

PROTECTING GOD'S CREATION

Objective

The children understand that the earth is God's creation and that it is mankind's responsibility to protect it.

Contents

- The earth is God's creation.
- It is mankind's responsibility to take care of it and protect it.
- What can we do to protect God's creation?



Introductory Remarks

Catechism

The visible creation (Catechism 3.3.1.2)

“Holy Scripture attests that God created the visible world in six days of creation. These are not to be understood as specific measures of time. The Bible relates how all that is perceptible to human beings was called into existence: God is the Creator of all discernible reality. It was at His word that heaven and earth, light, the shape of the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, the plants and animals, and even human beings came into being—and it was very good (Genesis 1: 31).

“Although the creation also came under the consequences of the fall into sin, it retains its generally positive assessment from God. Among other things, this is demonstrated by the fact that He watches over the order which He has laid into the creation (Genesis 8: 22). Thus the visible creation—even in its fallen state—provides an eloquent testimony of God, the Creator (Romans 1: 20). God also entered into the material world through His incarnation.

“God has assigned human beings their living environment and issued them the mandate to have dominion over the earth and to protect it (Genesis 1: 26–30; Psalm 8: 6). Human beings are thus accountable to God, the Creator, for their actions with regard to the creation. They have been instructed to treat all life and their habitat with esteem.”

Lesson Plan

Implementation

Statement Prompt

A child reads to the class.

The First Article of Faith

I believe in God, the Father, the Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth.

Discussion

In the First Article of Faith, Christians acknowledge that the earth is part of the creation and thus God’s work. This means that human beings should treat it with respect and esteem, like everything else that God has created. Human beings do not own the creation, on the contrary, they are creatures themselves and therefore a part of it. In this respect, they are irrevocably connected to the other creatures, the animals, and the plants.

Question Prompt

What is the position of man in God’s creation?

Teacher's Presentation

God gave man a prominent position among all the creatures. Man has been created in God's image and is thus responsible for all of God's creation.

Unfortunately, many people consider nature a resource for the lavish production of consumer goods. Motivated by selfishness, they often damage the creation to such an extent that it is almost impossible to repair it again. Through such actions people disregard their responsibility to protect God's creation.

In the long run, these actions destroy the ecological balance, and we not only risk our own future, but also endanger the existence of future generations.

A child reads to the class.

Bible

Genesis 1: 26–27:

"Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (Catechism-QA 80).

Catechism

What task does man have in the visible creation? (Catechism-QA 85)

Statement Prompt

Man has been given the commission to have dominion over the earth—that is, to shape it, on one hand, and to protect it on the other.

What does it mean to shape the earth?

Workbook, Exercise 1

The children think about possible answers and write them on a black-board or flipchart. If necessary, the teacher can help the children complete the assignment or can provide additional answers.

Board

Shaping the earth means:

- to create fields and plant grain and vegetables
- to breed and make use of animals
- to build houses
- to dig wells
- etc.

Question Prompt	What does it mean to protect the earth?
Workbook, Exercise 2	The children think about possible answers and write them on a black-board or flipchart. If necessary, the teacher can help the children complete the assignment or can provide additional answers.
Board	<p>Protecting the earth means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – We do not think of animals as commodities but treat them as God's creatures. We do not torture them but give them adequate space and care. – We do not intentionally contaminate nature but protect it from harmful influences. – We do our utmost to protect the habitat of human beings, animals, and plants. – We do our utmost to restore nature wherever it has been destroyed. – We do our best to make sure that future generations have an intact environment for their existence. – etc.
Bible	<p>A child reads to the class.</p> <p>Psalm 104: 10–15: <i>"He send the springs into the valleys; they flow among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. By them the birds of the heavens have their home; they sing among the branches. He waters the hills from His upper chambers; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of Your works. He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the service of man, that he may bring forth food from the earth, and wine that makes glad the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread which strengthens man's heart."</i></p>
Teacher's Presentation	These words show us that the psalmist holds God's creation in very high esteem. This psalm also makes it clear that God does not leave creation to its own devices but influences it constantly.
Suggestion	The teacher could bring a current newspaper article on the destruction of the environment and briefly discuss it with the children.

Conclusion

Workbook, Exercise 3

The children brainstorm with the teacher what they can do to contribute to the protection of God's creation.

Board

What can we do to protect God's creation?

- We can support organizations that protect the environment and animals.
- We do not create unnecessary garbage and do not leave garbage lying around in nature.
- We do not throw out food that is still edible.
- We can support efforts to protect the environment.
- etc.

Notes

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