

Lectio Divina

Lectio divina, which is Latin for “divine reading,” is a traditional Catholic practice of reading, meditating, and praying Sacred Scripture. It has four distinct steps:

Step 1: *Lectio* (reading)

Begin with the Sign of the Cross, and ask the Holy Spirit to assist you in this time of prayer. Next, read a selected passage from Scripture slowly and intentionally. If possible, read the passage aloud. Listen to the words as if God were speaking to you directly, and immerse yourself in the passage. If you wish, read the passage a second time.

Step 2: *Meditatio* (meditation)

The second step is to meditate on the passage you just read. Focus on the words or verses that spoke to you or struck you during the reading. Like the Virgin Mary (see Luke 2:19), ponder the Word of God in your heart, seeking to encounter the Lord and discern what he might be saying to you.

Step 3: *Oratio* (prayer)

In prayer, we not only speak to God but listen to what he is saying. You can use a formal prayer from the tradition of the Church, saying the words slowly and paying attention to what the prayer is telling you about God and about your relationship with him. Or you may pray in your own words, asking God for greater understanding of the Scripture passage that you just read. Ask him if he wants you to make changes in your life or in your faith journey.

Step 4: *Contemplatio* (contemplation)

Contemplation is resting in God’s presence and allowing him to arrange your thoughts and prayer. Let God enter and change your heart and mind according to his will.

Like anything new, *lectio divina* may take a little practice. However, if you practice it faithfully and give God a few minutes of your time each day, you will start to see a real difference in your spiritual life.

QUESTIONS?

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10 Tips for Getting More Out of Bible Study

- Pick a time and commit to it.**
The best time is when you can give it your full attention and avoid distractions.
- Pick a good Bible.**
The Bible you use should be a Catholic Bible with all seventy-three books.
- Use supplemental books.**
Have other books, such as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, that will help you understand the Bible and how it is interpreted by the Church.
- Pray.**
Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to what God wants to say to you through his Word.
- Have a plan.**
Decide what you will read each day and stick to it.
- Get the background.**
The Bible was written between 2,000 and 3,600 years ago, so it is good to know the historical and cultural context of the times it was written.
- Less is more.**
Part of your plan should be to set aside a reasonable amount of time each day. This is more about quality than quantity. If you try to read too much every day, then chances are you will not stick to the plan.
- Periods are there for a reason.**
Stop at the end of each sentence and think about what you read and what God wants to say to you.
- Keep a journal.**
Write down questions you have and things that strike you as you read.
- Put the Bible down.**
The Bible is intended to form us so that we can live out its message. Do not spend all your time reading about God instead of living for God.

Features of the Bible Timeline for Teens

- Period** → The Bible Timeline is divided into twelve distinct time periods that make the narrative easy to follow and understand.
- Narrative Books** → The fourteen narrative books of the Bible present the fifty Key Events that provide an outline of salvation history.
- Supplemental Books** → The fifty-nine supplemental books, placed into their correct historical context, support the fourteen narrative books and give additional information.
- Key Events** → The highlighted events in each time period are the ones that are essential in understanding the story of salvation.
- Dates** → These are the approximate dates of each time period.
- World Power** → The primary world power during the time period provides context and shows how the nation of Israel fits into the larger story of ancient world history.



The Six Covenants

God made covenants with his people. In each of the six major covenants in the Bible, God gave a sign to help us remember his promise.

One Holy Couple The first covenant

In the beginning, God created a covenant of marriage between a man and a woman—One Holy Couple. The Sabbath day of rest was given to Adam and Eve as a sign to rest and commune with God. (**Genesis 2:3**)

One Holy Family The second covenant

After the Flood, God created the world anew and made a covenant with Noah and his family—One Holy Family. The rainbow was a sign of this covenant. God promised that he would never again flood the whole earth. Noah and his family loved God and filled the earth with children and grandchildren. (**Genesis 9**)

One Holy Tribe The third covenant

God promised Abraham that he would have as many descendants as there are stars in the sky, and land to dwell in—One Holy Tribe. The whole world would be blessed through Abraham and his descendants. All the men and boys would be circumcised (dedicated to God) as a sign of this covenant. (**Genesis 15, 17, 22**)

One Holy Nation The fourth covenant

Moses and the people of Israel received the Ten Commandments as a sign of the fourth covenant—One Holy Nation. God promised to make them a mighty nation of priests, and the people promised to obey God’s commandments. (**Exodus 20, 24; Deuteronomy 29**)

One Holy Kingdom The fifth covenant

God made a covenant with King David, promising him a royal kingdom—One Holy Kingdom. The sign of this covenant was the Temple in Jerusalem. Jesus is the promised Messiah who descended from David’s royal line, thus ensuring that the kingdom will last forever. (**2 Samuel 7:11-15**)

One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church The sixth covenant

Jesus ushered in the New Covenant—One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church—by dying on the Cross for our sins, then rising again and ascending into heaven. The Church is the Body of Christ, and the Holy Eucharist is the sign of this covenant. Full communion with the Church involves sharing the bonds of faith, sacraments, and teachings. (**Luke 22, Mark 14**)

How You Fit into the Story!

We live in the time period of salvation history called “The Church.” Below are the steps we each need to take to become fruitful members of God’s Church as we wait for Jesus to come again.

1. Baptism

In Baptism, we receive the forgiveness of all our sins, we become part of the Church—the body of Christ—and we are given the grace to live a life of holiness. (**see 1 Peter 3:21-22**)

2. Confession

In the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, we are forgiven our sins, restored to a state of grace (if lost through mortal sin), and given the grace to avoid sin in the future. (**see 1 John 1:9**)

3. Confirmation

In the sacrament of Confirmation, we are strengthened by the gifts of the Holy Spirit and receive the grace to witness to Christ in the world. (**see John 14:15-26**)

4. Holy Eucharist

In the Eucharist, Jesus invites us to share in his very Body and Blood. When we receive Holy Communion, we become united to Christ and the other members of his Church and receive the grace needed to live a holy life. (**see Luke 22:19**)

5. Prayer

In prayer, we speak with God every day. We can say memorized prayers like the Our Father, practice devotions like the Rosary, read traditional prayers of the Church, or just speak to God as our Father and friend. (**see Philippians 4:6**)

6. Live a Life of Charity (Love)

By serving the needs of others in charity, we imitate Jesus and show our love for him. (**see John 13:34-35**)

7. Teach Others the Story

We are called to keep learning our Faith through the teachings of the Church. And by the power of the Holy Spirit, we can share the story of salvation with others. As disciples of Christ, we can show anyone how they can be part of salvation history too! (**see Matthew 28:19-20**)



