

REFLECTION 3 – We're all in this together

Jesus spoke of the need to have an equal concern for the welfare of all - both rich and poor, large and small, and of seeing the beauty, potential and worth in every living being.

He established a loving community of those who wanted to follow his example and care for one another and the wider world; and he described the process of transforming and recreating this world as 'building the Kingdom of Heaven'.

As you make your way back to the start of the trail consider these two key questions:

What one thing would you want to be different in your own life?

What one thing would you want to change to make this world a better place?

One final thing before you finish:

In this walk around the lake, you have had a rare opportunity to pause and reflect; to listen and appreciate the beauty that is around you and within you; and perhaps a chance to think about yourself, your relationships and the care of the environment in new ways.

All of that is part of what it means to pray.

Christians believe that as we remember God's love for us in Jesus and become aware of his presence with us, our spirit, which is our capacity to love, is refreshed by the one who is the source of all love and goodness.

As we then ask for help and respond to God's love for us, we begin a relationship with God, through Jesus, that can be truly life changing.

The FINISHING POINT



If you can, give yourself some more time here to pause and reflect.

Having deposited your litter in the bins nearby, take a seat and remember with gratitude some of the sights and sounds etc you have seen during your walk.

Then consider once more your responses to each of the questions previously raised.

What new things have you learnt today?

About yourself and your relationships?

About your care of the environment?

About God, Jesus and the work of the church?

What we think or believe to be true, is ultimately meaningless unless it affects who we are, and what we then choose to do.

In what way has this walk changed you and the way you will now care for the environment?

Are you now more appreciative of the beauty and love that is around you and within you?

St James is an Eco Church.

If you would like to know more about any groups, activities or worship services then just come along. On Thursdays you may like to combine this walk with a visit to our café (11am – 1.30pm) serving tasty lunches and snacks. Details of all the above and much, much more are on our noticeboards or see the website:

<https://stjameswoodley.org>

ECO TRAIL

South Lake, Woodley

This leaflet has been put together by members of St. James Church in Woodley. We hope it will help you to enjoy and learn from this local amenity in new ways.

South Lake was designated by Wokingham Council as a 'place of recreation' in the 1960's. We believe that it can also be a 'place of re-creation', as we reflect together in this leaflet on how to better care for our physical, mental and spiritual well-being... as well as the natural environment.

The trail **directions** are printed in *italic green*, some **questions** to consider, are in **red**, and suggested **action** points are in **purple**.

You can find linked **all-age activities** online at: <https://stjameswoodley.org/about-us/eco-church>

THE STARTING POINT:

Make your way to:

**St James Church Centre,
Kingfisher Drive,
Woodley. RG5 3LH**



There is FREE parking in the council owned car park (between the church and the convenience store) but note the regulations and always park in the designated bays.

The walk can be completed in under 30 minutes... but give yourself longer to get the full benefit.

Don't rush.... take your time...look around... and use all your senses to fully appreciate what this place has to offer. When invited to do so, pause, reflect and ask yourself what you are learning as the walk unfolds.

Mobile phones could be a distraction so ideally turn them off, unless of course you are using the online material or running an app to identify the different plants or bird songs!

Facing the main entrance of St James, head front right following the paths under the trees towards Kingfisher Drive. Cross this road carefully and then head between the houses to the edge of the lake.

On reaching the edge of the lake, TURN LEFT to begin the main walk which will take you clockwise round the lake till you return to the seats and tables that are visible to your right.

Caring for yourself and the environment

Using gloves and a carrier bag as necessary, aim to pick up and safely deposit up to ten pieces of litter during your walk as part of your practical response to this Eco trail.



REFLECTION 1 – Our Responsibilities

When you reach 'The throne' (see photo) a symbol of power, responsibility and control, and the nearby bench, sit down and consider the following questions:



In what areas of your life do you feel 'in control'?

Where do you feel out of control or vulnerable?

Who, or what, are you responsible for?

Who are the people that you rely on?

What good things do they bring to your life?

You may like to express your appreciation in some way next time you see them.

Before you move on, look at the young tree, near the path which could easily be damaged and so at this stage is being screened.



Consider those parts of the natural world that are vulnerable and in need of protection.

**In what ways are you currently caring for the world around you and making it a better place?
How are you helping those who are broken or vulnerable in our country or overseas?**

Take a moment to say thank you for those who are caring for you now...or have helped you in the past.

When you are ready, resume your walk as you continue along the path keeping the lake to your right. Pass the rear entrance to The Waterside Pub and then look out for a fallen tree trunk near the edge of the water with its view across the lake to the water level marker (see photo). Pause here or make your way round the end of the lake to stand beside this marker.



REFLECTION 2 – A Climate Change Emergency

The world with all its inherent beauty and goodness is being spoilt by our actions. With the steady increase in average global temperature, sea levels are steadily rising which will have devastating consequences for many low-lying countries around the world.

Many more species of birds and animals will become extinct. Farming and food production are already being affected by extreme weather such as drought and heavy rainfall and our seas and rivers are becoming warmer and more polluted.

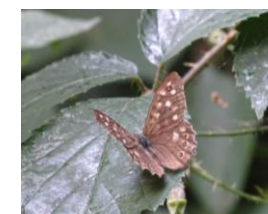
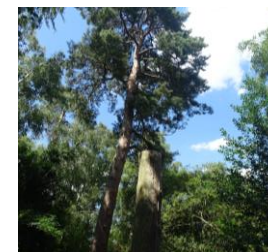
However, the long-term answer lies not in new technologies to enable us to simply continue 'as we are', but in us choosing to live more simply, sacrificing what is not necessary, so that others may have all that they need.

**What would it mean for you or your family to adopt a SIMPLER and more SUSTAINABLE lifestyle?
How can we encourage our elected representatives to deliver on all their environmental promises?**

Continue to walk along the edge of the water as the path heads towards the housing estate that adjoins the lake.



Listen for the sounds of the birds and enjoy the last views of the lake as a whole, before the path heads under the trees.



Look upwards at the trees that now tower above you, and then look down and follow the movements of the smallest insects and butterflies as they live their brief but vital lives. Both trees and insects have a crucial role, in the necessary biodiversity that sustains our planet.