

## Prayer Walk

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When I ask adults in my congregation when they feel the presence of God most clearly, I often hear things such as “while hiking,” or “when the sun sets,” or “in nature.” So often when we consider the wonders of God, we see evidence of God’s creative power in snowfall, or rain, or wind. This prayer practice involves walking in nature and noticing the marvels of God’s creation.

### **Designed for Ages 5+**

#### **Materials**

(All of these materials are optional)

1. Paper bag, basket, or other container for collecting interesting things
2. Magnifying glass
3. Binoculars
4. Camera
5. Sketch pad and pencil or crayons
6. Any materials that you need on a hike (sunscreen, bug spray, sunglasses, lunch, etc.)

**Time Investment:** 30 minutes—2 hours or more

#### **How To**

1. Pick a day and location appropriate for a walk or hike outside.
2. Prepare for your walk and take with you items that are relevant for your context and weather conditions.

3. Introduce the idea of a prayer walk to your family by saying, “*We are going to go for a walk now to think about all of the special ways that we can see the work of God in the world around us.*”

4. Choose a way your family might decide to identify how you see God on your walk. Some options:

a. Collect items along the way that seem meaningful and put them in a bag or basket (if appropriate; many parks and nature reserves don’t allow the removal of any living things, so only take things such as leaves already lying on the ground, etc.).

b. Encourage everyone to take photos of places where there is evidence of God’s work.

c. Draw sketches.

d. Write poems.

5. After the walk, gather together to share what you have learned by sharing your photos, drawings, and/or paintings.

### **Notes**

- Consider doing this prayer walk, not only on a sunny or pleasant day, but also on days that are rainy, “too hot,” “too cold,” or otherwise not ideal. These imperfect days offer a rich opportunity to see evidence of God’s work in ways that might not be apparent on other days.
- This activity will vary greatly depending on the interests and activities of family members. Consider allowing each family member to pick out the ways that he or she sees God’s work. One person might photograph, while another collects things, and yet another sketches.

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### **Variations**

- Do this prayer walk inside at a unique location: a mall, church, etc. Take the same walk and travel the same route over a period of time (one time per month for a year, for example), and compare how observations change over time.
- Travel to a special location for the purpose of this practice. Try different national parks, or local parks and trails.