

Experiencing creation prayer walk

Introduction

The purpose of this activity is to integrate prayer, sensation and the environment. You may wish to take with you a small notebook and pen/pencil so that you can record your thoughts, impressions or prayers. For the 'taste and see' section of the prayer walk, you will want to have with you an apple or other fresh fruit. You may wish to use a park, woodland or churchyard as a 'natural' space for your walk. Please ensure that the space you use is safe and allows public access. Please use care as you go on your walk.

Open your eyes

Find a space where few or no man-made objects (buildings, roads, etc) are in the centre of your vision. Look at the things of nature. What strikes you most about what you are seeing? Colour? Light? Pattern? Movement? Something else? Take a moment to really concentrate on what you see in front of you. What is God saying to you through your eyes? What would you like to say to God about what you have seen?

Only listen

Find a space where traffic noise and other distractions are at a minimum. Try to make yourself as still and quiet as possible. Make sure that you are comfortable. Close your eyes, and just listen to the sounds of nature around you. What can you hear? What do the sounds remind you of? How do they make you feel? Is God speaking to you through the sounds of creation? Is there anything that you feel you would like to whisper to God?

Feeling your way

You may want to stay where you are, or move to a new spot. Reach out and touch something of creation around you (but use care – although a part of nature, thorns and stinging nettles probably won't make for a pleasant experience. Please also take care to make sure that there is no broken glass, barbed wire or other dangerous object in your way). What is the object you've chosen? What is its texture? How does it feel? Rough? Smooth? Warm? Cool? Does it draw your thoughts to something else? Is God using this object to tell you something? Have you learned something that you'd like to share with God?

Breathe in

Again, find a space as far as possible from roads and traffic. Take time to relax and become comfortable. Breathe in deeply through your nose. Do this a few times. Are there any smells that you begin to notice? What types of scents are present? Plants? Animals? Earthy smells? Others? Where do these scents take your thoughts? The Bible sometimes speaks of things being pleasing odours to God. Is God filling you with peace and joy as you inhale the pleasing scents around you? What would you like to offer God here and now?

Taste and see

Examine the fruit that you have brought with you. Although cultivated, this is also a part of the natural world. Take a bite of the fruit. Can you describe its flavour? Its texture? Is God nourishing you in this moment? What is the flavour of prayer?

Space to think

You have now experienced creation through all five senses, and hopefully each of your senses helped to lead you into prayer in some way. Think for a moment about how you felt at each point on the walk. Some questions are provided below. Take time to reflect on your experience and to consider one or two of these questions, or other questions may come to mind that you want to ponder.

- Did you feel yourself part of nature, or somehow separate, outside of it? Why?
- Why did God equip us with such a variety of senses?
- Did using your senses in this way make praying easier?
- Do you think that all five of our senses should play some part in our prayers and our worship?
- What do you think about God speaking to us through his creation?
- Do you think you now have a greater appreciation of the natural world than you did before you started the walk?