Season of Creation 2022

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.

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.' 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.

Listen to the Voice of Creation

The theme for the Season of Creation 2022 is "Listen to the Voice of Creation". "I have heard their cry…I know their sufferings…Come, now! I will send you…I will be with you" (Ex 3: 1-12). The burning bush is the Symbol for the Season of Creation 2022. Today, the prevalence of unnatural fires are a sign of the devastating effects that climate change has on the most vulnerable of our planet. Creation cries out as forests crackle, animals flee, and people are forced to migrate due to the fires of injustice. On the contrary, the fire that called to Moses as he tended the flock on Mt. Horeb did not consume or destroy the bush. This flame of the Spirit revealed God's presence. This holy fire affirmed that God heard the cries of all who suffered and promised to be with us as we followed in faith to our deliverance from injustice. In this Season of Creation, this symbol of God's Spirit calls us to listen to the voice of creation, to the voices of those who suffer the impacts of climate change, to the voices of those who hold generational wisdom about how to live gratefully within the limits of the land. These are voices of the Earth. The global Christian family is called to awaken to the urgent need to heal our relationships with creation and with each other and to encourage our communities to do the same, "for we know that things can change!" (Laudato Si', 13).

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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**
https://www.catholicbishops.ie/2022/07/11/resources-for-the-season-of-creation-2022/

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Listen to the Voice of Creation

- The Liturgy may be used in the class or as a whole school assembly during the Season of Creation. It could also take place outdoors)
- Prepare a Sacred Space as a focal point with a candle, bible, cloth. Art work on the story of Moses and the Burning Bush could be prepared as a feature of the space. You may also wish to include fruit, vegetables, flowers/foliage/sheaf or corn.

Opening Hymn

Leader: Today we gather as a class/school community to celebrate the Season of Creation, a special time set aside to pray for the care of all creation. This year Pope Francis has asked us to listen to the voice of creation, to be more aware of how God's created world and his beloved people are not being cared for as they should be. We often see on television or on the internet pictures of fires damaging forests and people's homes. We see images of people, migrants, forced to leave their homes because of climate change, more and more animals becoming extinct. Pope Francis asks us to listen to the Holy Spirit living in each of us so we can better care for the world and each other. He also asks us to listen to those who can help us learn to care better for the earth. In may places throughout the world there are wise people who can teach us how to do this.

Leader: We begin our time together, making the Sign of the Cross reminding us that through Baptism w e are sisters and brothers of Jesus, sisters and brother of each other, called to be his loving, caring presence in the world today.

All: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Leader: Creator God you have given us a beautiful world to live in, to enjoy and to care for lovingly**.** We ask your help today to learn to listen better to what the earth is telling us about how we are hurting it and hurting our sisters and brothers throughout the world by our actions. We ask your blessing on all who work and support our efforts to care for creation. Amen.

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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. We also hear how people who grew very close to God often found they were able to hear what God was saying to them, on a mountain, in the hills, in the sound of a breeze, in quiet places. Today we are going to listen to the story of Moses who heard God speak in a quiet place as he was tending sheep.

Before we listen to the Word of God let us take time to be quiet and still… to breathe slowly, to close our eyes if we wish to and to listen not just with our ears but with our hearts too. What is God saying to us today…

Reader:
A Reading from the book of Exodus (Ex 3:1-13)
One day Moses was taking care of the sheep of Jethro his father-in-law, who was priest of Midian Moses led the sheep along the edge of the desert to Sinai, the mountain of God. Suddenly the Lord's angel appeared to him from a burning bush. Moses saw that the bush was on fire, but it was not burning up.. He said to himself, " This is strange! I'll go over and see why the bush is not burning up."
When the Lord saw Moses coming near the bush, he called out to him.
Moses answered, " Lord, here I am."
God replied, "Don't come any closer. Take off your sandals because the ground where you are standing is holy. I am the God who was worshipped by your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
Moses was too afraid to look at God and he hid his face.
The Lord said, " I have seen how my people are suffering in Egypt, and I have heard them cry out to me… but Moses said to God "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of their suffering in Egypt. God said, I will be with you.

The Word of the Lord
All: Thanks be to God

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Reader: Let us take a moment now and think about the story of Moses in the burning bush…

Reader: Moses was in a quiet place when heard God speaking in the burning bush… where are the quiet places you can go to listen to God speaking to you…

Reader: The fire that called to Moses didn't destroy the bush … the flame let Moses know that God was present… God is present all of the time…

Reader: This flame that Moses saw, the flame of God's Spirit, calls us to hear how the earth is hurting, how people are being forced to leave their homes because of climate changes and our selfishness in not caring for the earth or other people as God asks us to.

Reader: In the quiet of your heart listen to God, hear him calling you as he called Moses… you can make a difference… God will be with you as you try. Tell God how you will help care better for the beautiful world he has given you and for all God's people.

Prayers of Intercession

Leader: Creator God, all good gifts from you. Help us to listen with the ears of our heart so we may better care for our earth and all who live in it. The response to our prayers today is Lord Graciously Hear Us

Reader: Creator God, there are many people whose lives are made difficult because of climate change and pollution. May we listen to their cry for help and reach out to them in love.Through our better care for creation, may their lives be improved**.** Lord hear us

All: Lord Graciously Hear Us

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Reader: 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 listen and respond to them with respect.
Lord hear us
All: Lord Graciously Hear Us

Reader: Creator God, we pray for all those who have have the wisdom to guide us as we try to care better for all of creation. May we follow their example and be true 'stewards' of your gift to us of this beautiful world.
Lord hear us
All: 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 listen to what the created world is telling us and to better 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.
All: Amen.

Final Hymn

Celebrating the Season of Creation

Daily Prayer
Create a Sacred Space in your classroom which reflects creation, with a candle, bible, cloth. You may wish to include fruit, vegetables, flowers/foliage/sheaf or corn etc. Below are some posters and phrases from the Bible. You could display the posters provided on your whiteboard or print them out.

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 that God is all around them… and that God is also within them…

Make the sign of the cross together… In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Read the line of reflection from the poster… pause for a minute… give the children to speak to God in their hearts about it… Finish by asking the children to say together or to repeat after you…

Thank you God for the gift of the beautiful world you have given us. Teach us to love and care for everything and everyone you have created, Amen.