

Grades 6-12

Week 1

Activity: Begin by asking students to define Creation Care. What have they heard about it? What do they think it means? Work on a list of simple, everyday ways to have a positive impact on the environment (ex. Using reusable food/drink containers, reusable grocery bags, using scrap paper or online options, composting, hang-drying clothes, etc.) Choose some to write down with everyone's input to form a covenant. Come back to the covenant in a later week to share ways that everyone has been successful.

Reading: Job 12:7-10

“But ask the animals, and they will teach you; the birds of the air, and they will tell you; ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being.”

Questions:

What does it mean when the verse says to ask the animals?

What are ways in which nature can speak to us?

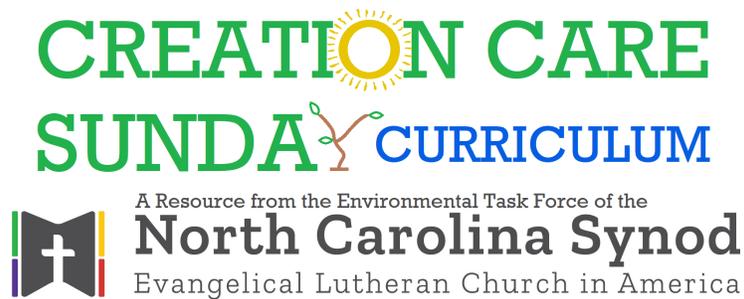
What are ways in which nature teaches us about ourselves? Teaches us about God?

How have you experienced God through nature?

How do you think the ‘breath of every human being’ relates to the whole of God’s creation?

Prayer: God of all creation, thank you for all of the life that this planet has to offer. The beauty & diversity are the work of your hands, and we pray for the strength & knowledge to use our hands to sustain this earth through.

Close: Sing/Play Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow



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Week 2

Activity: Review covenant from previous week and discuss progress. Discuss ways that the group could lead some sort of environmental initiative for the church (i.e. pick up litter, add recycling bins, volunteer to wash dishes for fellowship instead of using paper products, etc.)

Reading: Mark 12:28-31

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, 'Which commandment is the first of all?' Jesus answered, 'The first is, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these.'

Questions:

What are ways you show love in your life?

Have you ever thought about animals as your neighbor? What about plants?

What does loving our neighbor look like when we add all of creation into that?

How can you show love to all aspects of the earth?

Can we learn from nature how better to love God? If so, how?

Can we learn from nature how better to love our neighbor? If so, how?

Prayer: (written by Pope Francis) All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes. Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction. Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

Close: Play the song *First Light* by Steve Roach

CREATION CARE
SUNDA CURRICULUM

A Resource from the Environmental Task Force of the
North Carolina Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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Week 3

Activity: Review covenant from week 1 and discuss progress. Plan a time to accomplish the activity discussed in week 2 for the church.

Reading: 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a

Love is patient, love is kind.

Love is not envious, or boastful, or arrogant, or rude.

It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;

it does not delight in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.

It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.

Questions:

What about nature reflects God's patience?

What can the earth teach us about patience?

How do we show kindness to the earth?

When it comes to loving nature, what might it mean to not insist on our own way? Is that easy to do?

How could that become more of a possibility?

Can loving nature make us less irritable or resentful?

Do people ever rejoice in doing wrong to the earth? Is it ever tempting for you to do so?

What are some ways we rejoice in wrongdoing?

What truths about the earth and our relationship with the earth make you rejoice?

What are some ways we can rejoice in the truth?

How can we bear, believe, hope, endure for the future of creation?

What might we have to bear, in our love for the earth?

What might we need to believe in our love for the earth?

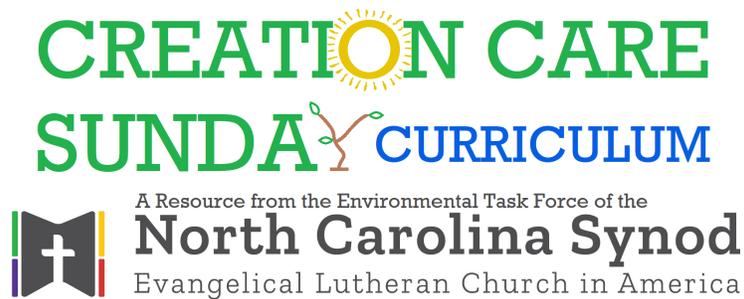
What might we have to hope for?

What might we have to endure, in our love, responsibility, and caring for the earth?

Prayer: Forgiving God, we have not lived out our responsibility to be faithful stewards of creation. For this, we seek your pardon. Our over-consumption has impacted the poorest members of our human family most of all. For this, we ask your mercy. Our actions have endangered both the lives of our children today as well as those yet to be born. For this, we seek your forgiveness.

Living God, as we meet you in nature, inspire us to see anew our place in the web of life. In our daily lives, help us to make daily choices that reflect global solidarity. As we reflect on the teaching of our faith, equip us to advocate for laws and policies that reflect your call to faithful stewardship.

Close: Sing/Play All Creatures of Our God and King



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Week 4

Activity: Review the covenant and activities from week 1 and 2. Have the students each come up with one word to describe what they have learned or experienced so far in these lessons. Compile the words together to form a collage. This can be done either physically or using an online collage maker.

Reading: The Canticle of Creatures by St. Francis Assisi

All praise be yours, My Lord
through all that you have made.

And first my lord Brother Sun, who brings the day...
How beautiful is he, how radiant in all his splendor!
Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Moon and Stars;
In the heavens you have made them, bright and precious and fair.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air...

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Water,
So useful, lowly, precious and pure.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
through whom you brighten up the night...

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Earth, our mother,
Who feeds us...and produces various fruits
With colored flowers and herbs...

Praise and bless my Lord, and give him thanks,
And serve him with great humility.

Questions:

What is it like to refer to parts of the Earth as “brother” or “sister?” Does that change your view of the Earth?

How does this Canticle continue with our theme of loving Creation that we have had this month?

How can we fulfill the last line: “serve him (God) with great humility?”

Bonus Activity: Create your own stanza for this Canticle that points to a different part of Creation and how it praises God. Combine them all together to form a Canticle for Creation by your group. You could share it with the congregation, if you choose.

Prayer: Creator God, as we feast our eyes on autumn reds and yellows, we sense your creative power. As we marvel at the uniqueness of each winter flake, we rejoice that you know us each by name. As we hear the songs of birds of spring, we yearn to sing your praises. As we breathe the delicious scents of summer flowers, our souls rest in your love.

Close: Sing/Play How Great is Our God by Chris Tomlin