



## **Lectio Terra In-Person Facilitation Guide** *created by Ben Yosua-Davis*

### **Guidelines And Suggestions for Facilitators**

- 1) *If you don't feel like you know much about the Bible or ecology, (let alone the two put together,) don't worry. Your job is not to be the expert, it's simply to keep group process as people encounter God, scripture, and the land together.*
- 2) *Pay attention to keeping the time. Sometimes, that will mean holding silence non-anxiously and letting the conversation unfold at its own pace, and at other points may mean inviting the group to move to the next part of the process even if the discussion is not quite wrapped up. You may find bringing a bell or chime to be helpful to call people into and out of the Lectio Terra time.*
- 3) *This guide is intended for a Lectio Terra session of about 1.5 hours in duration. Though sessions could be shorter, allocating at least 90 minutes is preferable to allow spaciousness in participating and sharing. Suggested times for each section are given, but feel free to adjust according to your group's needs.*

### **Scripture Passages**

You are welcome to use any Scripture passages which are resonant for you and your group. As a starting point, we offer the following suggested passages:

- Psalm 96:11-13
- Job 12:7-12
- Joel 2:21-24
- Proverbs 30:24-28
- Romans 8:19-25
- Mark 1:9-13
- Isaiah 11:6-9
- Isaiah 55:8-13
- Revelation 22:1-5

## Lectio Terra Session

### **Introductions And Connecting** *(suggested time: 15 minutes)*

Invite people to briefly share their name and the place they call home.

*Go first so you can model this.*

### **Sharing the Three Intentions** *(suggested time: 5 minutes)*

#### **Three Intentions:**

- **Share from the heart:** In this space, we are invited to “listen with the ears of the heart,” rather than to engage in academic study or action planning. None of us have to be leaders and experts. Instead, we’re all fellow wisdom-seekers, seeking to learn together about what it means to find our roots again in the soil of the traditions we’re a part of and the very real places we call home. In that spirit, you are invited to share from the heart first. For instance, when we engage in Lectio Terra, this is not about what the scripture “means” as much as it is what it “means to you” and how God and the more-than-human community speak to you through it.
- **Share with Spaciousness:** In this space, I invite you to commit to creating space for Spirit to speak. If you are the sort of person for whom speaking comes easily, we commit to take a step back, to make sure that everyone has a chance to share. If you are the sort of person who finds sharing difficult, I invite you to take a step forward to share what’s on your heart, even if it doesn’t always feel fully formed. We will receive all of what we share in a posture of listening and curiosity, rather than answering or fixing. Our job is not to solve each other’s problems, but simply to accompany each other on the journey.
- **Share with Confidentially:** I invite us to commit to holding this space as a confidential one, so that we can share vulnerably with one another. What we share stays in this circle together, and we also commit to asking for permission before we talk to someone about something brought up in this space outside of this group.

Ask: Are there other intentions we should name?

### **Introduce Lectio Terra** *(suggested time: 5 minutes)*

Hand out the Lectio Terra Participant Guide, the scripture passage, and then explain the process.

## Lectio Terra

When we re-open our sacred texts, we discover that they are filled with beings who are both other-than-human and startlingly alive. Trees clap their hands. Animals speak. The earth cries out. Where our Western eyes have been taught to read only two characters — God and the people — there is in fact a third: our non-human kin. In our climate-changed world, the Bible invites us back into communion both with God and the more-than-human community as we learn to engage with its sacred stories through the lens of the very real geographies where we make our homes.

## The Process

### Preparing for Lectio Terra

Encourage participants not to spend too much time looking for a space, but to sit in the first place that draws them.

Invite them to put on a timer, so they know when they need to return. *Invite them to set it however long you want them to engage with Lectio Terra, minus five minutes. E.g. If Lectio Terra is going to be 30 minutes, invite them to set it for twenty five.)*

Invite them to silence or turn off their phone before they begin. Nature speaks in slower rhythms than our technology does.

Invite them to maintain a spirit of silence: to go out in silence and to return in silence. “When we return, let’s sit together and rest in the silence, and then I will invite us into discussion.”

Invite someone to read the scripture passage out loud, and then the group can depart in silence. If you have a chime, you could ring it here.

### Lectio (Read)

1. Be present to the land and your non-human kin. Notice smells, sounds, textures, and colors. Notice what is moving and what is still. Allow a particular being or place to draw your attention. What do you notice about it?
  - a. Take time to observe. Resist the urge to metaphorize and instead approach with curiosity, gratitude, and wonder. (For instance, instead of speculating on what a spiderweb could symbolize, wonder where the spider is and how it made this web.)
  - b. Engage all your senses. Trust that you will meet God in the midst of this curiosity.
2. Read the scripture passage slowly. Listen with the “ears of your heart.” Find a word or phrase that you feel drawn to. Repeat this word or phrase silently to yourself for a few minutes, until it has found a resting place in your heart.

3. Return your attention to the place or being and see what else you notice.

### **Meditatio (Reflect)**

Reflect on the passage and on the land. What are they saying to you right now? What messages or insights are coming to you?

### **Oratio (Respond)**

As you take in the insights you received, what is your spontaneous emotional response? Share your feelings with God. Engage in a conversation with God and the land in prayer. Give the land a chance to offer its own prayer and speak to you.

### **Contemplatio (Rest)**

Quietly rest in God's presence. You are lovingly present to one another. Breathe in God's presence. When attention falters, you can resume reading (Lectio) until the next moment of insight or movement of love. Continue this peaceful, unhurried rhythm of reading and pausing until it feels complete.

At the end of your prayer:

- Give thanks to God.
- Shift your posture. You may wish to bow or touch your palms together as a gesture of gratitude and respect.
- Take a few minutes to get in touch with what you were feeling, sensing, or intuiting during your prayer. Note in your journal exactly what you were feeling, sensing, or intuiting. If possible, take notes in a journal that you can return to, so that you can track this ongoing conversation. This is an ongoing process that won't be completed today.

When your timer goes off, feel free to finish up your conversation and return to the group.

Invite someone to read the scripture passage out loud, and then the group can depart in silence. If you have a chime, you could ring it here.

### **Lectio Terra** *(suggested time: 25 minutes)*

Each group member moves out to a time of solitude and silence to engage with the scripture passage in the natural world.

### **Reflection** *(suggested time: 15 minutes or more)*

*You could ring a bell or chime to transition participants from silence into discussion.*

- “I invite us into a time of sharing together. For this first round of sharing, I invite you to share ‘What did you experience or encounter?’ After you share, I invite you to call on someone else to share. If you are not ready to share, feel free to say ‘Not yet’ and if you’d prefer to pass, simply say ‘pass.’ Once everyone has shared, we’ll open the time up for group reflection.”
- After everyone has had the opportunity to share or pass, invite them into a time of open sharing. You can offer the question, “What’s resonating with you?”
- After the open sharing, invite participants to respond to the question: “Who do you feel invited to be as result of this experience?”

**Prayer** (*10 minutes*)

“I invite you to lift up your prayer requests for yourselves, for one another, for this world, including our human and other-than-human kin. At the end of each one, I will say ‘God, in your mercy’ and together we will say, ‘Hear our prayer.’”

At the end, offer a closing prayer.