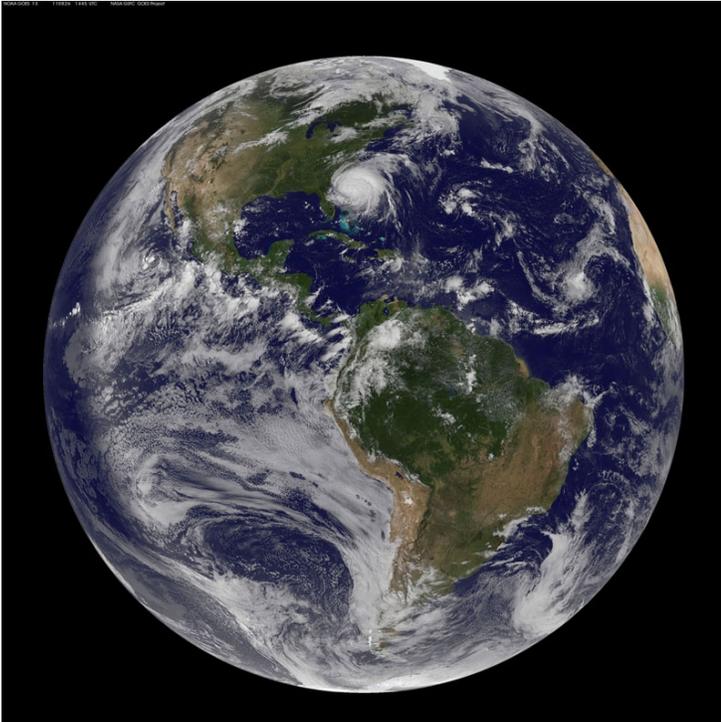


Caring for Creation:



Christian Mission in Light of Our Environmental Moment

Developed by: Ashley Patton

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Overview

The People

The workshop is geared for 8 to 12 people, mostly Christian. It is designed for people who may or may not be concerned with the environment and who may not have the knowledge or skills to know how they can help the environment. This workshop will also help those who do not understand how the environment affects vulnerable people.

The Time and Timing

- # of sessions: 4
- Time per session: 2 hours
- Breaks: one 15 minute break
- There will also be a 30 minute nature walk which the participant will conduct privately.

The Place and Space Requirements

- A square or rectangular room so everyone can face each other, ideally with comfy chairs
- The room should be made accessible to everyone
- Should be easy to access by transit or with adequate parking
- There should be audio visual capabilities (i.e. a projector or a TV)
- Snacks will be provided by the facilitator

The Situation

This workshop will not be mandated. It is being offered because Christians have been called to care for creation by God, but have not been very good stewards, leading to widespread environmental degradation and contributing to climate change. Therefore, education and action is necessary to bring change which will lead to sustainable living which respects all of nature, including people. There is continued and increasing environmental degradation which is occurring in and around Toronto, as well as a lack of community and human connection. Many people have expressed concern for the environment and have a desire to create community, but they do not know how or have the tools to do so. This event will help equip participants to live out environmental stewardship in their own lives. It will also tie together the positive human impact that environmental sustainability can have on a community.

The Desired Change

This learning will help inspire individuals to live more sustainably and with their community in mind. It will also help Christians become more aware of their duty to live environmentally sustainable lives, which will encourage them to live in a manner which helps build community and takes care of their neighbours.

The Objectives

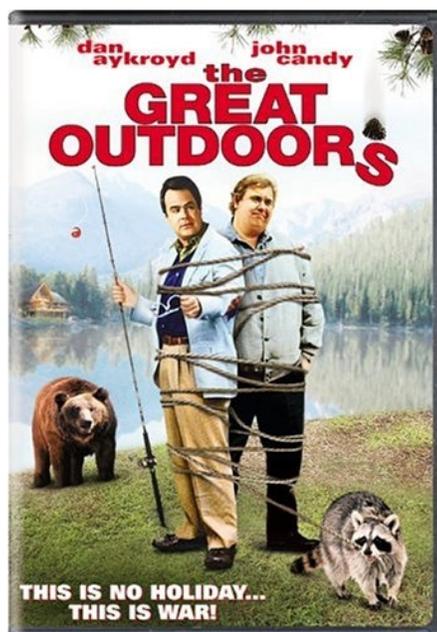
The Content	The Achievement-based Objectives
Creation care and social justice as fundamental practices of the Christian life	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Analyzed the Scriptures concerning care for creation- Discovered how creation care and social justice are an important part of the Christian mission
The state of the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Explored the ways in which the environment is effected by human acts- Analyzed the way in which the degrading of the environment affects humans
The benefits of caring for creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Had a personal encounter/experience with nature- Did a self-analysis on their time in nature- Analyzed the effects of environmental degradation- Named/identified the benefits of time in nature
How to live sustainably	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Drafted a list of practical ways to live sustainability- Critiqued and given feedback on each others' methods and lists

By the end of the workshop learners will be more inspired to live the gospel message of creation care and have learned how to live in a way that respects all of God's creation.

Lesson 1

Task 1: Course Introduction

- Welcome!
- Course overview.
- Clip of "The Great Outdoors."
 - *What do you think about this clip?*
 - *What struck you when hearing the opposing points of view?*



Task 2A: Christianity Warm-up

- Take 3 minutes to privately think and make notes about how the environment fits into your understanding of the Christian mission, if at all. Feel free to jot down some words or phrases that come to mind in the text box below or in your journal.

- In pairs or groups of three, take 5 minutes to share about your reflection.
- Let's take a minute to hear some of your thoughts.

Task 2B: Environment Warm-up

- Take 3 minutes to privately think and make notes about what you think about when you hear the words 'creation,' 'nature,' and 'Earth.' Feel free to jot down the words that come to mind or draw a picture of what comes to mind on the page provided.
- In pairs or groups of three, take 5 minutes to share about your reflection.
- If you feel comfortable, share your reflection with the group.

Debrief

- Please take a moment to consider the following questions before we discuss them as a group:
 - *What do you notice with the ideas that have been discussed?*
 - *What are some key words/themes here?*
 - *What still seems to be missing?*

Break



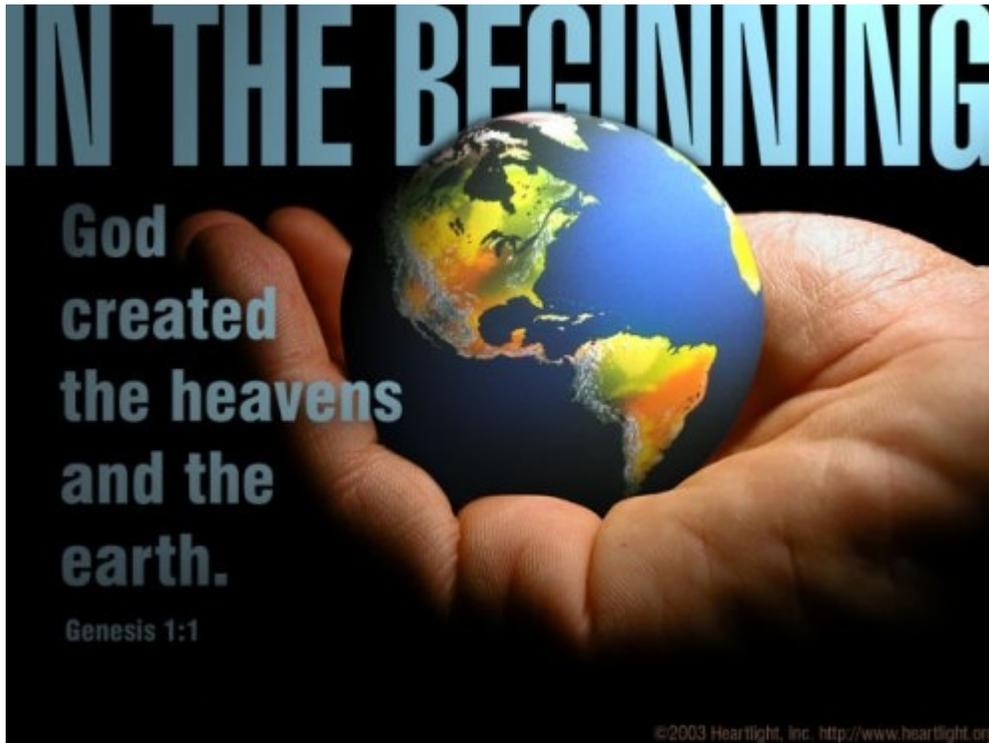
Task 3: Let's Define Creation!

- With the large group, begin brainstorming about how you think creation is defined.
- Please feel free to jot down the final definition in the box below.

- Please consider the following questions on your own:
 - *What do you notice about the ideas that have been put forward?*
 - *Is there anything missing?*
 - *Have the ideas challenged your preconceived notions?*

Task 4: What the Bible Has to Say about Creation

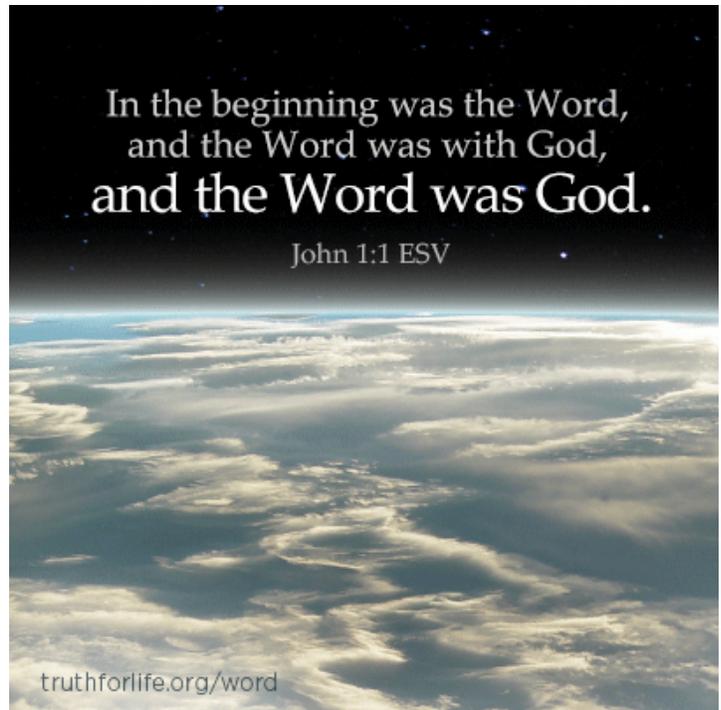
- Genesis 1 – God's call to care for creation
 - Read Genesis 1.



Debrief

- *What strikes you about this passage?*
- *What seems important here?*
- *What are the implications of this passage?*

- Humans are part of creation!
- The redemption of creation:
 - Read Psalm 19.
 - “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.” John 1:1-3 NIV



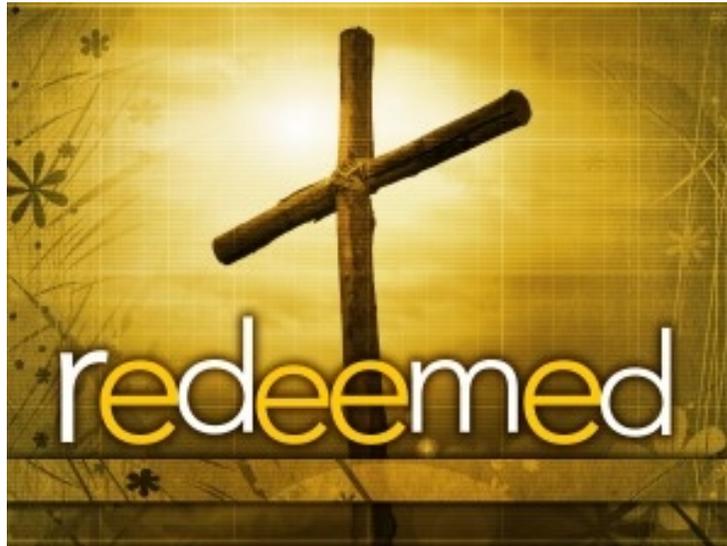
“For human beings... to destroy the biological diversity of God’s creation; for human beings to degrade the integrity of the earth by causing changes in its climate, by stripping the earth of its natural forests or destroying its wetlands; for human beings to contaminate the earth’s waters, its land, its air, and its life – these are sins.’ For ‘to commit a crime against the natural world is a sin against ourselves and a sin against God.’”¹

- The hope of Jesus

Colossians 1:15-20 says, “The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”

¹ Francis, *Laudato Si'* [On Care for Our Common Home], Vatican Website, May 24, 2015, page 8, accessed June 18, 2015, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

- It is only through the redemptive power of Jesus' resurrection, which conquered all sin, that we can have any hope or chance for the redemption of all creation.



Reflection and Debrief

- If you feel comfortable, please share your initial feelings about the material we have just learned with a different partner or group than you worked with before.
- Consider these questions as you discuss:
 - *Which aspects of what you have just learned seem most relevant?*
 - *Where do you find yourself agreeing/disagreeing with the material?*
 - *What doubts or reservations do you have?*

Task 5: Take Away

- Please begin to think about how stewardship is or is not practiced in your life, and in the lives of those around you, as you go about your daily activities this week.
 - *What is your experience with stewardship?*
 - *How do you see stewardship practiced or not?*
 - *Why or why not does this happen?*

Task 6: Closing Prayer

- Prayer for creation
 - Please take a moment to engage in a silent prayer for the Earth.
- Sing the Doxology

*Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

Lesson 2

Task 1: Welcome and Warm-up

In groups, read the passage below and reflect on its meaning with a partner.

Psalm 8 New International Version (NIV)

1 Lord, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory
in the heavens.

2 Through the praise of children and infants
you have established a stronghold against your enemies,
to silence the foe and the avenger.

3 When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,

4 what is mankind that you are mindful of them,
human beings that you care for them?

5 You have made them a little lower than the angels
and crowned them with glory and honour.

6 You made them rulers over the works of your hands;
you put everything under their feet:

7 all flocks and herds,
and the animals of the wild,

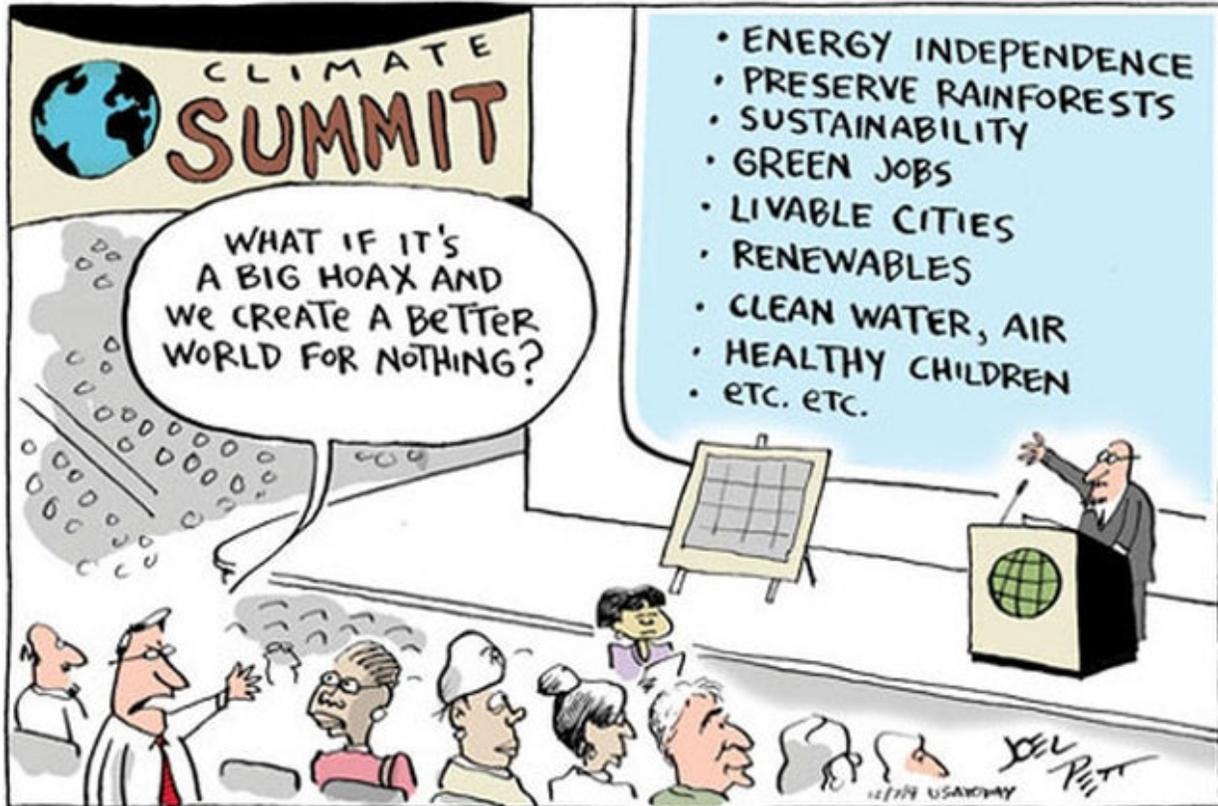
8 the birds in the sky,
and the fish in the sea,
all that swim the paths of the seas.

9 Lord, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

- *What strikes you about this passage?*
- *What is troubling or comforting in this passage?*
- *With this in mind, what does it mean to care for creation?*

Task 2: The State of the Earth

- Watch “What if Climate Change is Real?” by Katharine Hayhoe (18:15 minutes).
 - Please feel free to take notes in your journal on the video as we watch.



Reflection and Debrief

- Discuss in small groups how you feel about what you have just heard. Consider the following questions as you discuss.
 - *What was striking about the information you just heard? Was it difficult to hear?*
 - *How do you feel about the information? Scared? Sad? Hopeful? Inspired? Spurred to action? Or another emotion?*
 - *Bringing it home: What are the effects of climate change and environmental degradation you see in the GTA?*
- If you feel comfortable, share your feelings with the larger group.

Break



Task 3A: How Caring for the Environment is Part of the Christian Message and Mission

- Watch first segment of “Is God Green?” documentary (12:24 minutes).
- While we watch, think about what affects you most, what you agree with, what you do not agree with, and how this affects your understanding of the Christian's duty towards creation.
- Feel free to jot your notes down in your journal.



Reflection and Debrief

- Please take a few minutes to write, draw, or think about your initial reaction to what you have just seen. As you reflect, feel free to think about these questions:
 - *At which points did you find yourself agreeing/disagreeing?*
 - *How does the film compare with or differ from your own experience?*
- Feel free to share your feelings, drawings, or writings with a small group or partner that is different than who you have shared with before, if you feel safe to do so.

Task 3B: “Is God Green” Continued

- Watch second segment of “Is God Green?” documentary (13:24 minutes).
- While we watch, think about what affects you most, what you agree with, what you do not agree with, and how this affects your understanding of the Christian's duty towards creation.
- Feel free to jot your notes down in your journal.



Reflection and Debrief

- Please take a few minutes to write, draw, or think about your initial reaction to what you have just seen. As you reflect, feel free to think about these questions:
 - *At which point were you most energized?*
 - *At which point were you most frustrated?*
 - *At which points did you find yourself agreeing/disagreeing?*
- Feel free to share your feelings, drawings, or writings with a small group or partner, before we debrief in the large group.

Task 4: Take Away

- Consider how caring for the environment is part of the Christian message and mission as you go about your daily activities this week.
 - *How do you see creation care being honoured (or not) in your life and faith?*
 - *What affect does creation care have (or not have) on your life and faith?*

Task 5: Closing Prayer for the Earth

- If you feel comfortable, feel free to participate in a group prayer for the Earth with the whole group.
- Sing the Doxology

*Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

Lesson 3

(to be completed during the week between lessons 2 and 4)

- Go on a nature walk by yourself for at least 30 minutes, one hour is preferable.
- While on this walk, try to spend some time just being still and silent. Invite God to speak to you in and through nature.
- Take note of your physical and mental state of mind.
- Think about the sounds, smells, and things you are seeing.
- Reflect on how you experience God in this situation, if at all.
- Feel free to journal, write a poem, song, etc about your experience.



Lesson 4

Task 1: Welcome and Warm-up

"Indescribable" by Chris Tomlin

*From the highest of heights to the depths of the sea
Creation's revealing Your majesty
From the colors of fall to the fragrance of spring
Every creature unique in the song that it sings
All exclaiming*

*Indescribable, uncontainable,
You placed the stars in the sky and You know them by name.
You are amazing God
All powerful, untameable,
Awestruck we fall to our knees as we humbly proclaim
You are amazing God*

*Who has told every lightning bolt where it should go
Or seen heavenly storehouses laden with snow
Who imagined the sun and gives source to its light
Yet conceals it to bring us the coolness of night
None can fathom*

*Indescribable, uncontainable,
You placed the stars in the sky and You know them by name
You are amazing God
All powerful, untameable,
Awestruck we fall to our knees as we humbly proclaim
You are amazing God
You are amazing God*

*Incomparable, unchangeable
You see the depths of my heart and You love me the same
You are amazing God
You are amazing God*

- Take 10 minutes to discuss in small groups or pairs about your nature walk experience and what came to mind as you were listening to the song.
 - *What first comes to mind for you?*
 - *What stands out for you from your nature walk?*
 - *What surprised you most?*
 - *What, if anything, did that experience reveal to you?*
- Share your reflection with the large group, if you feel comfortable.



Task 2A: The Impact the Environment Has on Humans

- There are many effects that climate change and environmental degradation has on humans, however, the focus will be on effect they have on mental and spiritual health.

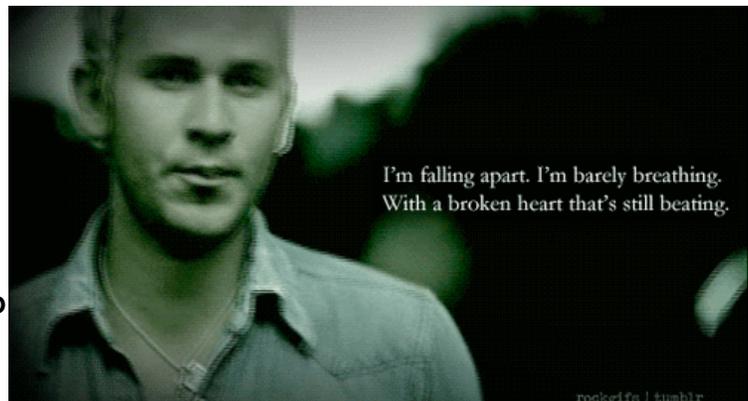
The Lancet Report: "Climate change is the biggest global health threat in the 21st century."²

State of Mental Health in Canada

In Canada, one in five people experience some sort of mental illness and the majority of the 4000 Canadians who commit suicide every year suffer from mental illness.³

It is estimated that the total cost of mental illness to Canadian economy is \$50 billion per year.⁴

- In our effort to make ourselves more affluent, civilized, and independent from everyone and everything, we have become a people who are deeply empty and broken, who are unable to cope with the stresses of the world we have worked so hard to create in an effort to make our existence easier and more efficient.



"Mental illnesses, including psychological distress following natural disasters and severe environmental degradation, are exacerbated by ill health and vice versa."⁵

- *How do you feel about this information?*
- *What did you connect with?*
- *What do you have questions about?*

2 Clare H. Redshaw, et al., "Potential Changes in Disease Patterns and Pharmaceutical Use in Response to Climate Change," *Journal of Toxicology and Environmental Health Part B*, 16 (2013): 286.

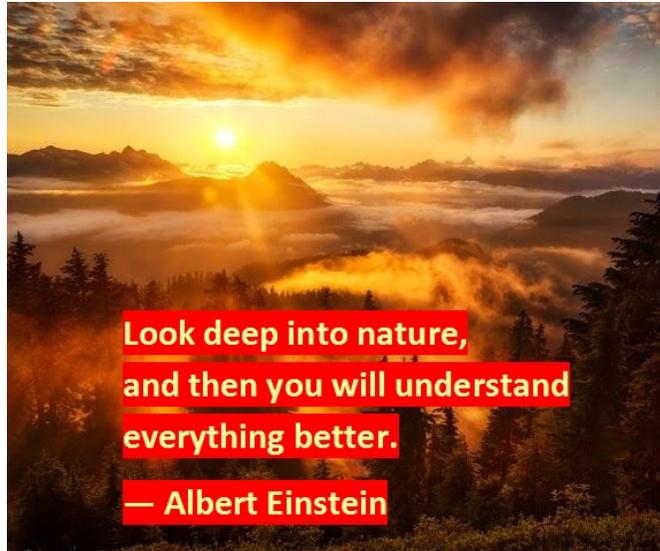
3 "The Facts," Mental Health Commission of Canada, accessed August 13, 2015, <http://strategy.mentalhealthcommission.ca/the-facts/>.

4 Ibid.

5 Clare H. Redshaw, et al., "Potential Changes in Disease Patterns and Pharmaceutical Use in Response to Climate Change," *Journal of Toxicology and Environmental Health Part B*, 16 (2013): 292.

Interaction with Nature is an Important Method of Connecting with God

- Nature has been the means that many people in the Bible were prepared for the great task they had ahead, or simply sought out the solitude as a means of connecting with God.



“We need the tonic of wildness...At the same time that we are earnest to explore and learn all things, we require that all things be mysterious and unexplorable, that land and sea be indefinitely wild, unsurveyed and unfathomed by us... We can never have enough of nature.” Henry David Thoreau

Reflection

- Please take a moment by yourself to consider the following questions. Please feel free to journal about your reflection.
 - *What, if anything, is the most difficult or shocking for you to believe and/or hear about the information that has been presented?*
 - *Where do you find yourself agreeing/disagreeing?*
 - *What implications can you identify?*

Task 2B: Benefits of Interaction with Nature

“Natural settings yield restorative effects such as stress reduction and promote [the] psychological well-being of visitors.”⁶



- Time in nature has also been proven to help create a sense of community which can be extremely beneficial in preventing or helping someone escape the dark hole of mental illness.

Reflection and Debrief

- Please feel free to discuss in small groups how you feel about what you have just heard. As you discuss, please consider the following questions:
 - *What benefits, if any, have you experienced in or from nature?*
 - *Think back to your nature walk and compare it with time you spend devoid of nature. Was there a difference in your mental or physical state? If so, how would you describe the difference?*
 - *What questions and/or feelings does this material raise for you?*
- If you feel comfortable, share your feelings and/or questions with the larger group.

⁶ Haywantee Ramkissoon, Liam David Graham Smith, and Betty Weiler, “Testing the Dimensionality of Place Attachment and its Relationships With Place Satisfaction and Pro-Environmental Behaviours: A Structural Equation Modelling Approach,” *Tourism Management* 36 (2013): 552.

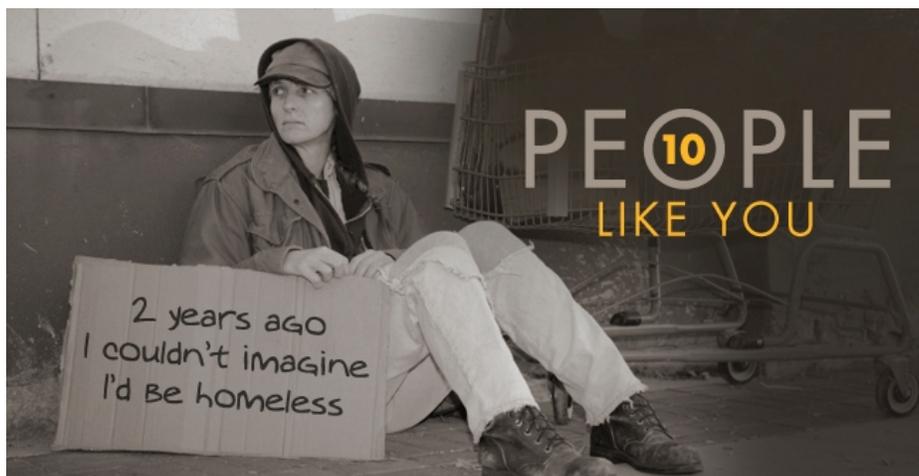
Break



Task 3: Christian Ideas of Social Justice

Canadian Demographics of Poverty

- The largest economic group in Toronto is the lower middle class, which is made up of people who are basically living paycheck to paycheck.
- 29% of children in Toronto live in poverty.
- According to the Canadian Payroll Association, 42% percent of Canadians state "they would be in financial difficulty if their paycheque was delayed by a week."
- Poverty is no longer restricted to those who are unemployed, homeless, or at risk, but it has the ability to affect those who are gainfully employed and are housed.



Christianity Calls us to a Life of Compassion

- **“Do unto others as you would have them do to you.” (Luke 6:31)**
- **In the Biblical sense, the poor include:**
 - **the victimized or oppressed;**⁷
 - **the hungry;**⁸
 - **he frail or infirm;**⁹
 - **the dependent;**¹⁰
 - **the dispossessed;**¹¹
 - **and the lower class of society**¹².
- **The Bible talks about poverty more than 2000 times,¹³ demonstrating the focus which God has on the poor and hurting in society.**
- **Jesus defended His stance toward the poor when He was confronted by the Pharisees.**

“When the... Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: 'Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?' On hearing this, Jesus said to them, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.'” (Mark 2:16-17)

-
- 7 The word in Hebrew is Aniy or Anah and it is the most used word to describe the poor in the Bible. It refers to the victimized and oppressed, whether that be a personal or a systematic oppression. The Greek word is Ptochos and it refers to those who are brought low in society. This information from Rick Tobias, “Towards a Biblical Understanding of Poverty” (lecture, Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, ON, September 30, 2014).
- 8 The Hebrew words for hungry are Raeb and Chaser. They refer to those who are experiencing a physical famine of food. The Greek word is Penes and it means to be starving or indigent. This information from Rick Tobias, “Towards a Biblical Understanding of Poverty” (lecture, Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, ON, October 14, 2014).
- 9 The Hebrew word for the infirm is Dal. Some people are born into a form of sickness and some people are made that way through circumstance. This information from Rick Tobias, “Towards a Biblical Understanding of Poverty” (lecture, Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, ON, October 7, 2014).
- 10 Ebyon is the Hebrew word for dependent. It refers to those who are unable to live without financial, emotional, or physical support of another. This information from Rick Tobias, “Towards a Biblical Understanding of Poverty” (lecture, Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, ON, October 7, 2014).
- 11 Rush is the Hebrew word which describes those who are dispossessed or marginalized in society. They the people who have been completely discounted by the world around them and seem to have no place in it. This information from Rick Tobias, “Towards a Biblical Understanding of Poverty” (lecture, Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, ON, October 7, 2014).
- 12 Ochlos literally means 'the multitude' in Greek and it is used to describe the lowest people in the lowest class or society. It refers to the people who are just barely getting by and have to work extremely hard to survive. This information from Rick Tobias, “Towards a Biblical Understanding of Poverty” (lecture, Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, ON, October 14, 2014).
- 13 “The Poverty and Justice Bible,” American Bible Society, accessed April 2, 2015, <http://justicebible.americanbible.org/>.

- In Acts, there is a beautiful picture of the early Church and how they lived together:

“All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:44-47)

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me... Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” (Matthew 25:35-36, 40).

- It is interesting how when Jesus described the Christian responsibility towards the poor, there is no mention of evangelism. Everything Jesus describes has to do with taking care of their physical and emotional needs.
- *As we were reviewing these texts, what was coming to mind for you? What is most provocative for you in these Biblical texts?*

Our Faith is a Faith of Action

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.” (James 1:22-25)

- Scripture is clear, living the Christian life means doing acts of social justice!



Reflection

- Discuss in small groups how you feel about what you have just heard. As you discuss, consider the following questions:
 - *What was most shocking or most difficult to hear?*
 - *At which point were you most frustrated? At which point were you most energized?*
 - *What did you find most relevant? What are the implications?*
- If you feel comfortable, share your feelings with the larger group.

Task 4: Take Away

- Consider how caring for the most vulnerable in society is part of the Christian message and mission as you go about your daily activities this week.
 - *How can you incorporate this learning into your life?*
 - *What, if anything, will you do differently because of this learning?*

Task 5: Closing Prayer for the Earth

- Sing the Doxology

*Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

Lesson 5

Task 1: Welcome and Warm-up

"God Of This City" by Chris Tomlin

You're the God of this City
You're the King of these people
You're the Lord of this nation
You are

You're the Light in this darkness
You're the Hope to the hopeless
You're the Peace to the restless
You are

There is no one like our God
There is no one like our God

For greater things have yet to come
And greater things are still to be done in this City
Greater things have yet to come
And greater things are still to be done in this City

There is no one like our God
There is no one like our God

For greater things have yet to come
And greater things are still to be done in this City
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There is no one like our God
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Greater things have yet to come
And greater things are still to be done in this City
Greater things have yet to come
And greater things are still to be done here

- Take 10 minutes to discuss in small groups or pairs about how you have been interacting with the course material over the past week. Please also reflect on your reaction to the song.
 - *Does or how does this song speak to last week's lesson about Christian social justice?*
 - *Does or how does this song speak to you about the character of God?*
- Share your reflection with the large group, if you feel comfortable

Task 2: Tying it All Together: Christian Mission in Light of Our Environmental Moment

Now is the Time to Act – James 1:27

- The love and care which Jesus showed to the poor was God's love for all humanity poured out in action. In the same way, the Bible calls all Christians to demonstrate the love of God to the world through action.



James said, "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." James 1:27

God did not call us to be complacent. God wants us to act!

"I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me." (Revelation 3:15-20).

- We are called to intervene in cases of injustice

- Lev. 19:15 "You shall do no injustice in judgement; you shall not be partial to the poor nor defer to the great, but you are to judge your neighbour fairly."
- Prov. 16:18 "Better is a little with righteousness than great income with injustice."
- Zeph 3:5 "The Lord is righteous within her; He will do no injustice. Every morning He brings His justice to light; He does not fail. But the unjust knows no shame."
- Romans 9:14-16 "What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." So then it *does not depend* on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy."

- Jesus calls His followers to be instruments of change and compassion in society, therefore, the Church must rise to the challenge and bring about reconciliation, equality, and justice between different socio-economic groups.
 - *As we were reviewing these texts, what was coming to mind for you? What is most provocative for you in these Biblical texts?*

How to Include Creation Care in our Faith

- Please take a minute to think about how you can include creation care as a part of your Christian mission.
- Feel free to write some of the ideas in the box below or in your journal.

Reflection and Debrief

- Please feel free to discuss in small groups how you feel about what you have just heard. As you discuss, please feel free to consider these questions:
 - *How have these lessons started to change your thinking about the environment or creation, and how we interact with it?*
 - *What have you noticed in yourself?*
- If you feel comfortable, share your feelings and/or questions with the larger group.

Break



Task 3: Sustainable Living as Part of Mission

- On your own, in your journal jot down 3-5 ideas of things you could do to live more sustainably. Circle the one you want to start with, today, now. Share this with someone close to you.
- In the large group, share your ideas for sustainable living.
- Please feel free to provide feedback/critique the list.

Task 4: Final Reflection

"Redeemed" by Big Daddy Weave

Seems like all I could see was the struggle
Haunted by ghosts that lived in my past
Bound up in shackles of all my failures
Wondering how long is this gonna last
Then You look at this prisoner and say to me "son
Stop fighting a fight it's already been won"

I am redeemed, You set me free
So I'll shake off these heavy chains
Wipe away every stain, now I'm not who I used to be
I am redeemed, I'm redeemed

All my life I have been called unworthy
Named by the voice of my shame and regret
But when I hear You whisper, "Child lift up your head"
I remember, oh God, You're not done with me yet

I am redeemed, You set me free
So I'll shake off these heavy chains
Wipe away every stain, now I'm not who I used to be

Because I don't have to be the old man inside of me
'Cause his day is long dead and gone
Because I've got a new name, a new life, I'm not the same
And a hope that will carry me home

I am redeemed, You set me free
So I'll shake off these heavy chains
Wipe away every stain, 'cause I'm not who I used to be

I am redeemed, You set me free
So I'll shake off these heavy chains
Wipe away every stain, yeah, I'm not who I used to be
Oh, God, I'm not who I used to be
Jesus, I'm not who I used to be
'Cause I am redeemed
Thank God, redeemed

- In pairs or small groups, think about how you may and/or will want to live differently in light of the information you have learned.
- If you feel comfortable, share your reflections with the larger group.

Task 5: Take Away

- Now it's time for us to do a final reflection on all we have learned and how we are living in and caring for God's creation. Take 7 minutes to review all your notes from this creation series, and write an action plan for moving forward (differently). Name 2 things.
- This should be an agreement between you and God which you will seek to fulfill in the coming days, weeks, months, and years.

Task 6: Closing Prayer for the Earth

- Sing the Doxology

*Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

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Appendix A

Concrete Steps to Living More Sustainably:

- As Christians, we need to be intentional about praying that God will direct us in our buying and in how we should live so we respect all of His creation.
 - A Rocha Canada has developed Good Seed Sunday resources for Christian faith communities. See <http://goodseedsunday.arocha.ca>.
- Use a carbon calculator to determine areas in your life which use the most carbon. A good carbon footprint calculator is:
 - <http://www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/page/calculators/>
- Share about your experiences, swap techniques and encourage others to do their part to live sustainably.
- Use natural cleaning products (e.g. vinegar, baking soda, hydrogen peroxide, etc.) instead of harmful chemicals.
- Compost and recycle. Check your municipality's website to learn about how products can be disposed of sustainably (e.g. in Toronto, the Waste Wizard at <http://app.toronto.ca/wes/winfo/search.do>).
- Walk, take transit, bike or carpool.
- Use LED light bulbs and low-energy appliances.
- Dispose of electronics and batteries in a sustainable way. Look at your municipality's website to find out how to dispose of those items properly.
 - *** Note: Best Buy will recycle your batteries and old electronics for you
- Limit the amount of disposable items you use (i.e. razors, toothbrushes, utensils, etc).
- Conserve water:
 - Turn water off between rinses
 - Use a low-flow toilet
 - Don't flush every time
 - Reduce the number of times per week you shower
 - Don't water your lawn or reduce the amount you water
 - Use low-water appliances
- Turn your thermostat down 1C and wear a sweater inside.
- Avoid using too much air conditioning by opening windows to create a cross-breeze, use fans, etc.
- Buy used clothing or participate in a clothing swap.
- Buy used items (i.e. used furniture, home decor, etc).
- If you are buying new, buy quality items that will last – do not look at everything as disposable.
- Give items more longevity by repurposing, refurbishing or revamping the item.
- Buy less in general – we don't need most of what we buy.
- Offset your carbon when you fly by donating to a program such as:
 - Climate Stewards <https://www.climatestewards.org/>
 - Air Canada's carbon neutral travel initiative <http://www.aircanada.com/en/travelinfo/traveller/zfp.html>
- Eat local. Here is a list of some places in Toronto to get local food:
 - Full list of Toronto Farmer's Markets on the City of Toronto website:

- http://tfmn.ca/?page_id=76
- Many food co-ops offer local or sustainably sourced food, such as:
 - West End Food Co-op
 - Harvest Noon
 - Karma Food Co-operative Inc.
- Eat seasonally. Here is a guide to seasonal eating for Ontario:
 - <http://www.harvestontario.com/seasonal.php>
- Try to reduce the amount of meat you consume, and eat alternative proteins such as pulses (e.g. lentils, chickpeas). See <http://www.pulsecanada.com>.
- Consider buying frozen produce during months when fresh produce must be shipped very far.
- Grow some of your own food.
 - Here are some links to plants that are easy to grow indoors:
 - <http://greatist.com/health/best-plants-to-grow-indoors>
 - <http://www.minq.com/food/4177/20-edible-plants-that-are-easy-to-grow-indoors#page=1>
 - The City of Toronto supports community agriculture programs. For a list of community gardens, look on their website at <http://csafarms.ca/>
- Limit food waste. Here are a couple of links with tips on how to prevent food waste:
 - <http://www.thinkeatsave.org/index.php/top-tips-on-reducing-food-waste>
 - <http://mashable.com/2015/02/15/food-waste-tips/#X6N2nJrGPqqb>
- Consider naturalizing your lawn – check your municipality's by-laws to see what is involved in getting approval or if it is allowed.
- Look into solar or wind power for your dwelling, church, school, workplace, etc.
- Lobby your local government to enact policies which encourage sustainability.

***** Remember, this list is just meant to jog your imagination and get you thinking about the ways in which you can live more sustainably. Be sure to do your own research and discover methods which work the best for you. The best thing you can do is be aware and stay informed.**

Annex A: Personal Reflection

My journey into Christian creation care has been a highly emotional and transformational one as I have dedicated my life to learning more about it and educating Christians about why it is an important part of their mission. When we were given the opportunity to develop a course, I knew right away that this was the subject matter I wanted to tackle. I wanted to develop a course which would synthesize the knowledge I have acquired on my journey through this material, help Christians see why they should engage with it, and give them practical tools to help them integrate it into their lives. It is my desire that the teaching of this course will help inspire a new generation of Christians to acts of great courage as they actively fight injustice and environmental degradation, while living out the redemptive power of Christ in the world.

I have been very intentional about adding the four A's (Anchor, Add, Apply, Away) to each session because I want to make sure the learners are able to retain what they are learning. I have also made an effort to design the course with the three major learning preferences in mind. Each session starts with something visual, auditory, or both to help the auditory and visual learners. There are also several videos, pictures, and quotes or important notes written down which will help visual learners. There are several discussion periods which will help the audio learners. For the kinesthetic learners, the learners will be doing a nature walk, which will encourage them to learn by doing. The facilitator will also make an effort to get people up and moving by encouraging discussion between people they are not sitting next to and by having a break in the middle of the session so people can have a chance to move. I have also made an effort to include multiple intelligences by having reflective time for intrapersonal learners and discussion time for interpersonal learners. I have encouraged people to take notes to help the verbal/linguistic learners. The workshop packet is laid out very logically and methodically to help the logical learners. The musical learners are considered by starting some of the sessions with songs to help set the tone of the session. Plants will be brought into the learning space and a nature walk will be undertaken to help the naturalistic learners engage.

This workshop was designed with adult learning and holistic teaching models in mind. I made a conscious effort to ensure that every piece of data and every activity included the six core factors of learning as well as the holistic teaching principles. This workshop is designed to be voluntary, so it was imperative that the learning be particularly relevant, immediate and that it moved people to action in their own lives by being cognitive, psychomotor, and affective all at the same time. Safety was greatly considered, so every task includes an invitation for the learner to engage or not. Respect was considered by making sure everyone is included and engaged thoughtfully in the material. The six core factors for learning were greatly helped by the pre-workshop questionnaire which will help ensure everyone's needs are met.

Annex B: LNRA Interview Questions to be Sent to Learner Once the Class List is Established

1. What made you want to take this course?
2. What previous knowledge, if any, do you have about the subject matter?
3. What excites you most about this course?
4. What, if anything, makes you apprehensive about this course?
5. What impact are you most hoping for? What do you most want to get out of this class?
6. What concerns or questions do you have?
7. Are there any needs you have that I should know about? (i.e. physical, mental, preferred learning style, etc)

Annex C: Facilitator Notes

Overview

The People

The workshop is geared for 8 to 12 people, mostly Christian. It is designed for people who may or may not be concerned with the environment and who may not have the knowledge or skills to know how they can help the environment. This workshop will also help those who do not understand how the environment affects vulnerable people.

The Time and Timing

- # of sessions: 4
- Time per session: 2 hours
- Breaks: one 15 minute break
- There will also be a 30 minute nature walk which the participant will conduct privately.

The Place and Space Requirements

- A square or rectangular room so everyone can face each other, ideally with comfy chairs
- The room should be made accessible to everyone
- Should be easy to access by transit or with adequate parking
- There should be audio visual capabilities (i.e. a projector or a TV)
- Snacks will be provided by the facilitator

The Situation

This workshop will not be mandated. It is being offered because Christians have been called to care for creation by God, but have not been very good stewards, leading to widespread environmental degradation and contributing to climate change. Therefore, education and action is necessary to bring change which will lead to sustainable living which respects all of nature, including people. There is continued and increasing environmental degradation which is occurring in and around Toronto, as well as a lack of community and human connection. Many people have expressed concern for the environment and have a desire to create community, but they do not know how or have the tools to do so. This event will help equip participants to live out environmental stewardship in their own lives. It will also tie together the positive human impact that environmental sustainability can have on a community.

The Desired Change

This learning will help inspire individuals to live more sustainably and with their community in mind. It will also help Christians become more aware of their duty to live environmentally sustainable lives, which will encourage them to live in a manner which helps build community and takes care of their neighbours.

Materials

- Computer

- TV or projector
- Speakers, if none included in the computer, TV, or projector
- Internet connection is necessary to play the videos
- Write brainstorming ideas on the computer and display on the screen, or, depending on the room arrangements, can write the notes on a board or on a large paper chart
- Bring flowers or plants
- Snacks/refreshments (either provided by the facilitator, by the host, or by the learners taking turns)
 - Try to provide or have people bring snacks that are healthy, thus causing congruence throughout the whole workshop
- Journals
- Pens and/or pencils
- Bibles

The Objectives

The Content	The Achievement-based Objectives
Creation care and social justice as fundamental practices of the Christian life	- Analyzed the Scriptures concerning care for creation - Discovered how creation care and social justice are an important part of the Christian mission
The state of the environment	- Explored the ways in which the environment is effected by human acts - Analyzed the way in which the degrading of the environment affects humans
The benefits of caring for creation	- Had a personal encounter/experience with nature - Did a self-analysis on their time in nature - Analyzed the effects of environmental degradation - Named/identified the benefits of time in nature
How to live sustainably	- Drafted a list of practical ways to live sustainability - Critiqued and given feedback on each others' methods and lists

By the end of the workshop learners will be more inspired to live the gospel message of creation care and have learned how to live in a way that respects all of God's creation.

Lesson 1

- **Course Introduction – 10 minutes**
 - Teacher introduces the course and subject
 - Goes over course outline briefly
 - Show video: “The Great Outdoors,” What do you see? scene <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dxg0LRTHgAU>
 - As they watch, have them consider these questions:
 - *What do you think about this clip?*
 - *What struck you when hearing the opposing points of view?*
 - Invite learners to discuss these questions in the large group and have them introduce themselves as well.
- **Christianity Warm-up – 20 minutes**
 - Take 3 minutes to privately think and make notes about how the environment fits into your understanding of the Christian mission, if at all. Feel free to jot down some words or phrases that come to mind in the text box below.
 - In pairs or groups of three take 5 minutes to share about your reflection
 - Opportunity for groups to share their reflections with the large group, if they feel comfortable
 - Go around the room and have everyone share their word or drawing.
- **Environment Warm-up – 15 minutes**
 - Take 3 minutes to privately think and make notes about what you think about when you hear the words 'creation,' 'nature,' and 'Earth.' Feel free to jot down the words that come to mind or draw a picture of what comes to mind on the paper provided.
 - In pairs or groups of three take 5 minutes to share about your reflection
 - If you feel comfortable, share your reflection with the group.
- **Debrief**
 - Please take a moment to consider the following questions before we discuss them as a group:
 - *What do you notice with the ideas that have been discussed?*
 - *What are some key words/themes here?*
 - *What still seems to be missing?*
- **Break – 15 minutes**
- **Let's Define Creation! - 10 minutes**
 - With the large group, begin brainstorming about how you think creation is defined.
 - Please feel free to jot down the final definition in the box below.
 - **Debrief**
 - Have learners consider the following questions on their own and then invite them to share their ideas with the group.

- *What do you notice about the ideas that have been put forward?*
- *Is there anything missing?*
- *Have the ideas challenged your preconceived notions?*
- What the Bible has to say about creation – 30 minutes
 - Genesis 1 – God's call to care for creation
 - Read Genesis 1
 - The creation account in Genesis makes it very clear that God is completely in charge of the creation of the world and everything in it. In this account, God is a cosmic and mighty force who is outside of space and time and who is capable of creating by simply speaking.
 - Debrief
 - *What strikes you about this passage?*
 - *What seems important here?*
 - *What are the implications of this passage?*
 - Humans as part of creation
 - Humans were part of God's creation which reveals His glory. Humans were specifically designed in God's image and were thus created to reflect the glory of God on Earth.¹⁴ Everything was made perfectly by Him, as is demonstrated by the fact that God called His creation “very good” once it was completed.¹⁵ Everything that was made was made to live in perfect harmony with a specific purpose and with limits that would govern its behaviour and would allow everything to fulfill its potential.¹⁶ Humans, being created in the image of God, were given a special place in creation when we were set above all other created beings and were tasked with ruling them.¹⁷
 - When God placed humans in this honoured position, it was in the context of a world without sin, where there was no selfishness, greed, pride, envy, or conceit. Everything on the Earth behaved in a manner which revealed the glory of God, not their own desires. Therefore, just as God takes care of humans and rules over us with kindness, love, and mercy, when God charged humans with ruling over the Earth, He desired us to rule in the same manner.
 - After The Fall of humanity when Adam and Eve were sent out of the Garden, God cursed them for their wickedness. Adam's curse pertained to his relationship with the Earth. No longer would he have a peaceful relationship with the ground, but the ground would rebel against his authority and would make it difficult for his livelihood, and the livelihood of all his descendents, to come from the Earth.¹⁸ The harmonious and equal relationship between men and women was also damaged that day when God cursed Eve and decreed that her husband would rule over her, not in a fair and righteous way, but in a subjugating and exploitative manner.¹⁹ This was the beginning

14 Genesis 1:26-28 NIV

15 Genesis 1:31 NIV

16 Matthews, 121.

17 Genesis 1:26-28 NIV

18 Genesis 3:17-19 NIV

19 Genesis 3:16 NIV

- of unrighteous living where God's creation no longer solely reflected His glory, but instead began to reflect the consequences of human sin.
- The redemption of creation
 - Read Psalm 19
 - God designed everything in creation with a purpose and a limit,²⁰ but once sin entered the world, the purpose and limits were warped, causing disharmony. The Law sought to bring everything back within its limits and to realign its purpose to uphold God's ultimate plan for the Earth. David, when he wrote Psalm 19, understood the connection between the Law and creation. For centuries, scholars believed that this Psalm was actually supposed to be two separate poems that were put together because it starts off discussing the glory of God's creation and suddenly switches to discussing the merits of the Law. David, however, understood how the Law is a crucial part of God's redemptive plan for all creation so, through the inspiration of God, included it as a crucial part of his reflection. The Law set out the rules for righteous living which would respect the Earth and all those who lived in it, while bringing limited redemption from the consequences of sin. The Law represented God's best practice at the time, until the true redeemer could be sent who would provide complete restoration to the whole of creation.
 - In Genesis 1 and Psalm 19 there is evidence of God's redemptive plan for all creation that is slowly being revealed. In the creation account, because there was no need for redemption before there was sin, there is not much evidence of redemption. The passage is, however, explicit about how God spoke everything into being; everything was created by His Word. Psalm 19 talks about how the law redeems humanity, and through humans, all creation is redeemed because humans are the stewards of creation. The other thing that Psalm 19 is explicit about is how creation declares God's presence, particularly in verse 1 when it states that "the heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands." In verse 4 David writes that the heavens have a voice which "goes out into all the earth." The description of creation having a voice links back to the Word of God which brought everything into being in the first place. 'The Word' is the term which the apostle John uses in his gospel to describe Jesus. John chose to begin his gospel describing Jesus as the Word who was instrumental in creation: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made."²¹ It is no mistake that John called Jesus the Word. It was through the Word that all of creation was made, it is the Word that was imparted to the Israelites through the Law, and it is "The Word [who] became flesh and made his dwelling among us,"²² in the person of Jesus.
 - Jesus is the embodiment of the Word of God but he is also the fulfillment of

20 Matthews, 121.

21 John 1:1-3 NIV

22 John 1:14a NIV

the Law who brings lasting and universal redemption to all creation. Sin soured the harmonious relationships and perfect balance which existed in nature prior to The Fall and creation has not been able to recover. Sin has so permeated the world that creation is now on the verge of complete collapse as greed, a love of money, and mistreatment of nature and other humans has caused irreversible damage leading to a change in our global climate. Social problems such as the subjugation of women, slavery, child labour, mental illness, domestic abuse, and a myriad of other issues have all stemmed from the sin which has justified mass environmental destruction. There are so many problems in the world, and no matter how much money, humans, and other resources we attempt to throw at the problems, they do not get any better, but sometimes get much worse. The problems have reached such a monumental scale that individuals alone do not have the power to make a transformational difference.

- In today's world, many Christians mistakenly believe that care for the environment is not our concern. They believe that it is the job of the environmentalist, 'tree-hugger', or political activist, largely because Christians have not cared to be part of the conversation about what is happening to our planet or they do not believe it is our job to fix the problem. This is a tragic misconception which has coloured our understanding of environmental issues for decades and has retarded our involvement in this dire issue. In Pope Francis' recent encyclical, he addressed exactly why care for the environment, also known as creation care in Christian circles, is an extremely important issue for Christians and why it is our duty to care for the Earth. "The destruction of the human environment is extremely serious... because God has entrusted the world to us men and women..."²³ In this statement, Pope Francis brought to light one important point that Christians often forget; the Earth and everything in it, including us, are God's creation and God charged us with taking care of it. "Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground —trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food... The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it."²⁴ Pope Francis further stresses the importance of our attitude towards creation when he referenced Patriarch Bartholomew of the Orthodox Church: 'For human beings... to destroy the biological diversity of God's creation; for human beings to degrade the integrity of the earth by causing changes in its climate, by stripping the earth of its natural forests or destroying its wetlands; for human beings to contaminate the earth's waters, its land, its air, and its life – these are sins.' For 'to commit a crime against the natural world is a sin against ourselves and a sin against God.'²⁵

23 Francis, *Laudato Si'* [On Care for Our Common Home], Vatican Website, May 24, 2015, page 4, accessed June 18, 2015, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

24 Gen 2:8-9b, 15 NIV

25 Francis, *Laudato Si'* [On Care for Our Common Home], Vatican Website, May 24, 2015, page 8, accessed June 18,

- The Bible clearly states that care of the earth is an important part of our relationship with God: “You shall not pollute the land in which you live, for blood pollutes the land, and no atonement can be made for the land for the blood that is shed in it, except by the blood of the one who shed it. You shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell, for I the Lord dwell in the midst of the people of Israel.”²⁶
 - The hope of Jesus
 - Colossians 1:15-20 says, “The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”
 - It is only through the redemptive power of Jesus' resurrection, which conquered all sin, that we can have any hope or chance for the redemption of all creation.
- Reflection – 10 minutes
 - If you feel comfortable, please share your initial feelings about the material we have just learned with a different partner or group than you worked with before.
 - Consider these questions as you discuss:
 - *Which aspects of what you have just learned seem most relevant?*
 - *Where do you find yourself agreeing/disagreeing with the material?*
 - *What doubts or reservations do you have?*
- Task 5: Take Away – 2 minutes
 - Please begin to think about how stewardship is or is not practiced in your life, and in the lives of those around you, as you go about your daily activities this week.
 - *What is your experience with stewardship?*
 - *How do you see stewardship practiced or not?*
 - *Why or why not does this happen?*
- Closing Prayer – 8 minutes
 - Prayer for creation
 - Please take a moment to engage in a silent prayer for the Earth.
 - Sing the Doxology
 - We sing the doxology as a thankful prayer to God who, despite all the problems we see in the world and in our failure to live out the principles of stewardship, is still in control of everything. We praise God who is in control

2015, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

26 Numbers 35:33-34 NIV

- of all creation and who sends His blessings over everything.
- We will sing it through until we all find a natural stopping point. Invite learners to close their eyes, raise their hands, etc

*Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

Lesson 2

- Welcome and Warm-up – 15 minutes
 - Welcome everyone
 - In groups, read the passage below and reflect on its meaning with a partner.

Psalm 8 New International Version (NIV)

- **For the director of music. According to *gittith*. A psalm of David.**

- **1 Lord, our Lord,**

how majestic is your name in all the earth!

- You have set your glory
in the heavens.

2 Through the praise of children and infants
you have established a stronghold against your enemies,
to silence the foe and the avenger.

3 When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,

4 what is mankind that you are mindful of them,
human beings that you care for them?

- **5** You have made them a little lower than the angels
and crowned them with glory and honour.

6 You made them rulers over the works of your hands;
you put everything under their feet:

7 all flocks and herds,
and the animals of the wild,

8 the birds in the sky,
and the fish in the sea,

all that swim the paths of the seas.

- **9 Lord, our Lord,**

- how majestic is your name in all the earth!

- *What strikes you about this passage?*

- *What is troubling or comforting in this passage?*
- *With this in mind, what does it mean to care for creation?*
- The state of the Earth – 20 minutes
 - Watch “What if Climate Change is Real?” by Katharine Hayhoe (18:14 mins) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PtrYNGs9oRM>
 - Katharine Hayhoe is an atmospheric scientist who also happens to be an evangelical Christian. She is a professor at Texas Tech University and she has also taken on the role of advising governments on climate change. She has gained a reputation as being one of the best speakers on climate change because she is very adept at taking extremely complex scientific findings and making them understandable to normal people. She was named one of Time Magazine's 100 most influential people in 2015.
 - Please feel free to take notes on the video as we watch.
- Reflection and debrief – 20 minutes
 - Discuss in small groups how you feel about what you have just heard
 - *What was striking about the information you just heard? Was it difficult to hear?*
 - *How do you feel about the information? Scared? Sad? Hopeful? Inspired? Spurred to action? Or another emotion?*
 - *Bringing it home: What are the effects of climate change and environmental degradation you see in the GTA?*
 - If you feel comfortable, share your feelings with the larger group
 - Facilitator will write these down for the larger group to see.
- Break – 15 minutes
- How caring for the environment is part of the Christian message and mission – 45 minutes
 - Watch first segment of “Is God Green?” documentary: <http://www.pbs.org/moyers/moyersonamerica/green/>
 - While we watch, think about what affects you most, what you agree with, what you do not agree with, and how this affects your understanding of the Christian's duty towards creation.
 - Feel free to jot your notes down in your journal.
 - Reflection and Debrief
 - Please take a few minutes to write, draw, or think about your initial reaction to what you have just seen. As you reflect, feel free to think about these questions:
 - *At which points did you find yourself agreeing/disagreeing?*
 - *How does the film compare with or differ from your own experience?*
 - Feel free to share your feelings, drawings, or writings with a small group or partner that is different than who you have shared with before, if you feel safe to do so.
 - Watch second segment of “Is God Green?” documentary
 - While we watch, think about what affects you most, what you agree with, what you do not agree with, and how this affects your understanding of the

- Christian's duty towards creation.
 - Feel free to jot your notes down in your journal.
 - Reflection and Debrief
 - Please take a few minutes to write, draw, or think about your initial reaction to what you have just seen. As you reflect, feel free to think about these questions:
 - *At which point were you most energized?*
 - *At which point were you most frustrated?*
 - *At which points did you find yourself agreeing/disagreeing?*
 - Feel free to share your feelings, drawings, or writings with a small group or partner, before we debrief in the large group. journal.
- Take Away – 5 minutes
 - Consider how caring for the environment is part of the Christian message and mission as you go about your daily activities this week.
 - *How do you see creation care being honoured (or not) in your life and faith?*
 - *What affect does creation care have (or not have) on your life and faith?*
 - Remind everyone to look at lesson 3 (the nature walk) and to complete it before the next session
- Closing Prayer for the Earth – 10 minutes
 - Invite learners to pray aloud for the Earth with the whole group, if they feel comfortable.
 - Sing the Doxology – we will sing it through until we all find a natural stopping point. Invite learners to close their eyes, raise their hands, etc

*Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

Lesson 3 (to be completed during the week between sessions 2 and 4)

- Go on a nature walk by yourself for at least 30 minutes, one hour is preferable.
- While on this walk, try to spend some time just being still and silent. Invite God to speak to you in and through nature.
- Take note of your physical and mental state of mind.
- Think about the sounds, smells, and things you are seeing.
- Reflect on how you experience God in this situation, if at all.
- Feel free to journal, write a poem, song, etc about your experience.

Lesson 4

- Welcome and Warm-up – 30 minutes
 - Welcome everyone
 - Listen to the song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qF9aY49oQTs>

**“Indescribable”
by Chris Tomlin**

*From the highest of heights to the depths of the sea
Creation's revealing Your majesty
From the colors of fall to the fragrance of spring
Every creature unique in the song that it sings
All exclaiming*

*Indescribable, uncontainable,
You placed the stars in the sky and You know them by name.
You are amazing God
All powerful, untameable,
Awestruck we fall to our knees as we humbly proclaim
You are amazing God*

*Who has told every lightning bolt where it should go
Or seen heavenly storehouses laden with snow
Who imagined the sun and gives source to its light
Yet conceals it to bring us the coolness of night
None can fathom*

*Indescribable, uncontainable,
You placed the stars in the sky and You know them by name
You are amazing God
All powerful, untameable,
Awestruck we fall to our knees as we humbly proclaim
You are amazing God
You are amazing God*

*Indescribable, uncontainable,
You placed the stars in the sky and You know them by name.
You are amazing God
All powerful, untameable,
Awestruck we fall to our knees as we humbly proclaim
You are amazing God
Indescribable, uncontainable,
You placed the stars in the sky and You know them by name.
You are amazing God
Incomparable, unchangeable
You see the depths of my heart and You love me the same
You are amazing God
You are amazing God*

- Take 10 minutes to discuss in small groups or pairs about your nature walk experience and what came to mind as you were listening to the song.
 - *What first comes to mind for you?*
 - *What stands out for you from your nature walk?*

- *What surprised you most?*
 - *What, if anything, did that experience reveal to you?*
- Share your reflection with the large group, if you feel comfortable
- **The impact the environment has on humans – 30 minutes**
 - There are many effects that climate change and environmental degradation has on humans, however, the focus will be on effect they have on mental and spiritual health.
 - **State of Mental Health in Canada**
 - In the midst of the ecological upheaval that has been occurring, mental health has been on the decline, particularly in developed countries. In Canada, one in five people experience some sort of mental illness and the majority of the 4000 Canadians who commit suicide every year suffer from mental illness.²⁷ The mortality rate due to mental illness has been steadily increasing since the 1960s, with no signs of this current trend reversing or slowing down.²⁸ Mental health issues not only affect a person's psyche, but it has become apparent that they cause physical deterioration as well. Studies suggest that adults with severe mental illness have a life expectancy which is 25 years less than the rest of the population.²⁹ Not only does mental illness affect those who suffer from it, but it is apparent that it is responsible for contributing to the breakdown of civilized society. "Estimates suggest that rates of serious mental health problems among federal offenders upon admission have increased by 60 to 70 per cent since 1997."³⁰ Mental health is also costly for our society because it prevents people from being productive members of society. "In 2010, mental health conditions were responsible for 47 per cent of all approved disability claims in the federal civil service, almost double the percentage of twenty years earlier."³¹ It is estimated that the total cost of mental illness to Canadian economy is \$50 billion per year.³² In our effort to make ourselves more affluent, civilized, and independent from everyone and everything, we have become a people who are deeply empty and broken, who are unable to cope with the stresses of the world we have worked so hard to create in an effort to make our existence easier and more efficient. These statistics, while bleak in outlook, demonstrate just how dysfunctional our supposedly 'civilized' society, which has everything one could want, has become. It is apparent that there is something fundamentally flawed about the way we have been developing.
 - **Link Between Environmental Degradation and Mental Illness**
 - **Scientific research is beginning to link the increase in mental health**

27 "The Facts," Mental Health Commission of Canada, accessed August 13, 2015, <http://strategy.mentalhealthcommission.ca/the-facts/>.

28 "Mortality Due to Mental Disorders," The Conference Board of Canada, accessed July 28, 2015, <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/hcp/details/health/mortality-mental-disorders.aspx>

29 "The Facts," Mental Health Commission of Canada, accessed August 13, 2015, <http://strategy.mentalhealthcommission.ca/the-facts/>.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

disorders with a lack of engagement in nature and environmental destruction. “Extreme weather events and environmental stressors associated with global climate change are likely to have immediate effects on the prevalence and severity of mental health issues in affected communities, significant implications for mental health services, and ongoing disruptions to the social, economic and environmental determinants that promote mental health in general.”³³ “Mental illnesses, including psychological distress following natural disasters and severe environmental degradation, are exacerbated by ill health and vice versa.”³⁴ A 2001 study “concluded that there is a causal relationship between heat and violence and that any increase in average global temperature is likely to be accompanied by an increase in violent aggression.”³⁵ This study predicted that for every 2 degrees Fahrenheit rise in temperature, there would be a rise in assaults and murders in the United States by approximately 24,000 per year.³⁶ It has also been concluded that the longer and more severe heat waves we have been enduring due to climate change have been linked “with increasing mortality, homicide, suicide, physical assault, and spousal abuse.”³⁷

- One of the by-products of environmental degradation and the increase in urbanization is noise pollution. While it has not been studied as much as the physical damage to the environment, recent research on the effects of noise pollution is beginning to demonstrate the depths with which we have taken environmental upheaval to. The ambiguous nature of noise pollution has made it difficult to measure and study, because noise pollution could be considered any noise at all, from a ticking clock to airplanes constantly passing overhead. Due to this, noise pollution has been linked to what is clinically termed 'annoyance.' Annoyance has been defined as “the resentment we feel at an intrusion into the physical privacy which we have for the moment marked out as our own, or into our thoughts or emotions.”³⁸ Technology has also had a significant impact on noise pollution as it has acclimatized us to constant noise. It is very rare to ever be in complete silence, thanks to television, ipods, cellphones, and other forms of technology which constantly bombard us with images and noise. This constant bombardment, which younger generations have experienced their whole lives, has created, what can only be described as, a fear of silence.³⁹ This fear of silence has become so ingrained, that it is very difficult to find truly quiet spaces, even in libraries, which used to be places of complete

33 Thomas J. Doherty and Susan Clayton, “The Psychological Impacts of Global Climate Change,” *American Psychologist* 66 no. 4 (2011): 268.

34 Clare H. Redshaw, et al., “Potential Changes in Disease Patterns and Pharmaceutical Use in Response to Climate Change,” *Journal of Toxicology and Environmental Health Part B*, 16 (2013): 292.

35 Thomas J. Doherty and Susan Clayton, “The Psychological Impacts of Global Climate Change,” *American Psychologist* 66 no. 4 (2011): 270.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid., 268.

38 Michel Shepherd, “Pollution, Noise, and Mental Health,” *The Lancet* February 8 (1975): 322.

39 Bruce Fell, “Bring the Noise: Has Technology Made Us Scared of Silence?” *The Conversation*, December 30, 2012, <http://theconversation.com/bring-the-noise-has-technology-made-us-scared-of-silence-10988>.

silence. Many libraries have reduced quiet space to a few isolated areas, and turned the majority of the space into, so called, 'shared learning spaces,' meaning people are able to be as loud as they like.⁴⁰ Given that most of the world's population lives or will live in urban centers within the next 15 years, it is important to understand the impact that constant noise has on the human psyche. "The most widespread and well documented subjective response to noise is annoyance, which may include fear and mild anger, related to a belief that one is being avoidably harmed. Noise is also seen as intrusive into personal privacy..."⁴¹ Noise pollution has also been linked to decreased neurocognitive function, mental health disruptions, and even neurodegenerative disease.⁴² Given all of these findings, it is clear that the Lancet Commission was correct when it "...concluded that 'climate change is the biggest global health threat in the 21st century.'"⁴³

- Check in with the learners:
 - *How do you feel about this information?*
 - *What did you connect with?*
 - *What do you have questions about?*
- Interaction with Nature as an Important Method of Connecting with God
 - The relationship between nature and mental health is important, not only because it exposes a fatal flaw in how modern civilization is composed, but it is fundamental in ascertaining the importance of nature in our relationship with God. The Pew Research Center has documented the decrease in church attendance since 1971. Their research shows a steep decline in Protestant church attendance from 41% to 27%, with Catholic church attendance declining from 47% to 39%.⁴⁴ It is no accident that this decline has occurred while environmental destruction and the effects of global warming have exponentially increased. This has happened because nature is an integral part of how people experience God. For Christians, God is the supreme Creator of everything in the cosmos. As Genesis says, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."⁴⁵ As Creator, God utilizes nature to reveal Himself to those He created. The Psalmist knew this when he wrote, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."⁴⁶ Not only does creation reveal the wonder of God's glory, but nature has been the means that many people in the Bible were prepared for the great task they had ahead, or simply sought out the solitude as a means of connecting with God. Moses led the people of Israel through the

40 "Noisy Libraries: Rethinking Quiet and Reclaiming the Sanctity of Silence," HubPages, accessed August 13, 2015, <http://robertkernodle.hubpages.com/hub/Noisy-Libraries-Rethinking-Quiet-And-Reclaiming-The-Sanctity-Of-Silence>.

41 Stephen A. Stansfeld and Mark P. Matheson, "Noise Pollution: Non-Auditory Effects on Health," *British Medical Bulletin* 68 (2003): 249.

42 Lilian Tzivian, et al., "Effect of Long-Term Outdoor Air Pollution and Noise on Cognitive and Psychological Functions in Adults," *International Journal of Hygiene and Environmental Health* 218 (2015): 10.

43 Clare H. Redshaw, et al., "Potential Changes in Disease Patterns and Pharmaceutical Use in Response to Climate Change," *Journal of Toxicology and Environmental Health Part B*, 16 (2013): 286.

44 "Canada's Changing Religious Landscape," Pew Research Center, accessed August 13, 2015, <http://www.pewforum.org/2013/06/27/canadas-changing-religious-landscape/>.

45 Genesis 1:1 NIV

46 Psalm 19:1 NIV

wilderness as they were preparing to go into the Promised Land. While lingering in the wilderness, they were able to have intimate encounters with God, the likes of which the people had never experienced. God appeared to the Israelites as a pillar of fire, and He appeared personally to Moses on a mountain. These are some of the most intimate encounters that humans have ever had with God, and they happened in nature. David, who is long suspected of suffering from some form of depression, spent much of his time in solitude as a shepherd, seeking solace from his woes in the glory of God's creation. The Psalms are filled with wonderful orations to the glory of God which David was able to experience in nature. Psalm 23 states, "he makes me to lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul."⁴⁷ This passage demonstrates David's understanding of how necessary time in nature is to the development and maintenance of a healthy psyche. Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness, in complete solitude, when He was preparing for His ministry. Luke recounts that Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit when He returned from His time in nature.⁴⁸ All of these situations demonstrate the intense need humans have for encountering God through nature which is ingrained deep in the psyche.

○ **Reflection**

- Please take a moment by yourself to consider the following questions.

Please feel free to journal about your reflection.

- *What, if anything, is the most difficult or shocking for you to believe and/or hear about the information that has been presented?*
- *Where do you find yourself agreeing/disagreeing?*
- *What implications can you identify?*

○ **Benefits of Interaction with Nature**

- It has been well-documented for centuries that interaction with nature is necessary for a healthy life, which includes a healthy psyche. Henry David Thoreau understood the importance of interaction with nature when he said, "We need the tonic of wildness...At the same time that we are earnest to explore and learn all things, we require that all things be mysterious and unexplorable, that land and sea be indefinitely wild, unsurveyed and unfathomed by us... We can never have enough of nature." John Lubbock wrote about the vital need for idleness in nature when he said, "Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass under trees on a summer's day, listening to the murmur of the water, or watching the clouds float across the sky, is by no means a waste of time." The great poet, Lord Byron knew that nature was a crucial part of a civilized society when he wrote, "There is pleasure in the pathless woods, there is rapture in the lonely shore, there is society where none intrudes, by the deep sea, and music in its roar; I love not Man the less, but Nature more." Even one of the greatest minds of all time, Albert Einstein, knew that there was something special about nature: "Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better."

47 Psalm 23:2 NIV

48 Luke 4:1 NIV

- **Christian ideas of social justice – 30 minutes**
 - While poverty may not seem to be a huge issue in such an affluent country as Canada, Canada is no longer the land of opportunity it was. In the past 5 years, poverty has been on the rise and it shows no signs of slowing down.
 - Talk about how the demographics of poverty have changed.
 - Show graphic:
 - http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2014/08/27/toronto_child_poverty_rate_at_epidemic_levels.html
 - The largest economic group in Toronto is the lower middle class, which is made up of people who are basically living paycheck to paycheck.
 - Poverty is no longer contained to the “ghetto” but it is widespread throughout Toronto, and even in the GTA.
 - 29% of children in Toronto live in poverty.
 - Poverty stats:
 - According to the Canadian Payroll Association, 42% percent of Canadians state “they would be in financial difficulty if their paycheque was delayed by a week”.
 - In 2012, a record 872,379 Canadians used food banks each month, the highest level of food bank usage ever (Food Banks Canada). In 2013 the number was only slightly lower at 833,098 – which is still 23% above the 2008 levels (Hunger Count 2013).
 - 3.1 million households pay more than 30% of their income on housing making them housing insecure, and 150,000 – 300,000 are visibly homeless, while 450,000 – 900,000 Canadians represent the ‘hidden’ homeless (Wellesley Institute, Precarious Housing in Canada Report, 2010)
 - Out of 25 developed countries, Canada ties for last place for failing to attain nine of UNICEF’s ten benchmark indicators of quality and access to early childhood education and care (ECEC) provision.
 - 1 in 3, or 33%, low-income children had at least one parent who worked full time throughout the year in 2008, and still lived in poverty (Statistics Canada, 2008)
 - Poverty is no longer restricted to those who are unemployed, homeless, or at risk, but it has the ability to affect those who are gainfully employed and are housed.
 - The fast-paced and ever shifting nature of our society and economy makes job security and stability nearly impossible, meaning that many people in the lower middle class are simply a few months of unemployment away from bankruptcy and falling into poverty.
 - In the light of the state that Toronto and Canada is in, what should our response as Christians be?

- **Christianity calls us to a life of compassion.**
 - **The Bible calls for humans to live in right relationship with one another by treating one another fairly and going above and beyond our duty to help and care for each other. As the Golden Rule says, “Do unto others as you would have them do to you.” (Luke 6:31)**
 - **However, when it comes to caring for the poor, the Bible calls us to a much higher level of conduct. There are hundreds of verses which deal with how we are to treat the poor and there are several words to describe the different meanings of poor. There are hundreds of verses which deal with how we are to treat the poor and there are several words to describe the different meanings of poor. In the Biblical sense, the poor include the victimized or oppressed,⁵⁵ the hungry,⁵⁶ the frail or infirm⁵⁷, the dependent⁵⁸, the dispossessed⁵⁹, and the lower class of society⁶⁰.The Bible talks about poverty more than 2000 times,⁶¹ demonstrating the focus which God has on the poor and hurting in society.**
 - **The different meanings of the word poor demonstrate that God is not just concerned with financial poverty, but He is concerned with those who are emotionally or physically poor as well.**
 - **When interacting with the poor, God calls us to acts of compassion, generosity, and love. In Deuteronomy chapters fourteen and fifteen, God sets up a type of welfare system which called for a third of the nation's tithes to be distributed amongst the needy, to cancel debts every seven years, and to be openhanded in giving. Jesus repeated this sentiment when He said, “Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back.” (Luke 6:30).**
 - **It is no mistake that Jesus spent the majority of His time on earth with the poor.**
 - **Jesus spent his time with tax collectors, those who were social outcasts**

55 The word in Hebrew is Aniy or Anah and it is the most used word to describe the poor in the Bible. It refers to the victimized and oppressed, whether that be a personal or a systematic oppression. The Greek word is Ptochos and it refers to those who are brought low in society. This information from Rick Tobias, “Towards a Biblical Understanding of Poverty” (lecture, Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, ON, September 30, 2014).

56 The Hebrew words for hungry are Raeb and Chaser. They refer to those who are experiencing a physical famine of food. The Greek word is Penes and it means to be starving or indigent. This information from Rick Tobias, “Towards a Biblical Understanding of Poverty” (lecture, Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, ON, October 14, 2014).

57 The Hebrew word for the infirm is Dal. Some people are born into a form of sickness and some people are made that way through circumstance. This information from Rick Tobias, “Towards a Biblical Understanding of Poverty” (lecture, Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, ON, October 7, 2014).

58 Ebyon is the Hebrew word for dependent. It refers to those who are unable to live without financial, emotional, or physical support of another. This information from Rick Tobias, “Towards a Biblical Understanding of Poverty” (lecture, Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, ON, October 7, 2014).

59 Rush is the Hebrew word which describes those who are dispossessed or marginalized in society. They the people who have been completely discounted by the world around them and seem to have no place in it. This information from Rick Tobias, “Towards a Biblical Understanding of Poverty” (lecture, Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, ON, October 7, 2014).

60 Ochlos literally means 'the multitude' in Greek and it is used to describe the lowest people in the lowest class or society. It refers to the people who are just barely getting by and have to work extremely hard to survive. This information from Rick Tobias, “Towards a Biblical Understanding of Poverty” (lecture, Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, ON, October 14, 2014).

61 “The Poverty and Justice Bible,” American Bible Society, accessed April 2, 2015, <http://justicebible.americanbible.org/>.

and despised by the religious elite, the sick, and the lower classes. All of his disciples were from the lowest class of society. Jesus could have chosen his disciples from the religious and social elites, but he purposefully chose to focus his ministry on the poor.

- He understood that the poor and downtrodden need to be loved, protected, cared for, and respected as much as the rich. He knew that the poor are overlooked and considered to be less important, but He knew that God counts all people as equal.
- Jesus defended His stance toward the poor when He was confronted by the Pharisees. “When the... Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: 'Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?' On hearing this, Jesus said to them, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.'” (Mark 2:16-17)
- Look at the example of the early Church
 - The apostolic form of Christianity, demonstrated by the early Christians in Acts, is a form of following God which honours the Bible's emphasis on equal and loving relationships with each other, as well as caring for each other's needs, as part of a deep relationship with God in Christ. In Acts, there is a beautiful picture of the early Church and how they lived together: “All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:44-47)
 - The early Christians described in the book of Acts not only took care of the spiritual needs of those in the community, but they assisted with physical needs. Throughout the Bible, when the poor are mentioned, God calls Christians to meet their physical needs, as well as their spiritual needs. Jesus described how Christians are to act towards the poor in the parable of “The Sheep and the Goats.” In that parable Jesus said, “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me... Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” (Matthew 25:35-36, 40).
 - It is interesting how when Jesus described the Christian responsibility towards the poor, there is no mention of evangelism. Everything Jesus describes has to do with taking care of their physical and emotional needs. By engaging in these acts of social justice, the early Christians were greatly blessed. It says that they enjoyed the favour of the populace and their numbers increased daily. The early Christians understood that acting in obedience with God's desire for social justice and living in right relationship with others would bring blessing that would lead to the salvation of many and cause their message to spread and grow.

- Checking in:
 - *As we were reviewing these texts, what was coming to mind for you? What is most provocative for you in these Biblical texts?*
- Our faith is a faith of action
 - James, the brother of Jesus, wrote one of the most instructive texts on social justice in the Bible. He was very clear when he said, “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.” (James 1:22-25)
 - Scripture is clear, living the Christian life means doing acts of social justice!
- Reflection – 10 minutes
 - Discuss in small groups how you feel about what you have just heard. As you discuss, consider the following questions:
 - *What was most shocking or most difficult to hear?*
 - *At which point were you most frustrated? At which point were you most energized?*
 - *What did you find most relevant? What are the implications?*
 - If you feel comfortable, share your feelings with the larger group
- Take Away – 2 minutes
 - Consider how caring for the most vulnerable in society is part of the Christian message and mission as you go about your daily activities this week.
 - *How can you incorporate this learning into your life?*
 - *What, if anything, will you do differently because of this learning?*
- Closing Prayer for the Earth
 - Ask the group how they would like to pray (i.e. one person prays for the group, they have silent prayer, or have spontaneous group prayer)
 - Sing the Doxology – we will sing it through until we all find a natural stopping point. Invite learners to close their eyes, raise their hands, etc

*Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

Lesson 5

- Welcome and Warm-up – 20 minutes
 - Welcome everyone
 - Play song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEFGGr1S8SkA>

"God Of This City"
by Chris Tomlin

[Verse 1]
You're the God of this City

You're the King of these people
You're the Lord of this nation
You are

[Verse 2]

You're the Light in this darkness
You're the Hope to the hopeless
You're the Peace to the restless
You are

There is no one like our God
There is no one like our God

[Chorus]

For greater things have yet to come
And greater things are still to be done in this City
Greater things have yet to come
And greater things are still to be done in this City

[Verse 1]

[Verse 2]

There is no one like our God
There is no one like our God

[Chorus]

For greater things have yet to come
And greater things are still to be done in this City
Greater things have yet to come
And greater things are still to be done here

There is no one like our God
There is no one like our God

[Chorus]

Greater things have yet to come
And greater things are still to be done in this City
Greater things have yet to come
And greater things are still to be done here

- Take 10 minutes to discuss in small groups or pairs about how you have been interacting with the course material over the past week. Please also reflect on your reaction to the song.
 - *Does or how does this song speak to last week's lesson about Christian social*

equality, and justice between different socio-economic groups.

- I am always reminded of Jesus' words in the synagogue when he quoted Isaiah; "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour," (Luke 4:18-19). By drawing attention to this crucial passage, Jesus was clarifying his mission on Earth, but I also believe he was shedding light on what our mission should be to the world around us. We must be harbingers of hope, justice, freedom, healing, and God's love to those around us who are hurting. In the Canadian context, we must fight against oppression and inequality. We must be warriors for the walking wounded around us who may not be visibly weak, but who are fighting inner demons. We must bring revitalization and hope back to a society that is increasingly becoming disconnected and frightened in the face of the world's problems. We must build strong communities that can withstand the perils that will come in the future and we must "let [our] light shine before others, that they may see [our] good deeds and glorify [our] Father in heaven," (Matt. 5:16b).
- Checking in:
 - *As we were reviewing these texts, what was coming to mind for you? What is most provocative for you in these Biblical texts?*
- How to include creation care in our faith:
 - Invite learners to take a minute to think about how they can include creation care as a part of their Christian mission.
 - Encourage them to share their answers with the group. Write the answers down for all to see.
 - Be sure to talk about the importance of the following:
 - Advocacy
 - Volunteer to plant trees, clean up garbage, remove invasive species, etc
 - Garden!
 - Sustainable living – will talk about this more after break
- Reflection and debrief – 10 minutes
 - Discuss in small groups how you feel about what you have just heard. As you discuss, please feel free to consider these questions:
 - *How have these lessons started to change your thinking about the environment or creation, and how we interact with it?*
 - *What have you noticed in yourself?*
 - If you feel comfortable, share your feelings with the larger group
- Break – 15 minutes
- Sustainable living as part of mission – 25 minutes
 - Invite learners: On your own, in your journal jot down 3-5 ideas of things you could do to live more sustainably. Circle the one you want to start with, today, now. Share this with someone close to you.
- In the large group, share your ideas for sustainable living.

- Write down the ideas of the learners.
- Have the learners provide feedback/critique the list
- Provide them with the following list of ways to live sustainably. The list will be included in Appendix A in their package

Concrete Steps to Living More Sustainably:

- As Christians, we need to be intentional about praying that God will direct us in our buying and in how we should live so we respect all of His creation.
 - A Rocha Canada has developed Good Seed Sunday resources for Christian faith communities. See <http://goodseedsunday.arocha.ca>.
- Use a carbon calculator to determine areas in your life which use the most carbon. A good carbon footprint calculator is:
 - <http://www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/page/calculators/>
- Share about your experiences, swap techniques and encourage others to do their part to live sustainably.
- Use natural cleaning products (e.g. vinegar, baking soda, hydrogen peroxide, etc.) instead of harmful chemicals.
- Compost and recycle. Check your municipality's website to learn about how products can be disposed of sustainably (e.g. in Toronto, the Waste Wizard at <http://app.toronto.ca/wes/winfo/search.do>).
- Walk, take transit, bike or carpool.
- Use LED light bulbs and low-energy appliances.
- Dispose of electronics and batteries in a sustainable way. Look at your municipality's website to find out how to dispose of those items properly.
 - *** Note: Best Buy will recycle your batteries and old electronics for you
- Limit the amount of disposable items you use (i.e. razors, toothbrushes, utensils, etc).
- Conserve water:
 - Turn water off between rinses
 - Use a low-flow toilet
 - Don't flush every time
 - Reduce the number of times per week you shower
 - Don't water your lawn or reduce the amount you water
 - Use low-water appliances
- Turn your thermostat down 1C and wear a sweater inside.
- Avoid using too much air conditioning by opening windows to create a cross-breeze, use fans, etc.
- Buy used clothing or participate in a clothing swap.
- Buy used items (i.e. used furniture, home decor, etc).
- If you are buying new, buy quality items that will last – do not look at everything as disposable.
- Give items more longevity by repurposing, refurbishing or revamping the item.
- Buy less in general – we don't need most of what we buy.
- Offset your carbon when you fly by donating to a program such as:
 - Climate Stewards <https://www.climatestewards.org/>
 - Air Canada's carbon neutral travel initiative <http://www.aircanada.com/en/travelinfo/traveller/zfp.html>

- Eat local. Here is a list of some places in Toronto to get local food:
 - Full list of Toronto Farmer's Markets on the City of Toronto website:
 - http://tfmn.ca/?page_id=76
 - Many food co-ops offer local or sustainably sourced food, such as:
 - West End Food Co-op
 - Harvest Noon
 - Karma Food Co-operative Inc.
- Eat seasonally. Here is a guide to seasonal eating for Ontario:
 - <http://www.harvestontario.com/seasonal.php>
- Try to reduce the amount of meat you consume, and eat alternative proteins such as pulses (e.g. lentils, chickpeas). See <http://www.pulsecanada.com>.
- Consider buying frozen produce during months when fresh produce must be shipped very far.
- Grow some of your own food.
 - Here are some links to plants that are easy to grow indoors:
 - <http://greatist.com/health/best-plants-to-grow-indoors>
 - <http://www.minq.com/food/4177/20-edible-plants-that-are-easy-to-grow-indoors#page=1>
 - The City of Toronto supports community agriculture programs. For a list of community gardens, look on their website at <http://csafarms.ca/>
- Limit food waste. Here are a couple of links with tips on how to prevent food waste:
 - <http://www.thinkeatsave.org/index.php/top-tips-on-reducing-food-waste>
 - <http://mashable.com/2015/02/15/food-waste-tips/#X6N2nJrGPqqb>
- Consider naturalizing your lawn – check your municipality's by-laws to see what is involved in getting approval or if it is allowed.
- Look into solar or wind power for your dwelling, church, school, workplace, etc.
- Lobby your local government to enact policies which encourage sustainability.

*** Remember, this list is just meant to jog your imagination and get you thinking about the ways in which you can live more sustainably. Be sure to do your own research and discover methods which work the best for you. The best thing you can do is be aware and stay informed.

- Final reflection – 20 minutes
 - Play song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VzGAYNKDyIU>
"Redeemed"
by Big Daddy Weave

Seems like all I could see was the struggle
 Haunted by ghosts that lived in my past
 Bound up in shackles of all my failures
 Wondering how long is this gonna last
 Then You look at this prisoner and say to me "son
 Stop fighting a fight it's already been won"

I am redeemed, You set me free
So I'll shake off these heavy chains
Wipe away every stain, now I'm not who I used to be
I am redeemed, I'm redeemed

All my life I have been called unworthy
Named by the voice of my shame and regret
But when I hear You whisper, "Child lift up your head"
I remember, oh God, You're not done with me yet

I am redeemed, You set me free
So I'll shake off these heavy chains
Wipe away every stain, now I'm not who I used to be

Because I don't have to be the old man inside of me
'Cause his day is long dead and gone
Because I've got a new name, a new life, I'm not the same
And a hope that will carry me home

I am redeemed, You set me free
So I'll shake off these heavy chains
Wipe away every stain, 'cause I'm not who I used to be

I am redeemed, You set me free
So I'll shake off these heavy chains
Wipe away every stain, yeah, I'm not who I used to be
Oh, God, I'm not who I used to be
Jesus, I'm not who I used to be
'Cause I am redeemed
Thank God, redeemed

- Invite learners in pairs or small groups, to think about how they may and/or will want to live differently in light of the information they have learned.
- Invite learners to share their reflections with the larger group.
- **Take Away – 10 minutes**
 - Invite learners: Now it's time for us to do a final reflection on all we have learned and how we are living in and caring for God's creation. Take 7 minutes to review all your notes from this creation series, and write an action plan for moving forward (differently). Name 2 things.
 - This should be an agreement between you and God which you will seek to fulfill in the coming days, weeks, months, and years.
- **Closing Prayer for the Earth**
 - Invite the learners into a spontaneous group prayer.
 - Sing the Doxology – we will sing it through until we all find a natural stopping point. Invite learners to close their eyes, raise their hands, etc

*Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*