

One Home: creative church resources



A special resource for family worship designed to inspire young children to think about God's creation and our responsibility to care for the planet.

These materials will help adults lead creative activities in a church or group setting that link Biblical principles about stewardship and care for our planet with All We Can's work around the world. The activities are recommended for children of between four to eight years of age but churches may need to adapt them to suit their own congregation's needs or the needs of the group.

Each activity is designed so that it can be run independently of the others but we suggest running all activities in a round-robin style format allowing children to freely and creatively explore the different options. Each one is designed to promote thinking about a different aspect of the theme of creation and stewardship.

These resources have been written for All We Can by Matt Gluyas, a young person from Cornwall, who visited All We Can's partners in the Philippines in 2015. Things Matt saw in the Philippines inspired many of the activities suggested here.

If you would like to find out more about what Matthew did in the Philippines and download resources for young people that explore the issue of climate change visit www.allwecan.org.uk/onehome



This pack contains

- Five thought provoking creative activities for children.
- One recommended Bible story to read with children that links to all activities and will inspire them to think about God's creation and our role as stewards of our planet.
- Photographs from All We Can's work in the Philippines.
- A [link to a film](#) from the Philippines that can be downloaded to show children how one of the activities takes place locally in that country. Find it at www.allwecan.org.uk/onehome
- Children's song suggestions that link to the themes and activities.
- A closing prayer to read with the children linked to the themes and activities.

Tips for using this resource

- Read through the Bible passages and leader's notes before the session and pray for your group as you prepare.
- Prepare the resources and materials needed well in advance. This could include a finished example at each activity station to show children.
- We suggest that at least one adult manages each creative activity and that you adapt this depending on numbers and ages of children likely to attend the session.
- Please do not feel limited by the materials provided. You may want to add in more activities or spread this session over two or three weeks depending on the needs of your congregation/children's group.
- Photographs from All We Can's work in the Philippines that link to the second activity can be printed and a [related film](#) can also be downloaded and shown to the children.

Bible reading for children

Based on extracts from Genesis Chapter One, interpretation taken from *The Children's Bible* by Henry A. Sherman and Charles Foster Kent.

'And God said, "Let the earth bring forth all kinds of living creatures, cattle and creeping things and wild beasts." And it was done. So God made all the different kinds of wild beasts, and the cattle, and everything that crawls upon the ground. And God saw that it was good.

And God said, "Let us make man like ourselves. Let him rule over the fish in the sea, the birds of the sky, the cattle, the wild beasts and all the living things that crawl upon the ground."

And God made man like himself, like God he made him. He made them male and female. And God blessed them, and said to them, "Have children, increase, live all over the earth, and conquer it; rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that crawls upon the ground."

And God said, "See, to you I give every plant which grows on all the earth, and every tree which bears fruit with its own kind of seed. It shall be food for you.

And to every wild beast and to every bird of the sky and to everything that crawls on the earth and is alive, I give every green herb for food." And it was done.'



This bible passage describes how God gave us the world to look after. He created the world as a gift for us, so we need to show that we appreciate this gift by looking after it and protecting it for the future.

Creative Activity One: Ballooning the world

Resources:

- Enough small balloons for each child to have one, preferably white, green or blue. It is best to have a few spare as some may pop!
- Child-friendly poster paints in blue, brown, green, white and yellow
- Aprons/old t-shirts for children to wear
- Newspapers or wipe-down surface to work on
- Water to wash messy hands
- Some chunky paintbrushes for children who are worried about using their fingers (not all children like mess)

Preparation:

- Make sure children roll up sleeves and put on old t-shirts/overalls.
- Depending on the age of the children, you may want to put the paint ready into individual bowls for them to use.
- Talk to the children about what you are going to do and show them a finished example.



God created the world and gave it to us as a gift to take care of. He designed the land and the sea and he made all of the animals, the flowers and the trees.

Some questions to ask the children as you carry out the activity:

- What animal is your favourite and why?
- Where would you rather live and why: the jungle, the beach, a desert, on a boat or up a mountain?
- What do you do to take care of nature and to be kind to animals?

Activity:

- Blow up the balloons to make small spherical shapes with the children. These will represent the globe.
- With older children you could ask them to identify where the North and South poles would be on their globe.
- Encourage children to use their fingers or the chunky paintbrushes to add areas of sea and land to their globes.
- When the globes are finished allow them to dry and then children can either take them home or you could hang them on pieces of string to create an interesting ceiling display.

An alternative to this activity would be to create papier-mâché globes.

Creative Activity Two: Sensational straws!

Resources:

- Thin string
- Scissors
- Dry pasta
- Sequins with large holes in
- Colourful drinks straws
- Beads with holes in

Preparation:

- Cut pieces of string into metre long sections and tie a bead at one end to act as a 'stopper'.
- Cut some straws into 2cm long pieces. Beware of sharp edges.
- Keep some full length straws for creating 'straw flowers' (see [film](#)).
- Put sequins, pasta, cut up drinks straws and beads into bowls ready for children to use.
- Print out photographs (see Appendix) to pass round and show to the children.
- If possible download the [film](#) to show to the children.

Before starting the activity, show children the photographs (see Appendix) and/or the film, and explain the following:



In rural areas in the Philippines many people choose not to have glass windows but leave the space open. This is done for a few reasons; the Philippines is a hot country and people like the breeze to keep their homes cool, some people cannot afford to install glass windows, and strong storms called typhoons can shatter glass windows. People still want to decorate their windows though, and have some shade and privacy, and one way of doing this is to use local materials to make beautiful blinds. There are many different ways to do this including using cut up straws as decorations (pass round photographs). We are going to work together today to make our own beautiful beaded blinds using simple materials we can find around our homes.

God has created a world where everyone is different. Different countries have different weather, different food, different plants and different animals to our own. People live differently in different places. God loves all of us equally though and has given us a world that is beautiful to share and look after.

Upcycling is when we use a material meant for something else, like these straws or this pasta, to create something new and exciting.

Activity:

- Encourage children to thread objects onto their length of string to create some interesting and colourful beaded blinds.
- For older or more dexterous children ask them to see if they can make the straw flowers as **demonstrated by the family in the Philippines**.
- At the end of the activity children could take their creation home or you could join all of your pieces together to make your own collective window blind.



Making colourful blinds in the Philippines with All We Can's partner Medair.

Creative Activity Three: If you go down to the woods today...

Resources:

- Twigs, discarded branches and offcuts of wood
- Craft materials for decoration that could include: glitter, glue, glitter pens, paint, ribbon, buttons, sequins, sellotape, stickers etc.

Preparation:

- Makes sure none of the pieces of wood have any sharp corners, and smooth down rough edges to prevent splinters.
- Make sure there are enough pieces of wood/tree branches/large twigs for everyone.
- Put craft items into bowls ready for use.
- This activity could be extended by actually creating an art piece using all of the individual contributions and putting them in a large plant pot. If you want to do that, make sure you also organise a large pot that could be used.

Before starting the activity explain the following:



In the Philippines one of the big problems children worry about is the rate of deforestation. Deforestation is when trees are chopped down and not replaced. When staff from All We Can visited the islands of Samar and Leyte, children explained to them how important it was not to waste things or to chop down trees without replacing them.

Today we are going to decorate some discarded tree branches and left over scraps of wood to show that we can reuse something and make it beautiful again. We should always try and reuse things if we can. While we do this we can think about all the wonderful trees God has given us.

Some questions to ask the children as you carry out the activity:

- What is your favourite type of tree?
- Why are trees good? Explain that they put oxygen into the air which helps us breathe, they can be used to build houses or as fire wood to keep people warm, and they provide the materials for us to be able to have the paper we draw on.

Activity:

- Let each child choose a piece of wood/twig/branch to decorate.
- Children can decorate as they wish by sticking, tying and hanging the craft materials on their wood/twig/branch.

Creative Activity Four: Go green!

Resources:

- Child-friendly green paint
- White A4 paper
- Pencils
- Aprons/old t-shirts for children to wear
- Newspapers or wipe-down surface to work on

Preparation:

- Make sure children roll up sleeves and put on old t-shirts/overalls.
- Depending upon the age of the children you may want to put paint ready into individual bowls for them to use.
- Talk to the children about what you are going to do and show them a finished example.

Before starting the activity explain the following:



When people look after the planet and take care of God's creation sometimes people say that they are 'being green'. What do you think this means? Why do you think the colour green is chosen to show people are taking good care of the planet?

We are going to make some green handprints to show that we are going to make a promise to try and look after our environment. Sometimes when people make a promise they sign their name but we are going to make a green handprint as a sign of our promise.

Activity:

- Let each children create a green handprint on a piece of A4 paper.
- Ask them to write their name/write their name for them underneath the handprint using the pencil.
- Display these promises in church or allow children to keep them as a sign of their commitment to caring for the environment.



Creative Activity Five: Up, up and away.

Resources:

- A4 sheets of plain paper or A4 sheets of scrap paper
- Pens and pencils
- Stickers (e.g. gold stars)
- Chalk
- Outside space/a large hall

Preparation:

- Create a good example of a finished paper aeroplane.
- Lay out pens and pencils and stickers so that all children have easy access and can share appropriately.

Before starting the activity explain the following:



The Philippines is a long way away and to get there you have to get on at least two aeroplanes from the UK. It takes a long time. When we travel to another country we get to find out lots about different people, a different environment and a different culture. The invention of the aeroplane has helped us find out so much about the world. Aeroplanes also create a lot of pollution though which can damage the environment and so many people see them as both a wonderful thing and a terrible thing.

Some questions to ask the children as you carry out the activity:

- Have you ever been on an aeroplane? What was it like?
- Have you ever flown overseas?
- Where would you most like to go in the world?
- Do you think we should use aeroplanes if they also cause damage to the environment?

Activity:

- Children to create and decorate their own paper plane. This may need modelling for younger children.
- Take children into an outside space or a large space indoors and hold a paper plane competition. Which plane can get the furthest? Whose plane travels in a straight line? Which one is most colourfully decorated?

Songs to accompany this creative worship

You could use some of the following children's songs to accompany this session:

All things bright and beautiful - Cecil Frances Alexander

He's got the whole wide world in his hands - Unknown

Our God is a great big God – Nigel and Jo Hemming

The creation song - Sharon Broome

My God is so big – Ruth Harms Calkin

The world looks very beautiful – Anna B Warner

Children's prayer to accompany this creative worship

A prayer of thankfulness for creation

Father God,

You made the bees and the birds,
the sun and the sky.
You made the creatures of the sea
and eagles that soar high.

You made the mighty lion,
the tiny beetle too.
You made the fluffy yellow chicks
and the hopping kangaroo.

You flung the stars up into space,
made trees taller than high towers.
You made the tiny croaking frog
and the smallest little flowers.

You have given us all we need,
the food to help us grow.
You have made the world so beautiful,
with the sun, rain, wind and snow.

Thank you for this world Lord,
thank you for your care.
Thank you for this planet Lord,
help us to give and love and share.

Amen

Appendix: Photographs to accompany Activity Two

These photographs were taken in the Philippines. Please also download the accompanying film [here](#).



This little girl has created many straw flowers to help her mother decorate their new windows in the house that All We Can's partner Medair helped them build after Typhoon Yolanda.



A completed straw flower ready for threading onto the blinds.



Beautiful blinds made entirely from string and drinking straws.



The finished product!