



TRINITY CHURCH SWARTHMORE

---

WAY OF LOVE  
NATURE WALK

---

OUTDOOR PRAYER AND  
MEDITATION FOR ALL AGES

CREATED BY NATALEE HILL  
OCTOBER 2020





---

## AN INTRODUCTION

---

Fall is a great season to spend some time outside. The heat of the summer has passed, but most days it is still warm enough that, at most, you only need a light jacket. Spending time in nature is also a key way that many people find an opening to, and connection with, God's divine Spirit.

This activity can be done solo, or in any sized group. Be sure to keep to your bubble or use masks and social distancing.

On the next pages you'll find a series of activities to help you focus on God while on a trip outdoors. There are activities that can be used by various age groups. You decide what fits you!

# Focus Meditation

## **Preparation:**

Find an outdoor space, a bit away from roads. You can head to a local wildlife refuge or national park, just the park down the road, or even your back yard. For best focus, go when it isn't too busy – really early or much later. To practice concentration and focus, go when it is busy for a challenge. Dress for the weather and maybe bring something to sit on – you want to be fairly comfortable.

Find a fairly comfortable place to settle yourself. Sit quietly and mostly still. This can be a challenge with little kids – make it a game to see how long they can sit quietly and still.

It can also help to practice a **breath prayer** to quiet and center yourself. Say or think quietly:

*Exhale: I let go my distractions*

*Inhale: I breathe in your presence, God. (repeat)*

Or

*Exhale: Help me be still*

*Inhale: And find you here, God. (repeat)*

As you sit still, reach out with your senses. Focus your thoughts only on what you can **hear, see, smell, feel, and taste\*** around you. What do you notice?

*\*Kids: Your trusted adults can tell you what is safe to taste nearby. I wonder, what does the air taste like to you?*

## **Journal:**

Write or draw on the next page what you discover.

Let your attention to the clouds, trees, animals and insects, whatever catches you, linger as long as you need. If other thoughts about the past or the future arise, thank them and tell them you'll get back to them later. Focus on what is around you right now.

## **Moving on:**

Hold this space with your noticing and journaling until you find yourself getting restless. That's a sign to move on. Say a brief thank you prayer to God for the present moment. Any words are good, even just, "Thank you for this time, God."

**Journal or Draw Here**

# Scavenger Hunt

**Look for something:**

- ☐ *Bright*
- ☐ *Beautiful*
- ☐ *Great (big)*
- ☐ *Small*
- ☐ *Wise*
- ☐ *Wonderful*
- ☐ *Makes God happy/joyful*
- ☐ *Grieves God's heart*
- ☐ *Something you want to know more about*
- ☐ *Something that fills you with awe*
- ☐ *Something out of place*

**Add your notes here**

---

## Colors and Shapes Hunt!

**Look for something:**

- |  |   |          |
|--|---|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Red</b>          |  | Triangle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Orange</b>       |   |          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Yellow</b>       |  | Square   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Green</b>        |   |          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Blue</b>         |  | Heart    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Purple</b>       |   |          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Brown</b>        |  | Star     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>White</b>        |   |          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Black</b>        |  | Circle   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Pink</b>         |   |          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Multicolored</b> |  | Other    |

**Add your notes here**

# More...

## Read

“i thank You God for most this amazing” by ee cummings

i thank You God for most this amazing  
day:for the leaping greenly spirits of trees  
and a blue true dream of sky;and for everything  
which is natural which is infinite which is yes

*(Look up the full poem on a mobile device, or find it before you head out. The first verse only is reprinted to help guide you.)*

## Pray

### ***Thanksgiving for the Beauty of the Earth***

*Page 840, Book of Common Prayer, 1979.*

We give you thanks, most gracious God, for the beauty of earth and sky and sea; for the richness of mountains, plains, and rivers; for the songs of birds and the loveliness of flowers. We praise you for these good gifts, and pray that we may safeguard them for our posterity. Grant that we may continue to grow in our grateful enjoyment of your abundant creation, to the honor and glory of your Name, now and for ever. Amen.

## **Older elementary through adults:**

Our natural world, as God made it, is impacted every day by human choices. Did you see anything today that you think may not be right with God?

What can you do?

*Some other ideas:*

- 1) Bring a pair of gloves and a bag with you to collect and properly dispose of any trash you find.
- 2) Note the animals you see – are any endangered or threatened? Who is working to help them? Donate to the cause. Every penny counts.





---

## WHAT IS THE WAY OF LOVE?

---

The Way of Love is a way of life. More than a program or curriculum, it is an intentional commitment to a set of practices. It's a commitment to follow Jesus: Turn, Learn, Pray, Worship, Bless, Go, Rest.

**Turn:** Pause, listen and choose to follow Jesus.

**Learn:** Reflect on scripture each day, especially on Jesus' life and teachings.

**Pray:** Dwell intentionally with God each day.

**Worship:** Gather in community weekly to thank, praise, and dwell with God.

**Bless:** Share faith and unselfishly give and serve.

**Go:** Cross boundaries, listen deeply, and live like Jesus.

**Rest:** Receive the gift of God's grace, peace, and restoration.

~ The Episcopal Church

# Way of Love Questions

**Add your own, too!**

**Turn:**

Does being in nature help you turn toward Jesus? What might it turn you away from?

**Learn:**

Read Genesis 1:1 - 2:4 or Matthew 6:24-34. What does nature teach you about God? What do you learn from creation about God?

**Pray:**

What kinds of prayers does being outdoors in nature bring to mind? How do you pray with or for nature? What do you hear Jesus or God saying to you in the stillness?

**Worship:**

Have you ever worshipped with others in nature? What was it like? If you created your own worship outdoors, what would you include?

**Bless:**

How does the natural world bless you? How can (or do) you bless the natural world?

**Go:**

Does this space need preserving and protecting? From what or who? What can you do? Who might you need to talk to?

**Rest:**

How does being in nature help you rest? Who else needs rest in nature? What rest might nature need?