

Worksheet #1: Learning about God through Creation

Resources for Reflection

The resources for reflection include sources from the Bible, Statements of Faith, hymns, stories, and your own experience. These will change with each section of the project. The resources will be listed (along with any links you will need). The process for reflection is included after the list of resources.

Resources marked with a ★ will be of particular interest to children but are valuable resources for people of any age. Please enter into learning with an open mind and an open heart..

Scripture:

"God makes a World" by Ralph Milton ★ (included on pages 13 - 15 in this document.).

Genesis 1:1 – 2:4

Hymns:

Here are a few hymns in which the lyrics are connected with Creator or creation. If you have, or can borrow, a copy of Voices United, look through the sections on Creation and the Nature of God, check the various Index options for references to Creator or Creation.

If you are comfortable using a computer to find information, you may want to check out the following link to Voices United. This site includes lyrics and some musical samples of the hymns in Voices United.

<https://hymnary.org/hymnal/VU1996>

The next link will take you to a similar site for More Voices

http://www.morevoices.ca/index.php?option=com_dbquery&Itemid=97

For the Beauty of the Earth	Voices United 226
-----------------------------	-------------------

All Things Bright and Beautiful	Voices United 291
---------------------------------	-------------------

Bring Many Names	Voices United 268
------------------	-------------------

For Beauty of Prairies	Voices United 303
------------------------	-------------------

God of the Sparrow ★	Voices United 229
----------------------	-------------------

It's a Song of Praise to the Maker ★	More Voices 30
--------------------------------------	----------------

Like a Rock ★

More Voices 92 .

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sLLz1VgN7U4>

(Feel free to join in the actions for this song!)

If you do not have access to lyrics for the hymns, try to recall words/phrases from these or others hymns about Creation and Creator.

Stories



Old Turtle by Douglas Wood <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0itq-Uk43mE>

In God's Name by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rfM69k_S1as

Photographs



A New Creed 1968; rev 1995

**“We are not alone, we live in God’s world.
We believe in God:
who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others
by the Spirit.
We trust in God.
We are called to be the church:
to celebrate God’s presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,our
judge and our hope.
In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.
We are not alone.
Thanks be to God.”**

from Song of Faith 2006

**...Each part of creation reveals unique aspects of God
the Creator,
who is both in creation and beyond it.
All parts of creation, animate and inanimate, are related.
All creation is good.
We sing of the Creator,
who made humans to live and move
and have their being in God.
In and with God,
we can direct our lives toward right relationship
with each other and with God.**

Reflection Process:

There are many ways to reflect. Some examples are:

- ❖ thinking
- ❖ writing
- ❖ praying
- ❖ drawing
- ❖ painting
- ❖ walking
- ❖ sculpting
- ❖ journaling
- ❖ knitting
- ❖ moving
- ❖ meditating
- ❖ music
- ❖ photography



When asked to reflect - marked by (R) you can choose a method from this list or choose something else. Whatever you choose, try to make sure you are choosing something that will help you to think deeply about God. This reflection is for you. You do not have to show anyone. You are invited to share some of your ideas but this is not required. If you do share your thoughts, you do not have to include your name. However, we are all encouraged to talk about our faith and what we believe. We hope that this project will make that easier.

How this works:

When you choose a mode of reflection (above), either something that is familiar for you or something new, make sure you have easy access to everything you need in order to reflect on what you see/hear. e.g. journal, paper, paint, markers, candle, clay, playdough, shells, stones, bowl of water, sand, plant, flower...OR just you!

There are no wrong answers. This is an opportunity to explore things about God you may not have considered and to clarify what you believe about God. Please try to keep an open mind and an open heart when considering who/what you understand God to be. You may need to let go of some long held images that no longer fit your understanding and you may need to be open to new images that emerge out of your changing views about God.

Religious Educator, Nelle Morton, offered the insight that, unlike concepts (which can be modified), if images need to be changed, they need to be shattered and new ones revealed or created. Images tend to be part of our thinking about God. e.g. The image of God as an old white man with a long beard sitting on a throne high in the sky deciding what is going to happen is familiar to many of us. Taking away the beard doesn't really change the image. If an image no longer reflects the God we now know, we need to let go of the image, let it be shattered. Then we need to create new images, based on our current understandings.

Centering: Find a place where you can be as comfortable as possible and, where possible, uninterrupted. You may want to light a candle, dip your fingers in water, make a design in

sand....OR not. You may want to hold something (e.g. stone, shell, playdough, clay, etc.) as you read/listen to help you focus or relax. Or you may want to move around. OR not.

Let the Reflection Begin!!!!

(R) Read through/listen to several of the resources provided in the Resources for Reflection section above. Please choose resources from more than one section.

Notice the general messages or impressions of God as Creator that you find in the readings. What is the Creator like? What does the Creator do? What does Creator not do? What does the Creator value? What is the Creator called?

Make note of these messages or impressions in a way that will help you remember them. Don't worry about retaining all of the words that draw your attention. Try to notice the **patterns or pictures** that are forming as you read/listen. Keep these messages in mind as you continue. These pictures or patterns are the core, the roots of how God is depicted as Creator.

Read/listen(to) again the readings you just read. Consider reading additional resources from the list. Before you start, you may find it helpful to make three sections on a piece of paper and put these - or similar – headings in the first row.

Familiar and fits	Doesn't fit; consider shattering	New and interesting but don't know if they fit

Keep track of familiar words/phrases that describe what God, the Creator is like that resonate with you (words that fit well with your understanding of God as Creator). If there are words/phrases that conflict with your understanding of God as Creator, please **record these in the appropriate column**. In the third column note any words or phrases used to describe God as Creator that are new to you as depicting God, Creator.

Choose up to five of these words or phrases or images that, for you, describe something important about the character of God as Creator. Try to find words that describe things about God as Creator rather than trying to name God. e.g God is like the stars in the sky - far away blanketing us with beauty yet close enough for us to see beauty in the ways the stars are grouped into constellations...OR God delights in diversity OR God cares about the tiniest and most vulnerable of the creatures and the biggest and strongest.

R Using one or more of the Reflection modes from the previous page, reflect on... each of these words/phrases/images you have chosen or consider them as a group. If there are other words/phrases that, for you are central to the character of God as revealed through Creation, **add them**. You may want to include some or all of the words that formed the patterns you identified earlier.

Connecting with the Bible...

Our beliefs about God as Creator need to be rooted in faithful interpretation of the biblical witness. Please refer to the following brief summary of some of the core biblical testimony about Creation and Creator.



R

Some questions you might ask:

- Where do my beliefs come from? *(It is often our early images of God that are the most deeply held and the hardest for us to give up, even if they no longer fit what we actually believe. These tend to be the images we fall back on in times of crisis even if they do not serve us well or are not consistent with the biblical witness.)*
- In what ways are my beliefs consistent with the biblical witness? How are they different?
- What emotions does this image/metaphor/understanding evoke?
- How does this image/metaphor /understanding call me to act?
- How does this image/metaphor/understanding offer reassurance? direction?
- Am I drawn to different aspects of the Creator when I am happy and when I am sad? Frightened?
- Are there understandings of the Creator that no longer fit with my beliefs? How will I let these images go/be shattered? Am I developing new understandings/images?
- How do I reconcile a God who creates beauty and wills harmony and peace for all of Creation with a world which experiences so much devastation though climate change and is witness to so much greed and destruction?
- What quality of Creator God is most important to me? Why?

Add your own questions...

For children and anyone who is looking for shorter and fewer words and more pictures...



Stories and Songs: Read/listen to one or more of these stories and the song.. These are children's books, suitable for children of all ages and grownups too.

"God makes a World" by Ralph Milton is included on pages 10-12 of this document..

Old Turtle by Douglas Wood <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0itq-Uk43mE>

In God's Name by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rfM69k_S1as

"Like a Rock" More Voices 92

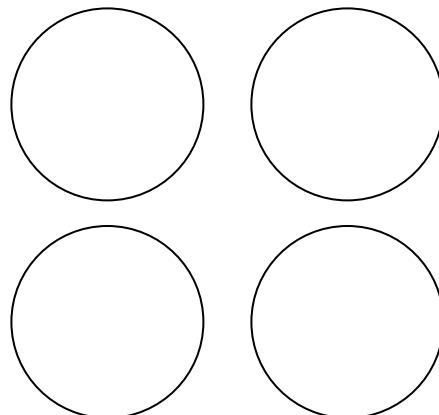
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sLLz1VgN7U4>

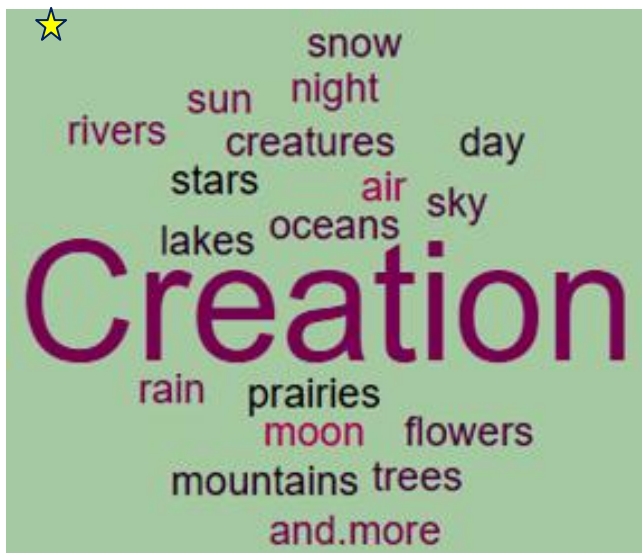
Feel free to join in the actions for this song!

Adapting as necessary, use the reflection process to talk about the stories/song.
How did the story/song make you feel?



- Draw a circle around any of the faces (below) that look like how you feel. You can also use the empty circles to draw faces that look the way you feel
- How many words can you think of that say something about what God is like?. Write or draw these or use your body to show what you think God is like.
- Where do we find God?
- When do you feel close to God?
- What is your favourite name for God? Why?





Creation

... is the whole world and more.

Circle some of your favourite parts of Creation. Talk about them. Draw a picture.

There is a story in the Bible about God making Creation. What can you tell about what God is like from thinking about what Creation is like?

(for all ages)!!!

We are called to “live with respect in Creation” (A New Creed, revised 1995)

The resource, “Take a Sacred Pause for the Love of Creation”, found on the next page, offers a way to reflect on that call. Read through the one page resource which is part of this worksheet so you will know what it requires. Sometime during the week, work your way through the process of reflection as a form of prayer. **Keep track of words/drawings** etc that emerge from that reflection .

R. Is there a difference between being a good steward of the earth and “living with respect in Creation” How might this difference be reflected in your understanding of God, and relationship with God? How would you express this with words, pictures, drawing, movement, etc.?

Review your Reflections

When you are finished with this project for the week, take a few minutes look back over the words, phrases, images, metaphors, etc. you have explored. Are there ways of understanding God as Creator that are new to you? that are expanding how you think about God? Are there ways of understanding God that may not fit for you any more? What questions are you pondering?

Our plan is that this project will lead to conversation within and beyond the congregation during the coming months .We hope that you will be open to sharing some of your reflections with others in the congregation. We are particularly interested in the words/phrases/images, drawings, sculpting, movement, photographs, etc. that you named as important for you in understanding the character of God, Creator. We are also interested in your questions about God, Creator. Please keep your reflections and questions in a place where you can add to them throughout. At the end of the project, you will be invited to share some of your work, with or without including your name. For now, please keep the work you have done in each of the R. times – or any other time that you want to include.

Thank you for your participation.

TAKE A SACRED PAUSE

for the Love of Creation

Begin with a... PAUSE –
Stop what you are doing.

SENSE



- **Sense** – use as many senses as you can. Notice the sounds and smells. Look wide. Look soft. Choose something and look close. Feel with your skin, your bones, your muscles. Feel your breathing. Notice any reactions you might be sensing in yourself – alertness, curiosity, fear, restlessness, attraction, distraction....

APPRECIATE



- **Appreciate** – focus your attention on something(s) near you. Take as long as you like. Notice all you can about it – its colours, shapes, textures. Appreciate what it is offering to you in this moment. Appreciate it for simply being itself. Acknowledge and give thanks for this gift of Creator/Creation. Speak your gratitude out loud.

CONNECT



- **Connect** – Is there a story, teaching, or image that this brings to mind? Think about who or what depends on this element? On what or on whom does it depend? How does it give? How does it take or receive? Consider any threats to its safety. What will become of it in a day, a year, 10 years, 1000 years? How will threats such as climate change and severe weather patterns impact it?

RESPECT



- **Respect** – think of how you relate to this element. How do your actions or inactions impact this part of Creation? How do you show care and respect for this element? Are there actions you will take to protect, to heal, to honour, or cherish?

EXPRESS



- **Express** – show your appreciation and respect by making an offering – you could do this with words, a prayer, a ritual, a song, a dance, for example. You might offer water, tobacco, or a lock of your hair. Take an intentional action in the moment to express your love and respect for this unique and precious part of Creation.

DELIGHT

- **Delight/Deepen** – As you leave, or return to your walk or swim or task, allow the feelings and sensations to deepen in you. Delight in the connections you noticed, or the concern you felt. You may want to take time later to reflect, using silence, arts, journaling, or other methods – perhaps in the context of your own spiritual tradition.



**For the Love
of Creation**

God makes a world

Genesis 1

Long, long, long ago,
before there was anything,
before there was a world,
before there was light,
before there was darkness,
there was God.

Just God. All alone.

So God decided to make the world.

Then God said, "Let there be light."

So there was.

Beautiful light shining everywhere.

And God said, "That's good."

Then God said, "Let there be a sky above, and water below."

So there was.

Then God said, "Let the water come together in the hollow places, so there can be dry ground."

So there was.

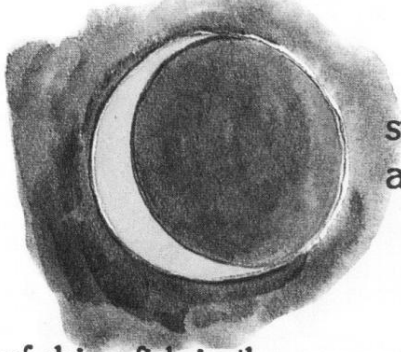
And God said, "That's good."

Then God said, "Let there be green plants and tall trees and



grass and beautiful flowers. And let them all make seeds so there can be new plants when the old ones die."

So there were.



And God said, "That's good."

Then God said, "Let there be a golden sun in the sky in the daytime, and a silver moon at night."

So there was.

And God said, "That's good."



Then God said, "Let there be all kinds of shiny fish in the sea and bright colored birds to fly in the air. And let the fish have baby fish, and the birds have baby birds, so there can always be new birds and fish when the old ones die."

So there were.

And God said, "That's good."

Then God said, "Let there be animals on the land. All kinds of animals that run and crawl and gallop."

So there were.

And God said, "That's good."

Then God said, "Let there be people in the world, and let the people be made so they are like me."

So God created people. Women and men. And God said to the people, "Let there be new babies born so there will always be new people in my world when the old people die."

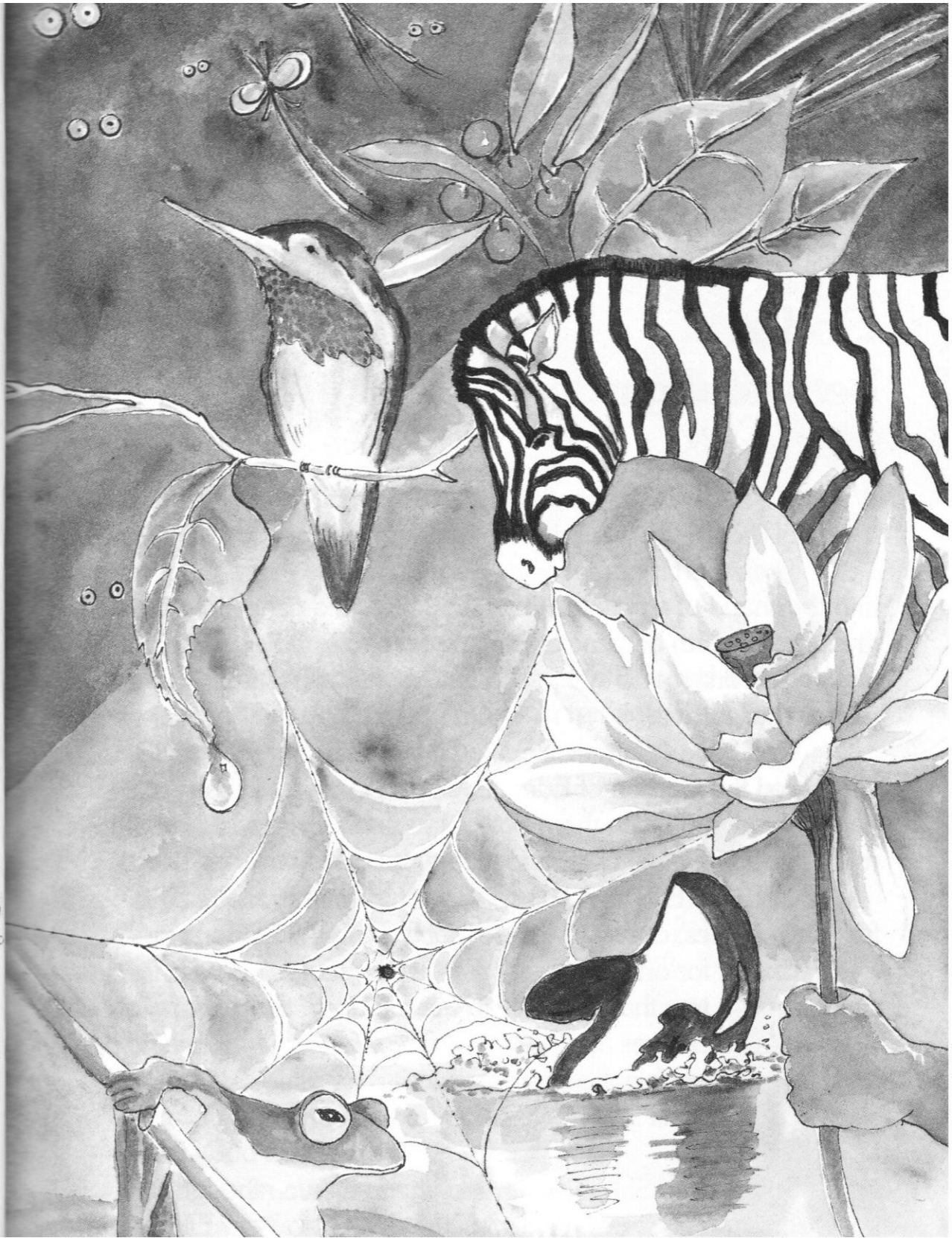
Then God said to the people, "Take care of my world. It's yours to use. All of it. But please be kind to my world."

Then God looked at all the world, and all the beautiful things in it.

And God said, "That's *very* good."

When it was all done, God rested.





from Living God's Way; permission requested from Ralph Milton and Wood Lake Books