

Caring for Creation



OUR ROLE IN
GOD'S PLAN
FOR THE
EARTH



A 4-SESSION **BIBLE STUDY**

CRLDD

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Introduction

We are a thoroughly “plugged in” people. Laptops, smartphones and tablets give us the lowdown on local and global news. We are constantly plugged in to the virtual world of email and social media. Yet, there is a problem: Although we are thoroughly connected to cyberspace, we are utterly disconnected from the physical space in which we live. We know cyberculture better than agriculture. We know more about Twitter than the birds twittering about on tree limbs in our backyard. We contemplate the World Wide Web far more often than an actual spider web. We are offline to the wonders of God’s creation.

Though we do not always recognize it, we live amongst creatures with unique capacities, personalities and needs. This study challenges participants to rediscover the wonders of God’s creation and renew their connection to the created world. To help us get back online with creation, this study will examine what Scripture teaches about caring for creation. Each session begins by exploring key Scripture verses in context. Then we discuss how these verses might be applied faithfully in our modern context. Each session concludes with a prayer that God might help us reconnect and better care for his creation.

How to Use

AS A BIBLE STUDY

One way to use this resource is as a four-session Bible study at church on Sundays or a weekday or at home in a small group. Make copies of each week's session for each participant to use and fill in answers on their own. Call on various participants to read aloud the Scripture texts printed herein. Encourage participants, as they feel comfortable, to share their personal stories related to the questions, discussion topics or the concept of caring for creation in general, and invite them to take part in the assignments at the ends of every session. This study can be done any time of the year.

AS A RETREAT

Another way to offer this resource is as the framework for a weekend or midweek summer retreat. Invite participants to gather for an all-day or multiday event at a retreat center, convention hall or church camp for relaxation and refreshment in God's creation. The four sessions could be spread out and used throughout the day or days of the retreat, along with other community-building activities (hikes, swimming, canoeing, sing-alongs, campfires, cookouts, ice breakers, board games, etc.). Perfect for men's or women's group events.

AS A PERSONAL DEVOTION

This resource can also be used as a guide for personal devotion for a week or several weeks over the summer or any time of year. The format of this study allows space for personal journaling and the recording of faith moments related to caring for creation or other instances in which a person is in touch with nature. This is a helpful tool to instill a routine for regular spiritual reflection on God's Word.

Community of Creation

God's Plan for Creation

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious God, your hands lovingly formed the heavens and the earth. You carved out spaces and filled them with countless creatures. Guide our thinking and acting as we relate to the world around us. Teach us to be mindful of the creatures you have created. Grant us the wisdom that is needed in order for us to lead lives of careful dominion. Amen.

HYMN

(Tune: Royal Oak)

All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful: The Lord God made them all.

Each little flower that opens, each little bird that sings,
He made their glowing colors, he made their tiny wings.

All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful: The Lord God made them all.

The purple-headed mountains, the river running by,
The sunset and the morning that brightens up the sky.

All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful: The Lord God made them all.

The cold wind in the winter, the pleasant summer sun,
The ripe fruits in the garden, he made them every one.

All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful: The Lord God made them all.

(cont.)

The tall trees in the greenwood, the meadows where we play,
The rushes by the water, to gather every day.

All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful: The Lord God made them all.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE ISSUE

Out of nothing God made everything. He carved out spaces and filled them. He filled creation with the sun and moon, birds and marine creatures. He filled the land with an array of animals and creepy crawly things. Lastly, he made two human creatures to watch over the entire creation and ensure that all of his creatures flourished.

On the seventh day, he declared it was all very good. God liked what he had made! Peace, harmony and interdependence filled every corner of creation. Everything was working together as he had intended. This session explores God's perfect plan for creation.

TOPIC FOR SHARING/ICEBREAKER

Where is the most perfect place you have ever been? What made that place so ideal? How do you think that place compared to the paradise of Eden that God first created?

CONTEXT QUESTIONS

1. Consider when humans enter into the creation narrative of Genesis. Is there a reason why God might have created humans last?

2. Are there other places in Scripture that provide further details of creation?

HYMN

(Tune: St. Gertrude)

Christ shall have dominion, over land and sea,
Earth's remotest regions shall his empire be.
They that wilds inhabit shall their worship bring,
Kings shall render tribute, nations serve our King.

Christ shall have dominion, over land and sea,
Earth's remotest regions shall his empire be.

When the needy seek him, he will mercy show;
Yea, the weak and helpless shall his pity know;
He will surely save them from oppression's might,
For their lives are precious in his holy sight.

Christ shall have dominion, over land and sea,
Earth's remotest regions shall his empire be.

Ever and forever shall his name endure;
Long as suns continue it shall stand secure;
And in him forever all men shall be blest,
And all nations hail him King of kings confessed.

Christ shall have dominion, over land and sea,
Earth's remotest regions shall his empire be.

Unto God Almighty joyful Zion sings;
He alone is glorious, doing wondrous things.
Evermore, ye people, bless his glorious name,
His eternal glory through the earth proclaim.

Christ shall have dominion, over land and sea,
Earth's remotest regions shall his empire be.

