



02 Ep #495 The Little Way Visualization Exercise for Your Inner Child

0:00:00.0 Speaker 1: Sonja created the LOVE The Word Bible Study Method just for you, based on Mary's personal practice and formulated for your personality and temperament. Get your LOVE The Word meditations every Monday morning by signing up at biblestudyevangelista.com. Now here's Sonja. If you like having Bible study in your pocket and you have an iPhone or iPad, why not leave a review? Search Bible study Evangelista in iTunes and tell everyone how you're loving and lifting all you've been given. Here's Sonja.

[music]

0:00:43.8 Sonja: All right, y'all, this is a big one. I have prayed a lot about how to offer this series and what order to do the exercises and the teachings in. And I believe that we need today to just jump right in to the Little Way, the inner-child exercise. So if you're driving or you're in a place where you cannot relax and have solitude and privacy, then you need to stop this audio right now and wait to listen to it when you do, because I'm going to lead you into some relaxation techniques and the inner-child or the Little Way exercise that I formulated based on St. Thérèse's Little Way. Now, it's important for me to point out that this is, this doesn't come directly from Thérèse. I'm just using her term the Little Way as a springboard for getting in touch with that inner-child and helping us bring the child in us to Jesus for healing. Later on in the series, we'll look at some of Thérèse's own practices in the Little Way that she teaches and that she gave the church. But I believe that what we're doing, what we're about to do today is loyal to the spirit of that Little Way. So let's just begin. And perhaps you listened to that last show where we got to know Thérèse and her background. You might have listened to that and said, this whole thing is just really weird and you might have been put off. And I'll be honest, and I was in the last show that I felt that way when I read her story of the soul.

0:02:35.9 Sonja: I mean it just, she's just so little. And as someone else in the community pointed out this week after the show, I was taught, you better be a big girl. You better be a big girl and quit your whining. And so if you have that feeling, I just want to say it's common. And this exercise might feel silly and it might feel odd at first, but ask little Thérèse to guide you and trust her. Because if as children, we weren't nurtured properly during our developmentally critical stages and childhood as a whole, is a pretty critical stage. Parts of us freeze up in time and they don't mature. And perhaps you catch yourself doing things or acting like a baby. I remember telling my mentor one time, I feel like such a baby, and she said, Sonja, you are his baby. So in cases where this childhood idea is just a little bit weird, we need to know that that's actually an indication that your inner-child needs to be nurtured. And maybe even re-parented by your adult-self in order to heal and not act out in fear. So right brain people tend to have an easier time with this because it's visualization, it's intuitive than those left brain, data driven people do, although that's not always the case.

0:04:00.1 Sonja: I have kind of both. But this method, this visualization, has so much data to back up its efficacy that it's worth at least getting out of your comfort zone a little bit to get this true sense of resilience and peace and play. So just try to drop the judgment and try the exercise. In fact, your inner-child is in distress if you experience feelings, either subtle or strong, of shame, guilt, inner-restlessness: I have said often that there's a difference in guilt and shame and contrition. Guilt and shame do not come from God. Contrition comes from God. Contrition is not loaded with judgment and condemnation. Contrition just says, "Man, that was bad, I shouldn't do that again." Whereas guilt and shame are loaded with judgment. You are bad, right? So if you experience these feelings of guilt and shame on a regular basis, especially in your inner thought life, your inner-child is in distress. If you find yourself chronically overworking or overachieving to either knowingly or unknowingly get approval, maybe from God, maybe from your employers, whoever you love and respect, if you're trying to get praise or trying to feel like you belong, if you have an inability to be present in the moment, if you always need to be busy, if you experience regular anxiety or fear or loneliness.

0:05:36.7 Sonja: If you have really strong perfectionist tendencies, if you're rigid, overly orderly, if you break down when you're faced with failure, if you notice or find it difficult to notice and celebrate your wins in life, if you feel like there's no good thing that you do is ever going to be enough. If you have a string of unhealthy relationship patterns, perhaps... And I call these pop quizzes, this pattern of feeling like you're dealing with the same challenges over and over, but every time with different people. If you self sabotage, if you're obsessive, if you have addictive behaviors, if you have feelings of worthlessness or never enoughness, that either makes you underachieve or overachieve. If you experience hopelessness, giving up or just not trying anymore to go after love or to improve your relationships or your relationship with God, or to achieve goals, if you have a lot of negative rumination and self-talk, all of these are indications that your inner-child is in distress. So this exercise is going to help you with that. In the difficult situations from our past, parts of us might have been shoved way down deep into the dungeon of our minds and our hearts. In internal family systems lingo, that word is exiled. And we do that subconsciously, of course, in order to protect ourselves.

0:07:09.8 Sonja: Those are coping mechanisms. And our brains learn how to cope with difficult emotional and intellectual realities in our past in the same sort of way that we learn how to ride a bike. So what we do physically in learning is similar to what happens in the brain emotionally and intellectually when we're learning. So we may encounter something that feels overwhelming when we're a child and we don't know what to do with it because we're not adults, we don't have the developmental capacity to deal with things in a mature way. And so we develop coping mechanisms which are good and helpful when we're children because they keep us safe and they keep us in a good relationship with the authority figures who provide us with food and shelter. And a child inherently understands that they must please the authority figure in order to be able to survive. So it's that innate, it's that rudimentary, it's that developmental. The problem is, though, that those coping mechanisms, we continue to operate in them long after they are healthy, and long after they're helpful. And so we might find ourselves like St. Paul said, "I don't do what I want to do, and I do do what I shouldn't do." So these are all indications that our inner-child needs some attention. And our pop quizzes help us know where the Holy Spirit is inviting us to see and acknowledge the wounded parts of ourselves.

0:08:48.3 Sonja: Now a quick review on pop quizzes. A pop quiz is an emotional eruption that

seems to come out of left field, which is why I call it a pop quiz. It's a surprise, or it feels like it anyway. And it's, usually a real pop quiz is usually super emotional. If you're a sort of passionate, expressive personality, it'll come out in say anger or aggression or outward displays of strong emotion. If you are more introverted, you may stuff a lot of that, because maybe you learn that it's unsafe to express strong negative emotion. Or perhaps you're just that sort of quiet and reserved personality that naturally does that anyway. But if it's hysterical, it's historical. I don't know where I picked that up, but somebody said it somewhere, and it's just so good. If it's hysterical, it's historical, which means if you're having a lot of super emotion, then it is likely rooted in something in the past. And so the pop quizzes are the Holy Spirit's way of alerting us to where he's working and where he wants to heal us and where he wants to address our woundedness. And this inner-child idea is exactly how we tune in to the roots of those wounds. And the feelings can be pretty intense, even if you don't have any recollection of the memories associated with this emotion perhaps, it was pre-verbal, pre-self-aware. We call that implicit memory.

0:10:25.9 Sonja: If you don't have like picture memories, but you get this overwhelming feeling, that is an indication that it could be an implicit memory. And so our pop quizzes help us recognize that our inner-child is stuck somewhere in pain and fear and perfectionism, maybe anxiety, maybe avoidance of the types of people and places and experiences that subconsciously we associate with those memories. And so if your inner-child is walking around with these big loads of pain or is afraid of you trying new things, you're probably going to get stuck feeling torn between a part of you that wants safety and another part that wants possibility and connection and adventure. Those kinds of conflicts cause us to get stuck. We feel paralyzed. A difficulty in playing is also a mark of an inner-child in distress. Children need love and fun and play in order to develop properly. Play is how they learn. So as adults, play also inspires our creativity and our intuition, and it helps us to develop some resilience.

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0:11:50.0 Speaker 3: You are listening to the Sacred Healing 12:30 podcast, because love heals.

0:12:02.5 Sonja: Aren't you tired of all the ugliness on social media? You need a faith community that nurtures you and helps you heal. Visit biblestudyevangelista.com and click community on the menu. Or scroll down to the radio notes and click the link to the Sacred Healing 12:30 Community. You'll find monthly coaching calls for one-on-one consultation and masterclass participants. Live healing prayer streams, a monthly Bible study prayer intentions and intercessions, love the word takeaways from the daily readings and poignant shares of our victories and struggles. We're waiting for you. Are you coming?

0:12:41.1 Speaker 1: Did you know you can get Bible study evangelista Radio notes and podcasts delivered to your inbox every Monday morning? Redeem your Mondays. Join thousands of your fellow listeners by subscribing at biblestudyevangelista.com now here's Sonja.

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0:13:10.0 Sonja: As much as food and water and shelter, fun and play are critical to healthy child development. And if we don't play as adults, if we for some reason are constricted by this hyperactivity or this overachieving all the time, if we're rigid in that way, that's first of all a clear indication that our inner-child is in distress. But also, we are not going to be as healthy as we could

be. If we didn't have a playful childhood that will stand in the way of our own resilience and success as adults. But it, don't worry, because it's not too late. That's what you're here for. We can re-parent our inner-child from a place of radical acceptance and curiosity and openness and, of course, fun and joy. So if you've been carrying big emotional burdens for a long time, it's going to be hard to do this type of work, this inner-child kind of thing, and it may, you may have an aversion to it. But as I said, there was some help. Over in the community, there was a little discussion between Carol and Jill. And Jill suggested Dorothy Day's book or writing called Thérèse, and she posted a page from it. And I just love this. We know Dorothy Day as the leader of the Catholic Worker Movement, and she was an activist and she was arrested a bunch, for social justice activism. But she also had a really strong devotion to St. Thérèse of Lisieux.

0:14:51.8 Sonja: And there's a little paragraph here that Jill sort of highlighted for us. It says, Day's devotion to the little flower, as St. Thérèse is popularly known, is all the more striking in light of her initial reaction. Upon first reading Thérèse's autobiography, which she received from a priest soon after her conversion, Day found it colorless, monotonous, too small, in fact, for my notice. In short, pious pap saying, what kind of a saint was this who felt that she had to practice heroic charity and eating what was put in front of her, in taking medicine, enduring cold and heat restraint, enduring the Society of Mediocre Souls, in following the strict regime of the Convent of Carmelite nuns, which she had joined at the age of 15. And yet Dorothy would come to see in Thérèse not only a great saint, but one with a message particularly relevant for our times. So she recognized and had this sort of aversion toward Thérèse too, because she was very immature and very childish in the beginning. But we can see that that is the perfect starting point. And in fact, it's part of why Jesus said, we have to become like little children again, and we're going to let Thérèse teach us exactly what that means.

0:16:08.6 Sonja: But part of it for us is acknowledging our inner-child, acknowledging the immaturity in us, acknowledging the childishness and the need for that. There's some need for that because our inner-children are, back in the day, we weren't actually even allowed to be children in some cases. Some of us were babied to the point that we didn't even develop good discipline. We don't know how to adult. Everything in life seems overwhelming. We can't discipline ourselves. We can't discipline our children. We start and stop. We quit. So some of us were not parented at all and some of us were over-parented. So either way there is an inner-child in there that needs to be re-parented because that inner-child is the one causing all the issues in your life right now. So we want to acknowledge those wounds and that distress and ensure our inner child that we're grown up now and we can and we will take care of her in the ways that she wasn't protected and wasn't provided for before. And where we're short on the will or the power or the strength or the resources to do that for our inner-child, that's where we draw on the Holy Spirit to love the grown-up us so he can repair those attachment wounds and those wounds of abandonment and fear that we carry from childhood, so that we are healing and we're being unstuck from unhealthy patterns and damaging past behaviors or even present behaviors.

0:17:43.9 Sonja: We can heal that inner-child and bring light and love to her in all of the ways that she didn't have or that she didn't get before. And we can live in playfulness and enjoy again. So when we protect and we provide love and radical acceptance for our inner-child, you know how this feels. She starts to glow and she warms us up inside. And then we have that inner-freedom. We breathe easier. We try new things. We're not afraid of failure. We know we can tolerate failure or mess-ups. We can deal with minor amounts of shame without getting totally gobbled up in fear. And we don't get stuck desperately needing approval from other people, our parents or employers or

spouses or whatever. Our inner-child needs to find safety in the world so that she can come out and play and be an active part and a productive part of our own life. So it's the child parts that allow us to be creative and wondrous, as the psalmist says. So I hope you're curious at this point, what does your inner-child's voice sound like? So we're going to find out today with the Little Way visualization technique. And I'm gonna, I'm giving you all of this very, very slowly, step by step by step. But as you practice, you're not going to need all this direction later. I suggest, though, that you always do this check-in with your body and your breathing before prayer, and also even a relaxation technique, which I'll give you in just a moment.

0:19:16.0 Sonja: So the check-in with your body and the relaxation technique I always do in prayer because it helps me get recollected, as the saints call it. And it's a good way to just sort of bring yourself into the presence of God. So let's do that. First, let's check-in with our body and our breathing. What does your posture feel like? Are you slumped? Are you rigid? Are you flexible? What's your heart rate? Is it quick or is it slow? Have you noticed that it has sped up as we talked about this inner-child, or it slowed down? Just notice it. That's all we're doing. We're just checking in. Where do you carry tension? Is it a knot in your stomach? Is it neck or back pain? Is it a headache? Is it tingling in your fingers or your hands? Is it twitching of your eye? Where is your tension? Is it in your chest? Mine usually gathers up in my chest, what external or internal elements offer you a sense of calm, what in your life makes you feel peaceful?

0:20:23.9 Sonja: Is it a favorite sweater? Is it a drink? Is it a place maybe on your sofa or at the beach? Or maybe it's an experience with a loved one, this is important. It's important to have a place to visualize a place of safety, and what I like to direct people to is what Bob Schuchts calls the 'Immanuel Moment.' Which is, think back to a time when you felt closest to God or to Jesus or to the Holy Spirit, or to Mary. When you felt safe and comforted and loved, think back to that and place yourself back in that moment, what did you experience physically? What did you see? What did you hear? What did you smell? What did you feel on your skin and around you? Perhaps, what did you taste? So you want to find when you're checking into your body or with your body and your breathing, think about what brings you a sense of peace and calm, particularly that Immanuel Moment.

0:21:33.4 Sonja: Now, Bob Schuchts got that from someone else, and I can't remember at the moment where he got it. But I've talked about it before, and that Immanuel Moment is a good place to come back to when you start to feel overwhelmed. And we'll talk about that in a moment, but right now we're just checking in with our body, we're looking at our posture our heart rate, we're looking at where we carry tension, we're remembering our place of peace, our Immanuel Moment. And now think about what external stimuli triggers you, or tweaks you? Is it loud sounds? Is it dark at night? Is it social interactions? Is it a particular relationship or a type of person? Alright, so we're just checking in and now I want to give you an exercise for grounding, in case you get overwhelmed as you're doing this inner child exercise, this visualization, you may start to feel overwhelmed, you may start to have a panic attack or just not be able to breathe. And I'll be honest that the first couple of times I ever encountered my own memories and emotions regarding my father and my father wound, I almost hyper-ventilated a couple of times, I didn't have this sort of exercise for grounding, so I'm giving it to you.

0:22:55.5 Sonja: And you can thank me later, because even if you don't have some sort of major traumatic event, if you have little traumas over time that have built up, situations will make you panic, and when you start to panic, you need a way to calm again. So, if at any point during this

visualization exercise you feel overwhelmed, this is the grounding exercise that you need to do. And I will present at some point, probably not this week, 'cause I'm traveling, but I will make sure that you get this in a print out which you can keep.

[music]

0:23:50.3 Speaker 3: You are listening to the Sacred Healing 12:30 Podcast, because love heals.

[music]

0:24:01.5 Sonja: Losing it more often, or lost yourself entirely. Binging on food, alcohol or your phone? Feeling exhausted. Anxious, angry, scared. You've done all the novenas, all the consecrations, adoration, daily mass, Bible study, therapy and deliverance prayers. Why has none of it given you permanent relief? Does God not care? He does care, but you can't feel it because you need to be cherished, you need to be healed. In Sacred Healing 12:30, I teach you how to live authentically from the holistic love of God and the power of Mark 12:30. Heart, soul, mind and strength. I teach you how to be cherished, I teach you how to guard your peace, I teach you how to love authentically, I teach you how to heal deeply, I teach you how to feel better because you can only love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. If they are healing and whole in Him, the love you were made for is only a mouse click away, go to biblestudyevangelista.com to stop the emotional vomit and start experiencing the miracle of living authentically from The Healing Love of God in your heart, soul, mind and body.

[music]

0:25:24.1 Sonja: Here is the grounding exercise for overwhelm or panic, or if you find you can't breathe or whatever, just notice inhale and exhale and notice what you feel in and around your body, especially the speed of your breath, your heart rate, your body temperature, notice all of that. What are you feeling emotionally? What are your thoughts like? Just notice, then go to your Immanuel Moment, think back at a recent time when you felt the most calm and the most safe and the most like yourself in God's presence.

0:26:04.1 Sonja: Then you want to identify, identify at what point in time you started experiencing these physical symptoms, where are they in your body? Where are they located? And when did they begin? Then you wanna replay, replay the scenario from your calm state, you wanna replay it from the calm state to the stress state, but in slow motion, like you're watching a slow motion movie. You wanna look at the people, the conversations, the objects, the behaviors that may have made you stressed or may have made you uncomfortable or that stand out to you, those are the things you want to sort of replay in your mind through the recent event.

0:26:51.6 Sonja: So you've noticed that you're starting to feel overwhelmed, you go to your Immanuel Moment to sort of get grounded, and you're... With all five senses, you're re-experiencing that moment of calm, that Immanuel Moment, and then you're identifying what was the trigger that caused you to start to feel these physical symptoms and the inner turmoil, the strong emotion. Then you wanna replay that entire circumstance from calm to stressed in slow motion and identify what it is exactly that has started to make you feel stressed or uncomfortable. Then you're gonna tune in to your body as you're recalling that event and that circumstance, you're gonna slow down, you're gonna notice if there's a shift in your body is there a sensation, tingling, tensing, warming, numbing,

cooling in your chest, in your arms, in your legs, in your face?

0:27:49.1 Sonja: Is there an overall change in your body temperature? So you wanna tune into your body and then I love this, and then the healing hand, place your hand on the area that has experienced that shift or that change and breathe very deeply. I do this a lot, I put my hand on my chest because that's where my tension gathers, it gets in my chest and I have a hard time breathing, and so I take a couple of deep breaths, I start to try to identify, where did it start? What was it? And then if I feel overwhelmed, I go to that Immanuel moment, I'll go back to the circumstance and I'll replay it and tune into my body and then just... I just I'm doing it right now, I'm rubbing my chest I just I have my hand on my chest, although I'm not stressed out or anything, but I just... I like that idea of that healing hand, the healing flows from the Holy Spirit into you, into your breath, into your body, wherever that area is, for me it's in my chest, I can feel that healing and that sense of calm return, and that is what allows your body to process the somatic experience, the physical symptoms, it creates a passage way to release the tension and the panic, the agitation that you're experiencing because of the circumstance, and for us it might be the circumstance of doing this visualization.

0:29:21.0 Sonja: So notice if something comes up, if you get an image, a sensation, an awareness, an understanding anything like that, that offers clarity to why you're feeling so panicked or distressed, and if nothing comes up, that's fine. You just wanna slow down, you wanna pace your breath, you wanna raise your awareness, all of that is progress, and all of that is helpful in itself, it helps to calm your body. It helps to calm that limbic system. Okay, and you need that. We all need it, we all need that on a daily basis, that's why I do some of this before I even start praying, 'cause it just helps me sink down into the presence of God and be held by him, so... Especially, you wanna practice this after any pop quiz 'cause it allows your body to process the emotions and the messages that your body is sending you through its symptoms, and you can practice it before a stressful event too, so that you can identify potential triggers or tweaks and you can go ahead and plan ahead, you can plan ahead for ways that you're gonna support yourself after the stressful event, say the holidays, [laughter] right?

0:30:31.8 Sonja: Now, we want to be very patient with ourselves when we are doing this sort of inner-child work, it's a little bit like visiting a stranger for the first time, you don't know, your inner child doesn't know if she can trust you, yet she doesn't know you 'cause you've probably ignored her for the whole of your life to this point, but you're gonna find also that she's been waiting to connect with you, she's been waiting to be nurtured by you for a long time, even if she's had a hard time expressing it.

0:31:04.8 Sonja: And the way our inner child expresses that need for attention from us is by the acting out, if your inner child feels resentment, that it's taken you a long time, that's also normal. Your goal is to establish trust, to check in, to connect with your inner child and offer security, especially when we haven't done so up to this point. We want to reassure our inner child that we're there now, we're present now, we know better now, and we're gonna be mindful of our inner child from now on and make sure that she has what she needs, it's gonna take some time to establish that trust and that's fine, just be patient, be patient with your inner child and yourself as you're learning to sort of navigate this inner world alright?

0:31:56.5 Sonja: And let the Holy Spirit, let Saint Thérèse guide you in this charity, in this gentleness for your inner child and let that inner child set the tone. Alright? It's very, very important

that you not approach that inner child with judgment. Be open-hearted, just allow whatever happens to just be, there's no right or wrong in this exercise, it just is what it is, you're gonna find a lot of surprising things. I have this inner child work has been the most effective healing that I've ever experienced, and this always happens, I'm doing a series for you, and what I'm discovering is I have found another layer to my own healing and it's shocking, but it comes through this attention to my own inner child. Alright? And I'll share that later. It can't be today, 'cause I wanna do the exercise with you before I run out of time.

0:32:55.9 Sonja: So you're gonna notice when you start to slow down and get curious about your inner child, that there is an inner child waiting there wanting to talk to you. She may be happy and playful, or she may be sad and hurt and wounded, she might have lots of energy and wanna play and run around and show you her toys or his wrestling moves. You might even notice that there's a teenager or a young adult part there too, we'll get to that in another show. But you're gonna know that you're in the zone, the healthy zone as your competent competent adult self and that you're not allowing a protector to take over when you can approach your inner child with the... Well, they're called the core qualities of self, the eight C's, but the main one is no judgment. The eight C's come from Richard Schwartz in his Internal Family Systems Model, and they are compassion, curiosity, courage, clarity, creativity, connectedness, confidence and calm. And then there are also five P's patients, perspective, presence, persistence, playfulness. There are a couple of H's too, according to some people, but that's enough to just get you started.

0:34:11.1 Sonja: The point is radical acceptance and no judgment, don't approach your inner child with a sense of judgment, and if you do, that if it happens, it just does, right? We're not no judgment there either, but you want to back off, you're probably gonna need some further individual help alright? You don't wanna harm further harm your inner child with judgment, you're gonna know you're in the zone when you have those eight C's, you're approaching as your adult competent self, and you're not letting the judgment or some other... What is called an IFS, a protector to take over. Because that will do more harm than good. So we want to approach with kindness, with charity, you wanna approach your inner child as you would any other neighbor with charity. With your presence with lots of love, with unconditional radical acceptance, and if you sense judgment or anger or resentment toward that inner child, you need to stop.

0:35:13.5 Sonja: Okay? The next step is to prepare your environment, now, I'm just gonna warn you that after this, you're probably gonna feel tired and drained, and that's normal. It can take a lot out of you. So start thinking now about ways to replenish afterward, but to get started, we're going to relax, we're gonna relax and sink into God's presence, and I'm gonna teach you a three, two, one relaxation exercise when we get back.

[music]

0:35:50.3 S3: You are listening to the Sacred Healing 12:30 Podcast, because love heals.

0:36:11.8 S1: If you love having Bible study in your pocket, you can become a friend of the show, click on the yellow friend of the show button on biblestudyevangelista.com, and become a supporter of any amount and any frequency. Now here's Sonja.

[music]

0:36:22.8 Sonja: Close your eyes and take a long deep breath in for four to seven seconds, hold that breath for four seconds, and then exhale slowly for six to eight seconds, and as you do so, relax your body. Visualize the number three, three times. Relax your scalp. Relax your neck. Relax your ears. Relax your jaw. Relax your shoulders. Relax your chest, both outwardly and inwardly. Relax your abdomen, inwardly and outwardly. Relax your hips. Relax your back. Relax your legs. Relax your calves. Relax your feet. Relax your toes.

0:37:25.3 Sonja: Now, take a deep breath in, hold it. Breathe out and visualize the number two, three times, and place yourself in a place of peace and calm, maybe it's the ocean, maybe it's the mountains, maybe it's your couch. Place yourself in that space and breathe deeply and relax, notice your breath, just stay in that peace place for a few moments, perhaps it's your Immanuel moment, and then visualize the number one, three times, relax your eyelids. From here on out, when you practice the three, two, one and you have relaxed your eyelids, you will be fully calm and fully relaxed, it feels very good to be this calm and relaxed.

0:38:37.2 Sonja: When you are at number one count back from 10 to one. Imagine yourself in an elevator going down 10 floors and a gentle stop at the bottom. Or imagine yourself going down a flight of steps, 10 steps to the bottom, into your peace place, into the presence of God. Breathe deeply again and again for as long as it takes for you to fully relax and each time, invite your body into a deeper and deeper relaxation into the presence of God, and once you feel fully relaxed, imagine putting away any stressful thoughts or any distractions that might be trying to sneak into your mind, you're gonna imagine each of those is surrounded by a little bubble and it just floats away with each breath. You can worry about all of that stuff later, put it in a bubble and let it float away right now, this time is all yours.

0:39:50.6 Sonja: And now I'd like for you to visualize that you're standing in a huge field; I want you to imagine what it looks like. What do you smell? What do you see in this huge field of tall grass? What do you hear? Perhaps you taste something. Do you feel the breeze? Do you feel the warmth of the sun? Imagine yourself in this field until with all of your five senses, you can be fully present in that field, you are calm, you are relaxed, and suddenly you feel a presence beside you, a strong, calm, safe presence.

0:40:43.9 Sonja: And you realize that it's Jesus, and He takes you by the hand, and you're both looking off into this huge field, enjoying one another's company, enjoying the surroundings, enjoying creation together. You feel safe and relaxed, and the two of you begin to walk, you're not speaking, you're just enjoying one another's presence, you're walking through this field, and way off in the distance, you see a little speck, but you can't make out what it is. You and Jesus continue to just walk together in a companionable silence, enjoying one another's presence, enjoying the outdoors, approaching that speck in the distance, you draw closer and closer until you realize that it is a child.

0:41:46.6 Sonja: The little you is before you now. Does she look up at you? Can you see what she needs? Does she want you to know something? Some of you are simply going to connect with your inner child with eye contact at first, perhaps you feel something in your body, remembering that Jesus is present with you. What does your inner child need? What does she want you to know? What does she want to share with you?

0:42:35.6 Sonja: Some inner children might prefer that you stay a few feet away, some are gonna

want you to hug them, that's what mine did. But try to sense what your inner child needs, you might bend down so you can listen to what she has to say, maybe she wants to be picked up and held. Let the child guide you, remembering that Jesus is present with you both, and let her know that you're a grown up now, you're here to protect and provide for her in all the ways that you couldn't before, reassure her that you're gonna be here, that you're mature now, and you know how to be there for her, and Jesus is going to take care of you both.

0:43:21.3 Sonja: In some of the earlier days of my own healing, when I approached my inner child, she was bawling, she was crumpled up in a pile with her head down between her knees, and she was just so sad and really pitiful, and she just needed to hear and know that I saw her, that I loved her, that she was good, she was good, just the way she is. And I picked her up and I put her on my lap and I just kissed her face later on in my healing, I was led in this exercise again in a little different way, and my inner child came running up to me, she was twirling around, and making me think about the Magnificat where, "My soul rejoices in God, my Savior." That twirliness, if you've never heard that series that show on the Magnificat, the very first show, I believe talks about that line, "My soul rejoices in God, my savior." And the picture there is this twirling, this happiness, and I saw my inner child was twirling and she came running up to me and jumped up in my lap and she saw me.

0:44:25.8 Sonja: She was really, really small and I was enormous, and she saw me as this great wise woman. And at first when I was in the child's point of view, I saw this huge, great wise woman, and I understood it to be Mary, but when I was in the great wise woman's point of view, and I saw the child before me, the child thought, I was the great wise woman, [chuckle] which I thought was interesting. So just don't judge whatever happens, just go with it, because you're gonna get a lot of information that's gonna be helpful to you and helpful to your inner child no matter what. And consistency, as with any child, consistency is part of parenting your inner child, because some of our inner children needed attention and love and protection, and safety and provision, but some of our inner children need some boundaries, right?

0:45:18.2 Sonja: And so we want to be loving and attentive and responsible as a re-parent to our inner child, because she needs your love and your care, he needs your attention, he needs your acknowledgement and your love and care in order to heal. And it can be a stretch, if you have never had a warm or connected parent model growing up, this can be a stretch, but offer what you have, so long as it's not Judgment, give what you have. Now again, after you do this, you're probably gonna feel tired and drained, and that's fine, it can take a lot out of you, so what can you do to nourish yourself and replenish, and during that inner child meditation, you might have noticed all kinds of stuff going on in your mind and your body, you may have observed some interesting details about your inner child, and just the act of getting curious and noticing what's going on is a big healing step all by itself, so even if that's all you get the first time around that is plenty.

0:46:18.1 Sonja: So now that you've done the exercise, you wanna kind of review and take some notes, how old was your child? What did she look like? What were the sensations in your body that occurred? What thoughts or memories did your child share with you? What were some of the emotions that your child was feeling? What did he or she need? And where did you feel those physical sensations in your body? So all of that then is part and parcel of what we're doing in the visualization, The Little Way, when we're doing the inner child work, when we're encountering our inner child, we're looking for what our child needs from us, and if we can't supply that on our own then we're drawing on the presence of Jesus, visualize Jesus holding you as the grown up and you

are holding the child, so that Jesus is embracing both of you.

0:47:07.4 Sonja: And there are other ways that you can do that, that I do one-on-one in one-on-one consultations to help people with this exercise, because you could also encounter a young adult you, an adolescent you other stages of yourself that need some love and care. And you can do that, and I do that in one-on-one consultations, but I'm not gonna have time to do that with you today. This is enough to get you started. It's enough to at least get you in touch with your inner child and bring that inner child to Jesus for that healing. And to attend to the inner you, this is The Little Way of Inner Childhood Visualization.

[music]

0:47:51.1 Sonja: Thank you for listening to the Sacred Healing 12:30 Podcast. Find out more at biblestudyevangelista.com because love heals.

