



Welcome to RE!

This month's theme is Deep Listening

Week 5: Listening to Nature

The UU faith reminds us that we are all connected, as stated in the Seventh Principle: "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." I love how John Muir, naturalist and defender of open spaces said this same thing: "when one tugs at a single thing in nature, they find it attached to the rest of the world." So this week, we practice deepening our connection to the Earth, as we listen closely to the natural world around us. This deepening and connection is so important. It nurtures our compassion for other creatures and our love for our planet Earth, home of all living things. And it also helps to soothe our nervous systems and recharge our spirits as we connect to the quiet power of nature.

Gathering Together: Listening to the smallest creatures

In [this week's video](#), Hippo comes back to help open the wonder box and it inspires a story for all. Here is [a .pdf of the story](#) I tell

Stories for RE: The Wisdom of the Earth

These stories remind us that everything has a voice, even the rocks, crickets and earth beneath our feet. If we can quiet our minds, tune into our hearts and listen deeply, we can hear the wisdom all around us.

- "[The Very Quiet Cricket](#)" by Eric Carle is a sweet story, embracing stillness for the youngest readers
Here is [an animated version](#) using Eric Carle's original drawings
- "[The Other Way to Listen](#)" by Byrd Baylor and Peter Parnall is a gorgeous book about listening to the wisdom found in nature.
- "[The First Fire](#)" a Cherokee story told by Robert Lewis of how Grandmother Spider brought fire to the world.

Mindful Moment: Barefoot Connection

Have you heard the term "earthing" (also called "grounding") yet? It's a simple and powerful practice that humans have done since the very beginning, but have grown away from in the last hundred years. It's the act of connecting to nature in a direct, physical way by either being barefoot, lying or sitting on the earth, gardening with bare hands, or hugging a tree. Not only does it feel good to wiggle your toes in sand or grass, but it also connects your body to the electro-magnetic field of the Earth, which has all kinds of [amazing health benefits](#). So I invite you to find a warm day and take off your shoes, sit on the earth and breathe in the experience of being grounded.

Songs of Joy: My Roots go Down

This lively song celebrates our connection to the Earth and helps us to imagine being many different parts of the web of life. The verses are endless, and I invite you to make up your own! Pick anything from nature and describe how it might feel or what it might be doing.

[Here's an audio](#) of me singing and explaining it.

Chorus:

My roots go down, down into the Earth (*sung three times*)
My roots go down

Example verses:

I am a spider, weaving my web (*sung three times*)
My roots go down

I am the ocean, flowing and free (*sung three times*)
My roots go down

Soulful Connections: Nature Love

Remember to drop off your LOVE NOTE from last week!

Leave your love note in the slotted box outside the UUCSC main door
between Friday, October 16 and Sunday, October 18.

For this week, we have some fun nature connections:

- Inspiration from Andy Goldsworthy: [Check out these images](#) with your kids. Talk about how he might have made them, remembering that he only uses things he finds outside. Now go make your own nature art from what you find outside! And send me some pictures if you can!
- Blindfolded Tree Hugger: Take turns with one person blindfolded and the other leading. The leader brings the other in a circuitous route to a tree. The blindfolded one feels the tree, the ground around the tree, smells it, feels for branches. Then the leader brings the blindfolded friend back to where they started. They take off their blindfold and try to guess which is their tree. Then they can take some time to sit under that tree and listen to its wisdom.
- A Story from a Tiny Creature: Sit outside and imagine you are tiny. You could be any kind of insect, spider or even fairy. Write (or tell) a story from that tiny creature's perspective. What would the grass look like? How would it feel to cross a field or climb a tree?

We hope you are able to weave some of these offerings into the tapestry of your family days.

May they bring you joy and connection.

Please feel free to email Lee with any questions, comments or feedback! We would love to hear how you are using these offerings and any other ideas you have for what would be supportive for you and your kids.

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