



# Season of Creation

Resources for children's ministry  
and all-ages worship





# Our theme: Caring for our climate

Activities for all ages to reflect on how we can care for the climate in different areas of our lives.

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**Week 1: Eat**

**Week 2: Move**

**Week 3: Power**

**Week 4: Shop**

**Week 5: Grow**

**Appendix**

# Week 1: Eat

This week we are learning that food is grown on farms, orchards and in gardens by the hands of many people. We can choose to eat food that looks after the land and each other.

## Activities for children's ministry

### All together

- Open with a greeting, prayer and collect from the Classroom Prayer Cards, courtesy of the Anglican Schools office. (See page 1 of the Appendix.)
- Then do one or more of their activities. (Page 2 of the Appendix.)
- Discuss our food, where it comes from and what is required for it to grow well.

### For younger and older children

- Help kids make upcycled vegetable seedling pots. You will need: upcycled vessels - such as toilet rolls, materials to decorate these, potting mix, and a seedling or seed. See these websites for instructions:
  - [www.redtedart.com/5-thrifty-gardening-ideas/](http://www.redtedart.com/5-thrifty-gardening-ideas/)
  - [kidsgardening.org/garden-activities-reducing-re-using-and-recycling-in-the-garden/](http://kidsgardening.org/garden-activities-reducing-re-using-and-recycling-in-the-garden/)
- Do some baking or cooking for a morning tea following church. Explore recipes that seek to use up aging food before it goes to waste. Check out creative and delicious recipes from the likes of 'Love Food Hate Waste', [lovefoodhatewaste.co.nz](http://lovefoodhatewaste.co.nz).



## Activities for all-ages worship

- Invite the kids up the front. Show them some vegetables - ideally, some homegrown by parishioners. Talk about where they came from, eg. John-Luke's amazing garden! Wow - God provides vegetables like this for us! What do they need to grow well? Farmers and growers are so awesome! A healthy environment is so important for all of us! Today we're thinking about how the food we choose to eat can help us care for the environment. Add the food you've made to the table to share in a feast after church.
- Watch the 3-minute videos about the Ward family changing their diet, or Karen's home vegetable garden, available at [movementonline.org.nz/seasonofcreation](http://movementonline.org.nz/seasonofcreation). Discuss together: what stood out? Is there any inspiration or challenge for us?
- Create a small nursery as a centerpiece. Invite parishioners to bring (or provide yourself) a vegetable or herb seedling to be placed on a tray at the front of the church. As they place their seedling, invite them to water the seedling and pray a blessing over the gift of good and nourishing food. At the end of the service invite parishioners to take home one seedling for themselves or a neighbour.
- Hold your normal worship service on the land of a parishioner's farm. You can find a collection of blessings for "Gardens and the Gardener" on this website here: <https://worshipwords.co.uk/liturgy-for-blessing-gardens-and-gardeners/>

*Copy and paste the following into your church news sheet OR print and give to parents to take home:*

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## Takeaway activities for families

- No time to waste: The best way to rescue your food waste from filling up the landfill (and creating pollution) and to nourish the soil is to start up a compost bin or a worm farm. Here are some DIY ideas: [sustaintrust.org.nz/blog/diy-worm-farm](http://sustaintrust.org.nz/blog/diy-worm-farm). Alternatively, find out if your neighbours have a bin you can add to. Check out bins in your area at [www.sharewaste.org.nz](http://www.sharewaste.org.nz).
- Love food, hate waste: Explore recipes that seek to use up aging food before it goes to waste. Check out creative + delicious recipes here: [lovefoodhatewaste.co.nz](http://lovefoodhatewaste.co.nz).
- Less meat, big feat!: Meat is a large source of carbon emissions. Challenge your family to reduce your meat eating. How many days a week can you realistically cut out meat? Meat is a source of iron, protein and other nutrients, so you'll need to replace these with alternative sources such as beans, nuts, eggs. Here are some recipes to start: [www.thespruceeats.com/high-protein-vegetarian-recipes-3376934](http://www.thespruceeats.com/high-protein-vegetarian-recipes-3376934), and [www.healthykids.org.nz/](http://www.healthykids.org.nz/)

# Week 2: Move

This week we are learning that God cares about how we travel on the earth. When we are able to, we can choose modes that produce less pollution or none at all.

## Activities for children's ministry

- Bring your wheels to church! If the weather is fine and there is safe space, spend time riding outside together.
- Discuss how traveling by foot, scooter, bike or bus produces less greenhouse gas pollution than traveling by petrol car. (If we need to use a car, carpooling is one way to reduce pollution.)
- Discuss what they notice about God's creation while they're traveling by foot, bike, scooter or bus that they don't notice when traveling in a car. What can you hear? What can you feel? What can you smell?



## Activities for all-ages worship

- Encourage your congregation to walk (or wheel!) to church with their neighbours. If there are church members who are unable to walk, offer to pick them up and carpool to church together.
- Watch the three-minute video about the Day family and their transport choices. Discuss – what stood out? Are there any encouragements or challenges for us?
- Consider speaking to Galatians 5:13-end. Hone in on verse 25, “Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” Allow these words to ring in your ears as you travel, no matter your choice of transport. Reflect on what this means for you and your family, especially in light of the messages surrounding this verse. What does it mean to ‘keep in step with the Spirit’ as you literally move? How can you ‘serve one another humbly in love’ with your transport choices? When you walk and move with the Spirit how are you ‘loving your neighbour as yourself’?

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## Takeaway activities for families

- In the footsteps of the Spirit: Take some time to do a prayer walk in your neighbourhood. Pray as you go and see what the Holy Spirit reveals. Consider partnering your prayer with a rubbish pick up. Incorporate some of the ideas from Uniting Earth’s ‘Kids and Creation’ strategies on ‘Walking’ (pg 11 of the resource).  
[www.unitingearth.org.au/resources/kids-and-creation-resource-pdf-62-2mb/](http://www.unitingearth.org.au/resources/kids-and-creation-resource-pdf-62-2mb/)
- At-home option: Trace your finger along this labyrinth. Before you begin, invite God to share God’s heart on low emissions transport. If you’d like to walk your own “labyrinth” try walking slowly and gently within the space you are in.



# Week 3: Shop

This week we are learning that God is our provider who wants to give us all that we need. God entrusts us to use resources to look after ourselves, each other, and the earth on which we all live.

## Activities for children's ministry

### All together

- Do the activities about “Creation is a Gift” from page 7-8 of *Companions with Creation* resource. (See page 3-4 of the Appendix.)
- Do the activities on the theme “We can be good Samaritans to the earth” from *Companions with Creation* resource. (Available on page 5-6 of the Appendix.)
- Teach children that one way to practice good stewardship over money is to repurpose resources that you already have. A simple example is repurposing material that is commonly wasted. Toilet paper rolls are highly versatile when it comes to repurposing. Try folding in the ends to make a wee box for a gift. Allow kids to colour the outside first. You can find further instructions here: [www.redtedart.com/tp-roll-gift-box-ideas/](http://www.redtedart.com/tp-roll-gift-box-ideas/).
- Alternatively, use the toilet paper rolls to make lanterns (which could be used on the following Sunday, focused on power and energy use).



- You will need to supervise cutting. Allow the children to paint the lanterns, and provide string or ribbon to hang them up. Further instructions here: [www.redtedart.com/chinese-new-year-crafts-lanterns-from-tp-rolls/](http://www.redtedart.com/chinese-new-year-crafts-lanterns-from-tp-rolls/). To add even more substance to the discussion, encourage the kids to gift their lantern to someone else. Remind them that God sometimes asks us to share our resources with others.

## Activities for all-ages worship

Watch the three-minute video about Rose explaining her approach to shopping.

Discuss – what stood out in this story? Are there any encouragements or challenges for us?

Videos are available at [movementonline.org.nz/seasonofcreation](http://movementonline.org.nz/seasonofcreation).



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## Takeaway activities for families

- Rubbish or resources? Perform a waste audit. This one is easier and more exciting to do alongside children. Be prepared to get a bit messy. Consider tipping your rubbish bin contents onto a tarp and put on some gloves to sort through your stuff. Scroll through your local council's website if you have questions about how to correctly dispose of your waste. Observe the bits and see if there is an abundance of a particular item or category of items (ie bread bags). Reflect on this item. How can you reduce the waste it creates? Can you make any part of it yourself? Can you source it in less wasteful packaging? Can it be reused for something else? Involve your children in this creative reimagining process.
- Divest your finances: Are you aware of where your money is invested through your Kiwisaver? Sadly, many of our Kiwisavers will be funding pollution and exploitation. To learn where your money is invested and to find an ethical Kiwisaver fund that fits your values and preferences go to [www.mindfulmoney.nz](http://www.mindfulmoney.nz)
- Alternative currency: Sign up for your local timebank and trade your skills and time for something you need created or done by someone else's skills and time.



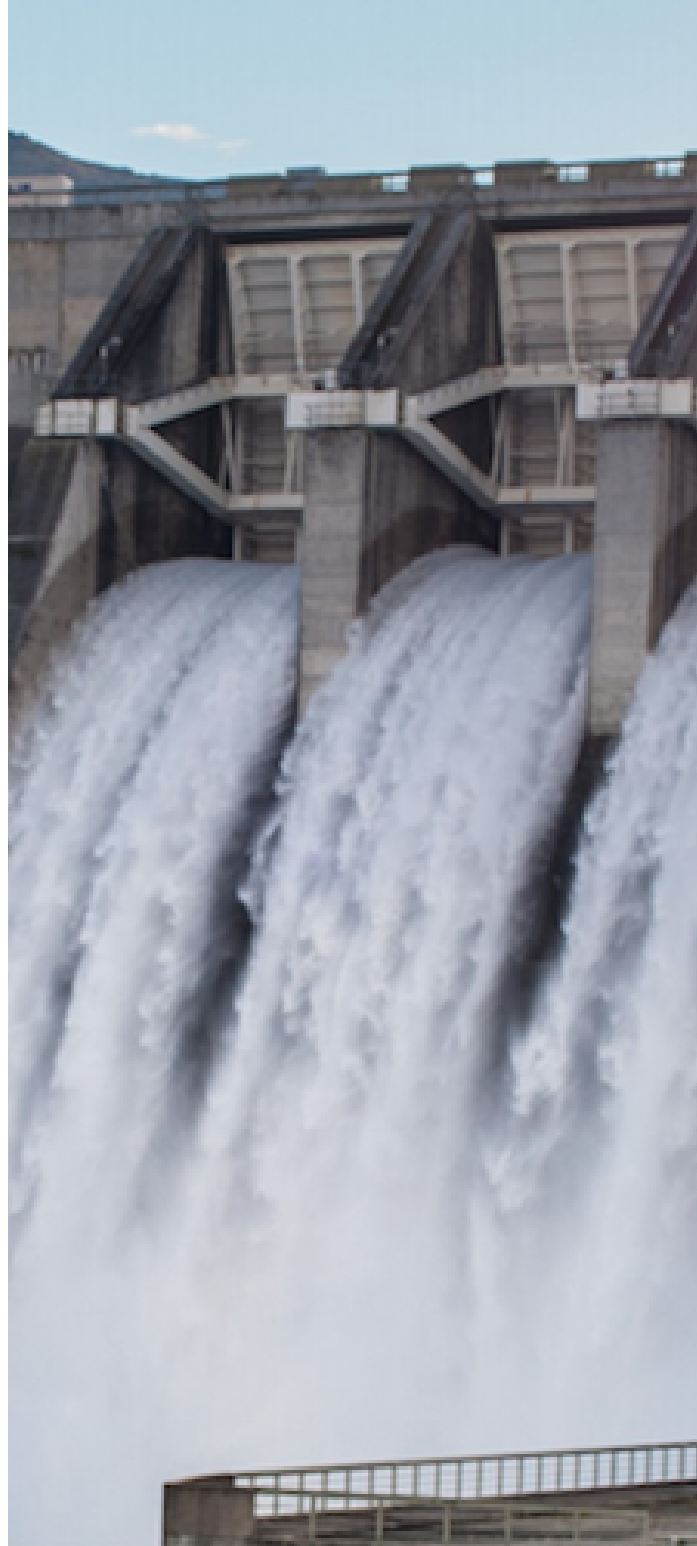
## Week 4: Power

This week we are learning that God's power is at work in nature. We can use God's creations of water, sunlight and wind as power for our houses and buildings. These types of energy renew the earth and reduce pollution.

### Activities for children's ministry

#### All together

- Discuss where we see God's power at work in nature – such as strong wind, crashing waves, rivers and waterfalls, hissing steam, sunlight that helps the plants grow. Reflect on times you've experienced the power of these parts of nature, for instance jumping in waves at the beach. Was it scary to feel those forces at work?
- Show pictures of these forces being used to generate renewable electricity, such as a hydro dam, solar panels, and tidal power. Discuss how our society is moving towards these types of electricity to reduce our pollution from coal and natural gas.



#### For young children

- Make pinwheels to “capture” the “power” of the wind. You will need a stick for each pinwheel, scissors, felts or paints, brass fasteners with long ends, recycled paper. Follow these instructions: [www.makeandtakes.com/garden-pinwheel-craft](http://www.makeandtakes.com/garden-pinwheel-craft).

### For older children

Read Psalms that display God's power among nature (i.e. Psalm 135:7; Psalm 29). Encourage the kids to write their own Psalms based on this format. Prompt them to think of places they've visited and to describe these places using all of their senses. Then ask them to describe – where do they see God in these places?

### A reflection from Creation Care Worship Enabler, Elise Ranck

We are reliant on various sources of power/energy for our survival. We need a source of heat to cook our food. We need a source of energy to power machines and appliances. These sources in the last century or so have typically come from resources which are pillaged from the ground below, processed to give us the energy we need, and then left to pollute our atmosphere. However, there are several renewable sources - ones that won't run out and won't damage the earth during their use - that we have yet to tap into on a large scale. These include solar, wind, geothermal, hydro and tidal power. All of these sources are available in the elements that surround us.

How does any of this relate to God? Well, God created all of these and God's own power orchestrates them all into action. Throughout the Bible, God's power causes creation to "tremble", "burst", "split", "resound", and make all sorts of noises of praise and joy. God creates "light" to be ever present in the day and the night, so that we are not left to work and play and rest in total darkness. The sun shines, the waves roll, the wind blows, and the rivers rush all by the power of God's hand. It is a gift for us to steward and use well.

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## Takeaway activities for families

- Dial down: Perform an energy audit around your house to find out what sources of energy can be dialled down. Input your energy footprint into a calculator (many can be found here: [www.ecochurch.org.nz/carbon-calculators](http://www.ecochurch.org.nz/carbon-calculators)). Involve your children by setting up a scavenger hunt which ultimately reveals which sources use the most energy. Determine together which sources can be dialled down.
- Unplug and unplug: As you dial down and unplug any unused or infrequently used appliances, consider also 'unplugging' yourselves from your daily digital devices and integrate some Sabbath-minded practices. Read books in the lounge, start up a board game, initiate a bike ride to the park, head out for a walk in the nearest bush reserve or park.
- Get fired up! Gather your friends and neighbours for a classic campfire sing-a-long. Bring out the marshmallows and chocolate, blankets and songbooks. Light the brasier, roast marshmallows, and sing the classics together! Can you do it without electricity?

# Week 5: Grow

This week we are learning that God's creation is amazing. We can grow trees to help to absorb pollution making the air cleaner for everyone to breathe.

## Activities for children's ministry

### All together

- Open with a greeting, collect and prayer from the Classroom Prayer Cards courtesy of the Anglican Schools office (see page 7 of the Appendix). Then do one of their suggested activities (Appendix page 8).
- Read the story and do the activities about "caretakers of creation" from Elise Ranck's creation care resource. (Appendix p.9-10.)

### For older children

- Arrange kids in groups of 2 or 3 with one adult (if possible). Send them outside to find a native tree somewhere on the property. Apps like "NZ Trees" and "Seek" are free and help you to identify plants and creatures. Once you settle on a tree or bush – ask, what do we have in common with this tree? Do a bark rubbing. Then return inside to share the observations in a creative journal. The purpose of this activity is to get to know the natural taonga (treasures) of Aotearoa New Zealand, to understand trees' ability to capture carbon, and the importance of protecting bush from pests.



Getting to know trees and plants at a sensory level helps us to relate more deeply to nature.

### For younger children

- Use all or part of this 90-minute session on 'Trees of the Field and Forest' by Salal and Cedar: <http://salalandcedar.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Trees-curric.pdf>

## Activities for all-ages worship

- Watch the 3-minute video about Ellen planting native trees on her farm. Discuss – what stands out from this story? What is the inspiration or challenge for us? Videos are available at [movementonline.org.nz/seasonofcreation](http://movementonline.org.nz/seasonofcreation).
- Find one or more tree on the church property. Weather permitting, hold your service around the trees, where joining in the presence of creation is collective praise, thanksgiving, and worship to Creator God.
- If there are no trees on the church property, assess if you can plant a tree. Hold your service around or before the tree planting, where the planting, weeding or the preparing of the soil is also counted as worship. For a full liturgy, check out “Forest Sunday” from Australia’s Season of Creation resources: <https://seasonofcreation.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/liturgy-forest-sunday-1.pdf>

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## Takeaway activities for families

- Plant a forest: Scan the Conservation Volunteers website to find tree planting working bees near you. [conservationvolunteers.co.nz](http://conservationvolunteers.co.nz)
- Pests be gone!: Interested to get involved with local trapping initiatives or set up traps at your own home? Check out Predator Free in your suburb. This handy map will help you to locate active groups near you: <https://predatorfreenz.org/big-picture/national-map/find-a-group/>
- Biodiversity is in your backyard: Explore and enhance the livelihoods of native species in your own backyard through these videos: [www.rotokare.org.nz/Education/Backyard-Biodiversity---Taiao-Taiepa-Ki-Tua/](http://www.rotokare.org.nz/Education/Backyard-Biodiversity---Taiao-Taiepa-Ki-Tua/)



# Appendix

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The following pages are shared with permission from these sources:

- Anglican Schools Office. Classroom Prayer Cards, Years 1 and 2. 2021. [anglicanschools.nz](http://anglicanschools.nz)
- Elise Ranck. Companions with Creation – A faith-based programme for children and families to look after God’s good earth. 2021. Available at: [www.strandz.org.nz/uploads/4/6/5/9/46590535/creation\\_care\\_project\\_small\\_.pdf](http://www.strandz.org.nz/uploads/4/6/5/9/46590535/creation_care_project_small_.pdf)

- **Page 1-2: Creation Season B (Week 1 - Eat)**
- **Page 3-4: Creation is a gift (Week 3 - Shop)**
- **Page 5-6: We can be good Samaritans (Week 3 - Shop)**
- **Page 7-8: Green Season (Week 5 - Grow)**
- **Page 9-10: God creates humans to be priests (Week 5 - Grow)**

# TERM 3 / WEEK 7 ORDINARY TIME

## Creation Season B



### ● You will need

Bell, seeds, enough for one for each student. Photos of fruit and vegetables (or the real thing).

### ● Focus

Ring a bell, first a number of times, then slowly down to a single ring into silence.

### ● Greeting

Teacher: Lord our God

**Students: Your greatness is in all the world.**

### ● Prayer for the day

Bible focus for the week is Psalm 96:11-13

Be glad, earth and sky!

Roar, sea, and every creature in you;

be glad, fields and everything in you!

The trees of the wood will shout for joy

when the Lord comes to rule the earth.

God will rule the peoples of the world with justice and fairness.

### ● Collect

Loving God, thank you for the gift of life you have given us. Breathe on the spark of your presence within us, so that we may burn with a flame of love for this world we live in and show our care for it in the way we live. Amen\*

### ● Close

Teacher: Lord our God

**Students: Your greatness is in all the world.**

\*Adapted from Light up the world, from A Heart for Creation: Worship resources and reflections on the environment. Chris Polhill. Wild Goose Publications, Glasgow, UK. 2010.

# Prayers for each day

## Monday

*Show the students the seeds, perhaps putting one in each child's hand to look at closely. Discuss what they might grow into. How do they grow? Take all ideas and let the wonder stay! We know what plants need to grow, and we know how they grow - but no-one in the whole world really understands what life is! It is still amazing. Pray: Thank you God for the beautiful plants we have on our earth and the wonder of how they grow.*

## Tuesday

*Fruit and vegetable selection. What is your favourite fruit or vegetable? What don't you like? Why do we eat them? Do you know what would happen if we didn't have fruit and vegetables? Talk about scurvy if you want to! Let's thank God for them. Hold out your hands and imagine your favourite fruit or veg in them. Then close your eyes, hold your hands up to God, and we'll say, "Thank you God" together.*

## Wednesday

*Paper and pen for teacher. Who has a pet? What is its name? If you don't have a pet, what would you like to have? Make a list so all can see it. Then move down the list, saying, "Thank you God for..." each one. Let students stand up or put their thumbs up or clap once for each pet they want to thank God for.*

## Thursday

Who likes insects? Why/why not? We need them! Do you know why? *Food for other creatures, cleaning up dead things, pollinating flowers etc.* Close your eyes and think about an insect you find interesting. Does it have wings? How many legs? What colour is it? Does it wriggle or run or fly? Then tell the person next to you about your insect. *Pray: Thank you God for the insects that fill our earth, who carry seeds, pollinate flowers, keep pests under control and keep our soil healthy. Amen.*

## Friday

*Ask the children to stand in a circle.*

*Children **crouch**:*

*Children stand as **tall** as they can:*

*Children stand as **widely** as they can:*

*Children stand as **thinly** as they can:*

What is the **smallest** animal you can think of?

What is the **tallest** animal you can think of?

What is the **widest** animal you can think of?

What is the **thinnest** animal you can think of?

*Pray: Thank you God for all the wonderful animals on our planet - tall, small, wide and thin. Help us to care for them all. Amen.*

## Week 3

# Creation is a gift that we all get to use, enjoy, and share together

## Story

### Genesis 1:25-31; 2:4-9

Today's story looks at how God created the animals, people, and finally Adam and Eve.

## Message

As you retell this section of the creation story, emphasize that all of creation is a gift that God has made purposefully for practicality and pleasure, and a gift that we partake in all together.

Some of these gifts are made evident in the Garden of Eden where God has placed Adam and Eve. The garden is teeming with good gifts - "trees that are pleasing to the eye and good for food", animals, etc."

**I wonder** what God as a gift-giver says about God's character?

When you receive a gift, I wonder what you do with it?

Like any good gift, we are expected to take care of it, to help it maintain its best condition. The same is expected of Adam and Eve where God has asked them to enjoy and to nurture all life within the garden. Today, God invites us to be like Adam and Eve and love and care for the gifts of life around us. In doing so, we are a gift to those around us.

**I wonder** what good gifts God is inviting you (and your family) to look after and to love?

**I wonder** if you know that you are a very good gift from God?

## Games

### Pass the Parcel

Purpose of this game, in relation to the message, is to emphasise sharing gifts and recognising that all gifts are from God.

In this game, all participants sit in a circle. The parcel contains a gift within many layers of wrapping and is passed around from person to person. If you wish, use music to keep time as the parcel is passed in the circle. In other words, the passing begins when

the song is switched on and ends when the song is switched off. As soon as the music stops, the person holding the parcel removes the first layer of wrapping. The passing and unwrapping rhythm continues until the final layer is reached unveiling the surprise gift.

Typically, when Pass the Parcel is played, the person who reaches the gift gets to keep it for themselves. Given that this week's message reflects God as the ultimate creator who has gifted all things to us to delight in and to share with one another, it would be fitting to place an inclusive gift within the wrapping (i.e. something that everyone can eat or engage with together), suggesting that it could be shared among the group. Consider inviting the person opening the final layer to pass along the gift to someone else. If they choose not to, prompt them to ponder and reflect on how the parcel could better represent a gift from God.

Following the game, regroup the kids for a circle time discussion asking them how they felt playing the game. Did they feel excluded from getting the "good gift"? How did they feel having to pass along the "good gift"? What would they have done if they received the "good gift"? How would they feel if they didn't pass along the "good gift"? How would they feel if they did?

For deeper discussion: Do the kids agree that all good gifts come from God? What are some "good gifts" God has placed in our lives? Do we deserve these good gifts? Why do some people miss out on the "good gifts"? How do we care for the good gifts so that everyone can enjoy them?

## Activities

### Scavenger Hunt

Purpose is to identify the gifts of creation all around us.

*Instructions:*

Create a clue sheet marking different points around the property of the place where you meet. Put the kids into smallish sized teams (i.e. two or three) and send them out with the clue sheet and a container in



which they can place the gifts they have found.

When time runs out or when one or two teams have completed the scavenger hunt, bring everyone back together. Ask for volunteers to speak to their favourite “gift” they found and then ask them to choose someone with whom they will share it.

### **Making a treat**

Consider making a treat that can be gifted to your church’s morning tea time for that morning or to other members of the community. Before beginning the treat making process, introduce the origin and production processes (including people involved) of each of the ingredients to the kids. Talk about the value of each ingredient and the value of each living thing that contributed to creating that ingredient into how we see it now.

### **Colouring pages**

An ongoing activity

## **Takeaway Activities for Families**

- Suggest families keep their eyes out for gifts of creation at home, on the way to school, at school, at a sports game, at the beach, etc. and name these gifts as they see them.
- Food is one of the most delightful gifts from God. When you sit down for a meal as a family, thank God for the food before you and all the steps (and people) it took to get the food to your table. As you eat, practice mindfulness and notice the different flavours and textures of your food. Go around the table and share one thing you appreciate or are grateful for about the food you are eating. Take time to show love and support for one another while you appreciate the food that nourishes your bodies.
- Decide with your family how you can give a gift to someone this week. Perhaps this means gifting your time or energy to serving in your local soup kitchen. Perhaps this means baking a treat for your next door neighbour. Perhaps this means sewing a string of bunting and gifting it to someone who has just moved house. Perhaps this means holding a special gift exchange with the people living in your house. Whatever gift you attempt, do so with respect and conscious concern for the people and land that was used to provide each element of your gift.

## Week 5

# We can be Good Samaritans to the Earth

### Story

**Luke 10:25-37.** Today's story is about the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

### Message

God desires for us to show love and compassion towards creation, especially the places that have been the most harmed and neglected. I wonder what places on the Earth have been harmed and neglected? I wonder why these places have been so damaged?

Through the story of the Good Samaritan, God teaches us a direct way we can actively respond to harmful behaviour. As we heard in the story, being a Good Samaritan means doing something for someone else without expecting that person to do anything for you in return. It means showing generous kindness, going out of your own way to show love and concern for someone who is hurting. God has created each of us to genuinely love each other as our own brothers and sisters. When one of our brothers or sisters is hurting, we ask if they need help and do our best to help and comfort them.

We can also be Good Samaritans to the earth, as if it were our brother or our sister. I wonder what it looks like to be a Good Samaritan to the Earth? Remember a couple of weeks ago, we talked about creation as a gift from God. I wonder what God thinks when God sees God's gift being destroyed?

When we offer ourselves as Good Samaritans to the earth, we are not only caring for the earth and its creatures, but we are also caring for the people that rely on the wellness of the earth. We all rely on clean water to drink and clean air to breathe. We must take care to protect our waterways from pollutants like toxic chemicals from farms concentrating in streams, choking tuna (eels), and contaminating fresh drinking water (Caritas, 2018 Taranaki example pg 39). When a river is contaminated, the people who drink and eat from it will get sick. For 160 years, Whanganui iwi asked the government to be Good Samaritan to the Whanganui river and in 2017 the government finally granted the river the same legal rights as humans.

On top of that, we have been given the honour and

the responsibility to do this task every day. The truth is that we are all dependent on the wellness of the earth and therefore need to be listening and looking to see how we can be Good Samaritans to those near to us and, as best we can, to those in other parts of the world.

**I wonder** in what ways we can practice paying attention to cries for help from those near and far from us?

### Games

**Good Samaritan Race** (without any emphasis on it being a winning type of game)

Form teams of four. Choose one person from each team to be the hurt man who was robbed and beaten on his way to Jericho. Have the hurt people lie on the floor at the end of the room opposite their teams. Give each team a supply of 10 to 15 adhesive bandages (or something else that can be reused... say strips of fabric) and a cup of water.

On "go," teams race with their supplies to their hurt team members. The goal is to put 10 bandages (bits of fabric) on the hurt neighbour, give him or her a drink of water, and carry the person back to the starting point.

Once every team has accomplished this, gather everyone together for circle time and reflect on the connections made between the bible story and the game. Consider asking, "How did you feel when you were helping the hurt person? If you were the hurt person, how did you feel while you were being helped? How would you feel if you were hurt like the man in the parable and no one stopped to help you? What do you think Jesus meant when he said, 'Love your neighbour as yourself'? What can you do to help others in need?"

### Good Apples

Tell the children that some time will be spent finding out about how people are the same and how they are different. Put apples on a table in front of the group. Have each child choose an apple. Tell them to get to know their apple really well. Feel the wrinkles

and ridges, smell the skin, look at the patterns and colours. Suggest they notice their apple's special characteristics. Have them make up a story about their apple and tell it to a friend. Allow the kids to share their stories with the rest of the group. Direct the kids to return their apples to the table in front of the class.

Mix the apples up and ask the students to come back and find their apple. Ask how they knew which apple was theirs (they will indicate things like colour, size, shape, special features). Ask what this has to do with people. Make a list of how people are different. Discuss why this is important. Make a list of how people are the same. Discuss why this is important. The lists may be done in cooperative groups and then shared with the large group.

### *Tying it All Together*

Summarize the importance of individual differences and similarities in people. Suggest that one way in which all people are similar is that they all have a star inside them (something special that makes them shine, that they especially like about themselves), just like each apple has a star inside it. Cut each apple in half (through the center, aligned with the stem). Let each child see the star inside their apple. While the children eat the apple, allow them to share something about their star, their strengths, their individuality.

## **Activities**

### **Simple words or actions of kindness**

Create something that can be shared at church morning tea (or another church gathering). Perhaps this looks like making something to display on the altar for next service. Take some time as a group to pray about people in the church who may be hurting or needing more love. Discuss how you can support them. Perhaps this looks like writing a note that reminds them of God's love for them.

### **Sharing the harvest**

If you've started growing vegetables in the garden, consider harvesting some to give away to parishioners or neighbours. Bless them with the gifts of the earth - the gifts of Creator and Provider God!

## **Takeaway for Families**

- Adopt a section of the street or a street corner near your home which you can resolve to monitor and maintain for all to enjoy. Pray for the people and creatures who most utilise that space. Ask God to help keep you alert to the needs of that environment and those who live in it or pass through it. Determine a practical way to support or engage with that environment and those people and creatures.
- Focus your prayer this week on those in your church, neighbourhood, or school communities. Ask God to reveal those who may be hurting and pray for God's nearness to them. Think about practical and simple ways you can extend God's love to them.
- Resolve to practices of distancing from your devices. In order to notice, we typically need to put away our devices, the things that most often disconnect us from each other. Although, we know there are also real benefits to our devices, we just need to be more selective about when, where, and how we use them. There are so many gifts in the present moment - we have to be attentive to notice them. If we are not attentive, we might miss an opportunity to be a Good Samaritan. Discuss as a family what it might be like to go without your devices for a day. Set family goals to eliminate device usage during the week. Reflect your experiences and observations back to each other. I wonder what you noticed. I wonder how your behaviour changed. I wonder what you heard from God.

TERM 3 / WEEK 3 ORDINARY TIME  
**Green Season**



● **You will need**

Green cloth, candle, prayer piece. You may want to put a potplant or green leaves in the middle of the circle with the candle from Tuesday onwards.

● **Focus**

Place a candle in the middle of the circle on the green cloth. Talk about it “coming alive” as you light it. Remind them that when we light the candle, it’s a sign we’re going to pray. Teach the new greeting from Psalm 8.

● **Greeting**

Teacher: Lord our God

**Students: Your greatness fills all the world.**

● **Prayer for the day**

See below.

● **Collect**

God who made the whole world,

Thank you for making us.

Fill us with your love so we can grow and grow  
into the people you want us to be.

Amen.

● **Close**

Teacher: Lord our God

**Students: Your greatness fills all the world.**

# Prayers for each day

## Monday

What colour cloth is our candle on? Do we always use a green cloth? *See if they can remember the white cloth or red cloth.* The colours we use show the special church season we are in. Church seasons aren't like summer, winter, autumn and spring. They are shaped around Jesus' life and our life with Jesus. What do you think of when you see the colour green? *Gather ideas.* One reason we use this colour for most of the weeks from Pentecost to Advent is that it's a colour for growing. This is the time we read the Bible and grow in what we know and how we live. So, everyone curl up as small as you can. Imagine you're a little seed. Now, feel the warmth of God's love seep into you, and slowly, slowly, uncurl and grow up and up and up! How does that feel? Let's pray. *Pray the Collect.*

## Tuesday

What sorts of things grow from seeds? *Take answers.* If you were a seed, what would you like to grow into? *Take answers - and maybe ask why they've chosen those things.* God must have had lots of fun thinking up all those different plants and trees and flowers. We know he looked at them all and thought, "These are good!" Think of something that grows that you're glad God made. We'll pass the prayer piece around and you can pray, Thank you God for...

## Wednesday

Can plants be happy? *Discuss!* When God

filled the world with life, he gave it to plants as well as animals and people. We don't really know if plants can be happy, but the Bible talks about trees clapping their hands for joy because of God. Do you ever see a tree clapping its hands? When? It's good to think of all of creation praising God with us. Someone put those words of the Bible to music. *If you have time, learn this song - <https://bit.ly/3iEYPU6>*

## Thursday

What do seeds need to grow? Sunshine and water and soil. We are like seeds, too. Our soil is our home - our family - our school - the people who love us. The water is like God's Holy Spirit pouring into us and refreshing us. And the sunshine? Jesus is the Son of God, and it is his love that gives us the energy to grow. We can think of Son-shine! So let's pretend we're a seed again. Curl up small. Then think about God's Holy Spirit pouring into you like refreshing water. Think of the love of Jesus, the Son, warming you and filling you with life. Start to grow... and grow... and grow... And everyone say together, "Thank you God!"

## Friday

God's life and God's greatness is in all the world, in all living, growing things. Let's think about all the living, growing things and people we've come across this week. *Pass the prayer piece around.* You may want to pray for someone or something, "Dear God, please bless...". Or you may want to say thank you. "Thank you God for..."

## Week 4

# God creates humans to be priests (caretakers) of the earth, God's temple

## Story

**Genesis 2:4-8, 18-23**

Today's story is about God making Adam and Eve

## Message

Remember last week we talked about creation as a good gift from God. We also talked about how we can be gifts to creation, and to each other. Do you remember? That's right, we can be gifts in the ways we love and care for the earth.

Like Adam and Eve, we are chosen by God to be caretakers of creation. From the creation story in the book of Genesis we are given an image of creation that is likened to God's temple. In the Jewish tradition, the temple is a sacred place of prayer and worship, similar to that of a church in the Christian tradition. Though there are many people who look after the maintenance or the cleanliness of the church space, priests play a particular role in taking care of the church.

What do you know about priests?

Unlike other types of caretakers, priests have the privilege of praying for others and leading them closer to God. They wholly devote their lives to listening well to God, gifting God's truth and love to other people, and proclaiming God's goodness wherever they see it. They connect people to God, earth to heaven. Not only this, but they open up opportunities for humans to connect with each other. So even if we are not priests of a church, we can still be priests of creation. This metaphor may become clearer when we imagine the earth as God's church, or in the context of the Jewish bible, the earth is God's temple.

**I wonder** how we can be priests of creation?

Think about the Bible story of Noah (Genesis 6). What does God ask of Noah?

God asked a huge favour of Noah to protect the diversity of creation. God asks Noah to sacrifice his plans and his desires for his life, and to take a risk in trusting God's plan to restore goodness in the earth. Noah accepts the invitation to protect and care for God's creation. He obeys by gathering his family, two

of every kind of creature, and lots of food onto an ark on which everyone lives together for forty days and forty nights until the earth is restored to its true goodness. Noah is priest within the ark.

Where do we often find priests? Yes, in churches! In churches, priests help us to feel more closely connected to God and to help us see what heaven is like. So in a sense, priests help bring heaven to earth.

**I wonder** what other spaces, like the church, bring heaven to earth?

Another example of a church-like space might be the garden. In the garden we learn to cooperate with plants and worms and rain and sun and grow food that then might feed hungry creatures. This shows us another one of God's churches: the table. At the table we can share a meal with food we have grown and people who are also deeply loved by God.

**I wonder** what other reasons God asks us to be priests of creation?

One big reason is because of love. God created all of us humans in God's own image. God can look like different things to different people, but we can all agree that God's main image is one of LOVE. If we are made in God's image and asked to be priests of creation, then we are made to express our actions through love - by loving God, by loving each other, by loving all of God's creation, and by loving ourselves. Through love we choose to take care of this earth that God has given us - we choose to satisfy thirsty plants, fill the hungry bellies of animals, and clean our streets from loose rubbish.

**I wonder** if you can think of living things that God has created?

*"There's dirt and leaves, trees and water. Have you ever thought that the earth is covered with God's love? Imagine all of the beautiful places in the world. Blue oceans with colorful fish. Big mountains covered with snow and trees. Now imagine the hand of God covering all of these things with his love. Where are you standing? Are you covered in God's love too? You bet you are!" - A Rocha USA*

## Game

### Encouraging connections

Purpose of this game, in relation to the message, is to emphasise how we can unite heaven and earth, by sharing God's love and truth to one another, which also unites us to one another in the family of God.

Gather everyone sitting together in a circle. Instruct one person to take the start of a ball of string and to choose a person to say one encouraging thing to. Once the starting person has finished talking they roll the string to the person they complemented. This receiving person then holds onto the string (keeping it taut between person to person), chooses a person to encourage and then rolls the string to them. This goes on until everyone has been encouraged and is holding onto some bit of the string (make sure you have enough string!!). The aim of the game is for everyone to receive the string at some point and to see at the end of the game how we connect to each other.

### Random Connections

Purpose of this game, in relation to the message, is to emphasise how God is creative in the way God connects all things to each other and that, that, creativity is purposeful.

In this game, create teams of 4-5. Provide a list of unrelated items that have been paired up. Ask all teams to write down any connections they can think of between the two seemingly unrelated objects. Once enough time has passed, ask teams to volunteer to share some of the connections they discovered.

## Activity

### Creating altars/sacred spaces

Create a diorama or a set-up. Encourage participants to include whatever items remind them of their role as priests, caring for creation.

Items needed:

- Scissors
- Coloured paper
- Colouring implements
- Glue
- Small objects found in nature

### Drawing or collaging

Create the most extraordinary garden you can imagine using coloured pencils, felts, paint, magazine cut-outs, pieces of nature found outside, etc.

Alternatively, provide garden or nature-abundant colouring sheets. Visit the Wellington Anglican Diocese Young Person's Pinterest page for options.

### Practice gardening!

Is there a bit of green space at your church on which you can establish a small garden? If not at your church, try somewhere else in the community. Perhaps there is a nearby community garden or pre-established gardening initiative you can encourage the children and their families to support as a church collective. Alternatively, join a bush regeneration working bee.

## Takeaway for Families

- Priests are very good at praying for the people around them. Prayer provides an opportunity for us to express God's love and truth to each other. It also encourages us to imagine how we can orient our behaviour in a better expression of God's love towards everything around us. This week, with your family, spend some time praying for each other and for creation. As you pray, consider asking God to reveal images or words that God would like members of your family to hear. Perhaps write your prayers on pieces of paper and display in a prominent place in your house so each person can be reminded of the encouragement gifted to them. See the Pinterest page for more ideas.
- We can also be priests of creation by acknowledging our deep connection to all other created things. In the Genesis story, we learn that everything was created by the same one God and from the same place - the dust of the earth. Therefore, we conclude that we are all part of one family. God is the Creator of all and has created each thing to live in harmony and at peace with each other. Like our own families, we choose to love and look out for each other. How can you be a priest to your family this week? Share with your family how you are seeing God in creation.
- Offer each family to take home a seedling and care for it in their homes.

**Find more resources at  
[movementonline.org.nz/seasonofcreation](https://movementonline.org.nz/seasonofcreation)**

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