

## A few different methods on praying Scripture for groups



### THE SAINT ANDREW'S METHOD

#### Step One: Listening for the Gentle touch of Christ the Word (*the Literal Sense*)

1. One person reads aloud (twice) the passage of scripture, as others are attentive to some segment that is especially meaningful to them.
2. Silence for 1-2 minutes. Each hears and silently repeats a word or phrase that attracts.
3. Sharing aloud: [A word or phrase that has attracted each person]. A simple statement of one or a few words. No elaboration.

#### Step Two: How Christ the Word Speaks to Me (*the Allegorical Sense*)

1. Second reading of same passage by another person.
2. Silence for 2-3 minutes. Reflect on "Where does the content of this reading touch my life today?"
3. Sharing aloud: Briefly: "I hear, I see..."

#### Step Three: What Christ the Word Invites Me to Do (*the Moral Sense*)

1. Third reading by still another person.
2. Silence for 2-3 minutes. Reflect on "I believe that God wants me to... today/this week."
3. Sharing aloud: at somewhat greater length the results of each one's reflection. [Be especially aware of what is shared by the person to your right.]
4. After full sharing, pray for the person to your right.

*Note:* Anyone may "pass" at any time. If instead of sharing with the group you prefer to pray silently, simply state this aloud and conclude your silent prayer with Amen.

# **THE MESTERS METHOD**

Process proposed by Frei Carlos Mesters, CEBI, Brazil.

## **Step One: Gathering, Prayer**

1. Gathering and brief interaction among the participants.
2. Opening prayer, calling upon the Light of the Holy Spirit.

## **Step Two: Reading the Text**

1. Read the passage slowly and attentively.
2. Remain in silence so the Word may soak into us.
3. The text is repeated by everyone, to try to recollect everything that was read.

## **Step Three: The meaning of the Text in Itself**

1. Share impressions and doubts about the meaning of the text.
2. If necessary, read again for everyone's clarification.
3. A moment of silence to assimilate all that was heard.

## **Step Four: The Meaning for Us**

1. "Ruminate" on the text and discover its for today.
2. Apply the meaning of the text to the situation in which we are living.
3. Extend the meaning, bringing it together with other texts of the Bible.
4. Situate the text in the plan of God that is being carried out in history.

## **Step Five: Prayer Based on the Text**

1. Read the text again, very attentively.
2. Observe a moment of silence to prepare to respond to God.
3. Pray the text, sharing received insight and strength.

## **Step Six: Contemplation, Commitment**

1. Express the commitment that the lectio divina suggests to us.
2. Summarize everything in a phrase to take with you throughout the day.

## **Step Seven: A Psalm**

1. Look for a psalm that expresses everything that was alive in the encounter.
2. Conclude the meeting by reciting the psalm.

# **THE LUMKO METHOD**

Inspired by Luke 24:13-25, the Emmaus disciples. Elaborated by the Lumko Missionary Institute, Delmenville, South Africa.

## **Step One: Let Us Invite the Lord**

The facilitator enlists someone from the group beforehand to “invite the Lord” with an extemporaneous prayer; those who want to may also join in with his or her prayer.

## **Step Two: Let Us Read the Text**

1. The facilitator indicates the chapter and verses of the text and waits until everyone has found it.
2. The facilitator invites someone to read the text aloud.
3. Brief period of silence and reflection.

## **Step Three: Let Us Tarry over the Text**

1. The participants (who so desire) read aloud a word or brief phrase that seems significant to them.
2. After every word or phrase, all remain in silence for several seconds, so as to repeat to themselves two or three times what they have heard, allowing themselves to be penetrated by that word.
3. The entire passage is read aloud one more time, very slowly.

## **Step Four: Let Us Keep Silence**

The facilitator invites the group to keep silence to open themselves up to God.

## **Step Five: Let Us Communicate with One Another What Has Impacted Us**

The participants share freely what impressed and moved them. They seek to relate the Word they heard in Holy Scripture to their own experiences.

## **Step Six: Let Us Talk of What the Lord Wants from Us**

1. The group confronts everyday problems and offers concrete suggestions to resolve them.
2. If the group so wishes, they can establish some goals to accomplish, being always diligent to focus on what is doable. These goals will be evaluated at the next meeting.
3. Call for moments of silence during this step so there is no pressure.

4. In some cases it is preferable as a practical matter to leave each one to carry out this step.

#### Step Seven: Let Us Pray

1. The facilitator invites everyone to pray.
2. The participants make spontaneous prayers of thanks and supplication.
3. The meeting is ended with a formal, recited prayer.

## **THE VASTERAS METHOD**

Named for the place where it was first practiced.

#### Step One: Invocation of the Holy Spirit

#### Step Two: Reading of the Biblical Text

#### Step Three: Individual Reflection

Each participant individually reflects on the text. To this end they are to write three symbols on the text:

1. A question mark: beside of the phrases that were not understood, those that leave a question open and are doubtful or unclear.
2. An exclamation point: beside a particular phrase or part of the text that brings to mind an important idea.
3. An arrow: where one has been touched from an existential point of view.

#### Step Four: Sharing

The participants together confront the entire passage, verse by verse, sharing what they have done. Respect everyone's freedom to decide what they want to share with others.

#### Step Five: Prayer

A common prayer is offered based on what has been shared.

# THE BLUDESCH METHOD

Named for the place where it was first practiced.

## Step One: Prayer

The facilitator introduces the lectio with a brief prayer.

## Step Two: Reading

A participant reads, attentively and clearly, the chosen text, in such a manner that everyone can follow well. The others ought to listen and not read.

## Step Three: Reflection

Everyone silently begins to reflect on the text, trying to respond in writing to five questions:

1. ***What is the central affirmation of the text?*** This question requires one to reflect on what is essential, on the true message of the text, avoiding getting away from what is essential.
2. ***What is it that I do not understand?*** This question orients a more precise reading and keeps one from skipping over things in the text that seem difficult.
3. ***What connections do I see within the text?*** This question takes into consideration the context. Alternative questions: What comes before this text? What follows it? Where does one find comparable texts in the Bible? Where do the most important words or ideas of the text reappear in the Bible?
4. ***What within the text touches me in a special way? What in it is difficult for me to accept?*** This question refers to feelings. The participants ought to be encouraged to express openly their sense of agreement or rejection, of admiration or confusion, without being reprimanded in virtue of a misplaced reverential fear toward the Sacred Text.
5. ***What can I concretely do?*** This question refers to the possible concrete consequences.

## Step Four: Interaction

The group interacts as a community.

1. People share their responses, one response at a time.
2. Be available and attentive in listening, to discover together what the Spirit of God wants to say.
3. Avoid arguments or rambling talk of any kind.

## Step Five: Prayer

Enter into prayer.

1. Contemplate an image (whether a billboard, a slide, etc.) that underlines the essential element of the text. The contemplation is carried out in silence.
2. Invite people to participate in the prayer.

## THE SEVIN METHOD

Presented by Marc Sevin, who recommends it especially as “family Bible reading.”

### Step One: A Short Time of Prayer

Begin with a short prayer of praise and petition, to signify that one is going to make a faithful reading and that one is listening for a testimony of faith.

### Step Two: Reading

Read the chosen text slowly and aloud.

### Step Three: Meditation

Based on two questions:

1. What do I consider the main point in this passage? Indicate the words or the expressions.
2. What are the faith convictions that are expressed there?

### Step Four: Review the Reading

Reread the text slowly in order to ask yourself afterward:

1. Are there words, images, characters of the text that can help me express my own faith convictions and that are Good News for me?
2. For an Old Testament text: How would Jesus have prayed based on this text? How is it taken up again in the preaching of Jesus?
3. For a New Testament text: How does this text express faith in Jesus?

### Step Five: Closing Prayer

End with a brief prayer where the words, images, and expressions that have especially called attention are taken up again.