

# GOD IN THE WILDERNESS

Rediscovering the Spirituality  
of the Great Outdoors with the Adventure Rabbi

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WILDERNESS  
Rediscovering the Spirituality  
of the Great Outdoors  
with the Adventure Rabbi  
RABBI JAMIE KORNGOLD

"A book that is easily digestible but at the same time worth savoring."  
– *Publisher's Weekly*

"A tremendous read for anyone who wants to get closer to the earth."  
– *Adam Werbach, former President of Sierra Club*

"Lovely.... a privilege to read."  
-- *Laurie David, producer of movie, Inconvenient Truth*

## LESSON PLAN: God in the Wilderness

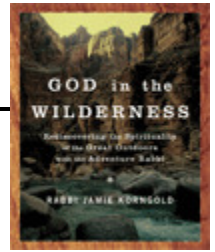
### Lesson Plan:

**Chapter 1: Cultivate the Patience to See Burning Bushes -  
Exodus 3:3-4**

**Note: Chapter 1 is available as a FREE downloadable chapter  
from the [www.GodintheWilderness.com](http://www.GodintheWilderness.com) website.  
(We hope you'll want to buy the book and use it for other lessons, too)**



*Adventure Rabbi*  
Let the Wilderness Awaken Your Judaism



**Lesson Plans:**

Have you used this book for a class? Send your lesson plan to [rabbik@adventurerabbi.org](mailto:rabbik@adventurerabbi.org). If we think it is a shareable resource, we will post it on the website (crediting you of course) and send you a free Adventure Rabbi Hike, Bike, Yoga, Pray t-shirt.

## Chapter One: Cultivate the Patience to See Burning Bushes

*The following lesson plan is an example of how you could use this book for outdoor, experiential learning with a group.*

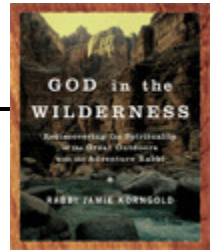
- *For adults, before the class, ask the students to read the chapter, or begin the class by reading it to them.*
- *For children, you might act out the two burning bush scenes from the book. Then try one of the exercises just for kids below.*

### Part I: Ask the students to review the chapter

#### How does the opening quotation summarize the chapter?

*“Moses said, “I must turn aside to look at this marvelous sight; why doesn’t the bush burn up? When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to look, God called to him out of the bush: Moses! Moses!” Exodus 3:3-4*

- What was amazing about Moses was that he takes the time to notice the burning bush.
- How does this relate to our lives?
- We too have to take time to notice the miracles that surround us. It’s easy to be so busy and preoccupied that we walk right past them.
- How do you react to hearing the Moses story updated? Does it make it more accessible?
- Where/when in your life are you most able to slow down?



**Part 2: Freeing Ourselves From Enslavement.  
An Exercise in Becoming Fully Present**

***Explain the following to the students:***

One of the first steps on a spiritual path is to become fully present in the here and now. When we are fully present, we discover a heightened attentiveness to the details of the world around us and become aware of the spiritual portals that exist.

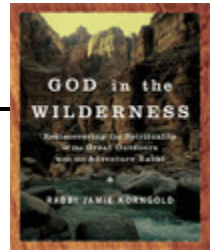
What impedes our ability to be fully present? Often we simply have too many distracting thoughts racing through our minds. The burden of our “to-do” lists creates stiff competition for our attention, no matter how lovely a situation we may be in.

In order to “cast off this enslavement,” I am going to ask you to write down a list of everything that you have to do. The goal is that if you write it down, you can then “put it down” because you are assured you will not forget about it and will get to it later.

***Give the students 3-5 minutes to write down their to-do list. Next, have them leave them on their desks or in a bag in the room, symbolically leaving them behind as they gather for the outdoor exercise,.***

**Things I have to do:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.



### Part 3: Cultivating Awareness

Bring the students outside and instruct each student to choose a quiet place to sit silently, within a certain geographic parameter that you provide. Make sure it is safe. Be aware of running water, cliffs, roads etc. This can also be done indoors, preferably within sight of something natural, but it's not quite a powerful.

I also love to do this exercise while walking. Have a set destination in mind and tell people how long they will be silent so they don't get distracted by wondering how long this will go on.

Instruct the students to choose one of these senses to focus on: sight, sound, smell, touch. Depending on the age of the group, one minute is a great place to start with ten minutes as a goal. Eventually this could be expanded to a powerful half day exercise or a wilderness "solo." Jewish groups can also do this as part of a Jewish worship service and this could be in the place of the silent mediation at the end of the Amidah. If you are trying it indoors, perhaps have them focus on looking at a hand, or the sound of their breath.

Be aware of how you transition the group out of the silence. Consider using a pleasant sound such as a quiet song or a gentle bell to indicate that the time is over and people should regroup. Have all the participants hold the silence until everyone arrives, again breaking the silence gently.

### Part 4: Reflection

**Have students take 10 minutes to journal the following questions:**

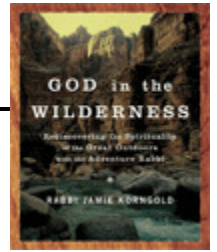
- What did you notice that you might have missed otherwise?
- How did it feel to be silent and simply observe?
- Did time go fast or slow?
- Was the experience different than you thought it would be?
- How did the experience change as the minutes went by?

After people have had time reflect privately, ask them to share either with the larger group or small groups of 3. If you break into groups of 3, then have each group report to the larger group.

### Part 5: Summarize

**Summarize what was learned and ask participants, "What changes can you make in your life to integrate this learning?"**





**For Children:**

**Exercises for Children to heighten awareness of surroundings:**

**“I-Spy”**

Have pairs of children sit in an outdoor space, about 5 feet apart. Each child demarcates a space in a circle around them. (For little kids you can use a hula hoop.) Have them try to describe, without naming, the individual plants that they see in their circle. The other child tries to find the same plant in their circle. Take turns describing.

**Focus on Hearing:**

Show children a deer or a photo of a deer. Ask them why they think the deer has such large ears. (It helps them to capture sound.) Have them cup their hands around their ears so they are like the deer and then be quiet for one minute and notice what they hear. I often do this exercise twice. The first time children often think they hear nothing. The second time they realize there actually is a lot to hear.