

Reflecting with Nature a Journey Through Lent

Based on Wild Lent by Rachel Summers



Introduction

Lent is a time for taking stock and reflecting on our lives as we move towards Easter. During this pandemic year there has been more time for reflection and many of us have taken solace in our gardens and the beauty of the countryside around us. It, therefore, seems as though some themed reflection using Creation as a steppingstone may be useful.

It is sometimes useful to use the analogy of a journey through reflections so that thoughts might build upon one another and lead to an end point. With this in mind, each week of Lent is linked to a different part of a journey. Each week will start with a theme for reflection and then give two activities to try whilst reflecting.

The activities can all be undertaken by adults and children alike and approached in the spirit of reflection or simply enjoyed as a way to connect to nature.

It is, however, a chance to reflect on things that are meaningful, supportive and important. A chance for discovery and surprise, a chance to deepen, glimpse or begin a relationship with God through the power, beauty, diversity and wonder of our weather and the natural world around us.

You may find it useful to start or end each activity with a short prayer.

Week 1: Starting Points

As we start our journey take time to reflect where you are now, what is important to take with you, what might you set down and leave behind that might be holding you back.



Leaf Collecting: Go for a walk around a wood or your garden and collect as many different shaped leaves as possible. Study their size, shape, feel, smell and colour. You may want to create a picture from them or prints using paint or bashing them between cotton cloth.

Cloud Watching: Spend time in the garden, on a walk or out of the window watching the clouds and reflecting on their shape, the way they move, their size and colour and absorbing the expanse of sky bringing life into perspective.

Week 2: Getting Ready

What will we need for our journey? What will make a difference but not be too large to weigh us down? Reflect on potential and opportunity. How can this be nurtured? Is it through busyness or stillness or a mixture of both? What is practical in the time we have?



Photograph Details: Use your phone or camera to take some close-up pictures of things in nature, such as a raindrop on a leaf, the texture of bark or a unfurling leaf or petal. Look closely, make decisions and spot the beauty.

Go for a senses walk: Notice the sounds, smells, colours and textures around you on your walk. Take time to stop and listen, notice and feel. Sometimes small things make a big difference.

Week 3: Setting Off

Spend time reflecting on the influences that shape and change you. How do you travel best and what helps and sustains you along the way? What helps you to stay positive and travel with an open and curious mind?



Spring Hunt: Go for a walk or amble round the garden and look for signs of spring. You may like to photograph or sketch. Take the time to share with someone else what you have discovered.

Wild Weaving: Find a stick with a fork in it and wind wool around it to create a loom. Then search for grasses, leaves, stalks etc to weave through the wool. Take it home and photograph it as a keepsake of your reflection time.

Week 4: Journeying On

Reflect on your family, friends and community. What nurtures and nourishes us and how we may be able to give and receive. Consider the challenges, beauty and surprises in life. How can we cherish them all?

Take One Stick: Find an interesting stick and spend some time looking at it closely and trying to imagine what made the blemishes, bumps and scars on it, reflecting on the life of the stick while you reflect on your own life journey.

Spend time with a tree: Find a tree to study. Look closely at its branches and bark, its silhouette and any leaves or buds. Stand close to it and touch it, lean against it or sit under it and look out at the view from the tree. Ponder on the roots and how, science has shown, that trees support each other by communicating through mycelium networks and carbon.



Week 5: Overcoming Obstacles.

Reflect on similarities and difference. What gifts and talents do we have to enable us to overcome challenge? How might we enhance these and complement others gifts to work together? How might we reconcile a change of pathway or delay?



How Many Greens: Prepare a card with double sided tape and hunt for as many different types of greens as you can from plants, grasses and leaves. Stick small pieces on the tape to create a rainbow of shades of green.

Barefoot Walk: Walk in your garden with bare feet. Notice the different textures of the surfaces you find there, the temperature changes. Expose your feet to whatever the journey brings. Does it help to walk slowly or quickly on tip toe or on the sides of your feet. Think of the vulnerability of your feet but also the sensory delight that the exercise brings.

Week 6: Journeys End

Reflect on what makes you feel at home, connected, content and fulfilled. How might you treasure and act upon the memories of the journey?



Sow Seeds: Sow some seeds broadcast or throw a seed bomb in your garden or village, reflect that where the seeds land that will be their home, which may be many miles from where they were produced. You may like to make seed bombs as alternative Easter gifts by rolling wildflower seeds in a ball of mud.

Sunrise Breakfast Walk: Get up early and walk near your house as the sun rises starting to look forward to the new day and the new season. Have breakfast outside, feeling the sun warm you and the breeze on your skin. Reflect on any altered perspectives that you may have had.

Lord, as my journey tips me towards you,
I give thanks for the beauty around me that
Your love brings into focus. May my life reflect
Your love and light to others. Amen