

YOUTH RESOURCES

11-14



LAND &
NATURE

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LAND & NATURE

Youth leader note: lead session outdoors if possible, in a park, church garden or garden of a church member, but adapt for indoors if needed.

*"But ask the animals, and they will teach you,
or ask the birds of the air, and they will tell
you. Speak to the earth, and it will teach you,
or let the fish of the sea tell you. Every one of
these knows that the hand of the Lord has
done this. The life of every creature and the
breath of all people are in God's hand"*
Job 12:7-10 (NCV)



INTRO

In today's session we are looking at how God created the land, creatures and all things including us. We are outdoors so that we can connect with nature and be grateful for all that God has made as we learn from him about it, and think how we can look after it well.



GAME

Bring Me

Info: Leader says 'Bring me' and names an item – everyone has to run and grab it and bring it to the leader as fast as possible to get a point. Person with the most points wins.

Equipment

If you're in a big enough outdoors space with a variety of stuff people can grab, then base this on nature and items they'll have with them. e.g. a big leaf, a small leaf, a blade of grass, a rock, a sock, a water bottle etc.

If your space is more limited on items to grab, bring some with you and dot them around in advance.



FOCUS

Youth leader note: It can be distracting to be outside but also it can be wonderful! If it's helpful for your group – use this 'Praise shout' by engageworship to focus everyone on God for the time you're going to spend together. Everyone responds with 'God is here' loud and with energy!

As we gather in this place – **God is here**
Praise him in this outdoor space – **God is here**
Walking, running, standing still – **God is here**
Down the valleys, up the hills – **God is here**
Praise him all you flying birds – **God is here**
Praise him all you digging worms – **God is here**
Praise him all you lofty trees – **God is here**
Praise him beetles, bugs and bees – **God is here**
Praise him clouds, and sun, and rain – **God is here**
Praise him people on your way – **God is here**
Say it to each other now – **God is here**
Say it to the world around – **God is here**
All creation sings God's praise – **God is here**
We join in that praise and say – **God is here.**



BIBLE

Read Genesis 1:1 – 2:3 together

Youth leader note: If your group is confident, sit together as a group and share out the reading amongst everyone there. There are lots of questions you could use here. Just select as much or as little you need to work best for your group. The main aim is to focus on God creating all things and inviting us to be part of it. Discuss as small groups or one larger group depending on how many participants there are.

- Icebreaker: if you could be any animal, what would you be and why?
- This passage is very poetic and beautiful – what kind of pictures does it conjure up in your mind?
- Do you have a favourite moment in this chapter that you love? Share it with the group
- Name all of the things God creates that's named here. Isn't that cool?!
- What does God think about his creation all the way along? (v10, 12, 18, 21, 25) what about once humans are created? (v31)
 - Sidenote – Once we were created God considered creation complete – us along with all he had created was VERY GOOD! Do you tend to think of yourself and other people as very good? Or good? Or average? God thinks creation with you and others in it is very good.
- V26 says God created humans in his image and likeness – discuss what you think this means.
- Gen 2:1–3 – On the seventh day God rested. This was not because he was tired but because he was showing us that resting after doing work is important for us and for creation. Why is it good for us to rest after working? Why is it good for creation – the land, plants and creatures – to have a rest too? (for example for fields to have a year off growing crops)
- Read Gen 1:28b and Gen 2:15 – what job did God give humans to do?
- Read Gen 2:19 – what was God's role here? What was the man's role? God is the Creator, he is Almighty God, the one in charge – but he also invites us to join in and be creative and work with him, that's amazing!
 - What tasks or creative jobs do you have at home or school that you can work together with God on?
 - What's one way you could work with God to look after creation better this week?



WORSHIP & PRAY

The right response to seeing how amazing God is and how everything he's made is 'very good' is to worship him and lift our prayers to him. Let's take a moment first to pray, saying thank you, sorry and please.

Youth leader note: here are a couple of options for how to pray together as a group.

OPTION 1

Spoken Prayer – Here is an interactive prayer using your body and words.

Leader: Put your hands up in the air and say together 'Thank you!'

Everyone: Thank you!

Leader: Creator God, we thank you for everything you have made – it is very good! The land, the plants, the sky, the sea, the creatures – thank you that we get to enjoy it, look after it and take part in being creative with you.

Leader: Put your hands on your heart and say together 'Sorry'

Everyone: Sorry!

Leader: Creator God, we are so sorry for the ways that we have not looked after your creation like we should, either accidentally because we didn't know better, or on purpose – please would you forgive us.

Leader: Put your hands out in front of you with your palms upwards and say together 'Please'

Everyone: Please!

Leader: Creator God, please would you help us to be people who love and look after your creation, help us to be creative with you in the way we care for the land and world around us.

We pray all of this in Jesus' name,
And we say together – **Amen!**

OPTION 2

Arty Prayer – Do some leaf rubbings and write your prayers around it.

Equipment:

- Crayons/oil pastels
- Pens
- Paper (recycled)
- Leaves (gathered during the time together)
- Hard surface(s) e.g. clipboards or books

Instructions:

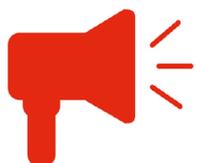
- Each grab a leaf or a few – just like each of you, every leaf is unique.
- Lay the leaf on a hard surface with its underside facing upwards towards you and place paper on top.
- Use a crayon or oil pastel to colour or rub over the whole of the leaf to see its shape and patterns (do this for all your leaves)
- Write your prayers around the leaf – why you're sorry to God for not looking after creation as we should, why you're thankful to Him for it, and ask him what you would like Him to help with

SING

If you did **Option 1** for prayer – now go find something in nature that you are thankful for (or take a photo if it's a flower or butterfly for example). Hold onto it whilst you sing a worship song together.

If you did **Option 2** for prayer – hold onto your leafy prayers as you sing together now.

Sing this song together, or one you know already as a group that helps you to thank God for his creation and praise him. You saw that it was good by Resound Worship:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjfOphqiWZM>



ACTION



Save the bees!

One way that we can join in with God caring for his creation is to get creative doing things that are good for the land and wildlife. Making sure that bees have lots of lovely flowers for pollinating is one way of doing this.

The Wildlife Trusts estimate that we have bees to thank for around a third of all the food we eat: Thank you bees! They are key pollinators, making sure our ecosystems run as they should, but they are really under threat. This is mainly from our overly huge demand for food meaning our farming processes have got more intense and are destroying habitats. Poor bees. But we can help them out!

As a group, use your land (church grounds, youth group garden, or your garden at home) to plant wildflowers which will support bees.

Watch this video from the Bumblebee Conservation Trust <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pjj61gbdkCs> (3.38 minutes) on how to plant a bee-friendly wildflower meadow in a pot. You can plant one up yourselves in Spring! (Use a pot with good drainage or into a flower bed if you have one free)

Equipment:

- Pots (see video for creative pot ideas)
- Peat-free compost (or home-made if you have it!)
- Bee-friendly wildflower seed mix
- Watering can



GOING DEEPER

Video – you might find it helpful to go deeper with your group on the themes of the Garden of Eden, the fall, and restoration through Jesus' death and resurrection. This Bible Project video (the Tree of Life) explores these themes in a really creative way. You might like to incorporate this video into your session. It's 4.51 minutes <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJLan-pJzfQ>

References:

- 1 – <https://www.engageworship.org/ideas/god-here-outdoor-praise-shout>
- 2 – <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/savingbees>