

Four Steps to Holy Reading and Listening to Scripture

Traditional holy reading and listening to the Scripture has four steps, with a leader guiding the process. But people can also practice this pattern on their own. (I use it regularly in my devotional practice.) To incorporate holy reading and listening to Scripture into your Mentoring Community gathering, choose a passage that is not too long—four to eight verses. Then prepare everyone for the reading:

READING GOD'S WORD

Have everyone close their eyes. Say, “Listen for a word or phrase that you particularly notice as I read the passage aloud.” After the reading, have everyone sit in silence for two to three minutes. Then say, “With your eyes closed, speak the word or phrase you noticed. Don’t worry about others speaking at the same time.”

REFLECTING ON GOD'S WORD

Next, say, “As I read the passage again, listen for how the content speaks to your life today.” Read the passage again, slowly and clearly, followed by two to three minutes of silence. After the silence, invite people to share: “What does the passage mean to you? What did you hear, or what are you feeling or thinking?”

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

For the third reading, say, “As I read the passage again, listen to how you might respond.” Read the passage again, slowly, and have the group sit in silence for two to three minutes. After the silence, invite people to say a small prayer of response. Sometimes someone will hear profound, life-changing words, sometimes someone is challenged or affirmed, and sometimes nothing happens. All is normal.

RESTING IN GOD'S WORD

Have everyone close their eyes again and listen while the passage is read for the final time. Say, “Receive the words and rest in Jesus’ truth.” After the fourth reading, the group might say the Lord’s Prayer together. At the conclusion, the group might discuss their experience. What are some questions or insights? How does listening help us to see and hear the Word differently than a Bible study does? How might the group respond to these words from Jesus?