

## FAMILY FAITH FORMATION “EARTH DAY” LESSON – April 18, 2021

**CENTERING:** Close your eyes. Take deep breaths, inhaling slowly, holding your breath to a count of 4, then slowly exhale. Take several of these breaths until you feel your body relaxing. Think about a place outside that gives you peace. What does it look like? What do you smell? What do you hear? How does it feel? Can you feel warm sunlight? Or a gentle breeze blowing on you? Spend some time pretending you are there. Feel like you are *really there*. To close... **Breathe in:** all the peace of this place. **Breathe out:** all that is bothering you, worrying you. Repeat this several times and then end by thanking God for this place.

**SHARING:** Share with family members the place that you were thinking about and why it brings you peace.

**READING:** Read about what God’s Word tells us about the gift of creation:

- Read Genesis 1:1 – 2:4. (Spark Story Bible pp 7-11)
- Read Psalm 8: 3-9
- Read Psalm 19: 1-4a
- Read Isaiah 5: 8-10

**REFLECTING:** Discuss together the following questions based on the biblical passages:

- Genesis gives a beautiful unfolding of how God’s creation took place. See if anyone can retell the story with the “order of creation” without looking at the Bible!
- What does the passage from Psalm 8 tell us about God’s love for us as human creations?
- The passage from Psalm 19 is a beautiful one telling us about how God’s natural creation speaks to us. How does nature speak to you? Talk about what God’s world outside teaches you without words.
- Isaiah 5 is a warning about not being good “stewards” of God’s world. What does this say to us today? Is this “biblical over-development” still a problem? What are the not-so-good things about taking away more and more land for the benefit of just some people? How is, development sometimes not fair to those who are disadvantaged? How have we misused the word “dominion” over God’s earth? (versus “stewardship” A “steward” is someone who *takes care* of something, doesn’t *dominate* it). How can all ages help to take better care of God’s earth? What are you doing right now?

**ACTING:**

- **GO OUTSIDE – ENJOY GOD’S CREATION!** While outside use your senses: notice spring colors, smells, sounds, the “feel” of the outdoors. Take time to be present to all of those things.

- **Create!** Use the gift of art or writing to celebrate God's earth. Draw a picture of what you experienced outside – what “spoke” to you. It can be a realistic drawing or try an abstract one using the colors of spring that you saw outside. Use whatever medium, like crayons, colored pencils, paint that you enjoy using. **OR** write about what you saw and felt – can be prose, a poem or even a prayer! **OR** use some of your recycling items to create a sculpture **OR** gather objects from outside and make a nature collage. **AND THEN: BRING YOUR CREATIVE PIECE TO DISPLAY NEXT SUNDAY AT OUR “CELEBRATE GOD’S EARTH” EVENT. We would love to see what you did!**
- **Take a check** to see what kind of stewards you are. Divide a sheet of paper into 3 columns. Make a list of what you are all currently doing to help environmentally. Then list things you're not so good at doing to protect the earth. Lastly, make a list of things you can resolve to do in the coming weeks to be better earth caretakers. Hang it someplace where you can all be reminded of how you are doing. Maybe even check off when you follow through on the different resolutions.

**CLOSING** with prayer:

Dear Creator God,

We give you thanks for all the beauty of your world that is around us every day and night. There is so much to look at and wonder at! (you could pause here and allow family members to call out gifts of nature they are especially thankful for) Please help us to realize how very special your creation is, not to take it for granted and how we each, no matter how old or young we are, can be people who love and take care of your earth. Your world is an AWESOME place! Amen!