
Environment Workshop

This workshop would be best suited to a setting close by a park, a beach or a local garden. Much of it involves being outside and working with natural products so please keep this in mind when setting a date for your workshop.

WELCOME:

(5 min)

Welcome all participants, and introduce yourself.

Explain the format of the day and any house-keeping/safety announcements.

Begin by outlining the Learning Intentions. You may like to display these so that you can refer to them throughout the session.

LEARNING INTENTIONS:

As Catholics, we understand that our earth and everything on it and in it is connected and our individual choices affect our earth and others who Share it.

As Catholics, we are asked to be kaitiaki – guardians/stewards and to care for our shared earth.

As Catholic, we live with the hope that God has a plan and that we are asked to participate in that plan.

"The Spirit of God has filled the universe with possibilities and therefore from the heart of things, something new can always emerge."

- Ladauto Si' #80

INTRODUCTION:

(30 minutes)

(Material Needed: A copy of the treasure hunt for each group and pens, a prayer table set up with a green cloth, a globe and a candle.)

"And God saw everything that God had made, and behold, it was very good"

Genesis 1:30

God is love, and God is in everything. God is in everything from the stars in the sky to the huhu grubs in the trees, to the earth in which the trees grow. God brought this world into being because of love for us, and God maintains our world through love. The big bang that ignited the earth is an explosion of that love, God is the beginning the middle and the end.

This is a huge idea and one that takes time to unwrap. This workshop is about us looking at our world and living in this earth differently, with more respect and love. Pope Francis wants us to fall in love with the earth again so that we can have a real connection to it. If we love something we want to care and look after it.

To begin our session today we are going to go outside on a scavenger hunt. As we are searching for the items take time to appreciate ALL of the gifts of the earth that God has given us. Also note that the word 'house' the 6th word down on the right-hand side is in inverted commas. Try and find an animal or insect house. If every group has a cell phone available they might like to take photographic evidence to share after.

Encourage the groups to bring back one item to put onto the prayer table.

When everyone arrives back from the hunt, allow some time to share amazing discoveries or interesting finds.

To end this section share a brief prayer.

To set up: Sit everyone in a circle with the prayer table at the front or in the centre.

- Light the candle


SAY: Our earth is gift, a gift from God who loves us. Often, we take it for granted and do not stop to think how grateful we are for it and for what it provides.

- Invite the groups to bring up one of their discoveries from the scavenger hunt and place it on the table.
- Back in the circle invite everyone to share something that they are grateful for.
Thank you for the gift of water or I am grateful for the gift of fresh air.
- Go around the whole group, and if someone feels uncomfortable about offering a prayer in front of others allow them to tap the knee of the next person to pass.

SAY: We share this wonderful world with so many other people. We ask you God to help us remember that it is all connected and that our actions and choices effect other people. Give us the courage to make wise choices that show we care for the earth and those who live on it.


- Finish by praying the Glory Be prayer together.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be world without end. Amen




NATURE SCAVENGER HUNT

FLOWER	CLOUDS
TALLEST TREE	A DROP OF WATER
SPIDER WEB	ROUGH BARK
BUG	A SEED
ROCKS	A FEATHER
BIRD	A 'HOUSE'
GREEN LEAF	STICK
BROWN LEAF	SOMETHING STRANGE
WORM	FOOD
A TREASURE	



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ICE BREAKER GAMES:

(30 minutes)

We're all tied up in this together.

(Material Needed: a ball of string)

- This warm up games illustrates how we are all connected and that our actions affect others to carrying degrees.

To set up: Get everyone to sit in a circle facing the centre.

- Tell everyone your name and something interesting about yourself
- Holding the string tightly toss the ball to someone else in the circle who has not yet received it.
- The string needs to be held firmly at all times, above the ground.
- Continue until everyone has received the string once and has told the groups their name and something about themselves.

General Discussion:

- Ask everyone to notice that we are all connected. In this game it is with a piece of string, but in real life it might be because of where we live, of our school, our human needs, clubs or family connections etc.
- Ask one person to pull on the string firmly. Discuss what happens. (Notice that some people are more effected than others. Relate this to choices we make in life. Sometimes it is easy to see who is effected when we make choices and at others times it is hard to know how our choices affect others ... but they ALWAYS do.)
- Now step into the middle of the string knot and cut the string. Then ask everyone to put tension on it. Discuss what happens. (Notice how when one relationship breaks down it affects us all. It's important for us to know that we need to support each other.)

We are connected

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11LNy8IOg8Y> Hola Hoop game

(Material Needed: a hoop)

- If you have a really large group you may want to split into two and either have a race or time each team to see who can work together to get the hoop around the group the fastest

To set up: Get everyone to stand in a circle holding hands with the person beside them.

Place the hola hoop over the clasped hands of two people. The object of the game is to stay connected the whole time and pass the hoop around the circle.

To make it more difficult you might like to introduce a rope tied into a loop about the same size as the hoop and have it moving around the circle in the opposite direction so that they have to pass each other at some stage.

Note that to achieve the goal we cannot separate ourselves from the whole group and we have to work together. Our care for creation is very much the same. If we all work together we can achieve the goal of caring for our planet.

DISCUSSION:

(15-20 min)

To encourage a focus on the topic of Care for Our Common Home. Ask the families to sit in smaller groups and share some observations about the environment. Here are some focus questions.

- Who/what do you see around you that takes care of the earth?
(Gardeners, rubbish collectors, people who recycle, people who use natural products, the supermarkets not using plastic bags, governments investing in waste recycling ...)
 - What type of things do you see people doing that show they love creation?
(Walking on the beach in the garden, hiking, mountain climbing, diving, gardening, eco-tourism, watching sunsets, feeding the ducks, playing at the beach)
 - How often do you ask for things that you don't really need?
(Do you want things because you see others with them? What do you think the world would be like without advertising?)
 - Look around your house do you have lots of extra things that you just don't use?
(TV's, computers, games, shoes, soft toys)
 - Do you see how people are effected by the choices you make?
(Think about buying cheap things, having long showers, the amount of waste you create)
 - Do you see how animals, wildlife and nature are effected by how humans live?
(Ocean animals that eat plastic, animals with nowhere to live, extinction, breeding animals)
 - What makes you happy? Is it having things, is it being with others, is it playing or spending time with family and friends?
 - How often do you get new things, use them for a while then forget about them?
 - Why do you think you can buy such cheap clothes and toys? What makes it possible for these things to be so cheap?
(Think about pollution, low paid labour, bad working conditions, short lived products)
 - Is this a good thing?
 - Do you need all the things you have or do you just want them? What makes you want them?
- (Consider the fact that every year children are exposed to over 40,000 adds on TV alone – this does not include social media! That is around 10 days a year!!!)
- Share something that you really love to do outside? (walk, swim, picnic)

(allow time for discussion between families/groups before sharing some responses)

GROUP WORK: OPTION 1

(60 min)

The group work will be creating shared pieces of art work.

(Material needed: You will need to be near a park or a beach or a playground where you can forage for pieces of trees, bark, stones etc that the groups can use to create their art. If you are not able to be outside due to weather try option 2)

Often when we create pieces of art we are so concerned about what they look like, we spend money on getting the best gear or the newest pens. Caring for the environment means looking at things differently, and considering how your choices effect the earth and others in it.

Your challenge today is to only use natural products to create piece of art that shows how we can love and care for the earth and share the resource with everyone.

Split the large groups into smaller groups so that they can work on groups pieces of art. Give each group 30-40 minutes to plan, collect and create their art.

Make sure you have enough time to share the art at the end and allow each group to present their pieces. Also ensure that you take photos of these to share among the group as a follow up.

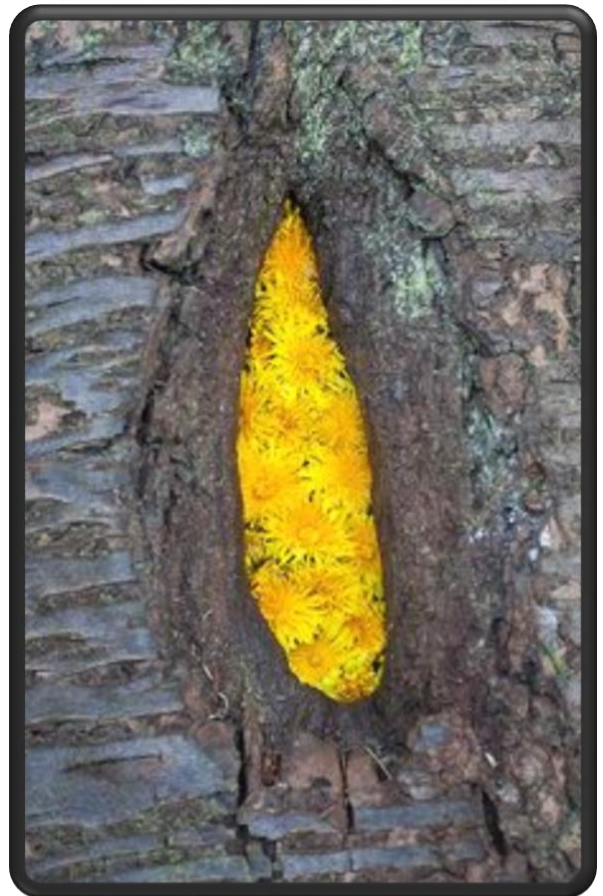
To start the ideas flowing share some of these images with them. If some of the group members are nervous with the idea of creating an image they can always create words using natural items.

HOPE LOVE PEACE SHARING









GROUP WORK: OPTION 2

(60 min)

The group work will be working on creating shared pieces of art work.

(Material needed: This option requires more organisation. You will need to collect as many natural products as you can before the session. Bark, leaves, pinecones, flowers, flax, seeds (popcorn), sticks, stones, acorns etc. that the groups can use to create their art. Create your art works on thick card and use PVA to stick them together. You may want to add some re-useable or recycled products to help with the creativity: paper towel rolls or string etc.)

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To start the ideas flowing share some of these images with them (see previous pages). If some of the group members are nervous with the idea of creating an image they can always create words using natural items.

HOPE LOVE PEACE SHARING

As they are working on their pieces of art – play quietly in the background Chris Skinner’s Awesome God song which they will learn next.

SONG:

(15 min)

(Materials needed: computer with song and sound system)

AWESOME GOD Chris Skinner

- *You may want to learn this song as a group*
- *Then break up into smaller groups to add actions to the verses.*
- *Return to the main group and sing through together with each group showing the actions they have created*

Awesome

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7aR0CvQSBA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ifqSo56VCs>

PRAYER SESSION:

(15 min)

(Material needed: Music for Wonderful World and Awesome God Chris Skinner, Bible to read scripture, prayer cards, a prayer table, with a cloth, a candle and a bowl of fresh water)

Prepare a prayer focus/table that is simple with a single large candle and a bowl of cool clear water, you may like to add a paua shell or something else naturally beautiful.

To begin this session, listen to song 'What a wonderful World'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vw3o6GQ2xe8>

Pope Francis in his letter to us called 'Laudato Si', reminds us all that Climate Change is a responsibility for all of us. But to be motivated, and to want to change, we need to fall in love with our world, to cherish her and be inspired by her. We need to shift the idea of climate change from head to heart. To do this it is important to spend time being in nature and appreciating its gifts. This helps us to understand just how connected we all are.

READ:

JOB 12:7-10

"But ask the animals, and they will teach you,
or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you;
or speak to the earth, and it will teach you,
or let the fish in the sea inform you.

Which of all these does not know
that the hand of the Lord has done this?
In his hand is the life of every creature
and the breath of all mankind.

Response: God of Creation, help us to love and care for our earth

We pray for the waters of the world,
that we can help care for them and bring them back to full health and make sure they are
full of life.

Response: God of Creation, help us to love and care for our earth

We pray for the earth,
that we may help keep it clean and free of pollution, and may we feed it so it can be healthy
and life giving.

Response: God of Creation, help us to love and care for our earth

We pray for all the amazing animals, insects and creatures that we share this earth with, may we care for their homes/habitats and help them to thrive.

Response: God of Creation, help us to love and care for our earth

We pray for everybody in our world who is effected by climate change.

Remind us that we are all connected and when one of us suffer we all suffer.

Response: God of Creation, help us to love and care for our earth

We pray for all human beings, that they may be encouraged to make a difference for the future of our world. Every little bit helps and our beautiful world is worth it.

Response: God of Creation, help us to love and care for our earth

Pray together this prayer from Laudato Si'

A prayer for our earth

All-powerful God,
you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your 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.

Finish by singing Awesome God

End with: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Wonderful prayer resource from Caritas: <https://caritas.org.nz/system/files/Prayer%20Booklet.pdf>

Conclusion:

(10 min)

To complete the work-shop finish off with a game or two

Getting to know You

(Materials needed: Blindfolds, a space with lots of trees)

- Put the children in pairs and partner them up with an adult.
- The children wear the blindfold, and are led the 'long confusing' way to a tree.
- The blindfolded child feels, smells, the tree until they think they really know it, and all its shapes and features.
- They are then led back to the starting place, the blindfold is removed, and they find 'their' tree.

Hawk eye

(Materials needed: A mixture of natural objects like feather, acorn, paua shell, pinecone etc, a large tray to put them on and a cloth to cover them all)

- Place all the objects on a tray and give everyone 30 seconds to remember what is on the tray
- Cover the objects and secretly remove one
- They children guess which one is removed.
- You may like to remove more than one, or even get them to list everything that's on the tray.

Feely Bag

(Materials needed: A mixture of natural objects like feather, acorn, paua shell, pinecone and a bag)

- Place one of the objects into the bag
- Choose a child to be the clue giver. They come up and feel the object until they know what it is
- Once they are familiar with it they describe the object to the detectives (the rest of the group) who guess what it is.
- The correct guesser gets the next go.

RESOURCES:

OUR LEARNING INTENTIONS

BEING GREEN

1. As Catholics, we understand that our earth and everything on it and in it is connected and our individual choices effect our earth and others who share it.
2. As Catholics, we are asked to be kaitiaki – guardians/stewards and to care for our shared earth.
3. As Catholic's we live with the hope that God has a plan and that we are asked to participate in that plan.

"The Spirit of God has filled the universe with possibilities and therefore from the heart of things, something new can always emerge."

- Ladauto Si' #80

WE ARE ALL CONNECTED

***We pray for the waters of the world,
that we can help care for them and bring them back
to full health and make sure they are full of life.***

READER 1

***We pray for the earth,
that we may help keep it clean and free of pollution,
and may we feed it so it can be healthy and life
giving.***

READER 2

***We pray for all the amazing animals, insects and
creatures that we share this earth with,
may we care for their homes/habitats and help
them to thrive.***

READER 3

***We pray for everybody in our world who is effected
by climate change.
Remind us that we are all connected and when one
of us suffer we all suffer.***

READER 4

We pray for all human beings, that they may be encouraged to make a difference for the future of our world. Every little bit helps and our beautiful world is worth it.

READER 5

The background of the page is a lush green fern frond. A dark green rectangular box is centered on the page, containing the title and the prayer text. The title 'A prayer for our earth' is written in a yellow, cursive script. The prayer text is in a white, sans-serif font, centered within the box.

A prayer for our earth

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and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
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O God of the poor,
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Bring healing to our lives,
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at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
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We thank you for being with us each day.
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