

Module 1 - Living With and *Within* Creation

Focus theme: From the very beginning of Genesis *humans are created to be in relationship with Creation.*

Genesis 1 & 2 - Each has a lesson for us to teach!

There are two distinct Creation stories found in Genesis, Chapters 1 and 2. The following are lessons that can be shared from each of these that teach us our role as humans in relationship with the earth, God's Creation.

Lesson 1 from Genesis 1:

Dominion over all things = responsibility not control or domination

Genesis 1: 26 After all things were created....

Then God said *"Let us make humankind[a] in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth,[b] and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."*

This story teaches that that God gave us (human beings) dominion over the earth. When God gave us responsibility, not control.

Additional Scripture Readings: (that also illustrate **Lesson 1**)

From the beginning, humanity is not an owner, but a steward of God's creation. We called to care for the creation on behalf of future generations and all species.

Psalm 8:6

Humans are to exercise godly care for "all things under their feet."

Psalm 24: 1-2

The earth is the Lords' and all those who live in it.

Activity: Role Play - Who's in Charge?

Invite Children / Youth to form 2 groups : NOTE: if you have younger children you may give them the roles on popsicle sticks or index cards with pre-printed words. You may wish to recruit older children to guide / direct the younger ones.



"Dominion as Domination" or "Caretaking Creation" (depending on the group)

One group creates 1) and the other creates 2)

OR: One group does both of them one after the other

Create and role play these 2 scenes:

1) An example of "Dominion as Domination" - showing something people do whose attitude is that God provided the earth and its resources to use up and consume without limit, taking all that they can and leaving the waste behind, polluting God's Creation, making it unhealthy for humans and other living things.

2) An example of "Caretaking Creation" - showing something people do who understand our responsibility to care for and guard the well being of the earth and all of its inhabitants, who live in balance, only taking what they need and practicing healthy ways of living with respect for all God's Creation.

Lesson 2 from Genesis 2: Humans are named as caretakers of Creation.

Genesis 2:25

And God put the human in the garden of Eden to keep it and tend it.

The Bible calls us to *"till and keep the garden"* and names human beings as the caretakers of creation. Because God created all the Earth and all of us, creation is beautiful and good and sacred. Our faith teaches us to be good stewards. A steward manages that which is owned by someone else. Being good stewards of the earth and waters is a way of caring for and sharing the gifts of Creation that God has given us. We express our love for God by protecting these gifts!

Activity: Creation Mural

Materials:

- Newsprint or large paper
- Crayons or Water based Markers
- Tables
- Masking Tape

Roll out Newsprint onto tables (you may have to tape it down).

Invite children/youth to draw things in Creation - plants, animals, earth and waters and show themselves taking care of God's Creation.

Display Mural on a wall in classroom.

Lesson 3 from Genesis 2:

Humans came from the Humus / Earth (Adam = "Adama" = Earth creature)

Genesis 2:7

Then God formed the human from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being

Activity: God made humans from earth and water = Clay

Materials:

- Modeling Clay - divide up into pieces about the size of a fist
- Wax paper (about 12" square to place each student's clay upon)
- Tables
- Water

Share: Everything we eat and drink comes from the earth. So we are made from earth and water! All our food is grown in or on the earth. What are some examples? Where did it come from? (a farm, a cow, a chicken, the ocean).

Clay is made of earth and water. And we heard the bible tell us that God made humans the earth too ("the dust of the ground")! Let's imagine God making and molding you as a person. Each of you is unique creation of God made of earth.

"Gallery Walk" - Children / youth share their creations by naming one thing from the earth that they like to eat and one thing that is special about themselves.



Lesson 4 from other Scriptures:

Humans are a part of, dependent upon, and in relationship with Creation

The Psalms are "song prayers" for singing prayers of praise, or thanksgiving, or asking for God's help. Examples of these:

Psalm 104, Psalm 95

Activity: Writing a "Prayer Rap" - Caring for God's Creation

(and use these "Prayer Raps" as a Closing Prayer for this Session)

We heard that Psalms are "song prayers." How can we sing praise to God for Creation?

Invite children and youth to write their own Rap to express thanksgiving for the gifts of Creation. How can we that show we will not misuse the resources of the earth? How are we dependent upon all Creation?