



Living the Faith – Step 5

Continuing God's Creation

Aim

To use the creation story and Pope Francis' Encyclical Laudate Si to explore our role of stewardship of and partners in creation.

Resources needed

Leaders

- *Come and See notes*
- *PPT laptop and projector or TV*
- *Prayer focus items*
- *Bible or Scripture Text*
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- *White board, large sheets and pens*

For Young People

- *Journals*

Prayer Focus

Green Cloth – *Ordinary time*

Crucifix – *colourful Peruvian or other – Jesus came for all*

Globe – *we are a world church*

Bible – *the word of God*

Candle – *the light of*

Prayer Book – *Prayer of the Church*

Liturgical Link

Our role in continuing God's work of creation is highlighted at various times in the liturgical calendar, in particular, at the Easter Vigil.

Overview

- In the beginning
- Harmony in relationships
- Care of the Planet
- Action Plan

Preparation by Catechists

- *Familiarity with content and resources*
- *Be ready to share personal experiences and ideas to assist with action planning*
- *Pray for the young people and leaders*

Scripture Passages

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| • Gen 1,2:1-3 | Creation Story 1 |
| • Gen 2:4-25 | Creation Story 2 |
| • Gen 3:1-24 | The Fall |
| • Mtt 22:36-40 | The Command |

Tenets of Faith (Faith Formation)

- God the Creator of all things
- Need for harmony with God, self, others, creation itself.
- The earth is crying out to us
- Taking Responsibility

Gathering:

- **Welcome & Overview:**
 - Welcome the young people back for this important last step ahead of the Review, Commissioning and Celebration.
 - Provide the overview and aim for today.

Introductory activity - *In the Beginning*. Early in this journey we looked at the importance of the Bible and the Creation Story. Today we begin by re-enacting the story.

- Divide the participants into two groups, provide each with a summarised version of one creation story: '*in the beginning*' to re-enact with simple movements and a narrator. Allow 6-10 mins
- Each group introduces their story.
- All are asked to take note of common elements in the stories and what is distinct about each.
- Invite a brief sharing of responses.

- FF**
- Both versions of the creation story tell of God's love for the world, everything was created from good and for good.
 - God's plan was for humans to exist in perfect harmony with God, one another and nature. God provided everything that was needed for fulfilment in life and wanted humans to work with him to continue the work of creation.

- **Activity - *What Next?* - Gen 3:1-24:**
 - Gather group around a white board or large sheet of paper.
 - Invite contributions regarding what happened next in the stories?
 - Using words or symbols note the key points and fill in gaps as necessary.

- FF**
- Sadly the perfect state was short lived. Having been given the gift of free will, humans chose to disobey God, a path which destroyed the harmonious relationship with God, self, others and creation. This event is known as the Fall.
 - We too disobey God, and so need to have the relationship restored, the Church offers the Sacrament of Reconciliation for this purpose, and of course many counselling services .
 - The coming of Jesus, the word made flesh, into the world was a clear sign of the extent of God's desire for the relationship between God and humanity to be restored.

Opening Prayer

- **Prayer focus:** *refer to other items and their significance here and as appropriate later*
No matter how often we let God down, God will never stop loving us, and being willing to welcome us home. As we listen to the song let us ask God to help us grow closer to him, and to our family members and friends, especially to help restore relationships that are strained.

- **Song:** *I will never forget you my people:* <https://youtu.be/uYmzhPubdBc> Cary Landry
- Leader** God our Father, you created all things, and love each of us unconditionally.
- All** Hallowed be your name
- Leader** Lord Jesus, you came to show us the extent of God's love and teach us how to love and forgive.
- All** Hallowed be your name.
When we become prisoners of ourselves, bring us the joy and freedom of your Holy Spirit.
- Leader** Holy Spirit when we are tempted to stray from the right path guide our minds and hearts.
- All** Hallowed be your name.
- All** God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us, this day and always.
Amen.

Harmony in relationships

- **Restoring Harmony - Introduction:** In the story of the fall we see how the relationship between God and humanity was destroyed. Every action in life has consequences. The act of disobedience did not just damage the relationship of human beings with God, but with each other, and with self. Let us explore a little of what that means.

Activity - Creating Harmony:

- Divide into two groups (not the same mix as for the previous activity)
 - Provide each with a large sheet of paper divided in two containing the following headings: Relationship with self / Consequences, and Relationships with others / Consequences.
 - Allow groups a couple of minutes to note down the left column 5-6 examples of behaviours that damage the relationship with self or others.
 - Give another 2-3 mins for groups to identify some of the consequences that result.
 - Bring the 2 groups together to share their work, point out the similarities, or threads that help create division or make reconciliation difficult.
 - As a group, suggest what might be the key attitudes or steps to restore and maintain harmony
- FF** - When asked by the Pharisees which was the greatest commandment, Jesus gives a threefold answer, to Love God, Neighbour, and self, in that order, (Mtt 22:36-40). In essence if we love God, the harmonious relationship that results will spill over into all other relationships.
- All human persons, are created in God's image. Just as God breathed life into Adam in the creation story, (Gen 2:7) so too God has breathed life into each of us.
 - It is not always easy to love everyone, but Jesus came into the world so we could learn to do that better. He stressed the importance of forgiveness, and of prayer.
 - Prayer is the key to maintaining the relationship with God, and also with self. Personal and community prayer are both important, including regular attendance at the Sunday Eucharist, where we grow in unity with God and others. We keep holy the Sabbath, as did the Jews.
 - Love of self is not about putting ourselves at the centre, but recognition of being a loved creation of God, worthy of dignity and respect.

- **Care of the Planet:** There is a fourth aspect of harmony to be nurtured, harmony with creation, the planet which God gave stewardship of to humanity. (Gen 1:28)
In 2015 Pope Francis, aware that: *'Beginning in the middle of the last century and overcoming many difficulties, there has been a growing conviction that our planet is a homeland and that humanity is one people living in a common home.* Published an encyclical, *Laudato Si, Care of our common home.* Before looking at the content of this Encyclical let us prayerfully reflect on the way humanity has cared for God's creation:
- <https://youtu.be/XAi3VTSdTxU> Earth song Michael Jackson (*abridge the video clip*)

Ponder

- *The words and images stay with you from the video?*
- *The feelings that emerged while watching the video, or after doing so?*
- Take feedback then check if any of the group are familiar with *Laudto Si*, other works or research relating to the planet.

Activity - Concerns for the Planet:

- Again divide the participants into two different groups and give each a large sheet of paper header 'Concerns for the Planet'
- Allow 1 minute for them to list as many concerns as possible
- Allow a further minute or so for each group to agree on the one or two items they believe to be of greatest importance – highlight these
- Gather the group together, with the sheets side by side to compare concerns and priorities.
- Briefly summarise before moving onto the next activity.

Going Deeper

- **Care of the Planet**
Activity - An urgent appeal: watch Earth care Australia video clip:
<https://youtu.be/lcP5E2trsX4> *Laudato Si – an urgent appeal for action - 3.27* also see (12-15 C&S L the F Step Step 5 Earth Care Australia & 12-15 C&S L the F Step 5 Care for our Common Home)
- Invite responses to the video, anything that surprised or shocked?
- Check which of the issues of concern identified on the sheets were mentioned in the video
- Were there concerns raised in the video the groups missed?

Invite individuals to jot down important points to note in their journals

- FF**
- The Encyclical is taken from the canticle of St Francis, a man deeply in touch with creation – check what do we know about him?
 - The Genesis story shows humans being created in harmony with creation and asked to care for it. That was always God's plan.
 - Throughout the Old Testament there are many references to God as creator of all things, and the interconnectedness of all created things.
 - Amongst the many Christian scholars to have shared this vision of creation St Francis of Assisi was probably most attuned to the reality. He spoke of bother sun and sister moon, air and fire, and flowing water.

- In the past 150 years or so, the modern era, advances in science and technology have led to a shift in attitude towards nature that suggests nature is there to be ordered, manipulated and mastered by humans.
- This is not in keeping with our beliefs or acceptable to anyone with a biblical view of the world

Notes taken from Bishop Barron on Laudato Si <https://youtu.be/zWEK8JXQo0M>

- **Activity - Action Plan:**

- Invite individuals to choose 2-3 of the Laudato Si messages expressed in the Earth Care video that they feel they could make some response to.
- In the journals ask the young people to identify:
 - the messages being responded to
 - reasons for the choice
 - simple practical steps that can be taken in relation to each, immediately, and over time
 - one piece of action to share with the group

FF

- Pope Francis makes clear the need for all the countries of the world to work together to prevent further destruction of the planet. The problem is a shared one, that can only be resolved by joint efforts and initiative.
- Examples such as plans for sustainable and diversified agriculture, the development of renewable and less polluting forms of energy, encouraging a more efficient use of energy, promoting better management of marine and forest resources, and ensuring universal access to drinking water are ones that were reiterated in the video clip we watch.
- Since not all governments are ready or willing to act responsibly, we as individuals need to play our part to show our concern for the planet.

Closing Prayer

- Gather group members in a circle / semi-circle around the prayer focus.
- Having reflected on the need for harmony in the world, in particular care of the planet over which we have been given stewardship, we offer our prayers for the earth as we listen to the song:

- **Song: *Laudato Si*** <https://youtu.be/VJz0ZuxxMIO> *A prayer for the earth – images and words 3.43*

Together We pray (divide into 2 groups one responding to the prayer of the other)

Group 1

Creator God we praise you,
 Creator God we praise you,
 Creator God we thank you,

Group 2

for the earth, the seas and all their creatures.
 for the wonders of creation.
 for the plants and animals that provide food.

Creator God we thank you,
Creator God we thank you,
Creator God we thank you,

for inventions that bring comfort and safety.
for our families, friends & all who care for us.
for creating and watching over us.

All: Praise be to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen

Closing Remarks and Next Step

- Invite response to the Step 5 gathering
- Living the Faith Step 6 – Review, Commissioning and Celebration
- Encourage personal and prayer support of one another and attendance at Mass

DRAFT