

# Ignatian Method Practice Tips

Each time of prayer and meditation in the Ignatian method follows the same basic pattern:

1. **Begin**—Take time to consider God’s presence and love for you. Kneel, sit, bow, however you wish to be comfortable for your time of prayer.
2. **Preparatory Prayer**—Offer God your time and focus. Ask for any grace you need during this time (peace, consolation, hope, focus etc.).
3. **Contemplate the Biblical Story**: choose a story from the Bible and use it to do the following:
  - **Read the text**: Read the text slowly, truly taking time to understand what is happening in the story. Take time as soon as you are done to recall what occurred in the story.
  - **Place yourself inside the text**: Use your imagination and place yourself in the story. Pretend you are one of the characters or place yourself in the story as an independent character that interacts with the others in the text.
  - **Participate**: Become part of the scene. Talk to the other characters in the story and interact with them.
  - **Observe**: Look around. What is happening around you? Where are you? Think about the sensory experience during this time. What does the place, feel, sound, look, smell like. Try to really imagine it. Also, gain a sense of who these people are. Why are they here, what are they doing, and what does that tell us about them? Remember, ground your imaginings in the text, but feel free to explore it. This takes practice, but becomes easier with time.
  - **Dialogue with the characters**: Ask yourself: What are those around me saying, to each other and to me? What do I say to them? What is our discussion like?
  - **Notice what is going on inside you**: Ask yourself what you’re feeling as you interact with the text in this way. Are you happy? Joyful? Full of sorrow? Peaceful? Confused? Full of love?
4. **Colloquy**: Have a short personal conversation with Jesus. Pretend that he is right there next to you and you are having a face-to-face conversation with a close friend.
5. **Closing Prayer**: Conclude with a prayer of your choice. You may stand, kneel, bow, raise your hands, etc.

When you have finished this practice review what you have experienced. Journaling is a great way to record your feelings and to help you remember what you experienced. Decide when you finish when you will engage in this practice again and look forward to it. Prepare for your next encounter and decide what passage you will use as well as where you will spend your time.

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Many people find it helpful to begin this practice with stories about Jesus from the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John). You can do it with any biblical story, but the Gospels are a good place to start.
- If you get distracted during this process, do not be frustrated. Ask God for help and focus, and set your mind back on the text. It takes practice to become good at these kinds of things.
- Remember to gain your facts from the text. Think about what it says about what is happening, and make sure that your imaginings line up with what the Bible actually says. Your imagination is a tool to help you experience God’s Word, and God’s Word must always be primary in this practice.
- Enjoy yourself. The imagination is a rich, wonderful vehicle or tool for exploration. Feel free to get lost in the beauty and truth of the biblical stories.

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A fuller description of the Ignatian Method and other approaches to engaging Scripture can be found online at: <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/scripture-engagement/>.