



Setting a Place at the Table Living our Missionary Call

The Care of Creation

Spring is a perfect time to continue to educate our children and youth on the Catholic Social teaching Care of Creation. Children can see what the lack of care for creation can do to the world and their back yards. Litter and pollution, the lack of clean water for so many in the world are constant reminders to all of us. Catholic Social Teaching demands that we care for all of his creation. The earth belongs to all of us and to future generations. God expects us to care for it, and pass it on to the next generation.

VERY QUICK SUMMARY

Our Catholic Social Teaching tells us we must care for the earth. The U.S. Catholic Bishops say, "Care of the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan, it is a requirement of our Faith."

Creation, all of it is a gift from God our Creator; it has been given to us in trust. Care of creation is more than recycling our soda cans. (Although that is a good thing to do) It includes using our resources in a manner that allows others to have the same resource. It is purchasing items that have minimal packaging and are not transported for more miles than necessary. We also must encourage manufacturers through the power of our purchases that we do care about how the items we buy are made. We need to pick up our trash

and recycle as much as we can, thinking about how items are made and if they could be made in a more environmentally friendly manner.

Globally, those who live in poverty, in developing countries, young children, are victims of poor environmental practices. Often environmental restrictions are not strict in undeveloped areas. The land and air are exploited, and in turn the people are exploited, once again it is women and especially children, suffer the most.



Key Terms

Ecology, means "the study of the household" so it is the study of the household, their neighbors, and their neighborhood.

Dominion, to exercise care and responsibility for God's domain, particularly in the interest of those who are poor and marginalized.
(Thee Stewardship of Creation by Russell A. Butkus)

Stewards, are caretakers for the things of God, are called to use wisely and distribute justly the goods of God's earth to meet the needs of God's children. *(U.S. Bishops)*

Fast Facts to Share

- If just 25% of U.S. families used 10 fewer plastic bags a month we would save over 2.5 billion dollars a year.
- 140 million cars in the U.S. travel 4 billion miles a day and use 200 million gallons of gas.
- Every ton of recycled bags saves 380 gallons of oil.
- Over 100 pesticide ingredients are known to cause diseases such as cancer and birth defects
- Every day 50-100 species of plants and animals become extinct

Quick and Easy Lesson Plan Idea # 1

Any age

Making a Worm Farm

- 1) Discuss with the students the coming of Spring and the importance of taking care of the soil. Talk about the fragility of the soil and what happens when the soil is not given proper care, such as growing the same crop year after year, overuse of pesticides and chemical fertilizers. The soil is depleted when used for the same crop over and over; Chemical fertilizers and pesticides poison the soil and kill beneficial insects if used too often or inappropriately.
- 2) Read or ask a student to read the story "The Chicken and the Worm" available from Heifer International. Ask the children if anyone has a compost pile or bin.
<https://www.heifer.org/readtofeed/resources/support-materials/the-chicken-and-the-worm.html>
- 3) Ask the children how worms help the soil and how compost helps the soil. Ask the children if they have any type of garden or flower beds, perhaps there is a child that lives on a farm. Ask for input on what can be done to take care of the earth in their "backyard"
- 4) Students can watch some good videos on You Tube. There are several that explain the care of the earth in kid friendly terms.
- 5) Talk with the children about how God wants us to treat the earth. Or tell them a simple version of the creation story. (example at the end of the lessons) Depending on the age of the students you could simply say God wants us to take care of the soil so there will be enough food for people to eat and that there will be enough trees to help provide oxygen for us to breathe. You may prefer to discuss some of the Church Documents or Scripture references. (resources at the end of the lessons)
- 6) Tell younger children that the earth is holy and to take care of the earth makes God very happy. Older children may want to read and memorize the last of the 7 Principles of Catholic Social Teaching, Care of Creation.
- 7) Talk to the children about the care of the earth has on people living in poverty. Explain that the people in developing countries and those that live in poverty are much more vulnerable to the effects of

pollution and the wasting of the worlds' resources. They can not access fresh water, they can not purchase food or even seeds to grow food, and they may not have a place to grow food. Tell them it may not seem as though we are helping someone in another country when we do not use bottled water or choose a Fair Trade product, however, we are because we are using less of our precious resources and we are allowing people to support themselves through our purchases.

Finish the lesson by creating a worm farm. For this you will need a Rubbermaid container any size is okay, it depends on the size of worm farm you want to make newspaper torn into strips, dry leaves, grass clippings or compost, eggshells, coffee grounds, tea bags, banana peels, worms (purchase at bait store or dig them up in your garden). Poke or drill holes 1 inch above the bottom and top of the bin and in the cover about 2 inches apart. Layer shredded newspapers and other materials about half way up, gently place the worms on the top and gently lay a layer of paper, mulch... over the worms, sprinkle water over the top and put on the cover. You can add compost materials, but be sure to add equal amounts of dry and wet dry such as egg shells, coffee grounds; leaves grass clippings and wet banana peels, potato, apple peelings. If it looks to dry you can add small amounts of water. Soon you will have beautifully composted soil. You can either use it to plant some vegetables or donate it to a community garden.

Quick and Easy Lesson Plan # 2 **(All ages)**

Key Term

Carbon footprint: is the amount of greenhouse gas caused by a person or an event.

Top 10 Reasons to Care for Creation

1. God is the Creator of the Universe and maintains its existence through an ongoing creative will.

2. God has blessed and called "very good" all that is created.
3. God's plan for Creation is one of harmony and order. Creation forms a whole, a cosmos.
4. God loves the community of life.
5. God's creatures share a common home.
6. God's presence is discernable in all Creation.
7. God intends the Earth's goods to be equitably shared.
8. Within Creation, the human person enjoys a consummate dignity. Inherent to this dignity is that of exercising a wise and just stewardship over the rest of Creation.
9. Sin brought division into the entire world, but not only within and between human persons. The consequences of sin also affect the Earth.
10. In a mysterious way, Christ's redemptive mission extends to all of Creation.

(Source: Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha Conservation Center www.conservation.catholic.org)



- 1) Ask the children if they have ever given a gift to someone, how did they pick it out, was it something the person really needed or wanted? Now ask them how they would feel if that person did not take good care of it or even just threw it down and forgot about it. Then ask them how do you think God feels when we do not take care of the earth, the awesome gift he has given to us.

- 2) Share The Top 10 Reasons to Care for the Earth with your class
- 3) For older children use the "Message of a Silent Spring: The Rachel Carson Story" from *Introducing Catholic Social Teaching to Children* by Anne Nueberger.
<http://www.anneneuberger.com/books-and-articles/to-act-justly>.
- 4) For younger children continue with the idea of the world being a gift from God.
- 5) Ask the children to think of ways we can show our appreciation to God for his gift.
 - Turn off lights and appliances when you leave the room
 - Unplug your cell phone as soon as it is charged
 - Turn off the water when you brush your teeth
 - Dry your clothes outside when possible

Use biodegradable soap and shampoo. You can and you can use items such as vinegar, baking soda, salt, and other common household ingredients to make them. Remind your students **they should never make these products on their own, but have mom or dad help them.** Not only will it be better for the environment, it will save lots of money! Here are some recipes for cleaning your home. Recipes follow

Liquid Cleaner

1/2c. baking soda

1/4 cup vinegar

2 cups hot water

1/4 t dish soap

Mix until baking soda is dissolved and put it in a spray bottle. Use it anytime you would use a spray cleaner.

Baking soda can be used instead of scouring powder

Drain Cleaner

1/2 cup of baking powder

1/2 cup vinegar

Pour baking powder then vinegar down the drain, allow to sit for 15 minutes and then run hot water down the drain.

Fabric Softener

2 cups vinegar

2 cups baking soda

4 cups warm water

20 drops of essential oil (lavender, rose, whatever you like) if desired

Put this in a jar and shake until baking soda is dissolved. Use $\frac{1}{4}$ cup per load in the final rinse.

Window Cleaner

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup vinegar

1T cornstarch

2 cups warm water

Mix until cornstarch is dissolved. Put in a spray bottle and use as you would with any spray cleaner.

- 6) Talk to the children about the impact our actions have. The use of chemicals and pesticides are one way we do not take care of God's gift. These actions affect the vulnerable among us because often people working in orchards and farms with these chemicals live in or near poverty. In many developing nations people work in conditions that are not safe, many times there are no regulations to stop companies from polluting the air and the land. One way to combat this is to buy Fair Trade and organic items in the store. Emphasize that God wants and expects us to try to take care of the earth, in age appropriate language.
- 7) Create a footprint large or small the child may print his/her name on it and some things s/he will do to make their carbon footprint smaller.



Scriptural Foundations

Genesis 1:1-31 "In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth"...

Genesis 2:15 "Then the Lord God took the man into the Garden of Eden to cultivate and care for it".

Leviticus 10:14 "Think! The heavens even the highest heavens belong to the Lord, your God as well as, the earth and everything on it."

Psalms 24:1-2 "The earth is the Lord's and all it holds, the world and those who live there. For God founded it upon the seas, established it on the rivers."

Matthew 5:1-12 The Beatitudes

Luke 6:20-26 Sermon on the Plain

Papal Encyclicals and Church Documents

Laudato Si: On Care for our Common Home (Pope Francis Encyclical Letter)

(http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)

Sollicitudo Rei Socialis 27.1, 28, 29, 30, 36, 37

Caritas in Veritate 48, 51

Redemptor Hominis 16.2, 16.4

Populorum Progressio "It is not wrong to want to live better, what is wrong is a style of life which is presumed to be better when it is directed toward having rather than being"
Centesimo's Annals (36)

Other Resources

www.catholicclimatecovenant.org (for the St. Francis Pledge)

www.heifer.org

www.columban.org/missioned (free lesson plans and videos)

www.maryknoll.org

www.usccb.org

<https://togoforth.org/2015/06/18/pope-francis-new-encyclical/>



Books and Videos

Old Turtle by Douglas Wood

The Lorax by Dr. Suess

My Side of the Mountain by Jean Craig George

If the World Were a Village by David J. Smith

The Barefoot Book of Earth Tales by Dawn Casey and Anne Wilson