

ADDITIONAL CELEBRATORY EVENTS/EXERCISES

Practical Picnic

Pack a simple festive meal, together with some surgical gloves, some garden tools, and large garbage bags. You might also like to include a few fold-up chairs, an umbrella, a blanket and some outdoor games for the children. Some means of cleaning your hands would be a good idea, either with wet wipes or soapy water in a container, and a towel/s.

Choose a safe public space for a family picnic, which is reasonably close to home so you don't travel too far. First allocate a time to clean-up the area, working together as a family to collect litter and possibly remove a few invasive alien species, if you have the expertise to identify these. This can be done most effectively by allocating family members to work in pairs to clear a specific area allotted to them according to age and ability.

When the work has been completed, gather the bags of rubbish together to be transported to a local tip site. It may be necessary to have a hired trailer for this purpose. Once all the litter has been loaded, surgical gloves gathered for recycling, and hands cleaned in preparation for a meal, pray a prayer of blessing on the food, the work done, the local environment in that place, and the future use of this space, especially with respect to litter and pollution (See below).

*Creator God,
there are so many beautiful places in our community,
but they've been spoilt by people using them as dumping grounds,
or carelessly littering and polluting the environment.
Today, we have helped to clean-up a small space,
but, tomorrow, people could just as carelessly spoil it all
by using it once again as a dumping ground, littering and polluting
with no thought to the consequences.
Please raise greater awareness among all people
of the need to protect the environment and to care for creation.
Help us to be aware of the impact of our own behaviour on the ecology
and to live celebratory lives as earth-keepers who are gentle and caring of the earth.
Bless the work we've done today in cleaning up this small part of your creation.
And bless the meal we are about share.
May we always be deeply appreciative of the many gifts
that you give us in nature. Amen.*

Finish up with a family picnic, making sure that all your own litter is gathered and removed, together with the rubbish collected by the family earlier in the day. Make sure that you leave only a minimal footprint and that the small footprint you leave has a positive, not a negative, impact. Drop off all the litter at an official garden refuse depot or mini-dump site before returning home.