

FINDING GOD IN NATURE

Get Outside in Lent

WEEK 1 - TREES



Isaiah 55:12 You will live in joy and peace. The mountains and hills will burst into song, and the trees of the field will clap their hands!

Welcome to “Get Outside in Lent.” Each week there will be six ideas for things to do outside and a celebration suggestion - because even in lent Sunday is a celebration day. Pick and choose what you would like to do. Change it and make it your own if you want to, or just do what it says. More than anything , enjoy being outside, take time to connect with nature, with anyone else you might be sharing this with, and with the something outside yourself that Christians would call God.

1

Hug a tree. Remind yourself that God made this tree and he loves it just as he loves you.

2

Find an evergreen tree. How would you describe the green of this tree? Be imaginative.

3

Find a tree with no leaves on it yet. Can you see buds where the leaves will form?

4

See if you can find a tree with catkins on it.

5

Take a long view and see if you can tell trees apart by their shape and the sort of pattern that their branches make. (you don't need to know what they are, just spot the difference.)

6

Take a few minutes (or longer if you like) to sit under the tree. Lean your back against it and see if the experience speaks to you in any way.

Tree Celebration

Use the words of the ritual if you would like to. Have a tree themed feast. (nut roast - eating tree fruit, broccoli - looks like little trees, chocolate log for desert.) There are some great ideas for three themed snacks on this Pinterest page. <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/laura9326/tree-themed-snacks/>



Ritual for trees week.

Gather (or be by yourself) near a tree if possible, or if not possible, then light a candle inside and place a leaf or twig beside it.

Be quiet for a moment or two (as long as works for you or your group) to reflect on what trees mean to you, and what the world would be like if we didn't have them.

Creator God, thank you for trees. Thank you for the beauty that they bring to our world, for the life that they support, and for the part they play in your creation.

Silence

We are sorry for those times and places around the world when people have destroyed trees because they are greedy for something else.

Silence

Help us to value trees as part of your creation not just for what they can give us, but because you made them and you love them.

Silence - Stand for a moment and let the tree point you towards God.



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WEEK 2 - FLOWERS



Luke 12:27 Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these.

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1

See how many different colours of flower you can find. Look at all levels, don't forget trees have flowers too.

2

Go for a walk and sniff every flower that you can find (and reach easily.) Can you tell them apart by their scent?

3

Find a flower bud. Can you imagine what the flower will look like when it opens?

4

Choose a flower to sit and contemplate. Remind yourself that this flower has value simply because God made it and he loves it.

5

Choose a particular flower and investigate it closely. (Don't pick it unless it is in your garden and you have permission to do that.) Look at the patterns and colours within the petals, the number of petals and how the flower fits onto the stem.

6

Choose a flower and watch it carefully for a while. See if any insects come to visit it.

Flower Celebration

Use the words of the ritual if you would like to. Have a flower themed feast. If you have somewhere that you are allowed to pick flowers near you, perhaps you could pick a few to put them on your table. Some flowers are edible; there are some ideas here but please don't eat anything unless you are certain it is the right thing. <http://www.handmadeapothecary.co.uk/blog/2017/3/29/edible-spring-flowers>

Alternatively, you could just make some food that looks like flowers. I know it says for children, but we are all children at heart really! <https://helloyummy.co/fun-foods-that-look-like-flowers/>



Ritual for flowers week.

Gather (or go by yourself) to a place where there are flowers growing if possible, or if not possible, then light a candle inside and place a flower or a house plant beside it.

Be quiet for a moment or two (as long as works for you or your group) to reflect on what flowers mean to you, and what the world would be like if we didn't have them.

Creator God, thank you for flowers. Thank you for the beauty that they bring to our world, for the life that they support, and for the part they play in your creation.

Silence

We are sorry for those times when we have been in such a hurry that we have not noticed the beauty of the flowers around us.

Silence

Help us to value flowers as part of your creation; not just for what they can give us, but simply because you made them and you love them.

Silence - Stand for a moment and let the flowers point you towards God.



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WEEK 3 - SOIL AND SEEDS



Genesis 2:9 The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow from the soil, every tree that was pleasing to look at and good for food.

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1

Plant some cress seeds on a damp tissue. Look at them every day to see how they are growing. (they should be ready to eat in a couple of weeks time.)

2

If you have a garden, take a handful of soil, feel it, and smell it. What words would you use to describe it?

3

Go for a walk and notice all the things that are growing around you, both wild and in people’s gardens.

4

One spoonful of good soil has more living organisms in it than there are people on the Earth. Dig up a spoonful of soil and imagine all those tiny life forms that are in it.

5

Many plants simply drop their seeds around them in the autumn. See if you can still find a seed on the ground. the flower fits onto the stem.

6

If you have a garden, is there something that you could plant now and take care of? Perhaps something that you could eat later.

Soil and Seed Celebration

Use the words of the ritual if you would like to. Have a seed themed feast. Maybe you could put a small bowl of soil on the table as a reminder of the importance of good soil. See if you can find a recipe that involves cooking with seeds. Remember that nuts and pulses are seeds too.



Ritual for soil and seed week.

Gather (or go by yourself) to a place where there is soil visible if possible, or if not possible, then light a candle inside and place a small amount of soil beside it and some seeds if you have any.

Be quiet for a moment or two (as long as works for you or your group) to reflect on the importance of good soil and seeds to our world.

Creator God, thank you for seeds and good soil in which to grow them. Thank you for the food that they provide, as well as beauty and enjoyment.

Silence

Please help people in those places where growing food is difficult because soil and growing conditions are poor, and forgive us for the times when we have forgotten to remember them.

Silence

Help us to value soil and seeds as part of your creation; not just for what they can give us, but simply because you made them and you love them.

Silence - Stand for a moment and let the soil and seeds point you towards God.



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WEEK 4 - WATER



John 4:14 But anyone who drinks the water I give them will never be thirsty. In fact, the water I give them will become a spring of water in them. It will flow up into eternal life.”

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1

Water is essential for all life on earth. Go for a walk and see how many places you can spot water.

2

If you are near wild water that you can reach, put your hands in it, or paddle if it is safe.

3

Go outside in the rain. Turn your face upwards and let yourself get wet. Maybe you could even jump in a puddle.

4

Go for a walk where there is running water. Close your eyes and listen. How does it make you feel?

5

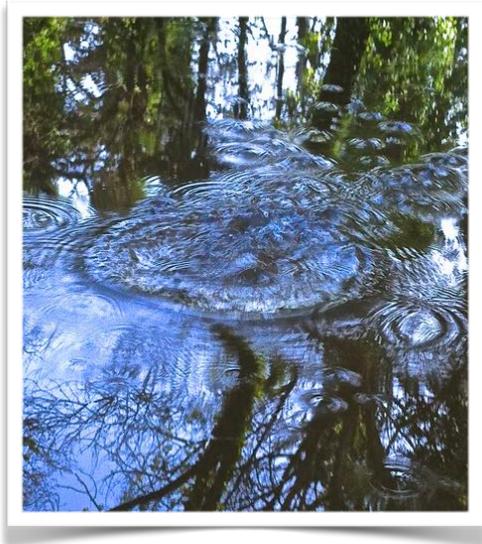
Listen to the sound of rain. (You can do this inside or outside.) Notice the different sounds it makes as it lands on different surfaces.

6

Go for a walk and notice all the things that are growing around you, both wild and in peoples gardens.

Water Celebration

Use the words of the ritual if you would like to. A water themed feast is difficult, but everything we eat contains at least some water so perhaps you could think about that as you prepare some of your favourite foods. Find a beautiful jug and glasses if you have them. Give your jug of water the place of importance on the table, and pour it and drink it as if it was the most precious thing in the world.



Ritual for water week.

Gather (or go by yourself) to a place where you can see water outside, or if not possible, then light a candle inside and place a bowl or glass of water beside it.

Be quiet for a moment or two (as long as works for you or your group) to reflect on the importance of water in our world.

Creator God, thank you for water, especially for clean, safe water to drink.

Silence

We are sorry for those times when we have wasted water, and we remember now those places where there is not enough water to keep crops alive, and those people who suffer because they do not have clean water.

Silence

Help us to value water as part of your creation; to realise our dependence on it, and our responsibility to look after it.

Silence - Stand for a moment and let the water point you towards God.



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WEEK 5 - INSECTS AND ANIMALS



Genesis 1:25 So God made every kind of animal. He made the wild animals, the tame animals, and all the small crawling things. And God saw that this was good.

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1

If you have a pet, give it a hug (if it is that sort of animal) and think about what do your pet adds to your life.

2

Go for a walk and see how many animals you can spot.

3

Hang on a banana skin on a bush and watch in the early evening - it may attract moths.

4

Go for a slow walk and see how many "small crawling things" you can find.

5

Find one "small crawling thing" and watch it for a while to see what it does.

6

Go outside at night and see if you can hear or even see any of the nighttime creatures.



Insects and Animals Celebration

Animals and insects celebration day! Use the words of the ritual if you would like to. There are all sorts of ways of having an animal and insect themed feast, without actually eating them. Some of these ideas do use animal products, but obviously you can choose which recipes work for your way of eating. <https://www.cuteness.com/blog/content/14-adorable-and-totally-doable-animal-themed-foods>

Ritual for insects and animals week.

Gather (or go by yourself) to a place where you can see animals or insects of some sort. If this is not possible, then light a candle inside and simply write a short list of your favourite animals and place it next to the candle.

Be quiet for a moment or two (as long as works for you or your group) to reflect on the importance of the many different sorts of living creatures that are in our world.

Creator God, thank you for the variety of your creatures. Thank you for the enjoyment that they give us, and for the part that they play in keeping your world healthy.

Silence

We are sorry for those times when we have been thoughtless in the way we have treated animals and insects.

Silence

Help us to value every living creature as part of your creation; to realise that everything has a part to play in this beautiful world, and that we are responsible for caring for them and treating them with respect.

Silence - Stand for a moment and let the animals and insects point you towards God.



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WEEK 6 - BIRDS AND AIR



Matthew 6:26 Look at the birds. They don't plant, harvest, or save food in barns, but your heavenly Father feeds them.

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1

Wherever you are today, keep looking around to see if you can see a bird, they are everywhere.

2

Find somewhere where you can be quiet for a few minutes and listen to the birds singing.

3

Put some food out for the birds and watch for a while to see what comes.

4

Choose a windy day, and go out and fly a kite. Make a simple one of your own if you don't have one.

5

Go for a walk and see how many ways you can tell that air is there even though you can't see it.

6

Watch a bird flying. See how different birds move in different ways. How does watching them make you feel?

Birds and Air Celebration

Use the words of the ritual if you would like to. There are some great ideas in this link for making fun food with a bird theme. <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/sharelynnd/bird-themed-food/> perhaps you could also make a feast for the birds and put it outside for them.



Ritual for birds and air week.

Gather (or go by yourself) to a place where you can see birds and feel the air.) If this is not possible, then light a candle inside and either open a book with a picture of a bird and place it next to the candle.

Be quiet for a moment or two (as long as works for you or your group) to reflect on the importance of air and birds in our world.

Creator God, thank you for the air that we breathe and the beauty of flying creatures like birds.

Silence

We are sorry for those times when we have taken the simple pleasures and necessities for granted.

Silence

Help us to value clean air, and to do our bit to keep it clean. And help us always to appreciate the beauty of your creation.

Silence - Stand for a moment and let thoughts of clean air and birds point you towards God.

