

IN THE

# WILDERNESS



**INSIDE  
OUT**

# Daily Overview for **IN THE WILDERNESS**

DAY	SCRIPTURE	THEME	STORY	DAILY GOALS
<b>Day 1</b>	Job 12: 7-10 (NRSVUE)	Wilderness Awe	Creation Teaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome everyone into the sanctuary of camp, a holy and wild place.</li> <li>• Invite each other to listen for the wisdom of wilderness, allowing this sacred space to teach us.</li> <li>• Celebrate the beauty and power of the universe, including ourselves and others.</li> <li>• Call each other to express awe at the beauty of creation.</li> </ul>
<b>Day 2</b>	Exodus 13: 17-22	Wilderness Leads	Pillars of Fire & Smoke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider our own individual and collective wilderness experiences.</li> <li>• Be assured God is with us in our wildernesses.</li> <li>• Explore signs of God's guidance and provision around us.</li> </ul>
<b>Day 3</b>	Matthew 14:22-30	Wilderness Frightens	Peter Walks on Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honor the tradition of Jesus entering the wilderness to reconnect, refuel, and be renewed.</li> <li>• Hold safe space to acknowledge that wilderness may be disorienting or even frightening.</li> <li>• Explore what it means to take bold steps, facing our fears and doing awesome things through God.</li> <li>• Affirm that no matter what our wilderness moments may bring, God is always with us.</li> </ul>
<b>Day 4</b>	Luke 10: 25-37	Wilderness Reveals	The Broken Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the Good Samaritan story from a fresh perspective.</li> <li>• Discuss how systems can help or harm people, and how we can respond.</li> <li>• Recognize the different roles necessary to create lasting change.</li> <li>• Reflect on how wilderness experiences and choices shape our lives.</li> </ul>
<b>Day 5</b>	Jeremiah 29: 11-14	Wilderness Awaits	A Future with Hope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affirm that we are equipped to face wilderness moments.</li> <li>• Remind each other to seek God, who is always accessible and present.</li> <li>• Commission one another to pursue mountain top experiences awaiting us in our wildernesses.</li> </ul>

## NARRATIVE OVERVIEW

Wilderness is a time or place where we encounter what is new, strange, scary, lonely, unknown or mysterious. The wilderness is a wild and beautiful time and place where we can discover the sacred within each person and all creation. The wilderness can inspire us and guide us, assuring us of God's constant presence. As the Spirit guides us through the wilderness, we find what we need to face our fears and the very real challenges that impact our world. The wilderness teaches us the importance of community and the ways we navigate challenges together. The wilderness reveals our strengths, growing edges, and potential as God equips us for the unknown still to come. The wilderness awaits us all, and God meets us there.

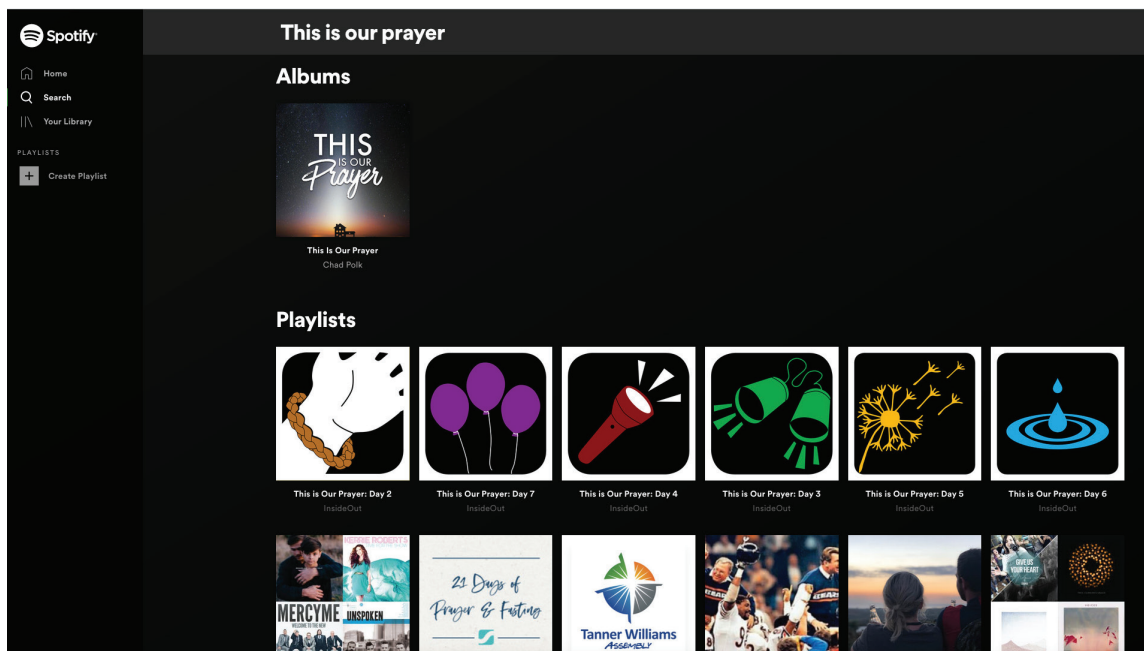


**Music has always been one of the best ways for people to connect with each other and with God, so we've created a playlist of songs to go with each day of *In the Wilderness*. Just search for *In the Wilderness* and scroll down to Playlists.**

Spotify is a versatile music platform that can bolster the great things your camp is already doing in a number of ways, such as:

1. Include songs in your daily worship that tie in the theme of the day.
2. Have something to play in the background during arts & crafts, free time, etc.
3. Connect with campers who feel the presence of God more tangibly in music than they do in sermons or activities.
4. Use individual songs on the playlists for Bible studies and devotions.
5. Show campers how many styles of Christian music there really is, and how even songs that weren't originally written for a worship setting can still be used for contemplative prayer.
6. Encourage your campers and staff to follow InsideOut on Spotify so they have something to remind them of camp in the off-season.

We hope you'll use and enjoy our latest resource! It is completely free to use.





## Day 1: Wilderness Awe

### Job 12: 7-10 (NRSVUE)

Throughout the book of Job, our protagonist grapples with immense suffering and questions God's justice. Job 12:7-10 emerges from this context, where Job, despite his anguish, acknowledges the inherent wisdom of creation. While some interpret this passage as Job's sarcastic rebuke to his friends, it can also be seen as a liberating recognition of God's presence in all things.

This perspective aligns with the idea that camp this week, offers an opportunity to learn from all of creation. As Job suggests, the animals, birds, plants, and fish all reveal God's handiwork. This can inspire us to start each day with open hearts, ready to receive new experiences and wisdom, even from unexpected sources. The wilderness, like this camp, becomes a classroom where God may speak through the rustle of leaves, the songs of birds, or the laughter of fellow campers.

If we read the earlier chapters featuring Job's friends, we see that a closed heart cannot receive such wisdom. This time is a gift, but its value depends on our willingness to engage with it fully. An expectant heart opens us to the possibility of growth, deeper understanding of God, and self-discovery. We may even uncover the potential to do even greater things than we ever imagined, just as we hear throughout scripture.

The liberation found in Job 12:7-10 lies in its invitation to move beyond human-centric perspectives and recognize God's presence in all of creation. This holistic view celebrates the beauty and interconnectedness of the universe, including ourselves. By embracing this mindset, we not only deepen our relationship with God but also unlock the potential for profound personal and spiritual transformation.

Many know Job through the opening narrative with a more skit-friendly scene where God is being challenged

about the true goodness of Job, who stands in as a representative for those people who praise God out of their comfort and privilege. Through Job, we learn about the importance of faith and humility amid suffering. Varied translations and interpretations have often led us to misunderstand this text. The Hebrew text has often translated "satan" as ha-satan, which means "the adversary." It is not a name. The same term is used throughout the Hebrew Bible to describe those who stand in opposition, including those who do it in the name of God. Often, it is a "good-guy" in the story, standing up to those causing harm.

While this might be helpful information for those who get questions about the full story of Job from well-informed campers, it can also exemplify how we often squeeze scripture into our understanding. We take what was written in the context of a community and make it fit a personal narrative that is more familiar and allows us to separate our personal faith journey from the neighbors and friends around us. Job is a text that begins with a metaphorical reflection on privilege and suffering, moves into a conversation among friends on blame and the nature of God, then has the creation itself reminding us that God is God and we are not.

When we forget that the Earth is a gift from God and start seeing it as something to possess, control, or fight over, it becomes harder to listen and learn lessons from those same lands and creatures. The power of creation is not in who controls it, but the ways it sustains and cares for all who call it home. The power of creation is not in subduing it, but standing in awe of the beauty and strength around us, recognizing God in the midst of it all.

We don't have to be in the forest or desert to experience such awe of God. We don't have to escape the city lights to find wilderness moments that inspire. When the sunrise reflects off the glass of an office tower, we can be moved by God's creation. When we see pollinator boxes on top of a building and the bees who call it home buzzing around the flowerpots that decorate an apartment's tiny patio, we can be inspired. When the technology we hold in our hands introduces us to natural wonders of the Earth, and we find ourselves contemplating our place in this vast world, we have entered a "wilderness" moment.

Some campers will come to the physical space of camp as "natural inhabitants." Others will feel like they are an "invasive species." Some campers will hear about where another lives and feel like it is as foreign as

another country or planet. Help campers find the awe and wonder that moves them beyond the initial “othering” that comes from exploring unknown people and places. If they need help, encourage them to look to the animals who will teach them, the birds who will tell them, and the fish who will inform them that this is God’s creation and in this place, we can experience and express all the joy and wonder that life brings. .



## Day 2: Wilderness Leads

### Exodus 13:17-22

Our community will teach and shape us. Our shared meals, intentional times for rest and play, pausing for prayer, and gathering for worship each make an impact, and the schedule itself becomes a ritual and expresses our priorities. When we change our schedule, it says something about how we live as a community.

In our scripture, the Israelites have just escaped Egypt, where they were living as an enslaved population. Moses rises as a leader along with his brother and sister, Aaron and Miriam. Creation plays an important role throughout Moses’ story. His personal call includes the “character” of the burning bush. Each sign or plague that Moses warned Pharaoh about featured something in nature. It was as if creation itself was rebelling against the inhumane act of slavery. The role of creation continues as God’s people look for a way out of Egypt and across a literal wilderness. Today’s story from Exodus continues to show us how God speaks through creation to guide God’s people. Not just individuals, but entire communities.

The pillar of cloud in the story seems consistent across translations. Some will notice a difference in the nighttime guide. Fire and lightning are both used by various translators. The root word is old, and Hebrew is not always as specific as we would like,

so either translation is accurate. In a practical sense, lightning from the sky often sparks fires on the ground. It would not be a stretch to think people made the connection, and the words would be connected or even interchangeable. Fire before it hits the ground, and fire that is still flashing around in the sky -- makes sense. Does it matter for this day and this theme? Probably not, but a curiosity itch that doesn’t get scratched can be a distraction, so this is an easy question to answer if it comes up for campers. It also might be a great time to talk about storms and how thunder and lightning can help us know how far away a storm is, and that in some ways work as an early warning system for creatures in a storm’s path.

Today is a great day to think about other ways we navigate creation. From “wayfinders” on the Pacific Ocean or “pathfinders” in the Appalachian Mountains, we inherit wisdom from those who explored the world before us and help listen to creation as we now navigate it. What signs does the creation give us for knowing where we are, finding our way to new places, or making our way “home”?

There is also a more personal layer to today’s theme that invites us to reflect on our personal journey and bring our experience to the “wilderness” metaphor. Some of these might be scary memories. Some might even be traumatic. Be tender as you invite campers to share, and be mindful of your own past experiences. When were you leaving behind something you knew on the way to something new? Was it a painful leaving or a liberating experience? Maybe both? Was your wilderness chosen, or thrust upon you (not truly a choice, but it didn’t just happen by chance)? What times have you faced a question, challenge, or new reality? What places have brought you face to face with something different or made you look at yourself in a mirror?

These questions about “wilderness” are not just for individuals. Cultural identities are often forged by wilderness experiences. Geographic regions have identities forged by things that happened there and how the people adapted and grew from them. Spiritual communities have stories of perseverance that offer resilience in the face of such challenges, and today’s scripture is one example.

Invite your campers to reflect and use camp as a wilderness—a place to explore, learn, change, and

grow. Invite your campers to reflect on their own experiences and share about a wilderness they have traveled, or those they still feel like they are living in. Maybe it is that in between-time when bodies change, but they are not sure who they are becoming. Maybe families have moved or changed dramatically. Maybe they had a dream that was dashed. Maybe they are just preparing to enter a wilderness that comes with being a year older, and are standing on the edge of a new unknown. Invite your campers to share, but don't push. Assure them of God's presence and invite them to look for reminders. It gets hard to find God when the chaos starts swirling. It's easier to spot the signs around us when we are practicing and expecting to see them.



## Day 3: Wilderness Frightens

### Matthew 14:22-30

Some stuff is just scary. It doesn't matter how much time you spend with snakes or spiders. It doesn't matter how much time you spend in the dark or climbing up high. Some things are simply scary to us and can be even more so to others. Still, fear has its uses. Fear is an instinctual response. Fear can keep us alive. Other times, it does not seem very logical. Either way, fear happens.

In today's story, Peter is scared of the wind. Before we start to tease Peter too much, he "saw the strong wind." Maybe it was the waves. Maybe it was the sea spray that stung as it blew against his face. Maybe small cyclones were forming. We are all good at imagining how scary something could be. We have plenty of images from disaster movies to inspire our imaginations. Still, Peter had some good/legitimate reasons to be afraid. He had just been in a boat, and scared of what they all thought was a ghost. Before

that, they had been battling the wind for a while. The wind was not new. They had already survived a potential poltergeist, and Peter had just stepped out of the boat to try walking on water. With all the evidence in front of him and all that he had already overcome, you might think Peter would fare a little better. Walking on water didn't scare him, but the wind that he knew was swirling did? It's strange what gets us.

Comfort is something we value in our society. We like a comfy couch. We like a padded seat. We like the temperature in the room to be consistent. We like the bugs to stay where they belong, which is far from us, even if we are outside. Sometimes we work so hard to stay comfortable that we keep ourselves from growing. Avoiding challenges doesn't allow us to build the confidence we find in overcoming those challenges. That doesn't mean we need to go out looking for trouble to overcome. That doesn't mean we need to invent problems to solve. We shouldn't hide from the reality around us. We should battle the strong headwinds in our lives, and when we have gotten familiar with that challenge, we might find ourselves stepping out and trying to walk on water.

Peter didn't start with walking on water, and it wasn't what made him start sinking. Peter was fine facing the winds with his friends, working as a crew on the boat. He was so courageous in that situation that he was able to bounce back from thinking they saw a ghost, to hop out of the boat when Jesus appeared. But once alone - once stepping out on his own, those same winds whirled around him and fear cycled through his brain. Once alone, Peter finds himself sinking.

Even though Jesus is right there, Peter calls for help, crying out, "rescue me!" Fear is not rational. Literally, it comes from the instinctual portion of our brain. In an emergency, our instinct operates first. Emotions follow, then logic brings up the rear. It's difficult when we think we are operating logically, maybe even a little in our feelings, and out of nowhere, the alarms go off and we are in fight or flight mode as fear tries to take over.

Campers will each come with their personal fears. Campers will each come with their own experiences and stories of bravery, even if they don't give themselves enough credit. Invite them to share and listen with respect. Remind them that even the bravest of us can be afraid. Assure them that fear is a normal human reaction and even plays a role in keeping us safe. Also, remind them that fear can be overcome.

Trying new things can be scary. Facing complicated emotions can be scary. Looking back on the past can be scary. Walking to a bathroom at night with strange-sounding frogs and crazy bright stars can be scary when you are not used to it. Sleeping in a cabin full of other people can be scary when you are not used to it. Changing clothes, fixing hair, and taking swim tests might have been scary on Day 1, but if something triggers those insecurities, they can be suddenly just as frightening on Day 3. Fear will happen but we don't have to let it have the final say.

We can bravely cry out to others to give us a hand. We can humbly name our fears and work on becoming less triggered by trying to figure out what they are protecting us from or reminding us about. We can practice facing challenges with others, recognizing that we are not alone. We can also remember that God is with us, even when a time, place, or experience triggers our fears. When the hairs raise on our arms and necks, when our vision narrows, when our breath shortens, and when we feel a trembling deep within—we can reach out to God, cry out to God's people, and look to the creation around us for reminders that we are never alone. Those worries may never completely leave us, but we never have to face them alone.



## Day 4: Wilderness Reveals

### Luke 10: 25-37

The “Good Samaritan” may be the most well-known story in the New Testament. The term, “Good Samaritan,” is used in secular settings all the time to describe a person who helps another. This story could be easily explored through a simple lens of “do the right thing.” This message would be worth teaching, yet there are more layers to unpack and the history of this passage in our American context is worth exploring. Maybe the simpler the story, the more it has to tell us.

Let’s start with the setting. An expert is testing Jesus. Is this a political adversary? Is this an arrogant young leader who wants to make a name for himself? Is this someone of privilege who feels exposed by Jesus’ teaching? Whatever his motivation, he makes a public challenge to Jesus about what it takes to achieve eternal life. Jesus doesn’t take the bait, and instead deflects. “What does the scripture say? What do you think it means?” The expert shows he is indeed an expert and can quote the text, but he doesn’t say what it means. Jesus lets him off the hook and suggests he go and live that way. Instead of walking away or letting someone else ask a question, the guy keeps pushing. Luke says he wanted to “prove he was right” or as other translations word it, “justify himself.” Clearly this guy has an agenda. Who does he think his neighbor is? It would be nice to hear him admit it before Jesus tells such a profound story that the interrupting expert can do nothing more than fall in line. Whatever he thought, it seems to have been far afield from what Jesus was teaching.

The next layer is the story itself. To answer “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus uses some characters that the people would be familiar with. A priest is going down the road to Jericho and sees a man on the side of the road who has been beaten and left for dead. He may

have been dead. As a priest, he would fall under the Law as written in Leviticus and spelled out in Numbers. He would know he should not touch a dead body or have to go through a ritual of cleanliness that would take many days. He was clearly headed somewhere. He had things to do. How could he risk such a delay? The second traveler was a Levite, a descendant of Levi. This family line had been serving the temple in various ways since the early days of ritual life in the Jewish tradition. Levites were part of the spiritual community, but not to the degree of a priest. In Jesus' telling, people might have even expected to hear how the Levite was a good person compared to the privileged priesthood.

Instead, the Levite follows the same path as the priest and intentionally avoids the injured man and any delay in his travels. Next, we get a Samaritan. Samaria was once the capital of the Northern Kingdom, called Israel. We don't know if this Samaritan shared a genealogy with the Jewish community down south, or if his heritage was different. What we do know is that there were tensions between Jews and Samaritans, so his being the hero in the story was a surprise. Finally, we get an innkeeper, who we assume was Jewish based on the location. He takes over care for the wounded man from the Samaritan who vows to return.

Fast forward to April 4, 1967, for another layer to this story. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. preached at the Riverside Church in New York City and stepped beyond issues of civil rights in America to condemn the Vietnam War and point to America's role in the violence of our world. King spoke about the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. He affirms our need to be "Good Samaritans", but takes it a step further, saying that eventually we have to address the systems that leave people beaten and battered. He said:

One day we must come to see that the whole Jericho Road must be transformed so that men and women will not be constantly beaten and robbed as they make their journey on life's highway. True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring.

Just one year later, on April 3, 1968, on the night before his assassination, King preached the same text. He talked about driving down that same road with his wife and understanding how dangerous it could be. He talks about how easily one could be attacked. He suggests that those who traveled it would have been fearful and maybe even seen the man as potential bait for an

ambush. King reverses the question and instead of the first two asking, "What could happen to me if I stop?" he imagines the Samaritan asking, "What could happen to this person if I don't stop?"

The story of the Samaritan reveals our priorities. It reveals how we see others and how we see ourselves. It reveals what risks we are willing to take and those steps that we are not prepared to take. It reveals who has power and privilege, and the cost of not using them. It reveals the vulnerability of all people as well as the power and potential they possess.

As we explore the story at camp, we might assume the road is desolate and remote. If we read it sitting in a different location, our imagination might connect with a dirty alley in an urban setting or a long and dark road with no lights outside a small town. The nature of the road is not as important as the people who walk it and those abandoned along the sides. Who are these people in our communities? Who are we? How do we contribute to the suffering we see in their eyes? How has God prepared us to make a difference?



## Day 5: Wilderness Awaits

### Jeremiah 29:11-14

This is the last day of camp, and many people will be going home. In this context, Jeremiah's words serve as a benediction at the end of a sacred time. The irony is, Jeremiah was sharing these words with a community that had just been taken from their homes and sent away. He is writing to those who had just been sent into exile. This passage offers the people directions from God on how to make new lives in the new place they are living, while praying for a day when Babylon will be no more. They have watched the walls of Jerusalem fall, the Temple be destroyed, and been carted off to a

foreign city. God assures the people that they are loved and not forgotten.

Let's name the uncomfortable truth that many people will be going home to a place that is not as safe or supportive as camp. Some will be going back to difficult relationships and families. Some will be going back to neighborhoods that don't feel safe to them. Some will be starting new schools or facing the well-known struggles in a familiar one. Leaving camp might feel like being ripped from a safe place and carted into exile.

Other campers are going home to loving families and old routines. They are going back to the comfort and relaxation of Summer. Camp may have been a "wilderness" experience for them, or it might have just been a fun and affirming week they have not yet found the words to describe. Some might even be exhausted by the structure and constant community of camp and ready to turn their brains off, or just have some alone time. Others may be headed home, all wound up about making a change in the world. However they are going, they ARE going.

Jeremiah understands the concept of "wilderness" well. He is a youth serving in an adult role. He is a prophet speaking out to a king who does not want to listen. He is a captive of the king who keeps asking questions but still doesn't listen. He is kidnapped by friends before Jerusalem falls and taken into hiding in Egypt. All along the way, Jeremiah is not where he expected to be and is dealing with complicated realities. Yet, amid his struggles, he pens a letter to the exiles in Babylon, sharing this word of hope from God.

You don't have a lot of time to do deep-dive Bible study today, but you do have a chance to assure each camper that God has plans for them--plans for peace and not disaster. You can assure each camper that if they search for God with all their heart, they will find God. This passage is written using the word "you" a lot. It is singular in Hebrew, but it is the form used when Moses speaks to all of Israel. "You" is the word used when God is speaking to all of God's people. As the campers leave, use communal language, reminding them that God has plans for all of us that God will bless all others. Assure each camper that more wilderness experiences await them--await all of us. Remind them that God will meet them in each new place and each new setting. Remind them that God is with them and the wilderness of the world awaits.



## Day1: Wilderness Awe

### Daily Quick Reference Guide

**Scripture Passage:** Job 12: 7-10 (NRSVUE)

**Scripture Focus:** Job 12: 7 (NRSVUE)

“But ask the animals, and they will teach you,  
the birds of the air, and they will tell you”

**Theological Summary:** God can be found in all of creation if one takes time to listen to nature and absorb the abundance of lessons it has to teach us.

**Daily Goals...**

- Welcome everyone into the sanctuary of camp, a holy and wild place.
- Invite each other to listen for the wisdom of wilderness, allowing this sacred space to teach us.
- Celebrate the beauty and power of the universe, including ourselves and others.
- Call each other to express awe at the beauty of creation.

DAILY ACTIVITIES		
TITLE	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
<b>Primary learning activity that explores the daily scripture is highlighted.</b>		
<b>__ Wild Talk</b>	<b>PLAY</b>	Nature communication guessing game
<b>__ Building Beings</b>	<b>CREATE</b>	Making new creatures
<b>__ Breath Prayer</b>	<b>PRAY</b>	Calming breath work
<b>__ Bouquet Cards</b>	<b>CREATE SERVE</b>	Cards for teachers
<b>__ Every Living Being</b>	<b>PLAY</b>	Collecting game
<b>__ Feed the Plants</b>	<b>LEARN SERVE</b>	Making plant food
<b>__ Sensing Nature</b>	<b>PRAY</b>	Nature Meditation
<b>__ Texture Bookmarks</b>	<b>CREATE</b>	Create bookmarks

**Leader notes:** While encountering nature, remind campers to protect the camp by not pulling up plants, keeping animals in their natural habitats, and avoiding littering or polluting the campgrounds.

**Prayer:** “God, may we seek to find you in the beauty of your creation all around us; from the songs of birds to the whispers of the wind. Allow us to understand the wisdom of the wilderness. Amen.”

# Daily Activities

## Wild Talk

PLAY LEARN

**Supplies:** N/A

**How:** Explain that animals and plants communicate to one another in unique ways to avoid danger, find a mate, and grow. Bees communicate in dance, gorillas hum, the fungal system communicates in electrical impulses, birds whistle a tune, and rabbits thump their legs. To start the game invite campers to stand up and form a straight line, front to back. All campers, except the first two, will then cover their ears. The second camper in line will turn around to the first. The first camper will name an object in the surrounding area. The second camper will then try to convey what this object is to the next camper through a form of nature communication (dance, humming, tapping on the shoulder/hand (electrical impulses), whistling, or thumping their legs on the ground). Each camper can choose what form of nature communication they wish to use.

Once the last camper has received communication of the object, they must guess in words what it is. The goal is to use nature communication effectively to correctly identify the object chosen by the first camper. Play in rounds until every camper has either had a turn to choose the object or guess it. At the end of the game ask the campers how difficult it was to communicate like other beings in nature. What was the easiest form of communication? If one of the forms of nature communication could replace speaking, which would they choose? Finally, invite the campers to take note of different forms of communication they see in creation during the week.

**Try This:** To make the game more difficult, have campers try to communicate and guess whole sentences.

## Building Beings

CREATE

**Supplies:** Playdough

**How:** Give each camper at least one container of playdough and invite them to think of a being that should exist. What would it look like? What would it be called? What would its purpose be? How would it communicate? Allow campers to use the playdough to

craft the perfect being (animal, plant, mythical, etc.). Once all campers are finished, ask them to present their beings to one another. Invite campers into an attitude of prayer and say, "Thank you, God, for all types of life and the beauty found in each being of your creation. Through our creations, may we better understand the work and love put into the creation of every living being. Amen."

**Try This:** If the playdough does not need to be reused, allow the creations to sit and dry for the week. On the last day the playdough creations will be dry enough to allow the kids to take them home.

## Breath Prayer

PRAY

**Supplies:** None.

**How:** Have campers sit in a circle. Invite a camper to read Job 12:7-10 aloud. Next, invite the campers to silently wonder about their breathing. How often do we breathe? Do we think about breathing a lot? What different types of breathing do we use? Allow campers time between each question to ponder the answers. Then, move into guided breathwork. Ask the campers to join you in closing their eyes and taking a breath for one second and then releasing for one second, then a breath for three seconds and releasing for three seconds, and then a breath for six seconds and releasing for six seconds. Do this cycle twice. Then, allow a moment of silence. Ask the campers to open their eyes and wonder how each breath made them feel. What feelings did this focus on breathing invite? Could they try to focus on breathing like this every day? Give campers a moment to think, then move into an ending prayer saying, "Thank you, God, for the beauty of life and breath. Help us remember the importance of our breath and to take time to just sit and breathe. May our breath remind us of the beauty of our lives and the life found in creation around us. Amen."

**Try This:** In between each breath type have campers notice a sensation of that number. For example, breathe in for one, release for one, recognize one sound around you.

## Bouquet Cards

CREATE SERVE

**Supplies:** Cardstock (full and half pieces), markers, clear tape, thumbtack or sharp pin-point object, and envelopes (5-3/4" x 8-3/4").

**How:** In advance, fold full sheets of cardstock in half (one for each camper). Give each camper a piece of

folded cardstock. Invite campers to think of someone in their life who teaches them, whether it is a parent, friend, or an actual teacher. Then ask campers to write a thank you card to this person using the folded paper. Have them write only on the left-hand side of the paper. Once done, hand each camper a half piece of card stock (5.5" x 8.5") and a marker. Invite campers to draw a vase on the piece of cardstock with room for flowers, but do not yet draw the flowers. Next, take a thumb tack and poke five holes where the top of a flower would be positioned for each camper's bouquet. Next, allow campers to explore the campgrounds and fill each hole with a small leaf, flower, blade of grass, etc. Remind campers to respect the environment and not rip plants out of the ground. Once campers have found all five of their items, feed the items through the holes and draw a stem for the flowers, leaves, etc. Secure each item on the back with clear tape. Next, with clear tape, secure the vase/bouquet to the inside right of the camper's cards. When completed, invite campers to decorate the front of their cards. Finally, place finished cards into envelopes to send home with each camper.

**Try This:** You can also poke holes directly into the right side of the card, but be aware that this will make the camper's creations more fragile.

## Every Living Being

PLAY

**Supplies:** Two bandanas in different colors, rope/tape to mark a line, two hula hoops (or enough cones to make two circles), and eight items representing the categories: mammal, bird, plant, and fish (two for each category).

**How:** This is a version of "Steal the Bacon." Campers will be split into two teams distinguished by different color bandanas. In an open area, teams will be separated by a line where four items (a mammal, a bird, a plant, and a fish) will be placed. Teams will start 10 feet away on either side of the line, shoulder to shoulder. Three feet away from the line, a hula hoop/circle of cones will be placed to distinguish a safety zone for each team. To win, one team must collect all four items. When the game starts, campers can run to the line to steal an item. A camper that picks up an item must try to place it on their team's start side without their bandana being pulled by the opposing team. Campers can only pull bandanas of the opposing team if they are on the wrong side of the item line. If a camper's bandana is pulled, they must immediately drop any items and go back to their side. Campers can remain safe as they attempt to steal items by standing

in the safety zone (hula hoop or circle of cones) on the opposing team's side. Once all items are on one team's side, they must shout "EVERY LIVING BEING" to win. Afterwards, ask campers about their strategies. How did each team keep each other and their items safe? Was it difficult to remember all the items? Invite campers to think about how they can keep these beings safe in real life. Is it just as hard as the game or easier?

**Try This:** Eliminate safety zones to make the game more difficult.

## Feed the Plants

SERVE LEARN

**Supplies:** Banana peels, coffee grounds, eggshells, and a mixing bowl.

**How:** Sometimes plants need a snack just like humans. This is a recipe for plant food that will help any plants, bushes, grasses, flowers, etc., grow healthy. You can use as many of each of these ingredients as you want. With campers, take banana peels and set them in a sunny place to dry (these can also be boiled). Once dry, have campers rip the peels apart into a large mixing bowl. These peels will help strengthen plant roots. Next, clean eggshells and invite campers to crunch them with their hands into the bowl. These shells give the soil calcium just like milk does for us. Then, add coffee grounds to the bowl. Coffee grounds give plants nutrients and keep away pests that can hurt them. Give the items in the bowl a good mix. Finally, invite the campers to spread the plant food around the campgrounds by mixing it into the soil and dusting it around flowers.

**Try This:** You can also give campers water so they can help water any dry plants as they feed them.

## Sensing Nature

PRAY

**Supplies:** Bible.

**How:** Have a camper read Job 12: 7-10. Then, allow the campers to explore the campgrounds and find a comfortable space to sit silently with nature. Give campers fifteen to twenty minutes to meditate, but don't tell them how long they have. Once the time is up, call the campers to meet back at a central location. Once all the campers have returned, ask them about their experiences. How long do they think they were meditating? Where did they choose to go? What did they see and hear? How do they feel after spending this time in nature? Close with a prayer, "God, thank you for the

time we get to spend in awe of your creation, and for the beauty of its sights, sounds, and textures. Amen.”

**Try This:** Give each camper a piece of paper and a marker to doodle, make notes, or write during this time. Then ask them what nature inspired them to create.

## Texture Bookmarks

### CREATE

**Supplies:** Crayon, white paper, scissors, and glue

**How:** Provide each camper with a piece of paper and a crayon. Invite campers to go out into nature to use the paper and crayons to see the texture of different elements. Have campers place the paper on top of an object and use the crayon sideways to lightly color and reveal the texture of different natural elements. Be sure to warn campers of any dangerous plants in the area. Allow campers five minutes to get as many patterns as they can. At the end of the time, ask campers to cut their papers into four strips. Have campers choose their favorite two strips and glue the back of them to stick them together. Trim the edges as needed. The final result is a bookmark that the campers can take home. This bookmark is to remind campers of all that nature can teach them and the power of listening and learning.

**Try This:** Upscale the bookmark by gluing it to cardstock, or inviting campers to try and trace the pattern with a marker through a thin piece of white cloth.



## Story Resources

**The Lorax (Illumination Entertainment 2012):** In an attempt to surprise the girl of his dreams with her dream of a real seed, a twelve-year-old boy learns about the story of the Lorax and is inspired to save his town by preserving nature.



## Day 2: Wilderness Leads

### Daily Quick Reference Guide

**Scripture Passage:** Exodus 13:17-22

**Scripture Focus:** Exodus 13:21

The LORD went in front of them during the day in a column of cloud to guide them and at night in a column of lightning to give them light. This way they could travel during the day and at night.”

**Theological Summary:** The path out of the wilderness may not be obvious. With trust in God, we can find our way through hardship into hopeful futures.

**Daily Goals...**

- Consider our own individual and collective wilderness experiences.
- Be assured God is with us in our wildernesses.
- Explore signs of God’s guidance and provision around us.

DAILY ACTIVITIES		
TITLE	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Primary learning activity that explores the daily scripture is highlighted.		
__ Two Trails	PLAY	Campers choose obstacles
__ Night Clouds	CREATE	Cloud nightlights
__ Packing Up	PRAY	Pray for those that must leave home
__ Rock Signs	CREATE SERVE	Painting rocks
__ Crash and Woosh	PLAY LEARN	Blindfolded follow the leader
__ Meditation and Mingle	LEARN PLAY	Scripture reflection
__ Is It Obvious	PLAY	Imagine creative solutions
__ Journey Tracking	PRAY CREATE	Draw life maps

**Leader notes:** The idea of carrying someone’s bones may be gross or funny to some campers. Try and center them on the importance of bringing important items and/or people back home.

**Prayer:** “God, thank you for watching over us in times of difficulty and leading us to new experiences. May we have patience for our journeys ahead, and remember you are always here to help guide us. Amen.”



## Daily Activities

### Night Clouds

CREATE

**Supplies:** Mason jars, cotton balls, LED tealights, acrylic paint, glitter, water, bowls, and gloves.

**How:** Prepare a building station with enough materials for each camper to have one mason jar, one tealight, and enough cotton balls to fill the sides of their jar. Provide bowls to mix each color of acrylic paint with water. Provide each camper with their jar and a handful of cotton balls. Have campers use gloves and pull each cotton ball apart until it is thin and flexible. Once a cotton ball is stretched, it can be dipped into the paint and water mixture. Have campers place cotton on the sides of the jar like a layer of cloud. Be sure to leave a hole in the middle for the tealight. Continue pulling cotton balls until the sides of the jar are full. Next, campers can add glitter to the cotton balls inside the jar. Campers may use as much or as little color and glitter as they like. Finally, place a lit tealight into the center of the jar, and close the lid. The result should be a dazzling, bright cloud night light. If camps have strict lights-out policies, allow campers to test out their lights to ensure they look just right, then with gloves, carefully remove and turn off the tealight for use later.

**Try This:** With glow-in-the-dark paint, campers can add designs such as lightning bolts to the sides of the jar before placing the cotton balls. At night, this will allow campers to see their striking lightning paintings and their colorful clouds.

### Packing Up

PRAY

**Supplies:** Notecard, pens, and Bible.

**How:** Invite a camper to read Exodus 13:17-22. Then initiate a time of reflection using questions like: What would it be like to leave a place you have lived in for a long time? How would it feel to know you were leaving one place for the unknown? Are there important things you would take with you? Next, pass each camper a notecard. Ask campers to draw/write five things they would take if they had to move. Once finished, ask the campers to share what items they chose to pack and the importance behind those items. Finally, lead a prayer saying, "God take care of those who must leave their homes behind in search of the unknown. Be with them as they plan what they can take with them on

their journey. We thank you for our (list some of the important items drawn by the campers) that bring us comfort in times of uncertainty. May we be grateful for all that we have. Amen."

**Try This:** Have campers turn in their cards without reading them aloud. Share the items on each card and have campers guess whose is whose. Have campers compare what is in their bags and deem what is a necessity and what is a want. This can provide campers with an important perspective on what it is like to make these life-changing decisions.

### Two Trails

PLAY

**Supplies:** Cones, hula hoops, pool noodles, and a timer.

**How:** Before campers arrive, mark two paths with cones in a field or other open space. Make one path longer in length with no obstacles, and the other path shorter in length but filled with obstacles made from hula hoops and pool noodles. The campers must decide which path they would rather take as a team to complete the path together in a prescribed timeframe. If they choose the long path, they cannot run it. They must all walk together. Start with a base time of one minute. For the second attempt, give thirty seconds. For the last attempt, give the campers ten seconds. At the end of the activity, discuss with the campers the struggles of the games. Which path was easier to complete in time? How did their ability to overcome certain obstacles influence their choice? Was the short path worth the risk?

**Try This:** To make the game more difficult add math problems and riddles to the short trail.

### Rock Signs

CREATE SERVE

**Supplies:** Rocks, acrylic paint, brushes, and Bible.

**How:** Begin by reading Exodus 13:17-22 as a group. Enter a time of wondering. What would it be like to see something and know it is God? What imagery brings you comfort? Have you ever seen a sign from God? What things make you feel safe and loved? Next, hand out a rock to each camper and invite them to paint a sign/symbol that represents comfort, safety, or God to them. Once all the rock paintings are completed, set them out to dry, and then disperse them around camp as signs of love to help other campers feel God's presence.

**Try This:** Have campers make rocks with positive affirmations that encourage others to remember to love themselves. Create enough rocks for the campers to take some back with them to leave at school, the park, a store, etc., as an act of kindness.

## Crash and Woosh

PLAY LEARN

**Supplies:** Blindfolds, cones, and Bible.

**How:** This activity is a version of the game “Follow the Leader.” In advance, place cones to create a path with lots of twists and turns. Gather the campers and choose one to be the group leader. Then, blindfold the other campers. The camper chosen to be the leader will guide the group around the path using only the words “Crash” and “Woosh”. How they choose to use these words is up to them. The goal is to lead the group through without anyone stepping off the path, and without any physical guidance. Have each camper take turns as the leader. At the end of the game, discuss some of the challenges: Was it hard to know where to go? Did you ever feel like you were lost? How did the limited use of words make you feel? Once campers have had time to discuss the questions, read Exodus 13:17-22. Invite campers to wonder if the Israelites may have felt a similar way. How would it feel to not know where you are going? Would it be easier to follow a column of cloud or lightning rather than a voice? What form of guidance would be the most comforting?

**Try This:** To make the game more difficult, counselors make other loud noises to distract the group. You can also try spreading campers apart in the path, with the leader having to guide each group member separately.

## Journey Tracking

CREATE

**Supplies:** Paper and markers.

**How:** Provide each camper with a piece of paper and markers. Have campers draw a map that connects key moments in their lives. Invite campers to get creative with how the trail of the map looks and moves, and to draw symbols or illustrations to represent specific memories. Once all campers have finished their life maps, ask them to pair up and share their illustrated journeys. Then, discuss as a group what each pair had in common on their maps, or things that stood out to them about their partner’s map.

**Try This:** Use a piece of butcher paper to make a life map for the campers’ time at camp. Have them draw up to day two with space to add each day as the week continues. At the end of the week, discuss how the campers’ expectations for the week and the map have changed over time.

## Is it Obvious?

PLAY

**Supplies:** Paper, markers, and Bible

**How:** Divide campers into small groups of three or four. Give each group a piece of paper and markers. Invite campers to devise a creative solution as groups to the problem: “What to do when your shoes keep coming untied?” Give groups two minutes to draw or write down their solution on and plan a presentation of their solution. Once all groups are prepared, have each group take turns presenting their creative solutions. Next, ask a camper to read Exodus 13:17-22. Invite campers into a time of reflection. Can an unobvious choice end up being a better decision? What aspect of their creativity made their solutions more interesting? How can we use creative solutions to make our lives better?

**Try This:** Apply the activity format to help solve world issues. What are creative solutions to climate change, war, racism, inequality, etc.?

## Meditation and Mingle

LEARN PLAY

**Supplies:** Paper, scissors, and a pen.

**How:** In advance, prepare enough slips of paper for each camper to have one. On each piece, write one verse of Exodus 13:17-22 (repeat verses are okay). Gather the campers in an open space with room to walk and have them draw a piece at random. Invite campers to meditate on their scripture as they walk around the space. At random times during this meditation, call out “Connection.” At this time, campers must pair up and share the verse on their slip of paper with their partner. Once every pair seems to have shared their verses, call out “Mingle.” Campers must then separate and walk around the room again until the next connection is called. Once two campers have connected, they cannot pair up again. Call for connection ten times, or until all the campers have shared. At the end, have the campers enter a time of reflection. What did they find interesting about their verse? What verses did it connect well with? How did another camper’s verse change how they saw their own verse of scripture?

**Try This:** Instead of handing each camper a slip of paper, scatter enough for five per camper on the ground. Once “connection” is called, campers must grab a slip of paper to then share with a partner. They can then keep this slip and meditate on it until the next connection is called. Keeping their first slip, they must grab another and connect again. Do this until all slips of paper have been collected.



## Story Resources

**Frozen 2 (Walt Disney Studios Pictures 2019):**

Queen Elsa of Arendelle is called into the unknown, sensing that the journey ahead is of grave importance. Her sister Anna and their friends journey together to find the source of Elsa’s call, but wind up finding a magical forest holding the truth about their kingdom.

**The Sound of Music (20<sup>th</sup> Century Studios & Argyle Enterprises 1965):**

A young woman named Maria leaves the abbey to become a governess to the Von Trapp family. She introduces the children and their single father to love, laughter, and music. However, this love is shadowed by the hate around them as Austria has fallen under Nazi control.



## Day 3: Wilderness Frightens

### Daily Quick Reference Guide

**Scripture Passage:** Matthew 14:22-30

**Scripture Focus:** Matthew 14:29

“And Jesus said, “Come.”

Then Peter got out of the boat and was walking on the water toward Jesus.”

**Theological Summary:** The unknown can cause us distress and fear, but by connecting back to God and God’s creation, we can find guidance.

**Daily Goals...**

- Honor the tradition of Jesus entering the wilderness to reconnect, refuel,
- and be renewed.
- Hold safe space to acknowledge that wilderness may be disorienting or even frightening.
- Explore what it means to take bold steps, facing our fears and doing awesome things through God.
- Affirm that no matter what our wilderness moments may bring, God is always with us.

DAILY ACTIVITIES		
TITLE	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
<b>Primary learning activity that explores the daily scripture is highlighted.</b>		
__ Come Together	PLAY	Campers find their team
__ Boats Away	CREATE PRAY	Rotating coloring activity
__ Nature Spooks	CREATE	Scary nature creatures
__ Fearlympics	PLAY	Conquering fears
__ Identifying Mountains	PRAY LEARN	Discovering self-care
__ Boat, Ghost, Mountain	PLAY LEARN	Game of choices
__ Dissolving Fear	CREATE PRAY	Water based reflection
__ Calming Friends	CREATE SERVE	Make sock friend

**Leader notes:** The scripture gives a great example of being afraid of the unknown. When the disciples saw Jesus walking on water, they assumed he must be a ghost. Lean into the humor and allow it to reveal how silly our worries about what we don’t understand can be.

**Prayer:** “God, find us as we lose our way in fear. Help us to be courageous and know that even in the darkest times, you are with us. Amen.”

# Daily Activities

## Boats Away

CREATE PRAY

**Supplies:** Boats Away handout, markers, and crayons.

**How:** Provide each camper with a boat handout and coloring tools. Invite them to spread out, write their name on the back of the handout, and design/color their boat for two minutes. After the two-minute mark, ask campers to leave their materials and move to the left to another camper's boat. Once arriving at a new boat, give campers one minute to add to the designs. Do this rotation four times, giving campers one minute at each new boat. Once the time has ended, bring everyone together, asking them to bring the boat they are working on and return it to the original designer. Allow campers to react to the changes made to their art, and then invite them to respond to the following questions:

- How did it feel to see someone else change your designs?
- Was it difficult to leave your boat?
- What did someone add to your boat that you enjoyed?

At the end of the conversation, close with the Serenity Prayer, saying, "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Amen."

**Try This:** This activity can also be done in groups. Have each half of the group rotate in opposite directions. In this version, campers must adapt to changes in their art, and those they are working to create designs with.

## Identifying Mountains

PRAY LEARN

**Supplies:** Bible.

**How:** Ask a camper to read Matthew 14:22-30 aloud for the group. Next, ask the campers what they know about the importance of self-care: What is self-care? What are ways you can enact self-care? What does self-care look like when you are hanging out with friends? Invite another camper to read Matthew 14:22-30, but this time have campers take note of moments of self-care. What form of self-care do we see Jesus enacting? Could self-care have helped calm Peter and

the disciples during the storm? Relate these answers to camp. At camp, what can we do to feel calm and more present? Are there times when you need a Jesus moment away from the rest of the group? What can be your mountain this week to maintain self-care? Close with a prayer saying, "God, thank you for showing us that it is okay to take space for our hearts and minds. Help us find our ways of self-care to be fully present and energized for the days of camp to come. Amen."

**Try This:** Give campers a paper to make a list of things they can do every day to ensure they are caring for their hearts, minds, and bodies. This can be as complex as meditating or as simple as brushing teeth in the morning.

## Come Together

PLAY

**Supplies:** Blindfolds and hula hoops.

**How:** In advance, place one hula hoop on the ground for every three campers in an open area/field (make sure they are nicely spaced out). Next, gather campers and divide them into teams of three. To begin the game, campers will be blindfolded, moved by a counselor to space out, and spun around five times. Once all campers are in position, on "Go," they must find their teams of three. When a team of 3 campers has reunited, they must find a hula hoop and all stand inside of it. Once everyone in the team of three is in the hula hoop, they can take off their blindfolds and help their other campers reach victory. If multiple groups find the same hula hoop, you can decide if they may share it or must find one of their own. Encourage the campers to be patient so they don't move so fast that they knock each other down or inadvertently cross personal boundaries.

**Try This:** To make this activity more difficult, try adding obstacles, having counselors spin campers around during the game, and giving the campers a time limit of two minutes to find their team.

## Boat, Ghost, Mountain

PLAY LEARN

**Supplies:** None.

**How:** In this game, you will offer the campers different scenarios. Based on what they would do in that situation, they can either respond with Boat (while making wave motions), Ghost (while doing spooky arms), or Mountain (while making a mountain with their hand above their head). Boat means that they would be okay with the described situation, Ghost

means that it would stress or freak them out, and Mountain means the situation would make them want some personal space to decompress. This activity can help campers learn more about one another's personalities and how they handle situations differently. There will be five prompts to start, and then invite campers to take turns making up their own:

- Performing a speech in front of a large audience
- Riding a rollercoaster
- Competing in a math competition
- Being famous
- Sharing your feelings with someone you like

**Try This:** Have campers try to incorporate boat, ghost, and mountain into their slang the rest of the week. What do we do at camp that is boat, ghost, or mountain to them?

## Dissolving Fear

### CREATE PRAY

**Supplies:** Wafer or water-soluble paper, markers, water, bowl, and Bible

**How:** Gather campers around a table and read Matthew 14:22-30. Together, enter a time of wondering: What fears do we have? How do our fears affect our decisions? What can we do to let go of our fear? Next, provide campers with paper and markers. Ask them to draw or write their fears on the pieces of paper. Then, prepare a bowl with water. Once all campers have finished their creations, have them take turns sharing their fears, place the papers into the bowl of water and mix it with their hands. Allow them to watch as the paper dissolves and washes their fears away. At the end, ask the campers how it felt to watch their fears dissolve. End this activity with a prayer saying, "God, thank you for being present with us as we wrestle with things that scare us or cause us distress. Help us to remember that through courage we can conquer and wash away our fear. Amen."

**Try This:** Use edible markers on wafer paper to allow campers to eat their fears.

## Nature Spooks

### CREATE

**Supplies:** Glue, tape, googly eyes, markers, paint, and paintbrushes.

**How:** Invite campers to go out into nature and collect items to bring back to the group. Remind campers not to pull anything out of the ground or harm animals.

Give the campers about five minutes to gather their materials and then meet back around a table. With the materials found in nature, campers must use glue, tape, googly eyes, markers, and paint to transform them into scary creatures. Once campers have finished their creatures, ask them to share what elements of nature they used as the base for their spooky creation. Enter a time of reflection. Would these creations be scarier if they didn't know what they were made of? What things look scary but become less scary once you know what they are made of? Is there a source of our fears that can make them less frightening?

**Try This:** In advance, create some scary creatures and place them around the area campers will explore to find their natural materials. See if any camper brings one back, or if they are talked about as they gather around the table. Ask the campers if these creatures scared or shocked them before inviting them to create their own.

## Fearlympics

### PLAY

**Supplies:** Paper, markers, and hat/bowl.

**How:** Ask campers to write down a fear they are willing to share with the group on a slip of paper. Next, place all papers in a hat and mix them up. In ten minutes, campers must draw from the hat, one piece of paper at a time, and find ways to conquer each fear as a group. For example, if fear of heights is drawn from the hat, campers can go and sit on the top bunk of a bunk bed. To move on to the next slip of paper, all campers in the group must participate in conquering the fear. If campers are at a loss for how to conquer a fear, they can say pass, but they can only use pass two times.

**Try This:** Divide campers into teams to compete for who can conquer their fears first. The slips will be read aloud by a counselor, and teams will break off to complete them. Once a team has conquered a fear, they can be given the next one. The first team to conquer all the fears wins.

## Calming Friends

### CREATE SERVE

**Supplies:** Fuzzy socks, rice, bowl, spoons, felt, super glue, scissors, clear elastics or rubber bands.

**How:** Around a table, provide each camper with two fuzzy socks. Pour the rice into a bowl in the center and, using spoons, have campers fill up their socks to their desired weight and feeling. During this time, they can use two elastics to tie off ears of their choice (they can

have no rice and be floppy or have a little rice and be round, bearlike ears). Next, tie off the end of the sock with a clear elastic and roll up or cut off any excess fabric. Using felt and scissors have campers design faces and eyes for their fuzzy friends. The result will be two small weighted plushies - one to keep the campers' company anytime they are nervous or afraid, and one to give to someone at camp or home who might need some extra comfort.

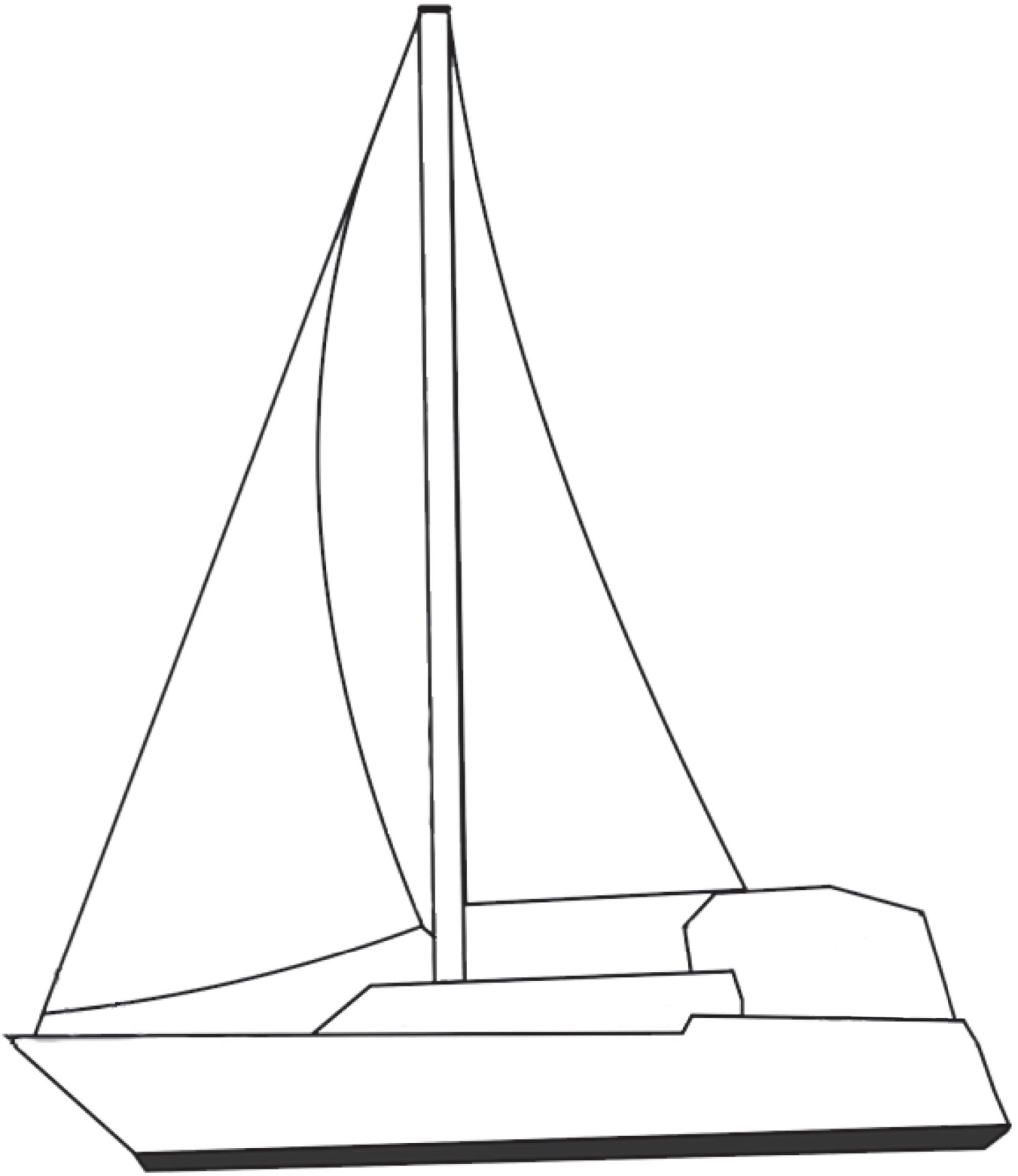
**Try This:** Add essential oils to the outside of the fuzzy friend for an extra calming element.



## Story Resources

**Frozen (Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures, 2013):** Sisters Elsa and Anna reunite after being torn apart due to Elsa's icy powers. However, after sending their Kingdom into perpetual winter, Elsa flees the kingdom. Anna must journey through the winter storm to save her kingdom and bring her sister home.

## Boats Away Handout



Younger Youth



## Day 4: Wilderness Reveals

### Daily Quick Reference Guide

**Scripture Passage:** Luke 10: 25-37

**Scripture Focus:** Luke 10:30

“Jesus replied, ‘A man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. He encountered thieves, who stripped him naked, beat him up, and left him near death.’”

**Theological Summary:** To be a good neighbor, we must be mindful of the reasons our neighbors suffer. God gives us the grace and empathy to help others and make systemic change.

**Daily Goals...**

- Consider the Good Samaritan story from a fresh perspective.
- Discuss how systems can help or harm people, and how we can respond.
- Recognize the different roles necessary to create lasting change.
- Reflect on how wilderness experiences and choices shape our lives.

#### DAILY ACTIVITIES

TITLE	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
<b>Primary learning activity that explores the daily scripture is highlighted.</b>		
__ Who is My Neighbor	PLAY	Character guessing game
__ Pieces of Art	CREATE LEARN	Draw a picture one part at a time
__ Privilege Line-up	PLAY PRAY	Discover who has the advantage
__ Who You Are	CREATE	Draw life-shaping events
__ Leftovers	PRAY	Campers take candy in turns
__ Go, Yield, Stop	PRAY LEARN	What would you do for others
__ Broken and Beautiful	CREATE	Beauty in the mending
__ Helping Hands	SERVE	Build kits for those in need

**Leader notes:** It is important not to get caught up in what makes a good neighbor. Try and focus on how neighbors and communities can work together to make the world a better place.

**Prayer:** “God grant us the compassion to be a good neighbor to all and have the patience to understand what is required of us as neighbors to make the world a less broken place. Help us mend the world with love and peace. Amen.”

# Daily Activities

## Who is My Neighbor

PLAY

**Supplies:** Pieces of paper, pens, and a bowl.

**How:** This is a version of the game “Who Am I? Give each camper a piece of paper and ask them to write down a type of person they see every day, (ex. A child, a construction worker, a doctor, or even Taylor Swift, etc.) These pieces will be folded and then collected into a bowl to be used later. In advance, prepare these additional prompts on pieces of paper for the bowl: Person experiencing homelessness, lost child, and senior adult.” To begin, one camper will be chosen as the guesser. This camper will leave the room, while the rest of the group draws one piece of paper. The prompt on the piece of paper will indicate what character the guesser is. Once all campers except the chosen guesser know what the prompt is, the guesser may return. To learn things about their character, the guesser must ask, “Can you help me?”. Other campers in the group can then respond, “Yes, I can help you with...” This is the only way the guesser can guess and the only way the group can respond. Play for a few rounds or one round per camper to give everyone a chance at being the guesser.

**Try This:** Make this game more challenging by having each camper in the remaining group, after selecting a guesser, draw a piece of paper and respond while acting like their chosen character. The guesser then must attempt to guess their prompt and everyone else’s.

## Privilege Line-Up

PLAY PRAY

**Supplies:** None.

**How:** Have campers stand shoulder to shoulder to form a line. Campers will be able to move a step forward if a prompt applies to them. If the prompt does not apply, campers must stay at their current spot. Start the activity with the prompt, “Move if you have been at camp for five days.” This should move everyone forward. Next, select a camper to get an advantage. Fill in the blank to the next prompts with that camper in mind:

- ...wearing (insert color) shirt.
- ...have (insert color) hair.

- ...your last name starts with (insert letter).
- ...have a (insert accessory).

Use these for every other prompt until campers have caught on. Once campers have completely caught on to the camper’s secret advantage, have them gather around to discuss. What did they think was happening? How did not getting to move in the game make them feel? What made the game unfair? When do we experience advantages in life? How can we use our particular advantages to help others? Close the activity with a prayer saying, “God help us recognize when we have privilege so we may use our resources to support others. Amen.”

**Try This:** You can make it more difficult to spot the unfairness in the game by choosing two or three campers to inspire the prompts.

## Who You Are

CREATE

**Supplies:** Who Are You Handout, markers, pens, scissors (optional), glue (optional)

**How:** Provide each camper with a handout. Invite them to think about crucial events in their lives that shaped them into who they are today. Are all of these memories, happy ones? What have they learned from the difficult times in their lives? Next, ask campers to draw their wilderness experiences on the outside of their silhouette. Once completed, ask campers to think about what they learned from each of these experiences. Next, have the campers write inside the person silhouette what they learned about themselves, the world, life, etc. from their wilderness experiences. Finally, take time to wonder about how we see ourselves. How would you describe yourself? Does this description include things you’ve learned from difficult experiences? What is one word from the silhouette that you would use to represent who you are?

**Try This:** Use scissors to cut out the person to remind campers that they are not their wilderness experiences. It is the lessons one learns from the wilderness that determine who they are. Then use glue to connect the person silhouettes together, similar to a paper doll chain. This can then be displayed so the campers can see themselves connected to one another.

## Leftovers

### PRAY

**Supplies:** Skittles, two bowls, cups, paper, and markers.

**How:** In advance, prepare slips of paper numbered up to the amount campers and place them in a bowl. In another bowl pour a bag of skittles. Begin by having campers wash their hands. Gather campers and provide each of them with a cup. Next, ask them to draw a number from the first bowl. This number will indicate when they can go up and get skittles. Each camper can take as many or as few as they would like during their turn. As each camper goes up, they must decide whether to take as much as they want or to leave enough for those waiting behind them. Make sure they do not eat any of the candy yet. Once every camper has had the opportunity to approach the skittles bowl or once the bowl is empty invite campers to enter a time of discussion: How did each person's turn make them feel? Did this activity feel fair? What would it be like if this is the only way they are able to get food, video games, clothes, tv, shelter, etc.? What are ways that one could get the things they want or need even if they have to go last? At this time, have campers hold out their cups and pour into one another's until all the cups are even. End this activity with a time of prayer saying, "God help us to notice when others are not given the same opportunities to access life giving resources. Allow us to show humility and love by sharing what we have with those in need. Amen."

**Try This:** Split campers into three groups. The first has access to an array of snacks, the second can ask the first group for snacks, and a third group must communicate by asking the second group to speak to the first group on their behalf. This will give campers a glimpse into the levels of privilege in a society and what inequality feels like.

## Pieces of Art

### CREATE LEARN

**Supplies:** Paper, markers, and Bible.

**How:** Gather around a table and invite a camper to read Luke 10:25-37. Place a piece of paper in the center and provide campers with markers. Together campers will create an image of the scripture. Each camper will be given an aspect of the drawing that they must add. However, each camper must add their picture element one at a time. The elements are the road, the sun, the sky, the thieves, bushes, trees, the injured man, the priest, the Levite, the Samaritan, and the Samaritan's donkey (this is the order in which they need to be

completed). If more elements are needed, have one camper draw the element and another camper color it in. Elements can also be combined if there are fewer campers than elements.

For the first attempt give campers 2 minutes to complete the image. For the second attempt give campers a new piece of paper and 1 minute to complete the image. For the third attempt, campers must choose one role to skip that they think will help their time and won't affect the story image. For this round, campers must complete the image in 30 seconds. Continue to have campers eliminate elements of the picture and reduce the time by five seconds for each remaining round.

Once the final round is complete, lay out all the pieces of art and enter a time of discussion: Why did they choose to keep or eliminate certain elements of the picture? How did the lack of time affect their decisions? Now, looking at all of the images, what is one element they wish they had kept?

**Try This:** Have the campers whose elements were eliminated create titles for each image as they are created. Ask them to create the titles as if they were someone who had never read or heard of Luke 10:25-37.

## Go, Yield, Stop

### PRAY LEARN

**Supplies:** Bible.

**How:** Ask a camper to read Luke 10:25-37. Invite campers to then enter a time of wondering: How would you react if you saw the injured man on the road? What about the road or the surroundings would stop you from helping the man?

After leaving time for wondering, introduce the activity. Different scenarios will be named, and campers can either say "Go", "Yield", or "Stop" to indicate what they would do. "Go" would be to not help, "Yield" is to pause but ultimately not help, and "Stop" is to stay and help. The scenarios are:

- An elderly man walking across the street falls down.
- Someone asks for food next to a restaurant.
- A child looks lost.
- Someone is being yelled at by their friends.
- A dog with a collar is roaming the neighborhood with no owner.
- A man asks for money.

After campers respond to a scenario, take time to go around and ask why each camper chose their answer. At the end of all the scenarios, reflect on the campers' decisions. How do our abilities affect our decisions to help others? What unknown factors of a situation could cause us not to offer aid? What could help us feel more comfortable reaching out to support others?

End this activity with a prayer saying, "God, in times when we want to, help us to recognize the good we could do. In times we Yield and fail to support others, remind us of your constant love. And in times we choose to Stop, help us acknowledge our abilities and what we can do for others. Amen."

**Try This:** Another way to do this activity is by playing it out in an open space. Have campers start on a line based on their choices; they will either move from the line or stay put. For "Go", campers will run away from the line, for "Yield," they will slowly walk away, and if campers choose "Stop," they will stay on the line. The physicality will force campers to make quick decisions on what they would do.

## Broken and Beautiful

CREATE

**Supplies:** Paper, markers, yarn, scissors, and tape.

**How:** Explain that this activity is inspired by the Japanese art of kintsugi. Kintsugi is the art of repairing broken pottery with lacquer that is dusted with gold or other metals.

Give each camper a piece of paper and ask them to draw a picture of one person helping another. If you are short on time and did the "Pieces of Art" activity, you can use those drawings for this activity. Once each camper has a drawing, ask them to turn it over so they can't see the image, then tear it into random shapes, ensuring they have at least ten separate pieces. Invite the campers to arrange the pieces like a puzzle with the image side up, then select a piece of yarn to go between all the pieces. They can choose one color or put different colors between the different pieces. Encourage the campers to do what looks right to them. Once the yarn is in place, ask them to use tape to connect the pieces, leaving the yarn in place. When finished, they can flip the page over and put more tape on the back if any of the connections are still fragile.

Invite everyone to share their final work with the group and ask how they chose their yarn colors. Point out that the taped sections are now stronger than the paper alone. Even though these were the torn edges, they

are now the strength of the paper. Ask the campers if they can think of other things that are stronger after they are repaired. This might include broken bones, something they have repaired at home, or even a friendship.

**Try This:** First, gather campers in an open space and provide them each with one mug and one trash bag. Have campers place the mug in the trash bag, knotting the top closed. Next, ask campers to throw the bags onto the ground to break them. If the mugs don't break right away, drop them a couple more times. (Note: you don't want to shatter the mugs, just break them into large pieces.) Once broken, take the mugs to a table. Have campers lay out the pieces and make sure they know where they all belong. Then, mix acrylic gold paint and super glue in a bowl. Have campers use paint brushes to apply this mixture to the edges of the broken pieces to put their mugs back together. The result will be a kintsugi-inspired mug that the campers can take home to remind them that broken things can be put back together and look beautiful. Explain that the mugs are now works of art, and they should not use it for food or beverages. This is not about the cracks, but out of concern for potential toxins in the glue and paint.

Or Try This: Show campers pictures of stain glass windows. Ask them how their creations resemble stained glass, and how they are different.

## Helping Hands

SERVE

**Supplies:** Plastic gallon bags, travel-sized amenities (soap, shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste), toothbrush, socks, paper, markers (include one of every item for each kit), and Bible.

**How:** Set supplies around a table and gather campers. Invite a camper to read Luke 10:25-37 aloud. Once finished, campers pack each gallon bag with one of every item to build kits for those experiencing homelessness. Once all the kits are completed, divide them evenly amongst the campers. With paper and markers, invite campers to write letters or notes of kindness and encouragement to those who could receive their kits. At the end of the note, have the campers write "Luke 10:25-37" and what the scripture means to them. Encourage campers to take these kits home to keep in their parents' car (or other handy location) so that they can give them out to people experiencing homelessness, or as a camp, select a

partner organization that serves people experiencing homelessness and give them the bags.

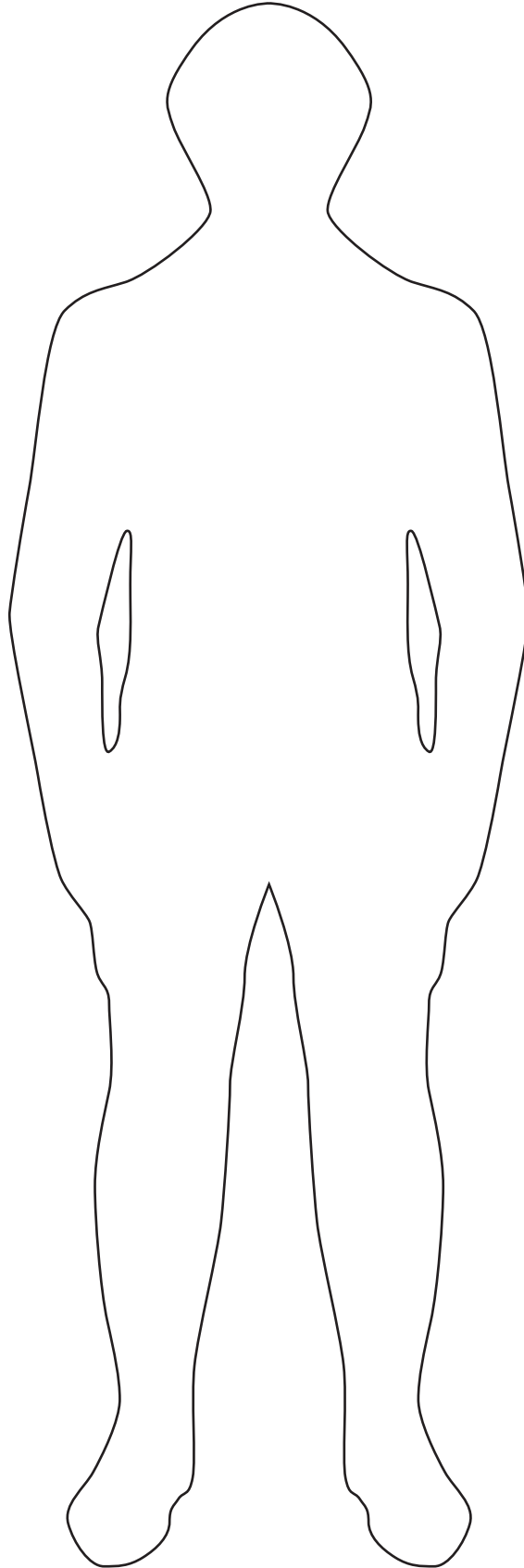
**Try This:** Have campers create friendship bracelets or keychains to add to the kits for an extra personal touch.



## Story Resources

**Elemental (Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures, 2023):** The elements fire, water, earth, and air live together in Element City, but the fire residents are looked down upon and reside in the Firetown district. This was all too familiar for Ember, a fire element, until she met Wade, a water element. The two learn they have more in common than their elements would have suggested.

## Who You Are Handout





## Day 5: Wilderness Awaits

### Daily Quick Reference Guide

**Scripture Passage:** Jeremiah 29:11-14

**Scripture Focus:** Jeremiah 29:11

“I know the plans I have in mind for you, declares the Lord; they are plans for peace, not disaster, to give you a future filled with hope.”

**Theological Summary:** Through God’s peace and love, we strive to build a future of hope. Because of God’s presence, we can brave the wilderness and reach our goals.

**Daily Goals...**

- Affirm that we are equipped to face wilderness moments.
- Remind each other to seek God, who is always accessible and present.
- Commission one another to pursue mountain top experiences, awaiting us in our wildernesses.

Younger Youth

DAILY ACTIVITIES		
TITLE	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
<b>Primary learning activity that explores the daily scripture is highlighted.</b>		
__ Calling God	<b>PRAY</b>	Make a fun, accessible prayer
__ Bring Home	<b>PLAY</b>	Seeking safety
__ Organizing Hope	<b>PRAY</b>	Build a bucket list
__ Personal Peace	<b>LEARN CREATE</b>	Mini-Peace Poles
__ Search and Call	<b>PLAY</b>	Pairs look for objects
__ Constant Presence	<b>CREATE SERVE</b>	Bracelets making

**Leader notes:** This scripture highlights God’s plans for the future. Due to this, campers may ask if their difficult life experiences happened because of God’s plan. This plan can also be seen as goals of peace that God works with us to achieve, while acknowledging there will be bumps in the road.

**Prayer:** “God, as we seek your guidance, help us to work in peace and love to build a future that unites the world. Amen.”

# Daily Activities

## Calling God

PRAY

**Supplies:** Pen, paper, and Bibles.

**How:** Invite campers to read Jeremiah 29:12. Ask the campers what types of prayer they are used to seeing or hearing. Is prayer always formal? What would a prayer to God look and sound like if it were a phone call between friends? What language would you use to refer to God? What slang words would you put in the prayer?

Have campers work together to make a collaborative phone call prayer. Encourage them to be creative. Once finished, use your hand as a phone and begin the group prayer. At the end, ask the campers if praying this way makes God feel more accessible. Is this a type of prayer they could see themselves doing more often?

**Try This:** Have the campers use this prayer style for a meal or worship later in the day. To be even more playful, they can present it as if they are texting or using a video game chat room to message God.

## Bring Home

PLAY

**Supplies:** Assorted color bandanas.

**How:** In an open field, place a bandana for each camper except for one. Ensure each bandana is spaced out to allow room for running. Next, designate one camper to be “It.” Once chosen, the remaining campers will pick their spots and be handed a bandana of a different color than the one they are standing on (each bandana on the ground must have a match given to a camper). Ask campers to tuck these bandanas into their pant pockets or belt loops with enough room for them to be pulled out. The goal is for each camper to sit on a bandana that matches the one in their pocket. This can be achieved by switching spots with another camper or trading bandanas. However, campers must be careful because the chosen “It” camper can steal bandanas from their pockets to keep them from matching up. Once a camper’s bandana is pulled, they must join the “It” camper to pull other bandanas. To avoid the “It” camper(s), each bandana spot on the field is a safety zone, even if the matching bandana has been pulled from the game. Once a camper has reached a spot that

matches their bandana, they must shout “Home” and sit down.

At the end of the game, invite the campers into a time of wondering: Was it scary leaving a safety zone in search of Home? Did working with others make it easier or harder to win? If you got to be “It,” what made it difficult to catch people?

**Try This:** To enhance gameplay, give campers a time limit of five minutes to play and continue to decrease time for each round. Until they only have 30 seconds.

## Organizing Hope

PRAY

**Supplies:** Pens and paper.

**How:** Ask campers to discuss their current goals and dreams for the future. What is their dream job? Where do they want to go to college? Where would they love to travel to? Do they want to sky-dive or swim with dolphins? Invite campers to think of all the possibilities for their dream future and create a bucket list with an item they can try and achieve each year. Have campers plan out ten years, with at least two bucket list items for each year. Once completed, ask the campers to share their hopes for the future to inspire one another’s lists. Close the activity with a prayer saying, “God, thank you for creating a world filled with hope and dreams. May we take advantage of all the world has to offer us and never stop finding new goals to reach. Amen.”

**Try This:** These can be displayed in the common space as a way for campers to learn more about one another’s ambitions and dreams for the future.

## Personal Peace

LEARN CREATE

**Supplies:** Paper, markers, and glue or tape.

**How:** Give each camper a piece of paper. Have the campers fold the paper in half short ways (hamburger style), unfold the paper, then bend both sides in to meet at the center crease. Release the new folds. Campers should now have three creases and be able to overlap the sides, forming a three-dimensional triangle. If they have a “w” shape instead, have them fold the center in the opposite direction. Provide tape or glue to connect the two outer flaps. This will be the structure for a three-sided mini-Peace Pole.

Explain that Peace Poles are universal signs of peace found in international communities, and the message “May Peace Prevail on Earth” is written on them in different languages. For these mini-Peace Poles, one

side will say, “May Peace Prevail on Earth,” and the other two sides can have different languages, quotes, symbols, illustrations, etc., that represent peace to each camper. Invite campers to keep these as a reminder to continue to work for universal, lasting peace.

**Try This:** If your camp has a Peace Pole, take a trip to see it so that campers can gain inspiration for their miniature creations. If a camp does not have a peace pole, use the creations to decorate worship.

## Constant Presence

## PRAY CREATE

**Supplies:** Assorted colors of crafting floss, scissors, tape, and Bible.

**How:** Gather at a table and have campers choose one color of crafting floss each. Then, ask a camper to read Jeremiah 29:11-14 aloud. Discuss what being present means: How can we be present for others? How is God present for us? As camp is ending, how can we be present for one another without physically being together?

Have each camper use scissors to cut a long piece of their crafting floss for each camper, including themselves. Exchange the pieces so that every camper has a thread from every other person in your group. Then, have the campers hold all their pieces together and tie a slip knot at the top. Once the knot is in place, tape will be used to secure the knot to the table. Next, invite campers to make their own friendship bracelet using all the strands. (They can use whatever method of braiding/knotting they know and prefer.) Once finished, tie a knot at the end. The result will be bracelets to remind each camper of their time and friends from camp.

End this activity with a prayer saying, “God, thank you for being present in our lives and showing us how to be present for others. May these bracelets remind us that we are never alone and to reach out to those we love. Amen.”

**Try This:** Encourage campers to make these bracelets as a thank-you gift to those who have been present for them.

## Search and Call

## PLAY

**Supplies:** Shoes, cups, water bottles, bandanas, and sunglasses.

**How:** Before campers arrive, on an open field, scatter one shoe, cup, and water bottle for every two campers. Then, fill the rest of the space with bandanas, sunglasses, or other assorted items. Once campers arrive, they will be divided into pairs. In each pair, there will be a caller and a seeker. The callers will be lined up, shoulder to shoulder, ten feet away from the seekers. To start each round, the callers will be told what item their teammate must find. The callers must then yell out a one-word clue to their teammate, who will search for the correct item. However, this clue cannot be or have any part of the actual item. (For example, if the item is a water bottle, the clue can't be water or bottle.) Once the correct item is found, the caller and seeker will switch positions. The caller will raise their hand with a number 2 or 3 to indicate which item they are searching for. The new caller will be told the next item, and the round begins. The first pair to find all three items wins.

**Try This:** To make the game more difficult, change the style of the clue for each round. The first-round callers can give a one-word clue, the second charades, and the last campers can only point from afar.



## Story Resources

**My Neighbor Totoro (Studio Ghibli 1988):** A father and his daughters move to the countryside to live near the hospital where their mother is currently undergoing treatment. The two daughters, Satsuki and Mei, rely on their new mystical friend, Totoro, to remind them that they can support their mom while still being kids.

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# Song Recommendation List

## Overall Theme:

- Turn the World Around (Harry Belafonte, 1977)
- Lost in the Woods from Frozen 2 (Jonathan Groff, 2019)
- We Can not Own the Sunlit Sky (Hymn)
- Spirit of the Living God (Hymn)
- Change My Heart, Oh God (Hymn)
- Give Me Your Eyes (Brandon Heath, 2008)
- Wilderness (Jeremy Camp, 2019)

## Day 1: Wilderness Awes

- Holy, Holy, Holy (Hymn)
- All God's Critters Got a Place in the Choir (Traditional)
- How Great Thou Art (Hymn)
- This is My Father's World (Hymn)
- All Creatures of our God and King (Hymn)
- God of the Sparrow, God of the Whale (Hymn)
- In the Bulb, there is a Flower (Hymn)
- We are Not Alone (Nick Cave and Warren Ellis, 2021)
- His Eye is on the Sparrow (Hymn)
- God of Wonder (Caedmon's Call, 2000)

## Day 2: Wilderness Leads

- Here I Am, Lord (Hymn)
- Lead on, O Cloud of Presence (Hymn)
- Bless Now O God, the Journey (Hymn)
- Be Thou My Vision (Hymn)
- I Want Jesus to Walk with Me (Hymn)
- Guide Me O, Thou Great Jehovah (Hymn)
- On Eagles Wings (Hymn)
- Thy Word (Amy Grant, 1984)
- Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For (U2, 1987)
- I Know Where I'm Going (The Judds, 1987)
- Place In This World (Michael W. Smith, 1990)

## Day 3: Wilderness Frightens

- Someone's Waiting for You, From the Rescuers (Shelby Flint, 1987)
- Come and Find the Quiet Center (Hymn)
- The Lord Will Make a Way Somehow (Hymn)
- How Can I Keep from Singing (Hymn)
- The Storm is Strong (Hymn)
- How Firm a Foundation (Hymn)
- Oceans / Where Feet May Fail (Hillsong, 2013)
- Something Wild (Lindsey Stirling, 2016)
- Fight Song (Rachel Platten, 2015)
- Brave (Sara Bareilles, 2013)

#### **Day 4: Wilderness Reveals**

- Change (Carrie Underwood, 2009)
- Here Am I (Hymn)
- These I Lay Down (Hymn)
- Sister, Let me Be your Servant (Hymn)
- Jesu, Jesu (Hymn)
- Kum-ba-ya (Traditional)
- Take My Life (Hymn)
- I'm Gonna' Live So God Can Use Me (Hymn)
- When All is Ended (Hymn)
- Someday, From Hunchback of Notre Dame (Ciara Rene, 2015)
- Dream God's Dream (Bryan Sirchio, 1995)
- In the Wilderness (Rachel Morley, 2020)
- Skyscraper (Rachel Platten, 2015)

#### **Day 5: Wilderness Awaits**

- Send Me On My Way (Rusted Root, 1994)
- May the Road Rise to Meet You (Traditional)
- Send Me, Jesus (Hymn)
- Rise Up, O Saints of God (Hymn)
- We are Walking in the Light of God (Hymn)
- I Am the Light of the World (Hymn)
- Called to Follow Jesus (Hymn)

# Arts and Crafts

## Flashlight Focus

**Supplies:** Black and yellow construction paper, white paper, markers (paint supplies optional), scissors, and tape or glue.

**How:** Invite campers to draw a nature scene from camp. Encourage them to think about what a space might look like at night if they could see in the dark. What animals might be there? This can be done with markers, made more complicated with paints, or kept simple with just black markers. Once those drawings are done, provide small pieces of white paper and invite the campers to draw a small flashlight, about an inch and a half long. They can draw a generic cylinder, or draw the flashlight that they brought to camp. Have them cut it out. Now, invite them to cut out a long “pizza slice” in the middle of their black paper. The narrowest point should be about two or three inches in from one side, with the triangle expanding across most of the page. Remind them not to cut too close to the edges so it doesn’t tear. Campers can glue or tape their flashlight picture to the narrow point, making it look like a cone of light. Invite the campers to place their black paper over the nature scene and imagine they are looking around at night. Invite them to pick a favorite view, then glue down the black paper to lock in the revealed scene. If they prefer, campers could use tape, in case they want to eventually remove the black overlay. While working, invite the campers to talk about what God might see that we miss and how God’s light leads us in unexpected ways.

## What is Revealed

**Supplies:** Paper, markers, black crayons, paper clips, toothpicks, and scissors.

**How:** In advance, cut some paper into quarter sheet rectangles. Give each camper a quarter sheet piece and a full sheet of paper to place it on, so they can work to the edges without coloring on a table. Invite the campers to draw a picture with markers, reflecting something they learned at camp or depicting one of the Bible stories they have learned. Encourage them to cover the entire piece of paper with color. Once they are done, invite them to use a black crayon to cover the page, coloring darkly over all the space. After they have

covered the entire image, invite them to use paper clips or toothpicks to scratch lines in the crayon to draw a new image. They could write “Wilderness”, the name of your camp, or draw a symbol that reminds them of God. As they scratch the image into the black crayon layer, color from below will appear and add a layer of beauty to the new symbol. If you have time and want to add another layer, you can invite the campers to design “frames” for their image, draw them on the larger paper, then cut them out, including the hole inside, and place them over the smaller piece of art. As you work, you can ask campers about lessons they keep learning and how we can keep digging deeper as we get older and see things in new ways.

## Rugged and Rubbed Outdoors

**Supplies:** Paper, crayons, scissors, and glue.

**How:** Invite the campers to take paper and crayons around camp and make rubbings of various shapes and textures in nature. Some might be leaves, or tree bark. Some might be a branch or ground cover. Remind them not to harm anything in nature as they make their rubbings. They simply place their paper over the subject and rub it gently with a crayon. This works best by unwrapping the crayon and using the long flat side. Once campers return with their rubbings, invite them to make a mosaic on another piece of paper by cutting out pieces and shapes from the rubbings and gluing them down. They could cut rubbings into creative shapes, symbols, or to look like other things in nature. Imagine tree bark cut into a heart or leaf patterns cut into flower petals.

## My Wilderness

**Supplies:** Dry erase markers and clear glass/plastic panels (or use windows at camp that are easy to reach), a long roll of paper or table cover, and a camera.

**How:** You can either provide simple glass or plastic panels, like you would find in a frame, or use windows at camp. If you are using panels, cover your workspace with paper or other covering and place the panels at each camper’s workspace. Ensure that you have the camp’s permission if using their windows. Provide

dry erase markers and ask the camper to fill the space using a marker as they draw what “wilderness” means to them. Once they are done, let the camper stand behind the panel or window pane and put their face close to it. Take a picture of each camper, silhouetted behind their wilderness image. While campers are working, invite them to talk about their work and what “wilderness” means to them.

**Try This:** Consider printing the images and making a collage of people in their wilderness that could be shared at camp, in worship, or even after camp to share stories with local congregations about what happens at camp.

### **F.A.S.T. Prayer Bracelets (Best for Day 5)**

**Supplies:** Yarn, string, or craft floss; and tape

**How:** Before you begin, introduce the concept of crafting as prayer. Explain that many people use repetitive crafts as a way to meditate or focus their hearts and minds on an issue they want to lift to God, and that this craft is a way to do that. They can simply reflect on a prayer concern, think about who they might give their bracelet to when they are done, or even think about things that person is going through. Another approach is to think about a different word or prompt for each movement. Here is a simple acronym to use as a prayer process:

#### **F(or)**

Something we are thankful for having or doing, or something we hope for.

#### **A(gainst)**

Something we are struggling with or need to stand up to.

#### **S(ingular)**

Something we are facing personally /  
What we can do individually.

#### **T(ogether)**

Something we are facing as a  
community / What we can do together.

Remind the campers that Esther asked the people to pray and “fast,” a practice of not eating for a set period of time, to help focus and show solidarity. Our “Fast” could be different, but still prayerful.

Invite campers to choose four colors of string and cut long lengths. Tape them down to a firm surface with the ends tight together or knotted. To braid four strings, you take the furthest on the right and place it over the one to its left, then put the two strings now in the middle close together and move the furthest left strand over both. Repeat this with the string on the right crossing one and the string on the left crossing two, until you have the full length braided. Campers can then tie off the ends and tie them on their wrist.

# Multi-Day Activities

## Weaving Prayers

**Supplies:** Frame (at least 16" x 20"), yarn, colored paper strips, and markers.

**How:** In advance, tie one end of the yarn to the frame, about an inch from the corner (ideally with the frame in "portrait" position), and draw the yarn down to the opposite edge, wrapping the yarn around that side directly across from the knot. Draw the yarn back to the first side, wrapping about an inch from the knot. Continue in this way until the whole frame is strung with yarn, tying a knot at the end to secure the yarn in place.

Every morning, invite campers to write their hopes for the day and whatever wilderness encounters they may have on a strip of paper. They should then weave the paper between the yarn. Watch as the frame fills with colorful prayers.

**Try This:** Write prayers of gratitude in the evening instead.

\* This could be a group activity or individual.

## Camp Creature

**Supplies:** Stuffed animal/other mascot and treats.

**How:** In advance, choose a mascot for the week at camp. Every day, choose a new place for it to "hide" in camp. Invite campers to look for the creature and report their findings to a designated camp leader. Whichever group finds the creature first gets a treat or other prize.

**Try This:** Invite campers who found the creature on day 1 to decide the hiding place for day 2, etc. They would not be able to play on the day they chose the spot.

## It's All Layers

**Supplies:** Large piece of cardboard, scrap paper, tissue paper, beads, smaller pieces of cardboard, glue, paint, brushes, and masking tape.

**How:** In advance, tape a large piece of cardboard to a wall. On day 1, invite campers to create a background, covering the entire piece of cardboard. On day 2,

invite campers to add a layer of one of their supplies, showing something of what they are learning that day. Do this on each of the next days to create a collage representing the full span of learning at camp.

## Leave a Trail

**Supplies:** Yarn and strips of scrap cloth.

**How:** Sometimes, when one is encountering wilderness, it is helpful to be able to see where one has been. Each day, invite campers to "yarn bomb" a space that they have spent time in by wrapping yarn or strips of fabric around a tree, seat, or other object in that space. Invite campers, as the days go on, to visit those places they have marked.

**Try This:** Invite campers to completely cover an object, creating not only a mark of their presence but a novelty for all who pass that way. These could enable some great photo ops on the last day of camp.

## Wilderness Lights

**Supplies:** Large coffee filters (bleached), watercolor paints, brushes, water, cups, and tape.

**How:** Over a series of days, invite campers to flatten out and then fold coffee filters. When the filters are creased multiple times, apply watercolor paint, making sure the paint saturates through the layers. Allow time to dry, then unfold and flatten again. Display these wildly patterned pieces in windows all over camp.

**Try This:** When it is time to put the pieces up, invite campers to surprise the rest of camp by putting them in windows secretly.

# Games

## Wilderness or Not

**Supplies:** Paper and pens.

**How:** Give each camper two slips of paper. Ask them to put a large “W” at the left edge of one. On this slip of paper, ask campers to write something they learned to do that was hard or complicated. Encourage them to think of things that others might think were easy and that they are comfortable talking about. For example, some who didn’t grow up in the church might use “learning the Lord’s Prayer,” or someone who grew up in a vegetarian home might say, “eating chicken nuggets.” On their second piece of paper, ask campers to write something they do all the time that is easy for them. This could be “brush my teeth,” or “walk to school”-anything that is ordinary. Collect all the slips of paper in a container and mix them up. Let campers take turns drawing one and explaining why it is a wilderness experience, and making up a story to explain it. The group will then vote “Wilderness” or “Not”. The camper who drew then reveals if the paper had a “W” on it or not. If the group gets it wrong, the camper reading gets a point. If they get it correct, the group gets the point. Play until everyone has drawn twice and all the prompts are gone. You could also add some extras without telling the campers, so there are extra simple tasks in the container.

## Redlight the Leader (Based on Day 3)

**How:** This game is a mashup of Redlight–Greenlight and Follow the Leader with some additional twists. Campers line up single file or in two rows if you have a larger group. In the front are two campers who will be called “Day” and “Night”. Another leader, named “Moses,” will walk alongside the campers to serve as a judge. Campers follow Day and Night, follow the leader style, going where they go and moving as they move (jump, crawl, hop, etc.). If Day or Night yells, “Rest,” everyone must stop following and pretend to pick up manna from the ground. Anyone who keeps moving must go to the end of the line. When they say, “Follow,” everyone starts following again. If Moses sees anyone not following fully, they can send that person to the back of the line. Along the way, Moses can also call out, “Sunrise,” which means “Day” is now the leader

speaking or “Sunset,” which means Night is now the leader. If either of them speaks when it is the other’s turn, they trade places with the first camper in line and go to the back as a follower.

**Try This:** Play on your way to worship, making a long journey around the camp, ending up in a place where you can worship God outdoors. If you have a traditional hike location or a high place, this would be a great way to get there.

## I Cannot Lie (Based on Day 5)


**How:** This game has three special roles for campers. One will be Esther, whose job is to identify both Mordecai and Haman. Mordecai can only answer statements truthfully. Haman can lie. Everyone in the game is allowed to ask yes/no questions, but nothing more. People answer with a simple “yes” or “no.” Esther and the rest of the people are trying to discover who Mordecai is and who Haman is as they wander around asking each other questions. Once Esther is ready, she can shout, “It’s time to see the king!” At this point, everyone forms a circle, and Esther can either give her answers for each or ask the group, “Who do you think Haman is?” with the group responding by pointing at who they believe it is. She may also ask, “Who do you think Mordecai is?” to get the people’s response. If Esther is wrong about either, Haman wins the game. Play a few times, changing roles and allowing for creative approaches from different campers assigned to be Haman.

## People in our Neighborhood (Based on Day 6)

**In Advance:** Collect simple items for groups to collect from various stations around camp. This could be numbered pieces of paper or something for them to carry. You decide how complicated to make this.

You will also want a task or trivia question at each station. Make sure a couple are really hard so that the campers will need to ask for help.

**How:** This game is played in groups or teams of 5-15. Explain that there are stations they must visit around camp and tasks they must complete at each station to



collect each designated item. Have extra adult leaders around camp and invite the campers to ask them for help if needed. One of those adults should be a “Person of Prayer,” who, when asked for help, makes the group sit in a circle and name things they are thankful for before wishing them good luck in the game. One person should be a “Person of History” who has the group sit to hear about another time they played a game at camp before wishing them luck and sending them on. One person should be a “Person of Samaria” who will have them sit in a circle, and then give clues to the more difficult stations. Occasionally, this person may also walk with them to help complete the task. Once all the groups have completed all the tasks, the game ends, and you have a great conversation starter about the blessing of those who got real help and those who were just delayed. If you have time, dive into a conversation about the support some of us get in the world and the experience of frustration others have. Is it fair? Is it based on our faithfulness or what we deserve? Of course, you can also just play this one for fun, but it has the potential to be a great total camp activity.

# Group Building and Challenge Activities

## Block Party

**Supplies:** Blocks (Paper and markers optional).

**How:** Set up a structure of blocks and have enough extras for a group to recreate it in another location. Have the campers sit around their unstacked blocks and select one leader who will go see what the final structure should look like. Take them to the example, and let them take a look, then bring them back to the group. Explain that this expert may guide, but may not speak or point. If the expert would like to go back and look at the example again, they must give up using one hand when they come back. If they look a third time, they lose both hands. See if the group can recreate the example. Play multiple times, rotating roles and changing structures. Make it progressively harder as they get more practice. You can also add in an extra expert or line up all the campers so that they are passing on directions “Telephone” style to the one building.

### Debriefing Questions:

- What made this activity challenging?
- What did you learn along the way?
- Where did challenges lead to improvement or discovery?
- How are leadership and communication connected?

## Hey, You...

**How:** Engage campers in one of your regular challenge activities or any traditional group-building game, but explain that no one is allowed to use anyone’s name. This includes last names, nicknames, etc. Allow them to adapt. They might create new names, assign numbers, or find another creative solution. See what they come up with, then debrief the activity and this special rule.

### Debriefing Questions:

- What role do names play in communication?
- How did the group come up with its solution to the name problem?
- What aspects of using names could not be overcome?

- How would it feel to be without a name for an extended period of time?
- If we could not use names in the world, how might we adapt?

## All in this Together

**How:** Give campers a series of tasks that can be done around camp and assign them points based on difficulty. The catch is, they must constantly be connected in a circle. You can have campers hold hands, press palms, or have a loop of rope that they all have to hold with both hands. Tasks could be as simple as saying a prayer in a special space, or as complicated as making a basket or brushing someone’s teeth. Use tasks that fit your camp’s recreation resources (everyone takes a turn on a swing), natural geography (get everyone’s hands wet in the pond), and community (tell the camp director a joke). You can set a time limit or make completing the list the end of the activity.


### Debriefing Questions:

- How hard was it to stay connected?
- Who was very intentional about the connection?
- Who was very focused on tasks?
- Who was very focused on people’s feelings?
- How do all these different concerns impact each other?
- How can a group best get things done when you are the one in charge?

## Wrap or Weave

**Supplies:** Yarn (enough to cover a ball) and a ball (small enough to be covered by yarn).

**How:** In advance, make sure you have enough yarn to effectively wrap the ball in its entirety. When campers arrive, present them with the ball, the yarn, and a challenge to transport the ball across your activity space as a group. Explain that once they leave the starting space, no one can touch the ball. Challenge them to transport the ball as quickly as possible. If



you have a very strong group, consider doing a yarn activity in advance where you pass a ball across a circle to form a web. You can make it a name game or have them name positive traits in each other. The forming of a web in one activity may lead them to try and recreate it as a platform to carry the ball. The catch is that just wrapping the ball completely and walking with it as a group is much simpler and faster.

**Debriefing Questions:**

- How did you decide how you were going to transport the ball?
- What made the process easier or more difficult?
- How did the group treat each other along the way?
- What was the goal of this activity, in your mind?
- What is the difference between working together and being a “group”?

# Science and Nature

## Sensory Walk

(Could be a multi-day experience) Day 2 or later

**Supplies:** Paper and pencils, clipboards, blindfolds, and cups of items that smell strongly.

**Preparation:** This activity is designed to be done in stages during a long walk or hike. It could easily be set up in stations around camp. Plan the route and have the supplies you need ready to go, or already set up and waiting for you.

**How:** Have a quick introductory discussion with the campers about our five senses. Ask them to list the senses we use and talk about which sense most people rely on the most (sight). You can also have campers pair up and discuss which sense they would least want to lose, and what their experience in the world would be like without the sense they chose. After this, take a walk, stopping to do each of the sensory activities below:

**Sight** (Big Picture / Small Picture): Invite campers to find a spot to sit close enough to easily hear you. First, ask campers to pick one spot far away, such as a point on the horizon or a point on a landscape in the distance. Give them one minute to silently memorize as much detail as possible about this spot. When the minute is up, instruct them to close their eyes and picture as much detail as possible from the image they chose. Finally, have them open their eyes to see how much they remember. Repeat this process with the campers picking a spot close to where they are sitting, so that they end up looking at about a 1 square foot space. Again, have them close their eyes after a minute to picture as much detail as possible, then open their eyes to check what they remembered.

**Sound** (Sound maps): Give each camper a clipboard, a piece of paper, and a pencil; and ask them to mark an X (or any symbol they want) to represent themselves in the middle of their map. Explain that they will be mapping distance and direction by sound.

For mapping direction, ask the campers to put a mark towards the top of the paper for sounds they hear in front of them, one at the bottom for sounds they hear behind, and so forth for left and right. They should place the sound on their map in the approximate direction from their body.

For mapping distance, ask them to place distant sounds towards the edge of the paper and close sounds near the center. This won't be exact, but that is okay.

Have campers close their eyes and simply listen for about 1 minute, to focus on the sounds, without writing anything down yet. Remind them to stay very quiet to hear all the sounds around them. Next, invite them to mark a symbol on their map for each different sound that they hear related their body position. Ask them questions like, Is the sound: In front or behind you? Left, or right? In the air or on the ground? Close or far away? Is it staying in one place or moving?

Finally, have them close their eyes to listen again (adapt time based on age and attentiveness). When they hear a sound, they can quickly open their eyes and add the sound to their map and then close their eyes again to continue listening.

Spend a few minutes debriefing. Ask them what they heard and if it was easy or hard to map the sounds on paper. Ask how the activity changed based on having their eyes open or closed. Ask the campers what sounds always bring them joy.

**Touch** (Blindfold Tree Hike): Invite campers to pair up and decide who will be the first to "meet a tree." That camper should close their eyes or wear a blindfold. The camper who can see guides their partner to a nearby tree and places both of their hands somewhere on the tree. Now, the blindfolded camper has one minute to get to know the tree through their sense of touch. They should reach as high and low as possible, feel for any branches or unique features, and move around the tree to see what is on all sides. After the minute is up, the guiding camper will take the blindfolded camper back to the starting point. The challenge is for the blindfolded camper to see if they can correctly identify their tree once their blindfold is removed.

Remind the campers who are guiding to watch out for poison ivy or other dangers that should be avoided. Have campers trade roles after the first round, then go meet another tree. Once they get back, ask the campers what they know about the tree they met. A discussion of the uniqueness of each tree compared to the general forest can also be interesting and can be expanded to include people and their unique features/abilities.

**Smell:** (Smell cups): Before this activity, prepare about 6-10 small cups of fragrant items. You don't need much, so you can probably draw from the camp kitchen. These items might include cinnamon, chocolate chips, curry, hot sauce, citrus peel, tomato, basil, ginger, onion powder, sage, syrup, molasses, or anything fragrant and available. Have the campers sit in a circle, close enough to be able to pass these cups around while blindfolded. Have them put on blindfolds, then pass around a practice item, like a pinecone, prior to starting the cups. Make sure that campers know they should not verbally say the smell of the cup they get, as it will change the experience for others - this can be very hard for some. When they're ready, begin passing the cups, slowly, so that they have time to smell and reflect on the scent. After everyone has experienced the different smells, campers can take off their blindfolds and make guesses about each smell as you review them.

**Taste:** (Experiential tasting): Depending on your camp's location and vegetation, as well as policies, you can either:

1. Let students take small tastes of each of the items from the scent cups in the previous activity. If you do this, you will need enough for each camper participating, as well as a way for each camper to get a small sample of the item.
2. Find a tree with fragrant leaves or needles, preferably a coniferous tree or other plant that you know has mildly edible parts. The best option here is to have students chew and spit out a pine/fir/spruce needle to experience the bitter flavors. This is often a new experience for many, so make sure campers know it is a personal choice, and that they do not have to do this if they're not comfortable. You can also include some information about edible plants in your area.

At the end of your walk, invite the campers to revisit the question of which senses they might be most willing to give up. Has the experience changed or affirmed their opinion? Invite them to think about how animals perceive the world based on different senses and how their different heightened senses might impact how they experience things.

## Bat and Moth (Great for Day 3)

**Supplies:** Cups or empty cans, rocks, and tape.

**Preparation:** Use cups or cans to make shakers by placing rocks inside and covering the openings with tape, or tape two end-to-end. If you have some time, you might want to browse Wikipedia pages about bats so that you can have a little knowledge if campers have different bat-related questions, but this is not necessary.

**How:** Explain that bats find food through the use of sonar. The bat sends out a high-pitched sound as it flies. If those sound waves hit something—a moth or some kind of obstacle—they bounce back to the bat. Through this use of sonar, a little bat can catch and eat up to 3,000 insects in one night.

Gather the group in a circle with students an arm's length apart from each other. Choose one student to be the bat, and a different student to be the moth. Explain that the bat, who will be blindfolded to simulate darkness (bats are not blind, in fact, their eyesight is quite good), will try to catch the moth using "sonar". To do this, the bat and moth will both be inside the circle. Neither the bat nor the moth can leave the circle of students during the game. The bat can shake their cup, to which the moth must immediately respond with a shake of their cup. Both bat and moth may walk inside the circle, but neither may run. The bat calls out as often as needed (but is not allowed to constantly shake their cup), and walks in the direction of the moth's response. This is done until the bat catches the moth. When this happens, allow other students to play the parts.

If a bat is having trouble catching the moth, stop the game. Decrease the size of the circle. This can signify loss of habitat. Resume play. After playing the game a few times, try some variations using one bat and several moths, or one moth and several bats.

Here are some questions for debriefing:

- How were different campers successful in this activity? What techniques worked best?
- Humans have made use of technologies that are based on the same principle that bats use in the wild. How have technologies like radar and sonar helped humans?

- What would our world be like without bats?  
Impacts can range from increased bug population to loss of flower pollination to loss of species diversity.

If you have time, look up “White Nose Syndrome,” and talk to the campers about how that fungus is threatening bat populations and what humans are doing to help.

### Web of Nature (Great for Day 5 or 6)

**Supplies:** Long ball of yarn/string.

**How:** Have the campers sit in a circle, close enough to pass/throw the ball of yarn. Ask them to decide which animal, plant, or other part of nature (sunshine, wind, water, rock, etc.) they would like to be. Give the end of the yarn to one camper to begin, and have them state what they chose. Next, ask the group if the items anyone else chose are connected to the first camper’s item. While the first camper holds the end of the yarn, pass the ball of yarn from the first camper to any who found a connection, then let whoever gets it last share their chosen item. If the last person has already shared, they pass it to another camper to begin. Each camper who is connected holds the yarn as the ball of yarn continues to show the connections between parts of nature. Eventually, you’ll be standing in the middle of a web of yarn with everyone holding at least one point.

When you’ve gotten everyone connected, ask campers to gently pull the yarn tight. Then, have one student release their connection. See how it affects the other connections around the circle. Ask if it truly matters if we remove an item from the web and start a discussion about what happens when we lose parts of nature. Are other parts of nature affected? If so, have those campers drop their yarn connection. Continue this process a few times to lead into a discussion of what happens when we remove an item from the web. As you continue to dismantle the web, taking the yarn from each camper, discuss the importance of every part of nature (even things we feel are negative, like mosquitoes or weeds).

Here are some questions for debriefing:

- Does this make you look at nature in a new way? How?
- Things must live and die for nature to continue, but when is it helpful or harmful to destroy something (pesticide, herbicide, etc.)?
- Are any parts of nature more important than others?

### Blind shapes

**Supplies:** A long string or rope.

**Leader Prep:** Know a variety of good shapes to ask campers to form, ranging from easy to difficult.

**How:** Tie a rope at its ends to form a circle large enough for campers to stand around the outside with both hands on the rope, and with space between them. Campers will put their blindfolds on for this activity. Have them pick up the rope and explain that they must keep hold of the rope at all times while making whatever shape you call out. Call out simple shapes and allow time for the group to form the rope into that shape without letting go. Do another round with the blindfold off and ask them to form some shapes from nature. This will be difficult because even simple objects have very different shapes, and few are symmetrical.

Here are some questions for debriefing:

- Who surfaced as a leader in this activity?
- What was more challenging based on your lack of sight?
- What strategies did the group use to succeed?
- Even though there was no time limit, did you feel rushed?
- What was most difficult about forming things from nature?

### Trusted Partners for Further Resources:

#### **California ReLeaf**

<https://californiareleaf.org/arbortree/educational-resources/>

**Recommendation:** Build a Tree (especially good with children)

#### **Green Schoolyard America**

<https://www.greenschoolyards.org/guides>

**Recommendation:** Mandala Suncatchers

## *In the Wilderness Journal*

Journaling can be a powerful spiritual practice, allowing campers to process the concepts being presented at camp and to hear what God is saying to them directly about their unique concerns and situations.

The following pages offer some reflection questions, particularly for older campers. For younger campers, you might ask more general questions that are the same each day, such as

- What was your favorite part of the day today?
- What did you learn about God today?
- Did you hear or do anything today that made you think of something God might want you to start or stop doing?

Emphasize that each camper's journal is sacred and should be left alone by other campers. If you think journals would be safer if the counselor gathered them and put them in a safe place, have counselors do so.

Whether or not you use any of the suggested questions, consider setting aside time for journaling. Tell campers that their journals are just for them. If they would rather draw than write words, that's fine. Journals are tools for getting in touch with ourselves and with God.

# *In the Wilderness Journal*

## Day 1: Wilderness Awes

**Job 12: 7-10 (NRSVUE)**

**Read: Job 12:7-10**

“But 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.

**Reflect:**

- What question would you like to ask an animal?
- What do you think the animals or plants might want us to know?
- How do you think animals and plants might worship God?

**Respond:**

Can you draw a picture of an animal or plant you think would be a good teacher? Can you include yourself in the picture as one learning? Where might God be in the picture?

# *In the Wilderness Journal*

## Day 2: Wilderness Leads

### **Exodus 13:17-22**

#### **Read Exodus 13:17-22**

When Pharaoh let the people go, God didn't lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, even though that was the shorter route. God thought, If the people have to fight and face war, they will run back to Egypt. So, God led the people by the roundabout way of the Red Sea desert. The Israelites went up out of the land of Egypt ready for battle. Moses took with him Joseph's bones just as Joseph had made Israel's sons promise when he said to them, "When God takes care of you, you must carry my bones out of here with you." They set out from Succoth and camped at Etham on the edge of the desert. The Lord went in front of them during the day in a column of cloud to guide them and at night in a column of lightning to give them light. This way, they could travel during the day and at night. The column of cloud during the day and the column of lightning at night never left its place in front of the people.

#### **Reflect:**

- How good are you at finding your way home or to school?
- Who do you trust to guide you to new places?
- How do you think God might give directions?

#### **Respond:**

Can you draw a picture of someone following a path to a new place? Can you place yourself in the picture? Where might God be in the picture?

# In the Wilderness Journal

## Day 3: Wilderness Frightens

**Matthew 14:22-30**

**Read Matthew 14:22-30**

Right then, Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead to the other side of the lake while he dismissed the crowds. When he sent them away, he went up onto a mountain by himself to pray. Evening came, and he was alone. Meanwhile, the boat, fighting a strong headwind, was being battered by the waves and was already far away from land. Very early in the morning, he came to his disciples, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified and said, "It's a ghost!" They were so frightened they screamed.

Just then, Jesus spoke to them, "Be encouraged! It's me. Don't be afraid."

Peter replied, "Lord, if it's you, order me to come to you on the water."

And Jesus said, "Come."

Then Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. But when Peter saw the strong wind, he became frightened. As he began to sink, he shouted, "Lord, rescue me!"

**Reflect:**

- What are you afraid of?
- What helps you feel brave?
- How might God help us feel brave?

**Respond:**

Can you draw a picture of you being brave with something that scares you? Where might God be in your picture?

# In the Wilderness Journal

## Day 4: Wilderness Reveals

**Luke 10: 25-37**

**Read Luke 10:30-37**

Jesus replied, "A man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. He encountered thieves, who stripped him naked, beat him up, and left him near death. Now it just so happened that a priest was also going down the same road. When he saw the injured man, he crossed over to the other side of the road and went on his way. Likewise, a Levite came by that spot, saw the injured man, and crossed over to the other side of the road and went on his way. A Samaritan, who was on a journey, came to where the man was. But when he saw him, he was moved with compassion. The Samaritan went to him and bandaged his wounds, tending them with oil and wine. Then he placed the wounded man on his own donkey, took him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day, he took two full days' worth of wages and gave them to the innkeeper. He said, "Take care of him, and when I return, I will pay you back for any additional costs."

What do you think? Which one of these three was a neighbor to the man who encountered thieves?"

Then the legal expert said, "The one who demonstrated mercy toward him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

### **Reflect:**

- When has someone you didn't know helped you?
- Why is it important to take care of other people?
- What makes it hard to help other people?

### **Respond:**

Can you draw a picture of you helping someone in need? Who else might help you help them? Where might God be in your picture?

# *In the Wilderness Journal*

## **Day 5: Wilderness Awaits**

**Jeremiah 29:11-14**

**Read Jeremiah 29:11-14**

I know the plans I have in mind for you, declares the Lord; they are plans for peace, not disaster, to give you a future filled with hope. When you call me and come and pray to me, I will listen to you. When you search for me, yes, search for me with all your heart, you will find me. I will be present for you, declares the Lord, and I will end your captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have scattered you, and I will bring you home after your long exile, declares the Lord.

**Reflect:**

- What will you do first when you get home?
- Who will you tell about your adventure at camp?
- What was your favorite Bible story this week, and what does it teach us about God's love?

**Respond:**

Can you draw a picture of yourself at camp? Who else might you add to your picture? I wonder what God might be in your picture?

# Connecting Camp to Home



We know that the most powerful influence on any person's faith life is those closest to them. For most children and youth, that is their family. All the camps, youth groups, and VBS programs in all the world can't equal the power of faith shaped by family and mentors.

The goal of these activities is to provide some practices for families at home. The themes follow the daily themes from camp. This provides another opportunity for campers to share their experiences with family and their family to join the conversation.

## Each day has the same outline:

**Scripture to Read** – This can be done individually or as a family. You can use the other activities and questions to dive deeper, or just discuss the reading.

**Questions for Reflection** – Whether it is a meal time, in the car, or an intentional conversation together, these questions invite storytelling and idea sharing.

**Activity to Share** – Every activity is different. Some are more complicated. Some require a little planning. All of them will create quality family connections.

**Challenges for Living it Out** – These can be used for reflection in the moment, as an invitation to share stories from the past, or as goals to vision around in the future.

You don't have to do these in any order, or even have to do them all. The hope is that these questions, activities, and challenges will provide a buffet or options for your family.

These could also be activities you share with other families in your church community. There is no wrong way to use these daily sheets. They are for your use, and our prayer is that they will help campers and families grow closer to each other and to God.

# Take Home Sheets



## Day 1: Wilderness Awe

**Scripture to Read:** Job 12: 7-10

**Questions for Reflection:**

- What have you learned by watching animals?
- What wisdom do you think a tree might have?
- When was the last time you actually experienced awe or wonder?
- What is the difference between awe and surprise?

**Activities to Share:**

These are options for you to do as a family, with friends, or with a group at Church.

1. Give everyone a piece of paper and provide something to draw with. Invite everyone to create a character who is either a non-human animal that exists in our world, or a plant. This is not a mythical creature or alien, but something from our world that (for this exercise) somehow has an ability to communicate. After everyone created their character, spend some time introducing them to each other. Invite each person to imagine what their character might teach us if they were given the opportunity. What might these characters tell us about God?
2. Invite each person to share the most beautiful or amazing place they have ever visited, or wish they could visit. For each person's location, imagine what your group might do together in that space. Is it somewhere you would want to be active, or sit and enjoy the scenery? Is it a place where you can be comfortable outside, or does it require special gear? Does the amount of work required to visit add to the experience or detract from it? How does being in such spaces make you feel? How does being in such places make you feel about God?

**Challenges for Living It Out:**

- Keep a running list of things that amaze you or evoke awe and wonder.
- Grow something or keep a plant alive and healthy
- Journal about what distracts you or numbs you to Creation's wonder.
- Find a sacred space that you can visit regularly, even if it's just a closet or park bench. If you pause to make room for God in that space, the sacred will become real to you.

# Take Home Sheets

## Day 2: Wilderness Leads

**Scripture to Read:** Exodus 13:17-22

**Questions for Reflection:**

- What are some parts of nature that people use to find or give direction?
- How good are you at asking for help or directions?
- When have you experienced Creation telling humans, “Change direction?”
- Where do you look for guidance when you are confused?
- How might God be guiding us today?

**Activities to Share:**

These are options for you to do as a family, with friends, or with a group at Church.

1. For each of the following prompts, ask your group, “Where would you go for guidance or to get directions?” This could be a person, publication, website, etc.
  - Lost in the woods
  - Deciding what to have for dinner
  - Putting together a toy or furniture
  - Completing a level in a game
  - Repairing a relationship
  - Fitting in at school or work

Afterward, think about what role God might play in each situation. Think about it from your personal perspective and then reflect on how someone from a different culture or faith tradition might see God in each prompt.

2. Invite each person to make a list of big decisions they have made, and for each, think about how God might have been guiding them. If you are working in an intergenerational group, consider having the younger “interview” others about how they made big choices or handled situations that they may face in the future.

**Challenges for Living It Out:**

- Make time each day to remember that God is with you.
- Practice asking for help or guidance.
- Journal about how you have made past decisions and what you learned.
- Imagine God is sitting with you when problem-solving.

# Take Home Sheets



## Day 3: Wilderness Frightens

**Scripture to Read:** Matthew 14:22-30

**Questions for Reflection:**

- How does being alone impact your fears or anxiety?
- What gives you courage or feeds your confidence?
- How comfortable are you with big or bold choices?
- What big or bold step might God be asking you to take?

**Activities to Share:**

These are options for you to do as a family, with friends, or with a group at Church.

1. Ask everyone to make two lists. One of the places where you can be yourself and feel safe. The other of the places where you feel less secure, worry, or know you can't be yourself. Invite everyone to share their lists and discuss how such places impact how we make decisions and feel about ourselves. Which type of space is easier to talk about our faith? Invite everyone to imagine being in an unsafe space, and Jesus meeting them there with an outstretched hand, saying, "I'm with you." If we could keep this image in mind, how might it impact our feelings and behaviors?
2. Give each person a piece of paper, a pencil, and coloring supplies. Invite them to write something in pencil that is a real fear for them, assuring them that no one will see it. Now, invite them to create a character to represent their fear. It could be a dragon, a spider, or a balloon with a face. It doesn't matter. Whatever they want to use is fine. Invite them to color it thoroughly so that the pencil writing is covered. Those willing can share their creature with the group, then provide some personal time for each person to converse with their "fear." What would they like to say to it? How might they work around it? What big steps might God help them take to move beyond it?

**Challenges for Living It Out:**

- Practice taking alone time or unplugging to refuel and renew yourself.
- Start conversations with your fears. Invite God in when you can.

# Take Home Sheets



## Day 4: Wilderness Reveals

**Scripture to Read:** Luke 10: 25-37

**Questions for Reflection:**

- What makes a person “good”?
- How much injustice can we ignore before we become part of the problem?
- What keeps us from making systemic changes in our world?
- How might Jesus respond to these questions?

**Activities to Share:**

These are options for you to do as a family, with friends, or with a group at Church.

1. Volunteer at a local food pantry, shelter, or feeding ministry. Do your best to call people by name and make eye contact with each person. Afterward, spend some time sharing your experiences and talking about why such services are needed in our world and how we might all do better.
2. Make a list of issues people in your community face daily. Now that you are aware of the issues (have seen the person in need), think about what the community could do to make things better. Write letters to a local leader or representative to share your concerns and suggestions for a better world. Invite others to join you by writing their own letters and suggestions.

**Challenges for Living It Out:**

- Look people in the eye and acknowledge them.
- Keep asking yourself what the “kingdom of God” Jesus taught about looks like.
- Keep asking questions about the needs in your community.
- Pray about people and systems and don’t give up.

# Take Home Sheets



## Day 5: Wilderness Awaits

**Scripture to Read:** Jeremiah 29:11-14

**Questions for Reflection:**

- What plans do you think God has for us in the future?
- How do God's hopeful words fit into the mood of our world?
- How can you help God's plans become reality?

**Activities to Share:**

These are options for you to do as a family, with friends, or with a group at Church.

1. Create a new prayer practice that you can use together in the future. This could be a way of starting a prayer, welcoming each other, or sharing thoughts and feelings with God. Practice doing it together a few times, until it becomes comfortable.
2. Take a walk and try to spot places where there used to be a road, path, trail, stream, or opening. This might be a closed-up door, a bricked-over entry, a rise in the geography that looks like water used to come through, or a place where new roads have been built. Imagine who used to travel that path, live there, or think there would never be another way besides that one. Have a prayer together thanking God for the new things that have happened and those still to come.

**Challenges for Living It Out:**

- Be attentive to new growth around you and thank God for it.
- Try a new name for God each time you pray for the next week.
- Look for new things God might be up to and celebrate them, even if it's hard.