



Nature Study

Each Friday morning, you will go through two of our nature cards. They are labeled in the upper right corner with the corresponding week. These are short, factual cards with images to help your child become familiar with objects in the natural world.

As you progress through our sessions, you may find it handy to keep your past nature cards in a binder for easy reference when your children come across a familiar object. These seeds you are planting will grow into a wonderful garden of knowledge for your children in years to come.

As you explore nature outside your home, watch and listen for newly discovered delights. Most of all, remember...

"Point to some lovely flower or gracious tree, not only as a beautiful work, but as a beautiful thought of God."

~ Charlotte Mason

Nature Study

1

Frankincense

Boswellia sacra

- Ancient Egyptians used frankincense as part of the embalming process.
- It has been used throughout history as a wound healer.
- The name comes from the French phrase "Fran encens," which means "high-quality incense."
- It can block inflammatory molecules that can cause asthma.
- Frankincense trees are tapped for their resin, which produces usable frankincense.



1

Hyssop

Hyssopus officinalis

- This herbal plant has violet-blue, pink, or white flowers.
- Hyssop produces lots of tall, thin stalks that can grow up to 2 feet in height!
- The hyssop shrub produces a fruit called an oblong achene.
- Hyssop leaves taste minty when chewed.
- It has been used medicinally by numerous people groups throughout history.



2

Spikenard (Nard)

Nardostachys jatamansi

- Known for its antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties.
- Called Jatamansi in Hindi, which means "human dreadlocks" because it looks similar to dreadlocks.
- In the Bible, nard is used as a perfume and as an incense.
- The root is used to make an amber-colored oil with a strong woody scent.
- The top of the plant produces flowers that are pinkish-red and bell-shaped.
- The plant grows at incredibly high altitudes, typically being found at 9,800 to 16,400 feet.



2

Bitter Herbs

Centaurium erythraea

- Pinkish red and bell shaped.
- These represent the bitterness of the Israelites' time in slavery on the Seder plate.
- The bitter herbs usually used for the Seder meal are horehound, tansy, horseradish, parsley, endive, and coriander.
- In the Bible, people were commanded to eat bitter herbs with their Passover lamb.
- The Hebrew name for bitter herbs is "maror."
- During a Seder meal, bitter herbs are consumed two times, once alone and once with a bread called matzah.



3

Cedar *Cedrus*



- Cedar trees can get up to 131 feet tall.
- Cedar has dark gray or brown bark.
- Cedar trees do not have flowers but rather reproduce through cones.
- In the Bible, cedar was used for both ship building and constructing King Solomon's temple.
- Cedar has natural insect-repellent properties.

3

Date Palm *Phoenix dactylifera*



- Dates are often used as an alternative sweetener today.
- 1 date tree can produce 10,000 dates in just one harvest season.
- Dates have to be harvested by hand.
- This tree is in the palm family and its fruit is believed to be the oldest harvested fruit.
- The name "date" comes from a Greek word that means "finger."

4

The Fertile Crescent



- Another name for this area is the "Cradle of Civilization" because many of the earliest human settlements were there.
- It is named for its fertile soil and crescent-shaped area.
- This area consists of parts of present-day Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, and Egypt.
- The wheel, agriculture, and irrigation were all innovations that were found here.
- Large rivers in the region (Nile, Tigris, Euphrates) made the area great for farming.

4

Egypt's Water Cycle



- Ancient Egyptians utilized irrigation techniques to control flood waters during times of heavy rain.
- Farmers in Egypt divided their year into three seasons that were based around the Nile.
- Akhet was the name given to the flooding season, the period of time falling around June-September.
- After the flood waters receded, farmers could plant crops in the rich, fertile soil called kemet.
- While active flooding was taking place, farmers ceased working their land and waited out the waters by mending tools and creating new ones.

5

Locusts *Acrididae*

- A group of locusts is called a swarm.
- Locusts can travel at speeds up to about 11 miles an hour!
- When the weather is dry, locusts all end up in the few places left with plants to eat. This crowding creates a surge in hormones and makes them want to eat more.
- Female locusts can lay up to 158 eggs at one time.
- Locusts are an important protein source for people in some countries. Locusts can be dried and eaten later or stir-fried.



5

Frogs *Anura*

- There are more than 6,000 species of frogs throughout the world.
- Frogs live on every continent on Earth except Antarctica.
- Frogs feed on spiders, bugs, slugs, worms, and small fish.
- Frogs need to live near wet areas like marshes, lakes, and rivers.
- A group of frogs is called a knot or a colony.



6

Grain in Ancient Times

- In ancient times, the innovation of irrigation made farming large crops of grains possible.
- Wheat and barley were among the first major grains to be grown.
- Emmer wheat and einkorn wheat were used to make bread.
- After Akhet (the inundation season of flooding), grain was the first crop planted and grown.
- Winnowing scopes, hoes, rakes, and sickles were the tools used to farm.



6

Sabbath Planting

- The Shmita is the name given to the Sabbath year of the agricultural cycle.
- Every 7 years, Jews were commanded to leave the ground fallow and cease planting and harvesting.
- During this 7th year, the year of Jubilee, no measures were to be taken to increase the production of crops.
- Anything that grew during this year was "ownerless" food, meaning anyone could pick it and eat it.
- The purpose of this year was to increase the Israelite's faith in God and dependence on Him to provide for their needs.

