Materials: Six people of God. Desert box or bag. Other items in the accompanying photographs are to show you the positions of the places. They are not needed to tell the story.

Optional: You may choose to end with two minutes silence, or you may invite people to leave a red or white silk petal on the scene.

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|  | There was once a Great War. Even though there had been wars before and since, it is still called the Great War |
|  | It started because both sides thought they could win and win quickly. It would be over by Christmas. Each side thought God was fighting for them. |
| Draw a square in the sand for Ypres.Mark 2 spots in the sand for Langemarck and Passchendaele.Mark a channel for the River Steen | Here is part of the war, called the Western Front. Here is the great old city of Ypres, here the villages and farms of Passchendaele, Langemarck. There were more places than just these, but these will help us to remember.  |
| Place 3 people of God to the left of Ypres (the German army) by Passchendaele.Place 3 people in Ypres (Allied Army) | The people of Ypres did not even want to go to war, but war came to them. |
|  | The land was fertile and green. It fed the people and their animals |
| Rub out the edges of Ypres, the river, and scuff the sand across the bag | Soon shells destroyed the fields and shattered the pipes the farmers had laid to drain water from the land. The banks of the river were broken down. Even the leaves and branches on the trees were destroyed |
| “Dig” trenches and tunnels in the sand, using the figures in each army to push the sand to form rectangles and paths as they move towards each other.  | The land was also flat and without places to hide, so the soldiers dug trenches where they could shelter from the bullets. Each side tunneled towards the other. Sometimes they were so close they could hear one another but even that did not stop the fighting.  |
| Use your hands to show the rain | In the summer of 1917 it began to rain. Water came down from the heavens and up from the earth. It rained and rained. The puddles became rivers and flooded the trenches. The fields that used to grow food for the people and the animals became a muddy swamp.  |
| Lie down a soldier in each army | It was a terrible time. Many people and animals died.  |
| Move the two surviving soldiers from each army to the edge of the sand to front left and right. Leave the dead soldiers where they have fallen.Mark Ypres, Passchendaele and Langemarck in the sand again. | Eventually the fighting stopped and the guns fell silent. The war was over. The soldiers could go home. The people of Ypres and Passchendaele and Langemarck could go home too and rebuild their city and farms and houses. |
|  | But nothing was the same as before the Great War. Great monuments were built to remind people of war. The dead of both sides were buried in cemeteries that stretched for miles. The soldiers who did not die had seen and heard, smelled and tasted so much that they had no words for it. Many went home and never spoke of it again. Maybe that is why we recall their deaths today by keeping two minutes of silence. We are going to do that now…… 2mins. |
|  | After the war, poppies sprang up in the fields. It felt like a new beginning. Today people still wear poppies to help them remember the Great War and all other wars since, and to pray for an end to all wars. |