

ADDITIONAL CELEBRATORY EVENTS/EXERCISES

Hosanna Hiking

“Hosanna” indicates praise, but it is also a plea for salvation. The idea of a “Hosanna Hike” is intended to raise deep appreciation of earth’s many natural treasures and the need to preserve these for others, including other forms of life and future generations.

Depending on available time and resources, a weekend or a one-day hike in nature for as many members of the family as possible is a wonderful way to celebrate Earth-Keeper Day. Many publications are readily available with detailed information about hiking trails in your area, but it is also important to check on the current condition of these trails with a local publicity and/or tourist information depot. Information can also easily be Googled.

If possible, have a map available for the hiking trail. Let it become a “hallelujah map” as you mark scenic highlights along the way with a hallelujah symbol of some kind. These spots can become places of spontaneous praise, depending on the personalities of your family members. Some may be exuberant, others will be understated, and a few may even be too shy to express praise aloud. Also have “hosanna” check lists handy for each person to tick off trees, flowers, birds, insects, and other wild life they see along the way. This creates the sense of a treasure hunt for children who might complain about the effort entailed, especially if they are unused to walking long distances. It also raises awareness of the need for all God’s creatures to be appreciated, protected and preserved.

Plan in advance where you will stop for meals and try to link these to spectacular views, cool areas, or places where it will be possible to swim. A one-day hike means that family members who would struggle to carry an overnight pack can be released to walk unhindered by extra baggage. While hiking, tread lightly upon the earth, constantly holding in your consciousness the footprint that you will leave behind. Keep your meal/s simple and earth-friendly. Pay attention to the beauty and balance of nature as you walk, and talk about the significance of what you see along the way, identifying as closely as possible with the notion that your identity is shaped as an integral part of the environment you are experiencing on your hike.

When you reach your destination for your celebratory meal, pray a prayer of blessing and thanksgiving for the food that you will share, the joy of this time spent together in nature, and the preservation of the beauty surrounding you. An example is provided below.





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*Creator God,
many religious traditions honour the concept of life as a pilgrimage;
today, as we hike through the beauty of creation, we are careful of our passage,
constantly thinking of the footprints we will leave behind.
May we always be aware of the impact of our journey through life.
Help us to leave no trail of destruction and hurt, but only the promise of new life.
May we have a deep sense of common identity with the earth
that prevents us from causing injury or strife.
Bless now this meal that we share in honour and celebration of Earth-keeper Day
and open our ears, eyes, hearts and minds to the beauty of nature along the way.
Amen.*