**Steward of Nature - Program Outline**

The purpose of this program is to show that we are to be stewards of nature and care for the planet that God has blessed us with. I suggest that this program be held at a campsite, beach, park or similar venue.

Key Text - Genesis 2:16 “The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it.”

Opening Prayer

Song Service/Praise and worship

Key Text

Welcome

Trivia

Health Tip

Group Activity

Discussion

Closing Thoughts

Closing Song

Closing Prayer

**Trivia Questions**

Instructions: Ensure that you have pencils and papers for persons to write their answers. The answers for each question are bolded below. After asking the trivia questions and everyone has written their answers allow them to switch papers with the person next to them so it can be marked. Ask each question again allowing them to say the answers out loud as the they mark each other papers. You can have a small gift for the winner.

1) What is the memorial for creation? **Sabbath (Exodus 20:11)**

2) What kind of leaves did Adam and Eve sew together to make clothes for themselves? **Fig (Genesis 3:7)**

3) What happened to the plant that God caused to grow over Jonah to give him shade? **Worm ate through the stem of the plant and it withered. (Jonah 4:7)**

4) Who slept under a juniper tree after fleeing for his life? **Elijah (1 Kings 19:4-5)**

5) Which plant is "the least of all seeds, but when it is grown, it is the greatest? **Mustard (Mark 4:31-32)**

6) Who climbed up a sycamore tree to see Jesus? **Zacchaeus** **(Luke 19:2-4)**

7) Which Psalm contains the line, "He leads me beside the still waters"? **Psalm 23**

8) Fill in the blank - [And he shall be like a tree planted by the\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Psalms-1-3/) **Rivers of Water (Psalm 1:3)**

9) Moses sent 10 men to spy on the land of Canaan. Which animal did the 10 spies liken themselves to, compared to the people of the land of Canaan? **Grasshoppers (Numbers 13:33)**

10) Name the animals that David killed protecting his sheep? **Lion and Bear 1 Samuel 17:34-36**

**Health Tip**

You feel happier

According to one study, spending just 15 minutes sitting in nature helped people feel psychologically restored. Those results were even faster when they spent that time walking.

Nature can literally heal

One study shows that people exposed to more natural light healed faster from a spinal surgery and reportedly had less pain than others.3 It seems nature served as a natural drug for them, because they also took fewer pain medications.

You can concentrate better

Taking a break in nature can improve your concentration4  by giving your brain a well-needed break. Leave your phone behind and let your mind unwind from the overstimulation so common with modern, busy life.

It prompts weight loss

Being outside may not be a magical diet pill all by itself, but it does tend to make exercise more enjoyable. What’s more, some aspects of outdoor exercise like hiking may help you lose weight in an unexpected way. Spending time at higher altitudes can speed up your metabolism and lower your appetite.

Your vitamin D supply improves

Spending time in the sun helps your body create vitamin D—a vitamin that studies have shown may help prevent cancer, osteoporosis, and heart attacks.6

Nature limits your stress

Being in mother nature, even if just in your own neighborhood, can reduce stress in the body. Studies show spending time outdoors can lower your heart rate—a symptom of stress.7

You age less painfully

Want to age gracefully? Going outside every single day may be the key. One study showed 70-year-old participants who spent time outside every single day had fewer complaints of common aging pains (e.g., aching bones, not sleeping) at age 77 than those who didn’t.8

It lightens feelings of depression

Being in Mother Nature heals you in so many ways—including your mental health. Multiple studies have linked nature walks with improved mental health.

**Group Activity One Purpose - How we see God in nature.**

Instructions:

Form multiple groups (4 - 6 based on the number of people available).

Allow the groups to take 15 - 20 minutes to walk out in the surrounding nature and observe the environment.

Each group should take note of natural things in the environment.

For each Item in nature that is identified list the following:

1. A Bible verse about the item.
2. What it tells us about God’s qualities/character or what can we learn from it?
3. How it is beneficial to us or other plants and animals.
4. How can we protect or conserve it?

You can provide the groups with a paper, pencil and instructions so they can make notes of items they see. After each group is done, have one person from each group share what they have observed.

Example

Item – Tree

1. Rock – But the LORD God warned him, “You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden— Genesis 2:16

2. Just like a tree, we should be rooted in Christ.

3. Beneficial to us as because trees provide us with oxygen and fruit.

4. We can plant trees throughout or communities and protect certain areas where trees would not be allowed to be chopped down.

**Discussion Questions**

Instructions: Ask each question to your audience, allowing them time to respond.

1) What is a steward?

* *Steward* is a biblical term that refers to a manager who is responsible for the goods and property of another. A steward is not therefore an owner, but one who has a responsibility to an owner to treat property with care and respect. *Stewardship* is a term that refers to the responsibility of a steward to manage wisely.

2) Why is caring for the environment important when this isn't our eternal home, and we are just passing through?

* God made man the steward of nature. “The heavens belong to the LORD, but he has given the earth to all humanity. Psalm 115:16 (NLT)

* Genesis 2:15 (NLT) recounts when God placed man in charge of caring for the Earth to “tend and watch over it.” Elsewhere in the Bible we are called to be stewards of all that God has given us. We don’t own the earth; we are called to take care of it for the Lord.

3) What are some benefits of the creations that God has made?

* Nature provides us with food: And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden. Genesis 2:16 (NIV)
* God uses the earth to teach us: Job 12:7-10 (NIV) "But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds of the air, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish of the sea inform you. Which of all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind."
* Nature reminds us about God and is proof of His existence, Romans 1:19-20 (NIV)"...since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse."
* Nature is here for us to enjoy:
	+ Victoria Falls
	+ Grand Canyon
	+ Mount Everest
	+ Northern Lights
	+ The economy of our country is dependent on our natural resources God has given us (land, sea and sun)
* Provides healing or medicinal properties, [Ezekiel 47:12](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ezekiel+47%3A12&version=ESV) (ESV) And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.”

4) What are some local plants that have healing properties?

* Aloe, Cerasee, Fever grass, Neem, Guniep leaves

5) Does anyone want to share any stories about how they used plants or items in nature for healing?

6) The flood was a natural disaster that was a form of punishment for the wicked. Are natural disasters Gods punishment e.g. Hurricanes?

* You will see that in Bible history when God used natural forces to execute his judgments, he always provided (1) a warning, (2) a reason, and (3) protection for obedient worshippers. Current natural disasters do not fit the pattern of divine intervention found in the Scriptures. What is more, these random events are out of harmony with God’s personality*.*
* Can be a sign of end of time, [Matthew 24:](https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/Matthew/24/7)7 (NKJV) “For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. [Matthew 24:29](https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/Matthew/24/29) (NJKV) "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.”
* One thing we must remember is that the world is fallen. It was impossible for a sinful man to live in a perfect environment of paradise, so all of nature is cursed. We have to accept however, that God allows natural disasters and while we may not understand we can trust and have faith that He is still in control and He has a plan for our lives. “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Jeremiah 29:11 NKJV)

5) What can we do to be better stewards of Gods planet?

* -Grow a plant
* -Clean Up Day
* -Use fluorescent lights
* -Be knowledgeable about organizations that protect the environment
	+ Bahamas National Trust
	+ Bahamas Caves Research Foundation
	+ Bahamas marine mammal research organization
	+ Bahamas environment protection
	+ Bahamas Reef Environment Educational Foundation
	+ The Nature Conservatory
* -Don't Releasing balloons in the air

**Closing Thoughts**

What can we learn about God from looking at Nature?

Nature reflects God and His creativity and glory.

* “The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship.” (Psalm 19:1 NLT)
* “You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.” (Isaiah 55:12 NIV)
* “And then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea. They sang: “Blessing and honor and glory and power belong to the one sitting on the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever.” (Revelation 5:13 NLT)

Nature displays God’s power and control.

* “You formed the mountains by your power and armed yourself with mighty strength. You quieted the raging oceans with their pounding waves and silenced the shouting of the nations. Those who live at the ends of the earth stand in awe of your wonders. From where the sun rises to where it sets, you inspire shouts of joy. You take care of the earth and water it, making it rich and fertile. The river of God has plenty of water; it provides a bountiful harvest of grain, for you have ordered it so. You drench the plowed ground with rain, melting the clods and leveling the ridges. And you soften the earth with showers and bless its abundant crops. You crown the year with a bountiful harvest; even the hard pathways overflow with abundance. The grasslands of the wilderness become a lush pasture, and the hillsides blossom with joy. The meadows are clothed with flocks of sheep, and the valleys are carpeted with grain. They all shout and sing for joy!” (Psalm 65:6-13 NLT)

Nature can act as God’s missionary and can testify to His existence.

* “I tell you,” he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.” (Luke 19:40 NLT)
* “For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities–his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.” (Romans 1:20 NLT)
* “But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish in the sea inform you. Which of all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.” (Job 12:7-10 NIV)

We can see that God will take care of us by looking at nature.

* “That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn’t life more than food, and your body more than clothing? Look at the birds. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren’t you far more valuable to him than they are? Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? “And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don’t work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?” (Matthew 6:25-30 NLT)

God reminds us of His promises and His faithfulness through nature.

* “Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.” (Genesis 9:16 NIV)

How did Jesus interact with nature?

* When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered. And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples. (John 18:1-2 NJKV)
* “Later that same day Jesus left the house and sat beside the lake.” (Matthew 13:1 NLT)
* “But Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness for prayer.” (Luke 5:16 NLT)
* “After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone” (Matthew 14:23 NIV)
* “Then Jesus went with them to the olive grove called Gethsemane, and he said, “Sit here while I go over there to pray.” (Matthew 26:36 NLT)

We can see through scripture that Jesus often went out in nature to commune with God. As nature was a blessing to Jesus it can also be a blessing to us. Let’s all do our part to care for the earth that God has given us!