



*Forming faithful stewards, Caring for sacred waters*

## Faith-based Watershed Stewardship Activities for Youth and/or Adults

1) **"Ruach" Breath of God guided meditation** -- how our breath, the breath of trees, and the breath of the Creator of the Universe are all interconnected in a cycle of life. Say: Let us offer our thanksgiving for all that God provides through trees. Read this meditation SLOWLY. Read this quote from William McDonough: *If you look at a tree and think of it as a design assignment, it would be like asking you to make something that makes oxygen, sequesters carbon, fixes nitrogen, distills water, provides habitat for hundreds of species, accrues solar energy's fuel, makes complex sugars and food, changes colors with the seasons, creates microclimates, and self-replicates.* "William McDonough: Godfather of Green", WNYC Studio 360 (18 March 2008)

Let us start with our breath. Read Genesis 1:1-2 *In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.* BREATHE (pause). This wind is known in Hebrew as "Ruach" or breath of God. When we breathe we breathe in oxygen produced by plants and trees. BREATHE (pause). Every moment of every day we are "breathed" and we breathe in life-giving oxygen. BREATHE (pause). Let us take a moment in silent thanksgiving as we breathe in and out with gratitude what God has provided from trees.

2) **A Tree of Life Wall Mural** -- Need: Water-based Markers, Pastels, or Crayons, long sheet from a roll of newsprint (or sheets taped together). Create together on a long newsprint taped to a wall (with various printed images of the Tree of Life from different parts of the world). Invite participants to write their commitments to care for and preserve the Tree of Life (Gen. 2:9, 3:24). OR if Tree of Life Images are not available, invite participants to create their own!

3) **Web of Life game** -- Need: A ball of yarn and space to form a circle of 10-12 people. Excellent intergenerational Activity. See "Web of Life Activity" handout.

4) **Who's My Watershed Neighbor?** Watershed literacy activity: Look online or on a map together to trace where their local creek is. Then where it comes from, and where it's going. Ask: Who lives upstream (both human and animal life)? Who lives downstream?

5) **Body Prayer** -- Stand with feet slightly apart. Reach down saying "We are rooted like trees planted by streams of water" (Psalm 1), OR "We are rooted and grounded in love." (Ephes. 3:17), and then reach up toward the sun, source of light for life saying "We praise God, Creator of all the universe," and then arms stretch out toward one another, saying "We give thanks for this community and the whole community of Creation."

6) **Bible passages that mention Trees and/or Water** -- Option 1 (without skit): Each small group (2-4 people) is given one of the scriptures selected from "Scriptures on Trees and Water" handout (either with Bibles or copies of the scripture on paper). Ask all the groups to read their assigned scripture together and answer: What is the action or quality of God expressed by the passage, depicted by the Trees and/or Water? Option 2 (includes Option 1): Invite each small group to offer a skit or movement to express their scripture with or without words.