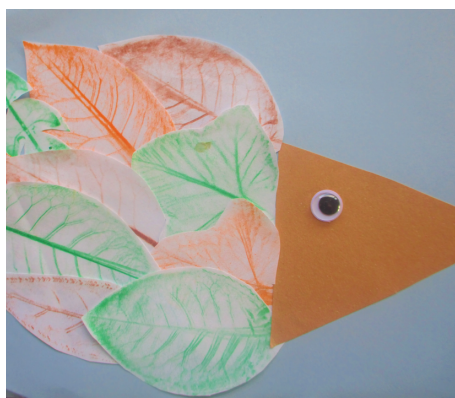




More seasons...

Exploring outdoors

Ideas for outdoors and intergenerational worship

By the Go Team

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www.bathandwells.org.uk/children-young-people



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Bath & Wells

Living and telling the story of Jesus

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More seasons... exploring outdoors

This booklet is a collection of twelve Bible-based activities to use outside with children and young people or family groups - three for each season of the year, including ones for Christmas and Easter.



We have collated some new ideas and ways to help children, young people and families to explore the natural world and connect with God outdoors. You will find ideas for activities or worship services which you can adapt for your own context.

You will notice that each session has the same pattern, beginning with a starter question, a Bible reading, activity, space for reflection afterwards and the same Psalm to say together for celebration at the end. This has been designed so that if you use more than one of these sessions, there will be something the same each time, to build a rhythm and familiarity for those perhaps not used to more reflective worship.



As we seek to live and tell the story of Jesus, we hope and pray that these ideas will help you, and provide some inspiration for your work with children, young people and families. Many of these ideas have been trialled and tested by our team and other local workers and volunteers.



For further practical ideas and guidance, do also check out our short guide 'How to go outdoors with your group'. You can find all of our resource booklets, 'How to' guides and our regular newsletter at bathandwells.org.uk/children-young-people or scan the QR code below.





Spring 1

Suggested location: A wooded area

Materials required: Wool and foraged plant materials for creating birds nests.

Gathering: Ask the group to pause and think about what they can see, smell, hear, sense or feel. Talk about how being outside can heighten these senses and how we can pay attention to them.

Briefly explain what will happen in the rest of the session.

Pray: Invite a child or a family to lead a short prayer to start your gathering.

Bible Reading: Psalm 104:10-15 CEV

‘You provide streams of water in the hills and valleys, so that the donkeys and other wild animals can satisfy their thirst. Birds build their nests nearby and sing in the trees. From your home above you send rain on the hills and water the earth. You let the earth produce grass for cattle, plants for our food, wine to cheer us up, olive oil for our skin, and grain for our health.’



Exploring and creating: Spring time is an amazing time of year! Invite everyone to get into small groups and have a wander around the area, to scavenge for sticks, leaves, moss and other plant materials to create a bird's nest. Wool can be used to help bind the materials together. You can use the photos below to help explain how to create a nest. (Ignore the eggs!)



Reflecting: Invite everyone to stand or sit quietly for a moment to reflect. After a few moments, read the Psalm again. Invite anyone to share something that stands out to them in the reading, or about how God has provided for them.

Pray: Allow a few moments for said or silent prayer.

Celebrate: Read Psalm 100 out loud together

“Shout praises to the Lord, everyone on this earth. Be joyful and sing as you come in to worship the Lord! You know the Lord is God! He created us, and we belong to him; we are his people, the sheep in his pasture. Be thankful and praise the Lord as you enter his temple. The Lord is good! His love and faithfulness will last forever.”





Spring 2

Suggested location: Near a stream, pond, lake or canal (in a safe space)

Materials required: Paper and pencils, phones or cameras for taking photos.

Gathering: Ask the group what they can see, smell and hear. What wildlife do they expect to see here, and what evidence can they see that wildlife might live nearby?



Pray: Invite a child or a family to lead a short prayer to start your gathering.

Bible Reading: Ezekiel 47:12 NIV

“Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing.”



Exploring and creating: Invite the group to investigate the trees, bushes and plants nearby. Can they identify any of them? Do the ones closer to the water grow differently to the trees further away from the water? What do you notice about the trees at this time of year, compared to what they might look like at other times? What animals might live in or near the plants here?

Invite the group to sketch or photograph their favourite tree or plant in their surroundings. What do they like about it?

Reflecting: Invite everyone to stand or sit quietly for a moment to reflect. After a few moments read the verse from Ezekiel again, then invite anyone to share something that stands out to them, or a time where they experienced a refreshing from God.



Pray: Allow a few moments for said or silent prayer.

Celebrate: Read Psalm 100 out loud together

“Shout praises to the Lord, everyone on this earth. Be joyful and sing as you come in to worship the Lord! You know the Lord is God! He created us, and we belong to him; we are his people, the sheep in his pasture. Be thankful and praise the Lord as you enter his temple. The Lord is good! His love and faithfulness will last forever.”



Spring 3 - Easter

Suggested location: A wooded area, churchyard, or large garden.

Materials required: small trays and materials to create Easter gardens (stones, sticks, moss, grass, soil, something to create a tomb, small flowers).

Gathering: Ask the group what they can see, smell and hear. Talk about how your different senses are heightened outside. If there are buildings nearby, discuss what impact they have on the natural space around you?

Pray: Invite a child or a family to lead a short prayer to start your gathering.

Story or Bible Reading: John 19:41-42 CEV

"In the place where Jesus had been nailed to a cross, there was a garden with a tomb that had never been used. The tomb was nearby, and since it was the time to prepare for the Sabbath, they were in a hurry to put Jesus' body there."



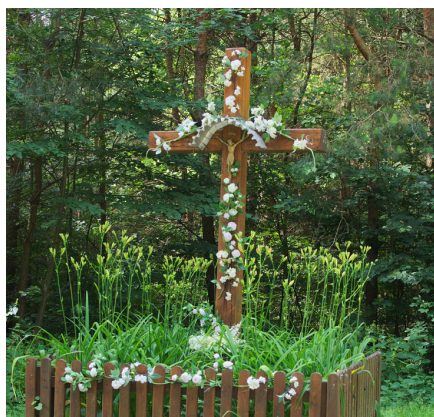
Exploring and creating: Invite the group find different materials to create a small Easter garden with three crosses. You may want to provide some of the materials and something to make the garden in. Use string to make twigs into three crosses.

Reflecting: Invite everyone to stand or sit quietly for a moment to reflect. After a few moments read the passage from John again, then invite anyone to share something that stands out to them, or what Easter means to them.

Pray: Allow a few moments for said or silent prayer.

Celebrate: Read Psalm 100 out loud together

"Shout praises to the Lord, everyone on this earth. Be joyful and sing as you come in to worship the Lord! You know the Lord is God! He created us, and we belong to him; we are his people, the sheep in his pasture. Be thankful and praise the Lord as you enter his temple. The Lord is good! His love and faithfulness will last forever."





Summer 1

Suggested location: A wooded area, large garden or canal.

Materials required: Insect investigating tools (i.e. magnifying glass, collecting pot, tweezers), identification sheets.

Gathering: Ask the group what they can see, smell and hear. Ask what their favourite time of year is. Notice how your senses are heightened outside, and think about what you notice when you are still. What evidence of wildlife can you see around you?

Pray: Invite a child or a family to lead a short prayer to start your gathering.

Story or Bible Reading: Genesis 1:24-25 The Message
 “God spoke: ‘Earth, generate life! Every sort and kind: cattle and reptiles and wild animals, all kinds.’ And there it was: wild animals of every kind, cattle of all kinds, every sort of reptile and bug. God saw that it was good.”



Exploring and creating: Invite the group to search for bugs and insects by carefully turning over rocks, lifting fallen branches and scraping back soil. Look out for different types of flying insects, bees, flies and butterflies. Use your equipment to carefully investigate the creatures you find, and your identification sheets to discover their names and attributes. What’s the most interesting creature you can find?

Reflecting: Invite everyone to stand or sit quietly for a moment to reflect. After a few moments, read the verses from Genesis again. Invite anyone to share something that stands out to them from the passage, or share something that amazes them about God’s creation.

Pray: Allow a few moments for said or silent prayer.

Celebrate: Read Psalm 100 aloud together
 “Shout praises to the Lord, everyone on this earth. Be joyful and sing as you come in to worship the Lord! You know the Lord is God! He created us, and we belong to him; we are his people, the sheep in his pasture. Be thankful and praise the Lord as you enter his temple. The Lord is good! His love and faithfulness will last forever.”





Summer 2

Suggested location: A wooded area, park or large public garden.

Materials required: phones or digital cameras for taking photos.

Gathering: Ask the group what they can see, smell and hear. Notice the trees and plants around you. What's the biggest tree you can see? How old do you think it is? What do you notice about the trees and plants around it?

Pray: Invite a child or a family to lead a short prayer to start your gathering.

Story or Bible Reading: Luke 13:18-19 NIV

'Then Jesus asked, "What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds perched in its branches.'"

Exploring and creating: Invite the group to search for the tiniest flowers and plants they can find, and take photos, then find the biggest tree they can find and take a photo of someone stood next to it. Come back as a whole group and compare photos of what you have found.

Reflecting: Invite everyone to stand or sit quietly for a moment to reflect. After a few moments, read Jesus' words again. Invite anyone to share something that stands out to them from the reading, or a time when they felt like their faith was really small like a tiny flower or seed, or really big like one of the big trees.

Pray: Allow a few moments for said or silent prayer.

Celebrate: Read Psalm 100 aloud together

"Shout praises to the Lord, everyone on this earth. Be joyful and sing as you come in to worship the Lord! You know the Lord is God! He created us, and we belong to him; we are his people, the sheep in his pasture. Be thankful and praise the Lord as you enter his temple. The Lord is good! His love and faithfulness will last forever."





Summer 3

Suggested location: A farm or small holding

Materials required: seeds or crops to identify.

Gathering: Ask the group what they can see, smell and hear. Notice what's been planted and what grows naturally. What other senses are you using to notice things?

Pray: Invite a child or a family to lead a short prayer to start your gathering.

Story or Bible Reading: Matthew 13: 3-9 CEV

'He (Jesus) said: A farmer went out to scatter seed in a field. While the farmer was scattering the seed, some of it fell along the road and was eaten by birds. Other seeds fell on thin, rocky ground and quickly started growing because the soil wasn't very deep. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched and dried up, because they did not have deep roots. Some other seeds fell where thorn bushes grew up and choked the plants. But a few seeds did fall on good ground where the plants produced 100 or 60 or 30 times as much as was scattered. If you have ears, pay attention!'



Exploring and creating: Invite the group to have a look around at the crops and see if they can identify what any of them are. Can you see anything edible? Maybe corn, wheat, maize or barley? Are there other crops or flowers you can see? What about the plants that have grown naturally?



Reflecting: Invite everyone to stand or sit quietly for a moment to reflect. After a few moments, read Jesus' words again. Invite anyone to share something that stands out to them from the reading, or how they relate to the different stages of faith in the reading.

Pray: Allow a few moments for said or silent prayer.

Celebrate: Read Psalm 100 aloud together

"Shout praises to the Lord, everyone on this earth. Be joyful and sing as you come in to worship the Lord! You know the Lord is God! He created us, and we belong to him; we are his people, the sheep in his pasture. Be thankful and praise the Lord as you enter his temple. The Lord is good! His love and faithfulness will last forever."





Autumn 1

Suggested location: A wooded area or orchard

Materials required: trees with different fruit and nuts on nearby with permission to take some, or a selection to look at if that's not possible.

Gathering: Ask the group what they can see, smell and hear. What different colours can you see in the nature around you? What might be different if you were here in summer or winter?

Pray: Invite a child or a family to lead a short prayer to start your gathering.

Story or Bible Reading: John 15: 1-5 CEV

'Jesus said: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts away every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit. But he trims clean every branch that does produce fruit, so that it will produce even more fruit. You are already clean because of what I have said to you. Stay joined to me, and I will stay joined to you. Just as a branch cannot produce fruit unless it stays joined to the vine, you cannot produce fruit unless you stay joined to me. I am the vine, and you are the branches. If you stay joined to me, and I stay joined to you, then you will produce lots of fruit. But you cannot do anything without me."

Exploring and creating: Invite the group to explore the woodland or orchard. What have the trees and plants produced that they could collect? Find fruit, nuts, berries, acorns and leaves. When you come back together, invite everyone to get into small groups and create an image with what they have made. They might like to make a face or a tree, or something more adventurous like an animal.

Reflecting: Invite everyone to stand or sit quietly for a moment to reflect. After a few moments, read Jesus' words again. Invite anyone to share something that stands out to them from the reading, or a time when they felt connected, or disconnected from God.

Pray: Allow a few moments for said or silent prayer.

Celebrate: Read Psalm 100 aloud together

"Shout praises to the Lord, everyone on this earth. Be joyful and sing as you come in to worship the Lord! You know the Lord is God! He created us, and we belong to him; we are his people, the sheep in his pasture. Be thankful and praise the Lord as you enter his temple. The Lord is good! His love and faithfulness will last forever."





Autumn 2

Suggested location: A wooded area or park

Materials required: Autumn leaves to forage from the ground

Gathering: Ask the group what they can see, smell and hear. How long do you think these trees have been here? Which ones are old or new? What do you know about the trees? How do you think they might change over time?

Pray: Invite a child or a family to lead a short prayer to start your gathering.

Story or Bible Reading: Genesis 2: 8-10 CEV

"The Lord made a garden in a place called Eden, which was in the east, and he put the man there. The Lord God filled the garden with all kinds of beautiful trees and fruit trees. Two other trees were in the middle of the garden. One of these gave life, the other gave the wisdom to know the difference between right and wrong. From Eden a river flowed out to water the garden, then it divided into four rivers.

Exploring and creating: Invite the group to explore the area around you. What leaves can they find on the ground? Ask them to collect as many different types and colours of leaves (ideally 20 or more). Come back to the gathering area and make a colour collage. Place the leaves in a wheel facing outwards, from green and yellow leaves, to orange and red ones, round to brown and purple leaves. Choose 2 leaves you like the most to go in the middle of the circle.

Reflecting: Invite everyone to stand or sit quietly for a moment to reflect. Look at the circles you have made and think about what made you choose those leaves in the middle. Invite the group to share their ideas with each other. After a few moments, read the verses from Genesis again. Invite anyone to share anything that stood out to them in the reading, and if they have ever asked God to help them make decisions. Has God impacted their lives and the choices they have made?

Pray: Allow a few moments for said or silent prayer.

Celebrate: Read Psalm 100 aloud together

"Shout praises to the Lord, everyone on this earth. Be joyful and sing as you come in to worship the Lord! You know the Lord is God! He created us, and we belong to him; we are his people, the sheep in his pasture. Be thankful and praise the Lord as you enter his temple. The Lord is good! His love and faithfulness will last forever."





Autumn 3

Suggested location: A wooded area, park or land with a variety of trees.

Materials required: Autumn leaves to forage from the ground, paper and thick wax crayons for leaf rubbing. A hard surface or some clip boards to do leaf rubbings on.

Gathering: Ask the group what they can see, smell and hear. What animals and birds do you think might live around this area? Can you see or hear any?

Pray: Invite a child or a family to lead a short prayer to start your gathering.

Story or Bible Reading: Matthew 6:25-30 CEV

"I tell you not to worry about your life. Don't worry about having something to eat, drink, or wear. Isn't life more than food or clothing? Look at the birds in the sky! They don't plant or harvest. They don't even store grain in barns. Yet your Father in heaven takes care of them. Aren't you worth much more than birds? Can worry make you live longer? Why worry about clothes? Look how the wildflowers grow. They don't work hard to make their clothes. But I tell you that Solomon with all his wealth wasn't as well clothed as one of them. God gives such beauty to everything that grows in the fields, even though it is here today and thrown into a fire tomorrow. God will surely do even more for you! Why do you have such little faith?"

Exploring and creating: Invite the group to explore the area around you. Forage for leaves and twigs and look at the bark on the tree. Using different coloured crayons and paper, take rubbings of different leaves, twigs and bark to make a picture. They could even create an animal or bird with their rubbings.

Reflecting: Invite everyone to stand or sit quietly for a moment to reflect. After a few moments of quiet, read Jesus' words again. How does God provide for the animals in this area? Ask if anyone would like to share how God has provided for them, or anything that has stood out to them from the passage.

Pray: Allow a few moments for said or silent prayer.

Celebrate: Read Psalm 100 aloud together

"Shout praises to the Lord, everyone on this earth. Be joyful and sing as you come in to worship the Lord! You know the Lord is God! He created us, and we belong to him; we are his people, the sheep in his pasture. Be thankful and praise the Lord as you enter his temple. The Lord is good! His love and faithfulness will last forever."





Winter 1 - Christmas

Suggested location: A garden, churchyard or large wooded area big enough to safely light a fire. Preferably late winter afternoon/early evening so it's darker!

Materials required: a fire pit, fire lighting equipment, logs, skewers, marshmallows, chocolate digestives (check with your group for allergies etc).

Gathering: Ask the group what they can see, smell and hear. Can you see any stars? Can you see the moon or any planets in the sky? What other sources of light are there?

Pray: Invite a child or a family to lead a short prayer to start your gathering.

Story or Bible Reading: Luke 2: 8-12 NIV

'And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."'

Exploring and creating: Invite the group to gather around the fire pit. If you are able to do so safely, invite the group to help you gather sticks, twigs and dry leaves to light a fire. You could sing a Christmas song or carol. When the flames have died down, toast marshmallows and make s'mores (a toasted marshmallow sandwiched between two biscuits).

Reflecting: Invite everyone to stand or sit quietly for a moment to reflect. After a few moments of quiet, read the passage from Luke again. Invite anyone to share anything that stands out to them in the reading, or a thought about the meaning of Christmas for them.

Pray: Allow a few moments for said or silent prayer.

Celebrate: Read Psalm 100 aloud together

"Shout praises to the Lord, everyone on this earth. Be joyful and sing as you come in to worship the Lord! You know the Lord is God! He created us, and we belong to him; we are his people, the sheep in his pasture. Be thankful and praise the Lord as you enter his temple. The Lord is good! His love and faithfulness will last forever."





Winter 2

Suggested location: A large garden or churchyard.

Materials required: seed trays or small plant pots, spoons or trowels for digging soil, a space where they can safely dig up different types of soil.

Gathering: Ask the group what they can see, smell and hear. What is growing nearby? What might be growing here in a different season?



Pray: Invite a child or a family to lead a short prayer to start your gathering.

Bible Reading: Isaiah 61:11 NIV

“For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.”

Exploring and creating: Invite the group to explore the area and find some different types of soil. Using a spoon or trowel, they should dig up some of each type of soil and put it in a separate tray or plant pot. When you come back together as a group, give out some small seeds which can be planted in winter, such as basil or chives to be kept inside. Explain that they should observe the seeds and see which type of soil encourages the most growth.



Reflecting: Invite everyone to stand or sit quietly for a moment to reflect. After a few moments of quiet, read the verse from Isaiah again, then invite anyone to share something that stood out to them from the reading, or how they help their faith to grow.

Pray: Allow a few moments for said or silent prayer.

Celebrate: Read Psalm 100 aloud together

“Shout praises to the Lord, everyone on this earth. Be joyful and sing as you come in to worship the Lord! You know the Lord is God! He created us, and we belong to him; we are his people, the sheep in his pasture. Be thankful and praise the Lord as you enter his temple. The Lord is good! His love and faithfulness will last forever.”



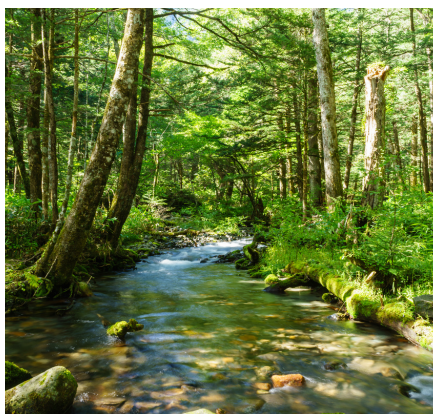


Winter 3

Suggested location: A place with a (safe) stream, trees and paths.

Materials required: phones with camera function, or digital cameras.

Gathering: Ask the group what they can see, smell and hear. What features can you see that are man made, or man-maintained? What features are natural?



Pray: Invite a child or a family to lead a short prayer to start your gathering.

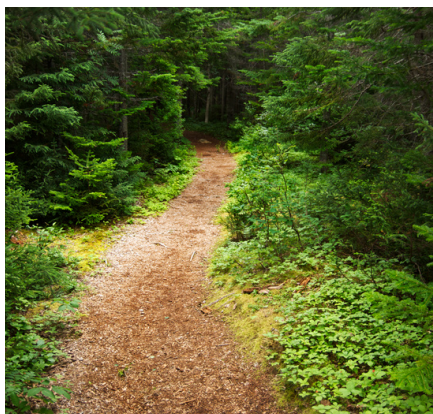
Bible Reading: Psalm 23: 1-4 CEV

"You, Lord, are my shepherd. I will never be in need. You let me rest in fields of green grass. You lead me to streams of peaceful water, and you refresh my life. You are true to your name, and you lead me along the right paths. I may walk through valleys as dark as death, but I won't be afraid. You are with me, and your shepherd's rod makes me feel safe."



Exploring and creating: Invite the group to explore the area and find places which are mentioned in the Bible verse. Take photos in or of each of these places. (field, stream, path). Come back as a group and compare the photos you have taken.

Reflecting: Invite everyone to stand or sit quietly for a moment to reflect. After a few moments of quiet, read the Psalm again. Invite anyone to share something which stood out to them, something they thought about while they were taking photos, or a time when they felt like God was close to them.



Pray: Allow a few moments for said or silent prayer.

Celebrate: Read Psalm 100 aloud together

"Shout praises to the Lord, everyone on this earth. Be joyful and sing as you come in to worship the Lord! You know the Lord is God! He created us, and we belong to him; we are his people, the sheep in his pasture. Be thankful and praise the Lord as you enter his temple. The Lord is good! His love and faithfulness will last forever."

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