

Topic: Biodiversity

Objective: To empower youth to create an event that educates themselves and their communities about the negative impact of invasive plant species.

Supplies:

- Each participant should have a pair of gardening gloves, comfortable shoes, a water bottle, and sun protection.
- Visuals to help people identify native plants vs. invasive species
- Reusable bins, cardboard boxes, or paper bags are a good way to collect invasive species.
- First aid kit

Prep work:

- Learn about the issue of invasive species
- Watch the Nature Conservancy's video [Invasive Species 101](#)
- Work with your adult leaders to invite an expert from within your faith tradition or from a nature conservancy or wildlife center to speak to your group about the problem of invasive species and how to identify harmful species.
- Put together a presentation for your faith community's leadership about what you have learned and how sponsoring a clean-up can help.
- Create a flyer to educate others about what invasive plant species look like in your area and with information about your clean-up.
- Promote your event
- Talk with adult leadership and conservation experts about the best way to dispose of invasive species and make a plan.
- Talk with your adult leaders and religious education professionals to provide guidance on age appropriate activities and care for younger participants.
- Invite your religious leader to attend the event and offer a blessing.

Blessing: Have your faith leader or a volunteer offer a blessing as you set out on your invasive species clean-up.

Welcome/Introduction:

Invasive plant species can take over and change biodiverse landscapes into monocultures, creating areas where it's difficult for native plants and animal species to exist. By removing invasive plant species, you make room for native plants and animal species to thrive.

Activity:

- After you've introduced the activity and welcomed everyone, take time to go over what species you'll be removing and what plant species not to remove. Having visuals can make understanding clearer.
- Communicate any safety issues including what people should do if they encounter wildlife, insect bites, etc.
- Everyone participating should be paired in groups that include at least one adult.
- Pass out bins, boxes, bags to collect invasives.
- Communicate to everyone where they should bring the invasives once they've been collected.

Closing:

- It's always fun to quantify your efforts. For example, if you're removing [garlic mustard](#) or [air potatoes](#) you can have each group count how many they've removed, or count how many bags, etc., and report back on your efforts.
- Thank everyone for coming and for their hard work, and talk about next steps.