

Ignatian Prayer of the Senses

Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) was the founder of the Jesuit order and developed many ways of praying which help people to discern God's will in our lives and God's activity in the world around us. Prayer of the Senses is one way Ignatius taught others to pray with Scripture.

Today we are using a modified version of the Prayer of the Senses to go through this practice as a group. This type of prayer is an imaginative exercise and is not meant to be an intellectual academic study of a text. This is an opportunity to embrace the mystery of this practice, and you explore Scripture with all of our senses.

Steps to practice the Prayer of the Senses as a group:

- Begin with a preparatory prayer, inviting the Spirit to speak through Scripture.
- **Journey through the text #1: SEEING**
 - Have one person slowly read the text aloud.
 - In your imagination, picture what would see moment by moment. "See" it in vivid detail and fill in the details which are missing. What are people wearing, what does the light look like, what body language are people using?
 - What are you learning as you go? What is coming to light?
 - If it is helpful, journal your thoughts down.
- **Journey through the text #2: HEARING**
 - Select another sense to focus on during this journey through the text.
 - Have another person slowly read the text aloud.
 - In your imagination, explore what you are hearing moment by moment. "Listen" in vivid detail and fill in the details which are missing. How are people speaking? Are they loud or quiet? What tone do they use? What other sounds are present in the story? Footsteps, animals, water, background noise?
 - What are you learning as you go? What is coming to light?
- **Journey through the text #3: TOUCH, TASTE, or SMELL**
 - Select another sense to focus on during this journey through the text.
 - Have another person slowly read the text aloud.
 - Immerse yourself in the senses in the text, imagining what you would experience through the different senses.
- If time permits, journey through the text going through all five senses.
- Concluding this time with a prayer of thanks.