

I often think of the heavens your hands have made, and of the moon and stars you put in place. Then I ask, "Why do you care about us humans? Why are you concerned for us weaklings?" You made us a little lower than you yourself, and you have crowned us with glory and honor. ~Psalms 8:3-5 CEV

Walk the "G" trail and at the flowers where the dead fallen tree is, read:

Look at the trees, look at the birds, look at the clouds, look at the stars... and if you have eyes you will be able to see that the whole existence is joyful. Everything is simply happy. Trees are happy for no reason; they are not going to become prime ministers or presidents and they are not going to become rich and they will never have any bank balance. Look at the flowers - for no reason. It is simply unbelievable how happy flowers are. ~Osho

Notice how the lilies grow. They don't wear themselves out with work, and they don't spin cloth. But I say to you that even Solomon in all his splendor wasn't dressed like one of these. ~ Gospel of Luke 12:27 CEB

Turn right at B-R-G/D trail intersection, walk to Kite Pond and read:

Around me the trees stir in their leaves
And call out, "Stay awhile."

The light flows from their branches.

And they call again, "It's simple," they say,

"and you too have come

Into the world to do this, to go easy, to be filled, With light, and to shine."

~Mary Oliver from "When I am Among the Trees," *Thirst*, 2006.

And this, our life, exempt from public haunt, finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything. ~William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, 1599

Back at the picnic table circle read: Most high, all powerful, all good Lord!

All praise is yours, all glory, all honor, and all blessing. To you, alone, Most High, do they belong. No mortal lips are worthy to pronounce your name. Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures, especially through my lord Brother Sun, who brings the day; and you give light through him. And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendor! Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness. Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars; in the heavens you have made them bright, precious and beautiful. Be praised, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air, and clouds and storms, and all the weather, through which you give your creatures sustenance. Be praised, My Lord, through Sister Water; she is very useful, and humble, and precious, and pure. Be praised, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom you brighten the night. He is beautiful and cheerful, and powerful and strong. Be praised, my Lord, through our sister Mother Earth, who feeds us and rules us, and produces various fruits with colored flowers and herbs...Praise and bless my Lord, and give thanks, and serve him with great humility. ~Saint Francis, *Canticle of the Sun*, 1224.

Reflect on what you observed and experienced. Groups may want to share final reflections with the option of joining hands in a final moment of silence/prayer.

SELF GUIDED CONTEMPLATIVE WALK (INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP)

Begin at the circle of picnic tables.

Make the intention to experience the spirit in nature. This walk draws from several contemplative/meditative traditions. One thing that they have in common is what is called mindfulness, or concentrated observation.

The point of this kind of walking is not to get somewhere, but to walk slowly and pay attention to the walking itself. In this kind of walking you slow down, and pay close attention to the movements of your body and the feeling of contact between your feet and the earth. You can also enter a rhythm of stepping and breathing. You may find your in-breath happening when you step down with your left foot and your out-breath happening when you step down with your right foot. Depending on how fast you walk this may happen on every other step. If done in a group, walkers may enter a rhythm of walking together.

Also pay close attention to your other senses; sight, sound, and smell. Notice the varying shades of color in the grass, bushes, and trees you pass. Hear any breeze in the trees and feel it on your face. Listen for bird songs and the scurrying of animals. Smell the air and the life about you. If your thoughts wander somewhere else, gently bring them back to what you are doing and observing.

It is often easiest to feel the spirit in silence. Psalm 46:10 says, "be still and know that I am God." So keep conversation to a minimum.

Begin by reading the following:

In beauty may I walk.
All day long may I walk.
Through the returning seasons may I walk.
On the trail marked with pollen may I walk.
With grasshoppers about my feet may I walk.
With dew about my feet may I walk.
With beauty may I walk.
With beauty before me, may I walk.
With beauty behind me, may I walk.
With beauty above me, may I walk.
With beauty below me, may I walk.
With beauty all around me, may I walk.
In old age wandering on a trail of beauty, lively,
may I walk.
In old age wandering on a trail of beauty, living
again, may I walk.
It is finished in beauty.
It is finished in beauty
~Navajo Blessing Way Prayer

At the B-R-G/RG/B trail junction read:

I thank you God for this most amazing day, for
the leaping greenly spirits of trees, and for
the blue dream of sky and for everything which
is natural, which is infinite, which is yes. ~ e.e.
Cummings, XAIPE, 1950

Climb the mountains and get their good
tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as
sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow
their own freshness into you, and the storms
their energy, while cares will drop off like
autumn leaves. ~John Muir

At R-G/R/G trail fork read:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I - I
took the one less traveled by, and that has
made all the difference. ~Robert Frost,
Mountain Interval, 1920

I believe that there is a subtle magnetism
in Nature, which, if we unconsciously yield
to it, will direct us aright. ~Henry David
Thoreau, *Walking*, 1862

You, LORD, are my shepherd. I will never
be in need. You let me rest in fields of
green grass. You lead me to streams of
peaceful water, and you refresh my life.
~Psalms 23:1-3a CEV

Turn right and go to Lucky's Pond.

At Lucky's pond sit on the bench or sit on
something to keep dry. Remind yourself
(everyone) of how much a part of nature
you (they) are. Besides the basic element
of the universe, hydrogen; exploding stars
created the other elements. As the dust
from these stars coalesced, planets like
our earth formed. Hydrogen and oxygen
combined to make water. One reason to sit
next to the pond is to remind you of your
great dependence on water. Anywhere from
55% to 75% of your bodies are water. Also
consider that your food comes from the
soil that is created by the death of living
things, mainly plants that live on carbon
dioxide and sunlight, and that give off the
oxygen you breathe.

Read the following:

Shall I not have intelligence with the earth?
Am I not partly leaves and vegetable mould
myself. ~Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*,
Chapter V: *Solitude*, 1854

We are stardust
Billion year old carbon
We are golden
Caught in the devil's bargain
And we've to get ourselves back to the garden.
~Joni Mitchell, from *Woodstock*, 1969

When was the last time you spent a quiet
moment just doing nothing - just sitting and
looking at the sea, or watching the wind blowing
the tree limbs, or waves rippling on a pond, a
flickering candle or children playing in the
park? ~Ralph Marston

You are invited to enter a meditative state, to
become aware of your breathing, and to keep
your eyes gently open. Sit silently and
observantly for ten minutes. At the end of ten
minutes reflect on what was observed, perhaps
writing in a journal, or if in a group, ask others
to share what they observed in a few words.

Just before leaving the pond read:

Stardust we are
Close to divine
Stardust we are
See how we shine ~The Flower Kings, from
Stardust We Are, 1997