



Lesson 3: **Guided Adventures & Learning New Skills**

Scene 3a: "Father and Son"

Scene 3b: "Morning Report"

Guided Meditation: "Explorer in the Garden"

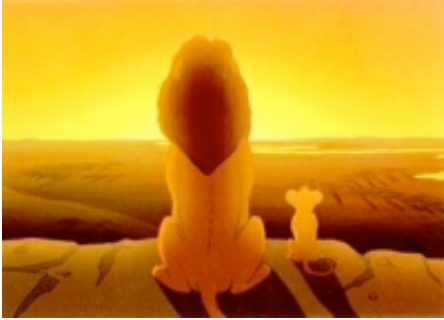
Objectives:

- (1) Scene 3a: "Father & Son": To encourage reflection and sharing on **special adventures with a beloved adult**.
- (2) Scene 3b: To remember times when a grown-up or older sibling or friend helped teach the child a **skill** that made them feel more grown-up and capable.
- (3) To introduce the idea of **stages in life**, and to connect that with the "Circle of Life" concept. To introduce the youth to the term **"Explorer in the Garden"** for the phase of life they will soon be saying goodbye to (or perhaps, for some, already have). Through a guided meditation, to help the youth begin to call up their **best and most vivid memories** of childhood experiences as "Explorers in the Garden."

Materials:

- **chime** or **bell**
- *The Lion King* DVD and DVD player. Before class, **put Disk 1 to into the player and cue it up to Scene 3, then pause it.**
- *The Lion King* **Audio CD** and CD player with speakers.
- Extra photocopies of **the lyrics to "Circle of Life"** for newcomers, plus the **stack of lyrics** that youth already used and signed in the previous session.
- **Photocopy** of the DISCUSSION QUESTIONS printed (with pictures) at the end of this lesson, for cutting apart and using for the **Grab-bag discussion**. (Use stiff paper, if available.)
- **The lock box with the journals** begun last session, plus **extra journals** for newcomers. **Lots of pens, colored markers and colored pencils.**

ACTIVITIES: DVD watching; discussions; silent reflection; journal-writing; stretching; guided meditation; singing



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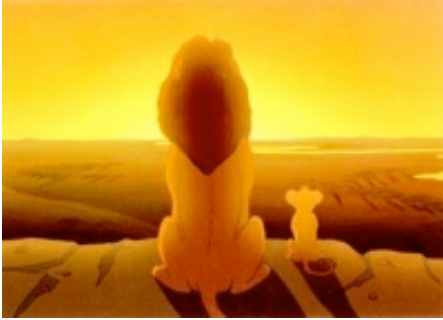
Guided Meditation: "Explorer in the Garden"

Classroom preparation:

- Before class, cue up **Disk 1** of the DVD to Scene 3: "Father and Son."
Cover monitor with cloth.
- Put the stack of **"Circle of Life" Song Lyrics** on a table.
- Put the **Lock Box** of **journals** onto a table; have **extra journals** available for newcomers, with pens and colorful markers
- Have the **chime** or **bell** accessible.
- Put the **Question Cards** into the **Grab-Bag**.
- Have the Audio **CD player** on and cued up to **"Circle of Life" song**.

Lesson flow:

1. **Recollections** from previous week **(3 to 5 mins)**
2. **DVD**: Watch all of Scene 3 **(4 mins)**
3. **Grab-bag discussion** of "Father and Son" **(10 mins)**
4. Silence, then **journal writing** on the themes and personal insights of the day. **(10 - 15 mins)**
5. **Guided meditation** for introducing the understanding of childhood as **"Explorer in the Garden"** and helping children image and remember **(8 mins)**
6. Open-ended **discussion / journaling (5 - 10 mins)**
7. Ritual ending: play the **audio CD** "Circle of Life song" (encourage sing-along with sheets of lyrics; possibly dance, too, or else students can choose to keep journaling) **(5 mins)**



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Recollections from Previous Week (3-5 mins)

GUIDE:

Q: "Did anyone decide to **keep journaling at home**, and who wants to add the new pages to their journal now?"

[If so, tell them to retrieve their named journals from the lock box.]

Q: "Does anyone else want to **take out their journal now**, so that you can draw or doodle in it or jot down a few notes during the discussion?"

Q: "Okay, before we watch the next scene on the DVD, does anyone want to remind us all about **something significant that you remember** from our previous time together — especially something that gives you insight into events in your own life that have already happened or that gives you a sense of hope about how your future may unfold — or else something that just really delighted you?"

[Let the discussion continue, so long as it is lively and on point.]

Date and Title a New Journal Page

[Invite the Youth to select a fresh page in their journal to date, and title it "Guided Adventures and Learning New Skills." . . . Also write down the titles of the new scenes we will watch today: "Father and Son" and "Morning Report". And since we will be learning a NAME for this stage of childhood life, write this down too: "Explorer in the Garden."]

DVD Viewing: all of Scene 3 (4 mins)

GUIDE:

Q: Who remembers what the last scene we watched was about?

[Answer: Mufasa and Scar arguing with each other.]

"Now let's watch what comes next."

[PLAY SCENE 3: "Father and Son" & "Morning Report" Scene 3 begins 8 minutes into the movie and ends at 12 minutes. It ends soon after a ground squirrel pops up with "News from the Underground" and Zazu tells Mufasa "Hyenas in the Prideland!" Simba and Zazu are walking away as the scene ends. Press the PAUSE button as soon as the scene shifts to a dark cliff with Scar on it.]

Grab-Bag Discussion: Childhood Adventures (10 mins)

GUIDE:

*[Ask for a first **volunteer** to reach into the **GRAB-BAG**, pull out card, read the question aloud, then stop and let discussion happen. The volunteer will see the answers, too, so that **they can help guide discussion and give hints** if necessary. You, as the adult Guide, should have very little to do during discussion; if possible, let the kids run it.]*

*[After 10 minutes or so, urge the discussion to come to a close, even if there are still unopened questions in the grab-bag. **Ask for a volunteer to read any questions that remain.** Say to the class something like,*

*"If you really, really want to say something about any of those unanswered questions, **remember it till next week**, and you can say what you want to say at the very beginning of class."*

Journaling (10 -15 mins)

GUIDE: *[Recruit a student to **pass out the JOURNALS**, while you explain:]*

"Instead of having a group discussion on what we just saw, I invite you each to do some journaling of your own, individual thoughts. As I said last week, many people regard **journaling as an important spiritual practice**. You can sometimes figure out how to handle a problem if you

journal about it. Or you can let off steam **if you are angry**, and thus not have to act out your anger. Overall, it is a great practice to learn right now so you can call upon it during your teen years and on into adulthood. . . Basically, **you can't get it wrong**. Whatever comes out of your pen is exactly what is supposed to come out. It might be a lot. It might be just a little. Remember, nothing that you write down here will be seen by anyone else unless you want it to be. All journals are kept in a lock box between classes."

"Let's begin, as always, with **a minute of silence**, and then I'll periodically offer some questions for you to think about. Some of my questions might spark memories and feelings in you; some of them might not. Ignore the ones that aren't helpful to you and just write about whatever might come to mind, or whatever you feel compelled to write — like you're not in charge of the writing, but the writing is in charge of you!"

So settle into a comfortable position . . . close your eyes . . . and start to breathe slowly and deeply. Just focus on your breathing. . .

[ring chime and wait in silence for 1 minute, then say, softly:]

"Here are several questions to ponder with your eyes closed, or to open your eyes and to write about, if you wish:

- **Q:** What are your most vivid memories of a wonderful adventure that a parent or grandparent or another adult took you on?"

[Wait a minute or so before asking the next question.]

- **Q:** Simba watched the sunrise with his father. Do you have a memory of a particular **sunrise** or **sunset** or other time out in **nature** when you felt like everything around you was beautiful and life was perfect? . . . Where were you then? . . . Might you have been camping? . . . What season of the year was it? . . . Were you bundled up, or was the air temperature pretty warm? . . . Who, if anyone, was with you? . . .

[Wait a minute or so before asking the next question.]

- **Q:** In *The Lion King*, during the song, "Morning Report," Simba is practicing pouncing. Mufasa steps in and gives Simba a few tips, and then Simba succeeds. See if you can call to mind **a time when a parent or adult or older sibling or friend helped you learn and practice** how to do something that made you feel great when you succeeded. Maybe it was learning to ride a bicycle . . . or how to float or swim or dive — or fish . . . or how to chop wood or use a saw or start a campfire . . . maybe it was how to sew a button back onto a shirt or how to knit . . . maybe how to use a lawnmower or plant a garden . . . or how

to bake cookies, make pancakes, or prepare a meal all by yourself? . . . Where were you at the time, and who was helping you? . . . What did it feel like when you finally succeeded?

"I'll stop talking now. Go ahead and journal for a few more minutes, or just sit quietly and continue to reflect on these questions."

[Watch the students to see how long they want to keep journaling. Close it off gently before more than a few begin to fidget, and absolutely leave enough time (20 minutes) for the rest of the lesson.]

Stretch:

"Let's all stand and stretch or jump or move around a bit to get our blood flowing." . . . *[then ask them to sit back down]*

Guided Meditation "Explorer in the Garden" (8 mins)

"Please close your journals, close your eyes again, get comfortable, as I lead you through a different kind of reflection. . . . This will be what is called a **"guided meditation."** I will be saying things to help you call up images and memories of your own particular childhood to reflect on in silence The **aim** of this guided meditation is to introduce you to an important way to think about your past childhood years, and to **help you remember and re-imagine some of your best adventures and other experiences.** You will keep your eyes closed the entire time, while your imagination and remembering is invited into **your own private awareness.** Later, you will have a chance to write in your journals, if you wish, about what memories and feelings came up for you. So let us begin with the chime . . ."

[ring chime for GUIDED MEDITATION]

. . . "The **phase of your life that all of you are finishing off** this year or perhaps the following year or so — or that, for some of you, maybe you have already grown past — this is the part of the life cycle traditionally called **childhood.** A mythical way to refer to the childhood stage of the Circle of Life is **"Explorer in the Garden"** . . . **"Explorer in the Garden"** . . .

. . . During childhood you were an **Explorer in the Garden.** This is true whether or not you liked school, because you were **eager to learn and explore** the world around you on your own terms. All mammals are born with an **urge to explore.** Simba and Nala both were born with the urge to explore . . . and you were no different. . . You might not have always been

interested in exploring something that a teacher or other grown-up wanted you to be interested in. But you were eager to explore the parts of the natural and cultural world that **truly interested you**. . . .

. . . Perhaps some of you developed a hobby of studying on your own something about nature — like learning the **constellations** or the names of birds or extinct **dinosaurs** . . .

. . . Some of you might have become **collectors** of something you found out in the natural world . . . perhaps rocks or **fossils** or **feathers** or seeds or **colorful autumn leaves**. . . or maybe you collected **photographs** that you took of those things. . .

. . . Some of you might have **built something outdoors** on your own or with friends. . . maybe a **fort** or a **treehouse**, or a **bow and arrow**. . . or a dirt jump for your bike . . . Some of you maybe built something **inside the house**, like a **tent of blankets** maybe . . . or a **playhouse** for your toy animals or people or dolls. . . or a **special box or shelf** where you kept favorite things you collected. . . .

. . . Some of you may have acquired **pet animals** to take care of . . . or maybe you regularly went out looking for **snakes** or bugs or caterpillars or flowers . . .

. . . Your generation also has a whole new world to explore that my generation didn't have: **the electronic world**. This is the world of the internet and video games. . . And so, many of you became Explorers in the Garden of the Internet and Computers too. . . Maybe it was there that you learned the most about **dinosaurs or planets or penguins**.

. . . And, of course, there was the **cultural world** and also **the social world** that you couldn't help but experience . . . You might have become fascinated with learning to identify different **types of cars** . . . or keeping track of **favorite sports teams** or favorite athletes . . . You might have discovered a **favorite book**, or a series of books. . . You might have watched over and over again a video of a **favorite movie** . . . You might have **drawn** pictures . . . or learned some special **songs** by heart . . . You might have learned to play an **instrument** or how to do a **cartwheel** or special dance moves.

. . . During childhood, the world all seems so big, so vast, so exciting, and sometimes even **magical**. . . Perhaps you can call to mind one of those **magical moments** from your childhood. . . perhaps a time when the sky looked

so blue, or the wind played through tall grass or through the leaves of a tree towering above you or a tree that you liked to climb. . . Or when you looked out across a lake or ocean – or down from a mountaintop. . . Or maybe some special spot in nature where you liked to go to be alone sometimes. . . . Just see if you can call to mind a specific time and a specific place when you felt like **everything was perfect**. . . . Perhaps you remember a really beautiful spring day when you stepped outside and the **air** felt so fresh and the **sun** felt so good on your face. . . . or a special time when you got a chance to play outside in **snow**. . . or in a lake or river . . . or to visit a nature park or a forest or a mountain or a beach a long way from home. . . . [long pause] . .

Now **choose one of those special moments** and hold onto it in your mind. Visualize that moment as best you can: What did you see? . . . What could you hear? . . . What did it feel like to be there and maybe to sense that you, too, are a natural part of the natural world? . . . [long pause]

. . . Now let that special image dissolve away and take a few breaths. . . in and out . . . in and out . . . Now let's shift to other memories of the natural world – memories in which you realized **the world was very big and you were very small**. . . Perhaps you remember a powerful, **scary storm**. . . . maybe thunder and lightning . . . or when you came upon a really **big snake** or almost ran through a spider web with a **gigantic spider** on it. . . or when you wanted to go **swimming** but the waves or the current were just too powerful to be safe. . . See how much of that image and feeling you can call to mind now . . . [long pause]

. . . Now gently let that memory go. . . breathe in and out . . . in and out . . . Now see if you can call to mind a **special birthday** – a special birthday when you got to do something you really wanted to do. . . Take a few moments to enjoy, to savor, what was best about that special time. . . . [long pause]

*[Look for when the kids just begin to fidget, and then **ring the chime**.]*

. . . Let us gently bring this guided meditation to a close. . . take several slow deep breaths . . . in and out . . . in and out . . . and then slowly come back to THIS time, this PLACE, this moment in your own precious life. . . .

Free Discussion (5 - 10 mins)

GUIDE:

Q: “Well, **how was that for you?** Did any of you have any really vivid images come to mind — any memories that came with powerful emotions? Was it something you’d like to experience again? . . . Feel free to begin writing in your **journal** during this discussion, if you’d prefer to do that instead of talking. You can listen while you write.”

[Let everybody have a chance to spontaneously share, if they wish and are excited to do so. If the conversation doesn’t get going, try these additional questions:]

Q: “Sometimes people have a **difficult time calling to mind images** when they shut their eyes. People who learn best not by seeing but by hearing or moving or sensing may find it more difficult to call up images. . . Did any of you experience that?”

Q: “Have any of you experienced a **guided meditation** before? . . . Do you want to tell us the context, or what you experienced? . . . How was this experience today different from regular meditation?”

“Okay, it is time to do our **ritual ending**. Remember that you can choose to continue writing at home and then bring in what you have written. Or, **you can even take your journal home with you** — if you think you will actually remember to bring it back next week.”

Ritual ending: Sing-along “Circle of Life” audio (5 mins)

Stretch:

“Let’s all stand and stretch or jump or move around a bit to get our blood flowing again.”

Pass out the SONG LYRICS: *[After a minute or so of stretching, ask for a volunteer to pass out the SONG LYRICS to “Circle of Life,” and to give out extra copies to those who missed the previous sessions. The volunteer will probably need to call out the names on each sheet, especially for the students he/she doesn’t know. Kids should stay standing and moving during this time.]*

Play AUDIO CD of "Circle of Life":

[If the group seems to be becoming cohesive, you might suggest to them this time (or next, if you need to wait for more intimacy to grow) to stand together in a closer circle, rather than just at their own seat. Then say something like:

"As you read along with the lyrics or sing along, **imagine** that this circle you have formed is a **symbol** of the part in the "Circle of Life" that **your generation** represents. I can't be in it with you in that circle, because, I'm not part of your generation — and, of course, because I've got to start and stop the CD.

. . . So get into a **close circle**, and try to become really **quiet**. . . .

Look around in silence at everyone in your circle . . . Know that everyone you see in this circle happens to share with you right now **this moment in your own life journey** . . . but you also know that each of them will be spinning off to follow their own unique paths — life journeys that will be very different from yours.

Look into each of the faces around you . . . and reflect on how each has their own hopes and dreams for their life What you all share right now is that you are standing in this circle together, getting ready to sing "Circle of Life" and you haven't a clue as to how your own life will unfold!"

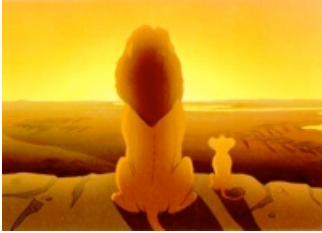
*[The last phrase was meant to release the creative tension with laughter, so now you can **start the audio song, "Circle of Life"**]*

[Make sure the SONGSHEETS are stacked again, as the kids break up into their own conversations.]

NOTE: If **anyone asks if they can take home their journal**, give an enthusiastic YES! — but ask them to remember to bring it back for next week's session.

Grab Bag Discussion Questions: *Photocopy, cut apart, put into Grab-Bag.*

Scene 3 questions for GRAB-BAG discussion



Mufasa says to Simba, "One day, Simba, the sun will set on my time here — and will rise with you."

Question: *What was Mufasa trying to tell Simba? And did Simba understand?*

Possible answers: Mufasa was trying to tell Simba that they would not be together forever, that Mufasa would die. Simba did not understand that his father would ever die.



Mufasa says to Simba, "Everything you see exists together in a delicate balance. As king, you need to understand that balance and respect all the creatures, from the crawling ant to the leaping antelope."

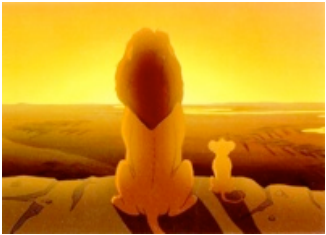
Question: *What does Simba say next? And how does Mufasa respond.*

Answers: Simba says, "But, Dad, don't we eat the antelope? Then Mufasa says, "Yes, Simba, but let me explain. When we die, our bodies become the grass, and the antelope eat the grass, and so, we are all connected in the great circle of life."



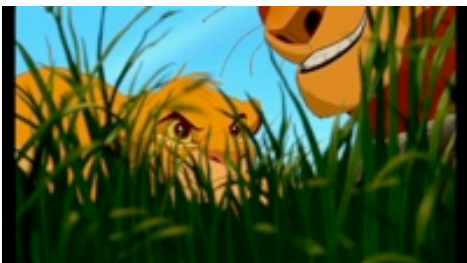
Mufasa tries to explain to Simba about death and about the food web in this scene. "The great circle of life" is a name Mufasa uses to talk about both the passing of the generations and how everybody eventually becomes somebody else's food.

Question: *Who has a memory they would like to share about when they first realized that creatures die? What about when they first realized that somebody they loved would eventually die, and that we all will die too?*



Question: *Was anything said in this scene that reminds you of one of our 7 principles of Unitarian Universalist principles?*

Answer: Principle number 7: "Respect for the interdependent web of existence of which we are part."



During "The Morning Report" Mufasa gives Simba some instruction in how to pounce, and Simba finally succeeds.

Question: *Who has a story about when an adult or older sibling or friend taught you a new skill, and it felt really good to succeed?*