



Day 2: Wilderness Awe

Daily Quick Reference Guide

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

Scripture Focus: Job 12:10

“In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being.” (Job 12:10)

Theological Summary: God has lovingly created everything on earth, all the creatures, plants, and environments.

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
Primary learning activity that explores the daily scripture is highlighted.		
__ We are One of a Kind	PLAY CREATE	Create unique fingerprint creatures
__ Walk on the Wild Side	PRAY LEARN	Take a nature walk
__ Silence is Golden	PLAY	A game using hand signals
__ Animal Antics	PLAY	An obstacle course
__ Would you rather?	PLAY LEARN	A questioning game
__ Bird Bistro	SERVE	Make bird feeders
__ Feed the Animals	PLAY	A relay race
__ Breathe!	PRAY LEARN	Non-verbal communication

Leader notes: Be aware of negative connotations for the word “Wilderness.” Encourage campers to have curiosity about nature and their surroundings.

Prayer: “Dear God, thank you for creating the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky. Thank you for helping us to know what to do, and for always being with us.”

Daily Activities

We are One of a Kind

PLAY CREATE

Supplies: Construction paper, markers, ink pads or paint and water, and magnifying glasses.

How: Read Job 12:7-10 with the campers. Discuss what makes people unique. Remind them that their fingerprints are special to just them. Using construction paper and diluted paint or ink pads, invite campers to press their fingers into the ink and then press them on the paper. Using magnifying glasses or simply looking, invite them to explore all ten of their own fingerprints. Next, invite the campers to turn their unique fingerprints into imaginary creatures. Share as campers desire.

Try This: Give each camper an additional piece of paper and invite them to redo their fingerprints. This time, label each fingerprint with something they think is special about themselves.

Walk on the Wild Side

PRAY LEARN

Supplies: Binoculars or magnifying glasses, large paper, and a marker.

How: Ask the campers what makes somewhere a “wilderness”, whether the area is urban, rural, or suburban. Consider plants, animals, and other elements of nature that might be found in your wilderness. Take a nature walk and invite campers to use their senses to observe God’s wilderness. Use magnifying glasses or binoculars if available. After the walk, invite each camper to say something they saw and create a group list (or a group drawing). Remind the campers that we can see God’s creation no matter where we are, and everywhere we go can be a place where God teaches us. Close with prayer saying “Thank you God for creating...” Close with the prayer of the day.

Try This: Find fallen or grounded items, such as leaves, twigs, rocks, etc., and create a group nature collage with tape or glue, labeling it “God is in Our Wilderness.”

Silence is Golden

PLAY

Supplies: None.

How: For this adapted version of “Red light, Green light,” designate a hand signal for “stop” and one for “go.” Campers line up on a “start” line. The leader

shows the designated sign for “go,” and then for “stop.” Campers “stop” or “go” depending on the sign. The first camper to reach the leader becomes the leader for the next game. Make the game more complex by adding signs for additional movements for things like hopping, laying down, walking on your toes, etc. Remind campers that God always wants us to listen for God’s voice in our lives.

Try This: As a group, create a hand signal, handshake, or short dance that can be used as an attention getter or a group identifier.

Animal Antics

PLAY

Supplies: Pictures of various animals, items for obstacle course (traffic cones, hula hoops, balls, items to jump over or crawl under).

How: Read Job 12:7-10. Discuss how all animals are created by God but very different from each other, such as crabs, fish, kangaroos, cheetahs, rabbits, and flamingos. Invite campers to come up with other examples. Create a short and simple obstacle course. Break the campers into teams, and have them complete the course several times for practice. Choose 3-4 animals and allow time for the campers to practice moving like each of the chosen animals. Select one of those animals for how they move through the course. Determine the group’s success, not by speed, but by some characteristic of the animal - complete the course as a rabbit or kangaroo, looking for the most hops. Complete as a sloth, looking for the slowest group, complete as a flamingo, spending as much time on one leg as possible. Be sure to accommodate any special physical limitations. Gather campers for one last round where everyone chooses their favorite animal to act like and remind them that God loves all of God’s creation.

Try This: Repeat the race, but for each obstacle, campers must change animals or have them change animals randomly as a leader calls out a new one mid-race.

Would you Rather?

PLAY LEARN

Supplies: Crayons, pipe cleaners, or play-dough.

How: Read Job 12:7-10 and invite campers to list as many varieties of animals, fish, and birds they can think of in three minutes. Picking out several animals, ask campers what they know about the animals. Invite campers to give ideas about why they think Job talks

about the animals. What is Job reminding us about God and creation? Spread the campers out so that each camper has enough space to act out animals. Call out two animals they listed and ask: “Would you rather be...” (Would you rather be a bird or a frog?) and the campers act out their animal choice. Continue with a variety of animal pairs. Close with the prayer of the day.

Try This: Using play-dough, pipe cleaners, or paper and crayons, and have campers draw their favorite animals. Invite campers to draw a background of land, sea, and air together and cut out and place their animals on the background.

Bird Bistro

SERVE

Supplies: Stale bread and/or pinecones, birdseed, lard (Crisco), straws, string, flat container for birdseed.

How: Read Job 12:7-10. Invite campers to think of ways we can help care for the animals in creation, especially birds. If practical, have campers listen for any birds they hear in camp. Give each camper a pinecone or a piece of stale bread. If using pinecones, have them wind a piece of string around the top to make a hanger. If using stale bread, have them poke a hole in the top of the bread to thread the string through. Using a spoon, have them spread the lard on the bread or pinecone. Then, campers should roll or place their bird feeder in the birdseed and gently shake off excess. Hang the feeders from a tree or other high place. Close with a prayer such as “Thank you, Lord, for the gift of birds. Help us to care for the birds and the places they live. Amen.”

Try This: Create a bird feeder using a piece of citrus fruit, bird seed, and string. Cut the fruit in half, scoop out and mix pulp with birdseed, then refill. Poke toothpicks around the outside and connect with strings to create a hanger.

Feed the Animals

PLAY

Supplies: Sidewalk chalk, 5 bean bags or other markers per team, 15 small items per team, and two baskets per team.

How: Separate the campers into teams of 5 and line them up to run a relay race. Create a start and finish line. Use sidewalk chalk to draw 5 circles in front of each team, but far enough for them to toss a beanbag to. Number the circles randomly with a number from

1-5. For each team, place one basket with 15 items in it at the finish line and an empty basket next to the first camper in line. The camper at the front of the line tosses the bean bag into one of the circles with numbers in it (like hopscotch). They then run to the far-away basket, grab that amount of “food” from the basket, run back, putting the food in the basket at the start of the line. The next camper tosses the bean bag into a circle to get a different number, then repeats the relay race. If they land on the same number, they must run, grab the bean bag, and try again. Repeat until all campers in each line have had a turn to “feed the animals.”

Try This: Have the campers act as animals as they race - kangaroos, frogs, etc.

Breathe!

PRAY LEARN

Supplies: Small slips of paper, a writing utensil, and bowl or bag (not see-through)

How: Read Job 12:7-10 with the campers. Talk with the campers about things they might pray for or about. Then ask them different ways people pray (words, songs, even just not talking). What kinds of feelings do people pray about? Using facial expressions, have campers guess what emotions you are showing (angry, happy, excited, scared, etc.). Remind campers that God knows all the feelings we feel and wants us to pray about them. Invite campers to take a deep breath in and out with you and explain that you are going to show them how to use their breath to pray. As they breathe in, you say, “Dear God, sometimes we feel sad”. As they exhale, you say, “Thank you, God, for being with me”. Invite them to say the words in their heads as you say them out loud. Repeat a few times, changing the emotions (happy, angry, excited, scared) but keeping the same rhythm. At the end, remind campers that God is with us no matter what emotions we experience. Close with the prayer of the day.

Try This: Ask campers to draw faces that show how they might be feeling. Ask them to share how they are feeling today. How can they ask God for help if help is needed? How can they help someone who is feeling a hard feeling?



Story Resources

Zootopia (Disney 2016): A rabbit becomes a police officer in Zootopia and has to learn to work with a fox. Animal characteristics and the dangers of stereotyping are addressed.

First the Egg, Laura Vaccaro Seeger

The book addresses transformations, one thing becoming something else. A caterpillar becomes a butterfly, paint becomes a picture. This can help campers explore the idea that they might be changing, but God stays the same.

Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? Eric Carle

A simple rhyming book that names a variety of animals and animal characteristics. Works well for younger campers and can also be used as a template for kids to create their own animal book.

What Do You Do with a Tail Like This? Steve Jenkins and Robin Page

Introduces animal body parts and their sometimes unusual functions, like a scorpion uses its tail to sting. This book can be used to address the wonder and uniqueness of God's creation in the wilderness.

National Geographic Kids Magazines <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/>

This resource has a wealth of information and videos about a variety of animals and their characteristics.



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Daily Quick Reference Guide

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

Scripture Focus: 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,^[a] and they will teach you...

Theological Summary: God created everything, and everything is ready to speak to us about God!

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
Primary learning activity that explores the daily scripture is highlighted.		
__ Sensing	PRAY	Quietly observing creation
__ That's a Handful	PRAY PLAY	How much can one hold?
__ P.S.A.	LEARN SERVE	Teach animal lessons
__ Pollinator Special	SERVE CREATE	Create pollinator feeders
__ Leaf Lines	CREATE	Leaf prints in watercolor
__ What's the Question?	PLAY LEARN	Ask the questions for the answers
__ Create-ure	PLAY CREATE	Draw a creature by rolling a die
__ Tagimals	PLAY	Play tag like an animal

Leader notes: Today's scripture lends itself to both silly games and thoughtful contemplation; balance is key.

Prayer: "God of all creation, help us to learn from and participate in every part of creation. Amen."

Daily Activities

Sensing

PRAY

Supplies: Optional: small tarps, plastic, or placemats for sitting on dewy spaces.

How: In the early morning, invite campers to sit in a circle somewhere in the camp that is away from buildings. As they gather, invite campers to observe the plants around them: Do they look different now than in the middle of the day? Why/not? Once seated, invite campers to close their eyes and use their senses of hearing and smell to explore the world around them. Ask them what they see. Is there anything standing out that they haven't noticed before or often? What is creation telling us about the Creator? Invite the campers to take a little time just to think about one of these questions.

Try This: Invite campers to focus on one observation of each camper's choice and invite them to keep that learning in mind throughout the day. In the evening, gather in the same space again. Can they still observe the same thing? If something has changed, what does that tell them about God's creation and God in creation?

That's a Handful!

LEARN PRAY

Supplies: Jumbo craft pom poms or cotton balls and Bible.

How: Read Job 12:7-10 as a group. What does it mean for God to hold all of creation in God's grasp or hand? How much can we, as humans, hold up and support? Invite one camper to hold out one hand, and the other campers to take turns adding a pom-pom/cotton ball to that hand. The one camper must hold them on their own, without help or advice. How many can they fit before some start to fall off? What can the one camper do to try to keep them all there? Is there a limit, or can they fit all of them? With the answers to these questions in mind, consider: How can God hold all of creation in God's grasp? What might it mean to be able to hold all of that, and what might God need to do to manage it all? Can we, as part of creation, fully understand what this means? Invite campers to quietly consider these questions, taking a moment to thank God for being willing to hold so much.

Try This: Invite every camper to try to hold all of the pom-poms, but this time allow for help or advice. What strategies do they employ? Can any of them do it on their own, or might they need help? How does this relate to the Job passage?

P.S.A.

CREATE SERVE

Supplies: Paper, markers, magazines (optional), glue, scissors, masking tape, and Bible.

How: Ask campers which animals (either from home or camp) they are most familiar with, and invite them to each choose one. Invite campers to think of what lesson they are most likely to learn from their animal, and to create a poster of each using markers and magazine cutouts, including a slogan that teaches that lesson. Hang these posters all around commonly used parts of camp in order to share these lessons.

Try This: At times when announcements are usually made (mealtimes, sing-along, etc.), double down on the animal slogans by inviting campers to add them to whatever announcements are already on the list.

Pollinator Special

SERVE CREATE

Supplies: Bowls, sponges, scissors, small stones, Sharpie markers, multi-colored tissue paper, glue, water, sugar, and pitcher.

How: In advance, make sugar water by dissolving sugar in water in a pitcher with a 1-to-1 ratio. In advance, cut sponges into smaller pieces. Invite campers to create pollinator feeding stations by decorating the edges of bowls with markers and tissue paper. Place sponge pieces and small stones into the bottom of the bowls. Pour sugar water over all of it, allowing it to absorb and leaving a ¼ inch in the bottom of the bowl. Invite campers to place the feeders in parts of camp where pollinators will have a harder time finding food (fewer flowering plants, dry areas, etc). Check on feeders during the day to see who or what is partaking. Be mindful of any campers with bee allergies and prepare or adjust accordingly.

Try This: Make a second set of feeders, but don't decorate. Invite the campers to experiment, observing which feeders appear to be more popular. Why do the campers suppose this is? What can campers learn about creation by observing the differences and similarities?

Leaf Lines

CREATE

Supplies: Heavy paper/watercolor paper, watercolor paints, paint brushes, and masking tape (optional).

How: Take a walk and collect fallen leaves of every size and shape available. Ask the campers to share what they notice about the different leaves. What might they learn just by observing their shapes and patterns? Give each camper a piece of paper and paints. Invite campers to cover paper in bold strokes of wet watercolor paint, and then to place the leaves in the paint. Set these in the sun to dry; once dry, peel the leaves up and observe the patterns left behind. What can the leaves teach now in their absence? Is there anything unexpected?

Try This: Tape the painting on a sunny window and look again. What can they observe in the combination of watercolor patterning as well as the lines left by the leaves? We can learn from varying parts of creation, but what happens when we observe them interacting?

What's the Question?

PLAY

Supplies: Handout, small note paper, and writing implements.

How: Divide campers into two teams, giving each some note paper and pens. From the handout, read each "answer," inviting campers to invent a question to match it. Campers need to write their questions on a piece of paper and rush them to the leader. Whoever gets there first gets to read it aloud.

Try This: Instead of a race, each team reads their response aloud and defends it. Who will convince whom?

Create-ure

PLAY CREATE

Supplies: Large paper, markers, masking tape, and a die.

How: In advance, tape a large paper to a wall. Invite campers to create a creature based on the roll of a die, where the numbers correspond with the body parts in this way: 1-leg, 2-wing, 3-snout/nose, 4-tummy, 5-head, 6-tail. Campers are invited to take turns drawing one body part at a time as another camper takes a turn with the die. No camper draws a whole creature by themselves. Make as many creatures as the campers like.

Try This: Invite campers to name their creatures and describe their behaviors and habitats, and diets.

Tagimals

PLAY

Supplies: Strips of paper, pen, and a bowl.

How: In advance, write the names of random animals (including sea creatures and insects) on each strip of paper and mix them up in the bowl. Ask campers to each take one strip. Invite the campers to play tag, informing them that they can only move the way the animal on the strip they pulled moves. After they've played for a while, ask campers what they may have learned about a day in the life of the animal they each imitated.

Try This: Instead of each camper having a different animal, the leader calls out the name of a different random animal at different times, causing the campers to change their movements.



Story Resources

The Mandala Book: Patterns of the Universe, Lori Bailey Cunningham: This book is filled with photos of the natural world and the ways that patterns in nature spring forth from a central point. Perusing these photos allows creation to teach us in ways we might not have otherwise noticed.

"Let the Whole Earth Sing Praise" by Tomie de Paola: This book is inspired by scripture and the folk art of the Otomi People of Puebla, Mexico. It celebrates that joy can be found (and learned) from everywhere you look.

What's the Question? Handout

- Bear
- Scales
- Cactus
- Roots
- Claws or talons
- Guinea pig
- Rose
- Oak tree
- Cat
- Stink bug
- Butterfly
- Aloe vera
- Grass
- Dragonfly
- Morning glory
- Dog
- Pine tree
- Tumbleweed
- Lion
- Bull thorn
- Cow
- Goat
- Corn
- Hen
- Sunflower
- Add more as you see fit!



Day 2: 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
Primary learning activity that explores the daily scripture is highlighted.		
__ Wild Talk	PLAY	Nature communication guessing game
__ Building Beings	CREATE	Making new creatures
__ Breath Prayer	PRAY	Calming breath work
__ Bouquet Cards	CREATE SERVE	Cards for teachers
__ Every Living Being	PLAY	Collecting game
__ Feed the Plants	LEARN SERVE	Making plant food
__ Sensing Nature	PRAY	Nature Meditation
__ Texture Bookmarks	CREATE	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.



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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: If we take the time to be present and pay attention, we find that the natural world has much to teach us about God’s ways and our lives.

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
Primary learning activity that explores the daily scripture is highlighted.		
__ Cross the River	PLAY	Learning what we have in common
__ The Gift of Poetry	PRAY SERVE	Nature poems for God (and neighbor)
__ Song of Creation	PLAY	Call and response game
__ Nature Speaks	LEARN	Experiencing God on a nature walk
__ Finding Awe	PLAY	Nature scavenger hunt
__ Wilderness Symbols	CREATE LEARN	Creating symbols for ourselves
__ Listen to Learn	PRAY LEARN	Listening to Creation

Leader notes: The creation is always a powerful partner in teaching at camp. Today’s theme leans into that, so be ready to see new things in creation and encourage your campers to keep their eyes open for what the camp’s grounds might reveal.

Prayer: “Breath of Creation, fill us with a spirit of curiosity this day, so we can discover your presence in the language of nature. Amen.”

Daily Activities

Cross the River

PLAY

Supplies: Rope, tape, or chalk.

How: Make a line on the floor/ground that divides your space in two (with a rope, chalk, tape, or just an imaginary line). This line is your “river.” Invite campers to stand in a line on one side of the river. Explain that as you call out various statements, if it applies to them, they “cross the river” to the side you indicate. After each round, pause and let campers look around to see who they have something in common with.

Examples of prompts:

- “Go to this side of the river if you love hiking.”
- “Go to this side of the river if you’ve ever slept outside under the stars.”
- “Go to this side of the river if you prefer lakes over oceans.”
- “Go to this side of the river if you’ve ever rescued an animal.”
- “Go to this side of the river if you like thunderstorms.”
- “Go to this side of the river if you think campfires make the best food.”

If you notice that some campers seem to have little to no experience with being out in nature, include aspirational statements like “I would like to learn how to paddle a canoe.”

Try This: Invite campers to suggest more choices, including things not usually associated with nature or camp. This could also be used as a great waiting game.

The Gift of Poetry

SERVE PRAY

Supplies: Bible, paper, pens, pencils, phone/speaker (optional), sidewalk chalk (optional), and examples or outlines of poetry in different styles (either printed or on the web).

How: Explain that portions of the Bible, including parts of the Book of Job, are written as poetry, perhaps in part because poetry does a wonderful job of expressing grand ideas like love or the creative power of God. Read Job 12:7-10 aloud. Invite campers to take a deep

breath and listen to the words and their meaning – then reread the scripture. Invite campers to spend some time writing their own poetry that is inspired by Creation and/or the Job passage. Point out that poetry takes on many forms, including haiku, sonnets, acrostics, song lyrics, and more. If campers need examples, read a few different poems. Remind them that there are no grades at camp, just write what they feel.

As campers work, play some soft nature sounds on your phone or other music player, or let the natural world around you continue to speak and inspire. When everyone has completed their poetry, encourage campers to share their pieces. After each piece is read, have the group respond with “God, thank you for your Creation.” When the final poem has been shared, close the group in prayer or invite the group to say “Amen.”

Try This: Gift the rest of camp with these poems/prayers by writing them around camp with sidewalk chalk or by making copies and posting them in well-trafficked camp areas. Some could also be shared in worship.

Or Try This: Invite staff, volunteers, and campers of all ages to participate and collect their writing into a poetry book from the camp.

Song of Creation

PLAY

Supplies: None.

How: This call-and-response game is a fun way to get campers’ creative juices flowing. Explain that the game will be how your group will create a “song of creation” filled with movement and sound. One by one, each camper will make a sound and accompanying movement/motion inspired by nature (e.g., bird song, flowing river), and the group will repeat it. Once the sounds and motions have been set and learned, get in a circle and take turns with someone in the center serving as the “conductor.” When the conductor points at someone, the whole group should make their nature sound and motion until they point at someone new, and the group takes up the new sound/motion.

Try This: Experiment with the musicality of this game. Perhaps one or two sounds feel like percussion – invite those campers to set the beat. Layer other sounds over the top to create a full Song of Creation.

Nature Speaks

LEARN

Supplies: Bible.

How: Invite campers to join you on a nature walk. Explain that the purpose of this walk is twofold: to enjoy nature and to listen to what the natural world has to teach us. To listen well, the bulk of the walk will be done in silence. Take campers along a trail or another nature area. Move slowly, helping them to slow down and attend (and kindly encouraging them to remain silent if they begin to chat). Somewhere along the way, stop and read Job 12:7-10. Invite campers to reflect on what they've seen, heard, and experienced along the walk. Encourage campers to share one lesson they've learned from an animal, plant, or natural element. If more discussion feels appropriate, invite campers to consider questions like:

- What do you think the scripture writer meant when they wrote that the animals, plants, and earth know that God has "done this"?
- What might it mean for the life and breath of every creature to be in the hands of God?
- What does that mean for them?

Try This: If a walk is not practical, invite campers to think of their favorite place that involves something in nature. Have them close their eyes as they imagine the sights, sounds, smells, and surroundings. As they reflect, read Job 12:7-10 and invite them to respond to the questions above.

Finding Awe

PLAY

Supplies: Finding Awe handout, paper, and pencils.

How: Give each camper a copy of the Finding Awe handout and a reusable shopping bag. Explain that for the next 15-20 minutes, everyone should go outside of your meeting area to find items that fit each prompt on the handout and draw a picture of them. After the time is up, call the group back into your meeting space. Go through the prompts one by one, giving campers opportunities to present (and explain, if needed) their findings.

Try This: You could combine this with the Nature Speaks activity above, allowing your nature walk to also be a scavenger hunt for items on the Finding Awe list.

Or Try This: If you are using the Wilderness Symbols activity, consider having campers use their drawings from this one as a place to start.

Wilderness Symbols

CREATE LEARN

Supplies: Bible, found objects, paper, pencils, tape, glue, string, and scissors.

How: Read Job 12:7-10 aloud. Explain that sometimes nature not only teaches us about God but also teaches us something about ourselves. Invite campers to explore camp, looking for something that represents or symbolizes them. Remind campers not to destroy nature for this, only picking up things that have already fallen, or that are not part of the natural environment. Give them 5-10 minutes to search, find, and return to your meeting area. Once everyone is back, give each camper a sheet of paper. Explain that they have an opportunity to use their found objects to create symbols or logos that represent themselves. When campers are done, invite them to share their symbols with the group. How do the symbols represent them? What have they learned about themselves through this activity?

Try This: Consider bringing these symbols to a shared worship space in your camp setting and placing them in a focal area as a way for campers to offer themselves to God and the community.

Or Try This: Let this activity grow out of the Finding Awe activity, using the items they collected in that process.

Listen to Learn

LEARN PRAY

Supplies: None.

How: Invite campers to close their eyes and listen to the world around them. Lead them in deep breathing where they breathe in and out slowly and carefully. As they breathe, invite them to listen for any animals they may hear. As they breathe in, invite them to say to themselves, "God, please protect...." and as they breathe out, "and help me to care for your creation." After several moments, invite campers to close their prayer time by repeating the daily prayer as you say it out loud.

Try This: Repeat this activity at different times of day—morning, afternoon, evening, night, and invite campers to think of how the sounds and feelings may have been different for them. Creation is always changing, just like they are.



Story Resources

Animals as Teachers and Healers, by Susan Chernak

McElroy: Random House, 1998: This collection of stories reminds us of the amazing power that comes from relationships with the animals around us.

Princess Mononoke, Ghibli Studio 1997: This is an animated Anime-type story dealing with a young woman's relationship with nature and the pressure of those around her who would seek to harm it. A good way to talk about sacred spaces and our relationship to Creation.

Planet Earth (BBC TV Series, available streaming or on DVD) 2006. Narrated by David Attenborough this series shows incredible footage of nature - the good and the bad. This could lead to some interesting discussions about the dangers of Creation, and the danger Creation sometimes faces.

Finding Awe Scavenger Hunt Handout

Find the following items in nature:

- **Something tiny but powerful.**
- **Something brightly colored.**
- **Something that can make a beautiful sound.**
- **Something older than you.**
- **Something that changes shape.**
- **Something that changes color.**
- **Something that smells good.**
- **Something younger than you.**
- **Something you don't understand.**
- **Something underrated.**
- **Something overrated.**
- **Something unpredictable.**



Day 2: Wilderness Awe

Daily Quick Reference Guide

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

Scripture Focus:

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

Theological Summary:

Humans have much to learn from creation. The more we learn about animals and plants—their unique perspectives, needs, and contributions to ecosystems—the more we learn about our Creator.

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
Primary learning activity that explores the daily scripture is highlighted.		
__ Nature Prayer	PRAY	Nature walk and prayer
__ Animal Balloons	PLAY	Balloon bouncing game
__ Mutual Care	SERVE LEARN	Mutual care
__ All God’s Creatures	PLAY	Animal themed game
__ Guessing Game	PLAY	Animal clues
__ Story Interviews	LEARN	Learn about each other
__ Categories Prayer	PRAY	Creative prayer time

Leader notes: The idea of this scripture is that all creation is created by God and has things to teach us about God. Think about what you have learned by watching creation.

Prayer: Creator God, lead us into deeper relationships with the rest of creation; with beautiful plant life, all God’s creatures, and with each other. Amen.

Daily Activities

Nature Prayer

PRAY

How: Read Job 12:7-10, then take a nature walk. As campers in your group observe the members of creation, invite them to name what they see and share questions they might like to ask if the creation could talk. For example, they might ask an old tree what it has seen or ask a squirrel how many nuts can fit in its mouth. Encourage them to think about what it might be like to be that creature or growing plant and ask a question. For each question, invite the group to imagine what answers might be given.

Try This: Instead of speaking aloud in the moment, have group members write down their observations and prayers to share after the walk.

Animal Balloons

PLAY

Supplies: Balloons and permanent markers.

How: Invite group members to draw animal faces on blown-up balloons. The same face should be drawn on two sides of the balloon, and large enough to be identified during the game. Campers should explain the animal they have drawn. Then, have group members bounce one balloon in the air and see how many times they can hit the balloon upward before it touches the floor. Every time someone taps the balloon, they have to make the sound of the animal. Then, introduce more and more balloons until you have a cacophony of animal noises!

Try This: Instead of a game, see if they can make a song, making animal noises to a familiar tune. Someone could serve as the “conductor” by hitting the balloons of each animal to keep the beat or direct the sound.

Mutual Care

LEARN SERVE

Supplies: Paper and pencils (optional: pictures of corn, bean, and squash plants).

How: Gather campers and tell them about Three Sisters gardening: this is a style of agriculture in which corn, beans, and squash are all grown alongside each other. The corn reaches tall toward the sun and provides a sturdy stalk on which the beans can wrap around and grow. The bean roots fertilize the soil with nitrogen,

which nurtures the corn and the squash. They also reinforce the corn stalk to protect against heavy winds. And the wide squash leaves provide shade to the soil, which keeps the area moist. This farming/gardening practice was and is used by many Indigenous tribes in North America, and it’s a great example of *mutual care*. The three plants take care of each other, along with a fourth family member: the human gardener who can keep watch, weed, harvest, and feast. Invite the campers to brainstorm, in pairs or as a group, ways people and parts of creation mutually care for each other and more ways people and creation can care for each other.

Try This: For young members, have them draw a picture of the three sisters planting, and then draw pictures of ways they care for others who care for them.

All God’s Creatures

PLAY

Supplies: None.

How: Select one or two campers to stand in the middle of an open space. They are Job trying to “ask” and “learn from” each animal. The rest of the campers will be lined up on one side of the space, and their goal is to get from one side to the other without being tagged by Job. Give campers a moment to choose which animal they want to be, but instruct them not to announce their animal out loud. Give some examples: fish, lion, narwhal, spider, platypus, giraffe. Then, Job calls out a description of the animal, such as: “Cross the field if you have fur,” or “cross the field if you live under water.” Then, any camper whose animal fits the description must run to the other side. If they are tagged, they become a tree—they cannot move their feet away from where they are tagged, but they can stretch out their arms and try to tag running campers in subsequent rounds.

Try This: On a hot day, consider using water balloons to tag players from a distance instead of running.

Guessing Game

PLAY

Supplies: Slips of paper and writing utensils.

How: Invite campers to write various animals on slips of paper. Then, each camper can take a turn pulling a piece of paper from a hat and describe the animal, which everyone else tries to guess. The first clue must be an emotion or an adjective. For example, someone might describe a lion as “brave” or a koala as “sleepy.” If a second clue is needed, it can be the animal’s habitat,

such as “swamp,” “ocean,” or “desert.” Finally, the third clue can be a physical characteristic, such as “furry,” “orange,” or “shiny.” Whoever guesses correctly gets to read the next slip of paper. You can adapt the rules based on the ability of your group.

Try This: For a no-supplies version of this activity, participants can simply make up an animal when it’s their turn to be the describer.

Story Interviews

LEARN

Supplies: None

How: Read Job 12:7-10, then have a brief open discussion about what it means to listen: to listen to the natural world, to listen to yourself, and to listen to those around you. Invite campers to think about what we can learn, and teach others; and share their thoughts as they feel comfortable. Divide campers into two groups, with younger campers in one group and older campers in the other group. One group will form a circle facing out, and the other will form a larger circle facing in. Each person should face a partner. Explain that one camper will answer a question while the other listens carefully. Then, they will switch roles. Encourage campers to listen and not interrupt each other. After both campers have answered a question, have the outer circle step to the right to face a new partner. Some prompt ideas:

- Tell me about your favorite part of being the age that you are right now.
- Tell me about your favorite experience in school, past or present.
- What is one thing you wish you could know about someone older or younger?
- What is one piece of advice you would offer your younger self, or what is one thing you hope for the *you* of the future?

Try This: Debrief the activity as a group, with questions such as:

- What did you most enjoy sharing about yourself?
- What is one thing you learned about a partner?
- What did it feel like to listen actively?
- Did you learn anything important that you will take with you after camp ends?

Categories Prayer PRAY

Supplies: Slips of paper, pens, and paper.

How: Have participants come up with categories of prayer. These can be broad categories, such as “prayers of thanksgiving” or “prayers for justice,” and they can also be specific categories, such as “prayers for tomorrow at camp” or “prayers to say at breakfast tomorrow.” Write the categories on slips of paper and place them in a bowl. Divide campers into pairs or groups of three. Select a slip of paper randomly and then choose a letter (either on your own as activity leader, or through random selection such as pulling a tile from a Scrabble box). Invite the camper groups to create a prayer in each category that starts with the letter. For example, for “R” / “Breakfast tomorrow,” campers might pray for the *rain* that grows the food that ends up on their plate. Have campers write their prayers on paper, and after all categories have been read, invite them to share their favorite with the group.

Try This: Go through the whole alphabet (minus letters like X and Z), then combine everyone’s prayers into one long prayer that can be read before bed, or on the last night of camp.

Story Resources

PBS Kids for Parents: Science Development for Kids:

<https://to.pbs.org/46AYETp>

Bill Nye: Home Demos

<https://www.billnye.com/home-demos>

These databases of fun and safe science experiments for kids/families invite participants deeper into the natural world. There are experiments for a wide range of ages, many of which have minimal required supplies and can be completed in a short time block. One of the daily goals for today is for campers to “listen for the wisdom of wilderness, allowing this sacred space to teach us,” which is one way of doing science! Encourage camper curiosity today by having them explore God’s scientific creation.