

Story Resources

(Movies, Books, and Links)

This section provides ideas for additional storytelling resources along with some extra tools for exploring daily themes. Some of these are children's storybooks or movies while others are recommended as tools for leaders. It is recommended that you read through the list and imagine how you might use any resource before making a purchase. InsideOut has no relationship with the publishers on this list other than the one Chalice Press book listed. These are simply recommendations from our writers and leadership team to help equip your camp. You will find age-specific recommendations from this list at the end of each day's Daily Activities.

Day 1

All the Colors of the Earth, By Sheila Hamanaka (Harper Collins, 1994)

This picture book highlights the differences between us, as well as fantasy travel to different locations. God loves us all; we are all wonderfully made!

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day, By Judith Viorst (Simon & Schuster, 1972)

Alexander is having a day where everything goes wrong. Much like a day when we might wonder if God is watching, helping us, and loving us. After reading the book, discuss where God might be in Alexander's Day, and how God might be present, even when we don't feel like he is there.

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day (Disney, 2014)

A movie version of the picture book, chronicling Alexander's very hard day.

Where the Wild Things Are, By Maurice Sendak (Harper & Row, 1963)

After a tough day at home, Max uses his imagination to travel to an imaginary world. He decides to return home when he wants to feel loved.

Where the Wild Things Are (Warner Brothers, 2009)

A movie version of the picture book, where Max uses his imagination to travel to a fantasy location after a hard day at home.

"Where Can I Go- Psalm 139 By Ellie Holcomb (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eb2mpkdhRHM>)

This beautiful song is a close rendition of the bible verse for today, Psalm 139: 7-14.

Where the Wild Things Are, Maurice Sendak: A boy named Max finds himself in a wilderness experience after some decisions made at home go awry. In this wilderness, he must navigate new realities before he can return to something more familiar. Campers could explore the theme of wilderness with a (likely) familiar story, asking questions like: Do we make our wilderness or does it find us? How do we navigate the unfamiliar? Are we alone as we do?

Moana (Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures, 2016): A young girl named Moana must brave the ocean to save her island and the world by restoring the heart of nature. Along the way, she develops a connection with the spirit of her ancestors and discovers her life purpose. With the help of her friend Maui, Moana is able to save nature and her home. This film can be used to discuss fear of the wilderness and the beauty of the unknown.

I Am God's Dream (Matthew Paul Turner, Convergence Books 2022): This children's book is a reminder of the unique beauty and strength of each person and how God celebrates the diversity of all God's people. While it is written for younger readers, it has a message and positivity worth revisiting.

Star Wars: Episode IV - A New Hope (Lucasfilm 1977): The movie that started the epic Star Wars saga with its prequels and sequels, Star Wars Episode IV introduces us to the characters of Luke Skywalker, Obi Wan Kenobi, Leia Organa, Darth Vader, and all the other characters that are now so well-loved. Another "character" introduced in this film is The Force, the powerful energy woven throughout the universe that gives the Jedi their power. The Force is in all things and with the Jedi no matter where they are. This may provide a helpful comparison to get campers talking about how God is with us no matter how lonesome our wildernesses may feel.

When God Made the World, by Matthew Paul Turner

This children's book creatively explores God's creative process in making the world and all its inhabitants. It encourages readers to see themselves as existing in community with plants, animals, and each other. Read this story at bedtime or worship to celebrate that all are wonderfully and marvelously made!

Day 2

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Day 3

Piper, Disney Pixar 2018 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WIPV1iwzrzg>

An animated short film showing the brave journey of a baby sandpiper as they learn to leave the nest. The theme of a journey and bravery fits in well with Exodus 13:17-22.

Sheila Rae the Brave, By Kevin Henkes

Sheila Rae takes pride in being brave until she gets lost, and her sister guides her home.

Finding Nemo, Disney Pixar 2003

A clown fish named Marlin goes on an epic quest, leaving the only home he has ever known, to find his son, Nemo.

Up (Pixar 2009): An old man and a young boy accidentally embark on a journey together. As they encounter new challenges, they learn more about each other's stories, and they find frustration, comfort, and help in each other's presence. Each discovers that they are not alone on their journey and that guidance and hope are there if they seek it.

"The Beatitudes: From Slavery to Civil Rights" by Carole Boston Weatherford: picks up on the theme that God is always with us, even in the hard stuff.

Frozen 2 (Walt Disney Studios Pictures 2019):

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

The Sound of Music (20th Century Studios & Argyle Enterprises 1965):

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

The Prince of Egypt (DreamWorks Pictures 1998):

Animated version of the Exodus story that helps fill in the gaps for campers who don't know the overall story arc of Moses, Pharaoh, Aaron, Miriam, and the Israelites. Plus, some catchy songs that might be applicable for worship and prayer times!

Underground Railroad Quilt Codes, by Marie Claire Bryant on Smithsonian Center for Folklife at Si.edu, May 3, 2019.

In God's Name, by Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso

This picture book comes from a Jewish context, which is an important perspective to engage with on a day centered on a Hebrew Bible passage. This particular story is about God's many names, which pairs well with today's Exodus story, in which God appears as both a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire. Explore some of the diverse names of God and come up with your own!

Day 4

Owl Moon By Jane Yolen

A young girl follows her dad through the woods to go owling. The girl has strong faith in her father and carefully follows all the directions she has been given.

Toy Story, Disney Pixar 1995

This is a story of friendship and believing in your friend. The song "You've Got a Friend in Me" from the same movie also discusses the strong bond of friendship.

What Do You Do With an Idea?, Kobi Yamada/Mae

Besom: Sometimes, sharing an idea gets a person mocked or ridiculed, but the idea is still there. It takes courage and time (and sometimes some help!) to take the bold steps to help an idea become a reality, but once it does, it's a whole new world.

Frozen (Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures,

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

Finding Nemo (Pixar 2003): This animated film is an excellent metaphor for stepping into the unknown. Nemo leaves the safety of home, Marlin (his father) learns to let go and trust, and Dory’s mantra—“*Just keep swimming*”—echoes the persistence and courage needed in scary, uncharted waters. It offers opportunities to talk about fear, trust, community, and growth. While this movie is designed for younger audiences, older youth can still relate to the themes.

The Book Thief (20th Century Fox, 2013) This is the story of a young girl who braves Nazi oppression in WW2 by reading books they want burned. She is living with a foster family, knows of a family hiding a Jewish person, and other challenges. It’s a good story of stepping out into the unknown. Based on a novel by the same name.

The Empire of the Sun (Warner Bros. 1987) This is a great Steven Spielberg story of a young boy in Shanghai during WW2 who is separated from his parents and sent to a Japanese confinement camp. It’s a story of being thrust into the unknown and how the boy maintains his spirit and hope throughout. Great discussion about how sometimes we don’t choose to leave the boat of safety, we get thrown out, and how does God show up for us in those times?

Picturing God, by Ruth Goring

A charming, collage-illustrated picture book that explores diverse images of God, leaning especially on images pulled from the natural world. Today, we’ve learned to associate God with water, and this story can invite a discussion on all the many ways we experience God’s presence.

Day 5

The Story of Ruby Bridges by Robert Cole

This children’s book details the experience of Ruby Bridges, a student at the beginning of school integration in 1960. Ruby bravely attended school as the only black child in a white school. Good to explore the themes of being brave.

Tyrone the Horrible by Hans Wilhelm

A small dinosaur named Boland finds the strength to speak up against a bully.

Speak Up, Molly Lou Melon by Patty Lovell

Molly Lou Melon tells the truth and sticks up for her friends.

The Who Was? Show, Episode 1—Ghandi and Benjamin Franklin (Netflix, 2018): Short episode describing the lives and achievements of two very different people who both found ways to speak truth to power, at great risk.

Wish (Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures 2023): A young girl named Asha sets out to become the next King’s apprentice so she can help make the wishes of her kingdom come true. However, she learns that the King is hiding a dark secret from the kingdom. In desperation, Asha wishes on a star. The star falls from the sky and works with Asha to save her kingdom and make her wish come true.

Hidden Figures (20th Century Fox, 2016): Tells the true story of Black women mathematicians at NASA who overcame racism and sexism to play a vital role in the space race. Like Esther, they spoke up and took action in unjust systems—using their voices, intelligence, and courage.

The Lorax, by Dr. Seuss: While the animated movie is also an option, books often work better at camp, and this 1971 classic takes readers and listeners on a journey from paradise, through “progress”, to the consequences of greed and neglect. The Lorax ends with a hopeful seed planting and is open-ended as to what tomorrow might bring.

“First They Came,” a poem by Lutheran pastor Martin Niemöller

First they came for the Communists
 And I did not speak out
 Because I was not a Communist
 Then they came for the Socialists
 And I did not speak out
 Because I was not a Socialist
 Then they came for the trade unionists
 And I did not speak out

Because I was not a trade unionist
 Then they came for the Jews
 And I did not speak out
 Because I was not a Jew
 Then they came for me
 And there was no one left
 To speak out for me.

[Text pulled from Holocaust Memorial Day Trust]

Use this poem in connection with today's Bible passage.

Esther is almost tempted not to speak out for her people, but Mordecai reminds her: "Don't think for one minute that, unlike all the other Jews, you'll come out of this alive simply because you are in the palace." He knows what Martin Niemöller knows too: there are no distinct categories between "us" and "them." What happens to our neighbor will circle around and happen to us too, so we want to speak out until *everyone* lives in the conditions that we want ourselves to live in. Brainstorm other groups that could be featured in a poem like this if it were written today. Walk through the journey of a refugee learning how to survive in a new place.

Day 6

Inside Out, Disney Pixar 2015

This Disney movie focuses on emotions. It identifies a variety of emotions and normalizes all feelings. It can also be used to talk about how people can help each other.

Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn

Chester Raccoon is scared to go to school. His mother helps him to feel better in the moment and even later, when Chester feels worried or scared.

Are You My Neighbor? Big Idea Productions 1995.

Veggie Tales retelling of the Good Samaritan story and the idea that everyone is our neighbor and can be a friend. Also available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=g1QltU8XcKQ>

The Day the Crayons Quit, Drew DayWalt: Each of the crayons in the box has a reason to change the system created by the boy who colors with them, and they have each written a letter stating their case. Multiple perspectives are presented and considered, in a silly and outside of the crayon box way of looking at peaceful, systemic change. evening.

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

The Other Side, Jacqueline Woodson: This beautifully illustrated picture book tells the story of two girls - one Black, one white - divided by a fence. It is a story about boundaries, compassion, and choosing connection over division, and can be a great conversation starter for considering "who is my neighbor?"

Burrow (Pixar SparkShorts)

This short film emphasizes themes of community, care, and the importance of relying on others for help. Watch it if the rain brings you indoors today, or as a planned after-dinner showing with fun movie snacks and desserts.

Wild Robot, (Dreamworks, 2024) - This story of a service robot, dropped off in the woods, reminds us that we all make mistakes and have room to grow, but that we also need to work as a community to change the world around us when it becomes destructive.



Day 7

Harold and the Purple Crayon, Crockett Johnson

Harold uses his purple crayon to create imaginary plans, so he has places to go and can be successful, much like God plans for us!

Feast (Pixar 2023): In this short film, a stray puppy finds himself the lucky adoptee of a man and thinks he has it made. As the man's life changes, so does the puppy's, and he finds that sometimes plans change, but it's not always a bad thing, and he's never alone.

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

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind (Netflix 2019):

A true story about hope and resilience in the face of adversity and famine. This film powerfully depicts faith, creativity, and perseverance.

Oh, the Places You'll Go, by Dr. Seuss: This classic book describes the journey, the wildernesses, and multiple destinations that await all campers as they return home and face the future.