

DAY ONE

Creation's Witness Morning Devotions Location

Choose a beautiful setting for this morning's devotion wooded, on a lake or beach shore, in the middle of a meadow or field. Have campers carry chairs to the location if the dew is too heavy to sit on blankets in the grass. If you must be inside, choose a building with a window or open wall that will turn the camper's minds toward nature and the creation before them.

Scripture

Ask several campers to set the stage for the day by reading a melody of scriptures.

...It is now the moment for you to wake from sleep... The night is far gone, the day is near.

—Romans 13:11, 12 NRSV

Look at the birds of the air...your heavenly Father feeds them.

—Matthew 6:26 NRSV (6:29 IV)

Ask the animals, and they will teach you; the birds of the air; and they will tell you. Ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being.

—Job 12:7-10 NRSV

Let everything that breathes praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!

—Psalm 150:6 NRSV

God's Wake-Up Call

Guide campers into a oneness with the morning using the following thoughts as a guide.

Close your eyes and listen to the

morning sounds. Do you hear the sounds of nature waking up? (*Have campers follow directions in silence. Draw their attention to sounds such as dogs barking, birds singing, frogs jumping in a pond, and wind blowing through leaves.*)

Keep your eyes closed and slowly take a deep breath. Then slowly let it out. Repeat this several times. As you do so, let yourself become a part of the air around you. Feel the renewing freshness of morning. (*Draw attention to things like the dampness of the air; the coolness of the morning, and the cleansing feeling of the deep breaths.*)

Now open your eyes. Look around you. How is nature praising God in the presence of this new morning? (*Draw attention things like flowers opening, birds soaring fish jumping, and small animals feeding.*)

Nature begins each new day with a sense of energy and praise to God the great Creator. Throughout today's activities we will let nature teach us. Our exploration of the creation will help us discover new ways to understand and know our God, our Creator.

Reflection Activity

Direct everyone through the following activity. Close your eyes and imagine yourself sitting in the most beautiful place you can think of. Maybe you are on an ocean beach, or sitting on a mountain side looking out for miles and miles. Maybe you are sitting in the middle of a still lake with the steam of the morning dew rising from the water. The dawn is just breaking, and the sun is coming up. Remember that you are a part of this morning's awakening. Slowly stretch your arms as high as you can reach, then stretch your legs and toes.

Feel the Spirit of God moving through your body as you open yourself to the renewal of the morning. Hear God saying to you, “Wake up my beautiful creation. You and all that is around you. Wake up. Know that this day is made for you to enjoy.” Now open your eyes. Look at the creation around you. Accept that you are a part of this wonderful creation. “*This is the day that the Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.*”

Psalms 118:24.

Let’s all say good morning to God. Can you say it with me? “Good morning, God!” Now let’s shout it from the mountain tops, “Good morning, God!”

Prayer

Share in a prayer thanking God for the beautiful setting of camp, the wonders of creation, and the opportunities it provides for learning more about our Creator and Lord.

Music Suggestions

Morning Has Broken, from *Hymns of the Saints*, 22

Everybody’s Got a Seed to Sew by Michael W. Smith meditation recordings of music from nature (water rushing, ocean waves, birds singing).

Suggestions for Classes

1. Nature photography
2. Solar print photography (kits *available through crafts and nature stores*.)
3. Sketching or painting nature settings
4. Nature’s music: make your own recordings of animals, water, birds, frogs, etc. Also make instruments using items from nature like rocks, sticks, seeds, reeds, sea shells, leaves rustling, and gourds.
5. Solar Cooking
6. Shadow sketches (*draw around shadows to create sidewalk and wall murals*.)
7. Nature study of plants, animals, birds, fish, etc.

8. Nature crafts: collages, seed pictures, jewelry, dried flower creations, walking sticks, sea shell creations
9. Flower arranging
10. Fishing
11. Astronomy
12. Sand candles/sculptures
14. Pottery
15. Wood burning
16. Create a sundial
17. Nature games: shadow tag, river hike
18. Nature sports: river or lake swimming, boating, surfing, skiing
19. Hiking
20. Outdoor cooking—cook one meal for the day outside!

Theme Class

Supplies Needed:

markers

poster board or newsprint

Bibles

1.A. Divide the class into groups of two to four campers. Explain that they are going to explore God’s creation together through scripture. Assign each group verses from Psalm 148 to read and interpret. If the class is small, create fewer groups and assign more verses per group. If the class is large, create more groups and assign more than one group to the same verses.

B. Give each group a piece of poster board or newsprint and markers. Ask them to interpret their assigned scripture verses on the paper through pictures and designs. Allow about 15 minutes for them to create their mural pieces. As the campers work, encourage them to be creative as they draw and express God’s creation.

C. After 15 minutes, bring everyone back together and hang the pictures together to form a mural. Ask the groups to provide one person to read their scripture verses and one person to explain their drawing.

2.A. Talk about psalms. Discuss how the book of Psalms is like our hymn book. It contains expressions of music and poetry to be used usually in worship settings. Just like music today, the psalms offer insight into people's expressions and understanding of their world, their God, and their worship. Pass out Bibles and hymnbooks. Give campers a few minutes to see how many psalms and hymns they can find which describe or talk about God's creation. Let each group choose one hymn or psalm to share.

B. Take the class to a place where they can see nature around them. Divide them into groups of three or four and ask them to find their own special spot to sit. (To avoid having campers leave, do not let anyone go too far away.) Give each group a notebook, or paper and a clipboard, and a pencil. Challenge them to write their own psalm. They are to let God's creation be their inspiration. This is their song. It can be as long or short as they wish. They should also think about how they would like this psalm to be shared. Is it to be sung, rapped, read, or accompanied by sticks and drums? Give groups 20 minutes write their psalms. If groups appear to finish sooner, call everyone back together.

C. Gather everyone together and share the psalms the groups have written.

Extra Activities

Animal Skits

Divide into groups of four to six. Have each group choose an animal from nature to act out. Each person in the group must be part of the animal. Let the other groups guess the animal being acted out. Create different rounds as time allows. Groups can act out plants/trees, insects, etc. This could also be done as skits for campfire.

Nature Bingo

Give groups paper with 25 squares drawn on them in rows of five by five. Have each group choose four squares to fill in as free spaces. Then ask the groups to fill in the rest of the squares with animals they can think of in God's nature. Explain that their answers count only if no one else thinks of it. When cards are filled, let each group tell one animal on their card. If no one else has thought of that animal, then they can mark it with an X. Continue taking turns until one group has five X's in a row.

Variations. Do other rounds with clean sheets of squared paper and new topics such as trees, flowers, birds, insects, or reptiles. To make the game go faster, use less squares on the bingo sheets.

Questions for Chats

1. Who does nature say God is?
2. By looking at nature, what do you learn about God?
3. How does nature reflect the power of God?

Evening Activity

Use topics from nature to create a game show. Look up trivia about nature in encyclopedias, almanacs, nature books, and trivia books to create interesting questions. Make questions age appropriate with some easy enough for anyone to answer. Possible topics could include the sun, moon, plants, trees, insects, large and small animals, fish, astronomy, people, and water plant life. Divide the camp into several teams. Rotate teams and/or team members with each round of questions. Possible show formats:
Jeopardy: provide answers, teams gives questions
Hollywood Squares: staff provides answers to questions, team decides if correct or not

Nickelodeon's Double Dare:

teams answer questions with the options of passing the question on to the other team or of taking a fun physical challenge if they don't know the answer. (Make sure physical challenges are fun, not humiliating!)

Campfire Ideas

If at all possible, hold campfire in a natural setting under the stars. Unless weather interferes, do not hold tonight's campfire inside! Having the campers follow a safe path to a remote location would be appropriate. Since fire is one of the mysteries of God's creation, make tonight's spectacular. Build a great fire and light it in an interesting way. For instance a wire can be strung from the fire up to a tree branch or pole out of sight of the campers. Light a roll of toilet paper soaked in lighter fluid on the out-of-sight-end and let it slide dramatically into the fire to light it. Make sure there are no branches or other obstacles in the way to stop the effect or create unsafe conditions. Be sure to test your lighting technique before campfire for safety and effectiveness.

Toward the end of campfire, ask the campers to lie back and look at the stars. Help them find familiar constellations. Remind everyone that people all over the world are looking up at the sky. To stir their thinking, read section 22:21 c,d,e from the Doctrine and Covenants.

"And worlds without number have I created, and I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten... But only an account of this earth, and the inhabitants thereof give I unto you; for behold there are many worlds which have passed away by the word of my power; and there are many also which now stand, and numberless are they ..., but all things are numbered unto me; for they are mine, and I know

them."

Ask everyone to sit back and reflect

on the wonders and power of God's creation. Remind them that they are also part of God's creation and challenge them to think about how they fit into this world. They are beautiful creatures, created in the image of God as expression of God's love. How are they going to take this gift and live it to its best?

Close with a prayer, but ask the campers to leave their eyes open as they connect with God through the stars and nature around them. If campfire has been held away from the main camp, lead the group back very slowly and quietly using only a few flashlights.

Cabin Devotions

Supplies: Bible

Have someone read the scripture verse Psalm 148 one more time. Reflect on all the things they have seen today which witness of God. Ask the campers to think of one thing in nature they connect to or want to be like. Give a few examples like the wind that gets to go everywhere, the tall tree that stands proud and strong, or the kitten who is small but willing to share love with others, Let each camper share their nature connection, If one of the campers is having a difficult time, let the others help think of a positive example from nature that they can see reflected in that person.