



Living Stewardship

About this Faith Practice

As a way of life, expressed in gratitude, living stewardship is a practice that involves all that it means to live as faithful followers of Jesus Christ. It grows out of a deep caring for and joy in who we are as God's created people and the natural world in which we live. Living stewardship is about how we live our lives and how our lives express our values. It affects all of our decisions, especially the ones we make about the natural and human resources entrusted to us for care. Living stewardship is shalom: living in harmony with others and the world. It is about our relationships, liberation, grace, justice, peace, and mutuality as well as our material possessions. As faithful stewards, we are joined by our common gift of life and the reality of finite resources. We recognize that each of us is a mixture of neediness and fullness and so have responsibility to care for each other as we honor the holy in creation and ourselves. As faithful disciples, we are called to live as generous creatures created by a generous God who mutually shares responsibility with us for all creation. Stewardship involves all people because all are connected in mutually covenanted stewardship within God's original intent for creation....

Let's Begin...

Now that you've downloaded the files for your faith practice and age group or setting, you can get started planning one or multiple sessions:

1 Open the .pdf file for your age group or setting. Choose an Exploration, the approach you think will help your group to best experience the faith practice. Choose any one of the following Explorations to use for one session:



Discovery



Scripture



Discipleship



Christian Tradition



Context and Mission





Future and Vision

Note: If you're planning multiple sessions, you can follow the order suggested above or feel free to use any order that fits the needs of your group. Some groups may choose to start with Scripture and then see where that leads them. Others may be more ready to act in their community and might want to start with Context and Mission.

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- 2 Locate the Exploration you've chosen
- 3 Look through all 9 activities and select the ones you would like to do with your group.
 - If you're planning a 30–45 minute session, choose 3 activities.
 - It is best to select at least one activity from Exploring and Engaging, at least one from Discerning and Deciding, and at least one from Sending and Serving.
 - For 45 minutes to 1 hour, choose 4 or 5 activities.
 - For a 1½ to 2-hour session, you can use all 9 activities.

Tip: Look for this symbol  to find activities designed for Easy Preparation (able to be done with minimal preparation using supplies normally found at the church).

- 4 Make copies of any handouts () related to your activities. Order posters () if using art (see "Ordering Posters," below).

Use of Art, Music, and Scripture in Faith Practices

Faith Practices activities include many opportunities to grow in faith through the use of scripture, music, and art.

Ordering Posters

If you choose activities that use an art image, you or your church will need to purchase posters of the art by clicking on the link provided in the activity. If you wish to use art, you will need to plan ahead, since it takes 1 to 2 weeks for the posters to arrive after you place your order.

Art

Six posters are used with the faith practice Living Stewardship and may be ordered by clicking on the links provided.

From Imaging the Word Poster Sets:

"Planting" by Rex Goreleigh (<http://www.tinyurl.com/UCCResources>)

"The Moorish Kitchen Maid with the Supper at Emmaus" by Diego Rodriguez de Silva y Velazquez (<http://www.tinyurl.com/UCCResources>)

"With hoot and squawk and squeak and bark ..." by Barbara Reid (<http://www.tinyurl.com/UCCResources>)

From AllPosters.com:

"Banjo Lesson" by Henry Ossawa Tanner (<http://www.tinyurl.com/AllPosters4>)

"Baobab, Okavango Delta, Botswana" by Pete Oxford (<http://www.tinyurl.com/AllPosters5>)

"Orion Nebula" by Stocktrek Images (<http://www.tinyurl.com/AllPosters6>)

Music

Three music selections are used with Living Stewardship. We have selected music which is easily found in many hymnals. A web link is provided to give more information about each music selection.

Jesu, Jesu Fill Us With Your Love, Tune: Chereponi (<http://www.tinyurl.com/FPSong4>)

Take My Gifts And Let Me Love You, Tune: Talavera Terrace (<http://www.tinyurl.com/FPSong5>)

God Whose Giving Knows No Ending, Tune: Austrian Hymn (Hymn lyrics: <http://www.tinyurl.com/FPSong6>) (Austrian Hymn tune: <http://www.tinyurl.com/FPSong6a>)

Scripture

Twelve Bible passages are used with Living Stewardship, two with each Exploration.

Discovery	Deuteronomy 8:7-18	Matthew 2:1-11
Scripture	Genesis 1:26-31	I Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19
Discipleship	Isaiah 55:1-3	Mark 10:17-22
Christian Tradition	Deuteronomy 14:22-29	Acts 4:32 - 5:11
Context and Mission	Isaiah 1:10-17	Mark 14:3-9
Future and Vision	I Chronicles 29:1-19	Revelation 21:10, 21:22-22:5

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Living Stewardship



Exploration: Discovery

About this Age Group

Young children enjoy receiving gifts, yet they often think that gifts are theirs by right. Living Stewardship may help children grow in their understanding that all of life is the gracious gift of God. God's gift of family helps care for their bodies and minds; God's gift of playmates and teachers provides prospects for learning and laughing; God's gift of nature opens opportunities to wonder, to care, and to be surprised. While helping children realize that all gifts come from God, we must help children respond to those gifts with genuine thankfulness for and compassionate care of God's gifts.

About this Exploration

For many, stewardship is only or primarily about money and tithing. This Exploration intends to help individuals and churches discover and imagine possibilities of what it means to live into a Christian sense of stewardship that involves all of life. We will explore both what stewardship can mean and how we might integrate it with our life experiences. Because God is still speaking, we listen, envision, and embrace our responsibility as God's people, drawing upon the stories found in scripture and the importance of continuing and sharing the story of what it means to be a disciple who is living stewardship.

BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:
Deuteronomy 8:7-18
Matthew 2:1-11

Exploring & Engaging Activities

Leader Preparation

God loves people. God cared for the Israelites in the wilderness, and, at the edge of the promised land, God pledged good things. God does not provide a list of requirements that must be completed before the blessings will be given: God tells the Israelites to eat first and then say thank you. God's extravagance extends to us, providing a world of wonder, yet imposing no conditions before pouring out the gifts. Like the Magi, our response to God's generosity should be equally as extravagant, yet priceless—the gift of simple gratitude. As God gives us the desires of our hearts, we give God the desire of God's heart—gratitude.

Prayer: Gracious Giver of all gifts, grace our session today with your presence. Remind us of the vastness of your generosity and prompt us to respond with liberality. Amen.

Session Development

For each session, leaders may choose from nine activities that help learners engage the practice of faith. It is best to select at least one activity from "Exploring and Engaging," at least one from "Discerning and Deciding," and at least one from "Sending and Serving." The first activity in each category



1 My Favorite Things (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Read Matthew 2:1-11 several times so that you can retell the story in your own words and not leave anything out.

Supplies:

- Bibles
- paper and crayons or markers

Show the children where the story of the Magi is found in the Bible in Matthew 2:1-12. Emphasize how the Magi traveled very far to see Jesus because they knew Jesus was very special. The Magi gave Jesus gifts to show their love for Jesus. Each of the Magi gave Jesus a gift that was very special to himself. Ask each learner to tell about his/her favorite belonging, a toy, a "blankie," or a pet. If you have time, perhaps they could draw a picture of their favorite thing. While they are drawing, ask: Would you give your favorite thing to someone you didn't like? Is there anyone to whom you would give this most favorite thing? What is special about that person? Point out that the Magi's gifts to Jesus were the same as the participants giving their special belonging to someone. God acts the same way, giving people the things God loves best.

2 What God Has Given Us

Leader preparation: Prepare by bringing in pencils or other small gifts to all. Also, familiarize yourself with verse 1 of the hymn "God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending" (tune: Austrian Hymn, alt. Hyfrydol).

The lyrics can be found at <http://www.tinyurl.com/FPSong6> and the tune at <http://www.tinyurl.com/FPSong6a>.

Supplies:

- pencils

Invite the children to be seated and distribute pencils. Remind the children that God gives us everything we have. Ask if that sounds silly, because you just gave them a pencil. Ask: How is this pencil a gift from God? Allow them time to answer, but be sure they understand that pencils are mostly made from trees and God made trees. God also helped people learn to make pencils, and God gave other people skills to earn money to buy pencils. So God really does give us everything. Introduce the song "God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending" by reading verse 1, inviting and helping each learner to understand each phrase. Tell everyone that since the song says, "Thankful song shall rise forever," they will sing the song. Sing the song a few times to provide familiarity.

3 Thank You for Our Senses

Leader preparation: Be sure to review this activity before you lead it.

Supplies:

- a blindfold and several items identifiable by senses other than sight, such as cinnamon, vinegar, cotton ball, sandpaper, whistle, drum, and foods with distinctive tastes

Ask the children to tell what their favorite foods are. After time for sharing, ask

is designed for “easy preparation” (able to be done with minimal preparation with supplies normally found at the church). Using all nine activities could take 90–120 minutes.

- To plan a session of 30–45 minutes, choose three activities, using one activity from each category.
- To plan a session of 45–60 minutes, choose four or five activities, using at least one activity from each category.

if they would enjoy that food as much if they just saw a picture of it. Seeing a picture of pizza isn't as good as actually eating a pizza. Repeat the process by asking: What is the softest thing you have ever felt? Is a picture of that item as soft and warm as the real thing? Point out that God gives people many ways to enjoy the good things God gives us. We enjoy things by tasting and touching and hearing and smelling as well as seeing. Blindfold each learner if he or she is willing, and let him or her use different senses to identify the items. Make this a fun activity, helping the children use God's gifts of senses to enjoy God's other gifts to us.

Discerning & Deciding Activities



4 An Animal Symphony (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Consider downloading some unique animal pictures from the Internet to go along with this activity. Searching for “Animal Pictures” with Google, Yahoo, or Bing will give you many from which to choose.

Supplies:

- photographs of animals (optional)

Ask all the children to name their favorite animals and tell what is special about that animal (or to identify some from the pictures you provide). Be prepared to broaden the discussion by suggesting animals with unique characteristics, such as a lion's mane, a cheetah's speed, or a pelican's beak. Ask: Why do you think God made the animals so different? Do you think God had fun creating all these animals? The Bible tells us that even the animals say thank you to God (Revelation 5:13). Encourage the participants to make the sound that different animals would make to praise God. Sing “Row, Row, Row Your Boat” using different animal sounds.



5 “With Hoot and Squawk and Squeal and Bark . . .”

Leader preparation: Display the poster “With Hoot and Squawk and Squeal and Bark . . .” by Reid where all can see it.

Supplies:

- poster: With hoot and squawk and squeak and bark... by Barbara Reid
<http://www.tinyurl.com/UCCResources>

Gather everyone around the painting and invite them to look closely at the painting and list all the animals they can identify. Ask: How might these animals be feeling? Why? Next, invite the participants to move in ways they think each animal in the painting moves when it is happy. Encourage them to move freely and extravagantly. After all the animals have been imitated, remind the participants that God told Noah to build the ark and God kept the animals safe during their trip. God was a good steward of the animals, taking very good care of them.

6 Texture Picture

Leader preparation: Place a copy of the painting “With Hoot and Squawk and Squeal and Bark . . .” by Reid where everyone can examine it closely.

Supplies:

- a variety of textured materials, such as sandpaper, cotton, tree bark, or lace
- glue
- blank pieces of paper
- poster: With hoot and squawk and squeak and bark... by Barbara Reid
<http://www.tinyurl.com/UCCResources>

Gather the participants around the painting. Ask: How might this picture feel if you touched it? How would the animals feel? The ark? The mountain? The water? Remind them that touch is one of God’s gifts to us. Distribute the construction paper and glue and indicate the variety of materials you collected. Invite them to create a design they can feel. Assure them the art doesn’t have to look like a real picture. Discuss with them God’s goodness in creating such a fabulous world and for giving us different ways to enjoy it.

Sending & Serving Activities

7 A Thankful Song (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Be sure you can sing the “London Bridge” tune.
<http://www.tinyurl.com/2dm8f5p>

You might practice it a few times with different animals and different children’s names. This is a great opportunity, also, for you to share how grateful you are for the children in your care.

Supplies: None

Call everyone to sit in a circle with you. Ask them to close their eyes and think of all the things God has given them. Guide their meditation by suggesting categories such as family, pets, food, toys, flowers, and so forth. After allowing time for thinking, ask them to share one thing for which they are thankful. Encourage each learner to share at least one item. After each learner shares, lead the group in singing “[Child’s name] says thanks for her dog Spot, her dog Spot, her dog Spot. [Child’s name] says thanks for her dog Spot. Thanks to you, God!” to the tune of “London Bridge.” End the sharing/singing time by singing how thankful you are for the group.

8 Stewardship

Leader preparation: Gather art materials for the participants to create a picture.

Supplies:

- paper
- crayons or markers
- glue
- scissors
- digital camera (optional)

Explain that God gives us everything we have—our bodies, food and water, families and homes, the animals, plants, and stars. God gives us gifts because God

loves us. We don't have to do anything to get them; we don't even have to say thank you to keep them. Because God's gifts are so special, people want to say thank you, and the best way to say thank you is to take care of God's gifts. Brainstorm some of God's gifts and discuss different ways the children can care for those gifts. Distribute the art materials and invite participants to draw a picture of themselves taking care of their favorite gift from God. Send the pictures home to remind them to say thank you to God.

Option: Take a picture of each child to put on the picture or the gift for which they are caring.

9 A Thank You Party

Leader preparation: Bring items for a celebration, including decorations and food.

Supplies:

- decorations, such as crepe paper and balloons
- healthy party foods

Invite everyone to imagine it is Christmas morning. They look under the tree and see the very present they wanted more than anything else in the whole world. Invite them to act out their reaction to the present. What would they say or do for the person who gave them that special gift? Explain that God has given us all the things that we really, truly want, and our reaction should be the same. We should be jumping for joy and shouting out thank you to God. Help participants plan and carry out a Thank You Party to thank God for all the gifts God has given us.

Reflect

Thinking back over the session, in what ways did the children reveal an understanding that, even though people may give them things, God is the true giver of all gifts? How did they demonstrate an understanding that we can thank God by caring for God's gifts?

Living Stewardship



Exploration: Scripture

About this Age Group

David and Goliath, Jonah and the whale, Noah's ark—young children's first introduction to scripture often comes through Bible stories. The excitement of the narrative provides a setting for teaching the deeper truths of scripture. By helping young children see how the stories pertain to their lives, we can begin to peel away the layers surrounding the message of the Bible and make it more relevant. By exposing young children to the boundless wealth contained in the Bible, we can begin to share the boundlessness of God's love. By disclosing our own relationship with the Bible, including our joy in it, our struggles with it, our trusting through it, we can show young children that the Bible is another of God's gracious gifts to us.

About this Exploration

When we hear scripture as a community, we discern its life-giving blessings and reconcile its power to generate wholeness with its history of abuse and its potential for misuse. Scripture gives us a foundational image of God that is relational and embodies differences within the whole. We hear many different voices and contexts within scripture and are invited to sit with these differences without resolving the tension. Within the context of stewardship, scripture affirms that God blesses each part of creation as necessary for the well-being of the whole. At the same time, our experience, guided by the Holy Spirit, calls us to reject an understanding of dominion as power over creation. Scripture tells us that we are made in the image of God the Creator and Source of Life and so invites us to accept the gifts God provides for the enjoyment of all and to embrace "life that is really life" rather than storing up treasures and individual possessions.

BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:

Genesis 1:26–31
1 Timothy 6:6–10, 17–19

Leader Preparation

Scripture provides the foundation of faith in the pictures it paints of God and God’s relationship with humanity. Scripture tells us that God created the world as a playground for all creatures, with everything needed for life to continue, and that God gave humanity dominion over it all. Now, through humanity’s abuse of that dominion, the natural world suffers and people struggle for happiness and a sense of personal worth. We need to encourage young children’s awareness that all good things are gifts from God—the worm digging through the ground, a mockingbird’s song, or a warm, comforting hug—and we need to remind young children that the good we do in God’s name—sharing our toys, picking up litter, or hugging someone back—is our thank-you gift back to God.

Prayer: God, who created and sustains us, you charge us to challenge young minds with your word. Bless our time today. Let what we do make the power and love that created the universe real to these young disciples in concrete ways. Amen.

Exploring & Engaging Activities



1 A Creation Drama (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Make notes for yourself to remind you of the order of creation in Genesis 1.

Supplies:

- Bible
- newsprint or white board and markers
- paper
- pencils
- crayons

Gather everyone in a circle on the floor and show them where the story of creation is found in the very beginning of the Bible. Tell the story of creation from Genesis 1. Allow time to ask questions. Invite them to name specific things that might have been created on each day. When you finish, ask them to help you create a poem that describes how each thing that was created felt or acted after it was created. Use as an example “God created light, and it made the darkness go away.” Another example might be “God made the oceans, and they splashed against the shore.” Accept their ideas and write them on newsprint or a white board. Once all parts of creation have been included in the poem, distribute paper and pencils and let them draw their favorite part of creation.

2 A World Out of Nothing

Leader preparation: Think about the miracle of creating everything out of nothing. Display the materials you gather on a table covered with newspapers.

Supplies:

- Bible
- newspapers
- glue
- invisible tape
- cups or napkins from snack supplies, any curriculum materials from previous years, pictures from magazines

Gather around the table. Invite the children to close their eyes, and then ask what they see. Explain that when God created the world, there was nothing, just like what they see with their eyes closed. Tell the story of creation from Genesis 1, encouraging the participants to keep their eyes closed to try to picture each part of creation you name. End your retelling by stating, “When God saw everything God made, it was very good.” God liked what God created.

Invite the children to create a world with the materials on the table. Give each a sheet of newspaper and have him or her to scrunch it up into a ball. This will be the basis for their world. Make glue and tape available. Be ready to help attach the materials, but let them create their worlds on their own.

Session Development

For each session, leaders may choose from nine activities that help learners engage the practice of faith. It is best to select at least one activity from “Exploring and Engaging,” at least one from “Discerning and Deciding,” and at least one from “Sending and Serving.” The first activity in each category is designed for “easy preparation” (able to be done with minimal preparation with supplies normally found at the church). Using all nine activities could take 90–120 minutes.

- To plan a session of 30–45 minutes, choose three activities, using one activity from each category.
- To plan a session of 45–60 minutes, choose four or five activities, using at least one activity from each category.



3 The Baobab Tree

Leader preparation: Post the photograph “Baobab Tree, Okavango Delta, Botswana” by Pete Oxford where all can see it. Study the information that follows so that you can share it.

Supplies:

- poster: Baobab, Okavango Delta, Botswana by Pete Oxford
<http://www.tinyurl.com/AllPosters5>

Invite the children to look closely at the picture. Explain that they are looking at a photograph of a baobab tree that grows in Africa. Ask them to describe the tree. Would this be a good tree for climbing? What other ways could you play on this tree? Direct their attention to the ground around the tree. Are lots of other plants growing there? Some people think the baobab tree looks like it was pulled out of the ground and stuck back in upside down. When it rains, the baobab tree stores water in its trunk, so it can continue to grow during the long months when no rain falls. No leaves grow on the tree for nine months of the year. Some rainwater falls into cracks in the tree, and travelers stop there to drink when they are thirsty. Every part of the tree can be used by people. The bark can be stripped off and pounded down to make mats, fishing nets, sacks, ropes, and clothes. The leaves can be cooked like vegetables and can also be used for medicines. The fruit, called Monkey Bread, can be eaten, or the powdery substance inside can be used to make a drink similar to lemonade. Animals called bush babies live in the top of the tree. Some baobab trees grow so big that people live inside the hollow trunk. Think together about how creative and imaginative God is to create such a wonderful tree and note how it shares everything God blessed it with animals and people.

Discerning & Deciding Activities



4 Who’s the Boss? (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Consider your own relationship with God. Who is in charge?

Supplies: None

After God created everything else, God created people. After God created Adam and Eve, God told them to take care of everything. Some people thought that meant they could use the things in the world any way they wanted, even if it wasn’t good for the people or the animals or the earth. Instead of being good stewards (caretakers) of God’s creation, some people were bad stewards. Explain that you will tell them some different ways people act, and invite them to tell if the people are being good or bad caretakers. If the people are being good stewards, stand up. If the people are being bad stewards, sit down (or you could do “thumbs up, thumbs down”). Use this list of activities: watering plants; feeding the birds; throwing trash in the street; sharing food with someone hungry; recycling cans; taking away someone’s house; burning a forest; leaving the TV on when no one is watching; letting the water run too long; raking leaves for a neighbor; not sharing; reading a story to someone; driving dangerously; driving someone to the doctor; buying warm clothes for someone. Add any activities you wish. Allow time for thinking about their decisions and accept whatever decisions they make.



5 Two Creation Stories

Leader preparation: Read through the Genesis 1 creation account as well as the creation stories on the handout “Two Creation Stories.”

Supplies:

- copies of “Two Creation Stories,” Attachment: Activity 5
- markers
- newsprint or whiteboard and markers

Invite the children to help you retell the creation story in Genesis 1 by reading “The Genesis Creation Story” from the handout. They are to fill in words similar to those in parentheses. Make a list of all the things Genesis mentions as created by God. The Navajo people are Native Americans who live in the Southwest United States. They have their own story of how the world was created. Read the Navajo creation story, making a list of everything created in the Navajo story next to the first list. Highlight the similarities between the two stories. Point out that in Genesis, God made people stewards over creation. In the Navajo story, the Holy People teach people to be good stewards of the earth. All people realize how important it is to care for God’s world.



6 God Gives Us What We Need

Leader preparation: Depending on the abilities of your participants, you can choose several methods for this process. If participants are readers, print “Needs and Wants.” If they are not readers, create a similar chart using pictures, glued to note cards, which they can separate into need and want stacks. Or create a large chart on newsprint or a white board.

Supplies:

- copies of “Needs or Wants,” Attachment: Activity 6
- glue
- note cards
- large “Needs” and “Wants” sign

Ask the children to tell you what they know about babies. Discuss the helplessness of babies: Can babies put on clothes? Can they feed themselves? God takes care of babies by giving them families to help them. Just as God makes sure babies receive what they need, God makes sure children and grown ups receive all they need, too; but sometimes people confuse what they need with what they want. If the children are readers, distribute the handout, and read it with them while they make checkmarks on the chart. If you have made cards with pictures, distribute the cards, identifying each picture. Designate one side of the room as “Needs” and the other side of the room as “Wants.” As a group, decide if each item or the chart or picture is a need or a want, and then move to that part of the room. Remind participants again that God supplies our needs, and that, as good stewards, we can help God meet the needs of other people.

Sending & Serving Activities

**7 Mitakuye Oyasin (Easy Preparation)**

Leader preparation: Write “Mitakuye Oyasin” on a piece of paper for each participant.

Supplies:

- “Mitakuye Oyasin” written on a piece of paper for each participant

Point out that people pray in many different ways. Some people make lists of people to pray for. Others say prayers they’ve memorized. Often, people just want to talk to God without really saying a prayer. The Lakota (LAH-coe-tah) tribe of Native Americans have a two-word prayer—*Mitakuye Oyasin* (Mee-tah-koo-yay O-yah-seen). The words mean “We are all related,” and when the Lakota people pray that prayer, they are praying for everything God created. They pray for people, animals, nature, the world, and the universe. Nothing created by God is left out. Invite the participants to say the words with you several times. Incorporate *Mitakuye Oyasin* as a closing prayer for the session and send home the paper with the words to share with their families.

8 Spending Special Money

Leader preparation: Make or buy play money to give to the participants.

Supplies:

- paper or play money

Distribute the play money, giving a lot to some and just a little to others. Explain that when people have lots of money, other people call them rich. When people have very little money, they are called poor. Ask which think they are rich. Explain that the Bible says that even people with no money can be rich if they do good things. Collect the play money and explain that you will give them a chance to become rich by doing good things. Ask them to think of things they can do in the next week that show good stewardship and have them share their ideas with the group. Discuss the idea that if they act as good stewards, they won’t have money to spend in stores, but they will feel good about what they did. Give each child some play money to help him/her remember to be a good steward, being sure all receive the same amount.

9 God’s Family Tree

Leader preparation: The movie *Avatar* (<http://www.avatarmovie.com/>) demonstrates the interconnectedness of all things. Although this movie is not recommended for very young children, it may help you as the leader reflect on how we are interconnected with others. Post a large sheet of paper on the wall where everyone can see it.

Supplies:

- newsprint or white board and markers
- 12” x 18” white construction paper
- pencils
- crayons

Explain that sometimes people create a family tree to show how the members of their family are related. Invite the participants to draw a family tree to show how everything in God's world is related. Distribute the paper, pencils, and crayons. Demonstrate how to draw a tree with several branches; then have them draw a tree, helping as needed. Ask the participants to suggest parts of God's creation they enjoy and encourage them to draw that part of creation as a leaf on their tree. When suggestions are finished, remind them that God is the tree and everything God created is part of the tree. Suggest that they look for other parts of God's creation as they travel home and add those to their tree.

Reflect

In what ways were the participants able to understand that the scriptures serve as the basis of our knowledge of God, as well as a "GPS" for how God wants us to live our lives in relationship with God? How did they demonstrate an awareness that God created everything for our pleasure and enjoyment? How did they demonstrate an understanding that God blesses us when we do things that bless others?

Attachment: Activity 5

Two Creation Stories

The Genesis Creation Story

In the beginning, only God existed, and darkness filled the space. Then God said, "Let there be light," and light filled the space. God called the light (day) and God called the dark (night).

Then God made the earth, and above the earth, God placed the (sky). God gathered the waters together in special places and called them (the sea, lakes, oceans, rivers, ponds). To grow on the earth God made all the (plants, trees, flowers).

God wanted to make the sky special, so God made the sun to shine during the (day). To shine at night, God designed the (moon and stars). Then God began creating animals. To swim in the water, God fashioned (fish). To fly in the air, God conceived (birds). To run and play on the land, God dreamed up all the (animals).

After making everything else, God created people. God told people to take very good care of the world God made and everything God put on the world.

A Navaho Creation Story

No one knows where the beginning is, except the Creator. The Creator had a thought, and that thought made the Light in the East. Then that same thought went South and made the Water; it went West and made the Air; and it went North to make the Earth. That one thought made Light, Water, Air, and Earth from nothing.

Light, Water, Air, and Earth all mixed together and created the Holy People. Then the Holy People helped the Creator create animals and birds and people, and they put the world in Hozjo. Hozjo means that each part of the world depends on every other part of the world, so the natural world all works together with friendliness and kindness and peace.

The Holy People teach what is right and wrong. They teach the Navajo people what they need to do to get along with Mother Earth, Father Sky, and everything that lives on the earth, so nothing gets hurt and everything is treated with respect.

Attachment: Activity 6

Needs or Wants

Item	Need	Want
Jacket		
House		
Basketball		
Clothes		
Water		
Shoes		
Pet		
Candy bar		
Friends		
Medicine		
Computer		
Candy		
Television		
Car		
Family		
Rain		
Trees		
Money		

Living Stewardship



Exploration: Discipleship

About this Age Group

For better or worse, young children first learn about relationships by living as part of a family. The impact of those relationships can be seen in how the children relate to others. Parents cringe when they hear their child use an inappropriate expression overhead from the parent, or smile to see their child treat a friend the way the parent treats his or her friends. Young children first learn about a personal relationship with Jesus through family and the church. If we wish to lead children to be good disciples of Jesus, we must make sure our lives provide an example worthy of following. More than merely following, however, sharing the good news with others is an integral part of Christian discipleship. Young children need guidance as well as modeling in the myriad ways of letting the world and those in it know the wonderful love of Jesus.

About this Exploration

Generational and experiential differences condition how we perceive, understand, and practice discipleship. Being an intentional disciple of Jesus presumes being a person of faith who embraces life as a journey of discovery and discernment about who Jesus is and what it means to live as a steward of God's creation. Discipleship involves the stewardship of our whole lives even as it enables our stewardship.

BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:

Isaiah 55:1-3
Mark 10:17-22

Exploring & Engaging Activities

Leader Preparation

Jesus' life serves as the supreme example of stewardship. His selfless giving of his time, his gentle care for those whom society designated unfortunate, and his anger against injustice set standards against which to measure our endeavors at stewardship. Young children can be inspired or intimidated by trying to follow the example of Jesus. By bringing different aspects of Jesus' life and personal stewardship down to a level understood by young children, we may add joy to their efforts at serving others as representatives of Jesus, and a sense of satisfaction with their endeavors.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, we invite your presence with us as we discuss your life and the ways you served others. Let the example of your deeds lead us to more willing stewardship and the example of your words lead us to more open sharing of your love. Amen.

Session Development

For each session, leaders may choose from nine activities that help learners engage the practice of faith. It is best to select at least one activity from "Exploring and Engaging," at least one from "Discerning and Deciding," and at least one from "Sending and Serving." The first activity in each category is designed for "easy preparation" (able to be done with minimal preparation



1 Follow the Leader (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Think about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. What do you think are the two most important qualities of a disciple?

Supplies: None

Invite the children to play a game called "Be a Disciple." Give each participant a chance to be the leader while the group imitates his or her actions. Once everyone who wishes to lead has had the opportunity, ask if they've played a game like this before. Was it called "Be a Disciple" when they played before? What was it called? Explain that a disciple is a person who follows another person in order to learn from that person. Remind participants that Jesus had a group of people who were his disciples. They walked with him as he traveled around the country, ate with him, talked to him, and went sailing on the lake with him. When Jesus was no longer with them, the disciples tried to live the way Jesus lived, and they also told other people about Jesus so they, too, could become like Jesus. Help participants understand that when they act as good stewards of God's creation, they are also acting as Jesus' disciples.

2 Working with God

Leader preparation: In your own quiet time explore what it means to be a co-worker with God. Think of an idea for a poster that you will draw.

Supplies:

- poster board
- markers

Gather participants around a table on which you have placed the sheets of poster board and markers. Tell them you have decided to decorate the room with posters. Explain that you are very excited because you have some great ideas, and you're going to start making the posters immediately. Begin drawing, telling participants how excited you are about your project. After a few minutes say: I can keep drawing and make all the posters myself, or I can let you help me. Which would be more fun for you? When you come in the room next time, would you be more proud if I made all the posters, or if you helped make them? Tell participants that when God created the world, God could have chosen to have food fall from the sky, all ready to eat. God could have made big houses for everyone to live in. Instead, God decided to create a world where people needed to help take care of themselves and their world. Being a steward means helping God take care of the world God created and all the things God put in it. Let participants design and color the posters and display them around the room.

3 Come, Buy, and Eat

Leader preparation: Carefully read Isaiah 55:1-3. Write a paraphrase that reflects your own gratitude for this gracious God and one you might share with the participants. Gather pictures or play food versions of foods the participants enjoy.

Supplies:

- Bible
- pictures of food, or play food
- plates and a real snack (be sensitive to any allergies)

with supplies normally found at the church). Using all nine activities could take 90–120 minutes.

- To plan a session of 30–45 minutes, choose three activities, using one activity from each category.
- To plan a session of 45–60 minutes, choose four or five activities, using at least one activity from each category.

Direct the participants to the table where you have displayed the pictures of food or play foods. Identify each item. Distribute the plates as you tell participants that they are at a food store where they can buy any food they want. Also explain that they can't go anywhere else and get food. Expect protests from participants, since they don't have any money. Role play a stern shopkeeper, telling participants that you can't just give them the food. They have to pay you in order to eat. Ask participants how they feel. Are they hungry? Are they angry? Open the Bible to Isaiah 55:1–3. Read the passage, explaining that God wants to give all people good things, if only they will listen to what God says. God doesn't want people to be hungry or angry. When Jesus saw hungry people, he gave them food. As good stewards and disciples, we need to share the food God gave us with people who are hungry. Have participants help you pass out the real snack you provided.

Discerning & Deciding Activities



4 Jesus' Acts of Stewardship (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Familiarize yourself with the following Bible passages: Matthew 9:27–30a; Matthew 14:13–21; Mark 4:35–40; Mark 12:41–44; Luke 10:38–41; Luke 18:15–16; and John 4:46–53. You will need to know these stories well enough to retell them.

Supplies:

- newsprint or white board and markers

Explain that a disciple of Jesus is a person who follows Jesus and acts in ways Jesus acted. If someone wants to be a disciple of Jesus, then he or she needs to know what Jesus did. Tell the Bible stories listed above, fleshing them out as you feel comfortable. After each passage, ask participants what they could do that would be similar to what Jesus did. For example, Luke 10:38–41 tells of Jesus' conversation with Mary and Martha. The participants may act as Jesus' disciples by helping their friends when they are upset. Jesus' healing of the blind man can be paralleled by spending time with or reading to a person who is blind. On newsprint or white board list the actions of Jesus in each passage along with participants' suggestions of how they can show they are disciples of Jesus in similar situations.



5 Asking Too Much

Leader preparation: Is your life characterized by generous or stingy stewardship? What areas of your life does "Sarah's Elephant" challenge?

Supplies:

- "Sarah's Elephant," Attachment: Activity 5

Invite participants to sit around you as you tell them the story "Sarah's Elephant." Discuss the story by asking participants to think of something they would really like to have. Then ask how they would feel if they had to give their very most favorite toy away to get that special something. Sometimes being a steward can be just as hard. God doesn't always make it easy for us to be good stewards. They may want a new toy, but instead their family buys the toy and gives it to a child who doesn't have many toys. On Saturday they may want to play, but instead they have to help their church serve food at a shelter. Sometimes, maybe, Jesus wanted to go fishing with his disciples instead of talking to people. However, since God gave us everything, including our toys and our time, we should be willing to share our toys and our time with others, even when we don't want to.

Challenge the participants to give up a few minutes of their free time to do something special for someone else during the week.

6 Soup for All

Leader preparation: To prepare, find out types of food needed and times contributions are accepted at a local food bank. For help finding a local food bank, go to <http://www.tinyurl.com/6jrz2>. If you choose to do a field trip, make the necessary arrangements (parents, transportation, food bank).

Supplies:

- a large sauce pan
- a large spoon
- one can of broth
- packages of nonperishable items needed by the food bank

Invite the participants to help make soup. Talk about how soup is made: first, the broth is heated; then, other ingredients are added. Give one food item to each learner and let her or him add it to the pan, stirring after each addition. Put the unopened can of soup in first and everything else around it. When all items are in the pan, ask if participants would like to eat the soup they just made. Give them time to respond. Then explain that Jesus often fed the people who followed him. The children can be disciples of Jesus and help make real soup for people who are hungry by giving food to a food bank. Food banks collect food and give it to people who cannot buy food. Food banks help God fulfill a promise God made. God said, "Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isaiah 55:1 NRSV). Invite participants to bring food items to the next session. The "soup" they made will go to a food bank. The participants will be stewards, working with God to fulfill God's promise, and they will be disciples following Jesus' example.

Depending on the age of the children, and with permission and assistance of their parents, plan a field trip to take the food to a local food bank.

Sending & Serving Activities



7 Disciples and Friends (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Read the activity, and then create a card or two of your own to share. If you have a friend or know someone in the church who is a "scrapbooker," invite that person to bring scrapbooking tools and help participants use them.

Supplies:

- construction paper cut to "card size" so a half fold is all that is necessary
- crayons or markers

In a conversation circle, ask participants to think about their friends. What do you like to do with your friends? Do you have one special friend? What makes that friend special? Do you ever get angry with your friends? What do you do when a friend is angry with you? What do you do when your friend is sad? Explain that Jesus had many friends he liked to hang around with. He ate with them and spent time with them just chatting. Tell participants that when Jesus' friends were

sad, Jesus talked to them and helped them feel better. Then invite participants to the table where the art materials are available. Invite them to make cards to share with a friend who is sad. Help participants fold the paper into a card. Be ready to assist with writing any messages. As they work, ask participants to think of other things they can do to help when one of their friends is sad. Explain that caring for friends is one of God's very special gifts to us. Consider sending cards to people in the congregation who are ill or homebound or in a nursing home.



8 Helping the Sick

Leader preparation: Before the session contact a local hospital and ask if you can bring in gifts to share with their pediatric patients. If you are able to do a field trip, make the necessary arrangements (parents, transportation, site arrangements).

Supplies:

- a long-handled wooden spoon and one pipe cleaner for each learner
- a variety of colors of construction paper
- markers
- scraps of yarn
- white glue
- scissors

Gather participants around the table and explain to them that when Jesus lived, he spent much time helping people who were sick. One time he helped a sick girl feel better. Jesus also helped blind people see again. Explain that even though we may not be able to make people feel better by making their headache go away, we can make them feel better by doing things for them. Ask participants if getting a gift would make them feel better if they were sick. Invite them to make puppets for sick children in the hospital. Give each learner a wooden spoon and pipe cleaner. Help participants wrap the pipe cleaner around the spoon to form arms. If you'd like to see what a wooden spoon puppet might look like, see Attachment: Activity 8. If you would like more help about how to make one, watch the video at <http://www.videojug.com/film/how-to-make-a-wooden-spoon-puppet>. This may also give participants some ideas for personalizing their puppets. Allow time to cut clothes out of the construction paper and glue them onto the puppet, then draw a face onto the bowl of their spoon. Glue yarn scraps onto the top of the spoon for hair. When the puppets are finished, remind participants that they are following Jesus' example of helping people who are sick. By giving their time to help others, they acted as good stewards.



9 "The Moorish Kitchen Maid with the Supper at Emmaus"

Leader preparation: Spend time studying the poster "The Moorish Kitchen Maid with the Supper at Emmaus." What do you see? Check out all quarters of it. Where are you in the picture? Display the poster in your learning area at the children's eye level so that all can see it.

Supplies:

- poster: The Moorish Kitchen Maid with the Supper at Emmaus by Diego Rodriguez de Silva y Velazquez, <http://www.tinyurl.com/UCCResources>

Draw the participants' attention to the painting and lead a discussion about the picture. Ask questions such as: What time of day do you think it is? Do you think this picture shows something that happened today or a long time ago? Why?

One name of this painting is “The Moorish Kitchen Maid with the Supper at Emmaus.” A maid is a young girl who is also a servant. Why do you think she is not sitting at the table? How do you think she feels? Jesus and two of his friends are sitting at the table in the back. Do you think the maid knows Jesus? Explain to participants that a disciple of Jesus is a person who follows Jesus and acts in ways Jesus acted. Mention some examples of Jesus’ willingness to help and serve others. If the maid in the painting wanted to be a disciple of Jesus, what do you think she would do next? Help participants create a scenario in which the maid acts as Jesus’ disciple. Assign roles and act out the scenario. After the role play, ask participants to name one way they will serve someone during the week, acting as a disciple of Jesus.

Reflect

In what ways did participants view different acts of Jesus as acts of stewardship? How many opportunities did you provide for them to determine ways they could be good disciples and good stewards? How did they demonstrate an understanding that, even though their acts may not be exact copies of Jesus’ deeds, they can still be disciples?

Sarah's Elephant

Sarah loved helping her family. She cleaned her room, fed the cat, and set the table for dinner. Sarah took good care of herself, too. She brushed her teeth twice a day, washed her face, and never argued about taking a bath because she loved bubble baths. When Sarah played with her friends, she made sure she took her turn, and she never ever called her friends names.

One day, Sarah went to visit Grammy. Grammy told Sarah she had a very special gift to give her, but she needed to know if Sarah had been behaving herself. Sarah told Grammy all the good things she had done. She told her about the time she let her brother sleep in her bed when he was scared, and how she helped her dad rake the leaves. Sarah talked about getting an award for being the best student in her class at school.

Grammy smiled and said Sarah had done very many good things. "But," said Grammy, "there is one more thing you need to do before I can give you my special gift. Sarah, if you want my special gift, you must give Ellie the Elephant to your cousin, Joe."

Sarah just stared at Grammy. Ellie the Elephant was Sarah's most precious toy. Sarah needed Ellie to get to sleep. Who would Sarah talk to if she gave Ellie away? And her cousin Joe always picked on her and made her cry. Sarah really wanted Grammy's special gift, but she just couldn't give her elephant to Joe. She just couldn't. She thought she had done enough to earn the special gift, but she would not give Ellie to Joe. Grammy would just have to keep her present.

Sarah hugged Grammy, and said, "I love you Grammy, and I really want your special gift, but I just won't give Ellie to Joe." Then Sarah began to cry.

Attachment: Activity 8



Living Stewardship



Exploration: Christian Tradition

About this Age Group

The daily morning rush, the bedtime routine, and the family Thanksgiving celebration provide structures to the young child's day and year. The familiar rituals furnish stability and security for young children, and family traditions connect them to relatives near and far. Rituals and traditions are part of church life, also, connecting worshipers to other believers and recreating a history important to who we are as Christians. While young children may not understand the meaning or purpose of a particular tradition, including them in the observation of rituals helps them feel a part of something special.

About this Exploration

Our ancestors in faith have given us a rich inheritance of living stewardship. The spiritual practice of tithing forms us as a community and provides for all even as it honors God. From tithing as joyful celebration in community among our Hebrew forebears and the "holding all things in common" of the earliest Christian churches, we see that people of faith before us were formed and challenged by God's call—as we are today—to live generously and compassionately, sometimes at great cost. From the beginning of the church, shaped for stewardship by worship, education, fellowship, and service, as intentional disciples of Jesus, we embrace life as a journey of discovery and discernment about who Jesus is. We also learn what it means to live as stewards of God's creation and as workers for justice, peace, wholeness, and inclusion. Exploring this legacy can inspire us to add faithfully to the tradition through our own acts of generous and compassionate stewardship.

BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:
Deuteronomy 14:22-29
Acts 4:32-5:11

Leader Preparation

The role church traditions play in faith development makes it important for young children to participate in those traditions at their own levels and abilities. Exposing young children to the ancient and new practices of the church, including various ways to tithe, may pave the way for easier acceptance of the practice as they grow older.

Prayer: God of the past, the present, and the future, make our time together an opportunity to understand how you have been revealed to us in the past. Help us to actively seek ways to return to you more than the tithe of all you have given us in the present, and prepare us for the future you have planned for us. Amen.

Exploring & Engaging Activities

1 Tithing (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Think about your own feelings about tithing and savings. Is it easy for you or hard? Why? Think about how you can share your own struggle with the participants.

Supplies:

- 9" x 12" green construction paper cut into 3" x 4" rectangles (ten rectangles for each learner)

Give each participant ten of the rectangles you prepared and assign him or her to a table. Ask them to pretend that the green rectangles are dollars. God wants everyone to give some of their money, their talents, and their time back to God. Have each child hand you one dollar. This is 10 percent of their money and is called a tithe. Saving one dollar is a good idea, also, so collect another dollar. They now have eight dollars to spend on whatever they want. Ask if it was hard for them to give God a dollar and to save a dollar. Why or why not? Now, invite them to go shopping. What toy or game would they really, really like to have? Invite them to pretend that they are at the toy store, and the toy they really, really want costs \$10.00. Do they have enough money to buy it? Why not? They had \$10.00 before they gave money to God and saved some. Is giving money to God and saving money easy now? If they knew beforehand that the toy cost \$10.00, would they still have saved and tithed? Lots of people find it hard to tithe because they want to buy lots of things. God promises that if we trust God and give our tithe to God first, God will honor our obedience.

2 Take My Gifts

Leader preparation: Tithing is not only about money; it is also about our time, abilities, and talents. How do you give yourself to God? You can find lyrics for the song "Take My Gifts and Let Me Love You" at <http://www.tinyurl.com/FPSong5>.

Supplies:

- empty boxes
- gift wrap
- scissors
- invisible tape

Invite the participants to act out a song. First, they need to prepare a prop by wrapping a gift. Distribute the empty boxes and help them to cut the wrapping paper and wrap their boxes. Put the gifts aside. Then invite the participants to practice acting out the following words: take, gifts, love, light, food, shelter, love, bread, loaves, fruit, harvest, compassion, juice, spiced, humor, laughter, tang, risk, taste, zest, sharpen, talents, hand, mind, and beautiful. You may need to define some of the words for younger participants or just choose the ones that they know. After practicing the motions, pick up the gifts and then read the lyrics for the song "Take My Gifts and Let Me Love You," pausing for all to act out the words. Read the song again, this time inviting the participants to place their "gifts" on a table during the last line of the song.

Session Development

For each session, leaders may choose from nine activities that help learners engage the practice of faith. It is best to select at least one activity from “Exploring and Engaging,” at least one from “Discerning and Deciding,” and at least one from “Sending and Serving.” The first activity in each category is designed for “easy preparation” (able to be done with minimal preparation with supplies normally found at the church). Using all nine activities could take 90–120 minutes.

- To plan a session of 30–45 minutes, choose three activities, using one activity from each category.
- To plan a session of 45–60 minutes, choose four or five activities, using at least one activity from each category.



3 A Party with God

Leader preparation: Have you ever thought about having a party with God? What would that party be like for you? What would you serve? What gift would you bring? Be sensitive to any allergies among the children as you plan a snack.

Supplies:

- copies of the party invitations; Attachment: Activity 3 (there are two per page)
- 9" x 12" green construction paper cut into 3" x 4" rectangles,
- stickers or other small items, enough for each learner to have ten
- small bags of a variety of snacks
- individual containers of juice.

Gather the participants in a circle on the floor and give each child ten of the small items you brought. Tell participants that God wants them to give God their tithe. A tithe is 10 percent, or one out of ten. If they owned ten dolls or ten trucks, when they gave a tithe to God, they would give God one toy. Ask: How much is your tithe for your stickers? Many people find it very hard to tithe. God doesn't want tithing to be difficult for people, though. Distribute the invitation you printed, and read it out loud. Ask: Who is giving the party? What do you need to take to the party? Tell them they can sell the tithe of their stickers to you, and then use that money to buy something from the table to take to God's party. When all have made their purchases, celebrate with God by enjoying the snack. After the party, ask: Was it hard to give a sticker as a tithe to God? What did God tell you to do with your tithe? Did you enjoy the party? Remind them that God doesn't want tithing to be hard; God wants it to be joyful.

Discerning & Deciding Activities



4 Name Our Gifts (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Before the session make a list of people in your church the participants may know, such as the pastor, the church musician, or the secretary, and the roles they play within the church. Also think about the spiritual gifts each learner may possess. What are your gifts?

Supplies: None

Gather participants in a circle and name the pastor of your church. Ask what the pastor does around the church. Ask the same question about the church musician. Then ask: Does the pastor play the organ (or piano or keyboard) at every service? Does the musician preach every week? Explain that God gave the pastor a talent for teaching and the musician a talent for music. God gives everybody special talents. Relate examples from your life of people talented in sports or art or cooking or making people laugh. Share your gifts. Explain that because God gives people different talents, the athlete may not be able to cook, and the cook may not be able to paint. Encourage participants to think about things they enjoy doing and can do fairly well right now. When all have at least one talent in mind, encourage them to think of ways they can use those talents as stewards of God. Invite all to share their ideas and add to the ideas of the others. Invite the participants to tell their families about their talents and to spend time sharing that talent during the week.



5 A Moravian Love Feast

Leader preparation: For this activity, be prepared to tell the story “The First Love Feast.”

Supplies:

- “The First Love Feast;” Attachment::Activity 5
- cookies
- juice,
- napkins and cups
- brown construction paper
- glue

Invite the participants to sit around you on the floor. Explain that there are many different kinds of churches and all have different traditions. Traditions remind people of important events. The Moravian Church celebrates a love feast. Tell the story “The First Love Feast.” After the story, explain that Moravian churches still hold love feasts during church services throughout the year. People called dieners (DEE-ners) serve a cookie or a bun, as well as a beverage, to each person in church. They carry the snacks on trays. In some churches, the choir sings while the people eat their love feast. In other churches, the people chat while they eat. Celebrating a love feast reminds Moravians of the special time in their history when God blessed them in a special way. Distribute the construction paper and help participants fold up 1” on each side. Glue the corners together, forming a tray. As participants decorate their trays, discuss the importance of remembering special events. Share a love feast of juice and cookies.

6 Share and Share Alike

Leader preparation: Consider how well you share. Is it easy for you—or challenging? What’s your favorite food?

Supplies:

- newsprint or white board and markers

Ask participants to name their favorite foods and list them on the newsprint or white board, being sure to have a variety. Next, ask if their kitchens were full of their favorite food, would they be willing to share with the rest? What if there was only one container of their favorite food? Would they still be willing to share? Would they be willing to give it all to their friends? Explain that when the church was very new, the members of the church brought everything they had to the church so that whenever a member of the church needed something, they could go to the church and get it. Ask participants to pretend they are part of the early church and have taken all their food to the church. At the first meal, all could have their favorite food. The next meal, they could have their favorite food again or a different food. Everyone would have the chance to eat at every meal, whether or not they had money. Even if they didn’t get to eat their favorite food, they would at least have something to eat. Sharing with others—and making sure everybody has a part—is a good way for people and churches to care for the people in God’s world.

Sending & Serving Activities

 7 How Do I Spend My Time? (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Do an “audit” of your time. What do you spend the most hours in a week doing? What the least? How do you feel about that? Prepare to share your typical daily schedule. Make simple booklets for the participants by folding two sheets of paper in half and stapling them near the fold.

Supplies:

- paper
- stapler

God gives everybody in the world twenty-four hours each day, but people choose what they do during those hours. Describe your typical daily routine in sections, including the time to get dressed and eat breakfast, half an hour to drive to work, and so forth. Ask participants to go through their day from morning until bedtime, and ask: What do you spend the most time doing—sleeping, going to school, playing? What do you spend time doing every day? What do you spend time doing once a week? What is your favorite time of day? Why? Be sure to report your own audit. Remind participants that God gives us all twenty-four hours, but most people don’t give much of that time back to God. Going to church and praying are two ways to give time to God. Any time spent in acts of stewardship is also time given to God. Give each participant one of the prepared booklets. Challenge them to spend time with God during the week and then draw a picture of the activity.

 8 “The Banjo Lesson”

Leader preparation: Spend time with the painting, visually exploring all parts of it. What impresses you most? Cut or tear a variety of colors of construction paper into 1” shapes, making enough for each learner to have fifty. Put twenty-five pieces into each of two envelopes for each learner.

Supplies:

- construction paper torn into 1” shapes (fifty pieces per child)
- envelopes
- poster: The Banjo Lesson by Henry Ossawa Tanner,
<http://www.tinyurl.com/AllPosters4>
- 9” x 12” pieces of construction paper,
- glue

Direct participants’ attention to the painting, explaining that the name of the painting is “The Banjo Lesson.” Ask them what they see. Do you think this could be a painting of someone in your neighborhood? Do you think the boy or the man has very much money? Why or why not? How does the man feel about the boy? How does the boy feel about the lesson? Do you think the man and the boy are related to each other? Why do you think the man wants to teach the boy to play the banjo? What type of things does your family teach you? Why do you think they teach you those things? Explain to the participants that you are going to teach them how to make a mosaic, a picture made from small pieces of paper. Distribute a large piece of paper and one of the envelopes of small pieces to each learner, and make glue available. Let participants work along as you demonstrate making a mosaic. When finished, give each learner another sheet of construction paper and a second envelope to take home with them. Explain that they get to be the teacher and pass on what they learned, perhaps to a sibling or their parents,

just the way the man passed on what he had learned about the banjo. All are being stewards by sharing a gift of knowledge that God gave them.

9 Candles, Candles, Candles

Leader preparation: What symbols are important for your faith? Before the session, cut 2" by 6" strips of tan construction paper for candles, 2" x 2" squares of red construction paper for trim, and flame shapes out of yellow construction paper.

Supplies:

- tan, red, and yellow construction paper
- a white candle (and matches if it is safe to have a lighted candle burning during the activity)
- scissors
- glue

Invite the participants to sing "This Little Light of Mine,"

<http://www.tinyurl.com/2csbzzt>.

When they finish, explain that the light they are singing about is the light of Jesus' love. Bring out the candle and tell participants that candles give us light, and churches often use candles. Sometimes the candles are lit right before the worship service starts by people called acolytes. If possible, go to the sanctuary and find the places candles are located. After returning to the room, explain that some churches use candles for a special service at Christmas or during Holy Week. Invite them to make a candle from construction paper. Hand out the red squares of paper and scissors, and instruct them to snip part way across one side of the square to make a fringe. Distribute the tan rectangles, which will be the beeswax candle, and the yellow flames. Have participants glue the red fringe at the bottom of the candle and the flame at the top. Explain that a symbol is something we are familiar with that stands for something else. Candles are symbols for Jesus because, just like candles help us see when it is dark, Jesus helps us see how much God loves us. Sing "This Little Light of Mine" again, reminding participants that sharing God's love is a very important part of stewardship.

Reflect

In what ways did everyone have the opportunity to experience various church rituals? How did they actively participate in tithing? How did they demonstrate that they hear that God wants to share in our good times?

Come to my party!

Sell your tithe,
buy something special
and
bring it to the party!

God

Come to my party!

Sell your tithe,
buy something special
and
bring it to the party!

God

Attachment: Activity 5

THE FIRST LOVE FEAST

My name is Anna, and my family and I came to the town of Hernhutt to find a place to worship God as we like. We live on land owned by Count Zinzendorf. Many other people live here, too, and we do not agree on very much. People argue with each other and stay angry over little things.

Today we had a service of Holy Communion. During the service, a special feeling went through the people, even the children. Count Zinzendorf told us all to tell Jesus the things we had done wrong. Then several men prayed. After that, the pastor led the Communion celebration.

I don't know what happened. Nobody saw or heard anything, but the people felt and acted differently. My mother said it was the Holy Spirit coming especially to us. People who had been arguing and angry with each other were friends again. They smiled and laughed and hugged each other. Everyone wanted to do what God told them to do. Everyone felt at peace.

After the service, nobody wanted to go home, not even to eat. Everyone wanted to stay and talk with each other about all the things they felt. Count Zinzendorf sent food down to us from his house, so no one had to leave. We sat on the grass, eating and talking at the same time. It was very good to be friends again.

Living Stewardship



Exploration: Context and Mission

About this Age Group

Young children enjoy routines and the security of knowing what comes next. The rituals surrounding places and services of worship can provide children with a sense of security. As children grow in safe environments, they learn about God and themselves. While learning how God acted in the lives of Bible characters, children learn that God acts in the lives of people today. While learning of God's incredible love for them, children learn that God wants them to share that love by reaching out to others with genuine care. While learning of the extravagant gifts given by God for them to enjoy, children learn that those same gifts belong to all people everywhere.

About this Exploration

We live in relationship with God and one another in a world created and sustained by God. The scriptures help us discover how God intends us to live as living stewards within a grateful community. This grateful community is called to go beyond rituals to serve the needs and celebrate the potentials of our neighbors near and far with extravagant grace and generosity.

BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:

Isaiah 1:10–17

Mark 14:3–9

Leader Preparation

Most worship services contain rituals that create comfort and a sense of familiarity for worshipers. However, rituals can easily take the place of true worship. While God wants us to worship, God prefers worship performed as care for all creation, most particularly, care for those who struggle merely to survive. Throughout history, the church serves as a force in distributing the necessities of life to those with little or no access to them. We, as the living church, need to continue the church's mission of justice by using the resources we have in lavish ways, possibly risking censure, to worship and serve as only we can.

Prayer: God of the widow and orphan, help us all to see the needs around us and to find ways to use our meager gifts to help alleviate those needs. Amen.

Session Development

For each session, leaders may choose from nine activities that help learners engage the practice of faith. It is best to select at least one activity from “Exploring and Engaging,” at least one from “Discerning and Deciding,” and at least one from “Sending and Serving.” The first activity in each category is designed for “easy preparation” (able to be done with minimal preparation

Exploring & Engaging Activities



1 A Special Act for a Special Someone (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: To prepare, think of several small acts the participants can perform for someone, such as cleaning a room, walking the dog, washing dishes, playing a game with that person, or watching a movie. Who needs your special assistance? Who needs to be welcomed into your life with Christian hospitality?

Supplies:

- a small dish containing cooking oil

Dip your finger in cooking oil and dab it gently on each child's forehead. Explain to them that when Jesus lived on Earth, one way to show someone she or he was welcome in your house was to put a little oil on his or her forehead. One woman wanted to thank Jesus for all he had done for her, so she poured a whole bottle of oil on Jesus' head. Ask them to think of someone very special to them; then have them think of something special they can do for that person. It should be something they actually do and not a gift they purchase. Remind participants that by doing something special for someone God loves, they are showing God's love for that person, too. Challenge them to follow through and do something special for someone to let that person know God loves him or her. In a follow up session, ask for stories the children can share.

2 “Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love”

Leader preparation: Who are your neighbors? Do you know the names of the people who live next door to you? You can find the tune and the lyrics for the hymn at <http://www.tinyurl.com/FPSong4>.

Supplies:

- hymn “Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love” (tune: Chereponi)
- a variety of different-sized boxes
- scissors
- construction paper
- crayons
- glue

Ask the participants to name their neighbors. Accept all answers. Help them build a neighborhood by letting each one choose a box and cover it with construction paper to make a house. Encourage all to decorate their houses using crayons and/or construction paper. When the houses are complete, arrange them on a table to create a neighborhood. Explain that the people who live in those houses would be neighbors, but they are not the only people who can be neighbors. Neighbors can be anybody—people we know and people we've never met, people who live close and people who live far away, people who look like us and people who look different, people we like a lot and people we don't like at all. Introduce the song “Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love” by reading the chorus and verses 2, 3, and 4. Tell them that God created all people and God wants us to treat all people as if they lived in our neighborhood. Help them to sing the song. (If you want to sing verses 1 and 5, explain the biblical story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet, found in John 13:1–15.)

with supplies normally found at the church). Using all nine activities could take 90–120 minutes.

- To plan a session of 30–45 minutes, choose three activities, using one activity from each category.
- To plan a session of 45–60 minutes, choose four or five activities, using at least one activity from each category.

3 Missions

Leader preparation: Is your church activity supporting a missionary? Do you know the missionaries of your denomination and where they work? Do you pray for the missionaries? Research the mission projects your church is involved in, and provide a world map or globe to show where those missions are located.

Supplies:

- a long-handled wooden spoon for each learner
- chenille stems
- scraps of yarn and/or fabric
- fabric glue
- markers
- globe or world map

God's love is so special that people want to share that love all around the world. Ask if anyone has lived in another country. Does anyone know a missionary? Often, a church will send people called missionaries to a place where the people haven't heard about Jesus. The missionaries live with the people and learn to speak their language so they can tell others about Jesus. Some missionaries go to places that already know about Jesus to help people build wells or schools or churches. Just by living as good stewards and by caring for the people and God's creation, missionaries show others how much God loves them. Using the map or globe, show participants where your church is located, then show them places where your church has missions. (Check to see if your denomination has a website with all of this information.) Be sure to include local charities supported by your church. Give each learner a wooden spoon and invite them to make a missionary out of the spoon. Help them wrap a chenille stem around the handle of the spoon to make arms, then use markers to draw faces, and yarn and fabric to make hair and clothes. Encourage them to make their missionaries of diverse ethnicities. As they work, lead discussion about how just being a good steward can help someone know God loves him or her; why it is important for people to know God loves them; and if they would want to be a missionary, and why or why not.

Discerning & Deciding Activities



4 Too Much (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Think about how you respond to others. Do you really mean it when you answer or praise? Is honesty your best policy?

Supplies: None

Seat all in a circle and ask each to tell you his or her name. Reward each child with lavish praise. Go around again, asking each learner her or his age, again rewarding each with lavish praise. Repeat the procedure several times, with questions such as Do you have any brothers or sisters? Do you have any pets? What is your favorite color? TV show? toy? favorite food? What color shirt are you wearing today? Make sure you reward each answer with extravagant praise. After several questions, stop and debrief the activity. Explain that at first you really meant what you said, but pretty soon you just gave praise because you thought they wanted to hear it. Ask them if they could tell you didn't really mean what you said. Next, ask if they would rather hear you say, "Wow, that was really terrific!" one more

time or have you help them make a gift for their family. Explain that God sometimes feels like they did. Yes, God likes to hear people say they love God, but not if they're only doing it because that's what they think God wants them to do. God really wants people to show they love God by helping other people and caring for the world.

5 A Hunger Meal

Leader preparation: What is our/your responsibility?

Supplies:

- napkins, cups, a serving spoon
- cold, cooked rice
- a pitcher with water, "dirtied" with red and green food coloring

Ask what everyone had for dinner the night before. Inform them that many children in the world are always hungry because they do not have enough food. Let the participants set the table. Place a small scoop of rice on each napkin and pour water in each cup. Explain that these amounts are all half the people in the world get to eat at a meal. Mention that there are people in your own city that also don't have enough to eat. Ask if they think that a scoop of rice and a cup of water will fill them up; then ask if they think God wants people to be hungry. Work as a group to think of ways to help people have enough food so they are not hungry. Say a prayer thanking God for all food, then join in eating the meal.



6 Gracias, Danke, and Merci

Leader preparation: How thankful am I? How sincere am I when I say thanks? Make copies of "Gracias, Danke, and Merci." Practice pronouncing the different ways to say "thank you." If you know someone who speaks a different language, ask that person to teach you how to say thank you in his/her language. If you have access to a world map or globe (or on line resources), bring it to the session to show where the countries are located.

Supplies:

- copies of "Gracias, Danke, and Merci," Attachment: Activity 6
- world map or globe

Suggest to the children that the next time they get a really special gift, instead of saying "Thank you," they might say, "Wow, that was really nice!" Invite participants to share ways they say thank you. Explain that everybody in the world has a way to say thank you. Teach how to say "thank you" in several different languages. If a world map is available, point to each country as you say its thank you. God loves to hear people say thank you. Suggest that the next time they say thank you to God for one of God's gifts, to try to say it in a different language. Mention how special it is that God understands what we say in any language.

Sending & Serving Activities

7 Water, Water Everywhere (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Are you a water conserver or a water waster? What kind of steward are you?

Supplies:

- glass of water for each child

Invite the children to take a drink and show how much they appreciate it with sounds like “ahhhhh.” Then ask: How important is water? Summarize their responses by saying that water is one of God’s greatest gifts. Water is something everyone in the world has to have to stay alive, so all of us need to be very careful not to use more water than we must. Ask participants to share what they do with water, both practical and fun, then encourage them to suggest ways they can save water. Turning the water off while they brush their teeth is one easy idea. Remind participants to share the ideas with their families and practice them at home.

8 Helping Other Children

Leader preparation: Check out the following recommended sites. What might you do to help others? Think about how your group might help? Prior to this session, research organizations such as Church World Service (under “Featured Links,” you’ll find “Best Gifts Catalogue”), <http://www.tinyurl.com/25kpgxm>, or the Heifer Project (click on the Give tab to find Online Gift Catalogue), <http://www.tinyurl.com/86d82>.

Make a list of opportunities for the children to explore.

Supplies: None

In many places around the world, people do not have enough to eat or drink. Go into as much detail as your participants will understand. God does not want people to be hungry or thirsty, and God wants us to help those who are. Present your list of opportunities to help people living in poverty, explaining as necessary why a particular gift would be useful. Ask if they would be willing to use some of their own money to help God care for other people. If they agree, let them choose what type gift they wish to give. Create a plan to collect or, if possible, make plans to raise the money.

9 “Planting”

Leader preparation: Spend time with the poster. Check it out carefully. What do you see that surprises you? Or impresses you? What do you think this painting is about? Display the poster “Planting” by Goreleigh in a place where all can easily see it

Supplies:

- poster: Planting by Rex Goreleigh, <http://www.tinyurl.com/UCCResources>
- small paper cups
- potting soil
- bean seeds
- a watering can
- a ball point pen
- newspaper

Draw attention to the picture. Invite the children to describe what they see. Where do you think the person is standing? Do you think this person has a lot of money? Why or why not? How do you think the person feels about the plant? Why do you think that? How do plants help people? Can plants grow by themselves? What do people need to do to help plants grow? Explain that the person in this picture is being a good steward, because stewards care for the things God has given us.

Cover the working area with newspaper. Distribute the materials you gathered. Use the pen to make drainage holes in the cups before putting potting soil in them. Review the steps of planting a seed as they work. Refer to the poster and ask how this person cared for the plant in order to be a good steward. How can we all be good stewards for the seeds we planted today? Remind everyone that good stewards help God care for all of God's creation. Send the plants home.

Reflect

In what ways did the children demonstrate that they understood the concept that many people in the world do not have the very basic things we take for granted? What evidence is there that they were able to realize that even folks in their own community have needs? Along with recognition of need, did all gain an awareness that they can work with God to meet some of the needs of their neighbors?

Attachment: Activity 6

Gracias, Danke, and Merci

language	thank you	pronunciation
Afrikaans	dankie	dahn-kee
Chinese (Cantonese)	do jeh	daw-dyeh
Czech	dekuji	deh-ku-yih
Danish	tak	tahg
French	merci	mehr-see
German	danke	dahn-kah
Greek	efharisto	ef-har-rih-stowe
Hebrew	toda	toh-dah
Hindi	sukria	shoo-kree-a
Japanese	arigato	ahree-gah-tow
Korean	kamsa hamnida	kahm-sah ham-nee-da
Philippines (Tagalog)	salamat po	sah-lah-maht po
Polish	dziekuje	dsyen-koo-yeh
Portuguese	obrigado	oh-bree-gah-doh
Russian	spasibo	spah-see-boh
Spanish	gracias	gra-see-us
Sri Lanka (Sinhak)	istutiy	isst-too-tee
Swahili	asante	ah-sahn-the
Thai	kawp-kun krap/ka'	kowpkoom-krahp/khak

Living Stewardship



Exploration: Future and Vision

About this Age Group

“You will feel better after you eat something.” “Your birthday will be here in two weeks.” Young children are beginning to understand that the future lies ahead of them, even though they may not understand the difference between two weeks and two millennia. Blessed with great imaginations, young children dream about a future created by God, where no want, no danger, no fear, and no tears blur the happiness of God’s people. Young children may feel, however, that they are too young to help bring about the ideal world. You can help them to understand how important it is to be good stewards and care for others and the world and help make decisions to bring their vision of God’s kingdom closer to reality.

About this Exploration

As we move into the future, a clear vision of where we are headed emerges out of our understanding of stewardship. This growing understanding will be enhanced as we consider far-ranging questions such as: What kind of persons do we want to be? To what purpose do we devote our lives? What are our core values and beliefs? That vision will also benefit by our wrestling with more immediate questions like: What choices and decisions are we making every day in our use of the money, time, talents and abilities, the environment, and other resources that have been entrusted to our care? Living Stewardship comes down to individuals and the communities of which they are a part. It also involves acting in new ways; growing out of our reflections on how we are living our lives and the journey we are on; discerning the messages that we’ve received throughout our lives from culture, family, and God; experiencing ourselves in community; and deciding our next explorations.

BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:
1 Chronicles 29:1-19
Revelation 21:10,
22-22:5

Exploring & Engaging Activities

Leader Preparation

Young children will spend their lives in the future, and, even at their young age, they can have an effect on what that future will look like for them. The activities in this Exploration expose young children to areas of possible importance to them as well as the rest of humanity. They provide avenues in which the children can work toward making a positive difference. God's kingdom, as described in Revelation, stands as the ultimate example of what our future should look like.

Prayer: God of all living things, I ask your guidance as I guide these young disciples into the future. Let me point them in directions you would have them go and let me serve as an example and a promoter for their actions. Amen.



1 My Ideal World (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Think about your ideal world—what would it be like? Where would it be? What would be the most important thing about it?

Supplies: None

Begin by describing what your ideal world is. For example, in my ideal world, it would snow every day, but the snow would only stay on the grass, you would have a giraffe for a pet, and the trees would be purple instead of green. Invite the children to share what their ideal world would look like. After each has a chance to share, tell the group that the nicest person you know is very kind and never says mean things. Allow a few minutes for participants to think about their favorite people and what they do that makes them special. Again, encourage everyone to share those characteristics with the group.

Create a song to the tune of the chorus of "B-I-N-G-O," using each learner's name and one characteristic of the people in her or his ideal world. For example, "Colleen's ideal world, Colleen's ideal world, Colleen's ideal world has people who are happy."

2 Sharing

Leader preparation: Think about how well you share. When was the last time you shared with someone? How did you feel? If you are serving a snack, be sensitive to allergies.

Supplies:

- at least two small toys, such as blocks, for each learner
- food, beverage, napkins, and cups for snack

Give each child two of the toys you brought in. Direct them to the floor and allow them to engage in playing for a few minutes. Encourage sharing during their play time. After a few minutes, join the group on the floor and gather the toys. Explain that you brought toys for them to play with today. Ask: Was it fun to share? Is it always easy to share? Explain that when they share their toys, everyone is able to play with the toys. Even though one person may not get to play with a truck as long as she or he wanted, at least she or he got to play with the truck for a little while. Give examples of sharing that they may be able to identify with, such as sharing the TV so you get to watch a show you like, and your friends can watch a show they like. Explain that sharing is one way of being a good steward. It's a way to help everyone get a part of God's gifts. Tell them it is time for snack. Ask them for ideas on ways to share the snack, then let them prepare the snack following their own suggestions. Before eating, say a prayer thanking God for food and asking God to be with children who do not have enough food to eat.

Session Development

For each session, leaders may choose from nine activities that help learners engage the practice of faith. It is best to select at least one activity from “Exploring and Engaging,” at least one from “Discerning and Deciding,” and at least one from “Sending and Serving.” The first activity in each category is designed for “easy preparation” (able to be done with minimal preparation with supplies normally found at the church). Using all nine activities could take 90–120 minutes.

- To plan a session of 30–45 minutes, choose three activities, using one activity from each category.
- To plan a session of 45–60 minutes, choose four or five activities, using at least one activity from each category.



3 The Orion Nebula

Leader preparation: Study the poster. What do you see? Look again, and again. How does the art make you feel? Place a copy of the poster where all the learners can see it. Cover it with a piece of black paper or a black cloth.

Supplies:

- poster: Orion Nebula by Stocktrek Images, <http://www.tinyurl.com/AllPosters6>
- two or three cans of foaming shaving cream
- craft sticks
- several colors of food coloring
- white copy paper

Invite everyone to join you in front of the covered poster. Invite them to think about what stars look like. Tell them that behind the black paper is a real picture of a nebula, which looks like a star in the night sky. Remove the cover and ask: Is this what you thought a star looked like? What is different? What colors do you see? What shape is this star? Remind all that God made the stars, the moon, and the sun. Invite everyone to sit with you around a table. Put a large dollop of shaving cream in front of each learner, and help him or her smooth it out, to about ½” thickness. Let the learner choose three colors of food color. Put one drop of each color on the shaving cream, then let them swirl the colors around with the craft stick. As they work, ask: Are you having fun making your stars? Do you think God had fun making the real stars? Would you like to be an astronaut and travel to the stars? What do you think you would find there? How could you be a good steward on a different star? After a few minutes, gently place a sheet of white copy paper over the learner’s painting and press it down. The colors from the shaving cream transfer to the paper, creating a star to take home.

Discerning & Deciding Activities



4 A Litany for God’s Realm (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Before this activity, review Revelation 21:10, 22–22:5. Review the following litany, “God’s Realm,” so you can lead it with the children.

God’s Realm

(based on Revelation 21)

God will live in the city with you. (God’s realm is wonderful.)
 There will be no sun because God is the light of the world.
 There will be no moon because there will be no darkness.
 There will be no locks on the doors because nobody steals anything.
 Everything good from the whole world will be there.
 No one who hurts others will be there.
 The river that flows down the middle of the street will be full of sparkling water.
 The leaves of the tree of life will make people well.
 Everyone will worship God.
 God will give them light all the time.
 All the people will be kings and queens forever and ever.

Supplies:

- copy of “God’s Realm” from Revelation

Gather all in a circle around you and ask them to tell you of a time they were scared. Next, ask them to share a time they were sad. Ask: Did you like being scared? Did you like feeling sad? Would you like to be happy all the time, and not be scared? Tell them that where God rules—God’s realm—people would be living in the city where God lives. They wouldn’t have to pray to talk to God; they could walk to God’s house for a chat. All the people would be kind and loving. No one would be mean, and no one would make people sad. Ask them to help you pray a litany. You will read one line of the prayer, and they will say, “God’s realm is wonderful.” Let them practice saying the line two or three times, then read “God’s Realm,” pausing after each line for them to respond. When finished, explain that God’s realm is not only about heaven but can also be about being good stewards now to make this world feel more like God’s realm.

5 Dream God’s Dream

Leader preparation: What are your dreams for the future? Do you think God dreams the same dreams as you do? What would be the differences?

Supplies:

- poster board
- magazines with pictures of items people need to live, such as houses, beds, food, clothing
- glue

Gather everyone around the table and explain the difference between needs and wants. Needs are those things people have to have to live, such as food to eat, clean air to breath, a place to live. Wants are those things that make life more fun, like toys and televisions. Give everyone time to cut out pictures of things they need from the magazines. After a few minutes, ask everyone to put their pictures in the middle of the table, then clean up the table. Pick up the pictures and mix them up; then deal them out evenly to each so that everyone has an equal number (but not the same things). Point out that some people don’t have enough of their needs, while other people have too many. God wants everyone to have everything they need. Invite all to look at their pictures. Ask: How many pictures do you have of food? Places to live? Something to wear? What would you do if you really had no food or clothes?”

Explain that justice means everyone has all they need. Ask: Is there justice in our room if some of you have no food or clothes? How can we work together to make justice happen in here? Exchange pictures so that everyone has food, housing, and clothes; then allow time for them to glue their pictures on a poster board.

6 Endangered Species

Leader preparation: Are you making the world a better, richer world or a worse and poorer one? Choose one thing to change for the better. For background information for this activity, go to World Wildlife Federation,

<http://www.worldwildlife.org>.

To the left of the globe, click on Act Now, then select Take Action from the drop-down list. Choose one of the options from the list.

Supplies:

- copy paper
- crayons or markers
- business-size stamped envelopes

Gather the children around you in a circle and ask each to name his or her favorite animal and explain why it is a favorite. Explain that God created the animals and gave them to us to enjoy, but because of certain things people do, some of the animals God made are becoming endangered species—a type of animal that is disappearing from the earth. Even though there were once lots and lots of tigers (or other animal you choose), now there are not very many still alive because people hunt and kill them. Report on as many other endangered species as you feel comfortable with. Say that we can all help protect the animals. Choose one animal and help them craft a brief letter to whichever “Action” you chose. After handing out the paper and markers, have them draw a picture depicting the animal and any steps they think would help protect the animal. As they work, write the message at the top of each learner’s paper. Help them fold their pictures and put them in the pre-addressed envelopes for mailing. Explain that by helping protect God’s animals they are acting as good stewards.

Sending & Serving Activities



7 Taking Care of Me (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Living as a good steward is not only about taking care of the world; it is also about taking care of ourselves. What are you doing to take care of yourself that you could tell your participants about? Before the session, fold copy paper in half vertically, one sheet per learner. Also familiarize yourself with healthy foods that young children may enjoy.

Supplies:

- crayons or markers
- a vegetable platter (optional)

Invite everyone to stand around the room with enough space between them for easy movement. Tell them you all are going to get some exercise. Sing “Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes,” then lead various exercise movements. Give any who wish the opportunity to lead an activity. All sit on the floor so that you can explain that exercise helps keep our bodies healthy. Eating the right kinds of foods helps keep our bodies healthy. Explain that while cakes and candy taste good, the best foods for our bodies are fruits and vegetables. Challenge them to name as many fruits and vegetables as they can; then list other foods that are good for healthy bodies. Do they have a favorite vegetable? What is your favorite? Pass around the vegetable platter if you brought one. Explain that God made our bodies. We need to take care of our bodies so we can do the work of stewards and care for the rest of God’s creation. Hand out the markers and the sheets of paper you folded earlier. Ask them to draw a happy face on one side of the fold and a sad face on the other. Explain that during the week, you want them to work with their families to put pictures of foods that are good for healthy bodies on the side of the paper with the happy face. Foods that are not good go on the side with the sad face. Remind them that taking care of themselves is taking care of a very special part of God’s creation.

8 Keeping God’s World Clean

Leader preparation: Are you a litter-picker-upper? Prepare to tell everyone how you keep things picked up—or how you are going to do so when you begin.

Supplies:

- latex gloves
- a plastic grocery bag or a kitchen-size garbage bag for each learner
- a large garbage bag for yourself

Invite the children to tell you what chores they do at home and what would happen if they didn't do those chores. What would happen if they didn't take out the garbage? What would happen if they didn't clean their rooms for a whole year? Would they want to live in a room or a house that nobody cleaned? Explain that the earth is our home, also. We need to keep the world clean, just like we need to keep our houses clean. Ask everyone if they know what littering is. If not, explain that when people litter, they throw trash on the ground instead of putting it in a trash can. Tell them you are going on a litter hunt. Lead them on a walk outside the church and invite them to point out trash for you to put in your garbage bag. Wear a pair of gloves during this activity. After returning to the room, give each learner a garbage bag and a pair of gloves. Encourage them to be good stewards around their neighborhoods and pick up any trash they find. Remind them to wear the gloves when they pick up trash.

9 Recycled Collectibles

Leader preparation: Do you recycle? Prepare to tell your own practice when it comes to this care of the earth. Check your local area's recycling policies.

Supplies:

- an empty plastic beverage bottle with label removed for each learner
- fabric glue
- fabric scrap
- fabric trim
- pipe cleaners
- crepe paper
- tissue paper

As everyone sits around the table, ask them what they know about recycling, making sure they understand that recycling is making something that would be thrown away into something new. For example, people buy and read newspapers. If they put the newspaper in a recycling bin when they finish with it, a company will shred it, add water and chemicals and make paper out of it again. Explain that many items can be recycled. Read the list of recyclables for your area, and explain how those items are collected and taken to the recycling point for your area. Explain that part of being a good steward is recycling. It helps keep God's world clean, it makes the amount of trash smaller, and it gives items a longer life. Hand each learner a bottle and put the decorating materials in the middle of the table. Challenge them to make something out of the bottle they were given, using the materials in the middle of the table. Encourage creativity. Send their collectibles home as a reminder to them and their families that good stewards recycle.

Reflect

What evidence is there that everyone enjoyed their involvement in the future? What activities were most appealing? In what ways did they experience justice in the concept of everyone having equal access?

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