

Season of Creation 2024: Resources



**TO HOPE AND ACT
WITH CREATION**

SEASON OF CREATION 2024

The firstfruits of hope
(Rom 8:19-25)



Guide: Accompanying Young People during Season of Creation

1. Introduction: Theme and Context

The 1st of September is Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation or Feast of Creation, opens the Season of Creation 2024. Faith leaders from around the globe will lead a time of prayer and reflection as we celebrate the start of the Season of Creation, on this year's theme, "To hope and act with Creation"

This additional resource guide aims to help you engage with young people and to deepen the spiritual and practical engagement of young people in your parish or school with the themes of creation and environmental stewardship during the Season of Creation. By combining prayer, reflection, education, and action, it encourages young people to become active participants in the care of God's creation.

- **Theme for 2024:** "For creation awaits with eager expectation" (Romans 8:19-25).
- **Duration:** September 1, 2024 - October 4, 2024.
- **Key Dates:**
 - September 1st – Day of Creation, also known as Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation or Feast of Creation, opens the Season of Creation 2024
 - 21st September – Day of Advocacy and Action
 - 4th October – Feast of St Francis of Assisi and end of Season of Creation.

Focus: The resource draws inspiration from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans, emphasizing the connection between human actions and the groaning of creation. This guide aims to engage young people in reflecting on their role in God's creation and their responsibility towards the environment.

Included in the accompanying PPT are two videos that speak about and use the audio recording from the Apollo 8 space mission. On Christmas Eve 1968, during their orbit around the Moon, the Apollo 8 astronauts broadcasted a live television message to Earth. As part of this broadcast, they read the first ten verses from the Book of Genesis, the biblical account of creation.

The Season of Creation is a time for reflection on our relationship with the Earth, and the Apollo 8 message serves as a powerful reminder of the beauty of our world and the importance of caring for it. By drawing on this historic event, young people can be inspired to take action in their own lives to protect the environment, ensuring that the beauty seen by the Apollo 8 astronauts remains for future generations to witness and cherish. The message from Apollo 8 continues to resonate, urging us to view the Earth not just as a place to live, but as a creation that requires our reverence and care.

2. Opening Prayer and Reflection for use in Sessions with Young People:

God, Creator of all,

We praise you for your goodness, visible in all the diversity that you have created, making us a cosmic family living in a common home. Through the Earth you created, we experience love and nourishment, home and protection.

We confess that we do not relate to the Earth as a Mothering gift from you, our Creator. Our selfishness, greed, neglect, and abuse have caused the climate crisis, loss of biodiversity, human suffering as well as the suffering of all our fellow creatures. We confess that we have failed to listen to the groans of the Earth, the groans of all creatures, and the groans of the Spirit of hope and justice that lives within us.

May your Creator Spirit help us in our weakness, so that we may know the redeeming power of Christ and the hope found in him. May the groans of the Spirit birth in us a willingness to serve you faithfully, so that we may hear and heal Creation, to hope and act together with her, so that the first fruits of hope may blossom. Loving and Creator God, we pray that you will make us sensitive to these groans and enable us to have the same compassion as that of Jesus, the redeeming Lord. Grant us a fresh vision of our relationship with Earth, and with one another, as creatures that are made in your image. In the name of the one who came to proclaim the good news to all Creation, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Reflection:

Invite students to read Romans 8:19-25 and briefly reflect on the interconnectedness of all life and their role in protecting God's creation. Use Romans 8:19-25 to ground any discussion on how humanity and creation are linked to hope and redemption.

2. Activities and Discussion with Young People

Using Power Point provided to guide the session.

- **Bible Study:**

Read and Explore Romans 8:19-25 and Genesis 1:1-2:1. Encourage students to identify the themes of creation, hope, and renewal in these passages.

Season of Creation 2024: Theme and Symbol

The theme this year emphasises that Creation is not an object that has been created for human use, but rather a subject that we are called to relate to and collaborate with as fellow creatures. By capitalising Creation, we refer to both the created order and the mystery of God's continuing act of creation. We acknowledge the whole created order, or the whole cosmos, including all living and non-living parts of God's Creation, showing our theological respect, reverence, accountability, and interdependence with the natural world.

The theological foundations for this year's theme and symbol are as follows.

- Creation is groaning in the pains of childbirth (Romans 8:22)
- Creation is standing on tiptoe waiting for the children of God to be revealed (Romans 8:19)
- First fruits of hope (Romans 8:23-25)

More details in respect of these talking points can be found in the official Season of Creation Guide via the following link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/12M3weSD4D2mvjCiI3Mxen3JQZ5Rrazz3/view>

Discussion Prompts/Questions:

- How do you see the groaning of creation in today's world?
- What role does hope play in the context of ecological crises?
- How can we act as "children of God" to help redeem creation?

- **Video Reflection:**

- Using the PPT provided show both the video that explains the Apollo Mission and how the reading of genesis 1 came about. The second reflective video that parallels this year's theme for Season for Creation and the famous words of the Apollo 8 crew. Discuss the significance of viewing Earth as a fragile, interconnected creation of God.

Apollo 8: Guidance and Context (See Season of Creation Resources)

The Significance of Apollo 8

Apollo 8, launched on December 21, 1968, marked a monumental moment in human history as the first crewed spacecraft to leave Earth's gravitational pull and reach the Moon. This mission, part of the United States' Apollo space program, was a critical step in the Space Race, a period of intense competition between the United States and the

Soviet Union during the Cold War. The crew, consisting of astronauts Frank Borman, James Lovell, and William Anders, were the first humans to witness and photograph the far side of the Moon and capture an "Earthrise"—the Earth rising over the lunar horizon. This iconic image, which showed our planet as a delicate, blue sphere hanging in the vastness of space, provided humanity with a new perspective on our home and our place in the universe.

The Apollo 8 Genesis Message

On Christmas Eve 1968, during their orbit around the Moon, the Apollo 8 astronauts broadcasted a live television message to Earth. As part of this broadcast, they read the first ten verses from the Book of Genesis, the biblical account of creation. This message, heard by millions around the world, resonated deeply as it linked the awe-inspiring views of the Earth from space with the ancient text describing the origins of life and the universe. The astronauts' reading was not just a reflection on the beauty of the world they saw from space, but also a reminder of the shared heritage and responsibility of all humanity towards our planet.

A New Perspective: Earth as Seen from Space

The image of Earth from Apollo 8, often referred to as "Earthrise," fundamentally changed the way people viewed the planet. For the first time, humans could see Earth as a whole, a fragile and interconnected system suspended in the vastness of space. This view underscored the idea that Earth is not just a collection of nations and territories but a single, shared home for all of humanity. It was a powerful visual metaphor for the unity and fragility of life on our planet, a message that is increasingly relevant as we face the ecological crises of today.

Linking the Apollo 8 Message to the Ecological Crisis

The Apollo 8 mission, and particularly the Genesis reading, can be seen as a call to stewardship of the Earth. The astronauts' message highlighted the beauty and sanctity of creation, a creation that is now under threat due to human activities. The ecological crises we face today—climate change, deforestation, pollution, and loss of biodiversity—are stark reminders that our planet is fragile. Just as the Apollo 8 crew saw Earth as a small, precious oasis in the vast emptiness of space, we too must recognize our responsibility to protect and preserve it.

- **Ecological Crisis Discussion with Young People:**
 - **Context:** Use insights from the videos and Season of Creation resources to discuss current environmental challenges, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.
 - **Activity:** Divide the students into groups to research and present on different aspects of the ecological crisis and propose actionable steps they can take as individuals or a community.
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4. Prayer and Worship Activities/Ideas for Parishes and Schools

- **Outdoor Worship Service:**
 - Hold a worship service in a natural setting (e.g., a park or garden) to connect the theme of creation with the surroundings.
 - Incorporate symbols from nature in Mass or any service using the prayer service from the Season of Creation Guide.
 - **Creation Walk:**
 - Organise a contemplative walk, encouraging young people to observe and reflect on the beauty of creation. Use this time to discuss the importance of caring for the environment and what it means to live sustainably.
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5. Practical Actions for Creation Care

- **Implementation Ideas:**
 - **Tree Planting:** Throughout the upcoming year organise a tree-planting event for Baptisms, Confirmations, or special milestones during the Season of Creation.
 - **Eco-friendly Projects:** Encourage students to participate in projects like reducing waste, recycling, or conserving water in their school or parish.
 - **Advocacy:** Engage in campaigns to reduce fossil fuel use as part of the global effort to combat climate change, as suggested in the Celebration Guide.
 - **Reflection and Commitment:**
 - Use the prayer and commitment exercises from the guide to help students reflect on their ecological footprint and make personal commitments to care for creation.
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6. Closing Prayer and Reflection

- **Prayer of Commitment:**
 - **Loving and Creator God,** we pray that you will make us sensitive to these groans and enable us to have the same compassion as that of Jesus, the redeeming Lord. Grant us a fresh vision of our relationship with Earth, and with one another, as creatures that are made in your image.
Amen
 - **Final Reflection:**
 - Invite students to share their experiences from the Season of Creation and how they plan to continue caring for creation in their daily lives.
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