



## Living the Faith – Step 5

### Continuing God's Creation

#### Aim

To use the creation story and Laudato Si to explore our role of stewardship of and partners in creation.

#### Overview

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

#### Resources needed

##### Leaders

- Come and See notes
- PPT laptop and projector or TV
- Prayer focus items
- Bibles or Scripture texts
- Laudato Si additional resources

##### For Young People

- Journals and hand out

#### Prayer Focus

Expressions of our belief:

**Green Cloth** – Ordinary time

**Plant** – God is the creator of all things

**Crucifix** – of choice

**Globe** – we are a world church

**Bible** – the word of God

**Candle** – Christ the light of the world

**Prayer Book** – Prayer of the Church

#### Preparation by Catechists

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

#### Scripture Passages

- Genesis 1,2:1-3 Creation Story 1
- Genesis 2:4-25 Creation Story 2
- Matthew 22:36-40 The Command

#### Liturgical Link

The creation story is an integral aspect of the Easter Vigil. An understanding of its relevance flows through scripture and the liturgy of the Church.

#### Tenets of Faith (Faith Formation)

- God the Creator of all
- The four harmonies
- Care of the Planet
- Taking Responsibility

## Gathering

- **Welcome & Overview:**

Thank the young people for coming back, give a brief reminder of key points from the last gathering. Give overview and aim for today.

**Activity - *In the Beginning*** Early in this journey we looked at the importance of the Bible and the Creation Story. The introductory activity today is for you to write your own version of Creation.

- Pairs are given a large sheet on which the words '*in the beginning*' are written. They create a few simple statements to summarise their understanding of the creative actions of God in our world. 5-6 minutes
- Sheets are then gathered together to see how their understanding has been expressed.
- Note links to the creation stories in Genesis and to the world today.

**Activity - Two Accounts of Creation in Genesis** - Gen 1,21-3 & Gen 2 4-25

- Divide into 2 groups each to look at one version of the story
- Create a 2-3 line summary identifying the important truths of faith within the story: the messages God wishes to be made known to the world.
- Groups feedback to the whole group
- Draw together the threads using the information below as needed

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- 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.
- 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.
- 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 to be restored.
- Daily news reports are full of evidence of the need for such restoration in our world

## Opening Prayer

- **Prayer focus:** refer to other items and their significance here and as appropriate later  
*We begin listening to this lovely version of a well-known hymn, feel free to join in, then offer our opening prayer.*

**Song:** O Lord my God: <https://youtu.be/LqXghQRss1A> 2m34

**Leader** Let us pray, Lord God, early in the morning, when the world was young, you made life in all its beauty and terror, you gave birth to all that we know.  
Hallowed be your name.

**All** Hallowed be your name

- Leader** Each morning, in the multicoloured company of your Church on earth and in heaven we celebrate your creation, your life, your death and resurrection, your interest in us: so to you we pray,
- All** Lord, when we are worn and tired, bring new life.  
Where we have turned hard hearted, bring new love.  
Where we feel hurt, and to those we have wounded, bring forgiveness.  
When we become prisoners of ourselves, bring us the joy and freedom of your Holy Spirit.
- Leader** We make these, and all our prayers through Christ Our Lord,
- All** Amen.

*Adapted from Wee Worship Book, Iona Community*

## Harmony in relationships

**Restoring Harmony** - Last week we explored the role the baptised share with Jesus as Priest, Prophet and King. To fulfil that role Christians need strength of faith and spirit.

**Activity:** - In pairs explore the meaning of harmony, with self and God: questions to consider:

- What do you understand this term to mean?
- What gets in the way and so causes disharmony with self and with God?
- What are the practical ways through which we can restore and maintain harmony with self, or God?

- FF**
- When asked by the Pharisees which was the greatest commandment, Jesus gives a threefold answer, a "Relationship Triad" of Loving God, Loving Neighbour, and Loving 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. We recognise all human persons, including ourselves, as persons 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.
  - Prayer is the key to maintaining the relationship with God, and also with self. Regular personal prayer, is important, ideally including reflection on scripture.
  - Joining the community in prayer, in particular the Sunday Eucharist, is also important.
  - The Jewish tradition of keeping Holy the Sabbath was continued by the early Christians, though the Sabbath changed from being Saturday to Sunday, the first day of the week, on which Jesus rose from the dead.
  - Love of self has nothing to do with self-centredness and unabashed pride, it stems from the knowledge of self as a loved creation of God, worthy of dignity and respect.
  - **Care of the Planet:** Love of neighbour has already been addressed. The fourth aspect of harmony to be nurtured is 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 clip)

**Activity:** Invite the group members to ponder the questions below.

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

**Activity:** Work in two groups, each with a large sheet of paper header 'Concerns for the Planet'

- 1 minute to list as many concerns as possible
- 2 minutes to group these, then try to put in order of priority
- Gather the group together, and place lists side by side to compare areas of concern.

## Going Deeper

- **Care of the Planet**

<https://youtu.be/TzyYPJLhZjc> Understanding Laudato Si EP01: "Models of Creation" 20.24

Fr. Daniel P. Horan, OFM introduces viewers to the three models or approaches to creation that have arisen over the course of Christian history. These different ways of interpreting sacred scripture and theology will help set the context for how we can approach and understand Pope Francis's teaching in his encyclical letter.

- 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
- are there others to now add?

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

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- The name and first line of the Encyclical is taken from the canticle of St Francis, a man deeply in touch with creation.
- The bible authors, early fathers, and great medieval doctors of the church all had in common a great cosmological vision.
- In Genesis human beings are situated within a cosmic framework. It isn't all about them.
- They have a very important stewardship role, but salvation will be played out within a cosmic framework. The idea comes from a keen sense of creation, the creator God. Since we all come from the same created source, we are all ontological siblings.
- St Francis of Assisi was the person most attuned to this, he spoke of brother sun and sister moon.

- When there is a keen sense of the creator, there is a real sense of all creation being connected.
  - This is the point Pope Francis is making in the encyclical, which calls for a recovery of the ancient biblical and early church ideas in a world where there is an aggressively anthropocentric modernity that see nature simply as something for us to manipulate.
  - This modern approach to philosophy has helped bring great technological and scientific developments, but also produced an attitude towards nature, that suggests humans are in a prime position and nature is there to be ordered, manipulated and mastered,
- This view is repugnant to a biblical sensibility, hence Pope Francis desire to recover this, which is important for all biblically formed people.

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

- **10 Important messages from Laudato Si:** [https://youtu.be/a\\_IqFTYLc\\_4](https://youtu.be/a_IqFTYLc_4) Fr James Martin SJ 4m30  
**Consider** while watching
  - see which of the 10 most strike a chord
  - consider which might be the easiest to respond to, for individuals and society in general

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- give handout with Care for our Common Home
- A global consensus is essential for confronting the deeper problems, which cannot be resolved by unilateral actions on the part of individual countries. Such a consensus could lead, for example, to planning a sustainable and diversified agriculture, developing renewable and less polluting forms of energy, encouraging a more efficient use of energy, promoting a better management of marine and forest resources, and ensuring universal access to drinking water. – *Laudate Si!, POPE FRANCIS' ENCYCLICAL ON THE CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME*
- As individuals we too can play our part in helping care for the earth and its resources.
- **Action Plan:** individuals to choose 2-3 of the Laudato Si messages they feel most able to make a response to and in their journals identify:
  - reasons for the choice
  - practical steps that can be taken in relation to each, immediately, and in time
  - in 2's or 3's share action plans.

## Closing Prayer

- Gather in a circle / semi-circle around the prayer focus. Having reflected on the need for harmony in the world and particularly greater 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/VJz0ZuxxM10> A prayer for the earth, images and words 3.43

**Together We pray** (divide into 2 groups, both responding to each line of the others prayer)

### Group 1

I welcome you, Lord, into my life;  
into my hopes and fears.  
because you are a friend,  
all,  
because you are forgiving.

Lord, help me to learn from you,  
to know I am worth his love and worth your death;  
how to live in your love,

This, Lord, is my prayer,  
process:  
to be the person you have made  
shaping;  
help me to live for you, to work with you,  
with my own unique personality,

Thank you, Lord, for your friendship,  
thank you that at this moment I can call you

### Group 2

Into the work of my life,  
I welcome you thankfully  
because you accept me, as you accept us

to learn that God is friend and father,  
help me to learn from you how to love,  
acting and forgiving others in turn.

to be like you and not lose myself in the  
and grow into the man or woman you are  
to share your gospel of peace and love  
unlike anyone else's.

thank you for what I learn from you,  
Friend, Teacher, Lord and God.

*We take a few moment to offer our own intentions, then bring these together as we pray:*

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,  
as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,  
world without end, 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