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## Imaginative Prayer Method

(Consider using this with Jesus Parables on 4:19 website)

### About the Saint Ignatius Prayer Method

Ignatius of Loyola was the founder of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) and is said to be the originator of a form of prayer that engages the scriptures imaginatively. Saint Ignatius believed that praying in this way shaped one's life. It is ideal to use a scripture passage that is narrative in nature; in other words, the characters are living out a story of faith.

### Guidelines for Using the Saint Ignatius Prayer Method

- Pick a passage of Scripture, ideally a story, parable or bit of history.
- Place yourself into the scene as one of the characters so as to experience it more fully in mind, body, and spirit.
- Enter the story as a careful observer—a fly on the wall.
- Ignatius commended the use of the senses in this type of meditation. You attempt to taste, hear, smell, and feel the passage.
- You may become one of the characters, experiencing it from his or her point of view. Most of all, the hope is to help you perceive the narrative from the viewpoint of Jesus.\*

### Instructions for a Time of Saint Ignatius Prayer

Begin with a brief prayer.

- Listen as the Scripture passage is read aloud for the first time. As the story is read, listen to gain an understanding of the characters, surroundings, and overall context. Reflect on what you heard during a time of silence.
- During the second reading, allow your imagination to bring you into the story. The reader may prompt you to visualize the sights, smell the smells, hear the sounds, taste the tastes, and feel the surroundings. Reflect on the experience during a time of silence.
- On the final reading, use your imagination to enter the story as one of the characters, allowing yourself to experience the emotions, beliefs, or thoughts of a person in the narrative. Reflect on the experience during a time of silence.
- Ask yourself this question: What does God want me to know, do or feel from this passage? Journal your thoughts and let your mind ponder all the experience.
- Respond to God in prayerful conversation with anything you sense he is teaching or telling you from this reflection. After the final time of reflection and silence, say the Lord's Prayer aloud.

### Works Cited

\*Based on material from Dawson et al., *Companions in Christ Participant Book* (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2001), 96–98. Harnish, James A., and Justin LaRosa. *A Disciple's Heart: Growing in Love and Grace*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2015. Print.