

March 2022

Opening Activity: As a household complete this opening activity and prayer.

We all live in one world, but we know everyone does not have the same things. The questions are, "What do we need?" and "How much is too much?" We need clothes for warmth and protection, but do we always need designer brands or 50 pairs of shoes? Take your journal page. Wait for instructions before you go to each section.

1) List the things you have or own which you don't really *need*. Include everything from clothes and shoes to furniture, appliances, technological devices, entertainment, etc.
allow 2-3 minutes

2) Now, list things to which you have access—things like electricity, phone service, newspapers and magazines, the public library, internet, etc.

3) Next, List what you think a homeless person on the streets of the U.S. has or owns and things to which he/she has access.

Take a few minutes and with your family or table, compare the lists.

allow 2-3 minutes

We know there are homeless people right here in Polk County. They have the same needs as anyone, but not the resources or access.

Opening Prayer

Leader: We begin with the sign of our faith:

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

Leader: We come to know about God and what God wants for us in many ways. One important way we get to know God is through the Bible. Let's listen to these words from the Bible about the world God made for us.

Reader:

Genesis 2:4,5,7,8,15

A Reading from the Book of Genesis

This is the story of the heavens and the earth at their creation. When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens—there was no field shrub on earth and no grass of the field had sprouted... then the LORD God formed the man out of the dust of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east... The LORD God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it.

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Pope Francis is the leader of our Church. When the pope wants us to know something important, he writes a letter to all of us. Seven years ago, he wrote a letter to all Catholics and to all the people of the world about God's creation. Here is a little section from it:

Reader: Pope Francis, *On Care for Our Common Home (Laudato Si')*, nos. 49, 91

A Reading from *On Care for our Common Home*

“A true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. . . . Everything is connected. Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society.”

From the words of the Church

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Let us pray together for the earth, the home we share with all of humanity

Dear God,
Thank you for this beautiful planet.
Bless it and keep it safe from harm.
We pray for the protection of
the animals
the soil,
air and water.
May we care for all you have made.
Help us to love the Earth as you do.
We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Carol Meyer

Leader: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Activity:

Watch *Laudato Si* Animation for Children and one or two of the other videos listed below. When do talk about how our everyday decisions affect others all over the world. How can we make better decisions to help others? How can we donate money to help others with less? What can we give up or conserve so that others have more? As a household complete the “My Plan to Care for Creation” handout.

Closing Activity:

Earlier we compared lists of what we really don't need, what we have access to, and what the homeless in the U.S. have.

Read the following Scripture passages as a table group:

- a. Genesis 1:24-28
- b. John 13:34-35
- c. Acts 4:32-35

Discuss what you think the Word of God is teaching about caring for God's creation and the people who live in it.

Closing Prayer:

Leader: Let us quiet ourselves for our closing prayer. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Leader: God has given us all that we need to have healthy, dignified lives. Our job is to take care of the Earth and each other. Let us listen to these words of Jesus from the Bible, words that remind us of God's love and care for all of us.

Reader:

Matthew 6:26, 30

A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew

Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. . . . If God so clothes the grass of the field, which grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith?

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Leader: We are grateful to God for the beautiful world He has created for us. Let us pray together that we may know how to take better care of this precious gift, and of each other.

All:

Father of all,
Creator and ruler of the universe,
You entrusted your world to us as a gift.
Help us to care for it and all people,

that we may live in right relationship--
with You,
with ourselves,
with one another,
and with creation.

Christ our Lord,
both divine and human,
You lived among us and died for our sins.
Help us to imitate your love for the human family
by recognizing that we are all connected—
to our brothers and sisters around the world,
to those in poverty impacted by environmental devastation,
and to future generations.

Holy Spirit,
giver of wisdom and love,
You breathe life in us and guide us.
Help us to live according to your vision,
stirring to action the hearts of all—
individuals and families,
communities of faith,
and civil and political leaders.

Triune God, help us to hear the cry of those in poverty, and the cry of the earth, so that
we may together care for our common home.

Amen

Leader: As we leave this place, let us be faithful to our Lenten plan and more conscious
of what we can do to care for creation and each other.

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