

QUICK GUIDE – GOSPEL CONTEMPLATION (60 minutes)

Scripture Passage: _____

10 min **Community, Vision, Teaching** – *Lead an activity that helps your group get to know one another. Then tell the group your vision for why you are meeting and what you hope to see God do.*

Activity:

Vision:

“Gospel Contemplation is a type of prayerful reflection on Scripture developed by St. Ignatius of Loyola in 1548 as spiritual preparation for missionaries. Also known as imaginative prayer, we imagine ourselves with Jesus in a scene from one of the Gospel stories, trusting that God can work through our imagination. We engage Scripture with our senses so that we can enter more fully into the text and meet with Jesus there. We pay attention to 1) the details of the story, 2) our experience of the story through our five senses, and 3) any invitation Jesus offers through our interaction with him in the story.”

3 min **Context** – *“Let’s begin with some context for our passage.” Share any information from before or after the passage that helps to set the scene. Include explanation for any parts of the passage that might be influenced by history or culture. Describe the scene in a way that opens the imagination.*

Context:

1 min **Preparation** – *“As we begin, sit comfortably but remain alert. Breathe deeply. You may find it helpful to close your eyes throughout the experience. I will guide you, and you can expect a few moments of extended silence, up to 30 seconds or a minute. Right now, ask God to help you quiet your inner noise and open your senses to God’s loving presence.” Pause for 30 sec.*

6 min **Listen and Review the Story** – *“As I read the text aloud, listen carefully to what is happening in the story. If you get distracted as I read, that’s okay. Ask Jesus for help, and set your mind back on the text.” Read the story and then pause for 15 sec. “Now review the story in your mind and notice anything that stood out or surprised you. As I leave some silence, feel free to jot notes or just rest.” Pause for 60 sec.*

10 min **Participate in the Story** – *“As I read the text again, use your imagination and place yourself in the scene. Which character are you drawn to? Whether it’s Jesus or someone else, become that person. Or maybe you’re a bystander watching the scene. What are you experiencing with your senses? What do you see? What are you feeling on your skin or through your body? What sounds do you hear? What are you smelling and tasting? What mood is in the air? Use your five senses to enter the scene and experience the other characters and the interactions taking place. Ground your imaginings in the text, yet feel free to explore.” Read the story and then pause for 30 sec. “Before we move on, let’s pause and share. After hearing the text read aloud and paying attention to your senses, what are you noticing? What struck you on a sensory level? Share with the group.” Facilitate a brief round of sharing (together or in groups of 2-3).*

7 min **Focus on Jesus** – *“As I read the text for a final time, focus on your interaction with Jesus in the scene. If you have been imagining yourself as Jesus, separate a bit so you can interact with him now. What’s happening between you and Jesus? It may be different from what the text is describing. What is Jesus saying to you, and how are you responding? What is the look on his face? Are you having an emotional response that might be worth pursuing? Is there any invitation you sense Jesus is giving you?” Read the story and then pause for 30 sec. “Take a moment to talk with Jesus about what is coming up for you and how this prayer experience is connecting to your life. It’s okay if you aren’t sensing an invitation or if you feel disappointed about this experience today. Just be honest with Jesus.” Pause for 60 sec.*

- 20 min **Reflect and Share** – “Write down a few notes about your experience, including any invitation you sense.”
Pause for 2 min. “Now let’s share. What did you experience? What was this time of prayer like for you?”
Facilitate group sharing and discussion. Begin in groups of 2-3 and then move to whole group sharing.
- 3 min **Pray** – *Thank God for what the community experienced in this time together. Consider inviting people to pray for one another in groups of 2-3, if appropriate. Learn more about Gospel Contemplation by visiting contemplativeathome.com or contacting Spiritual Foundations.*