Restoring our Common Home

Season of Creation 2021

DERRY DIOCESAN CATECHETICAL CENTRE

Celebrating the Season of Creation in Primary School

Background for Teacher

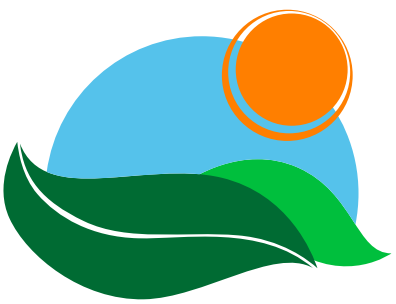
Pope Francis established 1st September as an annual World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation. The Season of Creation or, Creation Time, is marked throughout the Christian world from **1st September to 4th October** (Feast of St. Francis of Assisi) and celebrates the joy of creation as well as encouraging awareness-raising initiatives to protect the natural environment. There will be a special week of focus in the Diocese of Derry from **27th September- 4th October**.

Restoring our Common Home

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.' This year we are called to recognise the need to heal our relationships with creation and with each other, "for we know that things can change!" (Laudato Si', 13).

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

Resources

- 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

- What do the children understand about 'living in right relationship' with God, with one another, with all of creation. Their understanding will vary according to their age. However, from the youngest child to the oldest, they will know from their experience of family, friendships, being part of the school community, their local community that at the heart of healthy relationships are love, respect, care, kindness, compassion, forgiveness-the gospel values, the message of Jesus, their friend. This understanding needs to be extended to all created things.

- **Where is God?** is a resource which will help young children develop a sense of God in all things. https://catecheticalcentre.org/primary-school-resources/where-is-god/

- Saint Francis of Assisi Booklet for Children https://catecheticalcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/saint-francis-of-assisi-booklet-for-primary-schools-season-of-creation-2020.pdf

- Resources from Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference Season of Creation 2021 | Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference

Celebrating the Season of Creation

Daily Prayer

(Parishes in the diocese will be using daily reflections at Mass during the special Diocesan week celebrating The Season of Creation, Adapted ones are provided here for use in the classroom and at home)

Light a candle each morning in the sacred space in your classroom. Ask the children to take a moment and to become quiet and more aware of God's presence within them and around them. Read the reflection, pause for a minute, giving the children time to speak to God in their hearts about it and finish each day by saying.

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.

Monday

Today we thank God for the gift of water. Freely given, clean and available to us. Every time we experience water today whether that be when we take a drink of water, wash ourselves, use the dishwasher or washing machine, rinse the vegetables, take a walk by a river, lake or sea or find that it is raining outside, we offer a moment of praise said aloud or in our hearts for the gift of water. **(Glory be...)**

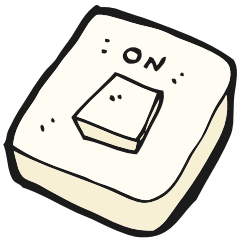
Tuesday

Today we thank God for the gift of freedom. For the right to make choices in our lives, for the safety we experience that so many children in the world don't (especially those fleeing from danger) for the safety we have. Think of keys today as a prompt to prayer every time we or others use them to lock or unlock a door or to travel in a vehicle, we offer a moment of praise said aloud or in our hearts for the gift of freedom **(Glory be...)**

Celebrating the Season of Creation

Wednesday

Today we thank God for the gift of power. For the ability to heat our homes, have light when it gets dark. For the option to have a hot cup of tea, a warm meal and to connect with others even when we have been confined to our own homes over the last few months. Using the action of flipping a switch as a prompt to prayer every time we switch something on which uses electricity, gas or oil, we offer a moment of praise said aloud or in our hearts for the gift of power **(Glory be...)**



Thursday

Today we thank God for the gift of food. In a world where so many survive on so little we are thankful for the food we have. Aware that we can often be ungrateful of the gift, allowing food to be wasted or thrown out and often having more than we need in our cupboards. Today every time we stop to eat we take it as a prompt to prayer, we offer a moment of praise said aloud or in our hearts for the gift of food. **(Glory be..)**

Friday

Today we thank God for the gift of time. Time to spend with our families, time to do things we enjoy. We know that often we can feel like we have no time. But today we will try to be more aware of time, not to waste it but enjoy it. Every time we look at our watch or notice what time of day it is we are prompted to offer a moment of prayer in thanksgiving for the day we have been blessed with and we offer a moment of praise said allowed or in our hearts for the gift of time **(Glory be...)**

Celebrating the Season of Creation

Saturday

Today we thank God for the money that we have and will spend today. For the freedom it allows us, for the things we can buy with it. We remember children and families who don't have money, who worry about it. Every time we pay for something today we thank God and ask we will always spend money wisely and we offer a moment of praise said aloud or in our hearts for the gift of money. **(Glory be...)**

Sunday

Today we thank God for the gift of Nature. The natural world around us offers so much. Today, let us be really aware of how beautiful the world that God gave us is. Today we might make a special effort to take a walk or sit in a place of natural beauty, or to spend some time in our own gardens or in a park and we offer a moment of praise said aloud or in our hearts for the gift of the natural world. **(Glory be...)**

Celebrating the Season of Creation

Daily Prayer for Younger Children

(Parishes in the diocese will be using daily reflections at Mass during this week. Adapted ones are provided here for use in the classroom and at home)

Light a candle each morning in the sacred space in your classroom. Ask the children to take a moment and to become quiet and more aware of God's presence within them and around them. Read the reflection, pause for a minute, giving the children to speak to God in their hearts about it and finish each day by saying, **Thank you God**

Monday

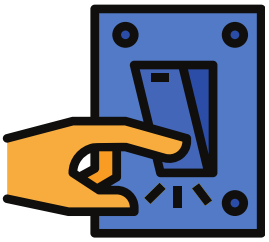
Today we thank God for the gift of water. We are very lucky to have water. Think of the way we use water, to drink, to wash, to water plants. Every time we use water today, we say, **Thank you God for the gift of water.**

Tuesday

Today we thank God for the gift of freedom. We are free to choose how to our lives. Many children can't do that. Today we think of keys, the freedom to open and lock doors to to keep us safe, the freedom to use keys to drive a car. Every time keys are used today we say, **Thank you God for the gift of the freedom to choose.**

Wednesday

Today we thank God for the gift of power. We use power to heat our homes, to turn on lights when it gets dark. Think how many times we turn switches on to help make our lives better. Every time we turn a switch on today we say, **Thank you God for the gift of power.**



Thursday

Today we thank God for the gift of food. Many people do not have enough food. Sometimes we waste food or are too greedy.Every time we stop to eat today, we say, **Thank you God for the gift of the food we eat.**

Friday

Today we thank God for the gift of time. We love spending time with our families, and friends. We have lots of time to do things we enjoy. Every time we look at our watch or a clock today, we say, **Thank you God for the gift of time.**

Saturday

Today we thank God for the money that we have and will spend today. We remember children and families who don't have money or who worry about it. Every time we use money today we say, **Thank you God for the gift of money.**

Sunday

Today we thank God for the gift of Nature. The world God gave us is beautiful and we need to look after it. Today let us be really aware of how beautiful the world that God gave us is. Every time we see a beautiful flower, animal or tree today, we say, T**hank you God for the gift of your beautiful world.**

Celebrating the Season of Creation

Liturgy for the Feast Day of Saint Francis 4th October

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

Celebrating the Season of Creation

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.

Together we pray: 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.

Celebrating the Season of Creation

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