

* Prayer

All that has been done in this session will be drawn together in prayer.

* Other Resources

See the back of the 'Caring for Creation - a Simple Guide' leaflet and also the websites suggested within this booklet.

Leading the Way is a resource produced by the Diocese of Truro Discipleship Team. It is designed to help individuals, congregations and communities to explore the way of life which will enable them to flourish in Jesus Christ.

LEADING THE WAY

Way of Life - a pattern for Christian Living

Journeying Out 
Treasuring-God's Creation



“Door. Bridget Macaulay. Used with permission

Participants' Notes.



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Are there people in your community who champion environmental issues?

- ⇒ Could you invite them to speak to your congregation/PCC to see what you could learn from them? Can you name them?

Have you considered making your churchyard a ‘Living churchyard’ (if it is not already)?

See: <https://ecochurchsouthwest.org.uk/actions/living-churchyards/>

- ⇒ Might this be a way to involve local schools or other community groups in the priorities of the church?

- ⇒ Identify the groups and the key people to speak to about this.

Proposals for renewable energy-generating projects can divide people within local communities.

- ⇒ How might your church provide enable the pros and cons of such projects to be explored and debated in a safe and open environment?

- ⇒ Who might you make use of to help you in this?

Have you considered what would be involved in becoming an 'eco-congregation'? Are there people in your congregation who could drive this project and inform others of what it entails?
<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/>

(If there is a small group of people within the congregation who would like to look at these matters in more detail, they use any of the resources cited here: <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/resources/>)

• Community

Do you invite the local gardening club and/or allotment association to your harvest services?

⇒ Could you or do you invite them to contribute produce?
Who would be your contact for this?

⇒ How will you make use of the produce in your local community?

* Beginning where we are

Your group leader will light a candle and place it on a table.

If you have been asked to bring something from your garden or neighbourhood, you will be asked to place it on/around the table, before using this Psalm together:

Lord our God,
the whole world tells the greatness of your name.

Your glory reaches beyond the stars.

I see your handiwork in the heavens:
the moon and the stars you set in place.

Your glory reaches beyond the stars.

What is humankind that you remember them,
the human race that you care for them?

Your glory reaches beyond the stars.

You treat them like gods,
dressing them in glory and splendour.
You give them charge of the earth, laying all at their feet:
cattle and sheep, wild beasts,
birds of the sky, fish of the sea, every swimming creature.

Your glory reaches beyond the stars.

Lord our God,
the whole world tells the greatness of your name.

Your glory reaches beyond the stars.

From Psalm 8.

* Icebreaker

* Introduction

There will be a brief introduction to the Christian understanding of why it is important for us to care for creation. A more detailed account of this can be found in 'Caring for Creation—a Simple Guide' - please take the leaflet home and read it further.

* Bible 'conversation'

Prayer

Holy Spirit of God
open our ears and our minds, our hearts and our spirits,
**that we may hear you speaking to us
through these words of Scripture.**

May we be ready to be encouraged and challenged,
guided and changed.

For the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen

Text: Genesis 1.26-2.3.

This is a very familiar passage from the Bible. We have deliberately given you an unfamiliar version of it (from The Message) to help you look at it in a fresh way.

Genesis 1:

²⁶⁻²⁸ God spoke: "Let us make human beings in our image,
make them reflecting our nature

So they can be responsible for the fish in the sea,
the birds in the air, the cattle,

Are there any steps which your church could make towards being more 'environmentally friendly'?

For example: is there a system for sharing car journeys to church on Sundays?

(Operation Noah offers suggestions for churches who are just beginning to think of this, through to more 'advanced' churches: http://operationnoah.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/How-green-is-your-church_suggested-actions_9-March-15.pdf

Do you make use of the agricultural year in planning your worship (Harvest, Lammas, Plough Sunday, Rogation Sunday, Sea Sunday....)? Resource ideas can be found here:

http://germinate.net/resources/?sf_s=worship

⇒ If you are located in a more urban setting, do these themes still make sense to you, or what would be the natural equivalent services for your congregation?

⇒ Are you aware of Pope Francis' encyclical "Laudato si"?

You can read a summary here: <http://www.focus.org/blog/posts/summary-of-laudato-si-pope-francis-encyclical-environment-quotes.html?referrer=https://www.google.co.uk/>

⇒ What has reading this prompted you to think about or do?

- **Congregational.**

How often does the environment feature in the worship of your church? (For example; in your intercessions, your hymns of praise or concern, your sermons, your visual aids and/or your decorations?)

⇒ Could/should you do this more?

⇒ How might changes happen? Who could be involved?

And, yes, Earth itself,
and every animal that moves on the face of Earth."

God created human beings;
he created them godlike,
Reflecting God's nature.
He created them male and female.
God blessed them:
"Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Earth! Take charge!
Be responsible for fish in the sea and birds in the air,
for every living thing that moves on the face of Earth."

²⁹⁻³⁰ Then God said, "I've given you
every sort of seed-bearing plant on Earth
And every kind of fruit-bearing tree,
given them to you for food.

To all animals and all birds,
everything that moves and breathes,
I give whatever grows out of the ground for food."
And there it was.

³¹ God looked over everything he had made;
it was so good, so very good!
It was evening, it was morning—
Day Six.

² Heaven and Earth were finished,
down to the last detail.

²⁻⁴ By the seventh day
God had finished his work.
On the seventh day
he rested from all his work.
God blessed the seventh day.
He made it a Holy Day
Because on that day he rested from his work,
all the creating God had done.

*Notes

* Questions

• Personal

Think of a time when you have made something yourself (anything from a cake or a bookshelf, a painting or a shed).

⇒ How did you feel as you worked on, and then completed, your project?

⇒ How would you have felt if someone had then misused or damaged it?

⇒ Do your answers help you to think about God's involvement with creation?

How much do you let the implications of climate change impact on you? Or do you tend to put it to one side, and think that it is someone else's problem?

⇒ Has reading the Caring for Creation—a Simple Guide changed your attitude in any way?

When was the last time you re-assessed your use of the world's resources? This can mean anything from water and energy to food, clothing and electrical goods.

⇒ Identify one area where you are prepared to make some change and note how you might do that.

You could use the 'Nine ways to live gently on the earth' as a way of thinking this through: <http://www.greenchristian.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/leaflet/nine-ways.pdf> summarised on p5 of the Simple Guide).

⇒ What can you take up (rather than give up) which might have an impact on God's creation? What could you grow, or make, or share, or give away, or urge others to do?