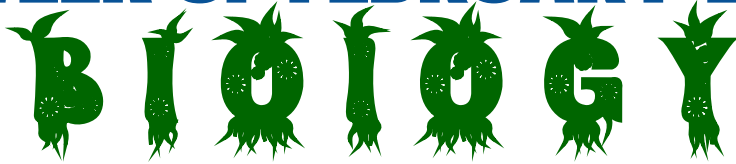




WEEK OF FEBRUARY 28



OBJECTIVE: This week's experiment will have you think about where and how growth can happen. Unlike some of the other experiments, this one will take a long time to see the results.

By planting Milkweed seeds you explore how a dark and cold environment is needed for growth. You will further explore the importance of this one plant that is needed for the survival of the Monarch Butterfly. You will be asked to draw a parallel with your own life on how the dark periods allow for your own growth and transformation.

HYPOTHESIS: Much like seeds, each of our lives are transformed by periods of darkness and reveal how God is always needed and near, nourishing and transforming our lives.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

MILKWEED SEEDS *(attached)*
POTTING SOIL
PLASTIC MILK JUG
SHARP KNIFE
PACKING TAPE
WATER
YOUR LIFE LAB JOURNAL

DIRECTIONS: Most milkweed species planted in North America need a cold moist stratification to encourage spring germination. Cold moist stratification is a technique used to simulate the real-world conditions a seed would receive outdoors after the frozen winter gives way to a warm, wet spring.

Using a sharp knife, cut the plastic milk jug about 1/3 from the bottom and not all the way off. Fold back the top part of the milk jug. Fill the bottom of the milk jug with potting soil, about 2 inches deep. Sprinkle the seeds over the soil. Cover the seeds with about 1/2 inch of soil. Water thoroughly. Put the two halves of the jug together and tape together. Make sure the cap is left off. Set the jug outside, in the snow. Now you just wait for the warmth of spring. Once the weather warms, keep the soil moist.

REFLECTION: *Use the following questions to talk about with others and/or record your thoughts in your LIFE LAB JOURNAL.*

1. The milkweed seed needs a period of dark and cold to transform from a seed to a plant. The Monarch butterfly needs a period of 10-14 days of being in the "dark" as it changes from a caterpillar to a butterfly. What are some examples of your dark times? Write these down in your *LIFE LAB JOURNAL*. You can do this by yourself or as a family.
2. Think about a time you had a dark time (think about the examples you gave previously) How did you feel during the dark? Did you call on God?
3. Has there ever been an experience that transformed you? ...that matured your faith in God?
4. For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal **LIFE**. - John 3:16

Belief in Jesus brings with it the promise of eternal life. What does eternal life mean to you?

Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of **LIFE**. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. - John 6:35

5. Communion is the meal of God for the people of God. How is communion life-giving for you?

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1

Embedded in the Genesis story are many stories not written. One such story is the monarch butterfly. God created the world's only migrating insect. It can migrate as far as 3,000 miles from Nova Scotia, Canada to a preordained destination in Michoacan, Mexico. It navigates with remarkable precision to a destination that it has never been to before. This migration may take three or four generations of butterflies with each generation picking up where the last generation left off until the migration cycle is complete. The monarch will even migrate to the exact tree that its ancestors used. Then, it returns to its original starting point and the process starts again. The perfect guidance system! God has also planted in our hearts a guidance system that always points us to our Creator, God.

SEED OF WHOLENESS by Mary Ferring

Inside the core of each seed, no matter how large or how tiny, a potential waits for the life within to lift its face to the sun and gift the world with a burst of freshness.

Such is your life within me, the potential for wholeness, a seed of grace so vast that each kernel of my latent goodness, whether it is unknown or undeveloped, can manifest its inherent greenness and grow into a harvest of love.

CONTINUE THE FUN!

Here are a couple of additional things for you to enhance this week's theme.



In this diagram, you see the life cycle of a Monarch Butterfly. At the core of the butterfly's existence is the milkweed plant. The milkweed plant is the **ONLY** plant that the Monarch butterfly will lay its eggs. The milkweed plant is the **ONLY** plant that the Monarch caterpillar can eat. Without the milkweed plant the Monarch butterfly wouldn't survive. The Monarch butterfly, just like bees, are pollinators. Pollinators are crucial for our food.

Food is one source of nourishment for

us, but another is God. Nourishment from God comes from bible reading, prayer, meditation, attending worship and communion, responding in love because God first loved us. As God transforms the butterfly, our transformation comes from God too.

Check out this great video that shows the amazing migration of the monarch butterfly:

tinyurl.com/4t843z5w

Watch a breathtaking Monarch Butterfly swarm:

tinyurl.com/9p23024g