

Some useful observations and thoughts

“Imagination isn’t always pictorial, visual . . . for some people it is a feeling, - sensing a presence. “

“If persistent ‘distractions’ occur, let them enter the gospel scene – it may help you to encounter God in your LIFE experience.”

If nothing seems to happen in the prayer, or not what you expected, stay with it and speak to God about your feelings, name them and reflect with God what you are looking for in prayer.

‘Nothing happening’ times can be particularly important!

Resources

Some useful websites for those wishing to explore Ignatian prayer further:

www.sacredspace.ie Offers a daily prayer app, together with an annual prayer book.

<http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/> Good on all things Ignatian including daily Ignatian prayer apps.

www.loyolapress.com/3-minute-retreats-daily-online-prayer A simple 3-minute prayer routine to fit into daily life.

<https://pray-as-you-go.org/article/imaginative-contemplation-exercises>
Has 6 sample meditations you could use with your group.

Reading Material:

Taste and See: Adventuring into Prayer by Margaret Silf (Darton Longman and Todd, 1999). An excellent book on prayer including Ignatian prayer. She also offers good reflective questions.

God of Surprises by Gerard Hughes SJ (Darton Longman and Todd, 1985 + later editions). An Ignatian classic.

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Ignatian Spirituality: Praying with Scripture for Groups



Small Group Leaders

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Finding God in All Things

The Holy Spirit . . .

Will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have said to you.
John 14:26

Ignatian Contemplation is prayer with scripture. It is a meeting with God through story.

Ignatius believed that your imagination can become the place where the world of Gospel reality and the world of your daily life can meet. Far from being a place where unrealistic daydreaming can take you away from God, Ignatian prayer always looks to a recognition of where God is drawing you. Ignatian prayer encourages us to see when Jesus/God is present to us now (not past or future). He enters our story and our lives as a friend, teacher, healer, and the thread of that encounter can be traced through everyday events in an Ignatian prayer called the examen or more simply, the Review of the Day:

Review of the Day

Relax and thank God for the day and its gifts.

Let the day 'play back'. Allow the moments, and the events that you enjoyed, to bubble up to the surface. They don't need to be huge events: the beauty of a sunrise, a friend's smile ...

Give thanks to God for those moments of joy.

Was there any moment when you were less than loving?
Give thanks to God for showing these moments to you and name any attitude that needs healing or befriending?

Finally, look towards tomorrow. Ask God to be with you throughout the day: in meetings, doing your normal daily tasks – even the boring ones. Let God show you all the nudges to greater life in the glorious imperfect human being that you are!

Imaginative Contemplation 'See the Place'.

Text: Select a short passage from the Gospels, preferably one that is colourful in detail.

Preparation. Take time to become quiet and settle into God's presence.

Read the text. The leader then reads the passage aloud, slowly, a few times, normally 2 – 3, to enable the group to familiarise themselves with it. Then put the text to one side.

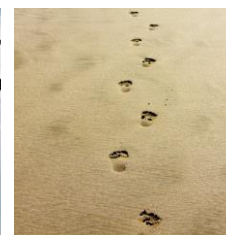
Enter the Story. Encourage the members of the group to imagine the story is present to them now. Visualise the event as if they were making a film.

Allow them slowly to engage with the story by asking them:

What is happening? Who is there? Where is all this taking place?

Pay attention to the details so that the story becomes more alive:
sights, sounds, feelings, taste and even smell.

Encourage people to participate in the scene by talking to characters around them ... to Jesus . . .



SILENCE. Allow a period of silence during which the group continue to pray with the passage.

End the silence by inviting people to return to the group in any way that seems right for each of them.

SHARING: Invite each to share what happened for them in the story, either in pairs or small groups.