

# Go wild in God's world and see what you can discover – church guide



CHURCHES  
COUNT ON  
*Nature*

**Is your church a haven for wildlife or would you like to encourage nature in your churchyard? In towns and cities the fastest bird in the world, a peregrine, can be seen perching on church towers, closer to the ground minibeasts are often hard at work. In rural areas wildflowers, mammals and birds are common. Green spaces around churches are often home to ancient trees which provide valuable habitats for woodpeckers, fungi, owls, hedgehogs and many other species.**

**Churches Count on Nature runs as part of Caring for God's Acre's Love Your Burial Ground week from Saturday 5th June – Sunday 13th June 2021.**

**The Swansea & Brecon CYFO Team have created a few ideas to get you started on your journey of discovery. We recommend checking the weather forecast before attempting outdoor activities and ensure that an appropriate risk assessment is completed.**



# I see - churchyard spotter sheet



**blackbird**



**hedgehog**



**daisy**



**robin**



**yew tree  
(poisonous)**



**ivy  
(poisonous)**



**bee**



**ancient  
tree**

You could share or print this spotter sheet and encourage individuals or families to look for nature in your churchyard. Remind everyone to be respectful of graves and complete an appropriate risk assessment. Encourage participants to walk slowly, stop and listen. Either tick the boxes or count the number of species seen e.g. 7 ancient trees, 10 daisies and 2 robins.

# I seek - nature scavenger hunt



leaves



pinecone



twigs



feather



lichen



Only collect items that have fallen to the ground and please don't pick wildflowers, leave them for the pollinators. Can you create some wild art or a mini nature display. Leave the items for others to discover or return them to the place that you found them.



Dandelion



# I create

## Group activity ideas



**Outdoor nature table - display natural materials outdoors on a table, rock or tree stump.**



**Create a cross using natural materials, add a circular or square border.**



**Create a mandala using natural items such as fallen leaves, pebbles, twigs or feathers.**



**Plant fruit trees, hedge plants or native wildflower seeds in the churchyard.**



# I sense - sensory walk

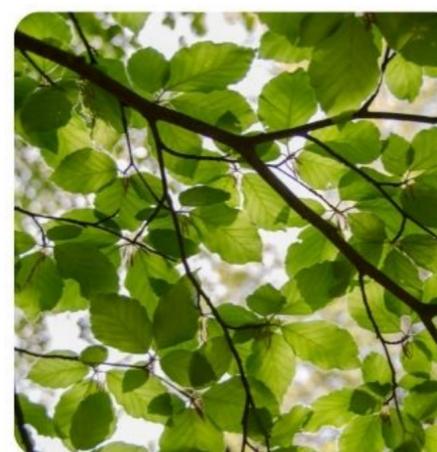
Touch



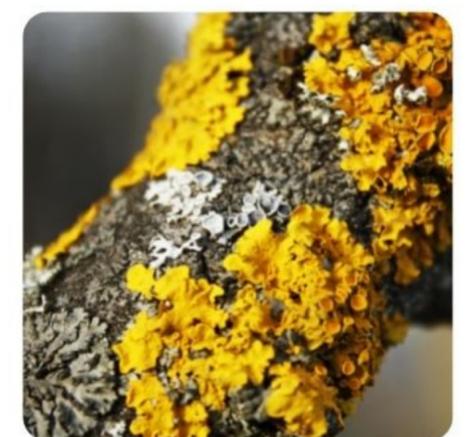
Smell



Hear



See



# I feel...Finger labyrinth

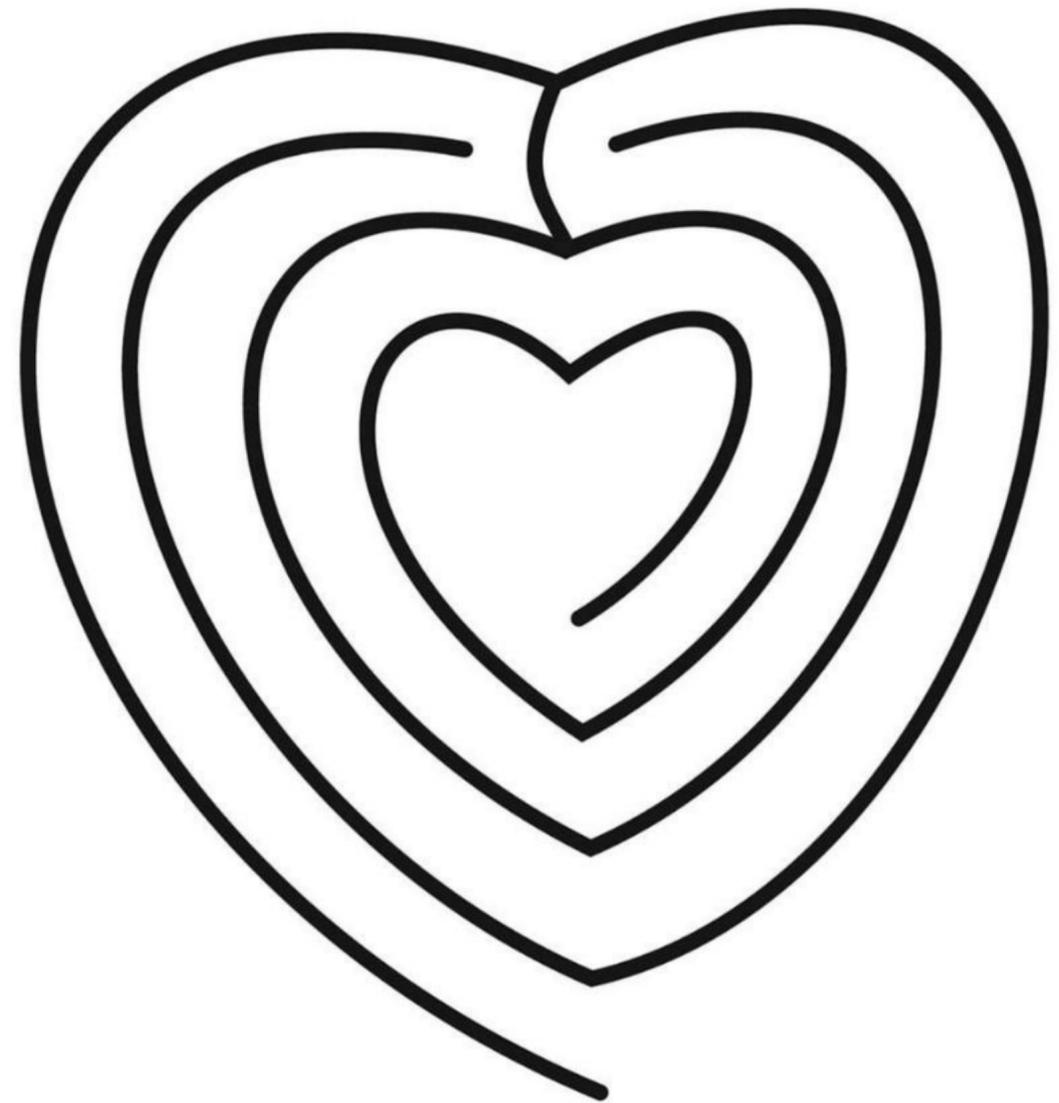
Find a quiet place where you can sit.  
Take deep breaths to relax and focus on  
the entrance of the labyrinth.

Place your pointer finger on the entrance  
of the labyrinth. Slowly trace the pattern  
of the labyrinth with your finger. Clear  
your mind of thought and focus on the  
labyrinth.

Finger walk to the centre of the labyrinth,  
rest and take deep breaths. Observe your  
breath and how you are feeling.

Retrace your path out of the labyrinth.  
Relax and breathe deeply. Observe your  
feelings.

You might like to make a labyrinth using  
stones or sticks. Try different shapes and  
sizes.



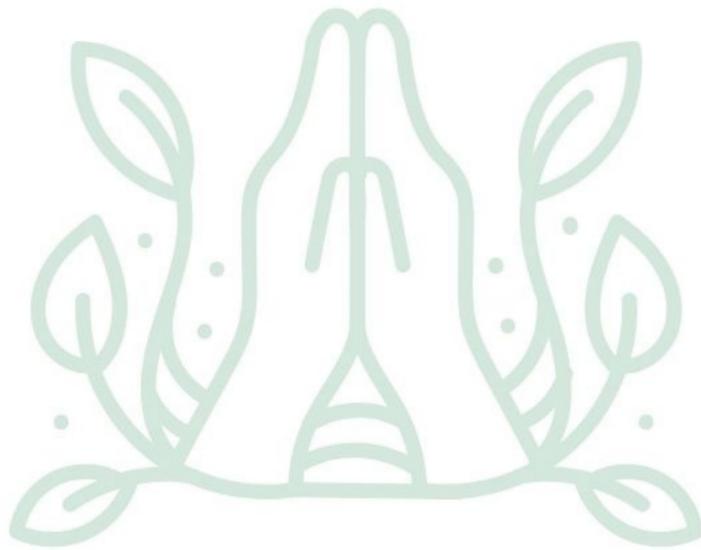
'In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord  
establishes their steps.'  
Proverbs 16:9

**If there's space in the churchyard you could try creating a large labyrinth by mowing grass, planting trees, laying sticks or stones to create a pattern. Here are a few examples.**



# I pray...God's world

God's world can bring us great joy even when we are suffering. Maybe you'd like to write your own prayer or poem. You could do this outside or inside.



**An Amazing Day**  
I thank You God for this most amazing  
day: for leaping greenly spirits of trees  
and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything  
which is natural which is infinite which is yes.

- E.E. Cummings

# Ideas

**Welcome.**

**We have come outside to remind ourselves of God's amazing creation.**



## **SONGS**

**All things bright and beautiful  
Morning has broken  
Think of a world without any flowers  
How great thou art**

## **READINGS**

**Genesis 1:11-14  
Leviticus 23:22  
Ezekiel 34:18**



## **TALK**

**During the pandemic some of us may have spent more time indoors, on social media, working longer hours or busy with home schooling. We are often rushing through our life. Take a moment to stop and look around you with new eyes. Look at natural things and remind yourself of God's creation. Take a moment to discover the veins on a leaf, the roots of a tree, the sound of birdsong, the scent of wildflowers, the touch of the wind or the brightness of the sky. Can you get closer to a nature? Maybe you could bend down or move right in for a closer look. Sometimes there is even more detail than you first realised. Tiny plants and minibeasts are delicate. Every creation is well known to our Father God and is precious to him as we are. How often do we stop to take the time to admire and respect God's creation? This world is precious and fragile.**

## **PRAYER**

**Lord of all creation, we pray for all creatures great and small. We thank you for the gifts that you have given us. Please help us to take care of the nature surrounding us. Help us to notice the small things and wonder with amazement. Help us to appreciate acts of kindness and carry them out ourselves.**

**Lord's Prayer**

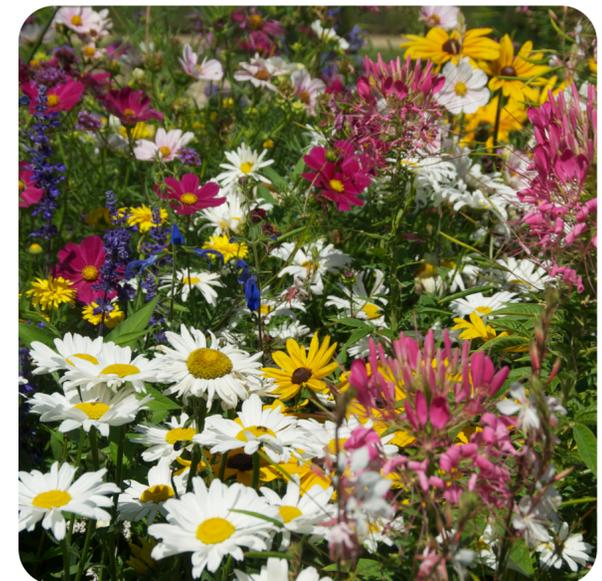
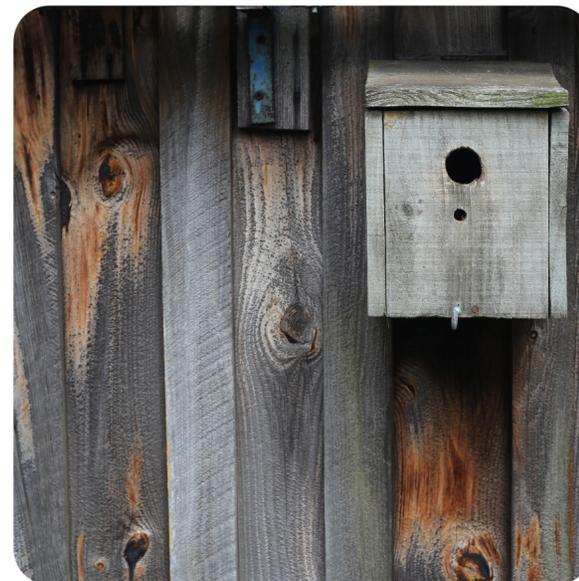


# Treasuring nature at your church



**Ancient trees are often found in churchyards, these habitats are home to birds, mammals, insects and plants. Litter can sometimes be a problem in churchyards. Why not organise a litter pick to engage your youth group, school or local families? In a recent survey carried out by the CYFO team children shared that they are passionate about their local community and the environment. Increasing amounts of litter, especially plastic is a major concern. Does your churchyard have a water butt? Rainwater harvesting is the process of collecting and storing rainwater. Water butts are a popular and inexpensive method of collecting water that could be used for watering flowers.**

**It may be helpful to display a sign on the church noticeboard or gate to ask visitors to take rubbish home with them. Posters and display boards are also a great way to engage with your local community and explain ways in which the church is working towards creating a haven for wildlife and reducing plastic waste by reusing and reducing.**



**Create a home for wildlife by making a bug hotel, putting up bird boxes, leaving logs in a pile or adding a hedgehog hideaway. Reduce mowing where possible and let the wildflowers grow, this could encourage more pollinators to the area and reduce maintenance costs.**

# More information

**We hope that this booklet can help you inspire your local community to value the area around your church and create a haven for wildlife.**

**This booklet has been produced by the Children, Youth & Families Team of Swansea & Brecon Diocese. You can contact the team by email at [CYFO.swanbrec@cinw.org.uk](mailto:CYFO.swanbrec@cinw.org.uk) or visit our Facebook pages for further information:**

**@cyfgreaterbrecon  
@cyfgreatergower  
@cyfradnorbuilt  
@swanseabrecondioyouth**

**Has your church signed up for Eco Church?**

**A Rocha UK's award scheme for churches in England and Wales who want to demonstrate that the gospel is good news for God's earth. A free online survey and supporting resources are designed to equip your church to express your care for God's world in your worship and teaching; in how you look after your buildings and land; in how you engage with your local community and in global campaigns, and in the personal lifestyles of your congregation. The actions you take will count towards a prestigious Eco Church Award.**

**Visit [ecochurch.arocha.org.uk](http://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk)**

**Would you like to find out more about Caring for God's Acre, Churches Count On Nature and Love Your Burial Ground Week? Caring for God's Acre works nationally to support groups and individuals to investigate, care for, and enjoy burial grounds and graveyards.**

**Visit [caringforgodsacre.org.uk](http://caringforgodsacre.org.uk)**

**Did you know that there is a Facebook page for Swansea & Brecon Diocese Eco Church Working Group?**

**@swanbrececo**

**Webpage: [swanseaandbrecon.churchinwales.org.uk/en/about-us/eco-church/](http://swanseaandbrecon.churchinwales.org.uk/en/about-us/eco-church/)**



# All things great and small

PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

**Why not try wandering and wondering, noticing the beautiful and amazing things in creation?**

**Experience nature and take photographs on your mobile phone or camera to inspire us all. Choose your favourite photo and email it to [CYFO.swanbrec@cinw.org.uk](mailto:CYFO.swanbrec@cinw.org.uk)**

**Include your name, age category and postal address. Please don't include any children in your photograph. One entry per person.**

**Age categories:  
0-6 years, 7-11 year and, 12-18 years**

**We will post all entries to Facebook.**

**CLOSING DATE:  
SUNDAY 13TH JUNE**



**'You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.'  
Isaiah 55:12**

