

Designing Your Own Retreat

You may want to plan a thematic movement for your retreat. You might find it helpful to establish a regular pattern that you use every time. Or you may want to simply be free to respond to the invitation of God. See the free resource on www.newim.org: "[Christian Devotional Practices](http://www.newim.org)" for additional ideas.

A RETREAT PATTERN

Arrival & Settling In
Worship
Recreation
Thirty Minutes – Silent Listening
Rest
Scripture Readings
Readings
Reflection
Prayer
Journal Writing
Community Gathering
Meal
Worship
Repeat the cycle

ACTIVITIES

Reading a Psalm
Journal Writing
Walk and repeat the Jesus prayer (Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.)
Meditative Reading of Scripture
Breath prayers
Worship with music
Lectio Divina
Confessing your sins and asking for forgiveness
Prayer of Examen
Recall your blessings and be grateful
Meditate on a work of art
Ponder the words of a favorite hymn or song
Centering Prayer
Allow your heart to soar in an unworded response to something of beauty you discover:
a sunset, a tree, a bird, a flower
Draw a picture
Create a poem
Be silent and listen to the sounds of nature

THEMES: A-C-T-S

(Adoration-Confession-Thanksgiving-Supplication)

You might begin with **Adoration**—and plan to begin your retreat with time focused on adoring the Lord. This might lead you to take a walk, and notice the tiniest details of flowers or bugs, and express your heart's adoration to the Lord for his beauty and goodness. You might write a prayer of adoration. Or look for a song that expresses your heart's love for Jesus. There's a video playlist (Online Retreat-Worship) and several music video playlists to guide you.

Next, you could make **Confession** the focus of your meditation. You might spend some time reading through the Scriptures and make David's prayer of confession your own. You could spend some time in Examen, and let the Spirit bring to mind thoughts, words, motivations. You could meditate on the Cross and internalize the truth that your sin required the Son of God to die.

Then, you could focus on **Thanksgiving**. Be intentional in your conversation with the Lord to express your gratitude. You could do an Art Journaling project to capture your heart.

Finally, you could let your adoration, confession, and thanksgiving lead you to begin an outward focus of lifting your concerns, and those of others, to the Lord in **Supplication**.

LOVE - Make Ephesians 3:14-21 your RETREAT prayer. (

You might begin with meditations on **God's love for you** – specifically. Centering prayer with a verse about the love of God. Journaling on God's love for you. Writing a love letter from God to you.

Move to a focus on **your love for God**. Continue intentionally being aware of opening your heart and receiving God's love for you experientially, deeply. Then— **surrender your life to the love of God**. Lay everything at his feet.

Finally—commit yourself to live in response to God's love for you. Create a remembrance of your retreat

