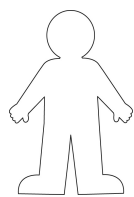


Franciscan Lectio of Creation

adapts the spiritual discipline of Lectio Divina, and with a Franciscan twist, creates a new approach for the “divine reading” of nature as a way to more fully know God. Our Christian tradition affirms two complementary sources of God’s revelation: (1) the book of nature and (2) the book of scripture. Scripture itself bears witness to these “books” in Psalm 19, with Jesus using nature in his parables and the Apostle Paul also affirming in Romans 1:19 that “what can be known about God” has been seen “ever since the creation of the world” with God’s eternal power and deity “clearly perceived in the things that have been made.” From the Early Church Mothers and Fathers into the Middle Ages, the metaphor of nature as a book was well established. During the Enlightenment, however, the Age of Reason undermined the authority of nature as revelation, giving primacy to biblical text. With growing contemporary awareness of humanity’s connection with nature, there is a need to re-educate God’s people in how to “read” nature and experience divine communion with the Creator through nature. Based in Franciscan spirituality, the teaching of St. Clare and the example of St. Francis of Assisi, this lectio also engages the whole self, head, heart, and hand for creation care. (For resources on this “new” spiritual practice and the *Canticle of re:Creation*, visit us at www.re-creation-network.com.)



1. CONNECT: *Open all your senses to experience the Creator through creation*

To become more aware of their surroundings, naturalists learn to be still and to engage their five senses. Find a spot outside and sit quietly for a few moments. Be present in the moment by calming your mind and stilling your spirit. Slowly open your “**owl eyes**” and expand your peripheral vision to see all that is around you. Next, begin to tune in to the sounds around you with your “**deer ears**”. As you take deep breaths, allow your “**bear nose**” to smell the air and sniff the multitude of scents surrounding you. Engage your “**raccoon hands**” as you tactilely explore your environment; and if you are

daring (and know something about the local plants), extend your “**reptile tongue**” and taste creation’s bounty. Open your whole self to the Creator through creation’s loving gaze and embrace. After a few moments focus your attention and connect with one creature. Be with it; connect with God through it; do not rush.



2. CONSIDER: *Think about your connections through scripture and science*

Given your “creation connection”, what thoughts are triggered as you consider what you know from scripture and science? Think about what this teaches about your relationship with God and all the Creator has made. How do the environmental realities we face today challenge this relationship? Also consider: What do you like best about being in nature? What is “good” and “beautiful” to your senses? How is God revealed through nature?



3. CONTEMPLATE: *Prayerfully bring to the Creator your considerations in love*

Given your “considerations”, what feelings are stirring in your heart? Bring this to prayer as you look on creation with love through the Spirit and allow your contemplations on nature to draw you closer to God. Also contemplate: How do you feel about creation? What are you experiencing as “true”? What passions are unfolding in your heart regarding your commitment to Christ, God, others, and the Earth because of your creation connections?



4. CARE: *Live and love like the Creator*

Given your time seeking the Creator in creation, what can you do to live out your growing convictions? How can you imitate the Creator’s love as a “brother”, a “sister”, a “neighbor” to all God has made? How is your connection with God through nature calling you to care, not just for people but also the planet? To CARE, choose: (1) a **Change** to make in your lifestyle, (2) a form of **Art** to express your growing passions and commitments, (3) a **Relationship** to address or to learn more about through study, (4) an **Example** to follow from nature or from someone whose creation care you admire. Your commitment to creation care is your “eco-vocation”, your ecological spirituality.