

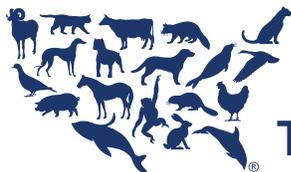


CARING FOR GOD'S CREATIONS: THE STEWARDSHIP OF ANIMALS

The earth and animals are important to God, and as a caretaker for God's creation, stewardship of animals is important. You are God's deputies.

The life of every living thing is in His hands and the breath of every human being.

Job 12:10



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

Celebrating Animals | Confronting Cruelty

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Introduction:

From the beginning of the Bible, we see how important animals are to God. He blesses them, forms covenants with them, enjoys them, and calls them good. Yet, from the beginning of creation, there has also been a special relationship between mankind and animals. One of Adam's first tasks is to name the animals. Naming is an act of relationship that reflects God's intent for humans to share a close bond with his other creatures. Yet, the most unique aspect of our relationship with animals is that out of all God's creation, only we are bound together in the highest partnership to praise God. Psalm 148 calls on everything to praise the Lord. The psalmist included sea monsters, beasts, cattle, creeping things and birds in this call (vv. 7, 10).

As we seek to fulfill this special relationship that God intended for us to have with animals, we must reflect on the responsibilities we have towards the animals put in our care. Psalm 24:1 clearly proclaims—"The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains." This fact is repeated regularly in Scripture. God commanded the Adam and Eve to "rule over" every living thing (Gen. 1:26). Yet, it is clear He did not relinquish ownership of every living thing.

Humans are uniquely created in the image and likeness of God. In His likeness, what duties do we have towards animals? The following lesson plans offer children a fun and accessible introduction to animal stewardship. We hope that this curriculum invites children to explore the unique relationship we have with animals, but, above all, we hope these lessons present children with a new appreciation for the glory of creation and the blessing of having all God's creatures in our care.

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord! (Ps. 150:6)

Unit objective: Encouraging compassionate stewardship of all God's creatures and an understanding of the interconnection of care for people, animals, and the environment.

Time: Lessons and activities are designed to take 40-60 minutes, but can be adapted to each individual setting.

Grade Level: K-5 (Older students are encouraged to act as mentors to younger students in the group.)

Contents

LESSON ONE: ANIMALS ARE IMPORTANT TO GOD..... 6

 Caring for God’s World..... 9

 Animal and Environment Cards..... 10

LESSON TWO: BEING A HELPING HAND FOR BIRDS AND WILDLIFE 13

LESSON THREE: PROTECTING POLLINATORS 17

 Kind News Story: What's Happening to Honeybees? 21

 Pollinator Worksheet 23

LESSON FOUR: THE JOY OF ANIMALS 24

 The Joy in God’s World! 27

LESSON FIVE: THE EARTH AND ANIMALS BELONG TO GOD 28

 A Pig’s Tail 32

For the Instructor: 33

LESSON ONE: ANIMALS ARE IMPORTANT TO GOD

Objective: Students will appreciate the variety of animals in their world and understand how they are all connected in God's web of life. Students will know that God created every living thing, both humans and animals, blessed them and called them good.

Materials Needed:

- *Caring for God's World* worksheet for each student
- White/chalk board and dry erase markers/chalk
- Crayons or colored pencils
- Ball of yarn
- *Animal and Environment Cards* (enough so that each student has one card)
- Optional: Bibles for each student or group of students

Time Needed: 40-50 minutes

ACTIVITY:

Preparation:

1. Copy *Caring for God's World* worksheet for each student.
2. Copy *Animal and Environment Cards* (enough so that each student has one card).
3. Draw a large circle on the board.

Opening:

1. Provide each student with one copy of *Caring for God's World* worksheet and share the following directions.

Directions: Spend five-10 minutes outside looking for all types of animals (birds, insects, mammals, etc.) you can see in the environment. Write down at least four animals that you see as well as what they are doing. (If some students are too young to write, have them partner with an older student.)

Make sure students know that they should not disturb the animals. Sit quietly in a safe place where you can observe the animals. Try not to

make any noise or sudden movements. Be patient. Let the animals become comfortable with your presence.

2. After the time is up, bring the students back into the classroom. Ask for volunteers to share one of the animals they saw. Write all of the animals they saw in the large circle on the board.
3. Tell the students that the Bible teaches us that God created animals. They didn't appear by accident; God created each one with great care. Genesis 1:24-25 says God created the animals, from the beasts of the earth to the creeping insects. Scripture even tells us that the breath of life resides within them (Gen. 7:15).

When God created animals, he declared their creation to be "good" (Gen. 1:25). At the conclusion of the creation account in Genesis 1, God looked at "all he had made" and declared it "very good" (v. 31). Creation was "very good" when considered in its totality, not only in reference to humans.

Optional: If bibles are available, you may wish to ask students to read these passages.

Body:

1. Based on the animals the students saw, ask them questions about what the animals were doing. (For example: Why are the birds singing? What were the ants doing? How was the frog enjoying the world that God made? Where did you see the animal/where does the animal live?)
2. Review that God made each of them for a specific purpose and all their purposes are intertwined with one another and with us as caregivers to our world. Each animal has a purpose and serves the wishes of the Creator. (Depending on the age of the students, you may wish to define intertwined.)
3. Choose two animals from the board who are related and underline or circle them (e.g., bird and insect). Ask students how the bird and ant are intertwined. Explain that in the case of many birds, they depend on insects for survival in the form of food. Review that God created all

animals with care and with a purpose of their own and to help our world.

4. Repeat step three as often as desired with the group.
5. Ask students what would happen to God's web of life if an animal disappeared. Provide the groups with an example (e.g., bird and insect). If the insect disappeared, what would happen to the birds who depend on insects for sustenance or food?
6. Explain that if one of God's creations or a part of the environment becomes extinct, the place in God's web of life is empty and there is a rip in God's fabric of creation.

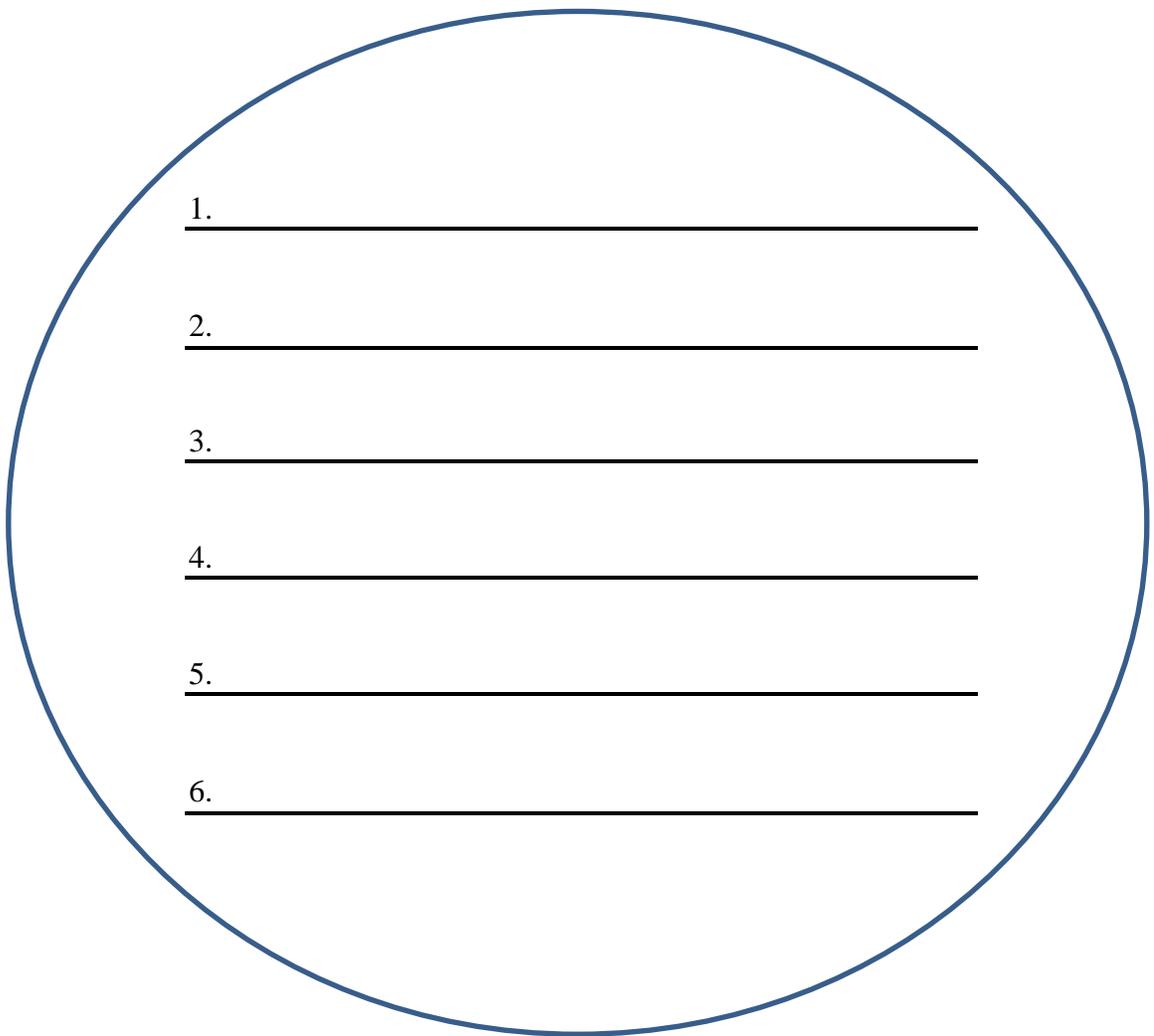
Closure:

1. Ask students to stand in a circle. Give each student an Animal or Environment card. (You may wish to tape the cards to the students or attach yarn to the cards so they can be worn around the neck.)
2. Give the ball of yarn to one student and ask the student to toss the ball of yarn to the animal or environment that is related. (For example, the student with the frog card would toss the ball of yarn to the student holding the snake or insect card. A frog eats insects and is eaten by snakes.) Continue tossing the ball of yarn until each student has had the ball of yarn at least one time. Some students may receive the ball of yarn more than once.
3. After each student has had the ball of yarn at least once, ask the group to look at how God planned the web of life to be interconnected and how as part of His plan all life depends on us being responsible stewards of the planet by caring for the animals and the environment.
4. Ask the students what they think would happen if all of the fish were extinct. After accepting a few answers, ask students holding the fish card(s) to drop their yarn. The outcome is that God's web of life is disrupted, and the whales, bears, birds and penguins would have no fish to eat. Nor would fish be around to eat many of the plants in the ocean, which could impact the environment of the ocean.

5. Ask students to return to their seats and finish the sentence on the bottom of their *Caring for God's World* sheet. Ask students to also draw one thing they can do to help protect the animal they selected.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Caring for God's World



1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

I can be kind to and protect _____
and help keep God's web of life strong!

Animal and Environment Cards

Copy enough so that each student has one card.

Lion

Zebra

Bird

Insects

Frog

Deer

Wolf

Puma

Turtle

Fish

Plants

Grass

Whale	Bear
Penguin	Snakes

Answer Key:

Lion-Zebra

Wolf and Puma-Deer

Deer and Zebra- Plants and Grass

Bird and Frog-Insects

Whale, Bear, Birds, and Penguins-Fish

Bear-Plants

Snakes-Frogs

Fish-Plants