

Midweek Groups: Advent Lectio

Advent Background

The word Advent literally means “coming” or “arrival”. The season of Advent is an opportunity to embrace the same anticipation the Jewish people had in waiting centuries for the arrival of the Messiah. For us today, it is a season to celebrate the birth of Christ, reflect on the simplicity of how he entered this world, and to live in anticipation of his coming back again.

Personal Experiences

If you need an introductory type question, you can ask the group to share their own experiences of Christmas and what they remember growing up. What were some traditions they practiced? What were some of the emotions and memories they experienced?

Philippians 2:5-11

Do Lectio Divina on the following passage in the context of Advent.

This is a great passage to meditate on in the context of Advent. The first half (v5-8) deals with his first coming and what it meant for Christ when he was born into this world. And the second half (v9-11) deals with his return and the reason we should be living in anticipation.

5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be
used to his own advantage;

7 rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

8 And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,

10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of
God the Father.

Lectio Exercise

Make sure you allow time to reflect in between each reading – don’t rush! Allow time for silence and reflection, even if it seems awkward.

1. Lectio – This first movement consists of reading the scriptural passage slowly and attentively. Identify words or phrases in the passage that grab your attention. (*Read the entire passage once*)

2. Meditatio – Next, spend some time contemplating the passage and the words or phrases that stood out upon first reading. Try ‘praying the passage’, opening your mind to God’s understanding of this passage. (*Read the passage again*)

3. Oratio – After another reading, share with each other the words that you focused on and perhaps the result of your meditation on them. (*Read the passage and then have an extended time of sharing – see below*)

After the 3rd reading, use the following questions to draw some discussion from the passage and what people were reflecting on.

a. What words or phrases stood out to you from this passage? Why?

b. How does this text speak to you in the context of the Advent season?

c. What is the text calling you to do or become this Advent season? (How do I need to live in light of this scripture?)

[**Optional** – Feel free to share prayer requests or things to pray for in light of the passage before the final reading. And then after the final reading, you can go straight to time of prayer and close with Lord’s Prayer.]

4. Contemplatio – Close by reading the passage a final time, try to ‘savor’ the words and thoughts shared earlier. (*Read the passage one last time*)

Advent Expressions

Spend some time brainstorming healthy, practical expressions during Advent that allow us to practice waiting and anticipation. If you have time and access, you could even have the group do some impromptu research online on different historical and traditional expressions of Advent and some traditions that different communities have practiced.