

Unit 1, Session 1

**HOW TO USE THE RECORDED GUIDED REFLECTION**

A special approach to prayer in Session 1 is an extended guided reflection titled "God's Wonderful Creation." To prepare to share this reflection with the children, listen to the recording "God's Wonderful Creation" (CD 1, Track 6) as a prayerful experience for yourself. Then, when you play the recording during the session, join the children in reflective prayer.

If instead you choose to lead the guided reflection yourself, listen to the recording a second time, following the script and noting pauses. You can use the script as is or adapt it as you wish. When leading the guided reflection during the session, play reflective music softly in the background to enhance the sense of prayerfulness.

You begin to walk into

You pass by

finally you come upon

# God's Wonderful Creation

Time: ~~13 min. 46 sec.~~ 10 min

We all like to imagine. Sometimes we imagine when we play with our friends. Today we're going to use our imaginations in a different but very special way.

First we have to get ready. Make yourself really comfortable. (Pause.) That's it, just relax. (Pause.) Close your eyes. (Pause.) Feel the heaviness leave your shoulders. (Pause.) It goes down through your arms and out your fingertips. (Pause.) Slowly release any tension from the rest of your body. (Pause.) You're relaxed and still. (Pause.) You can even hear your own breathing. (Pause.) Listen for your breathing as it goes in and out, in and out, in and out. (Pause.) Good. Now you're ready to imagine. Let's begin. (Pause.)

You're walking in an open field next to a forest. The weather is just how you like it. Is it sunny? Is it breezy? Is there fog? Rain? Feel the weather. (Pause.) See and smell the forest. (Pause.) As you walk, you feel happy. You're on your way to a special place. You're going to your Heart Home, that place deep inside you where you can talk with Jesus.

As you walk, you see an old woman sitting on a rock. She's smiling. You know somehow that you've seen her before, and you can tell that she's kind. "Are you looking for your Heart Home?" she asks.

"Yes," you answer.

"Here, catch!" says the old woman as she tosses you a big ball of red string. Then she says, "If you want to find your Heart Home, hold the ball of red string in front of your heart."

You hold the ball of red string just as she says and repeat the words that she tells you to say, "Red string, red string, I will follow you, my red string. Red string, red string, take me to my Heart Home." (Pause.)

Then she tells you to toss the ball of string out in front of you and follow it. You throw it, and the ball of red string starts to roll away into the forest. You follow it some more. At first the string rolls slowly by some tall trees.

~~The ball continues.~~ You look up and see two squirrels racing up a tree. It almost looks like a game of tag. (Pause.)

~~The ball then rolls slowly around some bushes. Follow it. See that bushy-tailed fox run away as the ball comes near? He's really fast, isn't he? (Pause.)~~ and enter into

~~The ball of red string goes across an open field. Notice the huge elk with an enormous set of antlers. It's standing still, sniffing the air and watching you as you walk by.~~

~~The ball of red string goes on, right into a big hill of boulders. Does it stop? No, it goes a little to the right and finds a hole—a hidden pathway. You feel safe as you follow the red string along the path.~~

~~You're past the rocks. Then you come to a huge river. It's too wide to cross by yourself. But the red string is there to help you. Watch it. The red string does something special to help you get across. What do you imagine it does to help you reach the other side? (Pause.)~~

Now that you're across the river, you see that the ball of string is getting very small. Only the curly end of the string is left, reaching up from the ground.

*ndly* / You've made it to your Heart Home! Look, there's a mailbox with your name on it. You walk around a bit. What do you notice about your Heart Home? (Pause.) And here's a good friend of yours. It's Jesus. He's here to welcome you. He smiles and calls you by name.

The weather is clear now, so Jesus invites you to sit outside with him. What are you sitting on? The ground? A bench? (Pause.) Jesus isn't in a rush. He wants to talk to you and hear what you have to say.

Jesus might tell you that he wanted to sit outside for a reason. Perhaps he asks you to look up at the sky. Do you ever wonder how high the sky is? If it stays the same color way up there? What else is out there? Ask Jesus. (Pause.) Now Jesus might ask you to look down at the ground and name the smallest thing you see. What is it? (Pause.) Who made these things that are so big and so small? Who made you? Jesus wants to know if you know. (Pause.) That's easy. You tell him that it's God.

Jesus reminds you that you're one of God's most precious creations. When you hear this, you tell Jesus all about the wonderful things you can do—like read, learn, and work. What other things can you do? Tell Jesus about those too. (Pause.)

Then Jesus asks you if now is a good time to pray. It is, isn't it? (Pause.) He may suggest that you picture something in God's creation that you think is amazingly beautiful. What is it? Study it in your mind's eye. (Pause.) What makes it special to you? (Pause.) Thank God for it and for all of creation. Know that he's listening with love. (Pause.)

Because it's almost time to go, you might want to share with God one thing you can do to help care for the created world. (Pause.)

You know you have to leave now. You also know you can meet Jesus in your Heart Home whenever you'd like. Together you and Jesus walk until you spot the curly end of your red string. You say goodbye for now and promise to talk with Jesus again soon. ~~You tap the red string very gently with your foot. It begins to rewind.~~ *you begin to slowly make your way back*

You follow the red string back over the river, where it helps you get across, just like before. You follow it through the rocks and the forest. The open field is in view now. And there is the old woman, still sitting on the rock. You're back where you started.

You pick up the ball of red string to return it to her, but she tells you to keep it to use whenever you want. You thank her and put the ball in your pocket.

Now gradually come back to the room. (Pause.) When you're ready, open your eyes. (Pause.) Stretch if you'd like. (Pause.) Look around. (Pause.) See our group and know that we're back together.

## SENSITIVITIES

- The children's awareness of what it means to speak to God in their hearts
- The children's experience with reflective prayer

## HINTS

When leading the guided reflection yourself,

- be aware of your voice quality, pacing, and the message
- allow the children time to reflect by pausing at appropriate times throughout the reflection
- gradually decrease the volume of the background music before turning off the CD player

## REFLECTIVE RESPONSES

At the close of the guided reflection, say: **Answer just for yourself. What one thing do you want to do today to help care for the created world?** Allow children time to reflect on their responses. Assure them that they will not be sharing these responses. Then discuss: **What aspect of God's creation do you think is amazingly beautiful?**