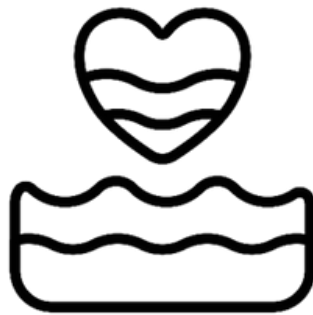


Key Concept/Message

The second instalment of the Heart for the Earth resources moves to the second day of creation described within Genesis One and focuses on water. This first act of collective worship of the 'Day 2' resources recalls the 'community of creation' theology introduced in Day 1, [1] before providing opportunities for pupils and adults to reflect upon the wonder of water. In so doing, it continues the 'heads, hearts and hands' framework of these resources. Put more explicitly, this act of worship aims to stimulate awe, appreciation and gratitude for water in our lives; it is this treasuring and valuing of water (and its wider impact on the Earth and life upon it) which ultimately will inspire wise use of water (the focus of the second act of worship in this instalment). Many within the school community will also value the opportunity to thank and praise God as creator for water. This act of collective worship invites the school community to reflect on the questions: how amazing is water?! And how can we treasure and show our thankfulness for it in our lives?[2]

Bible Story



Genesis 1, particularly Genesis 1:6-8

[1] Detailed in the Heart for the Earth overview (pages 4-5):

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/HftE-Overview.pdf>

[2] Other commendable worship plans on the topic of water can be found here:

<https://www.assemblies.org.uk/pri/346/water>; <https://www.assemblies.org.uk/pri/2071/walking-in-the-rain> These are particularly appropriate for Reception/KS1 pupils

Gather

As the school community are gathering, show this video of rivers and waterfalls: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kwk04JM08Ic>

Follow the school's normal gathering routines, using words of liturgy which are familiar to students and adults

or

Light a candle and offer the following prayer: 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you'. Response: *and also with you.*

Engage

Recap with the school community what was considered in 'Day 1' of Heart for the Earth – the 'community of creation' worldview (in contrast to the 'dominion' worldview) and how we can show a heart for the Earth through wise use of electricity. The following text, and supplementary PowerPoint slides, could be used here.

Earlier this year, we thought deeply within collective worship about a biblical creation story – Genesis 1. We explored how this first chapter of the bible describes God creating the world in six days and resting on the seventh.[3] We considered that some of the main messages Christians take from this narrative are...

...that the world has been created by God. God chose to create plants, animals, humans, birdlife, sealife, land and sky.

...and this creation is good! The world is full of so much beauty, amazing life and places.

[3] Acknowledge here that there are many views about Genesis 1 – some think it is literal truth, some think it is a symbolic poem which describes what God and creation are like, some have other views about this narrative.

We then thought about two different Christian views about the place of humans within creation. One view is the 'dominion' view. This is the view that we humans – who were created last, on Day Six – are the most special part of creation; more special than non-human creation such as plants, animals, land and sea. This view looks a little like this:



The 'dominion' worldview

Another view is that the wider Bible describes humans as living as part of a community with the rest of creation. In this view, all parts of creation are connected and equally valued. We called this the 'community of creation' view:



The 'community of creation' worldview

We thought about why these views mattered in the light of climate change. As humans, the ways in which we see the world shape how we act towards it. In the past and even today, many people use the 'dominion' idea to exploit the resources of the earth for their own gain. This is like being an 'earth tourist' – using the resources of the earth to have a good time, in a way which damages the earth in their pursuit of enjoyment.

Many Christians believe that the 'community of creation' view is better. This view helps humans act more like 'earth pilgrims' – treating the planet and life on it as sacred, special, to be treasured. In this view, showing a heart for the earth is a form of worship to God who created all things.

We then thought deeply about how we can show a heart for the Earth through our wise use of electricity. Today, we are going to think about what God created second in Genesis 1 – water.

.....

Invite the school community (individually or in dialogue in twos/threes) to ponder the question: How many different places can you think of where we can see water? (e.g. rain, puddle, tap).

After gathering some views, reflect how water is all around us! (See PowerPoint, Slide 7) We see this precious resource falling as rain, gathering as puddles, flowing from taps, swirling around our mouths and more besides. It is vital for the whole earth; it sustains life upon it, and is required for the growth of edible food from which the community of life on Earth depends. It can also be incredible fun to play in/with.

For us, water is vital for a clean, healthy life. Invite the school community (individually or with peers), to reflect upon how/when they have used water themselves in the last few days. Take responses from the school community (e.g. washing, drinking, brushing teeth), and reflect upon how much we use and rely upon water. I wonder what would our lives be like if we didn't have water so readily available and useable?

.....

Water is an amazing thing. Did you know... (you may choose to do this as a quiz/guess the answer instead)

...about 71% of the Earth is water covered?

...the ocean's hold about 96.5% of all water?

...there is the same amount of water on Earth as when the Earth was formed? (We are technically using the same water as dinosaurs!)

...our bodies are about 60% water? Amongst other things, it allows the blood to flow and give nutrients to our cells and helps us regulate our body temperature.

With the importance of water, it is perhaps not surprising that language and actions related to water are found in the bible. I wonder what you think the following might mean? Why do you think they might be linked to water?

- o God is described as the 'fountain of life' (Psalm 36:9)
- o God is described as the 'spring of living water' (Jeremiah 17:13)
- o The baptism of Jesus took place in a river (the River Jordan)

Many Christians reading Genesis 1 praise God for creating all things – including the precious resource of water – on which all the community of creation depends.

Respond

Let us spend a moment of silent reflection to reflect:

...on all the times we use water in our lives...
...on just how amazing water is...
...and how much all life upon the Earth is dependent upon it...

The prayer today is adapted from one written by a Christian charity in New York (<https://www.episcopalrelief.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Water.pdf>). If you'd like to make this prayer your own, join in by saying with me the words in bold (why not invite a pupil(s) and/or other adults up to lead these prayers?).

Leader: We thank you, Lord, for your creation that gives life on earth.

Response: We thank you, Lord, for the gift of water.

Leader: We give thanks for rain, snow, fog and dew. We give thanks for water under the ground, above the ground and in the oceans.

Response: We thank you, Lord, for the gift of water.

Leader: We give thanks for vast waters of the oceans, for water in lakes, rivers and streams. We give thanks for waters in glaciers, on the polar caps, for water bubbling out of rocky streams and water in the tiniest puddles and buckets.

Response: We thank you, Lord, for the gift of water.

Leader: We thank you, Lord, for the many uses of water. We give thanks for water to drink, water for cooking, water for bathing and cleaning, water upon and through which we travel to places far and near, and for water that cools us, warms us, and in which we might play.

Response: We thank you, Lord, for the gift of water.

Leader: We thank you, Lord, for the gift of water to grow our food. We ask you to bless us and all people on the earth with enough water for our farms and gardens, to satisfy the thirst of ourselves and of our animals, and to wash away germs and keep us healthy.

Amen

Send

This week, in all that we do, may we think about the wonder of water. Let us think about how amazing it is, how much we depend on it, and treasure it through our thoughts and actions.

