



Stewards of God's Creation

We should take care of God's earth.

Lesson Focus

God created the heavens, the earth, and all that is in them. God created man to rule over his creation. We have a responsibility to take care of God's creation and use it wisely.

Key Passages

Genesis 1:26

Memory Verse

Psalm 8:3–4 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

Prepare to Share

Scriptural Background

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages for this lesson along with this background.

Our God is the Creator and Sustainer of all the universe—everything we have comes from him, and it all belongs to him. “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). “The sea is his, for he made it; and his hands formed the dry land” (Psalm 95:5). “The earth is the LORD’s and the fullness thereof” (Psalm 24:1). “For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills” (Psalm 50:10). “Your faithfulness endures to all generations; you have established the earth, and it stands fast” (Psalm 119:90). God’s creation clearly brings him glory, and he rejoices in his works (Psalm 104:31). We can rejoice, too, in God’s graciousness to us each day as we appreciate the beauty and wonder around us. However, we must be diligent to respect this world because it does not belong to us.

When God created the world, it was perfect—it was all very good (Genesis 1:31). Man and all of creation lived together without any stress in a harmonious environment. But God did provide a hierarchy of authority. He intended that Adam and Eve be the ones to tend the garden and keep it (Genesis 2:15). He instructed them to multiply and fill the earth and to have dominion over it and all of its creatures (Genesis 1:28). This “Dominion Mandate” ordained by God gives all of us, as the heirs of Adam, a special responsibility—to care for God’s earth with diligence and concern from a biblical perspective.

Historical/Apologetics Background

Today the big issue surrounding the earth’s environment is climate change.

We are barraged with claims and facts that may leave us more confused than ever. There appear to be five recurring claims. We’ll take a quick look at those here.

Claim #1: Climate change is really happening. Yes, this is true. According to the National Climatic Data Center, the average global surface temperature has risen approximately 1.2°F (0.7°C) since 1880. We do not know exactly what has caused this warming.

What this means, however, is not always easily determined. Because of the high profile of this issue, you will come across many strong opinions. God did create resources for man to use to sustain life. But we find today those who want to abuse the resources out of greed and selfishness, causing needless loss and destruction in other areas. We see also the overly enthusiastic conservationists who appear to worship the creation more than the Creator—clearly a position not ordained by God (Romans 1:25). What we need to remember is to consult the full counsel of God’s Word in these matters. Because this is a sin-cursed world, we must weigh each specific decision in this area based on the circumstances and the expected results of that decision while asking the question, “How does this line up with biblical principles?”

As you consider this issue, remember that Solomon in all his wisdom reminds us that there is a time to plant and a time to pluck what is planted, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to break down and a time to build up, a time to keep and a time to cast away (Ecclesiastes 3:1–8).

Ultimately, this is an area that must be covered in prayer and balanced carefully between abuse of God’s creation and environmental idolatry. It is God’s creation. He made it, and he will destroy it by the word of his mouth at his appointed time (2 Peter 3:7). Meanwhile, he has promised to preserve it: “While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, day and night, shall not cease” (Genesis 8:22).

Claim #2: Humans are causing global warming. Again, it seems to be true that the addition of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere by man’s activities has increased the global temperature. However, the carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere is not the sole cause of this warming. And it has been determined that the warmer climate itself can actually produce more CO₂—giving a distorted measure of the cause and effect of CO₂ in the atmosphere.

It has also been determined that the changes in atmospheric CO₂ do not always correlate well with changes in the earth’s temperature. For example,

between the years 1910 and 1940, the temperature of the earth rose at a higher rate than did the levels of CO₂ found in the atmosphere.

Claim #3: Climate change will cause the extinction of animals. First of all, many animals became extinct long before the issue of global warming was considered, and species continue to go extinct. The woolly mammoth and the Miohippus (a small, three-toed, woodland horse) are examples of animals found in the fossil record that are extinct today. Although there are predictions that many animals will become extinct by 2050 due to climate change, currently there are no documented extinctions resulting from global warming.

Claim #4: The oceans will rise dramatically in the next century. There is no hard scientific evidence currently available to back up this prediction.

Claim #5: Climate change will cause more weather catastrophes than normal. Again, there is not sufficient evidence to make this claim. In fact, there are conflicting reports. Some blame global warming for an increase in hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, droughts, and extreme temperatures, while other studies have determined that global warming is not to blame.

From a biblical perspective, we know that we live in a world that is far from perfect and is groaning from the effects of sin (Romans 8:22). We also know that the earth has been established by God, its future lies in his hands, and he has made us its caretakers. We have no idea how long the earth will last. But because of the credibility of God's Word, we can be sure that the earth will be purged by fire in the future (2 Peter 3:10–12)—not destroyed because of CO₂ emissions.

Come On In

As students arrive, direct them to the activity you chose for today.

Lesson Time

Have the students assemble in a circle away from the tables—either on the floor or in their chairs.

Bring your stuffed animal, Bible, Flip Chart, and any items you prepared for this lesson.

Prayer

This prayer time is designed to help the students begin to understand some simple concepts about prayer and to encourage them to pray.

We start our Bible lesson with prayer. *Turn to the Prayer Page in the Flip Chart. Briefly review the different types of prayer presented there.*

- I love you prayers—Adoration
- I'm sorry prayers—Confession
- Thank you prayers—Thanksgiving
- Please prayers—Supplication

Today let's say prayers of confession—and tell God we're sorry.

I'll start. Dear God, I'm sorry for . . . (insert personal prayer here).

Pass a special stuffed animal—prayer bear—around the circle, giving all the students an opportunity to pray, or choose a volunteer to stand beside you and pray.

Very good! *Now let's put our stuffed animal away, and we'll answer our Bible Truth questions.*

Bible Truths

These four questions will be repeated each week to help the students learn foundational truths.

- ? **Who made you?** *God made me!*
- ? **What else did God make?** *God made ALL things!*
- ? **Why did God make you and all things?** *For his glory.*
- ? **Is there more than one true God?** *No. There is only one true God.*

Bible Pass Around

We are going to start out today by looking into God's Word, the Bible. *Hold up Bible. God's Word is true, and we can trust what it says. But where should we look? One of you will help me with that. We're going to play Bible Pass Around. Whoever ends up with the Bible must hold it very carefully until it is time to look in it. When it is time to read, you can bring it to me, and*

- **Before Bible Pass Around,** place a sticky note in your Bible to mark the first passage to be read.

we'll open it to see what we are going to talk about today! Here's what we're going to do. I want everyone to count with me up to the number *choose a number*. (You may also choose to recite the books of the Bible, sing one of the lesson songs, or recite the memory verse as you do this activity.) We'll start right here. Hand the Bible to the first student. As we say each number (or word), you must carefully pass the Bible to the person beside you. Remember, we don't want to drop it or tear it. Then when we get to the last number (or word), whoever has the Bible will hold on to it until we are ready for it in our lesson. Are you ready? Let's begin. *Begin the lesson when finished with Bible Pass Around.*

K-1st Lesson continues next. Go to page 134 for the Pre-K Lesson.



K-1st Lesson

Introduction

- ? Refer to the Lesson 17 Flip Chart. What did we talk about last time? *Birthdays. The age of the earth.*

That's right! We learned that the Bible tells us how many birthdays some of the people had starting with Adam—the very first man. He was created at the very beginning. And when we add up all those birthdays—how long they all lived—we can figure out how many birthdays the earth has had.

- ? Look at the Flip Chart. How many years went by from Adam to Abraham? *2,000.*
- ? And how many years went by from Abraham to the time when Jesus was born? *2,000.*
- ? Right! Now how many years have gone by since Jesus was born to us today? *2,000.*

Yes. And when we add up $2,000 + 2,000 + 2,000$ we get 6,000 years! That means the earth is only about 6,000 years old, not millions of years. So, God created the world about 6,000 years ago.

- Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

What Is a Good Steward?

Hold up the potted plant. I want you to take a look at this plant I have here.

- ? Have you ever taken care of your neighbor's pets or watered their plants while they went on vacation? *Allow answers.*
- ? What if I gave you this pretty plant to take care of for me? What would you do to take care of it and make sure it stays healthy? *Water it, put it in the sunshine, prune it, etc.*
- ? There are a lot of things you could do to care for it. But does that mean the plant is yours? *No.*

- Have the potted plant ready.

► Have the stuffed animal ready.

? But can you enjoy looking at it? Or if it blooms, can you look at and smell the pretty flowers while you take care of it? *Yes.*

Hold up stuffed dog or cat. Now let's pretend that this pet is real and that I've asked you to take care of it for me.

? What kinds of things would you do to take care of my pet for me? *Feed it, give it water, brush it, pet it, play with it, take it for walks, etc.*

? Does that mean it belongs to you? *No.*

? But can you enjoy petting and playing with my pet while you take care of it? *Yes.*

Yes. It sounds like you would be very good stewards. That means you would do a good job taking care of these things for me. That's what a steward is—someone who takes care of something that belongs to someone else.

Refer to the Lesson 18 Flip Chart Page. Now let's take a look at our Flip Chart. This little girl is watering a plant. And this boy is feeding some dogs.

God Gave Man Dominion

? *Point to the picture of the earth. But what about this? What is it? The earth.*

? *Wait a minute! Are we supposed to take care of the whole earth? Allow discussion.*

Well, guess what? We ARE supposed to take care of God's earth.

Genesis 1:26

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. The Bible talks about this in the book of Genesis. Have the student with the Bible bring it up and turn to the sticky note. Listen as I read Genesis 1:26. Read the verse, emphasizing "dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds . . . the livestock . . . every creeping thing."

? *Who created the earth and everything in it? God.*

? *So who owns it all? God.*

? *Right. But this verse says when God created man he gave Adam "dominion" over the earth. What do you think dominion means? Allow answers.*

Dominion means that God gave Adam the responsibility to take care of his creation and to use it wisely. God put people in charge of his creation.

? *What does man have dominion over? Listen to the verse again. Reread Genesis 1:26. Over the fish, the birds, the livestock, the creeping things—and everything else!*

God brought the animals to Adam for him to name. It helps us care for animals when we have a name for them! God also put Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden to tend it and keep it. They were taking care of God's creation when they cared for the garden.

? *How many of you have gardens or have helped care for a garden? Show of hands.*

► Reread the verses as necessary so the students can hear the answers straight from God's Word!

When we care for plants and trees, we get to eat what they grow. That's a blessing God gives us for properly caring for creation. It takes work to care for a garden. We have to water the plants and get rid of weeds.

How Can We Be Good Stewards?

So all the way from the beginning, God has given people the responsibility to watch over the earth and all the creation. In order to do that we need to be good stewards.

- ? *Show potted plant and stuffed animal again. Who remembers what we said a good steward is? A person who takes care of something for someone.*

Right. God wants us to care for his creation.

- ? *Let's think of some ways we can be good stewards of the things this verse says we're responsible for. How about fish? How can we be responsible for the fish? Allow discussion. Taking care of pet fish; feeding them and keeping aquarium clean. When you go fishing, following the rules, not catching more than you'll use, not tossing trash into the water.*

- ? *What about the birds? What are some things we can do for them? Allow discussion. Putting out bird feeders and bird houses; never throwing rocks at them. If you go hunting, making sure to follow the rules and not taking more than you need.*

- ? *What responsible things can you do for wild animals, farm animals, or pets? Allow discussion. Feeding and watering pets or farm stock. If you go hunting, making sure to follow the rules and not taking more than you need. Putting out campfires so animal's homes don't get ruined. Picking up trash. Not feeding "people food" to them so they won't get sick.*

- ? *What about the grass, trees, and flowers? Allow discussion. Taking care of the yard. Raking leaves, watering and weeding the garden so flowers can grow, keeping toys and trash picked up, or enjoying fruits and veggies from your garden. Staying on paths while hiking or camping. Cleaning up after a picnic.*

Wow! We've talked about some great ideas. They are all ways YOU can help take care of God's creation.

- ? *Refer to the Flip Chart. What are these kids doing to take care of things in God's creation? Raking leaves, recycling trash, and feeding the birds.*

We know that this is God's world and that God cares about it—he is in control of everything that happens. God owns it. But God gave man dominion over his creation, we're responsible to use it wisely, and he expects us to be good stewards and take care of it the best we can. And we should do that because we want to please God, the One who created it all! We can learn how to take care of God's earth while always praising him for the beauty we enjoy around us.

Continue with the Lesson Review Game on page 136.

- ▶ Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.



Pre-K Lesson

Introduction

- ? What did we talk about last time? *Birthdays. The age of the earth.*

That's right! We learned that the Bible tells us how many birthdays some of the people had starting with Adam—the very first man. He was created at the very beginning. And when we add up all those birthdays—how long they all lived—we can figure out how many birthdays the earth has had.

- ? Look at the Flip Chart. How many years went by from Adam to Abraham? *2,000.*
- ? And how many years went by from Abraham to the time when Jesus was born? *2,000.*
- ? Right! Now how many years have gone by since Jesus was born to today? *2,000.*

And when we add up $2,000 + 2,000 + 2,000$ we get 6,000 years! That means the earth is only about 6,000 years old, not millions of years. So, God created the world about 6,000 years ago.

What Is a Good Steward?

Hold up the potted plant. I want you to take a look at this plant I have here.

- ? Have you ever taken care of your neighbor's pets or watered their plants while they went on vacation? *Allow answers.*
- ? What if I gave you this pretty plant to take care of for me? What would you do to take care of it and make sure it stays healthy? *Water it, put it in the sunshine, prune it, etc.*

You're right! There are a lot of things you could do to care for it.

- ? Does that mean the plant is yours? *No.*
- ? But can you enjoy looking at it? Or if it blooms, can you look at and smell the pretty flowers while you take care of it? *Yes.*

Hold up stuffed dog or cat. Now let's pretend that this pet is real and that I've asked you to take care of it for me.

- ? What kinds of things would you do to take care of my pet for me? *Feed it, give it water, brush it, pet it, play with it, take it for walks, etc.*
- ? Does that mean it belongs to you? *No.*
- ? But can you enjoy petting and playing with my pet while you take care of it? *Yes.*

- ▶ Have the potted plant ready.

- ▶ Have the stuffed animal ready.

Yes. It sounds like you would be very good stewards. That means you would do a good job taking care of these things for me. That's what a steward is—someone who takes care of something that belongs to someone else.

Turn to the Lesson 18 Flip Chart Page. Now let's take a look at our Flip Chart. This little girl is watering a plant. And this boy is feeding some dogs.

God Gave Man Dominion

- ? Point to the picture of the earth. But what about this? What is it? *The earth.*
- ? Wait a minute! Are we supposed to take care of the whole earth?
Allow discussion.

Well, guess what? We ARE supposed to take care of God's earth.

Genesis 1:26

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- ? Who created the earth and everything in it? *God.*
- ? So who owns it all? *God.*

► Reread the verses as necessary so the students can hear the answers straight from God's Word!

Right. But this verse says when God created man he gave Adam "dominion" over the earth. Dominion means that God gave Adam the responsibility to take care of his creation and to use it wisely. God put people in charge of his creation: the animals, the oceans and lakes, and even our own backyards.

How Can We Be Good Stewards?

So all the way from the beginning, God has given people the job to watch over the earth and all the creation. In order to do that we need to be good stewards.

- ? Show potted plant and stuffed animal again. Who remembers what we said a good steward is? *A person who takes care of something for someone.*

Let's think of some ways we can be good stewards and take care of God's creation.

- ? Refer to the Flip Chart. Look at the Flip Chart again. These kids are taking care of things in God's creation. What ideas do you see there? *Raking leaves, recycling trash, feeding the birds, watering plants, and feeding pets.*

These are ways YOU can help! God created the great outdoors and everything in it. And we can enjoy it as we take care of it in some simple ways, like

picking up your trash after a picnic, never throwing garbage out of the car window, recycling your cans and plastic, and taking good care of your pets.

- ? Can you think of some things you already do to take care of God's creation? *Allow answers.*

We know that this is God's world and that God cares about it—he is in control of everything that happens. God owns it. But God gave man, all of us, dominion over his creation. We're responsible to use it wisely, and he expects us to be good stewards and take care of it the best we can. And we should do that because we want to please God, the One who created it all! We can learn how to take care of God's earth while always praising him for the beauty we enjoy around us.

Continue with the Lesson Review Game below.



Lesson Review Game

We all learn best with review and repetition! We encourage you to play a lesson review game.



Story Time

- ? Do you remember what happened in our last Justin and Jessie story? *Allow discussion.*
- ? Whose birthday were they celebrating? *Mr. Johnson's. The oldest man in town.*
- ? How old was Mr. Johnson? *100 years old.*

Right. Justin and Jessie also found out that the Bible tells about many birthdays. And when we add up how old some of the people were in the Bible, we learn that the earth is only 6,000 years old.

Let's find out what Justin and Jessie are doing this time. *Read the Justin and Jessie story as you show the picture.*

Uh oh! Justin came home to find something was wrong. But we'll find out about that next time.

- ? Let's think about Justin's fishing trip with his dad. What did Justin see out in the boat? *Water, waves, trees, boy throwing trash in the water.*

Yes. Justin saw God's beautiful creation in the water and trees. Then he saw someone tossing trash into the lake.

- ? Was that boy being a good steward? *No!*
- ? Why not? *Allow discussion.*

Tossing trash in the water was harmful to the fish. That's not taking care of the lake, is it? Justin learned some good ideas about how to be a good steward of the lake and fish.

Review Questions

K-1st Review Questions

1. Who created the earth, sea, heavens, and everything in them? *God.*
2. Who was the first man God created? *Adam.*
3. What did God give Adam dominion over? *Everything in creation—fish, animals, birds, trees, etc.*
4. What is a person called who takes care of something for someone? *A steward.*
5. Who does the earth and creation belong to? *God.*
6. Who is supposed to take care of the earth? *We are. People.*
7. What does a good steward do? *Takes care of something for someone.*
8. Can you think of a good way to take care of God's creation? *Have several students answer. Possible answers are illustrated on Flip Chart.*
9. Why should we be good stewards of God's creation? *It pleases God.*
10. Who made you? *God made me!*
11. What else did God make? *God made ALL things!*
12. Why did God make you and all things? *For his glory.*
13. Is there more than one true God? *No. There is only one true God.*
14. Can you say or sing the memory verse by yourself? *Allow several students to try to sing or recite the verse.*

Pre-K Review Questions

1. Who created the earth, sea, heavens, and everything in them? *God.*
2. Who was the first man God created? *Adam.*
3. Who does the earth and creation belong to? *God.*
4. Who is supposed to take care of the earth? *We are. People.*
5. What does a good steward do? *Takes care of something for someone.*
6. Can you think of a good way to take care of God's creation? *Have several students answer. Possible answers are illustrated on Flip Chart.*
7. Why should we be good stewards of God's creation? *It pleases God.*
8. Who made you? *God made me!*
9. What else did God make? *God made ALL things!*
10. Why did God make you and all things? *For his glory.*
11. Is there more than one true God? *No. There is only one true God.*
12. Can you say or sing the memory verse by yourself? *Allow several students to try to sing or recite the verse.*

Bird Feeder

Note: Be sure there are no peanut allergies before doing this activity. If there is a problem with peanuts, you can use vegetable shortening instead of peanut butter and birdseed mix without peanuts.

Materials

- Peanut butter or vegetable shortening
- Stale bread slices—one per student
- Yarn and yarn needle
- Birdseed
- Plastic knives
- Paper plates
- Paper towels
- Plastic sandwich bags



Instructions

Before class begins, prepare the stale bread for each student. Use a yarn needle to thread a 12-inch piece of yarn through the bread. Tie the ends together making a loop to use for hanging the finished bird feeder.

Divide peanut butter (or shortening) into several bowls for students to share. Lay out one piece of stale bread with yarn attached and one plastic knife on a paper towel for each student. Pour birdseed onto a paper plate for each student and have them spread the seed out to cover the plate surface.

The students will spread peanut butter (or shortening) onto one side of their slice of bread then lay the bread onto the birdseed on their plate, pressing it down until the seeds stick to the peanut butter. Have them repeat with the other side so both sides are covered in birdseed.

Put the finished feeders into plastic bags marked with students' names.

Suggested Discussion

Ask your mom or dad to help you find a good place in your yard to hang up your bird feeder. Pretty soon, the birds should find it, and you can watch them eat from it. We can have fun taking care of God's creation. But sometimes, there's a lot of work to do, too. Remember, God owns the earth—he created it. We can honor God by taking care of the earth and everything in it.

? What good ideas can you come up with to take care of the earth?

Allow answers.

Ask your mom or dad if they have good ideas of things you can do—even in your own backyard.

God has given all of us a job to do. It's our responsibility to be careful with his creation. But don't forget to enjoy it and to thank him for all he has made!

Memory Verse Game

Use the Flip Chart Memory Verse Page as you play a memory verse game. Explain the verse to your students as you review it together.

Psalm 8:3–4 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

Song Time

Use the downloaded music to practice the songs. Find the lyrics on the Song Sheet at the end of this lesson or on the Flip Chart Song Time Lyrics Page. You may want to add stomping, clapping, and musical instruments, or make up hand motions to any of the songs!

God Created!

We've been talking a lot about God's creation. And the Bible even helps us understand how old the creation is. We've sung this song before. Let's sing it all together. *Sing the song together.*

According to Their Kinds

Let's sing about how God created the plants and animals according to their kinds. *Review the words then sing the song together once or twice.*

Psalm 8:3–4

Turn to the Flip Chart Memory Verse Page. Okay. It's time to sing our memory verse song now. Review the words then sing the song together once or twice.

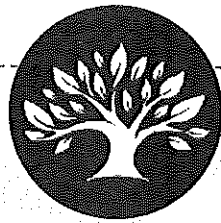
Sing other class favorites or songs from the Additional Songs list as time allows.

Group Prayer

Be sure to pray with your students and take requests if time allows.

- Thank God for letting us enjoy his creation.
- Ask God to help us find ways to be good stewards.

➤ Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind students to practice the memory verse this week.



Corruption: Sin Enters the World

Adam and Eve sinned, and now we all sin.

Lesson Focus

The first sin entered the world when Adam and Eve believed the serpent and disobeyed God. Because of this first sin, all people are born sinners.

Key Passages

Genesis 2:16–17, 3:4, 3:6; 1 Peter 3:18

Memory Verse

Psalm 8:3–4 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?