

**SUNDAY SCHOOL
CURRICULUM
AND
LESSON PLANS**



Season of Creation

2016

Curriculum

Term 3 2016

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Gauteng School Term: 18 July –30 September 2016

Awe at Creation

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost 4 September 2016

Reading: Genesis 1

Theme: Awe at Creation

Memory verse: "God saw all that God had made, and it was very good." Gen 1:31

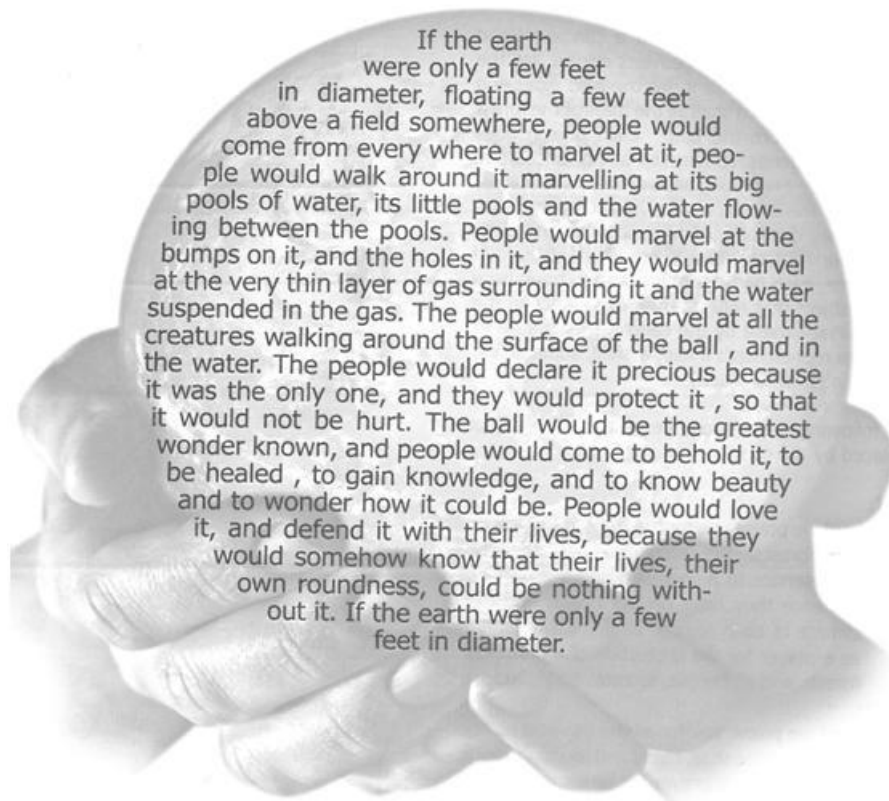


Information for the teacher:

In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth, and it was all good!

Today, the first lesson in our Season of Creation series for this year, we celebrate our beautiful world. We gain a greater appreciation for all things great and small – the miracles of nature which we all too often take for granted, or of which we are not even aware - the simple rising of the sun, the rhythm of the tides, a thunderstorm, the birth of a baby, the blossoms on a tree, birds singing at the break of dawn, a spider spinning its web, crystal clear streams – the list is endless.....

Consider this meditation entitled "Earth Ball" by Olaf Skarsholt:



Through today's lesson, may we gain a new sense of wonder for all Creation and may we pledge a new respect for the world in which we live.



Lesson Suggestions:

Note: Most of the ideas in this lesson are suitable for both younger and older children. Therefore, only one lesson plan has been provided, although some parts of the lesson have been divided into a younger and older children's section.

Lesson Objectives:

- To gain an appreciation all Creation, in particular for all creatures great and small
- To realise that all creatures have a role to play in the web of life, and that we are to look after and respect all Creation



Attention Grabber: If possible, encourage your children to come dressed in a way that depicts the celebration of spring and God's awesome creation. Perhaps organise a spring hat competition.

You may want to decorate your meeting area with flowers and pictures as a reminder of our beautiful world.

Explain to the children that today is the beginning of spring. During September we celebrate the Season of Creation where we are reminded of the beautiful world around us. Today we are specifically celebrating all creatures great and small!!

Begin with a few songs of praise. Examples of suitable songs for today's lesson follow.



Songs – the words to many of these songs can be found on page 42.

- All things bright and beautiful
- Morning has broken
- If I were a butterfly
- Praise Him, Praise Him
- Our God is an awesome God
- The Lord's been good to me
- When I look
- Think of a world without any flowers
- Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder
- Our God is an awesome God
- I love the sun, it shines on me
- This is the day
- He's got the whole world in His hands
- Who put the colours on the rainbow?



Bible Story: Genesis 1 (The story of Creation)

Very briefly revise the story of Creation. Perhaps have a few pictures to show the children as you revise the story. You may like to make use of the words that follow:

In the beginning there was darkness. God spoke and said, "Let there be light."
God made the sun to shine in the day and the moon and stars to shine in the night.
God said, "Let there be sky and land and sea." And so it was.
God made the fish and creatures that swim in the sea.
God made the birds that fly in the air and every animal that lives on the land
God made the first man and called him Adam. God then made the first woman and called her Eve.

In the beginning, when the world was new, God saw all that was made, and it was very good!



Activity and discussion:

For the younger children: Take the children on a bug hunt. How many bugs or small animals can you find? Perhaps allow the children to dig in the soil to hopefully find more creatures. During this time, try to also make use of other senses e.g. encourage the children to smell the flowers. Listen to the sounds around you – try to block out "man-made sounds". What can you hear? Ask the children what they most like about God's Creation.

Also ask the children if there are any animals/creatures which they do not like e.g. spiders, mosquitoes, lizards, snakes, bats, chameleons, owls etc. Sometimes children step on small creatures just for "fun". Explain that God made all things - great and small. Each animal has an important role to play in the world, and we must look after all of God's creatures.

For the older children: Go on a scavenger hunt. In groups, give the children a few minutes to collect objects from God's creation. They need to try to find an object for each letter of the alphabet e.g. a – ant, b -branch. (Note that they collect something that is natural e.g. a bottle should not be included in their collection) They must try to bring as many of these objects back to the group, but this may not always be possible to do – check for example if they are allowed to pick flowers. Provide each group with a bag to place their collection. At the end of the scavenger hunt, each group can display what they found. Which group was able to represent the most letters of the alphabet in their collection? Ensure that the children return any bugs that they may have collected to where the bugs were originally found.

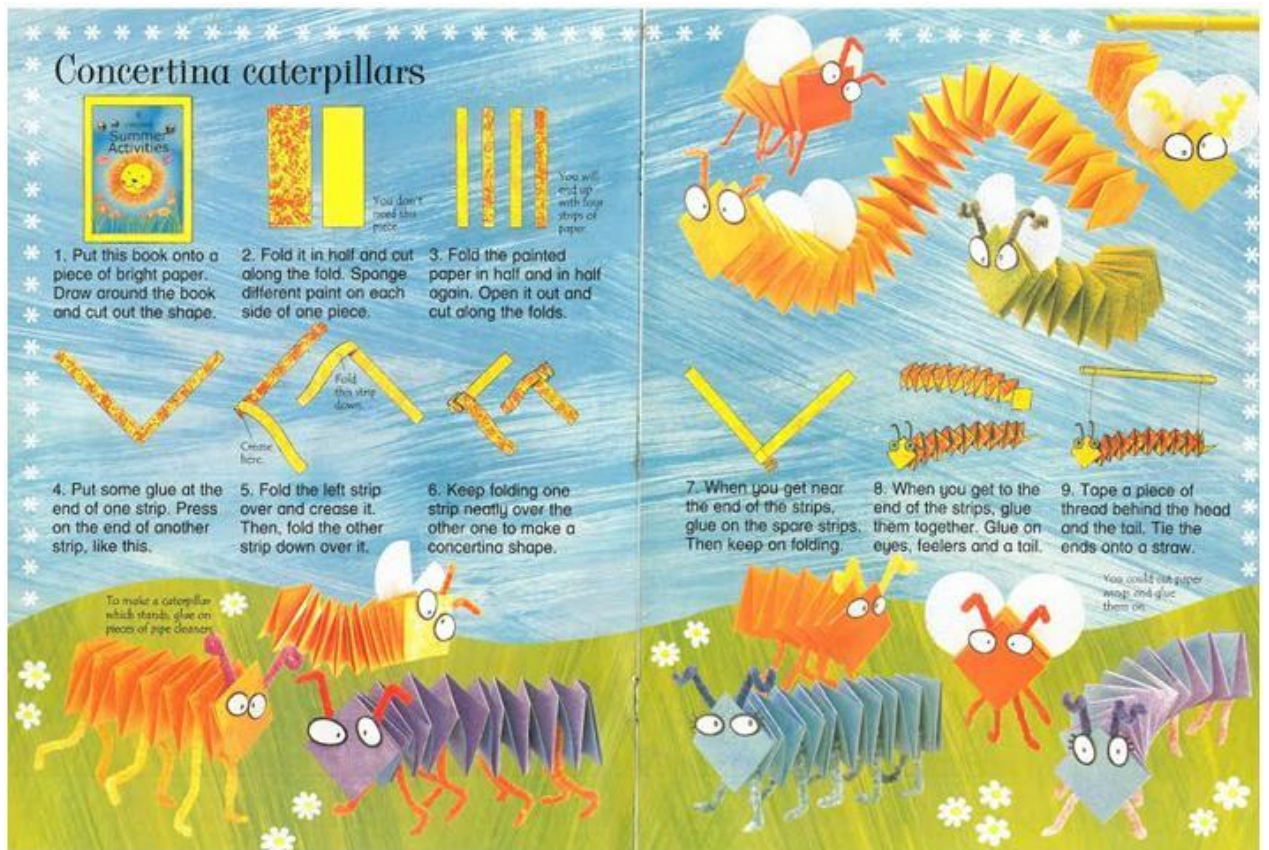


Craft and activities:

A number of crafts and activities follow. Choose ideas that you think will work best for your group.

Younger children:

- There are many bug-making crafts that the children will enjoy. Here are a few examples:



- Create a collage pot. Each child can be given a tin can or a paper cup. The children can decorate the “pot” with pictures from used magazines which reflect our beautiful world e.g. flowers, waterfalls, forests etc. Another option is for the children to decorate their pots with bug prints as shown below. Then give each child some soil and a seed/s to plant in the “pot”. Remind the children that they will need to water the seed/s.



- Creation banner: The children can glue pictures of Creation from used magazines onto a poster. If you don't have magazines, the children can fill the poster with pictures that they have drawn. Encourage them to draw all aspects of God's Creation e.g. sun, moon, trees, flowers, water falls, animals, people

Older children: The older children will enjoy the following True or False questions. They may prefer to work in groups for this activity. Each child / group can be given a piece of paper where they write down their answer for each question. (All the answers are True!!)

1. No two zebras have the same striped patterns
2. Tapeworms can live for 35 years
3. It takes 2 years for a pineapple to grow to its full size
4. It is possible for a female cat to be responsible for the birth of 20 736 kittens in 4 years
5. The arctic tern is a bird which flies from the north pole to the south pole each year. When added up over a lifetime, the total journey of the bird is the same as a trip to the moon and back!
6. It takes 22 months for a baby elephant to be born
7. It takes 6 months for a baby elephant to learn how to control its trunk
8. A newborn giraffe is about 2 m tall
9. Dolphins sleep with one eye open
10. All ants in the world weigh more than all the people in the world put together
11. A blue whale's tongue weighs more than most elephants
12. Snails can sleep for up to 3 years at a time
13. Gold fish need light to keep their colour

After the quiz, discuss with the children that we have learnt some amazing facts about the world around us. It is very important to realize that we look after all creatures, even those

we do not like e.g. spiders, mosquitoes, lizards, snakes, bats, chameleons, owls etc. Each animal, not matter how small, is an amazing part of creation and has an important role in the web of life. We need to respect all parts of God's Creation.

- Now, encourage the children to respond in some way to this lesson. Perhaps they would like to illustrate one of the facts that they have just learnt on a poster which can then be placed on a board to raise everyone's awareness to our awesome creation. They may like to prepare a skit or a song based on the lesson for today, or write a beastly prayer and then illustrate it – an example of such a prayer follows:

Thank you God for spotted ladybirds,
dangling spiders,
bees in trees
and for creepy crawlies that live under rocks.
Amen



Prayer:

Younger children: If possible, sing the following song with the children:

All things bright and beautiful
All creatures great and small
All things wise and wonderful
The Lord God made them all

Lord God, we thank you for all that you have made
Thank you God for spotted lady birds
Dangling spiders
Bees in trees

And for creepy crawlies that live under rocks

(Ask the children if they have any other creatures they would like to thank God for)

Amen

Older children: If possible, sit outside. Encourage the children to sit quietly and listen to the sounds around them. Try to block out "man-made sounds" – listen to the natural sounds e.g. the birds in the trees; the wind rustling the leaves.

After a while, read the meditation found in the introduction to this lesson entitled "Earth Ball" by Olaf Skarscholt.



Snack: Organise a picnic to celebrate the beginning of Spring. Play outside games if time. The younger children may enjoy playing "I spy"

Extension: Celebrating God's creation and developing an awareness of our beautiful world should not be limited to one lesson of the year. Always be on the look out for activities organised by your local community or botanical gardens e.g. frog walks; bat talks; bird spotting; star gazing etc and encourage your children to attend such events.

References:

Season of Creation, Anglican Church of Southern Africa

Special thanks to Noeleen Mullett – JAIE / EcoAct

www.sermons4kids.com

The real cost of things

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost 11 September 2016

Theme: True contentment

Memory verse: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and its righteousness; and all these things will be given to you as well". (Matt 6:33)



Information for the teacher:

Let there be stuff??

Have you ever wondered where your stuff comes from, and where it goes once you are done with it?

Our second lesson in the Season of Creation series this year is based on a project called the "Story of Stuff". There are many videos on youtube.com produced by this project which are very enlightening!

Today we explore how our stuff – specifically our clothing, electronic gadgets and luxury items - all have an impact on the world around us, sadly often leaving a toxic trail. Besides the toxic trail, there is also the human factor –many workers are subjected to slave-like conditions so that we can have "stuff".

This past term we have been learning about the prophets – people in Biblical times who offered the kind of moral challenge this lesson provides. Prophets were not popular because they conveyed God's judgement against society status quo and against deeply ingrained habits. The prophet Hosea harshly criticized the behaviour of the Israelites where a small class of rich landowners and merchants had begun to exploit and enslave their poorer citizens – does this not remind us of the times we live in? The richer Israelites had also become comfortable worshipping foreign gods – misdirected worship. As discussed in our lesson on Elijah, have material goods become our modern day gods?

The advertising industry provides relentless temptation for us to find happiness through material things. This runs counter to our religious values, which teach us that true happiness comes from loving relationships, compassion, service, and the pursuit of justice.

And so today's lesson is a spirit filled response to a consumer crazed world. It is a call to simplicity and to be responsible earth stewards. Through this lesson may we gain a better understanding of the impact of our consumption habits on the world around us, and turn our love for God and our Creation into effective action.

Lesson Suggestions:



Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objectives:

- To raise awareness within the children that everything we buy – our food, drinks, clothing and electronic goods - has an effect on the environment.
- To realise that true happiness does not come from material goods but from spending special times with family and friends



Lesson and Discussion:

(Perhaps begin today's lesson outside)

Let's think back to the time of Jesus.

What do you think the people in those days ate? *(The food people ate in those days included matzos/bread, olives, cheese, fruit and honey. Their drinks would have included water and grape juice)*

What games do you think people played? *(They may have played games like "catches" and "hide-and-peek" or "duck-duck- goose"; they would have climbed trees; they may have used stones to play games like hop-scotch. Remember they would not have had all the fancy toys that we have today!)*

Let's begin today's lesson by pretending we are living in the times of Jesus.

If possible, have a picnic, or enjoy a snack, making use of food that people living in the time of Jesus would have eaten. Try to use natural looking jars, bowls and platters – the people in those days did not have plastic, glass or tin!

We are going to play a game that children may have played – it involves using 4 twigs or sticks. Place the 4 twigs quite close together. Each child steps over each twig. Now place the twigs a bit further away from each other – the distance between all the twigs should be the same. Again the children step over each twig. Continue moving the twigs further and further away from each other so that the children have to leap between the twigs. If a child is not able to leap over the twigs, that child is "out". The game continues until there is only one child remaining in the game, who is then the winner.



Once you have finished playing this game, ask the children if they had fun.

Let's think back to Jesus day again – how else was the world different in those days?

(Find a picture in a children's bible which helps the children to imagine what a city/town looked like in Jesus' time.)

Did they have cars? Did they have television? Did they have cell-phones? Did they have coke? Did they have Mac Donalds?

Why do we have these things? *(Because we like them and they make our lives easier)*

Sadly, some of these things are not good for the world around us. Look at what we are doing to the world around us so that we can have all the things that we want:

Look at these beautiful forests which are being cut down



Look at this water – does it look clean and sparkling?



Look at this mine dump



Look at this smoke



How should our air smell? How does it sometimes smell? Do you think this is what God would want for our beautiful world?

And now think about what we do with all our “things” when we are finished with them. Do you give your toys to someone else? And what do you do with all your empty coke tins, plastic bottles, and paper that you have used? Does it land up on a rubbish dump, which gets bigger and bigger each day, like the one shown in this picture? Do you think this is what God would want for our beautiful world?



Now, lets again think back to the time of Jesus. These people didn't have all the things we have, but do you think they were happy? *(Allow the children to give their opinions on this, but people in Jesus' day would have been happy as they had everything they needed, and just like us they would have had family and friends to love and with which to enjoy doing things, and a loving God to watch over them – this is actually what makes us happy!)*

So, do you think we need all the things we THINK we need to be happy? *(No!)*

We should all try to think about how we can use less “stuff” - remember that all our “stuff” has an effect on God's beautiful Creation.

Think about whether your dad really needs a new cell phone if his cell phone still works. What is he going to do with his old phone?

Do you think your mom really needs a new pair of shoes?

And how about you - do you really need another toy from Mac Donalds? How much are you going to play with it and where is it going to go when you throw it out?

Let's all try to make less rubbish!! We will still be happy and our world will be a more beautiful place!



Prayer: Dear Lord God. We thank you for this beautiful world and for all that is in it. Help us to keep the world as you would like it to be. We thank you for our family and friends - for those who love and care for us, and enjoy special times with us. Help us to remember that these people are more important than all the treasures in the world! Amen



Craft: The Lord has given us a beautiful world. We need to do all that we can to keep the world as God would want it to be. Let's colour in a picture to remind us of this. *(A picture can be found on page 20, or the children can draw their own picture of themselves surrounded by God's beautiful creation. Add the following words to the picture, "Dear Lord. Help us to look after our beautiful world. Amen"*



Songs: Here are a few examples of suitable songs for today's lesson. All the songs for this series of "Season of Creation" lessons can be found on page 42

- Think of a world
- I love the sun, it shines on me
- The Lord's been good to me

If time, go play some more games outside and enjoy God's beautiful Creation.



Older children (7 – 13 years):

Lesson objectives:

- To raise awareness regarding the real cost of our consumption – both environmentally and socially
- To encourage the children to be more responsible “earth stewards”



Lesson and Discussion:

(If possible, begin this lesson by giving every child a small glass of coke.)

Ask the children to think about a glass of coke – where did the coke come from? How was it made? And what about the plastic bottle it came in – how was that made?

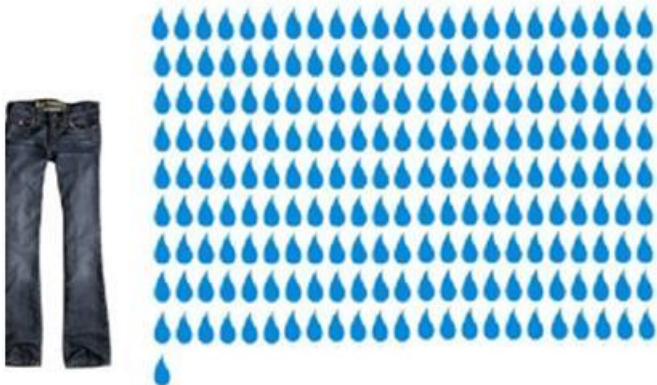
And what about a cell-phone – have you ever thought about where that comes from, and more importantly, where it goes when you are done with it?

Most of us don't really have a clue where our “stuff” comes from. We take it for granted that it just magically appears on the shelf at a store when we want it, we use it as long as we like and then just toss it in the garbage when we're done.



But, here are some scary facts:

- Did you know that it takes 10 850 litres of water to make one pair of jeans?



10,850 litres of water to
produce one pair of jeans

- Did you know that one gold ring generates about 20 tons of mining waste? You would need 4 pick-up trucks for all this waste!



- Did you know that people, sometimes children, work 11 hour-long days for less than R5 an hour to make the t-shirts we wear?



And here are a few more scary facts about making t-shirts for you to think about:

- Each year, enough cotton is grown to make 15 t-shirts for every person on earth. Do you think that each of us needs 15 new t-shirts each year?
 - Also, a lot of water is needed to make these t-shirts and because of this some communities don't have water to drink.
 - And then pesticides are sprayed on the cotton crops which don't just kill bugs – the workers also then suffer from nerve diseases and eye problems because of these poisonous chemicals.
 - Finally, once the fabric is made, it is then shipped to a factory in Haiti, China or Mexico where, as mentioned a little earlier, workers work 11 hour days, 7 days a week for very little pay.
 - The t-shirt is then shipped to us.
-
- How much do we pay for a t-shirt?
 - How much do you think we should pay for a t-shirt now that we know a bit more about the cost to the environment, and the conditions under which all those people work to make our t-shirts?

(The price that the children select in this exercise is not important. What is important is that the children gain an understanding of the cost of the t-shirt to the environment and to the workers – factors which are not added in to the cost of the t-shirt that we currently pay. Some children may comment that perhaps we should not buy t-shirts that are made under these conditions – this is a good point and can lead to a discussion about fair trade – more about this can be found later in this lesson.)



And now let's consider the cell-phone.

(You may want to select just a few facts from this list if you feel this is too much information for the children to grasp. It is however important that an awareness is created regarding the implications of our consumption habits, and hopefully a seed will be sown within all of us that we need to change our ways)

- What do you think a cell-phone is made of? *(Metals and plastic)*
- Where do the metals come from? *(Metals are mined from under the ground)*
- Did you know that poisonous chemicals are often used in mining? These chemicals often land up in our rivers polluting water supplies which people depend on, killing fish and animals that feed on fish.
- Did you know that a war is being fought in the Congo over a metal which is used in cell-phones?
- Did you know that once again, children, instead of being in school, are being used to mine this metal?



- Did you know that because of deforestation due to mining, the habitat of the mountain gorilla is being reduced, and this means less food for the gorillas? Less forests also means not enough trees to clean the industrial air. Also, people in the villages who used to rely on the forest for fire, wood, water and food, now resort to hunting mountain gorillas and selling bush meat.



- Now let's discuss where plastics come from – any idea? Plastics are made from oils, some of which comes from rainforests in the Amazon. By making plastic, we are destroying places such as the Amazon jungle.
- Did you know that the plastic used in cell-phones is made from one of the most toxic chemicals we know?

A cell-phone may cost as little as R100, but what are we doing to the environment in the process of making a cell-phone, and then think about what happens to your cell-phone when you no longer want it - you may give it to someone else, but eventually it will be thrown away.

Did you know that there are now more cell-phones than people in the world?

If your cell-phone lands up on a rubbish dump and is not found by someone, that it is where it will remain for the next million years – plastics in cell-phones do not degrade! And then there is the problem of leakage - did you know that very poisonous chemicals such as mercury and lead are also found in our cell-phones, and then there are also the batteries which are also very toxic? These chemicals can leak into our soil and our ground water.

Hopefully, most “used” cell-phones will be taken to an e-waste collection point for safe disposal. The metals can be extracted and the plastics recycled, but energy is required for recycling, which has an effect on the environment. Furthermore, dioxin, a very toxic substance is released when these plastics are incinerated.



Discussion:

1. Ask the children what their thoughts are on what we have so far discussed today.
(The main point that should come out of this discussion is that we all need basic essentials such as clothes, food and shelter, and we cannot ignore that we live in the 21st century and that gadgets such as cell-phones are a part of life, but we also need to be aware of the impact our material goods have on the world around us – both the environmental, as well as the human factor. What is the REAL cost of our stuff?

Let us be more careful with what we buy, how we look after it, and how we get rid of it. Also discuss the difference between “needs” and “wants”, as well as whether we really NEED the latest and greatest of everything.)
2. The world around us says that we need “stuff” in order to be happy, but what actually makes you happy? What is real contentment? *(Our relationships with others, as well as our relationship with God, play an important role in determining our happiness – we all need someone who loves and cares for us, as well as someone we can love and care for too. Did you know that there are many people who have a lot of “stuff” and yet are not happy)*
3. Based on today’s lesson, how can we become more responsible “earth stewards” – how can we better look after the environment and our fellow humans?
 - Live more simply – Reduce the amount of “stuff” that you buy. Buy what you NEED, not what you WANT. You do not need the latest and greatest of everything!
 - Try to reduce the amount of plastic, glass and paper that you buy. Recycle all that you can, but remember that recycling requires energy, which has an environmental impact – recycling should therefore be the last resort in our discarding of waste – we will discuss this in more detail next week.
 - It is also very important to ensure that all e-waste is responsibly discarded. E-waste includes batteries, cell-phones and other electronic gadgets. Places such as Macro collect e-waste. These appliances are then disassembled- parts are recycled and re-used
 - Try to buy products made from fair trade – this is where the working conditions of the people involved in making a product are good, and are paid a fair amount of money for what they do.

- Try to buy locally produced goods – the further your “stuff” has to travel, the greater the amount of fuel required to transport your “stuff”, which has an effect on the environment
- Challenge the “norms” of society. Do you really need the latest and greatest of everything? Should we really need to replace our “stuff” as often as we do? (Do you know that items like washing machines and watches used to be made to last for life? Now these same items are designed to work for just a few years and it is often difficult, if not impossible to find spare parts for these items.) Maybe you will feel led, perhaps not now but in the future, to be part of initiatives which can reduce the environmental impact of man and to reduce social injustice– maybe you will be able to make a really big difference to the way we currently do things!
- Remember this lesson and go home and tell everyone about what you learnt today – we all need to change our consumption habits!



Reflection and Prayer:

Think about this!! We learn a lot about Jesus in the Bible, but in none of the four gospels, do any of the writers tell us about the clothes Jesus wore, or the things He owned. They show us how strong and deep His friendships were and His amazing capacity to love and help people. But none of them thought His possessions or appearance was an important expression of who he really was or what He came to say. God gave Jesus what He needed – not Nike, Billabong, Sissy Boy, Yeezy or Caterpillar. Just warm, comfortable clothes, good tools and friends to share His journey.

Dear Lord, you know better than we do what makes us happy. May we always “seek first the Kingdom of God, and its righteousness, and all these things will then be added unto us.” Help us to gain a deep understanding of what really makes us happy, and to shape our lives to make that real for ourselves. Amen



Song: Seek ye first



Activity:

Divide the children into groups to discuss the following questions. After a few minutes, the groups can report back on what they discussed.

Discussion

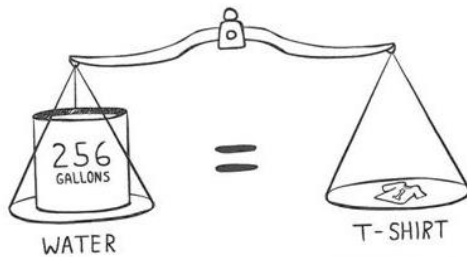
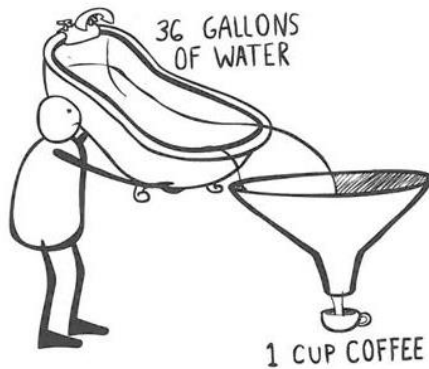
- Think about the times of Jesus. How was the world in which Jesus lived different to the way we live today?
- What do you think was better?
- What do you think was worse?
- Do you think the people who lived those days were as happy, happier or sadder than we are today?
- What would you change, if anything, about the way we now live?



Craft:

The children can make a poster based on what they have learnt today. The aim of this poster is to raise the awareness of others in the church to the issues discussed in this lesson. The poster needs to be bold and eye-catching to attract attention to the message you are trying to convey.

The children can add statements or facts that particularly struck them during today's lesson which they think will have an impact on others. Pictures from this lesson can also be included. Here are some more ideas and pictures that can be used:



And here are some phrases that can be used:
"Looking good shouldn't kill you - or the planet!"
"Let's make the world a better place"
"The real cost of things"

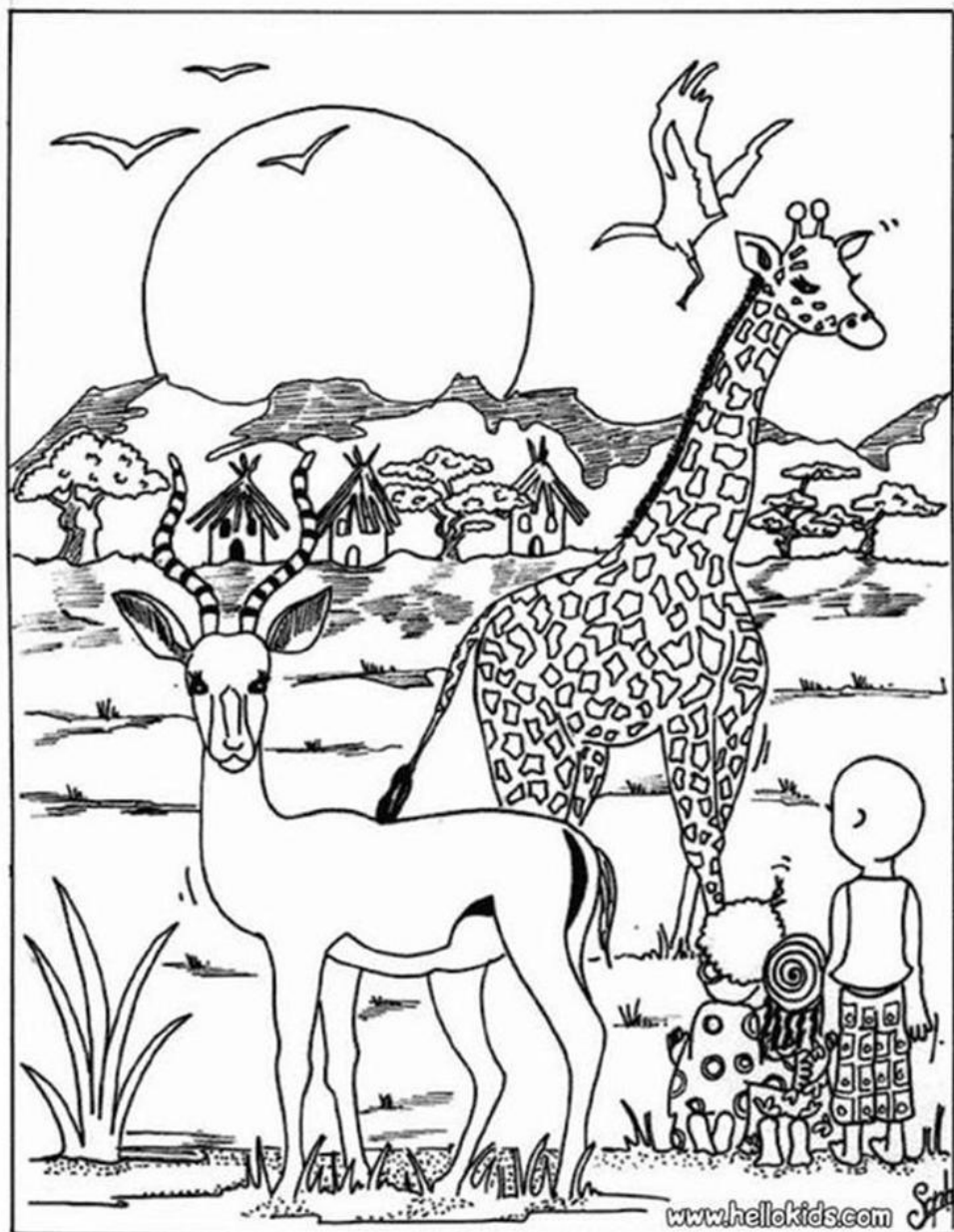


Physical activity: Run outside and play games that do not involve anything that was man-made – this is not to say that we should never buy man-made things ever again, but this also emphasises that we can have fun just making use of the natural resources that God offers us. (See the younger children’s section for some ideas of games which you can play.)

References:

www.storyofstuff.org

Special thanks to Noeleen Mullett – JAIE / EcoAct



What happens to our rubbish?

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost 18 September 2016

Theme: Caring for God's Creation

Memory verse: And I have brought you into a plentiful land to enjoy its fruits and its good things. But when you came in you defiled my land and made my heritage an abomination." (Jeremiah 2:7)



Information for the teacher:

You have just finished your meal at a fast food restaurant and you throw your uneaten food and packaging into the rubbish bin, and you don't think about it again. On rubbish day in your neighbourhood, you push your wheelie bin out to the pavement, and workers dump the contents into a big truck and haul it away. You again don't have to think about – it is gone! But have you ever wondered what happens to your rubbish? Where is the "away" in "throw it away"?

We generate an astonishing amount of rubbish each year –consider how much waste you throw away each day and the number of people who live in South Africa – our trash production is the 15th highest in the world! Some of our trash is recycled or recovered, but the majority is buried in landfills where it will remain for a very long time!! Cans take 80 -100 years to decompose; plastic bottles can take up to 450 years and it is estimated that glass will take 1 million years! Organic material, such as vegetable peels and grass cuttings, does not form compost on a landfill due to lack of oxygen and too little moisture. Instead, a methane rich gas, which has 21 times more impact as a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide is produced, and is therefore a significant contributor to climate change.

Landfills occupy space - in Johannesburg, for example, there are 4 operational landfill sites. We currently build mountains of waste equivalent to 6000 rooms per day and so these landfill sites will be full within the next few years, and what happens next? A new space will need to be found to discard our waste. Gradually, our earth is becoming a massive rubbish dump!!

It is clearly evident that we need to consider ways to reduce our waste. In today's lesson we discuss the 5 R's:

- Refuse
- Reduce
- Re-use
- Rot
- Recycle.

We also refer to a book written by Bea Johnson called "Zero Waste Home". In this book she describes how her family produces just one jar of rubbish per year, and this includes all recyclable material!!

Today's lesson is once again a challenge for us to face an "inconvenient truth" and to make lifestyle changes for the good of all.

Lesson Suggestions:



Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objectives:

- To make children aware of what happens to our rubbish
- To consider ways in which we can reduce our waste, and in so doing look after our beautiful world and its resources



Attention Grabber:

You will need a number of empty tin cans. The children need to stack the cans to try to make the biggest tower.

Ask the children what we are going to do with these cans once we are done with the lesson for today. The children will probably reply that we will throw them away, which is certainly better than just leaving them lying around, but then ask the children where something lands up when you throw it away. *(On a rubbish dump!!)*

Show the children a picture of a rubbish dump. How many of you have been to a rubbish dump? If the children are not familiar with a rubbish dump, explain that rubbish dumps are very smelly and that we want as few rubbish dumps as possible. Also show them a picture of a rubbish dump as shown below. Do you think this is what God would want for our beautiful world? *(No!)*

So today we will look at ways of making less rubbish. Empty a bag of rubbish in front of the children. Try to include paper, cardboard, tins, glass, plastic bottles, plastic bags, foil, vegetable and fruit peels, magazines, newspaper, batteries, broken electrical equipment, toys such as lego etc. The lesson continues with the discussion on the next page.

Or

Empty out a bag of rubbish in front of the children. Try to include paper, cardboard, tins, glass, plastic bags and bottles, foil, vegetable and fruit peels, magazines, newspaper, batteries, broken electrical equipment, toys such as lego etc

Today we are going to talk about rubbish. Where does your rubbish go? *(To a rubbish dump)* And what happens to your rubbish on the rubbish dump. It stays there for many, many, many years. Some of your rubbish will stay there for ever, getting smellier and smellier. *(Show the children a picture of a rubbish dump as shown below.)*

Do you think this is what God would like for our beautiful world? No!! So, today we will look at ways of making less rubbish.





Discussion:

Referring to the pile of rubbish in front of you, ask the children how they think we can make less rubbish. Here are points that you should discuss, although you may need to simplify for the very young children:

- Use less “stuff”. As we discussed in our lesson last week, do we really need everything we buy?

We must all try to use less plastic, tin, glass and paper.

Make sure you write on both sides of a piece of paper!

Have you noticed how many bottles and cans your family gets rid of each week? We should all try to buy fewer things that come in plastic or glass bottles and cans, although if you have to choose, many people feel that it is better for the environment to buy glass rather than plastic containers and bottles.

Make sure your family takes plastic bags with you when you go shopping so that you don't need to buy more bags.

Does your family use cling wrap to store food in the fridge? We should rather use containers that can be re-used to store food.

- If you do have plastic, tin, glass and paper that you need to get rid of, don't throw in the bin! We must rather recycle – we will talk more about this later in our lesson. (Explain to the slightly older children that if a plastic bottle lands up on a rubbish dump instead of being recycled, it will remain there for up to 450 years before it breaks down. 450 years is a long time! Also explain to the older children that some plastics e.g. polystyrene and cling wrap, especially “dirty” cling wrap, are not that easy to recycle, so try not to use these plastics. Also, some paper e.g. glossy paper, is harder to recycle, so tell your family to look out for magazines made from recycled paper, and buy these instead!)
- Vegetable and fruit peels do not need to be thrown away – they can be used to make compost. (Again, depending on the age of your group, you may want to discuss that “used” tea bags, egg shells, egg boxes, bread, shredded paper (but not glossy!) and newspapers can also be added to the compost heap. Note that meat, eggs, milk, cheese, bones – anything made of protein - cannot be put on a compost heap – this needs to go to a rubbish dump. It is never good to throw food away, but especially try not to throw away food that cannot go on a compost heap –it is mostly food waste that makes a rubbish dump so smelly!)
- Batteries should not be thrown in the dustbin – chemicals in the batteries can leak and make their way into our water. Tell your parents that batteries and other things like broken cell-phones should be taken to a special place that collects this type of rubbish. (You can tell the slightly older children this is known as e-waste. You may want to also mention that it is very difficult to recycle a c.d. or dvd, so we should rent our movies and, if possible, download the games and music we want to enjoy, rather than buying a copy from the shops.
- Lego and toys should never be thrown away. Is there someone you know who may enjoy playing with the toys with which you no longer play? Make sure you look after your toys, or else there may be no other place for them than the rubbish dump!

At the end of this discussion, you may want to tell the **older kids** that the following 5R's remind us of what we should do with our rubbish – for more detail, see the older children's lesson:

1. Refuse
2. Reduce
3. Re-use
4. Rot
5. Recycle

Try to get them to repeat these 5 R's throughout the rest of the lesson



Activity:

Provide a load of rubbish, which should include tin cans, paper, glass bottles, cardboard, different types of plastic, newspaper, polystyrene, some fruit and vegetable peels etc. Depending on your age group, you may want to include other items such as "used" tea bags, egg shells, batteries, bones, mouldy cheese, bread, some form of electronic waste etc. (Make sure your rubbish pile is not too dirty!!)

The children need to sort the rubbish into glass, tin, paper/cardboard, plastic and compost (vegetables/fruit), and possibly e-waste. You may want to divide the children into teams where they race to make the biggest piles.

Once the children have finished, inspect the piles – check that they have correctly sorted all the rubbish. Explain that none of this rubbish needs to go to the rubbish dump. Isn't that amazing?!!

If there is any rubbish in the original pile, this is the only rubbish that will need to go to the dump. Our rubbish dumps will be much smaller if we all recycle!!

(You may want to discuss with the slightly older children how we can make even our recycling piles smaller. Recycling, although better for the environment than adding all our rubbish to a dump, still does need energy which has an impact on the environment, so we need to aim to reduce our recycling piles as well! For more on this, see the lesson for the older children)

When you go home today, what are you going to tell your family and friends about today's lesson? (Try to get the children to commit to some form of recycling/ reducing of rubbish etc)



Song:

(Tune: frère Jacques)

Let's recycle, let's recycle
Me and you! Me and you!
Paper, tin and plastic,
Paper, tin and plastic
Bottles too! Bottles too!



Craft: A picture for the very young children to colour can be found on page 31 and for the slightly older children on page 32.



Physical activity: To end today's lesson, let's have some fun with our rubbish! There are many games that you (or the children) can make up with the rubbish that you have brought.

An example of a game that can be played is "milk bottle catchers". As shown in the pictures below, the children need to catch a ball using a milk bottle that has been specially cut for the game. The ball can be made out of a laddered stocking that has been rolled up, or a piece of paper that has been scrunched up etc.



Here are some more ideas:



Prayer: Dear Lord. You made a beautiful world for us to enjoy. Help us to keep it beautiful. May we all do what we can to care for our world. Amen



Older children (7 – 13 years):

Lesson objectives:

- To make children aware of what happens to our rubbish
- To consider ways in which we can reduce our waste, and in so doing look after our beautiful world and its resources



Attention Grabber/ lesson: Don't tell the children that today's lesson is about recycling, although you should mention that we are continuing with our lessons on the Season of Creation.

Read out the following figures and ask the children what they think each of these numbers represent: 2 weeks; 6 weeks, 1 year, 50 years, 80 years, 100 years, 450 years, 600 years, 1 million years

These figures are the number of years it takes for different parts of our waste to disintegrate - to break down / degrade.

Now put up a list of numbers as well as a list of items, as shown in the table below, but mix up the items on the right-hand side, and then ask the children to try to match each item with the number of years they think it will take for that item to break down.

2 weeks	Paper towel
6 weeks	Newspaper
1 year	Cigarette ends
50 years	Plastic bag
80 years	Coke can
100 years	Batteries
450 years	Plastic bottle
600 years	Fishing line
1 million years	Glass



Discussion:

So, have you ever wondered where all your rubbish goes? What happens to your rubbish when you throw it into a bin? A truck may come to take it away, but where is "away"? (*Landfills / rubbish dumps*)

Show the children the following picture of a landfill and ask the children what happens to the rubbish on the landfill. (*Some of the rubbish may be recovered, recycled and re-used, but most rubbish on landfills remains there, and stays there for a very long time!*)



Think about how much rubbish you throw out per day, and how many people live in South Africa. We produce the 15th highest amount of trash in the world!

Do you know that these landfill sites are going to be full within the next few years, and what do you think will happen next? (*We will need to start a landfill somewhere else.*)

Slowly but surely our earth is becoming a massive rubbish dump! This is most certainly not what God intended for our beautiful earth. It is our responsibility to look after the earth and all its resources, so what are we going to do about all this rubbish?

(The children will probably be able to offer a number of suggestions, but do ensure that you discuss the following points:

When discarding of our rubbish, we need to remember the **5 R's**:

- 1. Refuse:** As discussed in our lesson last week, do we really NEED everything we buy? Do we NEED to replace our “stuff” as often as we do? Do we NEED the latest and greatest of everything?

Furthermore, it is also important to realise that some plastics e.g. polystyrene and cling wrap, especially “dirty” cling wrap, are not that easy to recycle, so try not to use these plastics. Also, some paper e.g. glossy paper, is harder to recycle, so tell your family to look out for magazines made from recycled paper, and buy these instead!

- 2. Reduce:** Try to use less plastic, cans, glass and paper. Even though all these materials can be recycled, energy is needed to recycle, and this has an effect on the environment. So, rather use containers to store food than wrap in plastic; bring your own bag when you go shopping to carry your bought items rather than buying another plastic bag; Don't buy bottled water – did you know that almost every hour, 250 000 plastic bottles are dumped?

It is also important to note that many people consider glass bottles to be a better option than plastic bottles.

Try to reduce the amount of paper you use. Write on both sides of a piece of paper. If possible, try to convert from using paper to an electronic device, and download books and music rather than buying paperbacks and CD's. Did you know that CD's are one of the few things that can't be recycled?! Also, did you know that a glossy magazine requires more energy to recycle than a magazine made of recycled paper – keep this in mind when you next shop for a magazine.

- 3. Re-use:** Give things such as toys that you no longer use to someone else. Did you know that LEGO, for example, will “never in a million years” degrade?!! So make sure it does not land up on a rubbish dump!! Also, try to fix and repair things that have broken or are not in perfect condition instead of simply throwing away.

Again, if you have plastic bags, re-use rather than recycle – recycling is actually one the last options you should consider when discarding your waste

“Upcycle” your waste – do something useful with your waste. Make something out of your rubbish e.g. C.D.s can be used to make jewellery. Some people use “upcycling” to make a living – they make stuff that can be sold

- 4. Rot:** Have you ever smelt a landfill? – it is never a pleasant smell!! This is mostly due to food waste. A methane-rich gas, which has 21 times more impact as a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide is produced by food on a landfill and is therefore a significant contributor to climate change.

The good news is that most of your food waste does not need to land up on a rubbish dump –

much of this waste can be used to make compost. This includes vegetable and fruit peels and cores, egg shells and bread. "Used" tea bags, egg boxes, shredded paper (but not glossy!) and newspapers can also be added.

Unfortunately protein e.g. meat, eggs, milk, cheese, bones, yoghurt cannot be put onto a compost heap – this waste needs to go to a rubbish dump. It is never good to throw away food, but especially try not to throw away food that cannot go on a compost heap!

- 5. Recycle:** As mentioned earlier, recycling is the last of the 5 R's, because it is one of the last options we should consider when getting rid of our rubbish. Again, as mentioned before, recycling involves energy, which has an environmental effect. Furthermore, poisonous gases are often produced during the recycling process.

However, it is still better to recycle than for these items to land up on a rubbish dump. Did you know that a recycled can saves enough money to power a television for 3 hours?! (This is because it costs more money and energy to mine the metal for the can)



Activity: This activity should be done outside. Empty a bag of rubbish onto the floor – depending on the size of the class, you may need a few bags of rubbish. Try to include the following in the pile of rubbish: tin cans, paper, glass bottles, plastic bottles, cardboard, newspaper, polystyrene, fruit and vegetable peels, egg shells, batteries, bones, mouldy cheese; bread, "used" tea bags, possibly some form of electronic waste. This may not be a very pleasant exercise, but explain to the children that THIS is what we are giving back to the earth!!

During this activity, the children need to sort the rubbish into the following piles: paper, plastic, cans, glass, tetrapak, compost and e-waste. You may need to provide the children with disposable gloves or plastic bags to cover their hands as they sort through the rubbish. You can possibly divide the children into teams where they race to make the biggest piles.

You may prefer for the children to first sort the rubbish before explaining the meaning of tetrapak and e-waste. Tetrapak is the carton that fruit juices are often sold – these cartons contain cardboard, plastic and aluminium foil. These cartons are not as easy to recycle as cartons made from just cardboard, but there are places where this type of packaging can be taken to be recycled. If a product is made of Tetrapak, this will be mentioned on the packaging.

E-waste is where batteries, broken cell-phones and all other electronic equipment should be taken for safe disposal. It is here that useful parts from our electrical equipment will be removed and reused. Batteries should never be sent to a rubbish dump – chemicals in the batteries can leak and make their way into our water. Shops such as Macro have E-waste collection boxes.

Once the children have completed the activity, inspect the piles – check that they have correctly sorted all the rubbish. Explain that none of this rubbish needs to go to the rubbish dump. Isn't that amazing?! If there is any rubbish in the original pile, this is the only rubbish that will need to go to the dump. Our rubbish dumps will be much smaller if we all recycle!!

We should however, be aiming to reduce the size of all these piles! Here is something to think about: A lady called Bea Johnson has written a book called "Zero Waste Home". In this book she describes how her family produces just one jar of rubbish per year, and this includes all recyclable material!!

How is this possible? Here are some ideas:

- Where possible, buy your food without packaging - buy meat from a butcher rather than a supermarket. The meat can then be bought without all the packaging. You can put your meat directly into a container that you have brought with you. Similarly, buy bread that does not come in a plastic bag - bring your own bag to place your bread in – the lady who wrote “Zero waste home” uses a pillow case! Even better, make your own bread, cake and biscuits! Buy your fruit and vegetables from a shop where the fruit and vegetables are not pre-packaged, or even better, grow your own!! Instead of buying fruit juice, which always comes in a bottle or a carton, squeeze your fruit and make your own! If you buy a “take-away” meal, bring your own container – refuse the packaging! Don’t take a straw for your drink – it just adds to our waste.
- As mentioned before, take your own bags with you whenever you go shopping.
- Lunches for school should be placed in containers which can be re-used, not in plastic sandwich bags or wrapped in cling wrap, which will be thrown away after one use.
- Make use of natural things such as lemons for cleaning agents.
- The lady who wrote this book even makes her own toothpaste and deodorant, although that is perhaps going a little too far!!

Does this all seem a little inconvenient? Well, it is!! What we are talking about today is an inconvenient truth!!

Explain to the children that the intention of today’s lesson is to raise the awareness of the amount of waste we produce and the effect our waste has on the environment. We all need to make lifestyle changes and we also need to encourage those around us to make these changes – perhaps you can be part of an initiative to set up recycling bins at your church and in your school.

Today’s lesson should also challenge us to think about ways in which we can reduce our rubbish. Here are a few things to think about:

- Why does toothpaste need to come in a box? - can we not just buy the tube?
- Do toys really need so much packaging?
- Why can’t milk and fruit juice be sold in glass bottles? The bottles can be returned to the shop, sterilised and re-used – this is the way milk and fruit juice was sold to us many years ago.
- In America, you can take a container to the shop, fill with flour, rice etc instead of buying these products in a packet – why can’t this be done in South Africa?

(Perhaps ask the children if they can think of any other ways that we can reduce our rubbish / packaging)



Response: Ask each child what their response is to today’s lesson. Encourage each child to make a commitment to some form of action based on today’s lesson. Discuss where you can take recyclable waste in your area.

If time, give each child a piece of paper to write down one thing they have learnt from today’s lesson. These pieces of paper can be put on a notice board to raise the awareness of others of the need to reduce our waste.



Prayer: Dear Lord God. We thank you for our beautiful world and all its resources. As stewards of the earth it is our responsibility to care for our environment. May we follow the advice offered to us before it is too late. Amen



Physical Activity:

To end today's lesson, let's have some fun with our rubbish! There are many games that you (or the children) can make up with the rubbish that you have brought for today's lesson.

An example of a game which can be played is "milk bottle catchers". As shown in the pictures below, the children need to catch a ball using a milk bottle that has been specially cut for the game. The ball can be made out of a laddered stocking that has been rolled up, or a piece of paper that has been scrunched up etc.



More ideas for games can be found in the younger children's section.

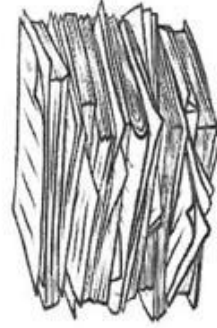
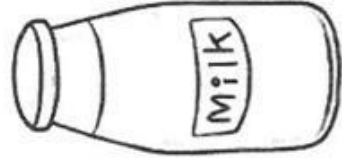
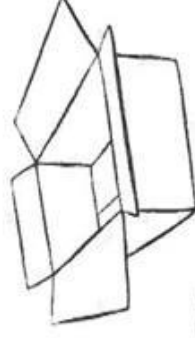
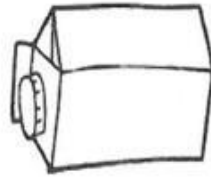
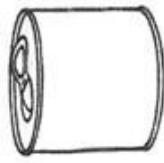
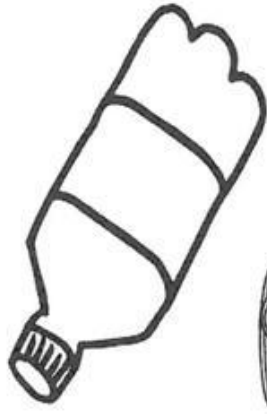
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Special thanks to Noeleen Mullett – JAIE / EcoAct



The recycling song (Tune: Frère Jacques)

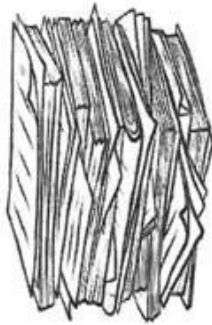
**Let's recycle. Let's recycle
Me and you! Me and you!**

**Paper, tin and plastic
Paper, tin and plastic
Bottles too! Bottles too**

The 5 R's



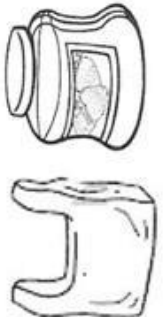
Refuse



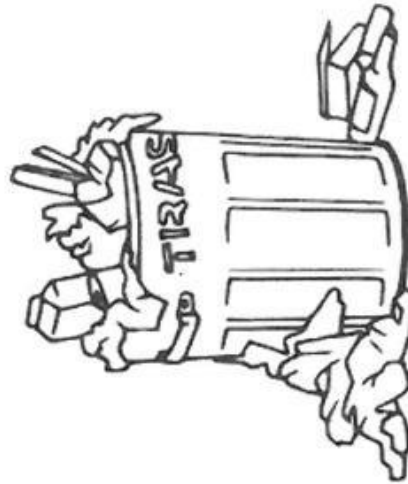
Reduce



Re-use



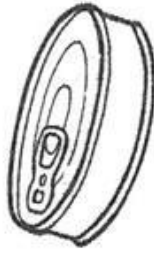
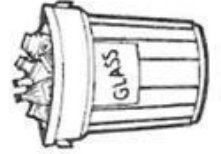
What can we do with all this rubbish?



Rot



Recycle



I am a new Creation!

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost 25 September 2016

Reading: *Jeremiah 18:5,6*

Theme: *Specially crafted by God*

Memory verses: *"We are the clay, you are the Potter" (Isaiah 64:8)*



Information for the teacher:

In the book of Genesis we read that on the 6th day, God created humankind. We were each created in the image of God and yet we are all different – each of us is a new creation! (Genesis 1: 27)

God knew us before we were born - God created our inmost being and knitted us together in our mother's womb (Psalm 139:13). God knows our innermost thoughts and everything about us (Psalm 139) - even the very hairs of our head are numbered. (Luke 12:7). Our God most certainly is an all-seeing, all-knowing and all-powerful God.

The Bible reading for today comes from the book of Jeremiah, which links well with the stories of the prophets we have learnt about this past term. In the passage, we are introduced to the image of a potter moulding clay into something he would like it to be. (Jeremiah 18:5;6) Jeremiah lived during the time when the people had turned from God's ways, and were now in exile, but God was working in the hearts of the people, just as a potter works on a piece of clay. Further on in the book of Jeremiah, the Lord declares through Jeremiah's letter to the exiles, "I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you - plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

And so God works in our lives too, shaping us through the Word of God. It is important for us to realize that we each have a role to play in God's glorious world. May we be the vessels through which God can work to fulfil a greater purpose.

Abba, Abba Father
You are the Potter
We are the clay
The work of your hands

Mould us,
Mould us and fashion us
Into your image
Of Christ, your Son

Lesson Suggestions:



Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objectives:

- To realise that we too are a part of God's Creation
- To celebrate our differences – we are all special in our own way
- To be introduced to the image that just as a potter moulds clay, so God is working in our lives, shaping us to be the person God would like us to be.



Attention Grabber: Give each child a piece of play dough and ask them to shape the play dough into something that God made in our beautiful world. Once the children have finished this task, each child needs to show everyone else which part of God's Creation they have chosen to make. The children may choose to make an animal, the moon, a flower, a fruit etc, but they will probably not think to create a person!! Explain to the children that everything they have chosen to make is a part of Creation, but we sometimes forget that we too are part of Creation! Today, our lesson is about us!



Bible Story and discussion:

The first story in the Bible tells us that in the beginning:

God made the sky,
God made the sea,
God made the fishes
And God made me!

The Bible also says we were all made from the same thing – we were all made from dust. But if you look around at all of us you will see that we are all different! Some of us are tall, some of us are short, some of us like reading, some of us like playing ball games, some of us are loud and some of us are quiet. So we are all made from the same thing, but we are all different – isn't that amazing? We have all been specially made by God in our own way!

The Bible tells us that just as a potter moulds a piece of clay, so God makes us just as God would like us to be. Remember how we made something out of clay at the beginning of the lesson - that is what God is doing to us – God is carefully shaping and moulding us into the person God would like us to be. *(Perhaps while you say this, you can shape a piece of clay into a person)*

Ask the children if they would like to tell the class what they think is special about them selves.



Songs: We are all special and God loves each one of us very much.
Here are some songs that we can sing about this:

Big family of God

(You can find this song on You-tube)

Some of us are big and tall
Some of us are very small
Some of us like pink and some like blue
Some of us like reading books
Some of us like feeding ducks
That's because we're different me and you

Chorus:

*But God loves everyone he's made.
God loves each of us in a special way*

*That's you and you and you and you
And you and you and you and you
God loves you, God loves you (x2)*

We're part of the big family of God

Some of us have curly hair
Some of us have specs to wear
All of us have different families
Some of us are very loud
Some of us don't make a sound
That's because we're different you and me

Chorus:

*But God loves everyone he's made.
God loves each of us in a special way*

*That's you and you and you and you
And you and you and you and you
God loves you, God loves you (x2)*

We're part of the big family of God

He's got the whole world in His hands (x4)

He's got you and me sister, in His hands (x4)

He's got you and me brother, in His hands (x4)

He's got the tiny little baby, in His hands (x4)

God loves you and I love you and that's the
way it should be (x2)

We love each other like brother and sister,
and that's the way it should be (x2)

Touch your finger to your nose
Bend your back and down and touch your toes
And when you come up slowly start to sing and
say to the Lord I love You

I love You, I love You
Sing to the Lord I love You



Craft: So, today we are celebrating that we are all different – that is what makes the world a more exciting place. Imagine if we were all the same –wouldn't that be boring?

There is only one you in the whole world! Isn't that amazing?

Read the poems on the first two bookmarks found on page 41. Then give each child their own book mark. They can draw a picture of themselves on the bookmark. Another idea is to give each child a piece of foil which they can stick onto the bottom of the book mark – the foil can act as a mirror – when they look into the mirror they will see a picture of themselves!



Physical Activity: As we have been discussing today, we are all different - some of us are good at school; some of us are good at music and art; some of us are good at telling jokes. Each of us is special in our own way. It is important to love everyone around us because God made them special too!

Let's now have some fun to see who is best at:

1. Balancing the most pencils on your head
2. Rolling a marble the slowest (without it stopping) across the floor
3. Throwing a ball the highest into the air and then catching it
4. Telling us a joke

You may want to give a small prize such as a sweet to the person who is the best at each of these activities.

The children can also think up some other crazy things to do, or if there is something special (or crazy) that they can do, they can show the class e.g. doing a hand stand for a long time or something much crazier!!



Prayer: Dear God. We thank you that you made each one of us, and that we are all different and all special in our own way! Help us to love all those around us, knowing that they are also specially made by You! Just as a potter moulds a clay pot, may we be moulded into the person you would like us to be. Amen



Older children (7 – 13 years):

Lesson objectives:

- To realise that we too are a part of God's Creation and we each have a role to play in this beautiful world
- To celebrate our differences – we are all special in our own way
- To realise that just as a potter moulds clay, so God works in our lives, shaping us to be the person God would like us to be



Attention Grabber:

(For today's lesson, the children should preferably sit in a circle)

Give each child some play dough and ask them to shape the play dough into something that God made in our beautiful world. Once the children have finished this task, each child needs to show everyone else which part of God's Creation they have chosen to depict. There may be a selection of ideas e.g. a variety of animals; the moon; a flower; fruit etc, but they will probably not think to create a person!! Point out to the children that everything they have chosen to make is a part of Creation, but we sometimes forget that we too are part of Creation! Today, our lesson is about US, and the role we play in this beautiful world.



Bible Story: The potter and the clay (Jeremiah 18:5,6)

In the book of Genesis we read that on the 6th day, God created humankind. We also read that we were all created in the image of God. (Gen 1:27)

And yet, look around at each other – we are all different! Some of us are tall, some of us are short, some of us like reading, some of us like playing ball games, some of us are loud and some of us are quiet and yet we are all made in God's image – there is a little bit of God in each of us - isn't that amazing!

We also read in the book of Psalms that God knew us before we were born. God also knows our innermost thoughts and everything about us (Psalm 139) - even the very hairs of our head are numbered. (Luke 12:7). Our God most certainly is an all-seeing, all-knowing and all-powerful God.

Today we will learn more about how God works in our lives. Our main Bible story comes from the book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah was a young man and a prophet of God – remember we have been learning about the prophets during this term. In this book God says, "I know the plans I have to you, plans to prosper you and not harm you - plans to give you hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29:11) These words were written to God's people who were now in exile. Listen to the following beautiful words of how God was working in the hearts of the people of Israel.

The Potter and the Clay (Jeremiah 18:5,6)

(By Sandra Mulchin)

One day, God told Jeremiah to go a potter's house. A potter is someone who makes pots and bowls and all sorts of things out of clay.

The potter reached down into a deep, rank-smelling pit and brought out a lump of clay. He slapped it onto the stone that was on top of the potter's wheel. The clay was rough looking with lots of lumps and bumps and uneven edges, but he balanced it carefully before starting to work with it. Dipping his hands in water, he steadily held his hands over the clay as the wheel started to spin. As the clay bobbed around, some gentle pressure was applied to hold it in place, preventing it from jumping and lurching. Never did the potter touch the clay without wet hands. The lump soon became smooth, and the potter was able to begin shaping and moulding the clay. As the vessel responded to the care of the potter's hand, it was moulded and fashioned in just the way the potter wanted it.

You see, the potter had a plan for that piece of clay. When he looked at the marred piece that he had started with, he did not see the lumps and bumps and rough bits. He envisioned a beautiful vessel, and he knew just what would be needed to achieve that goal and what work it would take.

While Jeremiah was watching, before his eyes that marred, old piece of clay was transformed into a beautiful, balanced vessel without any spots or wrinkles.

God then said to Jeremiah, "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter? ... Look, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand." Jeremiah 18:6. (NKJV)



Discussion:

1. Ask the children if they have any comments to make before continuing with the questions that follow.
2. After listening to this passage for today we realize that we too are all specially moulded by God. How does this make you feel? *(Special!)*
3. God is also moulding everyone else in their special way. What are your thoughts on this? *(We should appreciate everyone for who they are!)*
4. Do you think that God is finished making you into the person God would like you to be? *(No!! God is not finished with any of us yet – we are all still a work in progress)*
5. God has plans for each of us. Do you think we have the freedom of choice to decide whether we would like to be moulded in the way God would like us to be? *(Yes, God gives us free will and it is our choice to be clay in God's hands and be obedient to God's will in our lives.)*
6. How do we ensure that we are moulded into the person God would like us to be? *(Through prayer, coming to church and reading the Bible- these are ways in which God's Word is able to shape our lives)*



Reflection:

God has created each of us in a special way. We each have a role to play in the world around us. Let's spend some time in quietness where we each think about what is special about ourselves and what plans God may have for us.

After a short time, ask the children to now think about parts of themselves where God may still need to work in their lives to make them more into the type of person God would like them to be.

You can end this time of reflection by saying the following words, or singing them if you know the song:

Abba, Abba Father
You are the Potter
We are the clay
The work of Your hands

Mould us
Mould us and fashion us
Into Your image
Of Christ, Your Son



Activity: You may want to ask the children to now use their play dough to depict something that is special about themselves – perhaps they have a lovely smile – they could then make a set of lips; or if they are a helper, they can make a hand. If they feel that this activity is too difficult to do, then they can simply tell the class something that is special about themselves, and what special role they feel they play in the community. It is important that each child realises that he/she is special in some way!!

If the class knows each other well enough, and you feel your class is mature enough, you can then do the following activity: Each child is given a piece of paper. At the bottom of the paper he/ she must write his/her name. Then pass the paper to the person on the right, who then writes something special about the person whose name is on the paper – please emphasise that the comment needs to be something nice about the person!! He/she then folds over just the top part of the paper so that no one can see the comment, and passes the paper onto the next person on the right, who then adds their comment about the person whose name is written on the paper, folds the paper so that is just covers their comment and passes onto the next person, and so the activity continues until each person has written a comment or the page is full. Each person is then given their paper of comments to take home and read – affirming who they are!



Craft: Remind the children that today we are celebrating that we are all different– that is what makes the world a more exciting place –imagine if we were all the same – wouldn't that be boring? It is important to appreciate and celebrate our differences, and love each other for who we are!

A number of bookmarks can be found at the end of this lesson. Some of them require the children to draw a picture of themselves, and others they can simply colour-in.

Another idea is for each child to take home the play dough that they used earlier in the lesson in a container with a label: "You are the Potter, I am the clay" (Isaiah 64:8)



Physical Activity: As we have been discussing today, we are all different - some of us are good at school; some of us are good at music and art; some of us are good at telling jokes. Each of us is special in our own way.

Let's have some fun to see who is best at:

1. Unbending a paper clip and make it straight in the shortest amount of time
2. Write down the most fruits or vegetables starting with the letter "c" Doing the best impression of a person, machine or musical instrument
3. Finding the book of Philemon the fastest
4. Telling us a joke
5. Balancing the most pencils on your head
6. Saying the alphabet backwards i.e. beginning with Z
7. Rolling a marble the slowest (without it stopping) across the floor

Perhaps just select a few of these activities – you may want to give a small prize such as a sweet to the person who is the best at each of these activities.

The children can also think up some other crazy things to do, or if there is something special (or crazy) that they can do, they can show the class e.g. doing a hand stand for a long time or something much crazier!!



Prayer: Dear Lord. You are the potter, we are the clay. You have made each of us special in our own way – we are each a new creation. May we celebrate our differences, and love each other for who we are! As a potter moulds a piece of clay, may we be pliable in your hands so that you can work in our lives and shape us into the people you would like us to be. Amen

ME I Am!

I am the only ME I AM
who qualifies as me.
No ME I AM has been before
And none will ever be.

No other ME I AM can feel
the feelings I've within.
No other ME I AM can fit
precisely in my skin.

There is no other ME I AM
who thinks the thoughts I do.
The world contains one ME I AM
There is no room for two.

I am the only ME I AM
this earth shall ever see.
That ME I AM I always am
is no one else but ME!

No one looks the way I do
I have noticed this is true

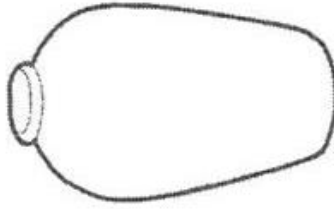
No one walks the way I
walk

No one talks the way I talk
No one says the things I say

I am special
I am me
There's no one else
I'd rather be!

Abba, Abba Father
You are the Potter
We are the clay
The work of your hands

Mould us,
Mould us and fashion us
Into your image
Of Christ, your Son



I know I am
special,
'cause God
don't make
junk!

Season of Creation Songs

He made the stars to shine

He made the stars to shine
He made the rolling sea
He made the mountains high
And He made me, and the Lord
made you
And this is why I love Him
For me He bled and died
The Lord of all Creation
Became the crucified

I love the sun

I love the sun, it shines on me
God made the sun and God made me

I love the stars, they twinkle on me
God made the stars and God made me

I love the rain, it splashes on me

I love the wind, it blows on me

I love the birds, they sing to me

Our God is so big

Our God is so big, so strong and so
mighty
There's nothing my God cannot do
(x2)

The mountains are His
The rivers are His
The stars are His handiwork too
My God is so big, so strong and so
mighty,
There's nothing my God cannot do

He's got the whole world in His hands

He's got the whole world in His hands (X4)

He's got the moon and the stars in His hands (x4)

He's got the rivers and the mountains....

He's got you and me

Our God is an awesome God

Our God is an awesome God
He reigns from Heaven above
With wisdom, power and might
Our God is an awesome God

All things bright and beautiful

*All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful:
The Lord God made them all.*

Each little flow'r that opens,
Each little bird that sings,
He made their glowing colors,
He made their tiny wings.

The purple-headed mountains,
The river running by,
The sunset and the morning
That brightens up the sky.

The cold wind in the winter,
The pleasant summer sun,
The ripe fruits in the garden,
He made them every one.

The tall trees in the greenwood,
The meadows where we play,
The rushes by the water,
To gather every day.

He gave us eyes to see them,
And lips that we might tell
How great is God Almighty,
Who has made all things well.

How great thou Art

O Lord my God, When I in awesome wonder,
Consider all the worlds Thy Hands have made;
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

*Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art.
Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art!*

When through the woods, and forest glades I
wander,
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees.
When I look down, from lofty mountain
grandeur
And see the brook, and feel the gentle breeze.

Think of a world

Think of a world without any flowers
Think of a world without any trees
Think of the sky without any sunshine
Think of the air without any breeze
We thank you Lord for flowers, trees and sunshine
We thank you Lord, and praise your Holy name