

Reading a Story with God

by Beth Beall



Lectio divina (LEK-see-oh di-VEEN-uh) means "holy reading." When we do lectio divina, we slow down and pay attention. Why? Because God is with us and maybe God wants to say something to us. In this activity, you'll try lectio divina with a story book.

For
Just for Kids

Season

Spring

Needed

The book *Goggles!* by Ezra Jack Keats. Your school library or public library may have a copy. (Don't worry if you can't find a copy of the book. You'll see a suggestion at the end of this activity that invites you to use a book you already have.)

Optional: drawing materials (colored pencils, crayons or markers; paper)

Activity Plan

1. Begin with a prayer. Maybe you want to pray silently. If you'd like to use words, you might try these:

"Loving God, I know you are always with me. Help me to see this story with your eyes, and to hear whatever you might want to say to me. Amen."

2. Read through the entire story of *Goggles!* Take your time, pausing to pay attention to whatever words and illustrations speak to you.
3. Optional: You might like to look through the story a second time, either re-reading the words or simply looking at the pictures.
4. With the book open before you, think or talk about one or more of the following questions.

- The Bible tells us that “a true friend sticks by you like family” (Proverbs 18.24). In this story, Archie and Peter are good friends. Who is one of your good friends? Why do you like being with that person? Maybe you’d like to draw a picture of your good friend.
 - While Peter and Archie are playing together, Peter discovers some goggles. Then some bullies appear and try to take the goggles. In the picture where the bullies say, “Give us those goggles, kid,” how do you think Peter and Archie are feeling? I wonder what God might say to the bullies in this scene? I wonder what God might say to Peter and Archie?
 - Peter, Archie, and Willie-the-dog all rush away to their hideout spot to get away from the bullies. Do you have a hideout spot? The Bible says that God is our hiding place (Psalm 32.7). If you’d like, draw a picture of you or some other people hiding in God.
 - Near the end of the story, Peter and Archie trick the bullies, and the bullies run away. On the last page, we see Peter, Archie, Willie-the-dog, and some other children having a relaxed and peaceful time together. If you were in this picture, what would you be doing?
5. Finish your lectio divina by doing something called “contemplation” (con-tem-PLAY-shun). Contemplation means resting in God. You might want to close the book and set it aside. Or you might want to leave the story open to a picture that especially speaks to you. Quiet your heart by taking a couple deep breaths. Rest for as long as you’d like. God has been with you as you’ve read *Goggles!* God is with you now, and always.

Using this Activity with Another Story Book

Choose a favorite story book that you have at home. Even if you like to read long chapter books, it would be helpful to try this activity first with a short story book. A story book with pictures you like would work well. These are the basic steps for doing lectio divina with a story book:

- Pray. Invite God to join you in looking at this book.
- Read slowly. Pay attention to what stands out to you and to how you feel during the story. You may want to look at or read through the story a second time.
- What do you wonder about? Try talking with God about the story, just as you’d talk with a friend. Listen for whatever God might want to say.
- Spend some time in contemplation. Remember that God has been with you while you read, and will be with you always.

