

• Lesson 4 •

# Waste Away

## Stewardship Activity

Genesis 3:19

By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”



**Introduction:** A waste audit involves analyzing the amount and types of waste that the church produces and where it gets disposed of. This activity will be messy and disgusting, but very eye-opening and fun! Be sure to inform your youth of this event well in advance so that they can wear old clothing that can get dirty. Also, make sure to contact the property trustees and/or head custodian for permission and to locate all of the waste disposal sites. Request that all of the waste for one week be left on site to be analyzed. Note: be careful with medical waste and bathroom waste. Make sure students wear gloves.

**Learning Outcomes:**

- Youth will become aware of the types of waste that the church throws away
- Youth will become aware of how much of that waste could have been diverted to recycling, compost or reuse
- Youth will learn about what it means to be a steward of resources and the environment
- Youth will encounter the ethical implications of waste disposal and how it affects our brothers and sisters in the community

## **Game/Activity**

### **Waste Away Stewardship Activity**

Grades 6-12

High School Youth Group Activity

Themes: Waste, Stewardship, Recycling

### **Scripture:**

-Genesis 3:19

-Romans 6:3-4

### **Materials:**

-rubber gloves

-2-4 tarps

-plastic garbage bags

-information about recycling in your community

- Decorah, Iowa: <http://www.decorahnow.com/recycling>
- Mason City, Iowa: <http://www.masoncity.net/pview.aspx?id=18024>

-optional: camera/video camera

**Opening Prayer:** *Dear Heavenly Father, Please be with us today as we learn about our church's consumption and waste. Please help us to learn to be good stewards of the resources you have graciously given to us. Help our church community to be mindful of the ways that our waste negatively impacts other people. In Christ Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

### **Waste Audit Procedure:**

1. Open in prayer.
2. Go to the place where the waste audit will be conducted, ideally outside next to the dumpster or near a hose to rinse off the tarps at the end.
3. Collect all of the trash and recycling receptacles from the church and bring them to the location of the waste audit.
4. Put tarps down on the ground
5. Hand out rubber gloves for youth to wear. Give safety instructions telling them to be careful of sharp objects, medical waste, etc.
6. Dump all of the contents of the trash receptacles onto one of the tarps. Try to keep track of what areas of the church the waste is

coming from. Say: "This trash can is from the office/ kitchen/ etc.)"

7. Step back and look at the pile. Take a picture and/or begin videotaping. Ask the youth:
  - a. What do you all think of our church's waste?
  - b. Is this more or less waste than you expected?
  - c. What events this week do you think contributed to the waste (church picnic, potluck, funeral, VBS, etc.)?
  - d. How much of this pile do you think is recyclable? Let's find out!
8. Begin to sort the piles onto other tarps. Designate areas to separate paper, plastic, metal, glass, cardboard, Styrofoam, food, plants, electronics, etc. Divide the youth up into groups to dig through the central pile and find these items. Take pictures of sorted piles.
9. Ask the youth:
  - a. How much of the church's waste was recyclable but not put in recycling bins?
  - b. What items that you found most surprised you? Are there items you found that you didn't know our church used? Does our church use more (paper, glass bottles, fresh flowers, etc.) than you expected?
  - c. Does our church have a good recycling system? Why do you think people did not put recyclable items into the recycling bins?
  - d. Are there items that our church should purchase less of?
  - e. Which area of the church are responsible for the most waste?
10. Put the newly sorted piles into the appropriate recycling or garbage bins.
11. Rinse off tarps with hose, dispose of gloves, and tell youth to wash their hands. Reconvene to new location (youth room) for scripture reading and discussion.
12. Read selections about stewardship from Genesis 1-3 and Romans 6:3-4

### **Discussion Questions:**

- a. What images come to mind when you think about being dust and returning to dust?

- b. There are some conflicting ideas about how humans should treat the earth in the creation accounts in Genesis. In Genesis 1 there is the idea of “dominion” and “subduing” the earth, whereas in Genesis 2 there is the idea of “tilling and keeping” the earth. What are your beliefs on how humans should treat the earth?
- c. How does the idea of recycling compare to the new life we receive in Christ through his death and resurrection?
- d. What does it mean to be good stewards of the resources God has blessed us with?
- e. What can our church do to be better stewards of our resources and produce less waste? Do we need to make any changes to the materials we use or our recycling system? Do we need to educate the congregation more? How can the youth group be involved?
- f. Where does our waste go in this community? Where is the landfill?
- g. How do you think a landfill affects the people living nearby, both in this community and other areas? Do you think they choose to live there? Or are they poorer people who have no other choice?
- h. How does the way we dispose of our waste and treat the earth affect other people in our community?

*Closing Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, Thank you for the experience we had today looking at our church’s waste. Please help us to remember that we can never truly throw things away, and that everything extracted from the earth will return to dust. In the same way that a plastic bottle is given “new life” through the recycling process, we are grateful that we are given new life through Christ’s death on the cross and resurrection. Help us to consider our impact on neighbors and the earth You have created in the decisions we make. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.*

**Optional Activities/Follow Up:**

1. Have the youth help label the recycling system to make it more clear
2. Publish photos and a report of what you discovered in the audit/discussion in the church newsletter or on a bulletin board

3. The youth make a collage of the garbage and display it in the church to raise awareness of the amount and type of garbage the church disposes of
4. Divide the youth group into teams to create garbage collages and have a competition for most creative piece, most disgusting piece, etc.
5. Create a video of the waste audit process and use it during adult education or incorporate it into a Sunday service about creation care
6. Have the youth take action on issues they identified during discussion regarding the stewardship of the church and environmental justice



# Into the Wilderness

## Bible Study & Discussion

Matthew 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted [a] by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

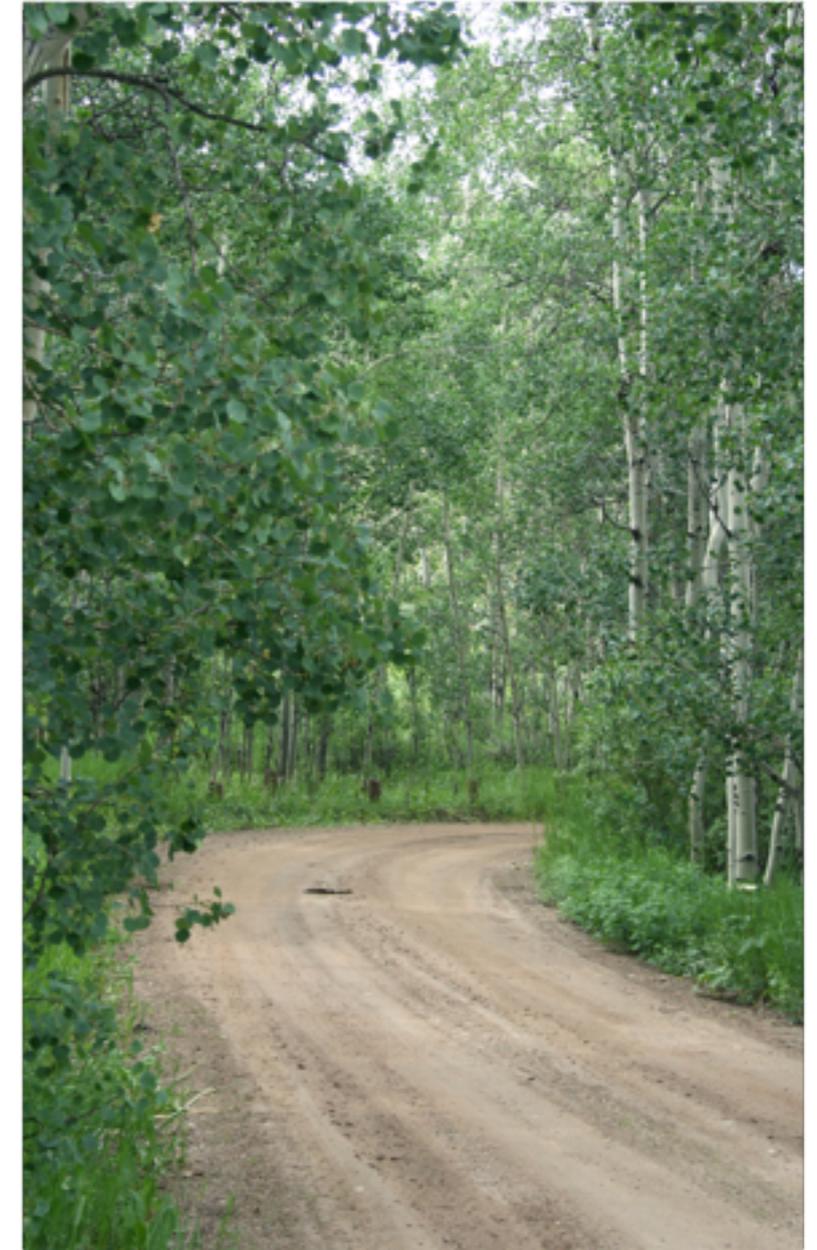
Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

**Introduction:** The contemporary connotation of "wilderness" is positive—people often wish to escape to the wilderness to get enjoyment away from the chaos of their daily lives. However, in Biblical times, the notion of wilderness is more solemn—it is where people in the Old Testament go to give sacrifices and where Jesus is tempted. This activity explores the ideas of how we define nature, how people encounter God in nature and the implications in caring for creation.

It would be ideal to facilitate this discussion outside if possible. A Sunday School or youth group hike, walk along the bike trail, bike ride, canoe trip or camp out could be some great opportunities to lead up to this discussion! You will want to ensure that the youth are in a speaking environment where everyone can see and hear each other. These discussion questions do not have to be contemplated in a large group; rather, dividing up into small groups may help students express their ideas more comfortably.

**Learning Outcomes:**

- Youth will enjoy spending time outside in fellowship
- Youth will explore different connotations of the word "wilderness" in the context of the Old Testament, New Testament, and present day
- Youth will consider what the Bible says about Creation and nature, and the implications for how humans treat the natural world



## **Bible Study/Discussion**

### **Into the Wilderness: Bible Study**

Middle School/High School

Sunday School or Youth Group

#### **Materials:**

-National Park Service definition of wilderness

<http://wilderness.nps.gov/faqnew.cfm>

-Bibles

-paper/journals/pens/pencils (optional)

-consider using scholarly articles/commentary about Creation/nature/wilderness in the Bible

#### **Scripture:**

-Matthew 4:1-11

-Exodus 7 (verse 16), Exodus 8 (verse 27)

-Numbers 14

#### **Opening Prayer:**

*Dear Lord, Please be with us today as we gather in fellowship to experience your creation. Please open our eyes to the ways we can experience you in nature and in our everyday lives. Be with us as we contemplate and discuss your word. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. How do you experience God in nature?
2. What is it like? What does it tell you about your faith?
3. What is nature? Is it a place completely away from human control? Does such a place exist? Can a place have nature but not be natural? Is nature a positive or negative thing?
4. What is God's role in nature? As a creator? Sustainer? Destroyer? How much are humans supposed to or able to "manage" nature?
5. What is wilderness? Is wilderness a positive or negative thing?
6. (Read park service definition) How does that define us in getting back to nature without any kind of human interference? What does it mean to be alone in nature? Does it make us feel more connected with the "real" of God as opposed to man-made connotations of what is real?

7. What is the Biblical view of wilderness? (Have students look at Matthew 4:1-11, Exodus chapters 7 and 8, and Numbers 14 and any other verses they wish to find)
8. What are your reactions to these Scripture passages? How is wilderness viewed?
9. How do we think about wilderness in the season of Lent?
10. What are the implications of our actions on God's creation?
11. How do we see our role in creation?

#### **Closing Prayer:**

*Dear Heavenly Father, Thank you for our discussion today. Be with us as we continue to ponder the deep questions about what it means to find your presence in nature. Please help us to consider the implications of our actions on the world you have created. Amen.*



# The Lord is My Rock

## Rock Painting Lesson

Matthew 7:24-27

Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.

### Introduction

In this lesson, students will think about what it means to be good stewards of God's creation. They will articulate their vision for a sustainable and just world and paint it on a rock, symbolizing that God is the foundation for these visions in the midst of environmental problems and injustices. It would best be used in conjunction with an inter-generational church wide gardening project to grow food for a food pantry, as the rocks could be used to decorate the space and remind the gardeners of the purpose for gardening. However, the rocks could also be used around the church landscape to remind the congregation of their foundation in faith, or they could be taken home. Please consult the property trustees to make sure that the students place their rocks in an appropriate location which will ideally be somewhere visible to the congregation.

### Learning Outcomes

- Students will articulate their vision for environmental stewardship
- Students will learn to articulate complex ideas in simple terms
- Students will make personal connections to plants/outdoors
- Students will make their presence known in an inter-generational church gardening project (if applicable)
- Students will understand that Jesus is the foundation of our hope in the face of problems



## **Arts and Crafts/Outdoor**

### **The Lord is My Rock: Rock Painting Lesson**

Grades 1- 5

Sunday School or After School

Approximate Time: 30-40 minutes

Themes: Faith, Nature, Hope

#### **Scripture:**

Matthew 7:24-27

#### **Materials:**

- rocks (should be about fist sized or bigger so that there is enough space for children to write on them, fairly flat; it would be ideal if students could go outside and select their own rock)
- acrylic paint, lighter colors that can be written on top
- large and small paint brushes
- many colors of permanent markers
- rags and clean up supplies
- newspapers to cover tables
- painting smocks (optional)

**Opening Prayer:** *Dear Lord, Please be with us today as we learn about how you are always strong and faithful like a rock. Help us to build our faith on a strong foundation. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

#### **Procedure:**

1. Cover the tables with newspapers and place paint smocks and other materials on tables
2. Gather as a group
3. Open in prayer
4. Tell the students: *Today we are going to learn about how God is our firm foundation.*
5. Have students select a rock that they are going to paint (go outside if applicable)
6. Wipe rocks off with damp rags and dry them
7. Give students each 1 choice of paint color and paint brushes for the base coat
8. While the base coat is drying, ask the students:
  - a. What are your rocks like? Are they strong? Do they break easily?
  - b. Where did these rocks come from? Who made them?
  - c. What is God like? Is he strong like a rock?

- d. What words would you use to describe your faith in God and Jesus? (some examples might be joy, peace, love, understanding, fun, etc.—let the students be creative!) Why?
9. When paint is dry, help students think of a word that they like that expresses their faith.
10. Direct students to write their word on their rocks, either with paint or permanent markers. They can also add some embellishments/decorations to their rocks.
11. Have students wash their hands and as paint is drying, read scripture Matthew 7:24-27
12. Discuss:
  - a. Describe what comes to mind to you with this Bible verse.
  - b. What does it mean to put your faith in Jesus on a firm foundation?
  - c. How can these rocks help remind us of our faith?
13. Go outside, either to the church garden or place on church property where the rocks will be placed. Help children select a location to place their rock. Allow them to explore the plants and flowers in the garden.

**Closing Prayer:** *Dear Lord, Please help these rocks to remind us and our community about you. Help us to put our faith on a strong foundation like the rock. Please bless the earth and rocks and plants that you have created. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

#### **Optional/Modifications:**

1. Instead of painting a base coat, have students use only permanent markers to decorate the rocks.
2. Students write an entire Bible verse or phrase on the rocks instead of just one word. It may be easier for younger students to write about their faith in more than one word.

## **Arts and Crafts/Outdoor**

### **The Lord is My Rock: Rock Painting Lesson**

Middle School and High School

After School or Youth Group

Approximate Time: 40-60 minutes

Themes: Faith, Nature, Hope, Justice

#### **Scripture:**

-Psalm 19:14

-Matthew 7:24-27

#### **Materials:**

-rocks (should be about fist sized or enough for students to write on, fairly flat; it would be ideal if students could go outside and select their own rock)

-acrylic paint, lighter colors that can be written on top of

-large and small paint brushes

-permanent markers

-rags and clean up supplies

-newspapers to cover tables

**Opening Prayer:** *Dear Heavenly Father, Please be with us today as we discuss what it means to take good care of our neighbors and your creation. Help us to remember that you are at the foundation of our visions for environmental stewardship, and that you are our rock and redeemer. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

#### **Procedure:**

1. Cover the tables with newspapers and place materials on tables
2. Gather as a group
3. Read Psalm 19:14
4. Open in prayer
5. Tell the students: *Today we are going to paint rocks to decorate the church property/church garden. The rocks symbolize that God is at the core of our faith. When we talk about issues of hunger, justice or environmental stewardship we need to remember that God is the foundation of our vision for the future.*
6. Have students select a rock that they are going to paint (go outside if applicable)
7. Wipe rocks off with damp rags and dry them

8. Give students paint for the base coat
9. While students are painting, ask them questions about environmental stewardship and justice. You may want to read an excerpt from newsletter articles or internet research on one or two issues (e.g. climate change, food, water, air pollution, etc.)
  - a. What are some of the problems we and our neighbors around the world face today?
  - b. What are some of the problems that God's creation faces today?
10. While the base coat is drying, read Matthew 7:24-27
11. Ask the students:
  - a. Describe what comes to mind to you with this Bible verse.
  - b. When we try to respond to these social and environmental problems, are we being more like the man who built his house on the rock or the one who built his house on sand? What solutions have endured and which ones have fallen?
  - c. What does it mean to put your faith in Jesus on a firm foundation?
12. Tell the students to select one word that describes their vision for a sustainable and just future. You may want to model with your own word but try not to be too prescriptive.
13. Have students wash their hands and as paint is drying,
14. Discussion Questions:
  - a. How do these rocks remind you of God's creation and your faith?
  - b. How can our God be the foundation of our visions for environmental stewardship and justice?
15. Go outside, either to the church garden or place on church property where the rocks will be placed. Let the students select a location to place their rock.
16. Encourage the students to find a quiet place to sit by themselves and meditate for a few minutes.
17. Close in prayer

**Closing Prayer:** *Dear Lord, Please help these rocks in the garden/ around church property to remind us and our congregation that our faith in you is at the foundation of all that we do. Please bless this space to remind us that you are our rock and our redeemer. Help us to take care of our neighbors and your creation. In Christ Jesus' name, Amen.*

# Creating the Kingdom on Earth

## Meditation & Art Project

Romans 12:1-2

“Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what is God’s will—his good, pleasing, and perfect will.”

**Introduction:** In our contemporary culture, youth are flooded with messages about efficiency, ease, and quick-fix solutions. But will these problem-solving methods suffice when seeking to heal brokenness in the world and themselves? Often messages of shame or guilt motivate people for a moment but then fail to bear the desired results in the long-term. Whether it is self-help books, New Years Resolutions, or campaigns, there are many unsustainable ways to seek personal growth, let alone social transformation.

In the Gospels, Jesus did not give his disciples a 10-step program or a list of do’s and don’ts. He beckoned them to “come and see” and “follow”. The Gospel shows a different reality, and this new ways of seeing leads to new ways of thinking and ultimately new ways of living. The Gospels present a compelling vision for the kingdom of God where the weak are made strong, the poor are made rich, and the oppressed are set free.



As youth enter on the path to sustainable-living, contemplation, imagination, and artistic expression can be powerful tools for inspiring them to bring the kingdom of God to earth.

### Learning Outcomes:

- Youth will slow down and reflect on their connection to God, others, self, and the world.
- Youth will meditate on Scripture
- Youth will exercise imagination and creativity to present their vision for the world

## **Meditation/Art**

6-12th Grade

Sunday School or Youth Group

Themes: Christian discipleship, Kingdom of God, Social Justice, Sustainable Living

### **Scripture:**

Romans 12:1-2

Luke 8:4-15

### **Materials:**

-Colored paper (Scrapbooking sheets work well)

-Colored markers, pens, pencils

-Glue Sticks (Works better than liquid for pasting images)

-(Optional): Photos (National Geographic is recommended; You can rip out pages ahead of time)

-Scissors

**Opening Prayer:** *God, open our eyes to see your vision for your kingdom on earth. Bless this time of reflection and meditation. Amen.*

### **Procedure:**

1. Open in Prayer
2. Introduce the lesson: Read introduction to students.
3. Read Scripture.
4. Ask students to respond to the following questions in a free-writing exercise. It is important for this initial reflection to be individual in order to allow the most imagination. (You may want to play soft music in the background to encourage reflection.)
  - a. What is your reaction to the Scripture readings? What stands out? What surprised you? What troubled you?
  - b. What is the kingdom of God? What does it look like?
  - c. What does it mean to follow Jesus?
  - d. What does it look like for me to bring the kingdom of God to earth in the context of environmental problems?

5. Invite students to use art supplies to show their vision through art. They can paint, draw, collage, write, or incorporate multiple mediums. Allow 20-30 minutes. Encourage them to show the vision, not tell or explain it, especially if they continue with creative writing or journaling.
6. Gather as a group and invite students to share their art work. Discuss as a group:
  - a. What excites you about following Jesus? What terrifies you?
  - b. What keeps us from following Jesus? What helps us to grow in our faith?
  - c. As people of faith, how do we bring the kingdom of God to earth in the context of global climate change? How would this kingdom change the way we live? How would it change our community or city? How would it change the world?
7. Encourage students to post their art in a visible place at home as daily reminder. Or, invite the students to make a collage of their art in a mosaic on a bulletin board or wall to display their visions to the rest of the church community.

**Note:** If you have access to a computer/projector, display images on a powerpoint and play during reflection/creative time.

### **Closing Prayer (Psalm 23):**

*Lord, you are my shepherd, I lack nothing.*

*You make me lie down in green pasture, you lead me beside quiet waters,*

*You restore my soul. You guide me along the right paths for your name's sake.*

*Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil,*

*For you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.*

*You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.*

*You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.*

*Surely your goodness and mercy will follow me, all the days of my life. and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Amen.*

# “Live Simply So Others May Simply Live”

Film & Dialogue

Matthew 22:36-39

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

**Introduction:** *What does it mean to follow Jesus in the context of global climate change?*

This is a crucial question for faith communities and individuals to reflect upon in order to be able to “green the church” and live more ethical and sustainable lives.

This film was made by Kristi Holmberg during a 2011 Summer Research Project at Luther College. Holmberg interviewed 13 people from Decorah, Iowa who demonstrate sustainable lifestyles. While this resource is not a representative sample of the many individuals and institutions in the area who model sustainability, the conversation offers a vision for environmentally sustainable Christian discipleship in the context of global climate change.



**Learning Outcomes:**

- Participants will learn from models of sustainability in Decorah, Iowa
- Participants will engage in meaningful discussion about important environmental issues
- Participants will articulate a vision for sustainability
- Participants will generate ideas to live more sustainable lives as individuals and communities

## **Film/Discussion**

### **Live Simply: Film and Dialogue**

Grades 6-12th and/or Adults

Fellowship Event or Youth Group

Issues: Climate change, social justice, sustainable living, Christian discipleship

### **Scripture:**

Matthew 22: 36-39

### **Materials:**

-Projector and screen

-Film (The online YouTube video can be found here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f2UgRsz7eU4>)

-Paper

-Markers

### **Opening Prayer:**

*Dear God, open our eyes to see your vision for sustainable and just world. May the voices in this film teach us what it means to follow you, inspire meaningful conversation for our own lives, and give us hope. Amen.*

### **Procedure:**

1. Open in Prayer
2. Introduce film title and background.
3. Show film (14 minutes)
4. Facilitate discussion with the following question:
  - a. What did you see? What images or words stood out to you in the film?
  - b. How do you think the issue of climate change affects you and your community?
  - c. Why is this an issue that that needs to be grappled with?
  - d. What is one of the biggest obstacles in regards to solving this and other problems in our society?
  - g. What gives you hope when you think about the future?
  - h. What brings you fear when you think about the future?
  - i. What is the future you want for your children? What future do your children want from you?

j. What can we do to live more sustainable lives as a faith community? As individuals? Families? Society?

k. What is one word to encompass your vision for sustainable living? Why did you choose it?

5. Instruct participants to write their one word on a banner with markers. You can display this banner or poster in the church.

6. Close in Prayer

### **Closing Prayer:**

*God we thank you for the stories and experiences that have shaken and transformed us. We ask you to forgive us for the ways our lifestyles cause pain and suffering for the least among us. As we go out from this place, open our eyes so we may see both the beauty and the injustice around us. Open our minds so we may imagine your vision for a peaceful world. May this vision lead us forward, past fears and failures, toward lives of compassion and service. We ask you to equip us with courage to wrestle with tough issues like climate change, the discipline to cultivate hope over despair, and the wisdom to pursue faithfulness over perfection. May your abiding presence fill us, sustain us, and strengthen us as we journey on the path to sustainable living.*

# Garden Harvest Celebration

## Fellowship Event

Genesis 1: 10-11

Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning — the third day.

**Introduction:** This activity is intended for use in many ways and can be modified to fit the needs of the congregation. If used in conjunction with a church gardening project that grows food for local food pantries, the activity would be to go to the garden site and harvest food, clean it, and transport it to the food pantry! The focus of the event would be on feeding the hungry and discussing social justice.



If the church has a community garden that grows produce for use in the church, the focus of the event would be a celebration of God's bounty in nature and would entail cooking a meal prepared with ingredients from the garden and engaging in fellowship.

If the church does not have a garden, the congregation can still celebrate with the contributions of food from congregation members. An ideal time to host this activity would be when everyone's gardens are producing faster than the gardeners can keep up and people are desperate to get rid of their zucchini! For both of these meal options, be sure to contact the kitchen committee for help and permission to use the kitchen.

All of these events can be inter-generational and offer the opportunity for community fellowship!

### **Learning Objectives:**

- Participants will learn about where their food comes from
- People of the congregation will remember their hungry brothers and sisters in the community and show compassion
- People in the congregation will learn about cooking and food traditions from each other
- People of all ages will spend time in fellowship together

## **Family Sunday School Activity or Fellowship Event**

Garden Harvest Celebration

All Ages

Special Event

Themes: Gardening, Hunger, Gratitude, Community

### **Scripture:**

-Genesis 1: 10-11

-Matthew 25:31-46

### **Materials:**

-garden equipment which may include: wheel barrows, gardening gloves, hoes, shovels, rakes, etc.

-containers in which to put the harvest

-place to wash produce

**Opening Prayer:** *Dear God, thank you for this time of fellowship. Bless the lips of those who taste this food. Thank you for the hands that have harvested this food. May the food and fellowship provide nourishment to our bodies and spirits. In Christ's name, Amen.*

**Note:** A freewill donation may be collected for a ministry or cause

### **Option 1: For use in conjunction with Food Pantry Garden**

#### **Procedure:**

1. Preparation:
  - a. Be in communication with people in charge of food pantry garden to help advise when things will be ready to harvest and facilitate it
  - b. If the church garden is off site, arrange carpools and a way to transport the harvest
  - c. If the food harvested needs to be rinsed off or prepared (i.e. blanched and frozen), get permission to use the church kitchen for these tasks
  - d. If the food pantry is off site, arrange a way to transport the harvest there (make sure that they accept homegrown produce)
  - e. Tell congregation participants to bring hats, sunscreen, sunglasses, gardening gloves if they have them, water bottles etc.
2. Open in Prayer and read Scripture
3. Divide people up into groups and instruct them on how to harvest
4. Close in prayer

### **Option 2: Harvest Meal (With Church Garden or Congregation Member Ingredients)**

#### **Procedure:**

1. Preparation:
  - a. Plan a menu based on what is available from the church garden or people's contributions. Be mindful of creating options for different dietary needs, including vegetarian, gluten free, dairy free, nut free, etc.
  - b. If planning this meal far enough in advance, consider harvesting and freezing earlier season vegetables to use for the meal
  - c. Seek donations for other menu items that will be needed (milk, spices, eggs, flour, etc.)
  - d. Gather the necessary cooking utensils to prepare the menu items. Borrow extras from the congregation if needed.
  - e. Recruit volunteers (youth, adults, seniors) with cooking experience to help children cook the meal
  - f. Recruit volunteers to help clean up
  - g. Create a washing station outside for a preliminary rinse of the produce
  - h. Set up stations to prepare each dish. Have tasks that even young children can assist with
  - i. Decide if you will take a free will offering to support a cause or ministry
  - j. Clean off all tables cooking surfaces in the church kitchen
  - k. (If using donated produce): Make signs with labels thanking the gardeners who donated them
  - l. Create table tents with discussion questions
2. Open in Prayer
3. (If using produce from church garden): Have children and adults harvest fruits and vegetables from the garden and rinse them
4. Wash and prepare produce
5. Have young children and adults set the tables
6. Read Scripture
7. Sing grace as a community before the meal (i.e. "Be Present at Our Table, Lord," "Adams family tune grace," etc.)
8. Enjoy the meal in fellowship
9. Clean up in community
10. Table Discussion Questions:
  - a. What did you help harvest and prepare?
  - b. What is your favorite dish that you tasted in this meal?
  - c. How has God blessed us with this harvest?

# Other Curriculum

## Free Online Downloads:

### **Awakening to God's Call to Earthkeeping**

<http://www.elca.org/Our-Faith-In-Action/Justice/Advocacy/Congregational-Resources/Caring-For-Creation.aspx#Congregations>

*This four session curriculum for older youth and adults is available for free online download from the ELCA. The leader guide and participant worksheets are included in the PDF, in addition to a list of resources in the appendix.*

### **Creation Care Bible Study and Discussion**

<http://restoringeden.org/resources/creation-care-discussion-guide>

*This stand-alone lesson for junior high and high school youth looks at scripture that calls people to be stewards of the earth. It is available online through Restoring Eden, a Christian organization for environmental stewardship.*

### **Creation Care Magazine**

[http://creationcare.org/media.php?what=21&c\\_id=7](http://creationcare.org/media.php?what=21&c_id=7)

*This website offers eight Bible Study sessions and a Lenten study for adults for free online download. The lessons are published by the Evangelical Environmental Network.*

### **Faithful Citizenship**

[http://www.congregationinpubliclife.org/Faithful%20Citizen\\_sample.pdf](http://www.congregationinpubliclife.org/Faithful%20Citizen_sample.pdf)

*A six week discussion-based curriculum for adults about how Christians can respond to global environmental problems. The curriculum is available online and requires use of a projector to show video clips.*

### **Georgia Interfaith Power and Light Study Guides**

[http://www.gipl.org/Content/Study\\_Guides.asp](http://www.gipl.org/Content/Study_Guides.asp)

*There are numerous curriculums of varying lengths for adults and youth available from Georgia Interfaith Power and Light, including*

*Dirt Wise, Water Wise, Buy Wise, and Waste Wise. All are available for free, except Dirt Wise which includes a DVD in the purchase price.*

### **Hunger and Climate Change Connections Tool-Kit**

<http://www.elca.org/Our-Faith-In-Action/Responding-to-the-World/ELCA-World-Hunger/Resources/For-Congregations/Hunger-Education-Toolkits/Climate-Change.aspx>

*This curriculum for children is published by the ELCA and connects environmental problems with social justice issues. This curriculum offers multiple opportunities for the leader to customize which lessons they will use and what level they are intended for. The lessons are available for free online download.*

### **LWF Together: Green and Just**

[http://lwfyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/LWF\\_Guidebook\\_2012-EN-WEB1.pdf](http://lwfyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/LWF_Guidebook_2012-EN-WEB1.pdf)

*This youth curriculum about ecological justice is published by the Lutheran World Federation Youth Desk. It includes Bible Studies, games, tips for project planning, film recommendations, and more.*

### **New Community Project Sunday School**

[http://www.newcommunityproject.org/pdfs/sunday\\_school.pdf](http://www.newcommunityproject.org/pdfs/sunday_school.pdf)

*This printable PDF, published by the New Community Project offers Sunday School lessons for elementary through high school children about why caring for God's creation is important.*

### **Operation Creation**

[http://www.newcommunityproject.org/pdfs/operation\\_creation.pdf](http://www.newcommunityproject.org/pdfs/operation_creation.pdf)

*This Vacation Bible School curriculum for children is published by the New Community Project, a nonprofit organization working on environmental and social justice issues. It is available for free online download, and could also be used as five separate lessons rather than VBS.*

### **Sharing and Protecting God's Creation**

<http://www.congwestonucc.net/Environmental%20Curriculum.pdf>

*This link provides three sessions of Sunday School Lessons about environmental stewardship that can be adapted to different age groups. It is designed for the rotational Sunday School model.*

### **Splendor**

<http://greenfaith.org/resource-center/spirit/religious-environmental-education/splendor>

*This adult education curriculum is available for free online download from GreenFaith, and inter-faith organization that addresses environmental and social justice issues. There are three sessions which explore different aspects of environmentalism for people of faith.*

### **For Purchase:**

#### **LIVE**

<http://www.simplyyouthministry.com/resources-curriculum-small-groups-live-curriculum-leadership.html>

*A 60 lesson curriculum for Junior High and High School youth regarding leadership in ministry published by Simply Youth Ministry. It would be an ideal curriculum for assisting youth in leadership positions on a "Green Team."*

#### **Green Church**

<http://www.abingdonpress.com/forms/ProductDetail.aspx?pid=5447>

*United Methodist author Rev. Rebekah Simon-Peter has created curriculum about environmental stewardship for children, youth and adults. Green Church: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rejoice! and 7 Simple Steps to Green Your Church are for adults, Burst: Green Church is a junior high and high school study, and Green Church: Caretakers of God's Creation is for children. The adult studies are available for checkout at Preus Library at Luther College.*

#### **ReNew**

<http://renew.wearesparkhouse.org/>

*This Vacation Bible School curriculum for children, published by Sparkhouse, is available for purchase (although you can view sample pages online). It includes games, activities, songs and more about environmental stewardship.*

### **Book Studies:**

#### **Blessed Earth For Children**

<http://www.blessedearth.org/resources/for-children/>

*This website provides an extensive list of children's books, environmental Sunday School curriculums and websites for families about taking care of God's creation.*

#### **Creature Kindness**

<http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Ministry/Women-of-the-ELCA/Lutheran-Woman-Today/Articles/2010/April/Creature-Kindness.aspx>

*This article by Kim Winchell describes the call for Christians to be hospitable towards God's creation and offers tips for individuals and congregations.*

#### **I Love God's Green Earth**

[http://www.tyndale.com/I-Love-Gods-Green-Earth/9781414331799#.UAd-x\\_VmogQ](http://www.tyndale.com/I-Love-Gods-Green-Earth/9781414331799#.UAd-x_VmogQ)

*This devotional for older children provides ninety devotions about the connection between faith and environmental stewardship, as well as tips for what children can do to make their home more environmentally friendly.*

#### **Year of Plenty**

<http://store.augsburgfortress.org/store/product/9411/Year-of-Plenty-One-Suburban-Family-in-Pursuit-of-Christian-Living>

*This book is about the connections between faith and eating local as experienced by a pastor and his family. It could be used as an adult or family book study.*