

Guided Meditation and Visualisation/Imaginative prayer

1.1 Breathing Exercise/Visualisation

Let us take time to be still...

Close your eyes and become aware of your body sitting on the floor/chair.

Feel the ground under your feet and the air touching your nostrils.

Be aware of your nostrils breathing in air.

Listen to the gentle sound of your breathing.

Breathe in slowly...

Breathe out slowly...take a deep breath in and then let it out.

Keep your eyes closed to help you see the following...

Imagine an eagle gliding through the air... (pause)

Imagine the sails of a boat being blown in the wind... (pause)

See the clouds moving quickly across the sky... (pause)

See yourself flying the most colourful kite on a windy day... (pause)

Feel the breeze on your face as you walk on the beach/ up a hill/ in a park... (pause)

Listen to your breathing.

Slowly open your eyes...



1.2 Ignatian Contemplation

How do we pray with our imagination?

First we get settled in a comfortable chair and in a quiet place where we won't be distracted. Our first gesture might be to open our hands on our lap, and to ask God to open our hearts and imaginations.

Then pick a story out of Scripture.
Read through it once slowly and put it down.

Now we begin to imagine the scene as if we are standing right there. What is around me? Who else is there? What do I hear in the scene? If I am in a house, what noises are in the house or in the street outside? What are the smells I can pick up?

Now we begin to imagine the scene we read about. Who is in it? What conversation takes place? What is the mood – tense? joyful? confused? angry?

Feel free to paint this picture in any way your imagination takes you. If we worry about historical accuracy, it can be a distraction that takes us away from prayer. This isn't scripture – this is letting God take our imaginations and reveal to us something of the intimate life of Jesus or others.

If, in our prayer, Mary pulls the toddler Jesus onto her lap to tie his shoes or zip his coat, we can let it happen that way. We don't want to fret about the historically accurate kinds of food served at a dinner or what kind of carpenter tools Joseph might have really had in his workshop. Here is an experience of prayer that lets our imaginations free themselves from anything that limits them. This is God revealing himself to us.

It helps if we imagine Jesus and his disciples as the real people they were who walked the earth. St. Ignatius imagined that the first person Jesus appeared to after the Resurrection was his mother and he encourages us to picture Jesus appearing at home to Mary, watching the joy and emotion in the scene.

Through the act of contemplation, the Holy Spirit makes present the mystery of Jesus' life in a way that is meaningful for us now. Using our imagination we dig deeper into the story so that God may communicate with us in a personal way.

