



Celebrating the Season of Creation in Primary School

Background for Teacher

Pope Francis established 1st September as an annual World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation. The Season of Creation or, Creation Time, is marked throughout the Christian world from 1st September to 4th October (*Feast of St. Francis of Assisi*) and celebrates the joy of creation as well as encouraging awareness-raising initiatives to protect the natural environment. There will be a special week of focus in the Diocese of Derry from **28th September- 4th October**.

Pope Francis, in his special letter *Laudato Si*, 'Care for our Common Home' asks us to recognise the wonder of the magnificent world that God has created-people, animals, plants, the solar system etc. Pope Francis says that the '*earth is God's gift to us, full of beauty and wonder*' and that we, '*the whole human family needs to work together to care for our planet earth so that we sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.*' Pope Francis wants us all to, '*put love for the world and love for our neighbours, into action, by living together in harmony, and caring for nature.*'

The week finishes on the Feast Day of Saint Francis Assisi. Pope Francis took his name when he became Pope. He believes he is the Saint whose example we should follow in our care for all of creation. Pope Francis says of Saint Francis,

'he loved, and was deeply loved for his joy, his generous self-giving, his openheartedness. He was a mystic and a pilgrim who lived in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature and with himself. He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace'

Celebrating the Season of Creation

- Talk to the children about gifts they have received. Who gave the gifts to them? What made them special? How do you treat special gifts? Ask them if they know that they are a special gift from God, that each person, each thing that God has created has been given to us as a gift?
- Talk to the children about how we have been given a very special responsibility by God-to care for everything in the amazing world that God has created.
- There's a video for children explaining Pope Francis' Letter, Laudato Si-Care for our Common Home (<https://vimeo.com/140633325>)
- **Daily Prayer-** Light a candle each morning in the sacred space in classroom. Ask the children to take a moment and think of all that they have to thank God for in the created world. Read the scripture quote, encourage them to take a quiet moment to think about it and then to ask Jesus to help them to use their special gifts and talents to care better for God's Creation. Finish by praying the prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi (see attached booklet) The younger children could repeat one line from it.

Daily Bible Quote

- **Monday:** *So, neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. (1 Corinthians 3:7)*
- **Tuesday:** *Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it. Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them; let all the trees of the forest sing for joy. (Psalm 96:11-12)*
- **Wednesday:** *God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. (Genesis 1:31)*
- **Thursday:** *This is my commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. (John 15:12)*
- **Friday:** *For, we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10)*
- Season of Creation-Book of Prayers and Promises for Mass-schools are invited to send a prayer written by a pupil based on the Season of Creation. These will be included in a book at the opening of the school year Mass. Each school is invited to make a promise to care better for our common home and email it to the Catechetical Centre.
- **Friday 25th September-**Opening of School Year Mass Celebrated by Bishop McKeown.

Monday Classroom Prayer Liturgy-Season of Creation

Opening Hymn: All Things Bright and Beautiful

Leader: As we gather together today, we remember that we are celebrating the Season of Creation. This is a very special time when Christians all over the world take time to thank God for the amazing gift of creation. We also use this season to think of ways we can show God's love, through our care for everything he has made.

We begin our time of prayer this morning by blessing ourselves, **In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen**

Opening Prayer: Creator God open our eyes and our hearts to the wonders of your presence among us. We gather as sisters and brothers and with all of creation. May we see the signs of your beauty within and about us. We thank you for your great gift of creation. Help us to care for people of every nation, animals of every species, all forms of vegetation, the planets, stars, and all the elements. We ask your blessing on all who work and support our efforts to care for creation. **Amen**

Leader: In the Bible we learn about all the wonders that God has created. We learn how we have been asked to look after everything that God has created. In the Book of the Prophet Daniel, there is a beautiful song of praise. It helps us to realise that God is everywhere, in every person, in everything that he has made. As we watch the video of Where is God? may we learn to listen with our hearts and see God everywhere in creation.

<https://catecheticalcentre.org/primary-school-resources/where-is-god/>

Leader: Let us give praise to God together-the response is Bless the Lord

Leader: Sun and moon **Response: Bless the Lord**

Leader: Stars of heaven, **Response: Bless the Lord.**

Leader: Every shower and dew, **Response: Bless the Lord.**

Leader: All you winds, **Response: Bless the Lord.**

Leader: Fire and heat, **Response: Bless the Lord.**

Leader: Frost and chill, **Response: Bless the Lord.**

Leader: Lightning and clouds, **Response: Bless the Lord.**

Leader: All you sons and daughters, **Response: Bless the Lord.**

Leader: Let all the earth bless the Lord.

Response: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Prayers

Leader: Confident of God's love, we bring all our prayers before him today.

1. Creator God, we thank you for the gift of the wonderful world you have given us.
Help us to look after it with care and respect. Lord hear us

Response: Lord Graciously Hear Us

2. Creator God, there are many people whose lives are made difficult because of climate change and pollution. May we reach out to them in love and, through our better care for creation, may their lives be improved.

Lord hear us

Response: Lord Graciously Hear Us

3. Creator God, your son Jesus gave his disciples a special rule, to 'love one another as I have loved you.' Guided by the Holy Spirit may we see all people as our sisters and brothers and treat them with respect.

Lord hear us

Response: Lord Graciously Hear Us

4. Creator God, we pray for all those who work to make the created world a better place to live in. May we follow their example and be true 'stewards' of your gift to us of this beautiful world.

Lord hear us

Response: Lord Graciously Hear Us

Leader: For a moment now, we pray quietly in our hearts, asking God for any help we need today... and together we bring all our prayers to God the father, in the words Jesus taught us.

Our Father....

Closing Prayer

Leader: Father in heaven, as we work together to care for the gift of your creation, may we live together in peace and harmony as Jesus taught us, guided in all we do by your Holy Spirit. Amen.

Closing Hymn :He's Got the Whole World in His Hands

***At the end of the classroom assembly, if possible, give each child a bulb to take home to plant. Pollinator friendly bulbs are recommended to help the environment.(e.g. crocuses, snowdrops, grape hyacinths, alliums)

- **Tuesday-Drawing God in Creation Day.** Karen Kiefer, author of Drawing God has recorded a special message for schools in the diocese of Derry. Pupils are invited to draw where they see God in creation.
- **Wednesday-Labyrinth Prayer**-to sense the presence of God in all creation requires us to take time to be still and to listen. Labyrinths are an ancient way of praying. Usually people walk labyrinths, but this is an adapted ‘finger labyrinth’ prayer experience. There are different movements in the prayer. The idea is to let go of worldly concerns and attachments, bring a question before God and to spend time listening to God and deepening our relationship with him. Invite the children to forget about all the material things they think they need in the world, to ask the question- God, how can I care better for the created world you have given as a gift to me and then to spend time listening in their hearts to what God may say to them.
- **Thursday**-Caring for those who are less fortunate throughout the world-using the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew Chapters 5,6 and 7)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ze7w3-BL3OM> -have a classroom discussion about how we can love as Jesus loves?
- **Friday**-The Story of Saint Francis-help the children to find out about the life of Saint Francis and his care for creation. Encourage them to tell their family about him. The video link to the story of Saint Francis and the attached booklet will help the children to do this. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKoF4Xxi6vk->

