



## **UNDERSTANDING CREATION CARE IN EVERYDAY CONTEXTS**

**A FOUR WEEK SERIES ON CREATION CARE FOR YOUTH GROUPS:  
CREATION CARE IN THE KITCHEN  
CREATION CARE IN THE BATHROOM  
CREATION CARE IN THE BACKYARD  
CREATION CARE IN YOUR ELECTRONICS  
CREATION CARE AT HOME: COVID-19 BONUS LESSON**

**Help youth engage in conversation around faithful and responsible relationships with God's creation with weekly lessons that focus on different places where each of us can have a practical impact on caring for creation. Experiential, educational lessons will allow for conversation within your youth group, and hopefully within your church and greater community.**



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[www.minnesotaumc.org](http://www.minnesotaumc.org)

[www.minnesotaumc.org/hopefulearth](http://www.minnesotaumc.org/hopefulearth)

[www.minnesotaumc.org/youth-young-adult-ministries](http://www.minnesotaumc.org/youth-young-adult-ministries)

## Thank You!

Thank you for using this Creation Care resource to lead your youth group discussions. We hope that this will serve as a springboard for additional conversations within your church community about how our Christian faith shapes the way we relate to all God's creation, and how we all can be better stewards of the earth. The essential goal of creating this is to support youth engagement around faithful and responsible relationships with God's creation.

## How To Use

Read through the Creation Care packet. There are four lessons and one list of daily challenges. The weekly lessons focus on different places where each of us can have an impact on caring for creation: kitchen, bathroom, backyard, and electronics usage. Each item is designed for you to edit and adjust based on your group's size, the time you have to discuss, and the age or interest of the participants.

### Each week prior to your youth group gathering you should:

1. Read through the lesson and determine which components you will be using. Prep any materials ahead of time.
2. Pray for the students who will be participating. Remember that God is big enough to handle all our questions, all our doubts, and all our fears.
3. Look over the #CreationCareYouthChallenge list and select the challenge(s) you will be presenting to your group. You can give this list out ahead of time, you can pre-select the things you want the group to focus on, or you can integrate a challenge into the lesson. Feel free to brainstorm and present your own challenges too! The list included here are simply suggestions to help get started. These challenges are meant to enhance the weekly discussions by having students practice creation care in their own daily lives. We hope the hashtag #CreationCareYouthChallenge may be a fun way to share on social media how students and leaders are engaging the challenges throughout the series.
4. Each lesson instructs students to explore scripture. Encourage students to reflect with the discussion questions and add your own to best meet the needs of your students.
5. Each lesson also incorporates introduction games and investigative activities. These were designed to begin thinking about how our faith calls us to advocate for change and environmental responsibility. As the leader, lean into having the students ponder their role in creation care.

## Supplies Needed

**For all lessons: Copy of lesson for each leader, Bibles, scrap/recycled paper, pen/pencils**

### Lesson Specific:

<p><b>#1 - Creation Care in the Kitchen</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Master Chef food ingredients *Food suggestions: (should seem random, but when put together can be something awesome)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Tortilla Chips</li><li>○ Peanut Butter (check allergies)</li><li>○ Cookie crumbs</li><li>○ Cream Cheese</li><li>○ Pomegranate</li><li>○ Bacon</li><li>○ Chocolate Chips</li></ul></li><li>● Internet access/video projection/TV</li><li>● Paper (recycled)</li><li>● Hole Punches</li><li>● String</li><li>● Pieces of cardboard from food boxes for the booklet covers</li><li>● Markers</li><li>● Small Plastic Jars/ Bins- 1 per student's households</li><li>● Larger Diameter Nails</li><li>● Hammers</li><li>● Optional: Paint/ Sharpie Markers</li></ul>	<p><b>#2 - Creation Care in the Bathroom</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Cardboard tubes (recycled toilet paper/paper towel rolls)</li><li>● Scissors (one per group)</li><li>● Student cell phones/access to computers (for internet search)</li><li>● Markers/crayons</li><li>● Paper to make a poster (recycled if possible)</li><li>● Whiteboard/screen/large piece of scrap paper to write out brainstorm list</li></ul>
<p><b>#3 - Creation Care in the Backyard</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Whiteboard or large piece of paper</li><li>● Markers</li><li>● Copies of Genesis text (p. 27)</li><li>● Copies of Goal worksheet (p. 28)</li><li>● Student cell phones/access to computers (for internet search)</li></ul>	<p><b>#4 - Creation Care in your Electrics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Copies of "Energy in the Bible" handout (p. 34)</li><li>● Coin (quarter or nickel)</li><li>● 2 small balls (small objects easy to grab)</li></ul>

## **#CreationCareYouthChallenge**

We want students to engage in creation care everyday, not just when we meet formally within the walls of our churches. We believe that these challenges may help us all to develop new habits, creatively problem solve, find meaning in the lessons, and help to foster awareness about our impact on the environment. Read the list of suggested daily challenges and choose how to best share these with your students. You may choose to post one each day on your youth group social media platform or you may give the list out to students all at once. Regardless of how you share the challenges the goal is to get students to be actively experiencing creating change.

**To take each challenge one step further we invite you and your youth to use the following hashtag to help promote creation care and to connect with each other:**

#CreationCareYouthChallenge

## **Earth Day Activity and #CreationCareYouthChallenge Wrap Up**

We encourage you to plan a concluding youth group activity. Depending on when you start your lessons and daily challenges you may choose to create an Earth Day (April 22) or #CreationCareYouthChallenge wrap-up activity for your youth group.

**Special Note: If you are using this in the spring of 2020 we encourage all groups to participate in some Earth Day activity, project, or celebration. If you're willing to share, please let Isaiah know what you decide to do at [isaiah.friesen@minnesotaumc.org](mailto:isaiah.friesen@minnesotaumc.org)!**

## Daily Challenges: #CreationCareYouthChallenge

(also listed week-by-week at the end of each lesson)

### Week #1 - Kitchen/Food

- Keep track of all the trash you throw away for one week. What do you throw away? What do you recycle? What do you compost?
- If you have a backyard, start a composting bin or pile there. If you live in a place where it's hard to compost at home, see what you can learn about your city or your county's composting/organic waste recycling program.
- Pray for people and communities who do not have enough food; pray also for the farmers, farmworkers, restaurant workers, and family members who work to grow and prepare the food you eat.
- Donate to your local food pantry and ask how you can help out as a volunteer. Ask about local community gardens or other programs you could participate in that seek to make sure everyone is fed.
- Go a whole day without eating meat. Why not try 5 days? A week? A month? Reflect on the plant, animal, and human life energy given so we can eat meat, and what it means to honor this food as a gift from God.
- If you know someone in your church who farms or gardens, hunts or fishes, have a conversation with them about how a relationship with God impacts the way you each relate to the land, plants, and animals.
- Help make your family's meal plan for the week, OR, if you are already regularly responsible for this, invite someone else in your family to help you think through a meal plan that is nutritious and reduces food waste.

### Week #2 - Bathroom/Water

- Time how long you spend running water in the shower. How much water could you save by only using what you need to get clean?
- Look up your community's wastewater treatment system. Where is it located? How does it work?
- Are your hygiene products packed in recyclable materials, or do they have to go in the trash? See what you can find out about where these items go once you dispose of them.
- Write a letter to your state or federal legislator letting them know why protecting clean water for communities is important to you as a Christian
- Pray for the health of the rivers and lakes and groundwater in your region, and pray for communities worldwide who do not have access to the clean water they need.
- Look at maps of waterways from your local river or creek all the way up to the headwaters, and all the way down to where that river or creek flows into the lake

or ocean. Which watershed are you in? What can you learn about the health of the water both upstream and downstream from your neighborhood?

- Read the stories of Jesus' baptism: Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:1-11; Luke 3:21-24; John 1:30-34. Reflect on what the importance of the ritual of Christian baptism might mean for how we care for the waters near our place of worship.

### **Week #3 - Backyard/Park**

- Take one hour to walk around a familiar outdoor environment and pick up trash. How many pieces did you find?
- Spend an hour in the place of your choice, reflecting on God's beauty in creation, and noting the ways each of God's creatures and ecosystems feed or care for each other.
- Volunteer to help with park cleanup or do a species count; ask park staff how you can help take care of the park as a volunteer.
- Give thanks for outdoor spaces that have been set aside for us to enjoy the beauty of God's creation, and pray for those who do not have access to healthy outdoor spaces such as these.
- Look at a map of parks in your city, county, or state. Ask about who has easy access to lakes and green spaces, who might find it more difficult to spend time in those places, and why that is.
- See how many different kinds of birds and flowers you can count in your backyard or the nearest park. Learn what you can about which species indicate the health of the local ecosystem.
- Have a conversation with someone in your congregation who works or volunteers in parks or environmental conservation, about how that work relates to their Christian faith.

### **Week #4 - Electronics/energy**

- Get through a day on just one full charge of your phone.
- Look up your local political leaders and learn about their stance on energy policy and public transit
- Learn about where your own household's electricity is generated. Ask what your power company is doing to make more renewable sources, like wind and solar, more available.
- Go around your house and make a list of the things that draw energy 24/7 even when they're not in use. How many can you practice plugging in only when you're actively using them?
- Spend a day biking, using public transit, or carpooling--avoiding driving alone anywhere in a car. What about three days? A week?

- Ask your church leadership where your congregation's energy is sourced from, and ask if there's a way you can help reduce your congregation's energy bill and/or carbon footprint.
- Pray for communities who do not have affordable access to electricity, for communities who suffer from being close to pollution from energy generation, and for those who make their living working in various kinds of energy industries: coal, oil, gas, solar, wind, hydroelectric. Pray for a transition to an energy economy that tends to every community's wellbeing.





## Week 1: Creation Care in the Kitchen

### Objectives:

- Students will make a connection between their faith, the food they eat (or throw away), and environmental justice.
- Students will be able to identify how they can be more environmentally conscious in Minnesota.
- Students will explore ways that they can reduce food waste within their own home.
- Students will be able to identify global environmental justice issues around food waste.

### Intro Activity: Master Chef--No Waste Edition

*\*This activity is based off of the Master Chef TV show*

- Split the group into teams of 3 or 4. Give each group a mix of ingredients and allow the groups 5 minutes to create some form of Nachos from the ingredients given. Must be something they will eat (stress the no waste priority).
- Ingredient suggestions: *(should seem random, but when put together can be something awesome)*
  - Tortilla Chips
  - Peanut Butter (check allergies)

- Cookie crumbles
- Cream Cheese
- Pomegranate
- Bacon
- Chocolate Chips
- Enjoy the nachos while you discuss

**Optional: Introduction Video:** Life of a Strawberry - <https://youtu.be/CLFOK4U34wI>

## Intro Discussion

### Ask: (conversation starters)

*\*If the group is large, this portion could be done in groups of 2-3 and then report back.*

- How many of you like to cook? What is your favorite thing to make?
- In your houses:
  - Who cooks the meals your family eats?
  - Who typically does the grocery shopping?
  - At the end of the meal, who takes care of clean up? (*dishes, taking care of scraps, wiping the table*)

**Leader:** Today we are going to talk about creation care in our kitchens. To get us started today, I have a few different facts for you, just to get us thinking.

Did you know that:

- Each year one third of all food that is produced globally for human consumption--roughly 1.3 billion tons--is wasted.
- "It's estimated that Americans waste 30-40% of all food produced, or approximately 63 million tons each year. To put that in perspective, if all that food we wasted annually came from one farm, that farm would be three quarters the size of California, and it would harvest enough food to fill a 40-ton tractor every 20 seconds"
- Along with that, 1 in 9 people--approx 795 million worldwide--do not have access to sufficient food to live a healthy life. In the US, 1 in 7 Americans live in a food-insecure household. 3 million of those houses include children.

Food waste and food scarcity feel like they go hand in hand. But for many of us, we are not the ones who primarily do the cooking/ grocery shopping/ etc. (*rhetorical questions*) So what are we to do about this food waste issue? More importantly, what does our faith ask us to do? Why does this matter?

For the first part of this lesson we are going to explore/discuss this issue a bit more. By the time we leave today, we are going to work on some ideas around how we can waste less in our homes.

**Ask:** Besides hunger, what other issues do you think come from food waste? (*allow students time to respond/brainstorm*)

**Leader:** “When food waste decomposes in a landfill without oxygen, methane is born. Methane is ~20 times more harmful than carbon dioxide, rapidly contributing to the destruction of our ozone layer. Wasted organic material also creates a large amount of groundwater pollution when rain falls on these landfills, which allows for toxic chemicals, such as ammonia, to develop. These chemicals can end up in our drinking water as well as our lakes and rivers, killing the living organisms that inhabit those environments. -United States Environmental Protection Agency”.

Other issues are: waste of water used to make food, economic issues- supply & demand, etc.

**Leader:** As we continue our lesson, we are going to look at a story in the Bible when food scarcity was an issue, but with some planning and leadership, a huge impact was made!

**Opening Prayer:** God, we thank you for the gift of food. We pray that as we study your word today, you would teach us how we can use this gift responsibly, and serve you in our own kitchens. Amen.

## **Scripture Reading and Discussion**

*Supplies Needed: Bibles*

**Leader:** We are going to look at a piece of the story of a person named Joseph. Not the married-to-Mary, Joseph, but one from the Old Testament. Usually when we look at Joseph’s story we can talk about overcoming trials, but in this part of the story, Joseph helps Pharaoh navigate what could have been a catastrophic food scare. It’s important to know before we read the scripture that God gave Joseph the ability to interpret dreams.

### **Read Genesis 41:14-24, 53-54**

*Bonus Activity during reading: ask two students to be “artists” and each draw one of Pharaoh’s dreams on a news print while you read.*

**Pause & Ask:** What do you think these dreams could be about? (*listen to their answers than continue*)

### **Read Genesis 41:25-40, 53-57**

#### **Discuss:**

- How did God reveal to Joseph what was going to happen to Egypt?
- How did Joseph’s faith impact his conversations with Pharaoh?
- What skill did Joseph use to make the food last? (*planning*)
- If you were Joseph, and you were in charge of the food, what would you have done?
- What would have happened if Joseph hadn’t interpreted the dream?

**Leader:** Just as Joseph was able to save the people of Egypt from the effects of the famine through his leadership, we are called to do our part in best utilizing what God gives to us. Joseph used the skill of planning when it came to managing the food, the same way that a little bit of attention and planning can make all of the difference in our kitchens. Because of Joseph's ability to trust God, lead others, and pay attention, many other countries traveled far and wide to Egypt, and looked to the help of Egypt during the famine.

Positive waste practices in our kitchens can multiply in ways we cannot even imagine. By being intentional about how we care for the environment in our kitchens, we can learn to pray and eat in solidarity with our neighbors, both locally and globally, who do not have access to the nutrition they need. We might even be able to lessen the gap in food scarcity that we see in the USA and all over the world.

### **Student Discovery Activity: Waste Booklet & DIY Kitchen Compost Bins**

**Leader:** Since most of us are not the lead cook or grocery shopper in our homes, we are going to create two projects that will help us to 1) Play our part in being “environmentally just” in our kitchens, as well as 2) Create something so that we help teach our families about food waste.

The first is a “Waste Booklet”. This is something for your families to do together! One way to reduce waste is to help keep track of what is being wasted in the kitchen. It's always a good idea to learn/observe our habits so that we can improve. The covers of the booklets are going to be made from food boxes from the kitchen (ex: cereal box).

The second thing we are going to make is called a compost bin. Does anyone know what a compost bin is/does? (*let students respond*). The main idea is to speed up the natural food decomposition process by creating nutrient rich soil that can be used in either your gardens at home, or even donated to a community garden in your area.

*Supplies Waste Booklet: (each booklet should have about 10 pages)*

- Paper (recycled from the church, even better!)
- Hole Punches
- String
- Pieces of cardboard from food Boxes for the covers
- Markers

*Supplies Kitchen Compost Bins:*

- Small Plastic Jars/ Bins- 1 per student's households (*any storage container with a lid will do, you need to be able to put hole in. We recommend these: [34oz Plastic Jars with Lids](#)*)
- Larger Diameter Nails- for putting holes in the container
- Hammers
- (Optional: Paint/ Sharpie Markers so the students can decorate their bins)

**Directions for Waste Book:**

1. Cut pieces of paper in to create small pages- roughly 8 ½ X 5 ½
2. Cut two pieces of cardboard to the same dimensions for a front and back cover to the booklet. The “brown side” can be out if a student wishes to decorate it themselves or use the colorful side.
3. Assemble the book into a clean pile, punch holes into the papers, then punch holes into the cardboard. Pay attention to hole placement, be sure that the holes line up!
4. Use the string to assemble to booklets. Make sure the tie is loose enough so pages can be turned.
5. On the first page of the booklet, create a “waste log” with columns.

Waste log should look similar to this:

DATE	MEAL	FOOD WASTED

**Directions for Compost Bins:**

1. Each person take a plastic bin.
2. Using a nail and hammer, students will CAREFULLY add holes to their containers. (Air flow is essential to the composting process and helps relieve any smell).

**Student Reminders:**

- Share and check in with student progress on #CreationCareYouthChallenge
- Set a date and time for Earth Day youth group activity
- Other:

**Wrap Up**

Challenge the students to take pictures of their compost bins throughout the next few weeks and post pictures on their social media platforms. Also, challenge them to bring their Waste Booklets for your next meeting!

- Clean up projects.
- End with prayer.

## **Week 1 - Resources to Learn More About Food Waste:**

### **Food Justice - UMC General Board of Church & Society**

<https://www.umcjustice.org/what-we-care-about/environmental-justice/food-justice>

Includes scriptures, United Methodist statements, and action steps for food justice.

### **More-with-Less Cookbook, by Doris Janzen Longacre**

<https://www.amazon.com/More-Less-Cookbook-World-Community/dp/083619263X>

This cookbook was first released in 1976 and remains an amazing resource for Christians to apply discipleship to their kitchens and dining tables, living abundantly and eating delicious meals while reducing consumption and waste.

### **Food Waste Warrior Toolkit (WWF)**

[www.worldwildlife.org/teaching-resources/toolkits/food-waste-warrior-toolkit](http://www.worldwildlife.org/teaching-resources/toolkits/food-waste-warrior-toolkit)

### **Live Science: The Science Behind Composting**

[www.livescience.com/63559-composting.html](http://www.livescience.com/63559-composting.html)

### **Regenerative farms 'producing more, opening new markets' while fighting climate change - MPR News**

[www.mprnews.org/episode/2019/11/01/climate-cast-regenerative-farms](http://www.mprnews.org/episode/2019/11/01/climate-cast-regenerative-farms)

Tells the story of one way Minnesota farmers are working to farm in a more sustainable way for the future, on a large scale.

## Daily Challenges: #CreationCareYouthChallenge

### Week #1 - Kitchen/Food

- Keep track of all the trash you throw away for one week. What do you throw away? What do you recycle? What do you compost?
- If you have a backyard, start a composting bin or pile there. If you live in a place where it's hard to compost at home, see what you can learn about your city or your county's composting/organic waste recycling program.
- Pray for people and communities who do not have enough food; pray also for the farmers, farmworkers, restaurant workers, and family members who work to grow and prepare the food you eat.
- Donate to your local food pantry and ask how you can help out as a volunteer. Ask about local community gardens or other programs you could participate in that seek to make sure everyone is fed.
- Go a whole day without eating meat. Why not try 5 days? A week? A month? Reflect on the plant, animal, and human life energy given so we can eat meat, and what it means to honor this food as a gift from God.
- If you know someone in your church who farms or gardens, hunts or fishes, have a conversation with them about how a relationship with God impacts the way you each relate to the land, plants, and animals.
- Help make your family's meal plan for the week, OR, if you are already regularly responsible for this, invite someone else in your family to help you think through a meal plan that is nutritious and reduces food waste.





## Week 2: Creation Care in the Bathroom

### Objectives:

- Students will make a connection between their faith, their use of water and other resources in the household, and environmental justice.
- Students will be able to identify how they can be more environmentally conscious here in Minnesota.
- Students will be able to identify global environmental justice issues about sanitation.

### Intro Activity: Cardboard Tube Challenge

*Supplies Needed: cardboard tubes (recycled toilet paper/paper towel rolls), scissors (one per group)*

### Directions:

1. Form groups of two to five and divide the tubes evenly among the groups.
2. Explain to each group that they can only use the tubes and a pair of scissors to build the tallest free-standing structure possible.  
*\*Building hint - if you cut small dashes into the ends of the tube, two tubes will link together (google it)*
3. Allow time for each group to brainstorm and build, give a one minute warning when time is almost up.



4. Feel free to congratulate winners as you see fit; tallest structure, most creative, best engineering, etc.
5. Recycle the tubes after the activity.

## Intro Discussion

**Leader:** Today we are going to discuss something a bit odd, creation care in the bathroom (hence the cardboard tubes). I want you all to think about water, handwashing, hygiene, and what happens after we flush the toilet. While I agree that it is a little gross, it is a very crucial part of creation care. We are going to think about it locally and globally. Did you know that around the world, 2.4 billion people lack adequate sanitation facilities. Also, did you know that while you brush your teeth, turning off that tap can save up to 200 gallons of water per month.

**Ask:** There is a global health issue that uses the acronym WASH. What do you think that stands for? *(allow time for students to brainstorm as a group)*

**Leader:** WASH (or WaSH) is an acronym that stands for "water, sanitation and hygiene". Clean water, basic toilets and good hygiene practices are essential for the survival and development of children. Without these basic needs, the lives of millions of children are at risk. For children under five, water and sanitation-related diseases are one of the leading causes of death. Global health organizations like UNICEF, the World Health Organization, and the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) work to improve water and sanitation services, as well as basic hygiene practices.

**Ask:** Why do you think it's important for someone to have access to safe water and sanitation services? *(Allow time for students to answer. Be sure to include ideas about how good hygiene practices, especially handwashing with soap, helps to prevent the spread of disease, human waste needs to be disposed off safely to avoid contact with other humans to prevent others from getting sick, etc)*

**Leader:** We are going to dig into ways that we can advocate for global efforts and make changes personally, but first let's explore scripture and think about God's call for creation care.

**Opening Prayer:** Good and gracious God, thank you for bringing us together to learn about you. Show us how to work together to bring about your kingdom. Amen.

## Scripture Reading and Discussion

*Supplies Needed: Bibles*

**Ask:** Can anyone give a brief overview of the creation story? *(Allow time for students to respond, be sure to include the "God saw everything ... and it was supremely good" as part of the story).*

**Leader:** We are going to look at a Psalm that also reflects on the creation story and how creation works together. Everyone turn to Psalm 104 in your Bibles. Let's read these praises together. We are going to take turns reading **Psalm 104:1-24**.

**Ask:**

1. What stands out when you are reading this passage?
2. How does creation show God's wisdom? Power? Generosity?
3. How do humans fit into the interconnectedness of creation?
4. How does God provide for creation? How do we support or undermine God's provision?
5. Do our human needs conflict with the needs of other people, animals, plants?
6. How should we take care of something that is God's?
7. What are you still curious about after reading this Psalm?

**Leader:** We are called to explore the impact of how we live. How it is affecting this world, both today and in the future. As the Psalmist writes about how all of creation is connected to each other, we are a part of that great wisdom. We are called to protect God's creation, and to provide for our neighbors. We are called to seek ways to ensure that safe water for washing, sanitation, and hygiene is accessible to all. We are called to reduce our wastefulness when we are brushing our teeth and taking a shower, after all, that water we are using is part of God's *wise creation*.

**Student Discovery Activity:**

*Supplies: Student cell phones/access to computers, recycled paper to make posters, markers/crayons, whiteboard/screen/large piece of scrap paper to write out brainstorm list*

**Before you begin:** Write out "[www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/sanitation](http://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/sanitation)" large enough for all to see, or give the directions to go to "[www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets](http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets)" and search "S", "sanitation"

**Directions:**

1. Brainstorm as a group ten things we can do in the bathroom to practice better creation care.
  - a. Include things like:
    - Turn off the tap when you are washing your hands or brushing your teeth, turn it back on only to rinse
    - Take shorter showers
    - Don't use "disposable" products when cleaning your bathroom, instead of paper towels and other disposable wipes, use reusable rags or microfiber towels for mirrors, sinks, etc
    - Switch to energy efficient light bulbs
2. Have students form groups of two to three.
3. Invite each group to look up the sanitation facts from the WHO fact sheet (link above in the "before you begin" info).

4. Explain that each group should create a bathroom stall poster that will be hung in the stalls at church to teach the congregation about “Creation Care in the Bathroom”. The poster should include something they can do at home and something they should know about the global effort of WASH (information from the WHO fact sheet).
5. Encourage students to use a header on the poster that draws people in, and also include a statement about our call as Christians to respond to water, sanitation, and hygiene needs.
6. Consider making a sample poster to show the students as an example.
7. Use recycled paper to create the posters.

### **Student Reminders:**

- Check in with student progress on #CreationCareYouthChallenge
- Set a date and time for Earth Day youth group activity
- Other:

### **Wrap Up**

Collect posters and end with prayer.

- Note for youth leader: set a reminder for yourself to hang up the bathroom posters

## **Week 2 – Resources to Learn More About Water:**

### **Sanitation - World Health Organization**

[www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/sanitation](http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/sanitation)

### **Water and Sanitation - Global Ministries**

[www.umcmission.org/umcor/learn/our-work/water-and-sanitation](http://www.umcmission.org/umcor/learn/our-work/water-and-sanitation)

### **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene - UNICEF**

[www.unicef.org/wash/](http://www.unicef.org/wash/)

### **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene - World Health Organization:**

[www.who.int/water\\_sanitation\\_health/en/](http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/en/)

### **Clean Water - UMC Church & Society:**

<https://www.umcjustice.org/what-we-care-about/environmental-justice/clean-water>

Includes scriptures, United Methodist statements, and action steps around working for clean water access for all humanity.

### **UMCOR Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Program**

[advance.umcor.org/p-368-umcor-water-sanitation-and-hygiene-program.aspx](http://advance.umcor.org/p-368-umcor-water-sanitation-and-hygiene-program.aspx)

### **Water, Health, and Equity -- Clean Water for All**

[www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/CWC\\_Report\\_Full\\_report\\_lowres.pdf](http://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/CWC_Report_Full_report_lowres.pdf)

Explains water infrastructure as an issue of equity and public health, and shows why it's important for individuals and communities (including faith communities like churches) to advocate for funding these infrastructure updates.

### **Closing the Water Gap - 2019 Report on the Water Gap in the USA**

*\*check out the executive summary*

[closethewatergap.org/](http://closethewatergap.org/)

Shows how water access is an issue of equity and justice for our human neighbor even within our own country.

### **Water Infrastructure in the Great Lakes**

[www.cleanwateraction.org/features/water-infrastructure-great-lakes](http://www.cleanwateraction.org/features/water-infrastructure-great-lakes)

Explains why water infrastructure updates are a big need in our own region of the USA.

### **Household and community-level tips to care for water**

[freshwater.org/water-action-tips/](http://freshwater.org/water-action-tips/)

Helpful ways each of us can individual take better care of the water in our own house/neighborhood/watershed.

## Daily Challenges: #CreationCareYouthChallenge

### Week #2 - Bathroom/Water

- Time how long you spend running water in the shower. How much water could you save by only using what you need to get clean?
- Look up your community's wastewater treatment system. Where is it located? How does it work?
- Are your hygiene products packed in recyclable materials, or do they have to go in the trash? See what you can find out about where these items go once you dispose of them.
- Write a letter to your state or federal legislator letting them know why protecting clean water for communities is important to you as a Christian
- Pray for the health of the rivers and lakes and groundwater in your region, and pray for communities worldwide who do not have access to the clean water they need.
- Look at maps of waterways from your local river or creek all the way up to the headwaters, and all the way down to where that river or creek flows into the lake or ocean. Which watershed are you in? What can you learn about the health of the water both upstream and downstream from your neighborhood?
- Read the stories of Jesus' baptism: Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:1-11; Luke 3:21-24; John 1:30-34. Reflect on what the importance of the ritual of Christian baptism might mean for how we care for the waters near our place of worship.



### **Week 3: Creation Care in the Backyard/Park**

#### **Objectives:**

- Students will make connections between the interdependence of members of the body of Christ and the interdependence of all God's creation
- Students will be able to identify how they can be more environmentally conscious here in Minnesota.

#### **Intro Activity: Find your Ecosystems**

*Supplies Needed: pens and paper, scrap paper, optional: markers/crayons*

**Say:** As defined by Merriam-Webster, ecosystem is:

- 1: the complex of a community of organisms and its environment functioning as an ecological unit
- 2: something (such as a network of businesses) considered to resemble an ecological ecosystem especially because of its complex interdependent parts

#### **Directions:**

1. Form groups of 2-4
2. Have students use a blank sheet of paper to draw a picture of an outdoor space that represents an environment that all in group would be familiar with. Encourage students



- to include input from all group members (elements of one person's backyard, another's local park, etc.), to draw one outdoor space that all have created. Use colors, if desired.
3. Ask students to circle the elements on their picture that contain "ecosystems", based on the provided definition
    - a. Examples:
      - A tree
      - the grass in yard
      - a body of water
      - a garden
      - a fallen log
  4. For each item circled, have students brainstorm a list of components that contribute to that ecosystem and their role.
    - a. Example: A Tree
      - i. Birds- nesting, eating destructive bugs
      - ii. Bugs- pollination, soil aeration
      - iii. Tree branches- nesting space, cover/protection for trunk, shade for enriching soil
      - iv. Leaves- photosynthesis, food for herbivores, fallen leaves to decompose and enrich soil
      - v. Soil- sustenance for tree
      - vi. Air- absorbed CO<sub>2</sub> as life sustaining for tree, oxygen released for life sustaining for other living creatures

## Intro Discussion

*Supplies: Whiteboard or large piece of paper, markers*

*\*Either leader or volunteer writes down answers for all to see*

**Leader:** We look at the natural world and see so many of these ecosystems around us.

**Ask:** What are the factors that keep an ecosystem healthy? (*balance, interdependence, moderation, each element as both giver and receiver*)

**Ask:** What is an example of an out-of balance ecosystem, or one that has too much or not enough of one element? (*invasive species of insect, corrupted soil, outside chemicals that poison, lack of pollination, etc.*)

**Ask:** If we see these ecosystems as models for all of Creation woven together by God, what are the lessons we can learn from them? What is the human role in all of this?

**Opening Prayer:** Creator God, you have woven us together with intention and love. As we center our hearts on that intention, may we be open to change, to grow, and to commune with all of the rest of your natural and blessed Creation. Amen

## Scripture Reading and Discussion

*Supplies Needed: Bibles, copies of Genesis text (page 26), pens/pencils*

**Read & Do:** Leader reads text. Students follow along on their copy and put a number next to each step that God “speaks” a separate element into Creation or assigns its function.

**Genesis 1: 11-27 (Inclusive Version below, student copies on page 27)**

<sup>11</sup> Then God said, “Earth: produce vegetation—plants that scatter their own seeds, and every kind of fruit tree that bears fruit with its own seed in it!” So it was: <sup>12</sup> the earth brought forth every kind of plant that bears seed, and every kind of fruit tree on earth that bears fruit with its seed in it. And God saw that this was good. <sup>13</sup> Evening came, and morning followed—the third day. <sup>14</sup> Then God said, “Now, let there be lights in the expanse of the sky! Separate day from night! Let them mark the signs and seasons, days and years, <sup>15</sup> and serve as luminaries in the sky, shedding light on the earth.” So it was: <sup>16</sup> God made the two great lights, the greater one to illumine the day, and a lesser to illumine the night. Then God made the stars as well, <sup>17</sup> placing them in the expanse of the sky, to shed light on the earth, <sup>18</sup> to govern both day and night, and separate light from darkness. And God saw that this was good. <sup>19</sup> Evening came, and morning followed—the fourth day. <sup>20</sup> God then said, “Waters: swarm with an abundance of living beings! Birds: fly above the earth in the open expanse of the sky!” And so it was: <sup>21</sup> God created great sea monsters and all sorts of swimming creatures with which the waters are filled, and all kinds of birds. God saw that this was good <sup>22</sup> and blessed them, saying, “Bear fruit, increase your numbers, and fill the waters of the seas! Birds, abound on the earth!” <sup>23</sup> Evening came, and morning followed—the fifth day. <sup>24</sup> Then God said, “Earth: bring forth all kinds of living soul—cattle, things that crawl, and wild animals of all kinds!” So it was: <sup>25</sup> God made all kinds of wild animals, and cattle, and everything that crawls on the ground, and God saw that this was good. <sup>26</sup> Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, to be like us. Let them be stewards of the fish in the sea, the birds of the air, the cattle, the wild animals, and everything that crawls on the ground.” <sup>27</sup> Humankind was created as God’s reflection: in the divine image God created them.

**Ask:** Look at what you numbered. What parts of an ecosystem show up here? How is what we just learned about ecosystems represented in this scripture?

**Leader:** In verse 26, the writer uses the word “steward” in describing the human relationship with all of the rest of Creation. In other translations, the term “have dominion over” or “rule over” is used. This scripture has been used in many ways to describe our relationship with the rest of Creation.

**Ask:** What are the differences between these understandings of our relationship, “to dominate, to rule over”, and “to be a steward of”?



## Read: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

### 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

<sup>12</sup>The body is one, even though it has many parts; all the parts—many though they are—comprise a single body. And so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup> It was by one Spirit that all of us, whether we are Jews or Greeks, slaves or citizens, were baptized into one body. All of us have been given to drink of the one Spirit. <sup>14</sup> And that Body is not one part; it is many. <sup>15</sup> If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” does that make it any less a part of the body? <sup>16</sup> If the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” would that make it any less a part of the body? <sup>17</sup> If the body were all eye, what would happen to our hearing? If it were all ear, what would happen to our sense of smell? <sup>18</sup> Instead of that, God put all the different parts into one body on purpose. <sup>19</sup> If all the parts were alike, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup> They are, indeed, many different members but one body. <sup>21</sup> The eye cannot say to the hand, “I do not need you,” any more than the head can say to the feet, “I do not need you.” <sup>22</sup> And even those members of the body which seem less important are in fact indispensable. <sup>23</sup> We honor the members we consider less honorable by clothing them with greater care, thus bestowing on the less presentable a propriety <sup>24</sup> which the more presentable do not need. God has so constructed the body as to give greater honor to the lowly members, <sup>25</sup> that there may be no dissension in the body, but that all the members may be concerned for one another. <sup>26</sup> If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members share its joy. <sup>27</sup> You, then, are the body of Christ, and each of you is a member of it.

**Ask:** The writer, Paul, is using this as guidance for the people of Corinth in how to be community. If we are to apply this to our understanding of our relationship with the natural world, what are key phrases and lessons we can adopt?

**Leader:** Have youth read the following:

From “Faith and Facts -Sustainability- United Methodist Church Committee of Church and Society”:

- The world’s forests, which remove CO2 from the atmosphere and provide life-sustaining oxygen, are disappearing at the rate of 13 million acres per year.
- Every 20 minutes a distinct species of plant or animal becomes extinct. One out of every five species is at risk of extinction due to climate change. The loss of biodiversity is occurring at 1,000 to 10,000 times the natural rate.

From EPA- [Climate Change Indicators in the United States](#):

“The Earth’s climate is changing. Temperatures are rising, snow and rainfall patterns are shifting, and more extreme climate events – like heavy rainstorms and record high temperatures – are already happening. Many of these observed changes are linked to

the rising levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in our atmosphere, **caused by human activities.** “

### **Student Discovery Activity: Strategies to find balance in Creation**

*Supplies: Google, pens and paper, copies of student handout “CREATION GOAL - BACKYARD ECOSYSTEMS” (page 28)*

#### **Directions:**

1. Have students pick one of the natural world ecosystems that was identified in their group. Use resources provided with this lesson to look at the ways that human activities are negatively impacting that ecosystem. Examples include deforestation, harmful chemical administration, burning fossil fuels, etc.
2. Have each group make one SMART GOAL together that they can implement to positively work against that negative impact and heal Creation.
3. Have students write a prayer that is focused on that part of Creation that they are seeking to heal
4. Ask each group to present their action goal to the large group.

#### **Student Reminders:**

- Check in with student progress on #CreationCareYouthChallenge
- Set a date and time for Earth Day youth group activity
- Other:

### **Wrap Up**

Have a volunteer from each group read their prayer based on their ecosystem.

## **Week 3 - Resources to Learn More about the Environment:**

### **Three billion North American birds have vanished since 1970, surveys show - *Science* magazine**

<https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2019/09/three-billion-north-american-birds-have-vanished-1970-surveys-show>

This article is an example of one way ecosystems are out of balance on our continent.

### **Effects of climate change in Minnesota - MPCA**

[www.pca.state.mn.us/air/effects-climate-change-minnesota](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/air/effects-climate-change-minnesota)

This article details a few ways that climate change is impacting our communities here in Minnesota.

### **North Minneapolis residents welcome shutdown of metal shredder - *Star Tribune*, 9/30/19**

[www.startribune.com/north-minneapolis-residents-welcome-shutdown-of-metal-shredder/561642752/?fbclid=IwAR18Pu8i-ZxtLdEtzb0713mdLjWkHt0sz...](http://www.startribune.com/north-minneapolis-residents-welcome-shutdown-of-metal-shredder/561642752/?fbclid=IwAR18Pu8i-ZxtLdEtzb0713mdLjWkHt0sz...)

This article highlights one way our waste management practices become a problem for human neighborhoods--an issue of environmental justice.

### **Mapping environmental justice in the Twin Cities - Center for Earth Energy & Democracy**

[ceed.org/section/ej-mapping/](http://ceed.org/section/ej-mapping/)

This website allows you to look up where particular aspects of public health and environmental balance--air pollution, access to green space, and soil toxicity, to name three--affect neighborhoods differently.

### **Inequality in American (Minneapolis) Public Parks - *The Atlantic***

[www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/09/inequality-in-american-public-parks/502238/](http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/09/inequality-in-american-public-parks/502238/)

### **Applying a Racial Equity Lens to Our Parks - *National Recreation and Park Association***

[www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2018/february/applying-a-racial-equity-lens-to-our-parks/](http://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2018/february/applying-a-racial-equity-lens-to-our-parks/)

Both of these articles make a connection between parks and environmental/racial justice in the Twin Cities as well as other metropolitan areas in the USA.

### **The Human Cost of Energy Production - *Environmental Integrity Project***

[environmentalintegrity.org/what-we-do/oil-and-gas/the-human-cost-of-energy-production/](http://environmentalintegrity.org/what-we-do/oil-and-gas/the-human-cost-of-energy-production/)

This website features two photography projects showing how communities in Texas and Pennsylvania have been impacted by nearby oil and fracked gas industries, respectively.

### **The Real Cost of Energy - *Nature*, November 2017**

[www.nature.com/articles/d41586-017-07510-3](http://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-017-07510-3)

This article looks at external costs of our energy sources, or long-term costs to our environment that may not be accounted for in what consumers or corporations pay.

## Creation Care in Everyday Contexts

### Week 3: Student Handout

**Directions:** While the scripture is being read put a number next to each time God spoke something into creation, starting with number 1.

#### GENESIS 1:11-27

<sup>11</sup> Then God said, “Earth: produce vegetation—plants that scatter their own seeds, and every kind of fruit tree that bears fruit with its own seed in it!” So it was: <sup>12</sup> the earth brought forth every kind of plant that bears seed, and every kind of fruit tree on earth that bears fruit with its seed in it. And God saw that this was good. <sup>13</sup> Evening came, and morning followed—the third day. <sup>14</sup> Then God said, “Now, let there be lights in the expanse of the sky! Separate day from night! Let them mark the signs and seasons, days and years, <sup>15</sup> and serve as luminaries in the sky, shedding light on the earth.” So it was: <sup>16</sup> God made the two great lights, the greater one to illumine the day, and a lesser to illumine the night. Then God made the stars as well, <sup>17</sup> placing them in the expanse of the sky, to shed light on the earth, <sup>18</sup> to govern both day and night, and separate light from darkness. And God saw that this was good. <sup>19</sup> Evening came, and morning followed—the fourth day. <sup>20</sup> God then said, “Waters: swarm with an abundance of living beings! Birds: fly above the earth in the open expanse of the sky!” And so it was: <sup>21</sup> God created great sea monsters and all sorts of swimming creatures with which the waters are filled, and all kinds of birds. God saw that this was good <sup>22</sup> and blessed them, saying, “Bear fruit, increase your numbers, and fill the waters of the seas! Birds, abound on the earth!” <sup>23</sup> Evening came, and morning followed—the fifth day. <sup>24</sup> Then God said, “Earth: bring forth all kinds of living soul—cattle, things that crawl, and wild animals of all kinds!” So it was: <sup>25</sup> God made all kinds of wild animals, and cattle, and everything that crawls on the ground, and God saw that this was good. <sup>26</sup> Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, to be like us. Let them be stewards of the fish in the sea, the birds of the air, the cattle, the wild animals, and everything that crawls on the ground.” <sup>27</sup> Humankind was created as God’s reflection: in the divine image God created them.

## Creation Care in Everyday Contexts

### Week 3: CREATION GOAL - BACKYARD ECOSYSTEMS

What is your chosen ecosystem? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the negative human impacts you have found that throw this ecosystem out of balance?

How did you learn this?

As a steward of Creation, commissioned by God to be a part of the greater “Body” of Creation where all are valued, what SMART Goal will you set, as a group?

#### SMART GOALS ARE:

- **Specific (simple, sensible, significant).**
- **Measurable (meaningful, motivating).**
- **Achievable (agreed, attainable).**
- **Relevant (reasonable, realistic and resourced, results-based).**
- **Time bound (time-based, time limited, time/cost limited, timely, time-sensitive).**

## Daily Challenges: #CreationCareYouthChallenge

### Week #3 - Backyard/Park

- Take one hour to walk around a familiar outdoor environment and pick up trash. How many pieces did you find?
- Spend an hour in the place of your choice, reflecting on God's beauty in creation, and noting the ways each of God's creatures and ecosystems feed or care for each other.
- Volunteer to help with park cleanup or do a species count; ask park staff how you can help take care of the park as a volunteer.
- Give thanks for outdoor spaces that have been set aside for us to enjoy the beauty of God's creation, and pray for those who do not have access to healthy outdoor spaces such as these.
- Look at a map of parks in your city, county, or state. Ask about who has easy access to lakes and green spaces, who might find it more difficult to spend time in those places, and why that is.
- See how many different kinds of birds and flowers you can count in your backyard or the nearest park. Learn what you can about which species indicate the health of the local ecosystem.
- Have a conversation with someone in your congregation who works or volunteers in parks or environmental conservation, about how that work relates to their Christian faith.



## UNDERSTANDING CREATION CARE IN EVERYDAY CONTEXTS

### Week 4: Creation Care in your Electronics

#### Objective:

- Students will learn to see the way we generate and consume electricity and electronics as matters of love and justice for our neighbor, as well as care for God's creation.
- Students will be able to see the relationship between electronics and our personal responsibility as it pertains to natural resources (energy/power/renewable resources).

#### Intro Activity: Electric Pulse

*Supplies needed: coin (quarter or nickel), 2 small balls (small objects easy to grab)*

**Say:** Welcome! This is our last week of Creation Care and I am excited to be learning from you.

**Game Objective:** The object of the game is for teams to squeeze hands faster than the other team. The first team to pick up the ball (or 2 small objects) will win the round (play 3 rounds).

#### Directions:

1. Split the group up into two even teams.
2. Arrange everyone into two long lines of people, approximately equivalent in length.
3. Place each ball (object) at the end of each team line.
4. Have everyone hold hands as an electric current, with everyone facing forward in the same direction.

5. Ask players to close their eyes, except for the two people at the front of each team. This game is to be played silently.
6. At the start of each round of gameplay, the facilitator flips a coin, if a “heads” is called the facilitator simultaneously lightly taps the shoulder of both team leaders and the “electric current” begins. The two people at the front of each team squeeze the hand of the next person in the chain as fast as they can. The next player who received the hand squeeze then also squeezes the next person in the chain, rapidly continuing to “pass the current” down the team. This first team who grabs the ball (object) at the end of the chain is the winner.
7. As a facilitator it’s important to flip the coin slowly and wait several seconds between flips. If someone grabs the object but there was no “heads” coin toss, that team loses a point. \*\*You may change team order after each round to keep things interesting.

## Intro Discussion

**Ask:** Who owns a cell phone/laptop/tablet/gaming console?

**Ask:** How many times a day do you charge your cell phones?

**Ask:** How is our electricity generated?

**Leader:** Electricity is most often generated at a power plant by electromechanical generators, primarily driven by heat engines fueled by combustion or nuclear fission but also by other means such as the kinetic energy of flowing water and wind. Other energy sources include solar photovoltaics and geothermal power.

**Ask:** Whose lives depend on jobs in the energy sector?

**Leader:** The 2017 U.S. Energy and Employment Report (USEER) finds that the traditional Energy and Energy Efficiency sectors today employ approximately 6.4 million Americans. These sectors increased in 2016 by just under 5 percent, adding over 300,000 net new jobs, roughly 14% of all those created in the country.

**Ask:** Whose lives are impacted greatest by living in close proximity to a power plant? And what is the impact on communities who live near power plants?

**Leader:** Evidence has shown that people living near coal-fired power plants have higher death rates at earlier ages, along with increased risks of respiratory disease, lung cancer, cardiovascular disease and other health problems. These tend to be communities of low-income people and people of color.



## Scripture Reading & Student Discovery Activity:

*Supplies Needed: Bibles, Energy in the Bible handout (page 34), pens/pencils*

### Directions:

1. Split up into smaller groups depending on your group size
2. Instruct students they will be discussing Bible verses as it pertains to energy in the Bible.
3. Provide each group with the “Energy in the Bible” handout (page 34) and pens/pencils
4. Encourage students to work through the handout together in their groups and say that everyone will come together to discuss what each group has discovered.
5. Give groups time to work through the handout.
6. Note: Depending on time you may want to break up parts of the handout and assign one section each group.

### Large Group Questions:

Discuss the following questions after each group has completed the handout.

- How does God’s message to his shepherds resonate with us today as it pertains to natural resources?
- In ancient times there were people who had plenty of power and resources, how were they challenged by God? How are we challenged by God with our resources?
- How often do you charge your phone in one day? How often do you leave lights on? How can you decrease your power usage?
- How are lives impacted negatively by the production of fossil fuels including oil, coal, and natural gas?
- Why is it important for the church to be concerned about the use of our natural resources? What steps has your church taken in this direction?
- Who are the organizations or individuals in our town, county, or state working toward a more just energy situation? What would a more environmentally just situation look like in our community? *(be sure to mention the UMW Just Energy for All campaign)*

### Student Reminders:

- Check in with student progress on #CreationCareYouthChallenge
- Check in about the Earth Day youth group activity
- Other:

### Wrap Up

Ask students to start reflecting on their use of personal electronics throughout the day. Remind them that we are all responsible for taking care of the earth and its resources. Invite a student to do closing prayer and dismiss the group.

## **Week 4 - Resources to Learn More about Energy**

### **Just Energy for All - United Methodist Women**

<https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/just-energy-for-all>

“We are fortunate to live in a time when many of us in the U.S. have access to energy to run our dishwashers, charge our phones, cook our meals and commute to our local United Methodist Women meetings. But is the energy that fuels all these possibilities just? How is it impacting the lives and health of women, children and youth in the U.S. and around the world? Our Just Energy for All Campaign works for energy that is cleaner and more just for all of God’s people and creation.”

### **The Global Cost of Electronic Waste - The Atlantic**

[www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2016/09/the-global-cost-of-electronic-waste/502019/?fbclid=IwAR0451oH0I7WWZnS9JPRxMMGaliCM8j4vyk2zFfGCWaBdjCYDwT24-cdOw0](http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2016/09/the-global-cost-of-electronic-waste/502019/?fbclid=IwAR0451oH0I7WWZnS9JPRxMMGaliCM8j4vyk2zFfGCWaBdjCYDwT24-cdOw0)

This article makes a clear connection between the our use and dispose of electronic devices, and how that impacts our neighbors on a global scale.

### **Minnesota Wind Energy Facts - Clean Grid Alliance**

[cleangridalliance.org/minnesota-wind-energy](http://cleangridalliance.org/minnesota-wind-energy)

This fact sheet gives helpful context for understanding the growing wind energy economy in Minnesota.

### **Minnesota Solar - Solar Energies Industry Association**

[www.seia.org/state-solar-policy/minnesota-solar](http://www.seia.org/state-solar-policy/minnesota-solar)

### **Minnesota Solar Fact Sheet - MN Commerce Department, Division of Energy Resources**

[mn.gov/commerce-stat/pdfs/solar-fact-sheet.pdf](http://mn.gov/commerce-stat/pdfs/solar-fact-sheet.pdf)

These fact sheets give helpful context for understanding the growing solar energy economy in Minnesota.

### **Can Natural Gas Be a Bridge to Clean Energy? - National Geographic, February 2020**

[www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/energy/great-energy-challenge/big-energy-question/can-natural-gas-be-a-bridge-to-clean-energy/](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/energy/great-energy-challenge/big-energy-question/can-natural-gas-be-a-bridge-to-clean-energy/)

This article shows some of the complexities in the conversation about whether our society should be investing in natural gas in the decade to come.

### **Shutdown of US coal power facilities saved over 26,000 lives, study finds -The Guardian, January 2020**

[www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jan/06/coal-power-pollution-gas-saved-lives-study](http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jan/06/coal-power-pollution-gas-saved-lives-study)

This article highlights how transitioning to cleaner forms of energy is a matter of human life and death in our century.

# Creation Care in Everyday Contexts Student Handout

## Week 4: Energy in the Bible

**Directions:** Take turns reading through each section, look up Scripture passages, and discuss the section questions within your group.

Renewable energy comes from resources that are naturally replenished; such as sunlight, wind, rain, tides, waves, and geothermal heat. It tends to be much less harmful to the environment. Renewable energy sources like solar, wind, and hydroelectric provide energy for people without emitting carbon dioxide and other negative effects of fossil fuels. Renewable energy sources have existed through the history of creation. Read on....

### Sun

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness... (Genesis 1:3-5)

- Look up & read: Genesis 1:16-18
- Discuss:
  - Before electricity, how important was the sun? How important is it today?
  - How does the sun enable life?
  - How do we use light in our homes, streets, classrooms, cars, etc? What are ways we can reduce our usage?

### Tending God's Flock

Shouldn't shepherds tend the flock? You drink the milk, you wear the wool, and you slaughter the fat animals, but you don't tend the flock. You don't strengthen the weak, heal the sick, bind up the injured, bring back the strays, or seek out the lost; but instead you use force to rule them with injustice. (Ezekiel 34)

- Look up & read: Luke 4:18 & Isaiah 61:1-2
- Discuss:
  - What is pollution? What are some of its causes? What are some effects of pollution?
  - Are we contributing to pollution? How do our actions about the energy we use affect our ability to tend the flock? To bring good news to the poor?
  - Do you think that we use energy fairly around the world?

### Energy Inequalities

"Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say." (Exodus 4:12)

- Look up & read: Micah 6:8
- Discuss:
  - Who regulates energy resources around the world? What are some examples of current energy reform? Is energy shared equally?
  - What can each of us do to make a difference about energy inequalities?
  - What is the difference between efficiency and conservation? Why is it important for individuals, governments, and corporations to care about energy efficiency and energy conservation?

## Daily Challenges: #CreationCareYouthChallenge

### Week #4 - Electronics/energy

- Get through a day on just one full charge of your phone.
- Look up your local political leaders and learn about their stance on energy policy and public transit
- Learn about where your own household's electricity is generated. Ask what your power company is doing to make more renewable sources, like wind and solar, more available.
- Go around your house and make a list of the things that draw energy 24/7 even when they're not in use. How many can you practice plugging in only when you're actively using them?
- Spend a day biking, using public transit, or carpooling--avoiding driving alone anywhere in a car. What about three days? A week?
- Ask your church leadership where your congregation's energy is sourced from, and ask if there's a way you can help reduce your congregation's energy bill and/or carbon footprint.
- Pray for communities who do not have affordable access to electricity, for communities who suffer from being close to pollution from energy generation, and for those who make their living working in various kinds of energy industries: coal, oil, gas, solar, wind, hydroelectric. Pray for a transition to an energy economy that tends to every community's wellbeing.



## Creation Care At-Home | COVID-19 Bonus Lesson

### Special Note:

During this time of social distancing, many of our groups have moved to “online” settings, or youth ministry within the homes. This lesson is designed to take place within the home of a student with the ability to include an entire family. We say this with the understanding that not all homes are faith nurturing environments. Nonetheless, the goal of this lesson is to encourage students to begin to think about caring for God’s creation within their everyday environment, as an overview that would lead into the four-week curriculum. It should be used throughout the duration of an entire day! Enjoy!

### COVID-19 At Home Lesson on Creation Care

*Goal:* Help students begin to build awareness of their daily rhythms and how they can participate positively in creation care at every moment of the day.

*Supplies Needed:* small notebook/scratch paper, pen, grocery bag/garbage bag, gloves.

## **Good Morning!** (Morning Activities)

As you wake up this morning, ask God to show you the ways that you can begin to care for God's creation today.

All the activities/devotions today can be done with other people in your home (*siblings, parents, grandparents, etc.*) We will list tips within each section labeled "**Home Activity**".

### Morning Activity:

#### Daily Nature Log

As you go throughout your morning, on your piece of paper, jot down all of the "natural elements" you engage throughout the morning. (Home Activity: keep a master list in a central location of the home; the kitchen)

Examples could be;

- Taking a shower (water)
- Using a stove (electricity/gas)
- Eating Spinach (plants)
- Going to the bathroom (water) (AND WASHING YOUR HANDS- Water)

### Lunch Devotion: (Home Activity - follow this devotion in conversation)

Take a look at the list you made this morning.

Read Psalm 24:1 "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein."

### Discuss:

- What stands out to you in this verse?
- What/who does this verse say belongs to the Lord? What is included in "the fulness thereof" of the earth? Who are the ones that "dwell therein"?
- What does it mean to you to be included as a creation that belongs to the Lord?
- If the earth and all things inside of the earth, including yourself, belong to the Lord, how should we care for these things?

Looking back at your list from this morning, take some time and write down next to every note one way that you (or your family) could try to take care of each element you listed. Did you miss any elements you want to talk about? (trees, plants, etc.) Feel free to add them and discuss them.

Each of us has an important part in taking care of what belongs to the Lord. One of the best ways we can start to do this, or do this better, is by being aware of our natural rhythms throughout a day. Every moment we are given a choice to transform our minds to be like Jesus Christ, in whom "all things in heaven and on earth were created" (Colossians 1:16).

Pray for God to continue to open your eyes to new ways of caring for creation.

## **Good Afternoon! (Afternoon Activities)**

### Daily Choices

As you continue to go throughout your day pay attention to other choices you make and how they could positively care for the environment or negatively. (Home Activity- start another list)

Examples;

- Do you use a plastic bag to store something or a tupperware container?
- Do you write on one side of a piece of paper and throw it away or do you flip it over and then recycle it when finished?

### Clean Up Walk

(Home Activity- go together! Make it a competition, who can collect the most trash?)

If the weather permits, grab a garbage bag and some gloves. Take some time to go on a walk. As you walk, pick up any garbage you come across. This small act can make a huge difference (and you never know who may see your example and follow along!) With every piece of garbage you pick up, say a short prayer for others to see the gift that the earth really is.

## **Good Evening! (Night-time portion)**

### Sky Gazing (Home Activity: do together)

Take some time and look outside at the night sky. (Bonus: if you can lie down outside on a blanket looking up, even better).

Is it cloudy? Is it covered in stars? Has the sun set yet?

Read again Psalm 24:1.

As you look at the vastness of the sky, the details of the clouds, the multiple stars, or the depth of the space, say out loud, "I am a creation of God." Let those words sink in, and then say it again. (Home Activity- reflect by yourself)

Sit in this time as long as you like meditating on that truth. "I am a creation of God."

Think about it (or discuss)

- As a beloved creation of God, how are you to care for yourself? How can you care for yourself as a creation while social distancing? What suggestions have come through in response to COVID-19 that are helping you to care for yourself? What care do you need from others?
- How does caring for the earth also show care to yourself? How does it show care to your neighbor?

When we take care of the earth, and all the beings in it, it is a way of saying “thank you” to God for all that we have been given. Caring for the environment has many scientific results, but spiritually, caring for creation also uniquely connects us to God, who is the creator of all things—including the night sky you see and the overwhelming depth that it is.

End this day-long devotion in prayer, thanking God for teaching you new things, giving you the opportunity to care for all that belongs to God.



## **Additional Creation Care Resources**

### **Connecting Faith and Justice - Youth Lectionary A Curriculum**

Youth curriculum designed to help students actively engage the intersection of faith and justice and explore why our faith compels us toward justice. Available as free download.

<https://www.umcjustice.org/articles/connecting-faith-and-justice-youth-lectionary-a-curriculum-967>

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### **Morningside Center - Teachable Moments**

Lessons and resources to help K-12 educators encourage social responsibility and foster social & emotional learning. Easy search tool to narrow lessons based on grade and topic.

<https://www.morningsidecenter.org/teachable-moment>