WEEK 3 · JOY · A GUIDE FOR LEADING A GROUP

Lectio Divina on John 1:6-8



"God, let me receive joy as your gift without forcing it, and let me know who I am before I know what I do."

PASSAGE
John 1:6-8

TIME
20 to 30 minutes

BEST FOR
3 to 12 people

YOU'LL NEED
The passage printed or on a screen, and four readers if you can, ideally different voices.

What this is about

John's Gospel opens with a poem about the Light. In the middle of it, the writer stops to introduce a man named John. The Gospel says he was sent from God and came as a witness, and that he was not the Light. This is the week to ask what a witness does.

New to Lectio Divina?

Lectio Divina (say LEK-see-oh dih-VEE-nuh) is Latin for "divine reading." It is an old Christian way of praying with Scripture. The group hears one short passage four times, and each time listens a little differently. The four readings follow four movements: listen, reflect, respond, and rest. You do not teach or explain the passage. You keep time and keep the silence.

Before you gather

Pray this passage yourself first, using the app, so the silences are familiar to you.

Choose four readers if you can, and give each one the passage ahead of time. A different voice for each reading helps people hear it fresh. Ask them to read slowly, in a plain voice, and to wait a breath before they begin and after they finish. Reading aloud is not a performance.

Have a bell or a phone timer ready, and a candle if you like. Print the passage in large type, one copy for each person. Sit in a circle if you can.

JOHN 1:6-8 (BSB)

6 *There came a man who was sent from God. His name was John.*
7 *He came as a witness to testify about the Light, so that through him everyone might believe.*
8 *He himself was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light.*

How to lead it

1 **2 MIN**

Gather. Light a candle if you have one. Sit in silence for a minute, then explain how this will go.

Say: "We will hear one passage of Scripture four times. Each time we will listen for something a little different. Nobody has to speak, and you can pass at any time. We will not discuss or correct what anyone says."

2 **1 MIN**

Pray the grace for this week together.

Say: "God, let me receive joy as your gift without forcing it, and let me know who I am before I know what I do."

3 **5 MIN**

First reading: listen. Keep one minute of silence. Then go around the circle. Each person says one word or phrase that stayed with them, with no explanation. After each person say "Thank you," and go on to the next. Take your own turn last.

Say: "Listen for a word or phrase that stands out to you."

4 **5 MIN**

Second reading, in a different voice: reflect. Keep two minutes of silence. Then ask who would like to share a sentence or two. You do not need to answer or comment.

Say: "What does it mean to you that John came as a witness to the Light?"

5 **5 MIN**

Third reading, in another voice: respond. Keep two minutes of silence. Then invite people to share, or to pray silently for the person on their right.

Say: "Where might God be inviting you to point to the Light for someone, or to let go of needing to be the light yourself?"

6 **4 MIN**

Fourth reading: rest. Keep three minutes of silence together. Nothing needs to be said. Ring the bell when the time is up.

Say: "Rest here. We will sit in silence until I ring the bell."

7 **2 MIN**

Close. Read this line together: "He himself was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light." Then thank the group.

Say: "Thank you for praying together. The peace of Christ be with you."

About 24 minutes in all, plus the time it takes to read aloud.

These times fit a group of about six. With twelve people, add five minutes for the sharing. With three or four, the sharing goes faster. If you have only twenty minutes, use three readings and skip the sharing after the second.

If you get stuck

- The silence feels too long: stay with it. Breathe. Do not fill it. Most people find the second minute is where it settles.
- Someone cries: stay where you are, pass a tissue, and say, "Take your time. We are here." Check in with them after the prayer.
- Someone explains the passage or gives advice: thank them, then say, "Let's stay with the words themselves."
- No one speaks: count slowly to twenty. Then ask people to share with one other person. A group that stays silent has not failed.
- Someone seems overwhelmed: thank them, stay close, and afterward suggest a pastor, a spiritual director, or a counselor.

A note for leaders

Do not teach or explain the passage. A short explanation can end the listening. If someone shares something painful, thank them and let the silence that follows be long. People who carry a lot for others, such as caregivers, pastors and parents, may feel relief at "He himself was not the Light." Others may hear it as one more job. Thank them for what they share and let the next silence be long.

Scripture quotations are from the Berean Standard Bible (BSB), which has been dedicated to the public domain. Learn more at berean.bible.