

Small Group Material: Creation Care 1

Beauty and the Beast

Welcome (15 mins) Give everyone a copy of the Planetwise Quiz (attached). Get them to score themselves. The numbers next to each of the answers is the score.

Spend a few minutes debriefing the results... Is there a big difference between people in the group? Have people changed in their outlooks over the years? What have been significant influences for you?

Worship (15 mins)

"Caring for the earth is part of our worship. If the primary purpose of human existence is to worship God and enjoy him forever, as the Westminster Shorter Catechism puts it, then we need to remember caring for God's precious planet – that he cares for too, that he made for Christ – is part of worshipping Jesus." Dave Bookless, A Rocha
Watch this 7 minute video from A Rocha:

<https://atyourservice.arocha.org/en/hope-for-planet-earth-2009-resource-pack/> Scroll down to no.6, 'The Challenge'

Read together Psalm 148

Join in singing: Let Creation Sing:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUgKvONLh88> or here's a

song about creation to watch:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9gaFm-MpxBw>

Spend a few minutes praising our wonderful God who has placed us in an amazing world!

Word (35 mins)

A. Give each of these verses to a different person and ask them to explain to us what they tell us about God and/or his relation to creation. Gen 1.1-3; Romans 1.20; Gen 1.31; Ps 50.10-11; Ps 19.1-4.

B. Read Genesis 2.4-20a

The creation account in these verses is a detailed review as it relates to humanity. Why are we given a close look at how people fit into the creation account?

What do 1.26-29 and 2.7-25 teach about our original nature and character? Our purpose and tasks? Our likeness to the animals? Our likeness to God?

C. Read Luke 12.47-48 from Jesus' parable. God's charge to Adam in Gen 2.15 interprets his words in Gen 1.26-28. The words 'work' and 'take care of' can mean 'serve' and 'preserve'. In the light of God's commission to Adam, how do you now interpret these words of Jesus?

What has God entrusted to you? What feelings, attitude and actions do you take to these responsibilities?

Witness (20 mins)

Divide a large piece of paper (or 4 x A4 sheets) and label the 4 sections: Discipleship, Worship, Lifestyle, Mission. Brainstorm together on how seeing the earth as God's and ourselves as called to care for it will impact practically in each of these four areas.

Pray for each other and the church as we explore this huge and exciting subject over the coming weeks.

Ask God's Spirit to prepare us for any changes in thinking, relationships, priorities and living this will lead to.

PLANETWISE QUIZ

What shade of green are you?

Which of the following statements do you most agree with (1 answer in each section). This will only work if you're pretty honest with yourself and the others in the group. However, the idea is not to embarrass or to condemn ... just to give you an idea of where you start from:

A. Recycling:

1. Recycling is a waste of time
2. I ought to recycle but never get round to it
3. I've made a start with recycling but have a long way to go
4. I recycle everything I possibly can
5. I avoid packaging and waste, so there's very little left to recycle!

B. Climate Change

1. Global Warming is a myth dreamed up by those who want to control us
2. We can tackle Climate Change and keep our lifestyles as we want them
3. I'm confused about Climate Change but want to think it through properly
4. Climate Change is a major problem we have to address
5. Climate Change is the biggest danger facing the planet today

C. Wildlife / Environment

I'm a member of X wildlife or 'green' organisations (1 for each, up to 4!)

D. Food

1. It's wonderful how convenient and affordable food has become
2. I'm beginning to realise there are problems with the way we produce food
3. I buy Fairtrade bananas and coffee. Isn't that enough?
4. I do the following (2 points, plus 1 extra for each you do)
 - Buy organic fruit and vegetables or
 - Grow as much of my own vegetables / fruit as I can
 - Buy locally grown food wherever possible or
 - Buy Fairtrade food wherever possible

- Only eat meat when I know the animals have been well-treated or
- I'm vegetarian

E. Christian faith and the planet

1. The bible teaches this earth doesn't matter – only heaven does
2. God made this world for human beings
3. Caring for the environment is a hobby for some Christians
4. Caring for the environment is a calling for some Christians
5. Caring for the environment is a calling for every Christian

F. Lifestyle

1. What's a carbon footprint? My lifestyle is my business and nobody else's
2. I know I'm addicted to getting more & more stuff, but I do want to change
3. I've started to do the following: (1 point, plus 1 extra for each you do)
 - Work out my Carbon Footprint and reduce it
 - Shop more ethically (clothing, electrical goods etc)
 - Holiday without flying abroad
 - Get a green electricity supplier

Are you Planetwise? The answers:

Add up your total number of points (0 to 4 for each question – up to 5 for D. & F.)

0-6 Not green - at least you're honest! You're living without much regard to God's creation, and badly need to get *Planetwise*. This course can help!

7-12 Green tinged ... you've started, but your lifestyle and attitudes still largely reflect our consumer culture. Learning to be *Planetwise* will be a big challenge, but you're on the right track.

13-19 Bright green ... Well done – you're taking this seriously and are leading by example. You know there's still more to do, and *Planetwise* will help to resource your thinking and action.

20-26 Deep green ... Wow, eco-respect! ... you should be leading this! Keep it up, but beware of being an eco-Pharisee and making everybody else feel guilty!