

Ignatian Gospel Contemplation: Facilitation Guide

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Contemplatives in Action Curriculum

Time: 20+ minutes

Group: 2+ students (can be done with large groups, too)

Materials for Facilitators:

- Bible
- Upcoming Sunday Gospel: <https://bible.usccb.org/>
- “Ignatian Contemplation” with Fr. James Martin, SJ
<https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-contemplation/>
- “Praying with Scripture” by Fr. Douglas J. Leonhardt, SJ
- Audio Ignatian Gospel Contemplations
<https://www.pathwaystogod.org/resources/imaginative-contemplation-exercises>

Outcomes: *Students will experience another way of reflecting and/or praying with scripture; Students will encounter God in a new and/or ongoing way.*

Contemplatives in Action relation (bolded):

**Self / Group / Community
Experience / Reflection / Action**

Summary:

The goal of this activity is to help students enter into a conversation with God through scripture. A Gospel contemplation may be done in a variety of contexts but should be done in a space where students feel comfortable and natural engaging in prayer and faith conversations. Retreats, Caminos, or other explicitly religious spaces are appropriate settings. This activity should be led by persons who have practiced doing Gospel contemplations. The video links identified above are great tools to help one learn. This activity could be done virtually. Cameras and microphones should be turned off from when the Gospel is read through the period of personal reflection.

Before beginning, the leader selects a Gospel passage (possibly the upcoming Sunday’s Gospel) and assigns two persons who will read it aloud at the appointed times. Explain to students they will be spending some time using their imaginations in envisioning a passage of scripture play out in their mind’s eye. The hope is that during their reimagining of the Gospel passage for themselves (after it has been read aloud twice to give them the flow of the passage), they will find themselves exploring a moment, exchange, person, or insight as part of a conversation with God. When imagining the passage for themselves, they should not be focused on “getting through the passage” per se. Getting “lost” in the story when retelling it to themselves is part of the prayer. Engaging one’s senses during this reimagining, like pondering how does this place smell, what does the sky look like, how does the ground feel beneath my feet, what color are Jesus’ eyes, are all rich ways to help make the passage come alive.

The leader invites all to sit in a comfortable, attentive posture (e.g., sitting in a comfortable chair with both feet on the ground, etc.), spend a few moments paying attention to their own breathing, and welcome the presence of God. A simple introductory prayer asking for God to be with everyone gathered may be offered.

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The leader signals the first reader to proclaim the passage. After a period of silence, the leader invites the second person to read the passage aloud. Participants then spend some time imagining this Gospel passage unfold. As this process unfolds, students may find themselves talking with God about their lives. After 15 minutes, the facilitator may offer a brief prayer. If appropriate, students can gather to share what emerged for them.
