Lesson Plans

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Lesson for children

*Supplies*

* small containers, such as plastic cups, yogurt cups, or similar
* fast-growing seeds such as lettuce, beet, or marigold, or the eyes of sprouted potatoes (simply buy a potato and leave it in the cupboard for several weeks to sprout, then cut around each eye, leaving a substantial chunk of potato flesh attached)
* soil
* paper and colored pencils or crayons

*Activity*

* Today we are going to think about how God grows inside each living thing.
* Let’s read from Scripture: “The tree grew and became strong, and its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth.Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, and the birds of the heavens lived in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it.” *Daniel 4:8-9*
* How does this Scripture remind you of the Earth? How does it remind you of God?
* Let’s all close our eyes for a moment and think of our favorite place in nature. What does it look like? Are there any feelings, odors, or sounds we remember there, maybe the fragrance of wet grass or the sounds of a river? Take a moment to see and feel it as clearly as you can.
* Now let’s draw a picture of that place. Trying to add as many details in your picture as you can—the sun or clouds, any trees, flowers, or grasses you can think of, the insects, birds, and other animals that are there.
* Your pictures are beautiful, but no matter how hard we try, we can never make these pictures come to life. Bringing things to life is what God does.
* I am going to pass out seeds, soil, and cups to plant our seeds in. Let’s plant together. You may take the seeds home, put them by a sunny window, and water them every few days. As the seeds grow, you may remember the gift of life from God.
* Let’s pray: God, You are the creator of all things. Please help us to care for the life You have created, and to love our brothers and sisters as we love ourselves. Amen

Lesson for teens

*Supplies*

* paper and pencil
* leaves, flowers, sticks, rocks, a dish of soil, and other materials from nature

*Activity*

* Today we are going to think about our role in protecting what God has created.
* Let’s read from Scripture: “The tree grew and became strong, and its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth.Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, and the birds of the heavens lived in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it.” *Daniel 4:8-9*
* How does this Scripture remind you of the Earth? How does it remind you of God?
* I am going to pass around a few items from our community. As each item reaches you, take a moment to experience it deeply. Look closely to notice its details. Rub in your hands to feel its texture and hear its sound. Smell its fragrance. After you experience each object, write down what is most beautiful about it. How is it special? Does it bring up any memories for you? Try to be as specific as possible.
* Let’s discuss as a group: what do these things reveal about God? How does God provide for us? How does God see the connections between things?
* Now, I am going to start taking a few of these items away, one by one. As I take each item away, cross it and all the beautiful things about it off your list.
* How does taking these items away feel to you?
* We know that many species are in fact disappearing from the Earth. Pope Francis says, “Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us. We have no such right.” (Laudato Si’ 33)
* Our community will plant a tree today in order to contribute to the web of life and mark our commitment to protecting creation. What are some other things we can do in our homes and in our parish?
* Let’s pray: God, You are the creator of all things. Please help us to care for the life You have created, and to love our brothers and sisters as we love ourselves. Amen