and respond to the Spirit’s promptings. Spiritual reading is best practiced when we listen with empathy and grace without judging or advising each other.*

Play contemplative music. Prompt the group to inhale and exhale. Ask the Holy Spirit to send the Scripture reading from your ears and minds into your hearts.

**Silence your body and mind.**

**Read [Genesis 1:1-2; 2:7](#) aloud slowly. How does the Scripture read you? Allow silent reflection. Prompt the group to inhale and exhale.**

Read Genesis 1:1-2; 2:7 a second time slowly. What is God saying to you? What words, phrases, or ideas inspire your heart? Observe silence. Prompt the group to inhale and exhale.

Read Genesis 1:1-2; 2:7 a third time slowly. What can you say to God in response? Respond with an unspoken prayer from the heart. Allow silence. Prompt the group to inhale and exhale.

Read Genesis 1:1-2; 2:7 a fourth time slowly. Rest in the Spirit's presence. Allow silence. Prompt the group to inhale and exhale.

Close by inviting the participants to open their eyes and exhale.

## 5. Assess

Discuss:

- How did the *lectio divina*/spiritual reading speak to your heart?
- How would you describe your connection to Scripture through *lectio divina*?
- Is spiritual reading better or worse/alike or different from how you usually read the Bible? Why?
- Did you experience any challenges/discoveries during the spiritual reading?
- What conversion of the heart is Christ asking of you?
- In what ways has the Holy Spirit's inspiring your heart to action?

*Talking point: Prayer is a relationship. Lectio divina is a way to cultivate our relationship with God. God does not require us to strive or be successful, just present and open to the Spirit's presence.*

## 6. Take *lectio divina* with you

Invite participants to brainstorm ways to take the experience of *lectio divina* into their daily experiences. Possible application:

**Choose a word or phrase from Genesis 1:1-2; 2:7 or John 20:21-22.**

**Write the words in a place where you'll see them frequently.**

**Take a picture of the words and set it as your social media cover photo.**

**Memorize the chosen words and carry them with you.**

**Repeat them to yourself between your daily activities and tasks.**

*media clip  
media equipment*

## 7. Closing and prayer

Invite anyone with drawing or writing experience to help lead session 2.

Watch "[Be still and know that I am God](#)" and follow the prompts.

Prompt the group to inhale and exhale. Close with prayer:

**Holy One, thank you for breathing the Spirit into us. Enliven us with the breath of heaven and your abiding presence. Inspire in us good works that glorify you and add good to the world. Amen.**