

# Junior Soldiers

UNIT 15 : LESSON 8



## Lectio Divina

**PURPOSE:** For the children to explore and understand how they can form a deeper relationship with God through Lectio Divina.

Everything in the Scriptures is God's Word. All of it is useful for teaching and helping people and for correcting them and showing them how to live.

The Scriptures train God's servants to do all kinds of good deeds.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (CEV)

I am eager to learn all that you want me to do;  
help me to understand more and more.

Psalm 119:32 (CEV)

Please, Lord, hear my prayer and give me the  
understanding that comes from your word.

Psalm 119:169 (CEV)

## Consider & Prepare

This lesson includes less action than most. It incorporates a significant period of quiet reflection. You might choose to do this as a special event with only your older Junior Soldiers. Consider bringing in extra helpers and break into smaller groups for the reflection portion of the lesson.

If you bring in additional helpers, be mindful of child protection requirements.

The phrase lectio divina, roughly translated, is the Latin for “sacred reading.” Lectio Divina involves slowing down and reading the Scriptures in a way that helps us to respond, remember and be transformed by the Word. It has been practiced over many centuries and can be a very helpful process. However, it is just one way of engaging with the Word of God. If you have children who struggle to connect with Lectio Divina, remind them that they can try again another time or find something else that helps them to connect with the Bible and with God.

Set aside some time to engage with the practice of Lectio Divina...

Visit these websites for more information.

<http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-what-how-why-of-prayer/praying-with-scripture>  
<http://www.catholicaustralia.com.au/the-scripture/lectio-divina>

## You Will Need

### For ‘Connecting In’

- A copy of Appendix A (page 8) or a copy of the book ‘Diary of a Wimpy Kid’
- Pens/pencils and paper for each child

### For ‘The Main Thing’

- Bean bags or large cushions
- Paper or journals
- Pens or pencils
- Bibles
- Markers
- A4 sheets of cardboard in a variety of colours – cut into quarters
- Quiet background music
- Blu-tac or sticky tape

Provide several of the following options for the children to choose from if they have trouble concentrating:

- Pens and paper to journal
- Paper and pencils to draw
- Kinetic sand
- Play dough
- Fidget spinners or cubes
- Pebbles or rocks to hold

### For ‘Tying In’

- Write each of the following questions on strips of paper. If you have more than five children then write multiple copies of each question so that every child will have one.
  - » What did you enjoy about Lectio Divina?
  - » What did you find challenging?

- » What did you learn?
- » What difference do you think it might make if you used the practice of Lectio Divina more often?
- » When would be a good time in your week to practice Lectio Divina?

### For 'Memory Verse'

- Write the verse on a board or sheets of butchers paper and display where the children can see it.

### For 'Home and Beyond'

- Print a copy of the Lectio Divina booklet for each child <https://focusoncampus.org/content/do-the-lectio-3-step-an-easy-illustrated-guide-to-praying-lectio-divina>
- Print a copy of the Home and Beyond card for each child

## Connecting In

I wonder if you have ever kept a diary.

A diary helps us to record information about what is happening in our lives, as well as what we are thinking and feeling at the time.

Let's look at an example of a diary entry...

*Pick one of the following diary excerpts:*

- *Option 1: Diary of HV Reynolds (Appendix A, page 8).*
- *Option 2: Excerpt from a Dog's Diary (Appendix A, page 8).*
- *Option 3: Choose a short section to read from 'Diary of a Wimpy Kid' – Jeff Kinney (2004).*

*Ask a volunteer to read the diary entry out loud.*

- What was the diary entry about?
- What happened?
- How do you think the writer was feeling?

*Read the diary excerpt aloud again.*

*Ask the children*

- What are all the things we can learn about the writer just by focusing on that short section of text?

*Ask each child to write a diary entry in a few sentences about something that happened to them in the past week.*

- What could someone learn about you if they read your diary entry?

We can learn about God, about who He is, about how He wants us to live, about what He has planned for us by reading the Bible, which is God's Word.

When we pray and think about the words God has given us in His Bible we learn more and more about Him and we begin to connect with God in a deeper way.

# The Main Thing

## What is Lectio Divina?

Lectio Divina is really just a way of reading a section of the Bible and concentrating on what God might be saying to us through those words. It has been used by Christians for thousands of years, as far back as the 6th century.

Sometimes we study the Bible to learn more about what is written. Lectio Divina uses the words written in the Bible to help us connect closely with God. It is a slow, listening kind of reading. When we read the Bible in this way it helps us to pray, to change and to grow more like Jesus.

Lectio Divina involves reading, reflecting, responding and resting. Today we will break it up into lots of little steps to help us learn how to use it but it can be a very simple process.

Usually, with Lectio Divina, you read as much or as little as you need to. There is no set amount of reading to do. Often, we learn more from Lectio Divina when we choose a short passage.

Today, while we practice, we will all look at the same verses.

*Choose one of the following passages and guide the children through Lectio Divina.*

*Exodus 3:1-10*

*Psalms 100:1-5*

*Luke 10:38-42*

## Becoming quiet

The first step of Lectio Divina is “becoming quiet”.

- Find a quiet place in the room.
- Sit comfortably.
- Relax your body and breathing.
- Once you feel peaceful and calm say a brief prayer quietly. You might like to ask God to help you to concentrate and to connect with him.

*Give the children a chance to say a quiet prayer.*

## Reading

The second step is “reading”.

- Everybody open your Bible to the passage, we are going to look at \_\_\_\_\_ (*say what passage you have chosen*).
- First, read through the entire passage slowly. *Give the children time to read through the passage. It would be good to model this yourself as the leader.*
- When you have read through the passage, think about these questions:
  - » What is the author trying to tell us in the text?
  - » Who are the key characters; what are the key words?
  - » Is there repetition, themes, pictures, or speaking?

*Give the children time to think through these questions.*

- Try to picture yourself inside the story.
- Then read through the passage again.

*Ask the children to share with a partner something that they think is important in this passage.*

## **Reflecting**

The third step for Lectio Divina is “reflecting”.

- Think about the verses you have read.  
*Share the following prompting questions slowly so that the children have time to reflect on each one before you move them along.*
  - » What word or idea stands out to you?
  - » Reread that part a couple of times.
  - » Quietly say it out loud several times.
  - » What does this word or idea tell you about God?
  - » What does it mean for your life?
  - » What do you need to change?

*Hand each child a piece of coloured card and a marker. Ask them to write on the card the word or idea that they noticed in the verses. They might like to decorate the cards.*

*Allow the children to stick the cards onto the wall to create a colourful word cloud.*

## **Responding**

The fourth step is “responding” to what we have read by praying to God.

*Explain to the children that it can sometimes help us to focus on prayer if we have something to keep our hands busy.*

*Provide several of the following options for the children to choose from if they have trouble concentrating:*

- *Pens and paper to journal.*
- *Paper and pencils to draw.*
- *Kinetic sand.*
- *Play dough.*
- *Fidget spinners or cubes.*
- *Pebbles or rocks to hold.*
- Take some time to pray.
  - » Speak to God by using your own words to pray - have a chat with God.
  - » Talk to God about what you have read.
  - » Praise God for who he is.
  - » If you have hurt someone, apologise, ask for forgiveness, and ask God to help you to make the relationship right again.
  - » If you feel thankful for something that God has done for you, then say “thanks”.
  - » If you are worried about something in your life, tell God about it and ask him to help you feel peaceful again.
  - » Simply talk to God and tell him what you are feeling, just like you would with a good friend or family member.
- Ask him to help you make changes in your life based on what you have learnt.

## Resting

The fifth and final step of the process is “resting”.

*You might choose to play some quiet background music during this stage.*

*Many people find this to be one of the hardest parts of Lectio Divina. You might need to try just a minute or two to start off.*

- Take some time to rest in God's presence.
- Don't worry about words - focus on being with God.

## Tying In

*Ask the children to stand and stretch. Invite them to stand in a circle. Take the strips of paper you prepared earlier. Scrunch the papers up, and throw one to each child. Ask the children to toss the papers around the circle until you say “stop”. Go around the circle and ask each person to answer the question on the paper that they are holding.*

*The questions are:*

- *What did you enjoy about Lectio Divina?*
- *What did you find challenging?*
- *What did you learn?*
- *What difference do you think it might make if you used the practice of Lectio Divina more often?*
- *When would be a good time in your week to practice Lectio Divina?*

## Memory Verse

**Please, Lord, hear my prayer and give me the  
understanding that comes from your word.**

**Psalm 119:169 (CEV)**

*Write the verse on a board or butchers paper so that all of the children can see it.*

*Divide the children into two teams.*

*Ask each team to stand in a line.*

*The first person must race to the other side of your space, shout out the verse then run back and tip the next person in line.*

*The teams must continue until everyone has taken a turn then sit down.*

# Prayer Time

*Ask the children to take down the card that they contributed to the word cloud then stand in a circle.*

*Pray*

Dear Jesus, please help us to understand how these words can change the way we live so that we become more and more like you.

*Ask the children to take turns around the circle to say the words on their card.*

# Home & Beyond

- Stick your 'word cloud' card where you will see it often this week.
- Use the booklet to help explain to your Big Bud or someone in your family about Lectio Divina.
- Choose a few verses in your Bible and take some time to try out Lectio Divina on your own or with your Big Bud or a family member.

# Appendix A

## Option 1: Diary of HV Reynolds

Sunday 7th February 1915. (Diary of HV Reynolds)

<https://www.evernote.com/pub/jholloway127/diaryofananzac#st=p&n=3e1e95e8-7835-4f30-88ef-346caf361a49>

'Ralph Clark and myself went over to Luna Park\* at Heliopolis and has such a good time, this place is not equal to the one at St. Kilda, but the prices are very much lower. They have a winter chute, scenic railway and other side shows, the place has been closed up for a time and has only been going since the troops arrived here.'

\*Luna Park at Heliopolis was used as an Auxiliary hospital from the landing in 1915..

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## Option 2: Excerpt from a Dog's Diary

<http://www.maniacworld.com/excerpt-from-a-dogs-and-cats-diary.html>

### Excerpt from a Dog's Diary.....

- 8.00am - Dog food! My favourite thing!
- 9.30am - A car ride! My favourite thing!
- 9.40am - A walk in the park! My favourite thing!
- 10.30 - Got rubbed and petted! My favourite thing!
- 12.00pm - Lunch! My favourite thing!
- 1.00pm - Played in the yard! My favourite thing!
- 3.00pm - Wagged my tail! My favourite thing!
- 5.00pm - Milk bones! My favourite thing!
- 7.00pm - Got to play ball! My favourite thing!
- 8.00pm - watched TV with the people! My favourite thing!
- 11.00pm - Sleeping on the bed! My favourite thing!



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