



# **Environmental Education:** **Working with faith-based communities**

**Online Professional Development Course  
EECapacity, Cornell University, NAAEE, EPA**

## **Lessons, Activities, and Outreach:** **Resources for Environmental Educators and Faith Groups**

**Submitted by Course Participants  
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**\*City of Surrey Urban Forestry and Environmental Stewardship**  
**An engagement strategy for strengthening relationships with the Sikh community**



**Mission:**

To increase partnerships with the Sikh community; to incorporate a spiritual dimension to outreach programs in order to link messaging to the community's [meaning systems and values](#).

**Program objectives:**

To increase canopy cover and healthy natural area vegetation in targeted residential areas in Surrey; to foster a sense of ownership and responsibility in local green spaces; to increase the capacity of Sikh communities to care for their trees and natural areas; to increase program efforts and channel resources towards [communities with limited access](#) to healthy green space.

**Outline:**

***Preparation***

1. Identify all Gurdwaras in areas identified as needing increased canopy cover and vegetation.
2. Identify appropriate project sites (on City-owned land) in [close proximity](#) to targeted Gurdwaras.
3. Ensure projects are accessible for a range of ages and abilities. Consider proximity to public transit and include parks with washroom facilities and wheelchair access. Consider projects that can be done by families and youth. Consider projects that do not require prior skills or knowledge. Include higher level projects to allow room for growth.

***Build on existing resources and partnerships***

1. Approach Sikh youth from existing volunteer programs (eg. [Surrey Youth Stewardship Squad](#)). Invite them to a meeting to discuss outreach strategies.

2. Identify common goals and motivations. Ensure that projects are in alignment with shared goals.
3. Identify Sikh youth leaders who are willing to outreach to their Gurdwaras. Discuss with youth the different forms this can take. A letter to the leader of the Gurdwara is one example. Offer resources, support, and [training](#) for youth who may want to give a talk or a presentation.
4. Encourage the youth to address the relevance of the projects to Sikh practices in their outreach.
4. Ask the youth about best times to outreach to their Gurdwaras. Are there relevant celebrations or observations? (eg. [Sikh Environment Day](#)).

### ***Projects and training***

1. Meet with interested Sikh groups to discuss and address their needs, goals, and vision for their project. Focus on shared goals and interests.
2. Train groups on local ecology and restoration processes for the specific project. Take language barriers into consideration and ensure there is a bilingual member of the group present to translate if needed.
3. Identify group resources. Offer leadership training for individuals with interest, background and/or experience in Environmental Sciences or Natural Resources.
4. Provide groups with tools and support, including site visits, follow up meetings, referrals to related opportunities, and funding sources, etc.

### ***Maintaining momentum***

1. Identify opportunities for mentorship and collaboration – if there is interest from new Sikh groups, ask active groups to introduce them to their projects.
2. Identify funding support for [project signage](#) to recognize groups for their efforts and encourage participation from other groups.
3. Invite group leaders to meetings to discuss funding opportunities and new projects.

### ***Evaluation***

1. Open communication – what is working and not working for the groups?
2. Asset health – is the group making a significant impact to the health of the park?
3. Community networking – have groups increased involvement with related programs and organizations?
4. Capacity – are groups able to work appropriately and independently?

### **Resources and potentials for partnership:**

- Eco Sikh  
[www.ecosikh.org](http://www.ecosikh.org)
- Sikh Youth Alliance of North America  
<http://www.sikhyouthalliance.org/>
- Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara Society  
<http://www.gurunanakgurdwara.ca/>
- The Sikh Coalition  
<http://www.sikhcoalition.org/>
- Sikh Net  
<http://www.sikhnet.com/>
- World Sikh Organization of Canada  
<http://worldsikh.ca/>

*\*This document was produced as a final assignment for the EE Capacity online professional development course “Working with Faith-Based Communities” and is not an approved City of Surrey program or policy. Environmental educators are welcome to use this as an educational resource and/or program guideline.*

# Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Girls' Camp Environmental Stewardship Activities

**Aimee Chlebnik**  
**West Yellowstone, MT**

Purpose: These activities are designed to help young women, ages 12-16, connect with nature and introduce them to the idea of environmental stewardship. The activities are meant to fit within the framework of girls' camp and to meet the certification requirements of the camp, while simultaneously encouraging the girls to think deeper about creation and their place in the world.

## *Day 1 – Environmental Survey*

Materials: Field guides, notebooks, scriptures

Time Needed: 1 hour

### Activity:

1. Read Moses 2: 1-31 and Genesis 1: 1-31. Discuss what we have read.
2. Explain that we are going to survey the environment around our camp. Pass out field guides and notebooks. Such surveys can not only help us to feel closer to our Heavenly Father through discovery, but also provide important information about changes in the world around us. Scientists often journal and record discoveries just as our prophets encourage us to do in our daily lives.
3. Challenge the young women to identify 6 plants and three animals that they have never seen before on their walk. Photograph and sketch these new discoveries in the notebooks.
4. Meet back at camp. Discuss what we found. How did these discoveries make you feel? What feelings do you have when spending time in and among creation? What do you feel your role is in God's creation?

## *Day 2 – Union Falls Hike and Natural Art*

Materials: Journals, Lunch and materials for an all day hike

Time Needed: All Day (leave at 6:00 am, return around 5 pm – 16 mile hike)

### Activity:

1. Hike to Union Falls.
2. Read LDS Church position on the environment. Read D&C 59: 16-20, D&C 104: 13-17, D&C 136: 27,

3. Invite young women to spend time journaling once we reach the waterfall. Use some form of art (artwork, poetry, song, dance, written word) to express your feelings on these scriptures and our responsibility to creation.
4. Share our creations with the group.
5. What are our ultimate responsibilities as divine stewards of our environment? How can we exercise and meet these responsibilities in our daily lives?

*Day 3 – Where Do You Stand? The Environment and Young Women Values*

Materials: “Where Do You Stand?” activity from Teaching Green: The Middle Years by Tim Grant and Gail Littlejohn, string, scriptures

Time Needed: 20-30 minutes

Activity:

1. Review the past two activities and their thoughts on environmental stewardship and our responsibility to creation.
2. Briefly discuss the Young Women values of: Faith, Divine Nature, Individual Worth, Knowledge, Choice and Accountability, Good Works, Integrity and Virtue. How do these relate to what we’ve been learning?
3. Complete “Where Do You Stand?” activity, emphasizing the need to listen to all viewpoints and to adjust your viewpoint as necessary.
4. Concluding discussion. We all hold similar values, how are these values expressed differently in the mock situations described? How do our expressions of these values relate to our responsibility to the environment? What are the different ways we can use our interpretation and expression of these values to fulfill our responsibility?

*Day 4 – Where Do We Go From Here? Stewardship at Home*

Materials: “Blowing Up Your World” activity from Teaching Green: The Middle Years by Tim Grant and Gail Littlejohn, balloon, journals, safety glasses (or sunglasses)

Time Needed: 45 minutes

Activity:

1. How have your feelings about environmental stewardship changed during camp?
2. Complete “Blowing Up Your World” activity.
3. How can we change the environmentally damaging behaviors that we identified during the activity? Why should we?
4. Have each young woman pick one behavior to change upon returning home..

# Trees of Life: Outline for an Eco-faith Retreat

Janeen Bertsche Johnson,  
Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary

## Session 1: Roots and Stump

### Optional activities:

- observe root systems of uprooted trees
- learn what tree rings tell us; count rings on a stump to learn age of tree
- examine shoot growing from cut-off stump (learn about invasive species)
- visit grove of trees connected by root system: aspen, musclewood
- learn about how tree roots grow and function

- 1) one important function of tree roots is to absorb moisture, nutrients, & oxygen and transport these up to the tree to keep it alive.
  - roots will grow down and out, depending on where water is available
  - many of us have image of tree roots mirroring what is above—not usually the case
  - some trees have tap roots—deeper major root that go straight down below the trunk
    - happens in sandy, well-drained soils, where there are open pores or pockets for air
    - under these ideal conditions, roots can grow to more than 20 feet deep
  - when soil is compacted (too tightly packed to allow air movement), water and air don't move down, and neither do roots
    - if soil is too compacted, tree will not thrive
  - because of soil compaction at deeper levels, many trees never develop tap roots, especially urban trees
    - their roots are shallow & horizontal—extend 2 to 4 times the diameter of the crown!
    - 80% of tree roots are in the top 36 inches of the soil, and most of those are in the top 24”
    - that is where they can get the most rainfall and oxygen
  - some roots are perennial; these are larger roots
  - feeder roots are very small (1/16 inch in diameter), short-lived (die and are replaced)
    - these make up the major portion of the root system's surface area
    - they grow mostly up toward the surface
  - if roots find a consistent water source, tree stays well-nourished
- 2) another essential role of tree roots is to anchor the tree—keep it standing, straight, and upright.
  - this is where trees with deeper roots have an advantage—harder to be pushed or blown over
- 3) a third function of roots: some trees reproduce by putting out new shoots from their roots.
  - one of the largest living organisms on earth is Pando, a Quaking Aspen in Utah; Pando is Latin for “I spread”—covers 106 acres, includes 43,000 tree trunks, might be as much as 80,000 years old!
  - all one root system; aspens can reproduce through cloning—through its roots—or through seeds
- 4) even if a tree is cut down, if its roots are left intact, some trees will regenerate from the stump
  - when a tree is cut intentionally in order to grow a straighter tree, the process is called coppicing
  - especially trees that spread from root shoots, such as the invasive Tree of Heaven
    - if you cut one down, you may end up with even more shoots, unless you put a chemical on it

### Reflect on texts:

#### Jeremiah 17

<sup>7</sup> Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord.

<sup>8</sup> They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream.

It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green;

in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit.

#### Luke 13

6 Then he told this parable: ‘A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. <sup>7</sup>So he said to the gardener, “See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?” <sup>8</sup>He replied, “Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig round it and put manure on it (giving the roots more air and nutrients). <sup>9</sup>If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.”’

### **Hosea 14**

<sup>5</sup> I will be like the dew to Israel; he shall blossom like the lily, he shall strike root like the forests of Lebanon.<sup>6</sup> His shoots shall spread out; his beauty shall be like the olive tree, and his fragrance like that of Lebanon. <sup>7</sup> They shall again live beneath my shadow, they shall flourish as a garden; they shall blossom like the vine.

### **Job 14**

<sup>7</sup> For there is hope for a tree, if it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and that its shoots will not cease.

<sup>8</sup> Though its root grows old in the earth, and its stump dies in the ground,

<sup>9</sup> yet at the scent of water it will bud and put forth branches like a young plant.

### **Isaiah 11**

<sup>11</sup>A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

<sup>2</sup> The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. <sup>3</sup> His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

### **Ephesians 3**

<sup>14</sup> For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, <sup>15</sup>from whom every family<sup>2</sup> in heaven and on earth takes its name. <sup>16</sup>I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, God may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, <sup>17</sup>and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. <sup>18</sup>I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, <sup>19</sup>and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. <sup>20</sup> Now to the One who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, <sup>21</sup>to God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

### **Activities:**

#### **-journal on tree texts**

-How are we nourishing our spiritual roots?

-What practices are helping us be grounded (centered, settled, connected) in God and in the place where we live?

-Which of these practices are deep, permanent roots which hold us in place? Which are more temporary roots which are helping us quench our thirst?

-take time to practice a spiritual discipline of your choice

## **Session 2: Trunk and Branches**

### **Optional activities:**

- learn about the layers of bark on the trunk
  - outer bark protects the tree from the outside world: weather, insects & animals
    - can identify trees by their bark, especially those with distinctive bark like the sycamore (peels off), hackberry (warty); beech (smooth and very light gray or white), birch (white & peeling)
  - under the outer bark are layers of living cells that transport water from the roots to the leaves and food that the leaves make to the rest of the tree; a new layer or ring is added each year
  - the center of the tree is the heartwood, which is the old dead layers
- learn about how the Emerald Ash Borer kills ash trees by burrowing in the inner bark
  - if those living layers between the outer bark and the heartwood are damaged, the tree will be in danger and might die.
  - one way to kill a tree without cutting it down is to girdle it—to cut through the living layers all the way around the tree
  - insect larvae are more frequent cause of tree death
    - the larvae of the Emerald ash borer have killed millions of ash trees in the eastern U.S. and Ontario since the insect first arrived in the Detroit area in 2002 from Asia
    - the ash borer larvae tunnel through the inner layers of bark and cut off the flow of sap
    - their presence is mostly hidden, but they exit the tree by boring a D-shaped hole (show bark with D holes if available)
- study life in branches—bird nests, squirrel nests
- learn how branches are grafted
  - Grafting is a technique in which a plant that is desired for its stems, leaves, flowers, or fruits is attached to a plant that is selected for its roots or trunk.
  - the tissues fuse together, and the resulting tree has the best characteristics of each of the trees used
    - farmers in the Mediterranean region renewed old olive trees by grafting in wild olive branches, rather than cutting down the old tree and replacing it

### **Reflect on Texts** (may use only some of these, depending on which activities are done):

#### **Psalm 92**

- <sup>12</sup> The righteous flourish like the palm tree, and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.
- <sup>13</sup> They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God.
- <sup>14</sup> In old age they still produce fruit; they are always green and full of sap,
- <sup>15</sup> showing that the Lord is upright; God is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in God.

#### **Psalm 104**

- <sup>13</sup> From your lofty abode you water the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.
- <sup>16</sup> The trees of the Lord are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.
- <sup>17</sup> In them the birds build their nests; the stork has its home in the fir trees.

#### **Matthew 13 (Luke 13:18-19)**

31 He put before them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; <sup>32</sup>it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.'

#### **Isaiah 55**

<sup>12</sup> you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace;  
the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

#### **Nehemiah 8**

13 On the second day the heads of ancestral houses of all the people, with the priests and the Levites, came together to the scribe Ezra in order to study the words of the law. <sup>14</sup>And they found it written in the law (Leviticus 23), which the Lord had commanded by Moses, that the people of Israel should live in booths during the festival of the seventh month, <sup>15</sup>and that they should publish and proclaim in all their towns and in Jerusalem as follows, 'Go out to the hills and bring branches of olive, wild olive, myrtle, palm, and other leafy trees to make booths,' as it is written.' <sup>16</sup>So the people went out and brought them, and made booths for themselves, each on the roofs of their houses, and in their courts and in the courts of the house of God, and in the square at the Water Gate and in the square at the Gate of Ephraim. <sup>17</sup>And all the assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in them; for from the days of Joshua son of Nun to that day the people of Israel had not done so. And there was very great rejoicing. <sup>18</sup>And day by day, from the first day to the last day, he read from the book of the law of God. They kept the festival for seven days; and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly, according to the ordinance.



### **Matthew 21 (Mark 11)**

<sup>6</sup>The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; <sup>7</sup>they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. <sup>8</sup>A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. <sup>9</sup>The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, 'Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!'

### **John 12**

<sup>12</sup>The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup>So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, 'Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord—the King of Israel!'

### **John 15**

<sup>15</sup>I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. <sup>2</sup>He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup>You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup>Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. <sup>5</sup>I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. . . <sup>10</sup>If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. <sup>11</sup>I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

### **Romans 11**

<sup>1</sup>I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! . . . <sup>5</sup>So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. <sup>6</sup>But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace would no longer be grace. <sup>7</sup>What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened, . . . <sup>11</sup>So I ask, have they stumbled so as to fall? By no means! But through their stumbling salvation has come to the Gentiles, . . . <sup>16</sup>If the part of the dough offered as first fruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; and if the root is holy, then the branches also are holy. <sup>17</sup>But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in their place to share the rich root of the olive tree, <sup>18</sup>do not vaunt yourselves over the branches. If you do vaunt yourselves, remember that it is not you that support the root, but the root that supports you. <sup>19</sup>You will say, 'Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.' <sup>20</sup>That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand only through faith. So do not become proud, but stand in awe. <sup>21</sup>For if God did not spare the natural branches, perhaps he will not spare you. <sup>22</sup>Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity towards those who have fallen, but God's kindness towards you, provided you continue in his kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. <sup>23</sup>And even those of Israel, if they do not persist in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. <sup>24</sup>For if you have been cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree. <sup>25</sup>So that you may not claim to be wiser than you are, brothers and sisters, I want you to understand this mystery: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.

### **Activity:**

-journal on tree texts (select questions based on which activities were done earlier):

- Is there anything burrowing unseen which might be damaging your inner life?
- How is God grafting new experiences into your life to renew you?
- How were we included into the family of faith? How does the image of grafting affect your thinking about how we welcome and incorporate new people into our faith family and help them grow in faith?
- What invitation are you hearing to branch out of your comfortable space, to extend your embrace to others? Or are you hearing an invitation to take better care of yourself because you've been giving too much?

## **Session 3: Leaves and Shade**

### **Optional activities:**

- learn to identify leaves (show variety of leaves if possible)
  - easiest way to identify trees; diversity is amazing (needles & broadleaf, simple & complex, toothed margins (edges) & smooth margins, narrow & wide, 1 lobe to 9 lobes, smooth & fuzzy)
- make leaf rubbings
- learn about impact of trees on carbon dioxide levels
- learn about impact of tree shade on energy bills

### **Reflect on texts:**

#### **Psalm 1**

<sup>1</sup> Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers;

<sup>2</sup> but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night.

<sup>3</sup> They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper.

#### **Proverbs 11**

<sup>28</sup> Those who trust in their riches will wither, but the righteous will flourish like green leaves.

<sup>30</sup> The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, but violence takes lives away.

#### **Ezekiel 17**

<sup>22</sup> Thus says the Lord God: I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of a cedar; I will set it out.

I will break off a tender one from the topmost of its young twigs; I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain.

<sup>23</sup> On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it, in order that it may produce boughs and bear fruit, and become a noble cedar.

Under it every kind of bird will live; in the shade of its branches will nest winged creatures of every kind.

<sup>24</sup> All the trees of the field shall know that I am the Lord.

I bring low the high tree, I make high the low tree; I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish.

I the Lord have spoken; I will accomplish it.

#### **Genesis 18**

<sup>18</sup>The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. <sup>2</sup>He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. <sup>3</sup>He said, 'My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. <sup>4</sup>Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. <sup>5</sup>Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.' So they said, 'Do as you have said.' <sup>6</sup>And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, 'Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes.' <sup>7</sup>Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. <sup>8</sup>Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

#### **1 Kings 19**

<sup>19</sup>Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. <sup>2</sup>Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, 'So may the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life like the life of one of them by this time tomorrow.' <sup>3</sup>Then he was afraid; he got up and fled for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belongs to Judah; he left his servant there. <sup>4</sup>But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die: 'It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors.' <sup>5</sup>Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, 'Get up and eat.' <sup>6</sup>He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. He ate and drank, and lay down again. <sup>7</sup>The angel of the Lord came a second time, touched him, and said, 'Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you.' <sup>8</sup>He got up, and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food for forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God. <sup>9</sup>At that place he came to a cave, and spent the night there. Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?'

#### **Mark 4**

<sup>30</sup> He also said, 'With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? <sup>31</sup>It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; <sup>32</sup>yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.'

#### **Micah 4**

1 In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised up above the hills.

Peoples shall stream to it, <sup>2</sup> and many nations shall come and say:

'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that God may teach us his ways and that we may walk in God's paths.'

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup> God shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore;

<sup>4</sup> but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.

<sup>5</sup> For all the peoples walk, each in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever.

#### **Luke 21**

29 Then he told them a parable: 'Look at the fig tree and all the trees; <sup>30</sup>as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. <sup>31</sup>So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near.'

#### **Ezekiel 47**

<sup>6</sup>Then he led me back along the bank of the river. <sup>7</sup>As I came back, I saw on the bank of the river a great many trees on one side and on the other. <sup>8</sup>He said to me, 'This water flows towards the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah; and when it enters the sea, the sea of stagnant waters, the water will become fresh. <sup>9</sup>Wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish, once these waters reach there. It will become fresh; and everything will live where the river goes. . . . <sup>11</sup>But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they are to be left for salt. <sup>12</sup>On the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.'

#### **Revelation 22**

1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup>through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life<sup>2</sup> with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup>Nothing accursed will be found there anymore. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship God; <sup>4</sup>they will see God's face, and God's name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup>And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

#### **Activity:**

-journal on tree texts:

- How do the biblical images of trees as places of hospitality and refuge expand your thinking about trees?
- How might you offer hospitality or refuge to others?
  - who are the people we are called to nurture?
  - who are the strangers who show up in our lives who might be messengers of God to us?
  - who are the refugees fleeing the threat of violence whom we might assist?
  - who are the voiceless ones who long to have a place of safety?
  - who are the ones rich in goods but poor in spirit who want to discover a deeper meaning in life?
  - who are the marginalized ones who would welcome an invitation for a genuine conversation?

## **Session 4: Fruit**

### **Optional activities:**

- learn about different types of tree fruits (fleshy fruits and berries, nuts, seeds, cones)
- sample edible tree fruits and nuts
- learn how fruit trees/vines are pruned
  - branches that have borne fruit are cut back so that their energy is not spent on the long branch and its leaves but on bearing more fruit

### **Reflect on texts:**

#### **Genesis 1**

<sup>11</sup>Then God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.' And it was so. <sup>12</sup>The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. <sup>13</sup>And there was evening and there was morning, the third day. . . .<sup>27</sup> So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. <sup>28</sup>God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.' <sup>29</sup>God said, 'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. <sup>30</sup>And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so. <sup>31</sup>God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

#### **Leviticus 26**

3 If you follow my statutes and keep my commandments and observe them faithfully, <sup>4</sup>I will give you your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. <sup>5</sup>Your threshing shall overtake the vintage, and the vintage shall overtake the sowing; you shall eat your bread to the full, and live securely in your land.

#### **Ezekiel 34**

. <sup>27</sup>The trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase. They shall be secure on their soil; and they shall know that I am the Lord, when I break the bars of their yoke, and save them from the hands of those who enslaved them.

#### **Matthew 3 (Luke 3)**

7 But when John saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup>Bear fruit worthy of repentance. <sup>9</sup>Do not presume to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. <sup>10</sup>Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

#### **Matthew 7**

15 'Beware of false prophets, . . . <sup>16</sup>You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? <sup>17</sup>In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. <sup>18</sup>A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. <sup>19</sup>Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>20</sup>Thus you will know them by their fruits.

#### **John 15**

1 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. <sup>2</sup>He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup>You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup>Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. <sup>5</sup>I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.

#### **James 3**

<sup>17</sup> the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy.

#### **Galatians 5**

<sup>22</sup> By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.

#### **Colossians 1**

<sup>5</sup>You have heard of this hope before in the word of the truth, the gospel<sup>6</sup> that has come to you. Just as it is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world, so it has been bearing fruit among yourselves from the day you heard it and truly comprehended the grace of God. . . . <sup>9</sup> For this reason, since the day we heard it, we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's-



will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, <sup>10</sup>so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God.

**Activity:**

-Journal on tree texts:

- Notice the rich biodiversity described in Genesis 1 and the other passages. How is that biodiversity evident or threatened in your community?
- How is God inviting you to be fruitful? How is God inviting you to share your fruits with others?
- Do you think of pruning as a kind of punishment, as a type of discipline, as a giving up of something that has been good, or as something else?
- Is there something that you sense is being pruned from your life now so that you can put your energy into something else?
- How is fruitfulness different than productivity or perfectionism? How is it about a state of being rather than just doing?

**Faith-based Ecology Groups**  
**Compiled by Kolya Braun-Greiner, MDiv**  
**For Environmental Education & Faith Course**  
**Cornell University**  
**March 2014**

**A Rocha USA**

P.O. Box 6761

Annapolis, MD 21401

(410) 897-9331

[usa@arocha.org](mailto:usa@arocha.org)

<http://en.arocha.org/usa/index.html>

A Rocha is in the business of reconciliation - between people and God; people and the natural world; and people with each other. In addition to Conservation and Community, A Rocha is rooted and motivated by biblical faith. Many articles throughout A Rocha's website explore the connection between biblical faith, life, culture and conservation. A Rocha is an international para-religious conservation organization.

LOCAL CONTACT>DC based group: [Matt Kuniholm](#) for more information or to get involved with DC A Rocha.

>*Eco Congregation* : a tool to help churches begin to address environmental issues in all that they do. It is suitable for all kinds of churches to use: <http://arocha.us/eco-congregation/eco-congregation-modules> with an Award scheme designed to:

- affirm the good environmental work of churches
- witness to the wider world that churches care for God's creation

**United Church of Christ: Environmental Ministry Program**

<http://www.ucc.org/environmental-ministries/>

When confronted with environmental responsibility, people of faith now face an additional choice: to live in despair or to live with hope. We in the United Church of Christ are called to live with hope. We are called to go beyond lifestyle adjustment. We are called to spiritual and lifestyle transformation based on justice and reverence for all of God's creatures and creation.

NATIONAL CONTACT>Ms. Meighan Pritchard, Minister for Environmental Justice

United Church of Christ

700 Prospect Ave, Cleveland, Ohio 44115

216-736-3722

[pritchardm@ucc.org](mailto:pritchardm@ucc.org)

**Evangelical Environment Network**

10 E. Lancaster Avenue

Wynnewood, PA 19096-3495

(202) 554-1955

[een@creationcare.org](mailto:een@creationcare.org)

<http://www.creationcare.org/>

The Evangelical Environment Network was initiated by World Vision and Evangelicals for Social Action as part of a growing movement among Christians to respond faithfully to the biblical mandate for caring stewardship of God's creation.

CONTACT: Alexei Laushkin [alaushkin@creationcare.org](mailto:alaushkin@creationcare.org)

### **Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL)**

443 Park Avenue South, 11th Floor

New York, NY 10016

(212) 532-7436

[info@coejl.org](mailto:info@coejl.org)

<http://www.coejl.org>

The Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life was founded in 1993 to promote environmental education, scholarship, advocacy, and action in the American Jewish community.

➤ Sarah Levinson <[slevinson@coejl.org](mailto:slevinson@coejl.org)>

### **Interfaith Power & Light**

<http://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/>

The mission of Interfaith Power & Light is to be faithful stewards of Creation by responding to global warming through the promotion of energy conservation, energy efficiency, and renewable energy. This campaign intends to protect the earth's ecosystems, safeguard the health of all Creation, and ensure sufficient, sustainable energy for all. This national organization focused on energy conservation, reducing carbon footprint, and action on climate change. Offers support to faith communities who are seeking energy audits, how to's on retrofit and engagement of members in efforts to go "green and clean on energy choices." Founded by Rev. Sally Bingham.

Programs include Cool Congregations, Cool Harvest, Annual Preach-in on Climate Change, and Carbon Covenant.

Local DC/MD/VA contact: Joelle Novey [joelle@gwipl.org](mailto:joelle@gwipl.org)

### **Buddhist:**

[www.earthsangha.org](http://www.earthsangha.org)

"Buddhist Values in Action" Founded in 1997, the Earth Sangha is a nonprofit public charity based in the Washington, DC, area and committed to practical environmental action as an expression of the Buddhist way of life. ("Sangha" is a Buddhist term for congregation or community.) A description of our commitment is available in our [Vision Statement](#). Earth Sangha, 10123 Commonwealth Blvd., Fairfax, VA 22032

**Chris Bright** is a co-founder, **Lisa Bright** is a co-founder  
703-764-4830 [info@earthsangha.org](mailto:info@earthsangha.org)

#### **Green Faith\***

<http://greenfaith.org/>

A National organization (formerly only NJ) resources for congregations on environmental stewardship and energy conservation. GreenFaith's mission is to inspire, educate and mobilize people of diverse religious backgrounds for environmental leadership. Our work is based on beliefs shared by the world's great religions - we believe that protecting the earth is a religious value, and that environmental stewardship is a moral responsibility.

>Director Rev. Fletcher Harper

#### **Presbyterians for Earth Care**

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/environment/earth-care-congregations/>

Presbyterians for Earth Care (PEC), formerly Presbyterians for Restoring Creation, is a nationwide network that cares for God's Creation by connecting with God and others through biblical and theological reflection, study, and experiencing God in Creation, equipping members with news and effective tools and resources, and inspiring members through conferences on timely eco-justice issues and Creation-honoring worship.

Use "[Earth Care Congregations: A Guide to Greening Presbyterian Churches](#)" to find ideas for earth care projects.

LOCAL CHAPTER (metro DC area): <http://www.thepresbytery.org/mission-ministry/ncp-earth-care-network/>

June Eakin (Warner Memorial) [jneakin@yahoo.com](mailto:jneakin@yahoo.com)

Rosie Perthel (Geneva) [rperthel@hotmail.com](mailto:rperthel@hotmail.com)

#### **Lutherans Restoring Creation**

<http://www.lutheransrestoringcreation.org/Home>

Lutherans Restoring Creation (LRC) encourages the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to incorporate care for creation into its full life and mission at all levels. LRC is inviting ELCA members to become partners in these efforts at the congregational, synodical, seminary, and national church levels.

Special Programs for Congregations: Lutherans Restoring Creation

GreenFaith Certification Program\*, for ELCA Congregations is a two-year program to bring care for creation into the full life and mission of your parish.

Energy Stewards Initiative (ESI) is a two-year LRC program for congregations to reduce your energy use, lower your carbon footprint, and save money for other expressions of mission.



Guides for Congregation Creation Care: *Cultivating Hope: Greening Churches Guide*-- Includes an introduction to the connections between faith, social justice and sustainability, suggestions for what churches can do regarding water, energy, waste, recycling, and land use, resources for incorporating environmentalism into worship, Sunday school lessons and youth group activities

### **Episcopal Ecological Network (EpEN)**

<http://eenonline.org/>

The EpEN's mission is to educate, encourage, and facilitate congregations, diocese, provinces, and the Episcopal Church, USA, toward local, regional, national, and international activities for the stewardship of God's Creation.

### **Earth Ministry**

<http://earthministry.org/congregations>

Earth Ministry's Mission: "To inspire and mobilize the Christian community to play a leadership role in building a just and sustainable future."

### **National Humane Society's Faith Outreach Program**

The Faith Outreach program of The Humane Society of the United States seeks to engage people and institutions of faith with animal protection issues, on the premise that religious values call upon us all to act in a kind and merciful way towards all creatures.

*Interesting possibilities for collaboration:*

>[Ministries for Protecting and Celebrating Wildlife](#)

>[Humane Backyard Program](#)

CONTACT: **Faith Outreach Campaign**, Christine Gutleben, Senior Director, 202-452-1100

### **Network of Spiritual Progressives**

2342 Shattuck Ave

Suite 1200

Berkeley, CA 94704

(510)644-1200

[info@spiritualprogressives.org](mailto:info@spiritualprogressives.org)

<http://www.spiritualprogressives.org/>

The Network of Spiritual Progressives is a community of people from many faiths and traditions, called together by the Spiritual Covenant with America and its vision of healing and transforming our world.

### **Web of Creation**

1100 East 5th Street,  
Chicago, IL 60615

[webofcreation@gmail.com](mailto:webofcreation@gmail.com)

<http://webofcreation.org/>

Home of the *Green Congregation Program*; established to facilitate the movement for personal and social transformation to a just and sustainable world-from religious perspectives.

### **Unitarian Universalist Green Sanctuary Program**

<http://uuministryforearth.org/>

The Green Sanctuary Program, originally nurtured and managed by the [Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth](#), was designed to give roots and wings to the vision that, together, we can create a world in which all people make reverence, gratitude, and care for the living Earth that is central to our lives.

**8 MD congregations:** <http://www.uua.org/environment/sanctuary/284515.shtml>

## MARYLAND Groups

### **Christian Simple Living**

University Park Church of the Brethren, University Park, MD

<http://www.christiansimpleliving.org/>

Christiansimpleliving.org is a ministry of the **University Park Church of the Brethren** in University Park, Maryland. It seeks to lay out the basic principles of, and resources for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Christian simple living, as well as the basis for a theology for modern/post modern simplicity.

CONTACT: Steve Seitz, MDiv [comments@christiansimpleliving.org](mailto:comments@christiansimpleliving.org)

### **Episcopal Ecological Network**

<http://www.eenonline.org/>

Diocese: Diocese of Maryland

Name: Creation Care Committee, The Cathedral of the Incarnation, Baltimore, MD

Contact: Paul Beares: [spbeares@verizon.net](mailto:spbeares@verizon.net)

### **United Methodist Church: Baltimore-Washington Conference**

<http://www.bwcumc.org/aboutus/conferencestaffdirectory>

>Unclear who is the contact for Social Action ministry or environmental stewardship.

Searching their website on “environmental stewardship” found:

**Green Church Devotions**

<http://www.bwcumc.org/immersion/greenchurch/devotionsweek5>

By Jim Gracie Jim Gracie owns an environmental consulting business and has been an active volunteer in ... capacities. Recently, he helped organize an Environmental Stewardship Ministry team at **Bethany UMC in Ellicott City**

Kayla Spears, a BWC communications associate, is helping to lead environmental stewardship efforts at the B-W conference Mission Center in Fulton.

**Interfaith Coalition for the Environment - Maryland**

c/o Paulette Hammond

401 Westshire Road, Baltimore, MD 21229

(410) 747-3811

<http://www.interfaith-coalition-for-the-environment.org/> (dead weblink however)

The Interfaith Coalition for the Environment is a charitable, grassroots organization of men and women, lay and ordained, from various religious and spiritual traditions who believe that care for creation and environmental justice are important matters common to us all.

**Green Muslims**

[Green Muslims](#) seeks to serve as a bridge between Muslim communities and environmental organizations in the US.

CONTACT: Sarah Jawad, Director. Please send all press and institutional partnership inquiries to [contact@greenmuslims.org](mailto:contact@greenmuslims.org)

## What does God provide to us?

Throughout Scripture, God promises the faithful that He will provide for them. Story after story demonstrates the Father's amazing ability to satisfy His children's physical, emotional, and spiritual needs.

And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19). Now notice, God has obligated Himself only to the extent of our needs. That would include food, clothing, shelter, companionship, love, and salvation thru Jesus Christ. It would not include the multiplicity of luxuries that we have come to think of as needs.

Don't tell Him how to meet your needs. Sometimes God will provide through people you don't know or in ways you least expect (Matthew 24:44).

### Further Readings

"Enhancing Spiritual Experience in Adventure Programs", in John C. Miles & Simon Priest (eds.) *Adventure Programming*. State College, PA: Venture Publishing, Inc.

"Psychological Benefits of Wilderness Experience", in Altman, Irwin & Joachim F. Wohlwill (eds.) *Behaviour and the Environment*. New York: Plenum Press.  
Kaplan, Stephen & Jane F. Talbot (1983)

"Outdoor Education: Practical Implications of a Deep Ecology Philosophy", *The Outdoor Educator*  
Martin, Peter (1993)

*Faith in Nature: Environmentalism as Religious Quest*  
Thomas R. Dunlap (2004)

*Religions, Values, and Peak Experiences*.  
Maslow, Abraham (1964).

*Wild Communion: Experiencing Peace in Nature* by  
Baetz Ruth (1997)

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Natural and Spiritual Service  
Providers

EE Capacity Online Course:  
*EE: Working with Faith Based  
Communities*

## Natural and Spiritual Service Providers



By: Nicole  
Jackson



# What does nature provide to us?



There is no doubt that nature provides so many wonderful things to the Earth. Pretty much everything that comes from nature is needed for us to survive. We are provided with food, water, materials to build shelter, and even medicine.

But although nature gives us such wonderful gifts, we have greatly become disconnected from it.. An increase in technology and technology has played a key factor in this. Television, cell phones, and video games have taken our focus away from the importance of nature and why we need it.

Other examples of what nature provides:

- **Pollination**- Picture your-

That would be a lot of work, but this is done already by insects, birds and even some mammals. Around 80% of the world's plants require a different species to act as a pollinator.

- **Biodiversity**- this produces food, fibers, wood products; it cleans water, controls agricultural pests, pollinates and disperses the world's plants; and provides recreation, such as bird-watching, gardening, and ecotourism.

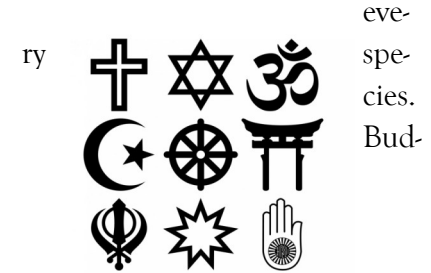


- **Medicine**- Nature is our greatest medicine cabinet! Ecosystems like rainforests, coral reefs, and even swamps have helped save millions of lives. It heals us physically, mentally, and most importantly spiritually.

Although nature provides us with many tangible resources, there are things that nature provides that are beyond measure and can't be held in the palm of your hand.

In Christianity, Earthly paradise ex-

isted in a garden, while Noah, the original conservationist, is commanded by God to save



dhists believe all life—from the smallest fly to the blue whale—is sacred and worthy of compassion. For Hindus every bit of the natural world is infused with divinity. Muslims believe the natural world was created by Allah and only given to humans as gift to be held in trust. Indigenous cultures worldwide celebrate the natural world as their 'mother'.

But you don't need to be religious to understand the importance of nature to the human spirit: one only need spend time alone in a shadowy forest, watch a beautiful sunset, touch the wings of a colorful butterfly, or watch the quarter moon swing behind mountain silhouettes.

## *What is this brochure all about?*

Have you ever considered that the words we use to express our “awe” of the natural world are often used to express spiritual ideas, too? But that doesn’t mean they are reserved for spiritual groups. It’s just that **the English language is limited!**

Some books that help children express their love of nature are overlooked by those who keep spirituality and nature completely separate because they rely on spiritual themes. But **nature is not limited** and children’s books can offer ways to celebrate the natural world even if spiritual words are the choice of the author.

**Children’s books have an amazing way of bringing open minds together!**

In all of these books, **nature is reflected accurately**, though creatively. Anthropomorphism (giving human characteristics to animals) is minimal which is important for environmental educators.

The books suggested here do have spiritual themes and some of them are directly tied into scripture or poems, but they are offered only as suggestions for thought. We ask that you consider each on its own merits and consider each for what it can offer you in **helping children get outside and exploring** the natural world.

**God of the sparrow God of the whale,**  
by Jaroslav Vajda, is one of the most popular modern hymns. The text features **no punctuation to create a sense of openness.** The hymn’s focus on the natural world makes it a perfect way to **remember the bond between nature and God.**

*So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. (Genesis 1:21)*



### **The Trellis and the Seed**

~Jan Karon

Not everything in nature keeps the same schedule: the moonflower for instance.

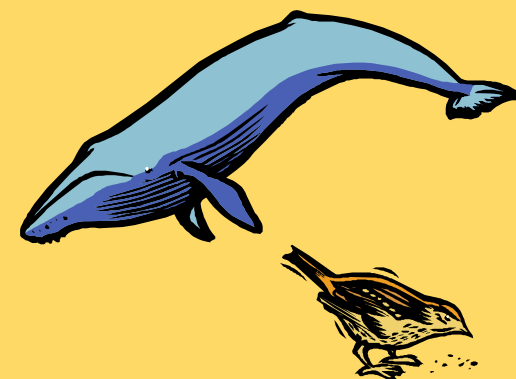
*And God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth.” And it was so. (Genesis 1:11)*



*This brochure was created as a final project for the **EE and Faith-based Communities** class offered by Cornell University, Spring 2014.*

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# God of the Sparrow, God of the Whale



**Children’s Books  
Celebrating  
Our Environment  
A Selection for Churches,  
Homeschools, and  
Everyone!**

◆ **The Give-Away: A Christmas Story in the Native American Tradition**

◆ **The Wing**

◆ **Christmas Moccasins**

◆ **God's Love is Like...**

~Ray Buckley

Unfortunately, most of these are currently out of print.



**Let The Whole Earth Sing Praise**

~Tomie dePaola

Reflecting the folk art of the Otomi culture of Mexico, this joyous celebration of nature was inspired by Old Testament texts.

*How many are your works, LORD!  
In wisdom you made them all;  
the earth is full of your creatures.  
(Psalm 104:24)*



**Mama, Do You Love Me?**

~Barbara M. Joosse

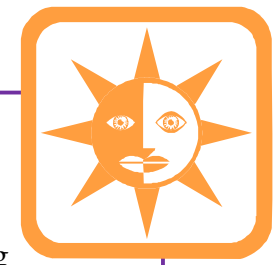
A beautiful story about the boundless love of a parent. Perfect for everyone but it can also be seen as a metaphor for God's love, too.



**Brother Sun, Sister Moon**

~Katherine Paterson

St Francis of Assisi's Canticum of the Creatures (or Brother Sun) is a classic Medieval poem celebrating all nature.



**The Three Questions**

~John J. Muth

This story by Leo Tolstoy is a classic that you will think about for years. The questions are as simple and complicated and timeless as nature.

*Can you answer the questions I ask?  
(Job 38:3 CEV)*

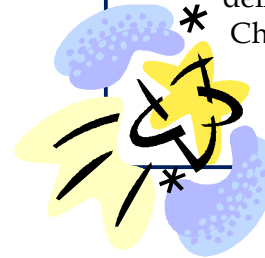


**Song of the Stars: A Christmas Story**

~Sally Lloyd-Jones

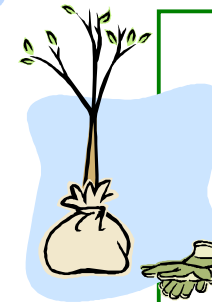
The illustrations of animals in this book are worth the price! A delightful retelling of the traditional Christmas story.

*Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace to those on  
whom his favor rests. Luke 2:14*



- ◆ **The Dreamer**
- ◆ **The Journey**
- ◆ **The Bird House**
- ◆ **Night in the Country**

~Cynthia Rylant

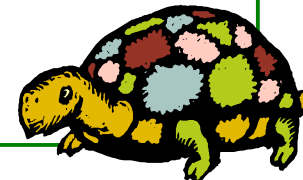


**Old Turtle**

~Douglas Wood

Who is God? What is God? The animals argue and Old Turtle finally answers. A book to help start a serious discussion about God.

*Why do you talk so much  
when you know so little?  
(Job 38:2)*



West Virginia native Cynthia Rylant is an award-winning author, well known to children.

*(Unfortunately, many of these books are out of print, so check your local library.)*



Engage in a study of Nature Writing to deepen the most essential relationships at the heart of every community. Without exception, each person is integrally related to Earth through families of birth, spirit friendship, community, bioregion, culture, and history. Mary Ann Doyle has been designing and providing encounters of study in Earth Literacy for more than twenty years. All requests will be honored.



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## EARTH LITERACY



This study in nature writing considers a way of being in nature that is attentive, engaged, and relational. We will explore the diverse writings of Annie Dillard, Rachel Carson, Aldo Leopold, Barry Lopez, Gary Paulsen, Gary Snyder, Ursula LeGuin, Loren Eiseley, and others. Participants will be supported in their own efforts to write in the genre of nature writing.

EARTH IN COMMON DESIGN, LLC

Mary Ann Doyle, Ph.D.

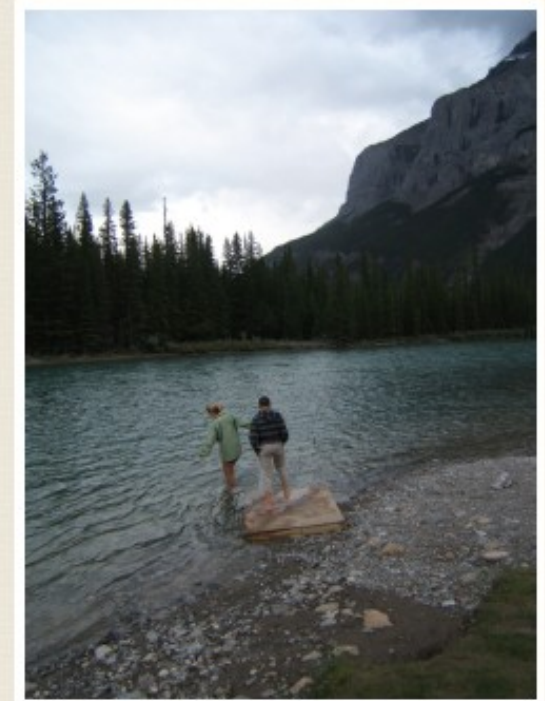
(210) 7846843

[www.earthincommondesign@gmail.com](mailto:www.earthincommondesign@gmail.com)

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## NATURE WRITING

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Grounded in science and poetic expression, nature writers attend to Earth and Cosmos. With them we too explore and discover our place in the great mystery of life.







*Life on Earth began in the Cosmos and remains an integral ecology across time and space.*

Earth literacy is an urgent topic of concern for formal and informal study in every part of the world. Schools expand Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programs of study each year in an effort to prepare for the increasingly complex issues we face in our efforts to conserve, preserve, and prepare for the future. The best way to support STEM programs is to provide a strong environmental education foundation for adults and children (NAAEE, 2014, EE Capacity). Earth Literacy is the heart of environmental education, and nature writers provide the scientific understandings as well as the poetic language needed for a strong foundation in ecological consciousness. A study of Nature Writers and Nature Writing may be designed to meet the goals and objectives of your small or large group.

# EARTH'S RELATIONAL NATURE

Learn the ways of nature writers as a foundation for addressing local and global issues of concern.



## NATURE WRITING AS EARTH LITERACY

Explore nature through the writings of those who bear witness to the great mystery of our seas, forests, deserts, mountains, rivers, and other planetary formation.



*How is land between rivers and lakes a sanctuary?*



*What does the sea do when it meets land?*

## NATURE WRITING FOR ADULTS AND CHILDREN

Learn the genre of nature writing as a way to explore the integral relationships among plants and creatures, both great and small. Learn to see and know and write as life opens and closes and opens again.



*How are wetlands and estuaries necessary for life?*



*How can mountains teach us about life on this planet?*

## NATURE WRITING AS EARTH IN COMMON

Explore the history of Earth as home to all its life forms, and to the mutually dependent and potentially mutually enhancing relationship we might have with her as we shape the future of the planet and all its species.



*Fresh water flows from mountaintops and gives life.*



*Why are trees so important to life on our planet?*

**MAKING CONNECTIONS: AN ADVOCACY PLAN by Paul Oryem**

**OBJECTIVE:** Create an interactive forum that recognizes disparate organizations and entitles capacities and strengths to make connections for informal environmental education.

**Our Sustainable Response Impact Map**  
*for Faith and Environmental Education*

<b>Competitive Advantage</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Necessary Conditions</b>	<b>Desired Impact</b>
<i>Strengths, assets, core competencies</i>	<i>The program and activities of your work, what you need to do create the conditions</i>	<i>IF these conditions are created the desired impact will be achieved</i>	<i>The longer term desired impact, tangible</i>
<p>World class institutions and community entities with broad programming capabilities</p> <p>Strong and active advocates in elected officials</p> <p>Active volunteers and members</p> <p>Engaged new constituencies</p> <p>A nascent community initiative that highlights connections</p>	<p>Action Planning – Collaborative efforts for outdoor activities including storm drain stenciling, neighborhood fairs and festivals</p> <p>Education Program – Highlighted connecting and reconnecting activities Increase exposure for informal science learning</p> <p>Public Programs – Promote regional and municipal green space events</p> <p>Case Studies – Spotlight local collaborations with faith based groups and other entities</p> <p>Tools and Resources – Activity map for faith based groups E-newsletter and directory</p>	<p>Increased awareness of environmentally responsible choices</p> <p>Engaged citizens speaking up for urban nature policies</p> <p>Time and money to donated to neighborhood environmental causes and services</p> <p>Increased interest in STEM programming in schools</p> <p>Green activities as announcements in church bulletins, newsletters and education exhibits in community health fairs</p>	<p><b>This region is a model for community collaboration and urban nature that serves as a catalyst for healthier citizens and improved quality of life</b></p>

Initiative will be hosted at [www.oursustainableresponse.com](http://www.oursustainableresponse.com) and will launch in summer 2014