

Praying With the Senses

Nature Walk



Seeing God's Gifts: Arboretum Trail

*Start this leg of your walk by simply asking God to help you to experience God's presence in the beauty that you see.

*Thank God for your ability to see, and then stand still for a few moments taking a few deep breaths to clear your head and engage your body.

*Begin to walk at a comfortable pace

* Concentrate on everything that you see and let go of any other thoughts or sensations that pop into your head.

"Notice the sky and it's shades of blue, gray, white. Notice the trees. How many colors of green are there? Do you see any buds or flowers on the trees?" Notice the plants and the flowers. What color are the blossoms, the stems, the leaves? "Are there any insects—flies, beetles, mosquitoes?" Do you see any other critters or evidence of critters—footprints, feathers, scat? "Look in all directions. Look up close, out to the horizon, and between the trees. Search out small details— the veins in a leaf, the wings on a dragonfly. Survey the broad picture: the hills in the distance, the clouds at the skyline. Keep walking until you feel the Holy Spirit nudging you" on to the next trail and into the next experience.

*Remind yourself that God has given you all of these treasures as signs of God's love; imagine the joy God feels showing them to you.

Psalm 8:4-10

When I see your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and stars that you set in place-What are humans that you are mindful of them, mere mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them little less than a god, crowned them with glory and honor... O Lord, our Lord, how awesome is your name through all the Earth.

Hearing God's Gifts: Arbury Trail

- *Start this leg of your walk by simply asking God to help you to experience God's presence in all that you hear.
- *Thank God for your ability to hear, and then stand still for a few moments taking a few deep breaths to clear your head and to engage your body.
- *Begin to walk at a comfortable pace.
- *Concentrate on everything that you hear and let go of any other thoughts or sensations that pop into your head.

“Can you hear birds? How many different kinds of calls can you hear?” Do you hear the sounds of frogs/toads croaking or insects humming? “Are there other animal sounds— a dog barking,” a snake slithering, a fish swimming or making bubbles? Can you hear water flowing? “Can you hear children playing or people laughing or talking with each other? How about air traffic, or vehicle noise” like lawnmowers, cars, an ambulance? “Keep walking until you feel the Holy Spirit nudging you” on to the next trail and into the next experience.

- *Remind yourself that despite all of the sounds and noise in the world, God hears you whenever you call out.”

Psalm 86:1-7

Hear me Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and oppressed. Preserve my life, for I am loyal; Save your servant who trusts in you. You are my God; pity me, Lord, to you I call all the day. Gladden the soul of your servant; to you, Lord, I lift up my soul. Lord, you are kind and forgiving, most loving to all who call on you. Lord, hear my prayer; listen to my cry for help. In this time of trouble I call, for you will answer me.

Touching God's Gifts: Meadow Mouse Trail

*Start this leg of your walk by simply asking God to help you to experience God's presence in all that you touch.

*Thank God for your ability to feel, and then stand still for a few moments taking a few deep breaths to clear your head and engage your body.

*Begin to walk at a comfortable pace taking time to touch things along the way.

*Concentrate on everything that you touch and let go of any other thoughts or sensations that pop into your head.

"Can you feel a gentle breeze on your face or a stronger wind? Is sunshine warming you or is rain tickling your skin? Is the surface upon which you are walking hard like pavement or soft like grass? Look down and pick up any item that might be at your feet— a pebble, a leaf, a stick. Gently pick it up and hold it in your hand. Roll it between your fingers, sensing its texture, shape, detail. Try to feel your feet connect with the ground beneath you. Notice as your heels touch first and concentrate as the rest of your foot connects with the sturdy ground. Concentrate on each step and on the subtle differences in the terrain. Even when it's irregular, notice how the ground is solid and reliable."

*Remind yourself that God is sturdy and reliable and will not let you down.

Psalm 91:1-12

You who dwell in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, Say to the Lord, "my refuge and fortress, my God in whom I trust" ... God's faithfulness is a protecting shield. You shall not fear the terror of the night nor the arrow that flies by day... No evil shall befall you, no affliction come near your tent. For He commands the angels to guard you in all your ways. With their hands they shall support you, lest you strike your foot against a stone.

Tasting and Smelling God's Gifts: Sugar Bush Trail

*Start this leg of your walk by simply asking God to help you to experience God's presence in all that you smell/taste.

*Thank God for your ability to taste and smell, and then stand still for a few moments taking a few deep breaths to clear your head and engage your body.

*Begin to walk at a comfortable pace with your mouth slightly opened and with your tongue touching the back of your teeth. For this portion of the walk breathe through your mouth and nose, allowing each fragrance to evoke a taste.

*Concentrate on everything that you smell/taste and let go of any other thoughts or sensations that pop into your head.

Do you smell city smells like exhaust or tar? Are there smells of other people around you— perfumes, laundry soap, sweat? Are there country smells around you – hay, freshly mown grass, flowers, manure? Do any of these smells have a distinct “taste” to them? Are they sweet or bitter or earthy tastes?

*Remind yourself that no earthly taste, scent, food, pleasure can fill your heart's deep longing for God.

Psalm 42:2-6

As the deer longs for streams of water, so my soul longs for you, O God. My being thirsts for God, the living God. When can I go and see the face of God? My tears have been my food day and night, as they ask daily, “where is your god?” ... Wait for God, whom I shall praise again, my savior and my God.