

Recorded Guided Reflections

Unit 2, Session 7

HOW TO USE THE RECORDED GUIDED REFLECTION

A special approach to prayer in Session 7 is an extended guided reflection titled "The Prayer of Saint Francis." To prepare to share this reflection with the children, listen to the recording "The Prayer of Saint Francis" (CD 1, Track 7) 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.

The Prayer of Saint Francis

Time: 12 min. 43 sec.

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.)*

Imagine that you go to a favorite place, one where you can get away for awhile. Maybe it's in your home, in your bedroom, or in a secret hiding place. Or maybe it's a place far away, somewhere you visited once and would like to go back to. Wherever it is, it's a quiet, safe place. Be in that place in your imagination. *(Pause.)* Look around. Now that you're there, is it a little too quiet? How about inviting someone to join you? Who will it be? *(Pause.)*

Hope you invited Jesus because—guess what—he's coming to join you. Smiling, you say hi and welcome him to your favorite place. You're so glad to be with each other. You might even want to show Jesus around. *(Pause.)*

Jesus, always interested in you, wants to know how you are. Where do you even begin? There's always so much going on. Why not tell him what you did yesterday? That's a good place to start. *(Pause.)* Is there anything else you want to tell him? *(Pause.)*

Well what about the Prayer of Saint Francis? Maybe that's a new one to you. Jesus might tell you that this wonderful prayer asks God to help you bring peace and joy wherever you go. Listen.

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.*

*O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.*

*For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.*

Saint Francis had loads of ideas about being a peacemaker. Talk about some of those ideas with Jesus. How about starting with the first line:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:

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Jesus might ask you to describe a time not too long ago when you were kind to somebody. It might be a time when some kids were being mean to another kid or didn't want to play with him or her. What did you say? What did you do? Tell Jesus about it. *(Pause.)*

*where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;*

If someone was unkind to you, or you were unkind yourself, tell Jesus about it. If the other person said, "I'm sorry," to you, how did you act? *(Pause.)* If you need to be sorry for something, tell Jesus about that too. You're always safe with Jesus. Besides, he knows about it already. *(Pause.)*

*where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.*

Think about a time when someone didn't know what to do and you helped them figure it out, or when you didn't know what to do and someone helped you. *(Pause.)* Now think of a time when someone was sad or upset and you played with them and made them laugh, or when you were sad and someone made you feel better. *(Pause.)*

Now spend a little time with Jesus talking about how you can help others. One of the wonderful things about Jesus is you don't have to use words to tell him about things, or worry about saying it right. You can invite Jesus to see what is in your heart. Jesus is very good at that. *(Pause.)* Now listen to what Jesus has to say to you. He loves you. You can trust him. *(Pause.)*

Maybe Jesus gets to talking about God, his Father and yours. Listen with your heart as he speaks about how very much, and for always, the Father loves you. It is true you know. *(Pause.)*

Then perhaps Jesus smiles, puts his arm around you if you'd like, and tells you something nice about yourself. Listen. What does he say? *(Pause.)*

Because you're almost ready to come back to the room, Jesus invites you to spend a few quiet moments with God. You invite God to see into your heart and know how much you want to be an instrument of his peace—bringing pardon, light, and joy to others. *(Pause.)*

You stand beside Jesus—maybe you hold his hand—and reveal your heart to God. Receive in your heart whatever God wants to give you. You don't always know right away what it is, but God does. It's okay. Take it in. *(Pause.)*

As you get up to leave your favorite place, Jesus promises to always be there to help you. With this promise, you say goodbye to Jesus, knowing that you'll see him again soon. *(Pause.)*

Gradually come back to the room now. *(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
- The children's experience with having a special or favorite place for 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 phrase in Saint Francis' prayer describes the hardest thing for you to do?*** Allow children time to reflect on their responses. Assure them that they will not be sharing these responses. Then discuss: ***How can we be peacemakers for one another?***