

Nature and prayer



Bible verses:

Psalm 121

A song for going up to worship



Aim:

To see nature as a help to praying in private



Today's session provides the children with an opportunity to consider the wonderful world God has made.

They will look at and create images of God's creation and consider how connecting with nature can be a way to connect with God.

Each child will need:

- Resources to create a nature picture
- Pens/pencils and paper
- *Explore it ideas* handout

You will need:

- *Psalm 121* poster – you may wish to enlarge to A3
- *God's creation* PDF / PowerPoint presentation



Start it

We're going to start our *Explore it* session today by diving into God's creation. The clip we're about to watch is filled with examples of the many different parts of the world God made. As you watch, look out for your favourite image to share with the rest of the group.

Video

The magnificent beauty of nature (Adiemus) by Eredus (3:56)

When the clip has finished, encourage the group to share their favourite part and why they liked it.

Sing it

Say:

Before we discover what the rest of the Psalm 121 has to say, let's share our memory verses together.

Memory verse

**'I look up to the hills.
But where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord.
He made heaven and earth.'**

(Psalm 121:1-2 *ICB*)

Say:

In our first session we started learning a song based around Psalm 121. We're going to sing the song again today. Notice the creative way the clip displays the words of this beautiful Psalm.

Song

'Psalm 121' by The Corner Room (4:18)

Tell it

Say:

In our session today we are going to spend time exploring the rest of Psalm 121. We have already learned the first two verses, but let's read the rest of the Psalm together.

Display the Psalm 121 poster for the children to read together and refer back to it as you work through the discussion questions.

Read:

**'I look up to the hills.
But where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord.
He made heaven and earth.
He will not let you be defeated.
He who guards you never sleeps.
He who guards Israel
never rests or sleeps.
The Lord guards you.
The Lord protects you as the shade protects you from the sun.'**



The sun cannot hurt you during the day.
And the moon cannot hurt you at night.
The Lord will guard you from all dangers.
He will guard your life.
The Lord will guard you as you come and go,
both now and for ever.'

(Psalm 121 *ICB*)

Say:

Verse 1 of this Psalm asks the question, 'Where does my help come from?' The psalmist, the writer of the psalm, points to God – the maker of Heaven and Earth – as the main person who helps them and supports them.

Discuss:

- Where does your help come from?
- Who are the people that love and support you?
- Who are the people you can trust?
- In what ways does God help us in our everyday lives?

Say:

The hills mentioned in Psalm 121 refer to those that surround the city of Jerusalem where the writer of the psalm lived. They are asking for help from the one who made the amazing hills surrounding the city.

Read:

**'He will not let you be defeated.
He who guards you never sleeps.
He who guards Israel
never rests or sleeps.'**

(Psalm 121 *ICB*)

Ask:

- Does the person who wrote this psalm sound like they are facing danger or trouble? If so, what in their psalm makes you think that?
- Do they sound worried? If not, why not?

Say:

The person who wrote this psalm knew that, whatever trouble they faced, the maker of the whole world could be trusted to be with them.

Read:

**'The Lord guards you.
The Lord protects you as the shade protects you from the sun.'**

The sun cannot hurt you during the day.
And the moon cannot hurt you at night.
The Lord will guard you from all dangers.
He will guard your life.
The Lord will guard you as you come and go,
both now and forever.'

(Psalm 121:5-8 ICB)



Ask:

- In what ways do these words make you feel safe and secure?
- Have you ever spent time in nature praying to God? Is it something you would like to try? If so, why, and how could you make it happen?
- How can looking at God's creation help us to pray to him?

Say:

Instead of feeling worried and afraid, the psalmist looks at God's creation as a reminder of his greatness. Creation is a signpost to an amazing God, who has made all things perfect for us to enjoy living on this amazing Earth.

Action it

Say:

Let's have another look at the psalm. It is filled with wonderful examples of God's creation. To connect with God, the psalmist looks to nature, and that's what we're going to do today.

Use whatever media you have available to give the children an opportunity to create their own nature picture. A *God's creation* PDF / PowerPoint presentation is provided as a starting point for ideas, and you can always refer back to the clip used in the Start it section.

Encourage the children to choose a picture that reminds them how amazing God is, and how he can always be trusted. You could even ask them to finish the sentence, 'I look up to the ...' to find an example of an image in nature that fills them with confidence that God can be trusted.

Pray it

Say:

For our prayer time today we are going to take a moment to rest in God's presence.

Encourage the children to have a moment of peace and quiet as they listen to the words of Psalm 121. Depending on your group and the space available, ask the children to sit or lay down in a comfortable space. Invite them to close their eyes and listen carefully to the words of the

song. The song is just over five minutes long, so feel free to fade the music if you spot that members of the group are getting restless.

When the music stops, read Psalm 121 to bring the session to a close.

Listen

'Psalm 121 (I lift my eyes)' Live – Kristyn Getty, Jordan Kauflin, Matt Merker uploaded by KeithandKrityn (5:11)

Explore it

Remember to send home the *Explore it ideas* for children and families.



Explore it is produced by the Children and Youth Department in collaboration with Kay Moorby (soulwithaview)

Nature and prayer

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



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Psalm 121

A song for going up to worship



Aim:

To see nature as a help to praying in private



Discover

Create a picture using examples of nature in your local environment. It could be as simple as a leaf from a house plant or a huge tree in your local park.

Write the second verse of Psalm 121 at the bottom of the picture as a reminder that God is always there to help you.

**'My help comes from the Lord.
He made heaven and earth.'**

(Psalm 121:2 ICB)



Relax

Ask someone at home to join you for a nature walk. Take time on the walk to notice the wonders of God's creation or pray together.



Memory verse

**'I look up to the hills.
But where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord.
He made heaven and earth.'**

(Psalm 121:1-2 ICB)



Song for the week

'Psalm 121' by The Corner Room

**LIVING
OUT FAITH**

Nature and prayer

**Bible verses:**

Psalm 121

A song for going up to worship

**Aim:**

To notice that the natural world is beautiful



Memory verse

'I look up to the hills.**But where does my help come from?****My help comes from the Lord.****He made heaven and earth.'**(Psalm 121:1-2 *ICB*)

Start it

What we see or hear around us can help us pray by thanking God for it.



Tell it

Share a child-friendly version of Psalm 121.

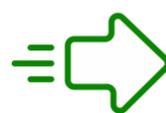
Sit in a circle and ask the group to share together:

- How many senses do you have and what do they do?
- What makes a poem so special? Today we have a poem called a psalm.
- How high have you ever climbed?
- Would you like to reach the top of Mount Everest one day?
- Imagine if you had no shade from the Sun. What would happen?

- I wonder what it would be like to visit the Moon?
- I wonder if you have ever thanked God for making the world?



Sing It

'Shine!' (From the inside out) by Nick Jackson uploaded by Tangy Crayfish (2:20)**'Holy Spirit' for children** by Aji and her friends. Sing only the chorus (0:44-1:15)

Action it

Games and activities to reinforce the Bible passage:

- look out of the window or go outside, and thank God for something you see, hear, taste, touch or smell
- collect things that you want to thank God for
- read any poem and remember that Psalms are poems
- find a picture of Mount Everest and pretend you are climbing it
- imagine you are walking on the Moon - what would you bring home?