

Small Group Material: Creation Care 2

Whose world is it anyway?

NB Watch your timings!! There is a suggested video to watch in the Witness section which lasts 11 mins. If you are leading an earlier section, please don't let them over run!!

Welcome (10 mins) What is an aspect/ a characteristic of the created world which amazes you? Can you give an example and say why?

Worship (15 mins) Ask everyone to find a verse in the Bible (the Psalms are a good place to look) which describes God's relationship with the created world. Then ask them to read them out and say a prayer based on that verse if they'd like to.
Join in singing Chris Tomlin's 'Indescribable'.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lpLqAUJcUbo>

Word (35 mins) We are going to explore the theme of 'The Land'.
To give us some idea of how important and overlooked the theme of land is, it's worth noting that the Old Testament refers to land 2,000 times, and the New Testament 250. In the life of Abraham alone, forty of the forty-six promises God makes mention the land and twenty-nine are mainly or exclusively about land. It's been calculated that there are more references in the Bible to land than to justification by faith, repentance, baptism or Christ's return." Planetwise p.48

A. This is a 'quick fire' section. **NB Go through this section quickly!** These references state what God says about the land and our relationship to it:

The land belongs to God - read Psalm 24.1 and Leviticus 25.23

We belong to the land. Read Gen 2.7. The Hebrew word for soil, earth is 'adamah' from which 'Adam' is derived.

Jeremiah 29.4-7. What do God's words through Jeremiah say about putting down roots in a new place and in our very mobile society?

The land is the place of our relationship with God. Point out to the group that the Old Testament is full of links between the people of Israel and the Promised Land, the land where his promises would be fulfilled. So many of the Jewish festivals in the OT were creation festivals, connected to sowing and harvesting, celebrating the rhythms of life upon the land.

B. **The land acts as a spiritual barometer.** Read the following verses and say what they tell us about how the earth responds: Ps 66.4, Jer 12.4, Romans 8.22, Hosea 4.3, Lev 18.25. What is it in response to?

Read 2 Chronicles 7.12-14. What situation and people did v14 originally address?

Dave Bookless of A Roche writes, '*What is so significant is that healing the environment comes about not primarily by recycling, down-sizing or resource management, but by repentance and returning to God. The land can only be healed when its inhabitants recognise whose land it is, and repair their broken relationship with God and each other. If the ecological crisis is ultimately a spiritual crisis, then the cure is also a spiritual one.*' Planetwise p.58

C. **Read Ezekiel 34.17-24** It is all too easy to 'spiritualise' these verses - but what do they say about God's provision, global and environmental justice, God's judgement, our responsibilities?

Where can you see injustice? What could you do about it?

Witness (25 mins)

Watch <https://atyourservice.arocha.org/en/hope-for-planet-earth-2009-resource-pack/> Video 2 called 'The Planet'. It lasts 11.0 mins.

Make sure you have time to pray! Pray

If you've got time: What aspects of our lack of care of the land most alarms us? What can we do about it - individually or with others?