

Creation prayer stations: leaders' notes

Overview

To reflect on the call to stewardship of creation, set up different prayer stations that will encourage other young people to think about how we can all share in the responsibility of caring for God's world. The ideas here are based on the seven days of creation found in Genesis 1:1–2:4 ...or you could come up with your own creative ideas! If you're using these ones, set up each prayer station with the materials and the instruction card so that people can move around the stations independently.

On day one, God created light from darkness

You will need:

- a sheet of dark-coloured paper or card
- a sheet of yellow paper or card
- a dark-coloured pen
- a stick of chalk or gold pen
- day one instruction card

Day one instruction card

On day one, God created light from darkness.

On the first day of Creation, God made the heavens and earth, light from darkness, night and day... quite a busy day! We often associate light with the good, bright and happy things of life. And darkness can represent the things that aren't so good.

At this prayer station, you're invited to think about the way you view our world. Write all the good things about our world on the yellow paper, and thank God for them as you do so. Then write down the things that you'd like to change on the dark paper – praying for a better world as you write. Even when things do seem dark and gloomy, we're reminded that God calls us to shine with the light of faith – so don't lose heart!

Take action! Remember that darkness is sometimes ok – for example, when you switch off lights that you don't need. Let your light shine – but if you can make it an energy efficient light, even better!

On day two, God created the sea and the sky.

You will need:

- two pots of water - place at opposite ends of the room
- straws
- protective plastic sheet
- day two instruction card

Day two instruction card

On day two, God created the sea and sky.

Anolaska lives in Zambia. Like other people in her village she used to walk miles just to collect the water she would use for the day. Now, thanks to a project supported by CAFOD, the village has a solar-powered water pump, providing the water they need.

Water is a precious gift – but it's something that we easily take for granted. In Europe, the average person uses 200 litres of water a day – that's around two bathtubs! Imagine having to carry that for miles.

To help you think about and pray for those people who still have to walk to find water, play this water-collecting game.

Set up two pots of water at opposite ends of the room and use a straw to move the water from one pot to the other as quickly as you can. Don't spill any – it's too good to waste. (But you may want to put down a plastic sheet!) If you wish, set up a score board with your friends. Remember to pray as you play – the game's a bit of fun, but it's not a joke if you have to carry heavy buckets many miles just to drink or wash.

Take action! There are lots of ways to save water at home – like turning the tap off when you brush your teeth, or fitting a water saver to your loo, or having a shower instead of a bath. See how much water you can save!

On day three, God made plants and trees.

You will need:

- a tree / houseplant or branches (it can be an illustration of a tree if you prefer)
- leaf-shaped tags (to add to the branches)
- pens
- day three instruction card

Day three instruction card

On day three, God made plants and trees.

An ancient proverb says, “Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach him how to fish and he will eat for a lifetime!” What has that to do with creating plants and trees?

Well, not a lot. But it has something to do with people like Nugamong from Cambodia. He is a resin tree tapper whose livelihood was under threat when illegal companies tried to buy his trees for timber. All very well – but losing his trees would mean an end to Nugamong’s long-term income. CAFOD partners supported Nugamong, encouraging him to keep the trees so that he could keep collecting and selling resin to support his family.

Making decisions that positively affect others is part of our responsibility as members of God’s global family. So, add to the tree of life by thinking of just one positive action you can do to help others – whether that’s someone in your local community, a friend or family member, someone in your school or parish, or someone from another country.

Write your commitment on a tag and hang it from the tree. See what other people have pledged to do as well!

Take action! Hug a tree! Do your best to respect God’s creation by looking out for recycled paper products, using both sides of a piece of paper, and recycling paper after you’ve used it. Look out for the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) logo on paper and timber products – it’s a sign that the product isn’t contributing to global forest destruction.

On day four, God made the sun, moon and stars.

You will need:

- access to online carbon calculator, for example, WWF Footprint calculator which can be found at footprint.wwf.org.uk
- day four instruction card

Day four instruction card

On day four, God made the sun, moon and stars.

It's amazing to look out at a starry night and think about how we form just a tiny part of God's amazing creation. And yet we have so much influence over the earth – including its atmosphere and climate.

For example, we all have a 'carbon footprint' – the size of which depends on things like the transport we choose, the amount of power we use and so on.

Work out your own carbon footprint using an online calculator. Think about how you could reduce your impact on the environment. How green is your school or parish? What changes could you make?

Take action! Ditch the car! Can you walk to school or use public transport instead? Turn off your phone charger when you're not using it, or even put on another jumper when you're cold rather than turning up the heating.

On day five, God made the sun, moon and stars.

You will need:

- strips of coloured paper
- pens
- day five instruction card

Day five instruction card

On day five, God made animals and fish.

We're able to enjoy a rich variety of foods – but how often do we think about the people behind the products?

People like Erik, for example, from Honduras, who had CAFOD's support in setting up an organic farming scheme. Through the scheme, he developed new skills and increased his family's income. The organic coffee that Erik harvests is enjoyed across the world.

Martin Luther King once said, "Before you've finished your breakfast this morning, you'll have relied on half the world." Even if you haven't enjoyed breakfast this morning (and you really should!) draw up a food diary for the last couple of days.

Do you know where your food comes from? And we don't just mean Tesco... what about the country of origin? Any ideas? Write down as many foods and countries as you know on slips of paper – and join the pieces of paper together with other people to create a food chain. As you write, think about those behind the products and pray for them.

Take action! Choosing Fairtrade goods like bananas, coffee and chocolate guarantees a better deal for farmers and food producers. See if you can increase the number of Fairtrade items you buy – or organise a tasting event with your friends. It's also good to choose local and meat-free foods as they can use less energy to transport (local) and produce (meat-free).

On day six, God created human beings.

You will need:

- Bibles/copies of Psalm 139:1-18
- a selection of small mirrors (unbreakable)/one large mirror
- lip stick
- day six instruction card

Day six instruction card

On day six, God created human beings.

All that amazing creative activity – and now God creates human beings, putting us in charge of the whole lot. As Uncle Ben told Peter Parker in Spiderman, “With great power comes great responsibility...”

In this prayer space, read the words of Psalm 139:1-18 – they speak of how God knows us all intimately.

Then look closely at your reflection in the mirror (this can be quite hard to do unless you’re really vain!) What do you see when you look at yourself?

Remind yourself that God sees an amazing and wonderful person. Then think about how you can show great responsibility for the world by using the gifts that God has given to you.

Choose one of these gifts and write it on your mirror using the lip stick. Of course, the greatest challenge is then to go out and use that gift!

Take action! Be a responsible member of God’s earth! Know that you have great power as a young citizen – through the things you choose to do, the things you buy, and the way you use the earth’s resources.

Don’t forget that you can also help to influence others by the choices you make. Find lots of ideas of how to do this at cafod.org.uk

On day seven, they rested...

You will need:

- bean bags/large cushions
- Relaxing music
- day seven instruction card

Day seven instruction card

On day seven, they rested...

After all that creative activity, it was time for a good rest! This prayer space is a comfortable chill-out zone with relaxing music and cushions. In this space you could share your experience of the prayer stations – or it could just be a place for quiet reflection and personal prayer.

Take action! If you've followed all or some of the suggestions here, you'll have done a lot already. But remember that we do it as God's creation, recognising our responsibility to care for one another and for our world.

So thank God for the amazing world we've been given – and pray that we can safeguard our planet for future generations.

What shall we do next?

Are you a young person? Take part in our latest climate campaign and encourage others to do as well. Get lots of ideas and resources at cafod.org.uk/secondary/climate

Are you a youth leader, teacher or chaplain? Download free climate sessions and resources at cafod.org.uk/secondary/climate