

World Environment Day
Connect with Nature



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Theme: Connecting people to nature

First reading	Job 28:1-11
Psalm	Psalm 148
Second reading	1 Tim 4:1-5
Gospel	Matt 6:25-33

Collect

God of all creation

Your eternal power is known through the whole flow of existence
and in its intricacies and beauty your voice speaks to us of your
wisdom and purpose.

Rooted in your love and grace may we with all creation
speak your glory from everlasting to everlasting,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Gathering

Creative ideas:

Plants and trees can be brought into the worshipping space instead of flowers.

The links between the ecological significance of trees and the rich imagery of
trees in the Bible (Gen 2, Psalm 1, the cross) can be explored in preaching.

Invite the Sunday School or youth to create banners which reflection the web of
life.

Call to worship

How wonderful, O Lord, are the works of your hands!

The heavens declare your glory; the arch of sky displays your handiwork.

In your love you have given us the power to behold the beauty of your world
robed in all its splendour.

The sun and the stars, the valleys and hills, the rivers and lakes all disclose your
presence.

The roaring breakers of the seas tell of your awesome might;

The beasts of the field and the birds of the air speak of your wondrous will.

In your goodness you have made us able to hear the music of the world.

You are in our midst. A divine voice sings through all creation

Penitence

Leader Creator and Saviour,
we have exploited earth for our selfish ends,
turned our backs on the cycles of life
and forgotten we are your stewards.
Now soils become barren,
air and water become unclean,
species disappear,
and humans are diminished.
In penitence we come to you.

Or:

Leader Lord, have mercy.
All Christ, have mercy.
Leader Lord, have mercy.

Leader O God, your fertile earth is slowly being stripped of its riches,
All open our eyes to see.
Leader O God, your living waters are slowly being choked with chemicals,
All open our eyes to see.
Leader O God, your clear air is slowly being filled with pollutants,
All open our eyes to see.
Leader O God, your creatures are slowly dying and your people are suffering,
All open our eyes to see.
Leader God our maker, so move us by the wonder of creation,
All that we may repent and care more deeply.
Leader So move us to grieve the loss of life,
All that we learn to cherish and protect your world.

God's word

Job 28:1-11	The amazing diversity of Creation with the many resources that God has asked us to care for. But we have exploited and abused them.
Psalms 148	The Great Choir praising God is made up of the whole of Creation, not only humans praise God but the great web of Creation praises its maker
1 Tim 4:1-5	All creatures are sanctified by God, nothing is unclean.
Matt 6:25-33	God looks after the whole of Creation. We become stressed and concerned with consumer items but there are riches and beauty of creation that we ignore.

Affirmation of faith

We believe in God, who creates all things, who embraces all things, who celebrates all things, who is present in every part of the fabric of creation.

We believe in God as the source of all life, who baptizes this planet with living water.

We believe in Jesus Christ, the suffering one, the poor one, the malnourished one, the climate refugee, who loves and cares for this world and who suffers with it.

And we believe in Jesus Christ, the seed of life, who came to reconcile and renew this world and everything in it. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the breath of God, who moves with God and who moves among and with us today.

We believe in everlasting life in God.

And we believe in the hope that one day God will put an end to death and all destructive forces.

Prayers of the People

Father, we praise you with all your creatures.

They came forth from your all-powerful hand;

they are yours, filled with your presence and your tender love.

Praise be to you!

Teach us to contemplate you
in the beauty of the universe,
for all things speak of you.
Awaken our praise and thankfulness
for every being that you have made.
Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined
to everything that is.
God of love, show us our place in this world
as channels of your love
for all the creatures of this earth,
for not one of them is forgotten in your sight.
Enlighten those who possess power and money
that they may avoid the sin of indifference,
that they may love the common good, advance the weak,
and care for this world in which we live.
The poor and the earth are crying out.
O Lord, seize us with your power and light,
help us to protect all life,
to prepare for a better future,
for the coming of your Kingdom
of justice, peace, love and beauty
Praise be to You.
(Pope Francis, Encyclical)

Creative responses

Video: This is a beautiful video clip of John Rutter's anthem "look at the world"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rb0g-npfVcI>

Peace sentence

Deep peace of the quiet earth to you
Deep peace of the still air to you
Deep peace of the forgiving heart to you
Deep peace of the Son of Peace (Traditional Celtic prayer)

Communion

The taking of the bread
Blessed are you Lord God of all Creation. Through your goodness we have this bread which earth has given and which we have received from the silent soil. It is the bread of the earth, this silent earth bathed in morning light, this beautiful planet in the teeming galaxies of space: warm and well-lit for us, generous, faithful and surprising, bringing forth life in all its forms.

The taking of the wine
Blessed are you, Lord God of all Creation. Through your goodness we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine and work of human hands. In our earth of many blessing the vine was planted, its roots reaching down to that richness from which all nourishment, strength and health are drawn.

Creative ideas: as people come to receive communion, play birdsong instead of a hymn.

Birds <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oTcxaqiIg4U>

Commissioning and blessing

Christ calls you to be his disciples, to serve him with love and compassion, to serve Earth by caring for creation, honouring the forests that God has planted to provide breath for all things living.

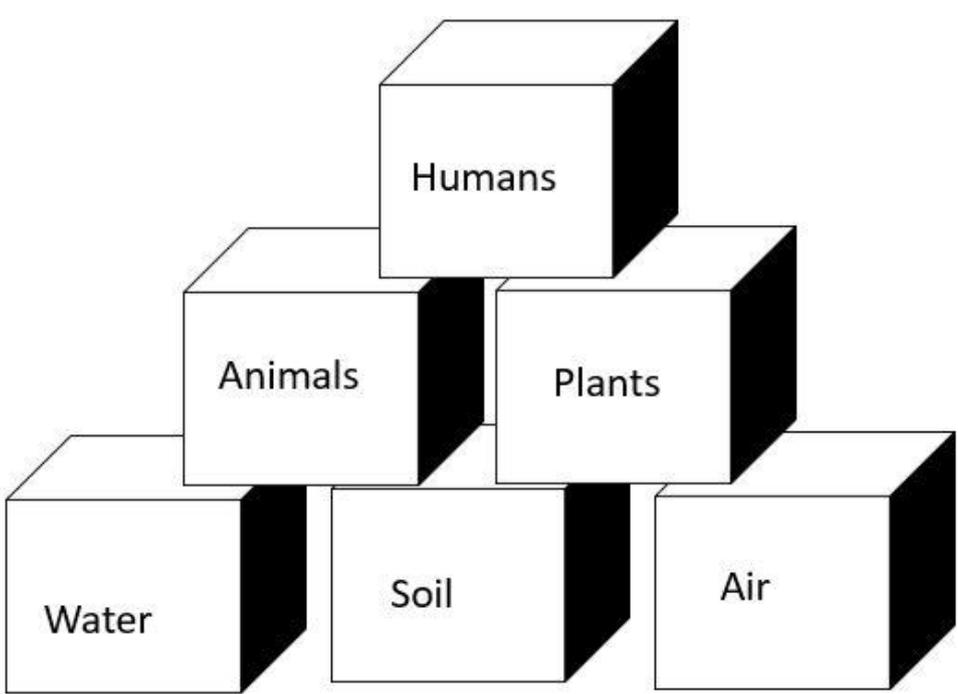
All: We will follow our Lord, the crucified Christ, listening for cries of injustice from Earth, groaning with a creation burdened by our sins. We will follow our Lord, the risen Christ, to become partners with Christ in healing our planet, working for the renewal of creation

We will care for creation, preserving the oceans and the forests loving our kin, and celebrating life

(Adapted from Let all creation praise forest Sunday)

DRAMA: THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF LIFE

Written by Liz Taylor (Wessa)

<p>Characters: Rhino (holding a horn) Poacher (with gun made of cardboard) Woman King –cloak and kings hat King's son Second boy</p>	<p>Props: Red cloth for blood Bucket Gun Big saw Rhino horn Big cell phone Blue fabric for river Bag King's hat and cloak Rubbish for river</p>
<p>Prepare six large cardboard boxes with six names written on them: HUMANS, ANIMALS, PLANTS, WATER, AIR, SOIL</p> 	

Music

These songs can be downloaded

Mafikizolo "emlanjeni" by the river:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AQa_8efdiRs&list=PLDA36F0E01F7E14CB

Scene 1:

Rhino is grazing.

The poacher comes creeping in.

Poacher: (Shouting at the audience) *Where's that Rhino?. Has anybody seen that Rhino.*

I want to shoot it and cut off its horn and make a lot of money.

Sees the Rhino.

Poacher : *Aaah sssh, sssshhh*

BOOM!

He shoots the Rhino. Quickly runs across and cuts off the horn with the big saw.

Poacher: (holding the horn, he phones someone) *"Hullo, hullo.*

Yes.... Yes... I got it.

What do you mean R10 000 you told me R30 000.

Ok ok I'm coming.

Dead?... dead? (looking back) No its not dead yet.

He leaves the stage.

Rhino continues to lie there. A red cloth as blood coming from the horn area.

Scene 2:

Woman comes in carrying a bucket of water on her head. Singing a lovely Zulu song. (Mafikizolo, I'll meet you by the river)

Puts the bucket of water down by the river (long strip of blue cloth) and looks around.

Sees the dead Rhino. Looks shocked. Hand to mouth.

Woman: *This is so terrible*

Who has done this?

Why is this happening to our country.

Everywhere I look I see nature being destroyed.

Our Rhinos are being killed by people greedy for money.

Our heritage is being destroyed.

King enters.

Speaks to the woman.

King: *Good morning Lady. I see that you are collecting water here but you are also sad. What is the matter?*

Woman: *Yes, I am sad. Look around. There is another Rhino killed by poachers. Our nature is being destroyed right before our eyes.*

I have seen so many changes happening. Our indigenous plants getting destroyed, our forests, our grasslands.

Look... even our rivers are polluted and full of litter and we can't drink the water anymore.

King: *Yes it is so true . It is nature that keeps us alive.*

We need soil.....he stamps the ground
We need air.....he breathes a big breath and opens his arms
We need water.....points to a river
We need plants and animals.
THESE ARE THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF LIFE. Points to the boxes.
Without these we cannot live.

Son enters;

Son: *Hullo father. (Looks cheeky)*

King: *Hullo my son. What have you got in that bag?*

Son: *Lots of money (Speaks in a cheeky way trying to hide the bag)*

King: *Where did you get that from?*

Son: *I sold something*

King : *WHAT DID YOU SELL!!*

Son: *A rhino horn Dad. Lots and lots of money*

King: *(Shouting) You stupid stupid boy. You are the one ruining our future. You are the one destroying our land. You are the ones who don't care about future generations.*

The father goes towards the son to hit him. They have a fight.

The woman tries to stop them. *No, no don't fight.*

Son falls down and is crawling away.

Second boy arrives on stage

Second Boy : *What's happening here?*

King : *This stupid boy thinks that by killing our animals, our nature, that he can get rich quickly.*

But he does not realise that he is destroying our future.

Second Boy : *How can that happen? How can he destroy our future? What do you mean?*

King : *Come here and look. (Shows him the pyramid of boxes)*

Look at these building blocks of life.

This is how it works.

Man is at the top

Second Boy: *Can we call your son to show him how this works.*

King : *Yes Call him here.*

Second Boy fetches the son.

King : *Now look here my boys. This is how nature works. This is how ecology works. We are all dependant on the soil, on the water and on the air.*

Takes the two boys. Stand here. They look a bit sulky and down-cast.

King: *To the boys. Now. How long can you live without **air**?*

Son and other boy. *I don't know.(sulky voice)*

King: *Turns to ask the audience: How long can you live without air? Try? Hold your breath. 4 minutes then you will be dead.*

Speaking to the two boys: *4 minutes and you will be dead. Air is very important.*

King: *To the boys. Now. How long can you live without **water**?*

Son and other boy. *I don't know.*

King: *Turns to ask the audience. How long can you live without water? What do you think? Just guess. 4 days. Yes. 4 days*

Speaking to the two boys: *4 days and you will be dead. Water is very important.*

King: *To the boys. Now. How long can you live without **food**?*

The plants and animals. All food is made from plants and animals.

How long?

Son and other boy. *I don't know.*

King; *Asking the audience. How long can you live without food? What do you think? Just guess. 40 days. Yes. 40 days*

Speaking to the two boys: *40 days and you will be dead. Food is very important.*

King speaking to his son.

Now come here and destroy this building block that represents our water. Just kick it out. What happens to people at the top?

King calls up someone from the audience.

(Other boy and woman fix up the boxes).

King tells someone from the audience to hit out the water.

Look what happens now.

Who falls the furthest? Man.

We need to look after our natural resources.

These are the building blocks of life.

Without these building blocks man is nothing.

We need to look after our building blocks for future generations.

King speaking to his son.

So son! Everything in this world is connected. If we destroy one part of it then it is us, the people that suffer the most.

Son: *Yes, father. I can see now.*

Turning to the audience. In a strong and confident voice. Saying with authority. Standing tall.

I have learnt something today. I have learnt about the building blocks of life. I have learnt how important it is to look after our natural resources, how we as humans need to look after our environment so that we can remain healthy and happy.

Don't think that by destroying our natural resources we can get rich quickly. We will just be destroying our planet for future generations.

So please let's join together to save our ecology and make sure we live in a healthy and caring world for today and for those to come.