

Sacred Text Discussion Group

The **Sacred Text Discussion Group** meets monthly at UUFSD. The times and dates can be found in the **Stay Connected** weekly email.

Meeting Format

Our format is flexible depending on the host (the person who chooses and leads the topic). When possible, we recommend the following format:

1. **The Check in.** Share any books or ideas of a spiritual nature you have been exposed to since we last met.
2. **The Discussion.** If the topic is a sacred text reading, try to use the *Lectio Divina* format (see below). If the topic is not a sacred text reading, at some point have us consider the three "senses" - literal, allegorical, and moral - of your chosen topic.
3. **The Check out.** Share your views on what you learned and how it could change your life.

Lectio Divina

One ancient technique of religious study is called **Lectio Divina** (divine reading). It is a method that attempts to take the participant deeper into the material. It typically involves three readings of the same passage, with directed reflections after each reading. (Using Lectio Divina is only one of the possible ways that we hold our meetings.) Below is the Lectio Divina method we have used at UUFSD. We start by choosing a member at the previous meeting who will pick the passage and run the meeting (the host):

Step 1: The Literal Sense (the power of the words)

The host picks a sacred passage from one of our sources. The host tells all attendees the passage at the start of the meeting. Attendees may or may not have a copy of the reading too. Everyone listens attentively as the host reads the passage slowly, after which everyone contemplates for 1 - 2 minutes. Then the group briefly discusses their impression of the literal meaning of the passage, especially what strong words stand out to them.

Step 2: The Allegorical Sense (what the passage speaks to me)

Another member reads the same passage again, from a different translation if possible (or from the original passage if not possible). Again the attendees contemplate for a few minutes, and then discuss the reading. This time, the discussion revolves around the allegorical meaning of the passage, looking for a hidden (often moral or political) meaning to the passage.

Step 3: The Moral Sense (what the passage invites me to do)

Another member reads the same passage again, from a different translation if possible (or from the original passage if not possible). Again the attendees contemplate for a few minutes, and then discuss the reading. This time, the discussion revolves around the moral meaning of the passage, specifically what it compels us to do this day or this week.

Although the Lectio Divina was designed to be applied to a biblical passage, any text of a spiritual or consequential nature could be used. We envision that it could be applied to a piece of prose or poetry to good effect.