

To Till and Keep

Text: Genesis 2:15-21

Highlighted Verse: *The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it (v 15).*

Main Themes:

God created the world and everything in it
We are supposed to care for God's creation

Introduction:

Begin by reviewing the story of creation with your class, briefly sketching the seven days of creation. If the class is old enough this can be done as a group quiz to see if they can name what happened on each day. For younger children visual representations could be helpful (i.e. a picture of the sun and moon etc). Remind the children of what God thought at the end of each day – creation was pronounced good. Explain that God created the whole world and everything in it and cares very much about all of creation.

Lesson:

Read Gen. 2:15-21 with the class. Explain that after God created the world, God put Adam in the Garden of Eden to care for the earth and the animals. Again, depending upon the age group, visual depictions of animals, Adam and Eve, and a garden could be helpful. Ask the children if they know of any ways they can help take care of the earth. Explain the ideas of reduce, reuse, recycle and why they are important. Use props (ex. an old spaghetti sauce jar that can be used to hold screws or nails; a newspaper and soda can that can be recycled). Talk about how they can save water and energy by turning off running water and lights when they're not using them, such as when they are brushing their teeth or when they leave a room. Show them an energy efficient light bulb and explain how it can be used to save energy. If your church does anything to promote creation care (recycle bulletins, use energy saver appliances, have recycling bins) explain those actions to the children. Invite them to use their imaginations to come up with ways they can help protect God's good creation.

Activity:

Plant seeds that the children can care for and watch grow.

Materials:

- Soil

- A place to plant: individual pots, a large planter, or perhaps there is a good place on the church property to have a small garden or flower bed
- Seeds: *Consult a local gardener or florist to help you evaluate important factors such as whether the plants will grow primarily indoors or outdoors, what will grow best during the time of year you do this lesson, the amount of care the plant will need, and how long they will take to grow in order to make the best choice for your class.* Some suggestions: many herbs, such as basil, and beans sprout quickly and are easy to care for. Good flowers include certain varieties of sunflowers, borage, and cosmos.
- Water

Have the children plant seeds so they can practice caring for part of God's creation. Individual plants could be sent home with each child with instructions on how to care for it. It may be more fun and instructive, however, if this is a class project the children can return to every week and that they can watch grow together (in this case it would be especially important to know what, if any, care the plant would need on more than a once a week basis). If the chosen plant is an herb, vegetable or fruit you can explain how God cares for us by providing food for us to eat and we are supposed to care for other creatures and plants. You can even write Gen 2:15 on the side of the pots or planter as a reminder of this lesson.

Alternate Activity:

Have the children draw pictures of God's good creation and ways they can care for it. Older children can look through magazines and cut out examples of things God made and glue them into a collage.

Materials:

- Crayons
- Markers
- Paper
- Glue
- Magazines
- Scissors