

Ignatian Contemplation: *Crayola Divina*

This is a prayer practice which encourages the involvement of our imagination, our physical bodies and senses, and our emotions, and invites us to respond. This type of prayer is important for people who approach daily life primarily in a sensory or physical way. It helps others stretch out of our primarily language-oriented reflection and prayer into new prayer possibilities.

I. Purposes of this session:

- A. To experience “sensory/imaginative” prayer through a guided meditation and Ignatian Contemplation
- B. To share what we experience with each other.
- C. To practice leading one of the prayer practices.

II. Suggested Procedure

A. Opening - (5-10 minutes)-

1. **Light the candle** to symbolize God’s creativity and presence. Invite God’s presence with you as you explore less familiar ways of responding to God’s Word. Welcome everyone.

2. **Explain the process** - You will meditate on a Bible story using a method which helps us enter into and respond to the stories with our whole being - body, mind, and spirit.

III. Meditation on a biblical text

(You will need to provide crayons and paper for this form of prayer)

1. *Make your circle big enough* so people have adequate ‘personal’ space between them.
2. *Prepare them for the prayer experience.*

Distribute paper to each person. Ask them to have their crayons ready to use. Instruct them to color or draw with their non-dominant hand so that non-artistic and artistic people are on the same level of competency in this. *Ask them to try to allow themselves to move beyond the “thought/head” reflection to a “feeling/heart” response to each question - and then express that feeling/heart response on paper by colors and shapes - abstractly or representationally, or by descriptive words - with their non-dominant hand.*

3. *Begin by reading the story through together*, having one person read or having people take turns, each reading several verses.

4. *Ask people to close their eyes and listen as you read the text again*, and **envision** the scene in their minds, **receive** it in their hearts, **see** the people and the landscape, **hear** the sounds, **feel** the air, the temperature, the breeze; **smell** the smells; **feel** the feelings of the story’s characters as you read. Listening to the story in this way is prayer. *Begin the reading by saying, “Let us pray.”*

5. *Read the story slowly, giving them time to “be there.” Allow 4-5 minutes for reflection and drawing.* End the reflection time with “Amen.”

6. **Invite people to share**, according to *whatever was most important for them* in this experience. If they need prompting, you may suggest questions, such as any of the following:

- How did it feel to put their response on paper - in color - rather than just thinking and keeping it all internalized?

- Was one of the questions more important than the other for them at this time in their life?

- In what ways were you surprised by what happened as you prayed in this way?
- What was it like to try to express these things with color and shape or size?

11. Close this meditation time, *inviting those who wish, to offer a one sentence prayer, beginning with the address, “Lord Jesus,…”* End the shared prayer with AMEN.

12. Thank them for being open to this form of prayer. Encourage them to try it at home, particularly with Gospel stories, especially if they are “visual” people.