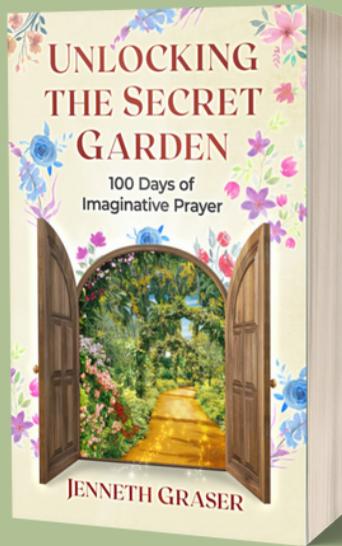


# SMALL GROUP GUIDE



## *Unlocking the Secret Garden*

Jenneth Graser



Welcome! You have decided to go on retreat with *Unlocking the Secret Garden* in a small group setting, whether at someone's home, outdoor location or via Zoom connection. This introduction to your time together, will give you an overview of the book with suggested group guidelines.



*Unlocking the Secret Garden* is a retreat into an internal garden without containment that grows inside of you, in your heart of prayer. It is like the original garden of Eden, face to face with God, or the garden from the Song of Songs, a love story of Christ and his Bride.





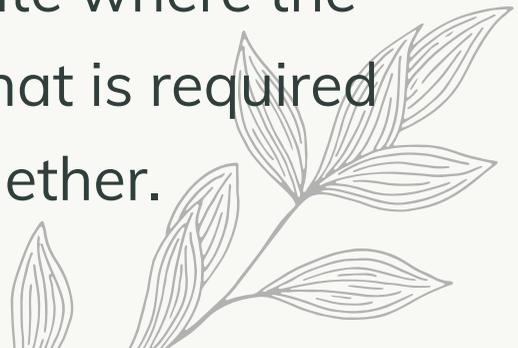
It is also a heavenly garden, ever expanding with eternal possibilities.

It is the secret garden of your personal and unique relationship with Jesus, which unfolds for each person in a unique way. Different aspects of the secret garden will be explored over 100 days of imaginative prayer.





The devotion may be read aloud. A time of quiet contemplation follows for a duration of your choice and then you can do the activation together. Some of these require preparation beforehand in terms of props, location, art supplies, journals... The group leader can communicate where the group will meet and what is required for the time together.





Communicate your guidelines for sharing and participation. After the allocated time for the activation is over, allow room for feedback and sharing. When one person shares, the rest can listen without interruptions or the giving of advice. Each person shares, mindful of the others and the group leader facilitates, making sure that everyone has an equal opportunity.





The following questions explore the use of your imagination in prayer as well as praying contemplatively with scripture: Parables, Imaginative Prayer, Lectio Divina, Ignatian Contemplation and Creative Prayer.



# What are Parables?



Jesus used parables or stories to communicate spiritual truths. As you engage with the unfolding story of the secret garden as a group, you will be able to discuss what opens up for you.

What emotions and feelings are triggered? What rises up to be talked about, so that fellow members can pray for and support each other?

# What is Imaginative Prayer?

You can use your imagination in prayer to deepen your relationship with God, yourself and others.

An example: *The Interior Castle* by St. Teresa of Avila - a vision of a castle, exploring union and fullness of intimacy with God.

In *Unlocking the Secret Garden*, you are coming together in a group context to use your imagination to experience the different dimensions of the secret garden, deepening spiritual intimacy, healing and resting in contemplation as you journey within.



*"Your inward life is now sprouting,  
bringing forth fruit. What a beautiful  
paradise unfolds within you. When  
I'm near you, I smell aromas of the  
finest spice, for many clusters of my  
exquisite fruit now grow within your  
inner garden."*

Song of Songs 4:13 TPT

# What is Lectio Divina?

This translates as the divine reading of scripture or sacred text. Read until a particular passage, verse or word stands out to you. It is as though the Holy Spirit is breathing these words to life. Allow time to contemplate this word or verse mindfully, making room

to share with Jesus about why you feel it is standing out. After which, you can allow space to receive from Holy Spirit greater insight into the verse or word. Finally, rest in the revelation you receive.

***Read, Reflect, Receive, Rest.***



*"Then he opened their minds to  
understand the Scriptures..."*



Luke 24:45

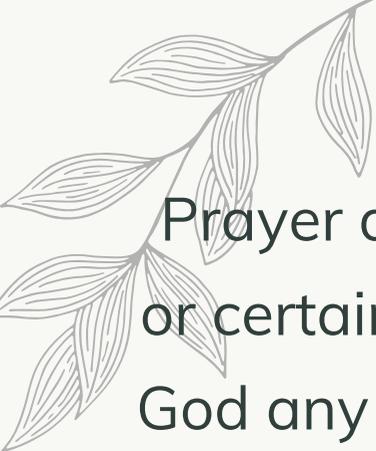


## What is Ignatian Contemplation?

You can use your imagination to enter the gospel stories and put yourself in the place of one of the people in the story you most relate to, watching and observing the events as they unfold. Listen for wisdom from the Holy Spirit, and for the words of Jesus spoken to you in a personal way through the conversations and happenings as the story progresses.

# What is Creative Prayer?

You can enter a place in your memory where you've felt especially close to God, or go to a place in your imagination to spend time with God in prayer. Other ways to be creative with prayer are by using your senses of hearing, sight, sound, touch and taste, being creative using art supplies, a walk in nature, writing a letter to God and from God to yourself, using helpful aids such as essential oils, candles, music for contemplation and gentle movement.



Prayer doesn't need to look a familiar or certain way, you can commune with God any way the Holy Spirit leads your heart. One of the ways you will explore this as a group is by landscape designing your very own secret garden with room on the page for expansion as new areas of the garden are explored throughout the retreat.





Allow for quiet time with background instrumental music as the closing quotation is read aloud.

Afterwards, any further prayer requests can be shared and the members can spend some time in listening to God for each other, sharing messages of encouragement or scriptures that come to mind.





You can access YouTube videos of the daily readings and activations and watch these as a group to enrich your time together.

These can be found at:  
<https://youtube.com/user/jennblog>



Order copies of *Unlocking the Secret Garden:  
100 Days of Imaginative Prayer*

Paperback available here:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B09765YD6M>

Kindle e-book available here:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B097F5KN6F>



More information about  
***Unlocking the Secret Garden***  
and to get in touch with the author:

[www.secretplacedevotion.weebly.com/unlocking-the-secret-garden.html](http://www.secretplacedevotion.weebly.com/unlocking-the-secret-garden.html)





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