

# Earth Day Guide 2017

PRE-K/K & GRADES ONE THROUGH EIGHTH TEACHER GUIDE



## Introduction

Catholic Climate Covenant thanks you for joining with thousands of others to host this educational Earth Day program. Since 2006, Catholic Climate Covenant has inspired and equipped Catholics to care for creation and care for the poor. In collaboration with our 16 national partners, the Covenant is delighted to provide this template for a 45-minute to one hour program focused on creation care, climate change, and Catholic Social Teaching.

## Earth Day

April 22, 2017 marks the 47th anniversary of Earth Day, a secular celebration that many faith communities have incorporated into their annual calendars. This year, we join with the Earth Day Network to celebrate Earth Day *and* to embrace our call as Catholics to increase awareness of care for creation and climate change issues. This Earth Day program should be seen as the beginning of an educational campaign to increase creation care and climate literacy within our parishes, schools, and religious communities.

- » Note: This year we also invite you to celebrate [Mercy to Earth Weekend!](#) April 23rd is Mercy Sunday and it is a perfect moment to reflect on Pope Francis' "mercy to earth" message.



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## Know the Creator Through Creation

In this program, we will call upon the name of the Creator and invite our God to reveal the love of the triune God present in all of creation. God's grace comes to us through the waters of baptism, and we have been inflamed by the fire of the Holy Spirit to share God's love in the context of all creation. Opening our spirits to the interconnectedness of the wonders of our world will draw us ever closer to the author of the universe and challenge us to care ever more deeply for the earth, our common home.

### Purpose

The purpose of this Earth Day program is to ground creation issues in our understanding of God as Creator, to increase knowledge of creation care and climate literacy, and to expose students to the Pope's message in *Laudato Si'*.

### This program will:

- Guide the group as they learn about climate change and Catholic Social Teaching about climate change issues.
- Help us understand what is happening to creation because of our actions.
- Let us see that we can get to know the Creator through the splendor of creation.
- Impart understanding that through our work to protect and care for creation we proclaim God's glory.
- Empower Catholics to care for creation through actions, advocacy and/or establishing a Creation Care Team.

## What's Included

The Program Guides for elementary/middle school students includes an opening and closing prayer, a scripture reading, discussion and reflection questions, hands-on activities, and a [short video](#).

*NOTE: These short programs are not in-depth climate literacy programs. In fact, we need to be aware that although there is much interest in ecological issues, many concepts may be beyond the developmental readiness of very young students. Yet, the elementary grades are the time when the foundation is built for both understanding God as creator and how God's creation is threatened by human activities. As a result of this exploration of God and God's creation students will be ready to take action!*

We hope this short program will spark interest for further study. For more in-depth resources to continue exploring creation care and climate literacy please look at the resource list at the end of the Teacher's Guide.

### Time Needed

The program is designed to last about 45 minutes, though you may wish to allocate an hour. If you have extra time, you can allocate more time to the discussion questions and the activities. If you need to shorten the program, feel free to skip or shorten Activity #1. The optional tree-planting activity will need extra time. Perhaps schedule it for another day later in the year and reinforce what the students will learn through this program.

### What Do You Need?

1. Copies of the prayers and readings.
2. Index cards and pens/pencils for the action pledges
3. Paper for the mural or individual papers for drawing (activity)
4. Coloring pencils and/or crayons
5. For middle schoolers: carbon footprint calculator handout which includes the prayers, readings, and activities. A video is embedded in the [PowerPoint](#). You must download and save the PowerPoint for the video to play. You can also access the video [here](#).



## Optional Activities for Further Action:

**CREATION CARE TEAMS:** If your students are energized and motivated to continue to learn about creation care, we invite you to form a [Creation Care Team](#) in your school or parish.

If you have extra time or you wish to plan a separate tree planting event in your school grounds or community:

**PLANT A TREE!** In keeping with Earth Day Network's goal to plant 7.8 billion trees by 2020 (50th anniversary of Earth Day) we invite your group to either plant a tree or donate funds so tree(s) are planted in your name. The plant a tree activity will most likely require more time than this one-hour program allows. You can either schedule a longer program, or plant the tree(s) at another time of the year. Please [email](#) us how many trees your group plants or donates funds for tree planting. We'd like to keep a record of how many trees Catholics are planting!

- You can plant a tree (or trees) on your church or school grounds, or in your community. For information about how to plant trees in your community contact your local parks department or check the information provided by [Arbor Day](#). The tree planting could be accompanied by a blessing from your pastor.
- If tree planting in your community is not possible you may wish to consider donating to our partner [Catholic Relief Services](#). Your donation will help mothers in Guatemala plant fruit trees to improve their soil, create more food for their families, and provide additional income. Simply indicate Climate Capable 1550 738 0224 in the Special Request line. You can also donate to [TIST](#) - the International Small Group and Tree Planting Program. We are excited to partner with them to "grow clean air."
- Give away a packet of seeds or a tree seedling with a copy of our St Francis Pledge card attached to parishioners or students to plant at home.

## Appendix A

### RESOURCES:

- Catholic Creation Care Resources for Kids: On this [website](#), a ministry of The Pastoral Center, a company serving Catholics across the English-speaking world you will find a myriad (both free and for a fee) of resources for children. This website includes: Vacation Bible School resources, scripture-based curriculum resources, music, and catechetical eResources.
- [Videos](#) on Climate Change and Catholic Social Teaching
- [Catechism of the Catholic Church - The Creator:](#) Good resource for teachers to ground our understanding of the catechism and creation.
- Earth Day Network's [Climate Literacy Campaign](#) and [Earth Day Toolkit](#)
- US EPA [A Student's Guide to Climate Change:](#) This site offers facts about climate, weather, and greenhouse gases as well as games, animations, and resources for teachers.
- Ohio State University's Beyond Polar Bears and Penguins: [Climate Literacy in the Elementary Classroom](#)



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# Earth Day Guide 2017

ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM



*Know the Creator through Creation*



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**NOTE TO TEACHER: IN GENERAL, WORDS IN ITALICS INDICATE A SUGGESTED “SCRIPT” FOR YOU TO USE OR TO GUIDE HOW YOU MIGHT WANT TO INTRODUCE THE SECTIONS. WORDS IN BOLD ARE GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS OR GUIDANCE BUT NOT PART OF THE SCRIPT.**

## Greeting, Opening Prayer, and Scripture Reading (5 Minutes)

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### Greeting

**LEADER:** *Today we are celebrating Earth Day, a time to celebrate the wonders and glory of God’s creation. We will learn about how the earth, our common home, is suffering because of global warming, and we will hear Pope Francis call each of us to take care of God’s creation. Today, we will remember that we are called by the Holy Spirit to share God’s love with all creation. By opening ourselves to the wonders of our world, we will get to know God and answer the call to care more deeply for the earth, our common home.*

### Opening Prayer

**LEADER:** *Let us pray...*

God, our Creator, we ask you in a special way today to teach us how to love and preserve the earth, our common home.

This is one of your greatest gifts to us.

May we offer the earth only love and peace.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son, and our Lord. Amen.

### Scripture: Creation Story

**LEADER:** *We now invite you to listen to the creation story adapted from the Book of Genesis in the Bible.*  
(Suggestion: Use multiple readers, and adapt and edit for your own purposes)

God is the beginning of all things. God made the heavens and the earth. The earth was empty and dark, with water everywhere.

Then God said, “Let there be light.” And there was! There was evening and morning. This was the first day.

Next God put a wide space above the water. God called the space sky. This was the second day. On the third day, God gathered the water into its own places. Now there were seas and dry ground. “Let plants grow in the ground,” God said. And they did!

Then God said, “Let there be lights in the sky for the day and for night.” God made the sun, the moon, and the stars. This was the fourth day.

On the fifth day, God made fish for the seas. He made birds for the sky.

On the sixth day, God made living things for the land. Then God said, “Let us make human beings. Let them rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the living things on land.” God made the first human being from the dust. The first man was called Adam. God breathed into Adam the breath of life. God looked at all he had made. It was very good!

On the seventh day, God rested. He made that day a holy day.

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.



## Activity #1: Creating a Creation Mural (10 minutes)

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**LEADER:** *We just read the creation story. Where do you see God in creation today?*  
(Have the children brainstorm where and how they see or experience God in creation)

Cover a wall (or use separate pieces of paper that can then be posted together on a wall) with paper and invite the students to draw where they see God in creation. This is a great opportunity to direct their thoughts towards worshipping God as they are thankful for all the things God created.

## Activity #2: Video (5 minutes)

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## Discussion questions: (7 minutes)

1. God created the earth and all living creatures and declared them all "good". How are we not taking care of creation? How does Global warming hurt God's creation?
2. What do you think Pope Francis wants us to do to take care of our home, the earth?

(Have the group brainstorm ideas of what actions they can take to love the Creator by loving and taking care of God's creation.)

## Activity #3 (10 minutes for elementary school and 15 minutes for middle school)

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### Elementary school: (1st-5th grades)

**LEADER:** *Let's see if we can come up with some ways in which we can help care for our common home. Each of you should write or draw one or two things you can do today to show that you care about the earth.*

(Have the students write (draw) on an index card one or two actions they will take to care for our common home. They should take the cards home and share with their pledge with their parent(s). They will also use these pledges in the closing prayer.)

### Middle School

**LEADER:** *Let's find out our own carbon footprint! We will use a carbon footprint calculator to get an estimate of our "carbon footprint" – that is, find out how much greenhouse gases we emit.*

Let everyone fill out the carbon footprint calculator.

After children have found their individual carbon footprint, have them brainstorm as a group how can they can lower their footprint so that they start to take care of our common home.

Have children write on an index card one or two actions they will take to care lower their carbon footprint and care for our common home. They should take the cards home and share their actions with their parent(s).

Have children share their action pledges within the closing prayer



## Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

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### READER:

The Earth is my home.  
I promise to keep it  
healthy and beautiful.  
I will love the land, the air,  
the water and all living creatures.  
I will be a defender of creation.  
United with friends and God, I will take care of our  
home.

(Pause)

Ask the children to share their action pledges at  
this time.

### READER:

Let us continue praying our closing prayer  
together ...  
Creator God,  
We thank you for all your gifts.  
Thank you for the sky and clouds, for waterways  
and deserts,  
For mountains and valleys,  
For the moon and the stars. Thank you for the gift  
of the Earth.  
We make this prayer in the name of the Father,  
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**PRAYERS AND SCRIPTURE READING ADAPTED  
FROM PRAYERS FOR CREATION: AN ECOSCHOOLS  
RESOURCE, COMPILED BY THE COMMITTEE FOR  
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS  
& FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION, ALGONQUIN AND  
LAKESHORE CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD,  
2008**



**Catholic Climate Covenant  
inspires and equips people and  
institutions to care for creation  
and care for the poor.**

**If you wish to sign-up to get  
further updates go to:**

**[info@CatholiClimateCovenant.org](mailto:info@CatholiClimateCovenant.org)**



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# Earth Day Guide 2017

PRE-K/KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM



## Know the Creator through Creation

Please see the facilitator guide for elementary/middle school for more background information.

**Note:** In general, words in italics indicate a suggested “script” for you to use or to guide how you might want to introduce the sections. Words in bold are general instructions or guidance but not part of the script.

**Time Needed:** The Pre-K/K program is designed to last about 30 minutes, though you may wish to allocate up to 45 minutes. If the program is being held at the same time as the program for parents, you can allocate more time for the craft and also plan to spend some time outdoors (weather permitting) where the children may enjoy God’s creation.

### What you will need:

1. The program guide with prayers and reading
2. Computer/projector to watch [video](#) (You can watch the [video](#) directly on YouTube. If you watch directly, you will need internet access).
3. Materials for craft activity: paper plates, string (for hanging), crayons, coloring pencils. (Optional: blue, green, yellow and orange pieces of tissue paper (cut or torn), glue)



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## Greeting

**LEADER:** *Today we are celebrating Earth Day, a time to celebrate the wonders and glory of everything God created. We are going to learn about how we can be closer to God by being thankful for all that God created. God made the world and everything in it. God made the sun and the oceans, and all the creatures and plants. God made you!*

## Opening Prayer

**LEADER:** *Let us pray...*

Let us pray the Lord's Prayer.  
Our Father,  
Who art in Heaven,  
hallowed be Thy name;  
Thy Kingdom come,  
Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
Amen.

## Scripture Reading: Story of Creation

(Based on Gen 1, 1-27 and adapted by Antonio Pereira, Ignatian Corps Volunteer at Catholic Climate Covenant)

God created the heavens and the earth.  
"Come the light," God said,  
and there was light.  
God called the light day,  
and the dark night.

The water under the sky  
looked like a big lake,  
that God called sea.  
The dry land God called earth,  
with plants and fruit trees.

God made two great lights:  
the sun for the day,  
the moon for the night.  
Yes, God made also the stars.

And God said:  
"The earth will sing with different animals:  
birds flying across the sky,  
and dogs, cats, and elephants  
running on the earth."

To take care of the entire creation  
God made man and woman.  
And God was so happy  
with all creation, God declared it good.  
The Word of the Lord.  
All: Thanks be to God.



## Video (5 Minutes)

**LEADER:** Let's watch this video about being thankful for all God has made.  
(You can repeat the video and invite the children to sing along)



## Discussion and Craft Activity (15 Minutes)

Gather the children in a circle. Have them think about what things in God's creation they are thankful for. Are they thankful for the sun, the moon, the clouds? The rain? Or the fish in the sea? The monkeys in the jungle? The bears in the woods? Are they thankful for trees, flowers, or the food that we eat? Themselves? Work together to list things in creation, and invite them to share things that they are thankful for.

Then tell them that they'll get to draw and color one thing they are thankful that God created. They may need a reminder of the things they listed as things they are thankful that God created.

**Supplies Needed:** Each child will need 1 paper plate, some crayons and/or coloring pencils.

**Optional:** Blue, green, yellow, and orange tissue paper (torn/cut into small pieces), glue

**DIRECTIONS:** *On the paper plate, draw and color one thing you are most thankful that God created. Is it you? Is it the sea or a river? Monkeys, bears or gators? Flowers? Your pet? The Earth or the sun? Something else that we talked about? Try to color as much as of the paper plate as you can.*

**Optional:** For children who can't draw, or who wish to create the image of the Earth or the sun on their paper plates, give each child a paper

plate, tissue paper pieces, and some glue. The green is for land and the blue for the oceans. The yellow and orange are for the sun.

After the children have created their Thanks for Creation plates you can display them by hanging them from the ceiling or posting on a bulletin board. Or they can take the plate home and have them share their favorite thing in God's creation with their family.

## Closing Prayer: God Made Me

(DLTK's Growing Together, [www.dltk-bible.com](http://www.dltk-bible.com))

(Teacher should say and model the prayer for the children. The children should repeat the words and the hand gestures)

(Make a sun above your head by placing your hands together)

GOD MADE THE SUN!

(Make wave motions with your hands at your side)

GOD MADE THE SEA!

(Place the palms of your hands together and wiggle them like a fish)

GOD MADE THE FISHEYS!

(Point to your chest)

AND GOD MADE ME!

(Make a sun above your head by placing your hands together)

THANK YOU FOR THE SUN!

(Make wave motions with your hands at your side)

THANK YOU FOR THE SEA!

(Place the palms of your hands together and wiggle them like a fish)

THANK YOU FOR THE FISHEYS!

(Point to your chest)

AND THANK YOU FOR ME!!!



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