

CREATION SPEAKS



Daily Overview for *Creation Speaks*

Daily Guide	Creation Teaching	Scripture	Campers Will
Day 1	Invited by Light Genesis 1:1–5	John 8:12 Light of the World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience light as a symbol of invitation. • Be introduced to God's Creation and the way it manifests in their lives. • Discover Jesus as God's light in the world.
Day 2	Refreshed by Water Genesis 1:6–8	John 4:4–15 Woman at the Well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand that water is life-giving and spiritual water is life-changing. • Learn about Jesus as one who crossed boundaries and welcomed all people. • Celebrate the diversity of people and backgrounds present in camp.
Day 3	Shaped Like Earth Genesis 1:9–13	Jeremiah 18:1–10 Potter's House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that we come from the earth. • Understand that God continues to shape and reshape us. • Embrace that the stuff we are made of is valuable.
Day 4	Purpose for Humanity Genesis 1:26–31	Genesis 2:4–7 God Breathes Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn that they are created in the image of God. • Learn that they are created for a purpose as caretakers of Creation. • Know they are empowered by God's Spirit. • Know that caring is a shared responsibility with God and one another.
Day 5	Inspired by Creation Genesis 2:1–3	Psalms 104:1–13, 24, 31 Celebrating Creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joyfully proclaim the awe and wonder of Creation. • Go home with grateful hearts for our Creator.

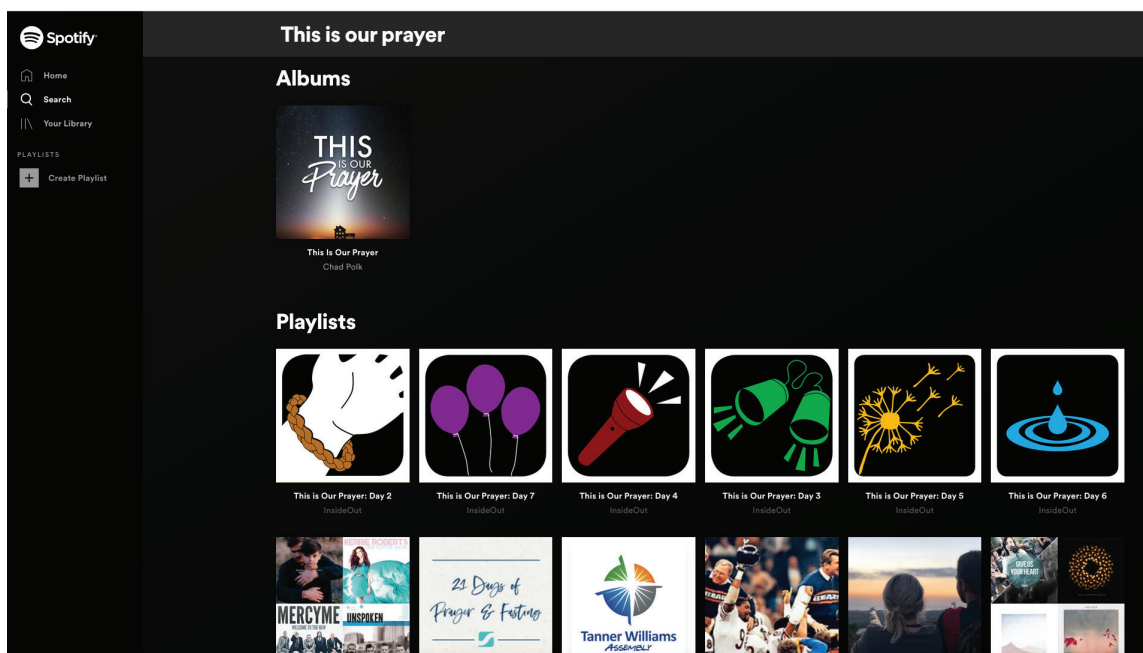


This year we're introducing a new resource as part of our program offerings. Music has always been one of the best ways for people to connect with each other and with God, so we've created a playlist of songs to go with each day of *Creation Speaks*. Just search for *Creation Speaks* and scroll down to Playlists.

Spotify is a versatile music platform that can bolster the great things your camp is already doing in a number of ways, such as:

1. Include songs in your daily worship that tie in the theme of the day.
2. Have something to play in the background during arts & crafts, free time, etc.
3. Connect with campers who feel the presence of God more tangibly in music than they do in sermons or activities.
4. Use individual songs on the playlists for Bible studies and devotions.
5. Show campers how many styles of Christian music there really is, and how even songs that weren't originally written for a worship setting can still be used for contemplative prayer.
6. Encourage your campers and staff to follow InsideOut on Spotify so they have something to remind them of camp in the off-season.

We hope you'll use and enjoy our latest resource! It is completely free to use.



Biblical and Theological Background

Overview

The Bible begins with God's speaking Creation into being. God has been speaking since the very beginning of time. This account of Creation is recorded in the book of Genesis, and *Creation Speaks* will dive into all it has to teach us. God continues to speak through Creation, and Creation has things to say. We can listen to what God has to say in two ways: through what's recorded in the Bible and through what God has spoken and continues to speak through Creation. Another way to describe this is by saying that we have two "books" we can read from God: the book of Scripture in the Bible, and also the book of Creation that reflects the nature of its Creator back to us. *Creation Speaks* will help us read the stories of the Bible, listen to Creation, and hear how each informs the other. *Creation Speaks* will take a look at each day of Creation in Genesis 1, celebrate that part of Creation, and connect it to another story from scripture that echoes the lessons each creative element might teach us.

Genesis literally means "beginnings," and the first book in the Bible is exactly that—a book of beginnings. It attempts to answer the big questions of life: How did we humans come to be? How did this planet and the universe begin? Genesis 1 answers those questions with a liturgical poem that, historically, would have been read aloud in worship together. While this Creation story has similarities to other ancient Creation myths, it is unique to the Hebrew people. In particular, it describes the nature of God as much as it describes how Creation came to be. The poetry always reminds the reader of the centrality of God to the story. In fact, notice through this week how Genesis is often written from the perspective of God. For example, God notices over and over "how good it was," highlighting how Creation brings enjoyment to God.

As Genesis 1 is poetry, it has multiple layers and meanings. As we read this week, see what different layers and meanings you can tease out. Notice the repetitions. The repetitive structure reminds us of important things, such as the goodness of Creation. When read aloud, the structure helps the reader or listener spend time contemplating this goodness. Another repetition is the way in which God acts. God speaks and then Creation acts, but God does so in a specific way: by separating and gathering. This is God "setting apart"—or in other words, sanctifying or making holy—each part of Creation. Also notice the carefully worded poetic language. Poetry has layers of meaning, but it is also beautiful in its own rhyme and meter.

God's order of Creation is important. Just like any poem, the order is not arbitrary. The order reflects back to the nature of God. Also notice that each day of Creation is a little more detailed than the previous one, culminating with humans on Day 6 of Creation, highlighting humanity's special role in the created order. The process of Creation ends with Sabbath, God's special day of rest.

Outside of the book of Scripture, Creation continues to speak to us. Creation speaks by reflecting God's values and God's characteristics. The Creation story tells us about what God values. Relationships, interdependence, and growth are all parts of Creation we can observe and learn from. For example, humans aren't separate from the created order. Humans are interdependent with Creation, inextricably connected to Creation. Another way to say this is that human life is ecological. Ecology is the science of relationships between organisms and their physical environment. The Creation story tells us about the relationships between humans, God, and the rest of the created order. Creation also shows how God values diversity. God celebrates the different seeds and animals, and God loves and cares for the diversity of humans too.

Observing Creation shows us God's characteristics. The Creator God, by definition, is creative and life-giving. From Jesus with the woman at the well to Noah and the ark, many of the stories we will read this week will highlight those parts of God's character. God's generosity is also revealed in Creation. The Creator of the universe provides food for every living creature because God is generous. God also generously gave us Jesus. The Bible reminds us that God so loved the *world*—the entire world and all of Creation—that God gave us Jesus.

Using Creation to understand God was one of Jesus' most common tools for teaching. Jesus made the Creation his classroom as he taught people about God. Jesus uses light, mustard seed, yeast, figs, fish, grapes, lilies, sheep, goats, cedars, palm trees, olives, mountains, rivers, sparrows, sand, stone, wheat, watering holes, ditches, donkeys, and more to make his points.

Listening to Creation speak directly, and through scripture, helps us grow closer to God. Being made in the image of God, humans have a special role in the created order, but our created nature should also remind us of the One who created. Out of gratitude for our Creation and God's unconditional love, we can respond with love. This is one more lesson we can take from Creation. If we don't open our mouths to praise God and use our gifts to serve in love, Jesus suggests that "even the rocks will cry out" to celebrate God.

Let's spend this week helping the campers explore God's Creation and listening together. Help them be present and open, aware of God's amazing Creation all around us. What will Creation teach us this week? Let's listen to Creation speak and find out!



Day 1: Invited by Light

John 8:12; Genesis 1:1–5

Genesis 1:1–5 is where it all begins. Genesis 1 begins the story of God and the whole universe. This Creation story is beautiful and poetic. The structure is a liturgical poem, meant to be read out loud. Try reading some of it aloud to the campers and notice how colorful and musical the language is. The poetic structure helps us slow down and enjoy God's Creation just as God enjoys God's Creation. As it is poetry, it is not meant to be read literally. It uses beautiful metaphors to show the reader God and Creation. It's about as far from a science textbook as one can get. Still, within it, we discover great truth. Although we often imagine this story answering the very human question, "Where did we come from?" it also answers, "What is God like?"

First, Genesis begins by explaining what was before God created. When God first creates the universe—both "the heavens and the earth"—Earth is different. It is "a formless void" and light is missing from it, but God is there. The "wind from God" is literally the Holy Spirit, because in Hebrew "wind," "breath," and "spirit" are all the same word: *ruach*. Next, God enters a repetition of speaking things into existence. Over the next days of Creation, God speaks, and things become. Into the dark, God speaks, and there is light.

After God speaks light into being, God sees that the light is good. All of God's Creation is good. In fact, the Hebrew could be better translated, "and God saw how good it was." Here, we get a little bit of God's perspective and thinking—we get to see God's enjoyment of and appreciation for Creation. God will do this with each aspect of Creation. Also note that there is nothing coincidental in this accounting of God's Creation. God seems to

know what God is doing. There is no “trial and error” in this story. We can compare that with the story in Genesis 2, in which God keeps creating animals in search of a suitable partner for the person God has created.

Then, just like God does on subsequent days, God separates. On Day 1, God separates the light from the darkness. Separating is an act of making things holy or set apart. Next, God names the light and the dark. This act of naming is important because in the ancient world, names have power. God is showing God’s power in the naming of Day and Night. This pattern continues throughout the next days of Creation: God speaks, Creation acts, God separates, God names, and Creation is good.

John 8:12 tells us more about the light of the world that God creates in this first day of Creation. John claims that Jesus is the same light of the world as the light of Day 1. Just as God and the Holy Spirit were there in the beginning, John suggests that Jesus was there too. Creation reminds us that light is literally necessary for life. Light is the first step in creating life. Light is life-giving.

Jesus does not just tell us about light. Jesus invites us into the light. When he says, “whoever follows me,” it is truly an invitation to all. We can follow Jesus into the “light of life.” This invitation to light might be understood differently by campers who are younger and hold fears of the dark. This might be heard differently by those who have faced great challenges. Remember that this can also be heard in a literal way that has historically been used to belittle those of darker skin. This is a metaphor about what is within. Help campers know that there is already light inside them. We can all share our light, and in doing so, we share the light of God we read about at Creation’s dawning and that Christians claim dwelt among us in Jesus.

On this first day of camp, Jesus’ invitation to walk in the light can be offered as a comfort to the campers. Walk with them as they begin to marvel at Creation’s speaking all around them in their new surroundings of camp. Help them to see how following Jesus makes them a light to the world.



Day 2: Refreshed by Water

John 4:4–15; Genesis 1:6–8

Days 1 and 2 of Creation focus on two of the most important elements to sustain life: light and water. On the second day of Creation, Genesis follows the same pattern as Day 1. God spoke, God created, God separated, and then God named. God’s words might seem a little strange at first. God says, “Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” In the ancient world, it was believed that the sky was a watery dome. God was separating the water covering the earth (seas) and the “water” that covered the heavens (sky). In other words, God is separating the seas from the sky. God names the Sky, and it is good.

John 4:4–15 also centers around water. Jesus and his disciples were traveling through Samaria. Jesus was tired and stopped by a well built by their ancestors Jacob and Joseph. John doesn’t tell us why Jesus and his disciples chose to go this way, saying only that Jesus “had to go through Samaria.” Perhaps this was simply the shortest path between two places, and they were in a hurry. Perhaps Jesus knew it was important to meet the woman at the well. While Jesus is at the well, a Samaritan woman comes up to get water, and Jesus asks her for water. It was unusual for Jesus to speak to her. First of all, it was scandalous for men to speak to women alone, and, as the passage notes, Jews and Samaritans did not get along. Jesus crosses these cultural expectations of gender and nationality and talks to her anyway.

The woman notes the unusualness of Jesus speaking to her. She questions why he asked her, of all people, to get him a drink. Jesus’ response to her is unexpected. He says, “If you knew the gift of God and who was asking, you would have

asked me for water instead.” How would she have known to ask Jesus for this water? Her first response to this is confusion, and rightly so. She questions him about his ability to get water and does so in concrete terms—she notes that Jesus has no bucket and asks where he will get this “living water.” She asks, incredulously, “Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob?” Those hearing this story originally would have known the spoiler—that Jesus actually is greater than their common ancestor Jacob.

However, Jesus does not answer her question directly. Instead, he describes the living water and its life-giving properties. At this description, the woman is intrigued. His description of water wets her thirst for the living water of Jesus. Finally, once she hears this description of Jesus’ mysterious living water, she begins to understand that the water of Jesus is more than just allowing her to stop doing the back-breaking work of hauling water daily. She wants to take part in the promises of Jesus, and the living water of Jesus allows her to do so. It is a story that breaks through her literal processing of the words to a metaphorical meaning. It is a story that breaks through explicit cultural barriers into the unconditional love of God.

Water, like the living water of Jesus, is important throughout the Bible. God acts by using water over and over. In each of these stories, water comes in many diverse forms. Water is expressed in the ancient Hebrew “water” of the heavens and the seas. Water can be found in rivers and lakes and oceans, and from deep within the earth like the well in the story. Water gives us tides and waves and rainy seasons. Each of these types of Creation’s water speaks back to us, reminding us how God loves diversity.

Each of these types of water is life-giving and life-directing. Sometimes, water literally allows for life, as it does in this day of Creation or in allowing rain for crops to grow. Sometimes, God acts through water to allow people to live, such as when God parts the Red Sea to allow the Israelites to escape or when Moses draws water from the rock for the people to drink. Sometimes, God works through water metaphorically, using stories such as Jonah’s being drug further and deeper into

the water and today’s story with the woman at the well. We connect with this metaphor through the tradition and sacrament of baptism.

Water is also life-changing. Floods and steady streams continue to shape the face of the earth, long after God’s Creation began. Weather events mark seasons and often shape the economy of communities. Water makes up a large portion of our very bodies; thus, the waters of Creation are at the center of our being. For the woman at the well, Jesus’ offer of living water is also life-changing. When the woman at the well accepts Jesus’ offer of eternal life and living water, she runs and tells everyone in the village about this man and his promises. Living water bursts forth as joy as she becomes one of the earliest evangelists for Jesus in the Bible. Living water reminds us that that faith, love, and our relationship with God are moving and active, and should not be allowed to become stagnant and contaminated.

Water also has the ability to cross boundaries. Just as Jesus passed through the boundary of Judea into Samaria, water can pass through boundaries. Rivers pass through nations and states, not caring which boundaries humans have set down. Waters can also change land. Just a drop of water over time can erode even the hardest stone. These are ways that Creation speaks back to us. Both water and Jesus cross physical and cultural boundaries. The waters of the earth are for all to enjoy, just as Jesus offers living water to everyone. God’s Creation of water and Jesus’ offer of living water allow everyone, including the campers, to quench their thirst.

As you explore this story, help campers name things we all thirst for and how Jesus speaks to those needs. As God’s Creation meets our physical needs, Jesus’ love meets our spiritual needs. Remember, sometimes the living water is quenching our thirst, and others times it is leading us beyond our boundaries and guiding us to new relationships and realities.



Day 3: Shaped like Earth

Jeremiah 18:1–10; Genesis 1:9–13

God creates the dry land of the earth on Day 3 of Creation, following the pattern of the previous days. God speaks and then gathers and separates the dry land from the waters that covered the earth. Creation responds to God's words, and then God names the Earth and the Seas, and again it is good. After creating the dry land and the seas, God has more to say. God speaks a second time, and then the earth brings forth vegetation. God says, "Let the earth..." God speaks and allows the earth to do what it innately knows how to do. God wants the earth be fully Earth. The story is showing that Creation acts in accordance with the nature of its createdness. The nature of the earth is to create an abundance of different types of seeds. In the agrarian world of the Israelites, seed was important because not having seeds to produce crops could literally lead to starvation and death. It also reminds us that God intended for a wide diversity of plants and seeds. God likes diversity. It also shows the generosity of God—providing seeds and plants for every living thing. And finally, just like the previous days, God calls this day good.

Just as God wants the earth to be fully Earth, God wants humans, and the campers, to be fully human, and God does so by creating humans out of the earth. As we will see later in the week, in Genesis 2, God creates a person (in Hebrew, *adam*) out of the earth (*adamah*). It's a Hebrew play on words to show the human's connectedness to the earth. The closest English wordplay might be that God created humans out of the *humus* (compost-like dirt). Humans are uniquely connected to the earth because we are made from the same stuff. This creates a kinship between the earth

and humans. In fact, God creates a covenant between the earth and humans in Genesis 9. In this covenant, God gives the land to the people, and the land provides for people, and the people worship God in return. This creates a community with the earth. The earth is not a commodity to be used, but a part of our communities. Rather than being the setting for the story of God and God's people, the Creation is a character in the story. And for each of us, the Creation is an important part of our communities.

God cares so much about humans that God continues to shape and reshape us. In Jeremiah 18:1–10, God speaks to Jeremiah just like God spoke in Creation. God instructs Jeremiah to act, and just like the earth, Jeremiah responds. Jeremiah goes down to the potter's house and watches the potter in action. The potter sees room for improvement on the clay vessel being made and reshapes it into a new creation. God is telling Jeremiah, through the dirt on the potter's wheel, to listen and watch how Creation speaks.

God shows Jeremiah that God can act and shape and rework Israel, just like the potter can rework pottery. God can shape the earth, shape nations, and shape all of us. God is a potter. Just like on each day of Creation, God makes the earth better and better. God continues to shape and form us out of love.

It is important to note that in the story the potter sees greater potential in the clay. The clay did nothing wrong. The clay is not thrown away. The creator simply sees what more it could be. Campers can be assured that they, like the Earth, are created good; and that while we can change and grow, it doesn't mean that we are "bad," or "broken." It is also important to be mindful of how firm a hand the creator takes or doesn't take in the future of this vessel. While the potter is shaping it, the potter is not dictating how it will be used. Although we affirm God's hand in shaping us, this passage does not suggest that God is controlling us or dictating our future. This is not a scripture about "God's plan," "God's will," or even about free will. It is simply an affirmation that God continues to shape Creation and us to our full potential.

On this day, help the campers listen and watch for ways God may be using Creation to speak to them. Sometimes that may mean that God will continue to shape and mold them like a potter. Maybe they just need to remember that they are connected to the earth, or maybe God wants the campers, like Earth, to be fully themselves. Help them hear the voice of Creation speaking to them today.



Day 6:

Purpose for Humanity

Genesis 2:4–7; Genesis 1:26–31

Today is an important one, if for no other reason, we are the focus of the Genesis 1 story. Day 6 is the first time God says God's Creation is "very good," and we are told humans have a special purpose in Creation. On this day, God speaks, just like on the previous days, but God says humans will be made in the image of God. All of God's Creation up until this point is good and still reflects the nature of the One that created them, but in humans, the fullness of God is revealed. Reflecting the image of God, humans are given a special responsibility, or "dominion," over all the animals. Dominion means that humans are in charge of the animals and should care for the rest of Creation the same way God cares for Creation. Just because humans are in charge does not mean that humans get to do whatever they want with the rest of Creation. Humans should take care of God's Creation that God worked so hard on with care and compassion and love. It is our responsibility to be caretakers of Creation with God.

Today is also important because we put the two Creation stories of Genesis side by side. The Creation story in Genesis 2 also claims that humans are special. In this second Creation story, Creation begins with the "generations of the heavens and earth." Then, God forms a person from the dust. This story reminds us of the story of the potter we learned about on Day 3, where

God is shaping things out of the earth. God literally forms a person, adam, from the "dust of the ground," the adamah. God then does something unusual—God breathes into him. God's breath, or *ruach* in Hebrew, is the same breath or wind that hovers over the deep in the first day of creation. God's spirit, or God's breath, is what makes humans special. This same Spirit is the one that came down from heaven when Jesus was baptized, and is the same Spirit that comes upon us during the sacrament of baptism. The Holy Spirit gives us power as Christians, and we and the campers are created full of it!

These three things—being made in the image of God, having a special responsibility to care for the Earth, and being empowered by God's spirit—makes humans God's very special Creation. After creating humans, God stops and sees "everything that he had made" and calls it not just good, as on the previous days, but "very good." God marvels over God's new Creation of humans and calls humans "very good." God then gives humans a special blessing.

As image bearers of God, humanity's responsibility is to reflect well on God's image inside of us. We need to remember our special job as caretakers of Creation with God. We also need to remember that we are *very good*. We need to notice the specialness of ourselves and those around us.

We can, like God, stop and marvel over all of Creation. Finally, we can bless other humans and all of Creation around us.

This day also brings a challenge for those who may be surprised by the presence of two different Creation stories. Like the story of Jesus' birth being taken from two gospels and merged into one simplified story, the story of Creation is often conflated into one telling. Yet, when we look at each on its own, we see unique images of God. Genesis 1 is a poetic and structured expression of a cosmic creator speaking things into existence, spinning heavenly bodies and keeping the universe in order. Genesis 2 is a narrative that shows us an intimate God who has hands to shape and hold, lungs and mouth to blow breath into a human form. This is a God who walks with us and holds our hand. Both images of God are important because God is all of this and more.

It is important to note that the person God forms is often translated "man." In reality, this is a non-gendered person. It is not until we have a

companion formed later in the story that they take on gendered expressions. This echoes what we read in Genesis 1, where God created male and female, all humankind, in the image of God. It is important for every camper of every background to know that they are created in the image of God. It is important for every camper to know that they carry with them an innate sense of purpose. It is important for every camper to know that they are filled with potential that is born of the very breath of God. Often, when Creation is speaking, it is speaking to us—reminding us that we are people of God and that it's time we got to work!



Day 7: Inspired by Creation

Psalm 104:1–13, 24, 31; Genesis 2:1–3

God ends the week of Creation with a day that is very special. After Day 6, God is finished with the work part of Creation, and God takes Day 7 to rest. God calls this day of Sabbath more than good or even very good—God says that it is “hallowed,” which means holy or set apart. This is the final bit of separating that God does; just like God separated the light from the dark and the earth from the waters, God separates the six days of Creation where there is work, from the seventh day, when God stops and rests.

God’s stopping to rest is important. God took an entire day to show its importance, and in other parts of the Bible, God emphasizes that the Sabbath rest isn’t just for humans—it’s for all of Creation. Donkeys and cows and even our fields where we grow food all need rest too. God commands all Creation to rest, just as God did. However, resting does not mean just absence

of work. God rested so that God could pause to marvel with awe and wonder all that God had created. God rests so that God can marvel and celebrate.

Psalm 104 shows us and the campers how to stop, rest, marvel, and celebrate just like God did on Day 7 of Creation. Psalm 104 echoes the themes of the Creation story, including the holiness of the seventh day. It’s a doxology, which means it is an expression of praise to God, and it’s directed at God—God is the “you” in the passage. First, the psalmist asks their soul to bless God, which is the beginning and end of the purpose of Creation. Creation directs the created to revere and give thanks to the Creator. Psalm 104 begins with thanks.

Next, Psalm 104 celebrates God’s Creation in the order of the days of Creation in Genesis. Each line takes time to marvel and celebrate each different part of the created order. It begins with light, just like in Day One, with God literally clothed in light. Then, God is described as stretching out the heavens over the waters, just like in Day 2. These lines describe all the images of the Spirit of God—the breath or wind and the fire or flame, like on the day of Pentecost. The psalm then describes dry land and mountains and how the water answers the sound of God’s voice, all mirroring the language of Creation. The diversity of the created animals is then celebrated. Finally, it describes the Lord rejoicing in His works, just like on Day 7 of Creation.

Just like Creation continues to speak, we and the campers get to continue to celebrate in Day 7 of Creation each and every week! God commands us to stop and rest on the Sabbath Day, but we are invited to celebrate and marvel in Creation. Take time this week and every week to stop and rest. Help the campers act like the Psalmist and celebrate Creation all around them. Help campers listen to how it is still speaking, and marvel and wonder in its diversity. Help them claim how good it is. Help them find expression of praise and wonder. Give thanks to God for the glory of God’s Creation!



Day 1: Invited by Light

Daily Quick Reference Guide

Scripture Passage: Genesis 1:1–5; John 8:12

Scripture Focus: John 8:12

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.”

Theological Summary: Light is universally appealing. It is something that we gravitate toward, and therefore makes an excellent symbol for Jesus as not only a guiding beacon, but a welcoming one.

Today, campers will...

- Experience light as a symbol of invitation.
- Be introduced to God’s Creation and the way it manifests in their lives.
- Discover Jesus as God’s light in the world.

DAILY ACTIVITIES

TITLE	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Primary learning activity that explores the daily scripture is highlighted.		
___ Calling All Campers	CREATE LEARN	Create group names and symbols
___ Spin the Flashlight	PLAY PRAY	Learn names and name lights
___ Find the Light	PLAY LEARN	Scavenger hunt for metaphors
___ Tug of Opposites	PLAY LEARN	Explore what is between opposites
___ Light It Up	CREATE SERVE	Luminary craft
___ Now You See It	LEARN	Night hike with a twist

Leader Notes: Remember that while light is inviting, that doesn’t make darkness bad. Campers are at a point where they will start to see dichotomies in scripture and automatically relate judgements to their wider lives. God created light and dark, and both were part of the Creation that God proclaimed as “good.”

Prayer: Lord, we thank you for creating light and dark, for giving us the comfort of your light and the restfulness of night and shade. Help us to shine your light of invitation to all around us.

Daily Activities

Calling All Campers

CREATE LEARN

Supplies: Large paper, markers

How: Invite campers to choose a group name that represents all of them, not just the most outgoing. Challenge them to come up with something that sounds welcoming to others and uses the daily theme of light. Once they've agreed on a name, encourage them to create a symbol, or collection of symbols, and create a group sign.

Try This: If campers come up with simple enough symbols, they could cut them out of cardboard and tape them to flashlights as a "bat-signal" for the group.

Spin the Flashlight

PLAY PRAY

Supplies: One flashlight per group

How: Sit in a circle on the ground and place a flashlight in the middle. As campers take turns spinning it, have the person the light is shining at share their name and a source of light. Once they have named one, they spin so someone else can answer. See how many you can think of without repeating.

Try This: You could use this as a closing for the day, playing in the dark and sharing a prayer of blessing for whoever the light lands on.

Find the Light

PLAY LEARN

Supplies: Bible, paper, pens

How: Ask campers to make a list of all the things light provides. Using the list, send campers on a scavenger hunt around camp to find those things. Have campers go in pairs or small groups of three or four and take a pencil or pen and paper to write where they found the items on their list. You can give bonus points for sources of light they didn't think of in advance. Once they return, read Genesis 1:1–5 and ask the campers how the light sources they found reflect attributes of God.

Now, read John 8:12. Ask campers why they think Jesus described himself as the light of the world, and discuss how that metaphor connects with the different sources of light from the scavenger hunt.

Try This: Offer "bonus" points if campers also write down how what they found from the scavenger hunt list would be different without the light.

Tug of Opposites

PLAY LEARN

Supplies: Long rope and something to mark the middle point.

How: Divide campers into two equal teams, and line them up on opposite ends of a rope for a game of "tug-of-war." Make sure every camper grasps the rope on their end. Explain that the goal is to pull hard enough to force the other team over the dividing line without getting dragged over the line themselves. Afterward, ask the campers to reflect on the tensions between the two ends and how one impacts the other. Read Genesis 1:1–5 and ask the campers what comes between light and dark. What other things are created by the tension or difference between the two? This might include colors of gray, shadows, eclipses, etc.

Try This: You could let campers make a list of other things in Creation that have an "in between." Examples in Genesis include seasons, days and night, animals of the water and the ground (frogs, turtles, etc.), etc. There are others in nature, such as floods and drought or plains and mountains.

Light It Up

CREATE SERVE

Supplies: Paper bags (both brown and white), scissors and X-acto knives, stencils or templates, candles, sand or rice

How: Explain to campers the symbolism of a luminary. By cutting designs in the bags, campers allow light to shine from the candles inside. Invite campers to serve one another and the camp by creating luminaries that can light important paths or be used in worship. Campers can create a luminary to give to the camp or to take home as a reminder of how we live as God's light in the world. Watch the "How to Make Paper Bag

Luminaries” video listed in the Story Resources for step-by-step instructions.

Try This: If your kitchen has a large number of 10 cans available, you can poke holes in the cans with hammer and nails instead of cutting bags, making luminaries that can become semi-permanent or at least are fit for use year-round. If you use cans, you can take either both ends or just one off and flip the cans upside down to protect the candle from weather.

Now You See It

LEARN

Supplies: Blindfolds

How: Plot out a short night hike that can be accomplished in just a few minutes, because it will be done three times. First, lead campers on the short hike using flashlights. The second time, blindfold all but one of the campers, line them up single file, and have them place their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them, so that only the first camper has a flashlight and can actually see where they are going. Make sure to closely monitor campers to help them navigate any difficult portions. Remind the leader to communicate obstacles and turns and remind others to pass it on. For the third walk, take all the blindfolds off, take away all flashlights, and let campers’ eyes adjust to the dark for a few minutes before leading them on the final short hike. After the activity, debrief with campers what made each version of the hike different. Encourage discussion about how even in the dark, God has given us the moon, stars, and eyes that adjust to lower levels of light. Consider discussing how other senses can be heightened to make navigation easier even when we are blindfolded.

Try This: You can take campers along a route they’ve already used during the day and ask them to focus during the third time through (in ambient light) on what is different at night. Different sounds, different animals, etc.



Story Resources

***Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, by J. K. Rowling (New York: Arthur A. Levine Books, 2007).** In chapter 18, Ron explains how the deluminator led him back to Harry and Hermione with light. The light that brings him back to his friends is another great example of how light repels more than one kind of darkness; in this case, it repels loneliness and anger.

“Luminaries,” Rockwell Group, <https://www.rockwellgroup.com/projects/luminaries>. This website shows and explains an installation of lights in New York City that seeks to create community through light.

“How to Make Paper Bag Luminaries,” Southern Living https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x3W_dTsC8gE. Quick and easy tutorial on making luminaries.



Day 2: Refreshed by Water

Daily Quick Reference Guide

Scripture Passage: Genesis 1:6–8; John 4:4–15

Scripture Focus: John 4:13–15

Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.”

Theological Summary: The message Jesus brought is like water in more than one way: It sustains life like water does, and it also goes everywhere and fills even the smallest gaps like water does. God’s love, like water, finds new ways to refresh us all.

Today, campers will...

- Understand that water is life-giving and that spiritual water is life-changing.
- Learn about Jesus as one who crossed boundaries and welcomed all people.
- Celebrate the diversity of people and backgrounds present in camp.

DAILY ACTIVITIES		
TITLE	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Primary learning activity that explores the daily scripture is highlighted.		
___ Moved by Water	PLAY LEARN	Explore water’s importance
___ Overflowing	PRAY	Water communion as prayer
___ Rocks and Minnows	PLAY LEARN	Sharks and minnows with a twist
___ Analogizing	CREATE LEARN	Tell a story to make a point
___ Water Coloring	CREATE LEARN	Spilling outside the lines
___ For the Birds	CREATE SERVE	Serve Creation through hydration
___ Your Words, My Words	PRAY	Praying someone else’s prayer

Leader Notes: Today’s passage is relatively short, so make sure you provide the full context to help campers better understand how diversity features in this story. The woman at the well is “other” in the eyes of so many. That is core to the story.

Prayer: Thank you, God, for both the created water that keeps us hydrated at camp and the living water that sustains us in life. Amen.

Daily Activities

Moved by Water

PLAY LEARN

Supplies: Large bucket, multiple cups of water, teaspoons

How: Open by reading Genesis 1:6–8. Place the large bucket somewhere central that all campers can easily access. Place smaller cups of water all around your space and give each camper a teaspoon. Challenge the campers to fill the large bucket to the fill line using only their teaspoons to transport water from the cups to the bucket. Let them use the teaspoons for a few minutes, then stop the activity and reflect on the ridiculous nature of the task and brainstorm all the ways we move water and access water in our world today. See how many they can name. Examples might include irrigation systems and automatic pet waterers. Read John 4:4–15 and ask the campers why they think Jesus chose to use water as an analogy. Ask them how the story's meaning would change if we replace water with food, air, money, or other things humans consider to be important?

Try This: This would be a great time to talk about how your camp gets its water and how the watershed in your area impacts the camp and surrounding community. You could even invite in a conservation office or local educator.

Overflowing

PRAY

Supplies: A large bowl or jar, cups of water for each camper

How: Provide each camper with a cup of water, and place the bowl in the middle. Ask campers to imagine something they would like to pray for, then focus on that as they come forward and pour their water into the bowl. Once everyone has poured their water, point out the way the prayers combine and intermingle and are now indiscernible from one another. Explain that this is how God takes in our prayers—each prayer is of the same value, and we are all equally important

to God. Even if the water is poured out, it never disappears. It may seep into the ground, but it remains in the water cycle, much like our prayers remain on God's heart. Use the bowl to water plants or return the water to the natural cycle.

Try This: Consider using the water to draw symbols of faith, or include a hand-washing service in worship.

Rocks and Minnows

PLAY LEARN

Supplies: A large, well-marked square area and a creative staff member

How: Set boundaries for a narrow game space. Ask two volunteers to be “rocks,” and the rest of the campers will be “minnows” who try to “swim” across the space without touching a rock. Each round, the rocks can move one small step in any direction, but then must stay put and not move. Minnows must always follow the same path they took the first round. If tagged, they can take the place of a rock, or if there are more campers tagged than rocks, they can change their path for the next round. After playing a few times ask the campers the difference between this game and traditional “sharks and minnows.” Usually the danger for minnows is moving sharks, not slowly shifting rocks. Ask the campers how they navigated the challenges as individuals and how each person's choices impacted the group's experience. Spend a few minutes talking about how water moves, shifts, and shapes the world around us in slow and profound ways. Ask campers how Jesus might slowly shape and shift us.

Try This: This could be a large camp game with staff watching to make sure campers follow their same paths. You can also just let people cheat, then debrief the ways we adapt to face new or changing circumstances.

Analogizing

CREATE LEARN

Supplies: Bibles

How: Together, read John 4:4–15. Discuss how stories—even true ones—use literary devices to make a point, and talk about the difference between the literal water the woman went to the well for and the figurative water Jesus offered her. Why did Jesus use water as a metaphor? Was it just convenient to the moment, or was there deeper meaning? Now split campers into smaller groups and ask each group to do what was done in the story using their own life experience. Challenge campers to choose an activity that is common for them or their friends, then figure out how they could use that experience to teach something about God or a justice issue. Ask them to share their stories and lessons with the larger group.

Try This: Consider having the campers brainstorm ways their story might be told or shared. Would it be in person or digitally shared? Would it be one-on-one or communal?

Water Coloring

CREATE LEARN

Supplies: Large paper, markers, blue food coloring, bowl, water

How: Put some drops of blue food coloring in a bowl of water. Draw a simple water scene on a large sheet of paper. This can be as simple as some waves, or you can make a more complicated scene. The important thing is to have an area that should be water and space that is clearly not water. Now, invite campers to take turns pouring water from the bowl onto the page to color the water portions. Do not allow brushes, sponges, or any method other than pouring. Afterward, spend some time talking about how water ignores the lines on the page and goes where it wants. Then spend a few minutes talking about divisions we create that God's love ignores. Make a list and challenge the campers to think of divisions they personally struggle to overcome.

Try This: You could do this with different colors of paint and try to color an entire sheet with a nature scene on it. It may come out more abstract but could be a beautiful art piece to decorate your worship space.

For the Birds

CREATE SERVE

Supplies: Old bowls, nails, hammer, string

How: Let campers use the bowls to create simple birdbaths. They can use the hammer and nails to punch holes, then use string or other materials to hang them. . Campers could be creative and decorate them before installing them. As a group, search for spots to hang them around camp where you think the birds will be safe taking a rest, and then fill them with water as a fun way to serve nature.

Try This: If you don't get a lot of rain, have campers return each day and refill the dishes, connecting the project to each part of the curriculum. Ask the campers to make the connections themselves as they work through the week.

Your Words, My Words

PRAY

Supplies: Pens, paper

How: Start by reminding campers that when Jesus spoke to the woman at the well, he was specifically including her in his ministry, and giving her a chance to re-integrate into her community after being shunned (which we know because she was at the well, alone, in the middle of the day when no one else was drawing water) for some time. With the spiritual water Jesus has offered all of us, we must now do the hard work of including/welcoming others. Then explain to campers that in this exercise, we will include through prayer. Ask each camper to write down a prayer on their paper and then redistribute the prayers. Each camper should then pray the prayer they are handed as if it is their own.

Try This: Give campers the option of praying in small groups or pairs, reading the words aloud together. You could also weave this activity into an evening worship service.



Story Resources

***The Story of God, the Story of Us*, by Sean Gladding (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2010).** This book addresses scripture through the eyes of contemporary people. It will give campers an idea of how diverse people see the same stories as well as reminding them of the history and lessons that to us are stories, but to others were their lived experience.

***Slumberland*, by Tom Mansell, podcast <https://www.podcasts.com/slumberland-podcast> .**

***This American Life*, NPR, podcast <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/>.** Both of these programs offer excellent examples of the art of oral history/storytelling. *Slumberland* is a fictional podcast and *This American Life* is a celebrated real-life radio program. For camps that allow access to digital media, they are excellent resources as your campers plan their own oral histories.



Day 3: Shaped like Earth

Daily Quick Reference Guide

Scripture Passage: Genesis 1:9–13; Jeremiah 18:1–10

Scripture Focus: Jeremiah 18:6

Can I not do with you, O house of Israel, just as this potter has done? says the LORD. Just like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.

Theological Summary: Clay is shaped and, sometimes, smashed and reshaped. But the clay itself is never considered faulty. We, like the clay, might need a different tactic or a different shape, but we are never considered ruined or disposable. God is always working with us to help us grow.

Today, campers will...

- Recognize that we come from the earth.
- Understand that God continues to shape and reshape us.
- Embrace that the stuff we are made of is valuable.

DAILY ACTIVITIES		
TITLE	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Primary learning activity that explores the daily scripture is highlighted.		
___ Potter's Tag	PLAY	Blob tag with shapes
___ Personal Ingredients	PLAY PRAY	Things we share in common
___ What's My Motivation	PLAY LEARN	Imagining others' perspective
___ It Is Like...	PLAY LEARN	Reimagine common games
___ Shaping and Growing	SERVE LEARN	Earth and plant connections
___ History of Me	LEARN	Reflect on life-shaping factors
___ Pass the Prayer	PRAY	Communal prayer practice

Leader Notes: Self-esteem is a fragile thing, and today's scripture invites us to see ourselves as a work in progress, growing in goodness. Help campers see their potential rather than their flaws. Also, be prepared for some big questions on how much God tinkers in our world. Don't be afraid of big questions, and don't feel pressured to have all the answers.

Prayer: God, help us keep growing into the individuals and community you created us to be. Help us claim our potential and overcome our mistakes. Amen.

Daily Activities

Potter's Tag

PLAY

Supplies: none

How: This is a variation on blob tag, in which one person starts as "it" and each person they tag joins hands and becomes part of "it." In this version, the leader shouts out a shape whenever the blob adds a new person. The "it" blob has to stay together and make that shape in order to tag someone. If they fail to make the shape or if they lose contact with one another, the "it" blob loses the last camper they captured, who goes back to running away. Alternatively, rather than losing a member, the blob could be delayed by five seconds while runners get a head start.

Try This: You could add a rule that campers running away must also make a shape. For instance, the blob could be a fish and the runners could be worms.

Personal Ingredients

PLAY PRAY

Supplies: Chairs (one per camper)

How: Have campers sit in a circle of chairs, then ask them to consider what they are made of physically, emotionally, and even metaphorically. Give some examples such as "skin," "love," "pumpkin spice," or "music." Begin the game removing one chair and having everyone stand in the center. Have one camper share something they are made of. Everyone who thinks they are also made of what's been spoken tries to find a new chair. The person without a seat is the next to call out a personal ingredient. Take a moment to affirm the person by naming the thing they are made of, and ask the rest of the campers to affirm them with clapping or snaps. Repeat until everyone has had a chance to call out a personal ingredient, or until the game naturally winds down. Afterward, discuss the things that make us who we are and how our personalities and preferences are shaped. Close with an affirmation, thanking God for all the things that make up the members of the group.

Try This: You could add a rule that anyone who offers a negative description of themselves must be met with three compliments by others. Also, consider challenging them to come up with things that make everyone, or no one, move. Discuss what things are universal and connect us and what things are unique to us.

What's My Motivation

PLAY LEARN

Supplies: none

How: Read each of the following three scenarios to the campers, providing time between each for conversation about the motivations and how others might experience the characters: Camper always wants to be alone and avoids being in large groups; camper is always volunteering and wants to be helpful at everything; camper is always where they are supposed to be but never says anything and seems emotionally numb. Ask the campers to imagine a backstory for each camper that helps us understand their behaviors. After sharing and discussing these three situations, ask the campers if they have ever resembled these descriptions and how (if applicable) they have changed over time.

Try This: You could invite campers to imagine something that might help the person in each scenario grow as a person and feel safe in community, and encourage them to contribute to a positive camp culture that provides for those needs.

It Is Like...

PLAY LEARN

Supplies: none

How: Divide campers into groups of two or three and assign each a common game such as Red Light Green Light, Simon Says, or Rock Paper Scissors, and challenge them to come up with a new version. This could be more age-appropriate, more challenging, or appropriate to the camp theme. Encourage them to be creative. Let campers share their new ideas, and if you have time play some of the adaptations. Afterward, spend a few minutes talking about how familiar elements and new twists impact the experience.

Try This: You could also pass the game along, so that one small group at a time changes some aspect of the same game and then it goes to another group. Play the game at the end of the day and see how much it has changed from its original form.

Shaping and Growing

SERVE LEARN

Supplies: Assorted seeds, an area to plant them (or small pots), and tools for digging

How: Choose an area at camp to either beautify with flowers or plant some vegetables, or plant seeds in compostable paper cups. Read Genesis 1:9–13 and ask the campers why the forming of the earth and bringing forth vegetation might come together on the same day. Spend some time talking about how the growth protects (avoiding erosion, blowing, etc.) and enriches the earth, and how the earth nourishes the vegetation.

Try This: You might spend some time imagining how vegetation and the grounds of camp might have changed over time. Are there hillsides held in place by roots and vegetation? Are there changes in the grounds that have created new space for flowers? Have waters changed the grounds in any way or caused abundance of growth in some areas? How is it all connected?

History of Me

LEARN

Supplies: Paper, pencils

How: Give each camper paper and a pencil. Read Jeremiah 18:1–10 together, then ask the campers to brainstorm things that shape us and change us through life. They might include milestones such as starting school or learning to ride a bike. They can include disappointments or loss, or physiological changes such as aging or puberty. They might list people or communities. Now, ask them to draw a shape or symbol that represents them. It can be a “sculpture” of them, a picture of something the love, or just a simple shape like a box. Ask them to write things around that picture that shaped the way it looks today. You can review the things they brainstormed to help them get started. Once they have had time to reflect and respond, invite them to look at the

shaping influences and think about which ones made the most impact. For these, ask campers to add the initials of people who were part of that experience. They can be teachers, mentors, coaches, family members, or friends. It might even be a person that caused conflict that they overcame. If you have time, invite those willing to share, or let them pair off and talk about the experience with a partner. Either way, end by inviting them to look at their page and see where God might have been at work on their journey.

Try This: You can add another step to this activity and ask campers to imagine things that will shape them in the future and to identify things they can control (influences they choose) and those that are beyond our control.

Pass the Prayer

PRAY

Supplies: none

How: Have one camper start a prayer and let them pray as long as they'd like. When they stop, the person next to them should add onto the prayer, again with as many or as few words as they'd like. Pass the prayer around the circle, and when everyone has had a chance to add to the prayer, say amen together. Talk with campers about how the prayer may have changed in ways they weren't expecting, and how it felt in the end.

Try This: These prayers could be part of a worship experience, or you could use this style of prayer as closing through the week to help campers get used to participating in prayer.



Story Resources

***Journey to the Center of the Earth*, directed by Eric Brevig (New Line Cinema, 2008).** An exploration of the layers of the Earth and how complicated it is. This movie is fun and will remind campers how little of the Earth they actually interact with and understand.

***Divergent*, by Veronica Roth (New York: Katherine Tegen Books, 2011).** Even though Tris is different and considered dangerous, she recognizes how valuable her divergence is, and so do others.

***The Lorax* (Universal Pictures, 2012).** This movie retelling of the Dr. Seuss classic is one everyone can enjoy while learning a valuable lesson about standing up for the Earth.



Day 4: Purpose for Humanity

Daily Quick Reference Guide

Scripture Passage: Genesis 2:4–7; Genesis 1:26–31

Scripture Focus: Genesis 2:4b–5

In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground.

Theological Summary: Obviously God could have (and did) create plants and herbs “of the field” that would grow with no help from man. This means God intentionally made us an important part of the life cycle and an essential building block in Creation.

Today, campers will...

- Learn that they are created in the image of God.
- Understand they are created for a purpose as care takers of Creation.
- Know they are empowered by God’s Spirit.
- Know that caring is a shared responsibility with God and each other.

DAILY ACTIVITIES		
TITLE	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Primary learning activity that explores the daily scripture is highlighted.		
___ Breathe on Me	PLAY	Freeze tag reimagined
___ Balancing Act	PLAY LEARN	A game to remind us we all have to care
___ DIRT Hunters	PLAY LEARN	Combine word scrambles and prayer
___ Job Descriptions	LEARN	Reinforcing interdependence
___ Reflections of God	CREATE SERVE	Make up an empowering chant
___ Celebrating Us	PRAY CREATE	Naming God’s gifts in us
___ Capture Your Flag	PLAY	Reverse the popular game

Leader Notes: Camp tends to be about community and interdependence most of the time, so take any opportunity you see to remind campers that what they’re doing relates to the theme. Let the rhythm and connections of camp teach.

Prayer: God, we pray today that you would remind us of our responsibility to this world you created and empower us to be good partners in continuing to care for it. Amen.

Daily Activities

Breathe on Me

PLAY

Supplies: none

How: Begin by reading Genesis 2:4–7 to help campers make the connection between the game and the scripture. In this version of freeze tag, when someone is tagged, they become earth again and must lie down and freeze until someone who hasn't been tagged comes and breathes the "breath of God" on them. Campers could fan one another so no one is made uncomfortable by others blowing on them.

Try This: You could also require campers to say something good about the person they are unfreezing.

Balancing Act

PLAY LEARN

Supplies: Paper plates, hole punch, string, something to carry

How: Punch four holes equidistantly around the edge of a paper plate and attach four lengths of string through the holes. Put campers into teams of four and challenge them to use the plates to move items from one place to another. If the item falls off, the group has to go back to the starting line and try again. You can try again, or change the activity as you go, taking one or two group members away to show how difficult the task is without everyone doing their part. Afterward, spend some time talking about how each person contributed to the activity.

Try This: You can make this a larger group activity with more holes and strings. The more participating, the more complicated it can be. Spend some time talking about the challenges of working together in larger groups versus smaller teams or communities.

DIRT Hunters

PLAY LEARN

Supplies: Paper, marker, tape or tacks, pens

How: In advance, choose four locations and mark them with the letters D, I, R, and T written on pieces of paper. On the backs of the pages, write the corresponding words: "Dominion and Responsibility," "Inhale and Exhale," "Relationships," and "Thankfulness." How hard you hide the letters depends on how long you want the activity will last. When you gather with campers, read Genesis 2:4–7 and Genesis 1:26–31 together. Begin by assuring them that the activity is not a race and there is no hurry. Explain that there are four stations for them to find, each marked with a letter. At each station, they are to turn the letter over and read the words, then discuss how it relates to the day's scripture readings. They can write their thoughts on the paper. Once they have found all four, they bring them back to your group space and put them in order to form a word. Ask the campers what it means to them that people were drawn from the Creation (dirt) and set as caretakers for Creation.

Try This: You could make this an all-camp experience by making sure there are enough copies of the letters at each station for all groups to take one.

Job Descriptions

LEARN

Supplies: Paper, pens

How: Divide the campers into two groups and assign each group one of the scriptures for the day. Have one read Genesis 2:4–7 and the other read Genesis 1:26–31. Ask each group to create a job description for being human. Ask them to talk about what God expects and what Creation needs based on their assigned scripture. Bring the full group back together and compare expectations. Ask the campers how they think they might do if applying for the job as "Human Caretaker of Creation."

Try This: If you have time and a creative group, consider letting them divide into pairs and take turns interviewing each other for the job of Human Caretaker. This could be a fun roleplay, followed by a great conversation on how much room we all have for improvement in caring for Creation.

Reflections of God

CREATE SERVE

Supplies: Dry erase markers, paper, pens

How: Read Genesis 1:26–31 together, then ask the campers what it means to be created in the image of God. What attributes do they think we have that reflect God? Invite them to brainstorm some short affirmations or slogans to encourage others to see God in their own reflection. Use dry erase markers to write these affirmations or slogans on mirrors around camp so they will be seen when others are looking at themselves. Be sure to be sensitive and appropriate about privacy in bathrooms.

Try This: These could be left up so the next week's campers see them. Consider how campers might do this for staff as well.

Celebrating Us

PRAY CREATE

Supplies: String, paper, scissors, markers

How: In advance, cut pieces of paper into large triangles. Ask campers to identify one way that God has empowered them. This can be a gift, talent, a strength they have, or a characteristic they think God gave them. Give campers markers and triangle-shaped pieces of paper and have them decorate their paper to communicate their answers. They can draw a picture or write a word and decorate it. Take all the papers, attach them to a string, and hang the newly made decorations across your group space. Close with a prayer, thanking God for the gifts hanging around the space.

Try This: You might consider decorating your worship space with these affirmations of blessings. Campers could take home their own pennant after the service or take home someone else's to pray for that person. You could also leave them up from week to week, adding new camper gifts to the worship space.

Capture Your Flag

PLAY

Supplies: One flag per team

How: Split campers into two teams and introduce a game of Capture the Flag. Explain the rules and encourage campers to make their flags easy to defend and difficult to find. Give campers three to five minutes to hide their flags before the game starts. Once everyone is ready, gather campers back together for the major change to this game. Instead of retrieving the other team's flag, teams are switching territories. Their new goal is to get their new flag from the spot where it was hidden by the other team into the spot where they originally hid theirs. Teams should spend a few minutes finding the flag left by the other team so they know where the opposing team will be looking to plant their flag. Then they should defend that area while taking the flag hidden there and try to get it into the spot where they hid their original flag at the beginning of the game. After the game, spend some time talking about how each team made the challenge harder on themselves, and ask the campers to think of examples of ways people make life harder on others and on themselves.

Try This: Capture the Flag is an excellent night game, so this could work well at night, too.



Story Resources

***Smallfoot* (Warner Bros., 2018).** The story of a Yeti who sets out to prove that humans are real. This is an interesting twist on the stories we tell ourselves to explain where we come from, and it also shows how important it is for humans to work with Creation instead of against it.

***Mountains Beyond Mountains*, by Tracy Kidder (New York: Random House, 2003).** This is the biography of a doctor whose goal in life was to cure infectious diseases in the developing world. The doctor's belief that "the only real nation is humanity" will resonate with campers who take the sharing of our responsibility seriously.



Day 5: Inspired by Creation

Daily Quick Reference Guide

Scripture Passage: Psalm 104:1–13, 24, 31; Genesis 2:1–3

Scripture Focus: Psalm 104:24

O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.

Theological Summary: God's Creation is all around us, singing praise to our Creator and showing us every day how close and how powerful God truly is.

Today, campers will...

- Joyfully proclaim the awe and wonder of Creation.
- Go home with grateful hearts for our Creator.

DAILY ACTIVITIES

TITLE	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Primary learning activity that explores the daily scripture is highlighted.		
___ All I See	PRAY	Prayer of gratitude
___ Prompted	CREATE LEARN	Thinking about how great God's work is
___ Puzzled	PLAY	A fun relay race
___ Marvel-ous	CREATE LEARN	Heroes for Creation
___ Leave It Better	PLAY SERVE	Leave the camp clean

Leader Notes: This is often a short day, so make sure that you are focusing on today's theme whenever possible. Having a fun last day with lots of sneaky learning will ensure campers go home happy and thoughtful.

Prayer: Amazing Creator, thank you for a fun week, and for giving us a world full of wonder so we can know you better.

Daily Activities

All I See

PRAY

Supplies: none

How: Invite campers to pick a quiet spot in nature and pay careful attention to everything around them. Encourage them to take this as a prayerful moment to connect with God and Creation. Gather campers back together and ask them what they noticed on this last day that they might have missed on the first, or how this week of camp changed the way they see things they have seen many times before.

Try This: Challenge campers to use this as a prayer practice at home, particularly when they are feeling overwhelmed or anxious.

Prompted

CREATE LEARN

Supplies: A large piece of paper at the front/center of the space you use with the prompt printed out on it

How: Read Psalm 104:1–13, 24, 31 together. Repeat the line “O Lord, how manifold are your works, in wisdom you have made them all,” and ask campers to share something in God’s Creation they are amazed by, or a part of Creation where they see God’s wisdom at work. After they have had time to share, finish by reading this verse again.

Try This: This could be done as an art response. Just provide paper and something to create with. Drawings, poetry, or a rewriting of the Psalm would all be appropriate responses.

Puzzled

PLAY

Supplies: Create or purchase a puzzle with an image of Creation. You can simply print out an image and cut it into random shapes.

How: Let the campers work together to complete the puzzle, then ask them what piece of Creation care they think is their responsibility when they get home. Let them write it on a piece of the puzzle to take with them as a reminder.

Try This: Connect this to the scripture by having campers take a “rest” after every seventh piece is put into place. Everyone can just take a big deep breath and then dive back in again.

Marvel-ous

CREATE LEARN

Supplies: Paper, pens or pencils

How: Read Psalm 104:1–13, 24, 31 together. Point out how the Psalm reviews the different parts of Creation. Ask campers to share what they remember learning on each day of camp. Now, invite them to invent a new superhero based on one aspect of Creation. Give them time to think and bounce ideas off of one another, and let them work alone or in groups as they prefer. When they have created a superhero they’re happy with, invite them to share it with the group, then challenge them as they go home to live like that superhero in their own lives.

Try This: If some campers are strong artists, they might want to draw out their heroes. These could be used as a Creation care mascot for the camp and be featured on your social media or as pictures on the camp’s recycling centers.

Leave It Better

PLAY SERVE

Supplies: Trash bags, gloves

How: Introduce this activity as a scavenger hunt. Explain that the only item on the list is “trash.” Send campers out in groups of three to find anything that doesn’t belong and collect it. Offer prizes for people who find the most items, the weirdest items, and the most colorful collection to make it even more fun. They may accuse you of pretending a chore is a group activity. This is a great conversation to have as you work. Challenge them to understand the importance of doing little things that make a difference.

Try This: You could dive into an affirmation process by looking at all the trash collected, then asking campers what else they collected this week. Ask them what thing they will take from others in the group and what personal problems or concerns they will leave behind at camp as they go home.



Story Resources

***The Magician's Nephew*, by C. S. Lewis.:** This installment of *The Chronicles of Narnia* tells Narnia's creation story, mirroring the Biblical creation story.

"Laudato Si' Animation," by CAFOD, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o3Lz7dmn1eM>. This is a short animation (five minutes) created to go along with Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'*, a letter calling us all to action to protect our planet. It offers a concise description of what is happening to our planet as well as hope for the future.

"Canticle of Creation Prayer Card," Sadlier Religion <https://go.sadlier.com/religion/canticle-of-creation-prayer-card>. This downloadable colorable prayer card is intricate enough to keep the attention of junior high campers and would make a nice sending-home project to extend the week's learning.

Songs and Music

There is no designated music time, theme song, or music guide for this curriculum. Below are recommendations to help you prepare for opening gatherings, worship presentations, or a music session with children. Most are readily available in hymnals or with a simple online search. Many have videos on YouTube which you can use to lead children should you lack music leaders.

Creation Speaks: General Theme

- “The Whole World’s in God’s Hands” (Traditional)
- “Turn the World Around” (Harry Belafonte, 1977)
- “What a Wonderful World” (Louis Armstrong, 1968)
- “This Is My Father’s World” (Hymn)
- “We Are the World” (USA for Africa, 1985)
- “One Spirit of Love” (Andra Moran, 2012)
- “Let There be Peace on Earth” (Hymn)
- “Lean on Me” (Bill Withers, 1972)
- “Faith Like a Child” (Jars of Clay, 1995)
- “Beautiful Things” (Gungor, 2010)

Day 1: John 8:12; Genesis 1:1-5 Invited by the Light

- “This Little Light of Mine” (Traditional)
- “I Am the Light of the World” (Hymn)
- “Thy Word” (Amy Grant, 1990)
- “We Are Walking in the Light of God”/“Siyahamba” (Hymn)
- “Walk in the Light” (Aretha Franklin, 1987)
- “Day & Night” (Andra Moran, 2012)
- “In the Light” (DC Talk, 1995)
- “In the Light of God” (Hymn)
- “Light the Fire” (Bill Maxwell, 1986)

Day 2: John 4:4-15; Genesis 1:6-8 Refreshed by Water

- “I Went Down to the River to Pray” (Traditional)
- “For Those Tears I Died” (Marsha Stevens, 1972)
- “Deep & Wide” (Traditional)
- “Peace Like a River” (Traditional)
- “We Shall Not be Moved” (Hymn)
- “Spring Up O Well” (Hymn)
- “Oceans” (Hillsong United, 2013)
- “Oh Fill My Cup” (Hymn)
- “Just around the Riverbend” (Disney’s *Pocahontas*, 1995)

Day 3: Jeremiah 18:1-10; Genesis 1:9-13 Shaped like Earth

- “Spirit of the Living God” (Hymn)
- “The Whole World’s in God’s Hands” (Traditional)
- “In the Garden” (Hymn)
- “This Pretty Planet” (Tom Chapin, 1988)
- “Creation Doo Wah Diddy” (Traditional)
- “God of Wonders” (Third Day, 2003)
- “Green Grass Grew All Around” (Traditional)
- “This Island Earth” (The Nylons, 1987)

Day 4: Genesis 2:4-7; Genesis 1:26-31 Purpose for Humanity

- “You Are Beautiful” (Christina Aguilera, 2002)
- “I Am Lovable and Capable” (Traditional)
- “Jesus Loves Me” (Hymn)
- “Bind Us Together Lord” (Hymn)
- “Jesus Loves the Little Children” (Hymn)
- “We Are One in the Spirit” (Hymn)
- “In Christ There is no East or West” (Hymn)
- “Weave” (Hymn)
- “Give It Away” (Michael W. Smith, 1991)
- “Give Yourself to Love” (Kate Wolfe, 1983)

Day 5: Psalm 104:1-13, 24, 31; Genesis 2:1-3 Inspired by Creation

- “One Spirit of Love” (Andra Moran, 2012)
- “Jesus Loves the Little Children” (Hymn)
- “Imagine” (John Lennon, 1971)
- “Celebration” (Kool & the Gang, 1980)

Arts and Crafts

Upcycled Friendship Bracelets

Supplies: Several T-shirts (cut into ½" strips, from bottom hem to top of shirt)

How: Take three strips, and tie together at one end. Braid the strips together until you reach the other end. Tie ends together, then tie the two ends of the bracelet together. For an added design twist, tie knots in individual strands as you are braiding, and see how it looks.

For younger campers:

Take a strip or two, and begin tying knots. They will begin to look like beads. When the camper is satisfied with the knot design they have created, tie the two ends together, and wear.

Stepping Stones

Supplies: Paint, paint brushes, rocks, photos of animal prints

How: Start by gathering campers for a brief presentation on what kinds of prints animals leave in the ground. These can be photos of prints from the local animals that frequent your campground to animals on the other side of the world. Then, either invite campers to find a stone with a smooth enough surface for painting or hand them stones that you set up beforehand. Campers will then paint their paw prints and hoof prints of choice, and after the paint has dried, they can line the paths around camp with the new rocks to make it easier to identify animal tracks.

For younger campers: Make stamps of paw prints. These can be purchased or made out of craft foam glued to cardboard.

Try This: Campers could draw pictures of the animals, their tracks, and add a photo of the animal to compile into a "Nature Center" book for the camp. Future campers could learn about the area's wildlife through their work.

From Trash to Treasure

Supplies: Plastic bottles (or whatever kind of single-use plastic your camp uses, if it does), general arts and crafts supplies, masking tape

How: Ask campers to brainstorm a list of single-use plastics they interact with throughout their daily lives. What might they use instead of that plastic? Then, brainstorm a new list of creative uses for all those plastics after they are done being used for their original purpose to keep them out of the landfill. Finally, take the single-use plastics you have and turn them into any number of arts and crafts projects: turn plastic bottles into piggy banks or rocket ships or flower vases; incorporate nonrecyclable packaging into a sculpture, or build a mini-windmill out of (washed) plastic utensils. The possibilities are endless! But remind campers that even better than finding new uses is to stop buying single-use items as much as they can.

Try This: Ask the campers to make buildings (castles, camp cabins, etc.) from their upcycled parts.

Try This: Ask the campers whether they can sculpt animals from their parts.

Leafy Lamps

Supplies: Mason jars, leaves, mod podge, sponge brushes (optional: tea light)

How: Have campers explore their surroundings for fallen leaves of all shapes, sizes, and colors. From there, campers can spread a layer of glue on their mason jars, place their leaves all around it, then spread another layer of glue on top. Campers can take with them a little piece of camp, and with a tea light (candle or battery-powered) they can take with them a little reminder of God's light as well. Be sure to remind campers that their leaves will not last forever, eventually drying and browning.

Glitter Jars

Supplies: Glass or plastics jars (such as baby food jars) or bottles (such as soda bottles) that come with lids; warm water; glitter glue, regular glitter, and regular glue; food coloring

How: Start by showing campers a pre-made example jar. Glitter jars can be shaken in a moment of frustration, fear, or anxiety, which makes the glitter swirl around in the jar. One way to pray is to name all your frustrations as you are shaking the jar, and then to set the jar down and sit in stillness as you watch the glitter gradually sink back to the bottom. It's a great activity for calming down, centering yourself, and clearing your head. To make the glitter jar, start by pouring warm water in your container until it is a third full. Then add glitter glue while stirring, and also add roughly three drops of food coloring. Then, add the regular glitter until water is full of it. Finally, pour more water into the container until it almost reaches the top. Put glue on the lid and screw it on tightly. After the glue has had a moment to dry, campers can begin using their new glitter jars.

Water Bottle Fish in the Sea

Supplies: Used water bottles, scissors, yarn, acrylic paint, brushes, permanent marker

How: Plastic water bottles are so smashable!. Remove the lids from the bottles and encourage your campers to smash those bottles flat. Once this is accomplished, use the marker to draw the shape of the back end of a fish (tail, back fins) on the plastic. Cut out this shape carefully. Poke a hole in the top middle of the fish to thread yarn through later. Paint patterns on the fish/bottle to complete its fish-i-ness. When it is dry, thread a length of yarn through the hole, and hang to display. Campers can take these home or add to a summer aquarium collection on a blue wall somewhere.

Multi-Day Projects

Build an Altar

Supplies: Table, cloth, light source, daily activities

How: Begin on the first day with a table (or raised flat space) with a cloth and some kind of light source on it (think: electric votives, camping lamp, etc.). Invite the campers to add some element from each day's activities to the altar each day as the week progresses. On the last night, invite the campers to look at the incredible richness of the altar they have created and reflect on the experiences and discoveries that it reflects.

Paper Cathedrals

Supplies: Sticky notes in a variety of colors, writing utensils

How: Bring campers to a building with windows, preferably big windows. Then ask them about where they have seen stained-glass windows before, and what images were portrayed on them. Explain that today we'll be making our own stained-glass windows by writing our prayers on sticky notes and covering the window with them; that way, our prayers will fill the room with color and light. This can also be a project that continues throughout the summer, so by the last week the windows are filled with prayer.

Week-Long Campfire Prep

Supplies: Sticks/small pieces of firewood, markers, fire lighter

How: Each day, near the end of the day, invite campers to choose a small piece of wood. Invite them to reflect on the day and to write or draw either a memory of the day or a prayer about the day. Collect the pieces of wood each evening, until the last night. Build a campfire out of the wood. Explain to the campers that during this campfire, their memories and prayers will be lifted to God in the flame and smoke as they gather for one of the last times.

Collage Animals

Supplies: Heavy paper, tempura paint, brushes, combs, sponges, corrugated cardboard, scissors, glue/glue stick

How: This activity allows campers to explore the textures and shapes of various animals, celebrating their place in creation.

- Day 1—Give each camper three or four pieces of heavy paper and invite them to share an array of paint colors. Invite them to think of an animal they admire, and the colors that they associate with it. Invite the campers to spread the paint across the paper with fingers, brushes, whatever is available, paying attention to texture and pattern. Leave the papers to dry overnight.
- Day 2—Give each camper another piece of paper, and invite them to sketch the animal they had in mind the day before. Invite the campers to cut out the shapes from the papers they painted the day before and to glue them in place, until they have a very Eric C. Carl type picture.



Shine the Light Art

Shine The Light

Supplies: Cardboard, white glue, yarn (at least “worsted weight”), aluminum foil, tape, translucent acrylic paint

How: Day 1—Invite campers to soak lengths of yarn in a dish of white glue. Invite campers to lay the yarn on their piece of cardboard in any pattern they like; it can make a picture, or can be more abstract. Allow the yarn to dry onto the cardboard overnight.

- Day 2—Cover the cardboard with aluminum foil, so that all of the yarn is covered, and the edges are folded over to the back side. Tape the foil in place on the back. Gently rub the foil over the yarn until the yarn has made an imprint and the foil is quite textured. Invite the campers to lightly paint their foil creation, so that it remains shiny, but is as colorful as they would like. Allow to dry.

Pray into Shape

Supplies: Scrap paper from newspapers, magazines, old art projects, etc., a paper cutter, pens or markers, glue, balloons, stiff cardboard.

How: First, make sure all paper is cut into strips of even width, though the length can vary. Make sure the strips are wide enough to write on. Decide ahead of time if you’d like to make one large project to remain at camp, or have each camper take a smaller project home. Give campers a choice between creating a bowl, vase, small hanging, or photo frame. Explain that, like the potter in Jeremiah, we will try our own hand at molding, and praying while we do. Have campers write a prayer on a strip of paper, any prayer at all. Then instruct campers to roll each strip of paper tightly, creating coils we will use to create a vessel, mosaic, or photo frame. Campers should write as many prayers as they want and then they can continue to roll coils with extra paper until they have as many as are needed. For a bowl, blow up a balloon and glue coils around the round bottom of the balloon and up the sides as far as makes sense for the size bowl. Go further up the

sides for a vase. For a hanging, simply glue coils together at the sides and add with a thumb tack on either side. For a photo frame, take two pieces of cardboard the same size. On one piece, cut out a hole for the photo to show through, and glue the paper coils to that piece of cardboard. Use the second piece as a backing for the frame.

Try This: Invite campers to display their projects in a public area throughout the week, showing everyone their prayers (while still keeping them private) and ask campers to pray whenever they see them.

Prayer Journal

Supplies: Notebooks, pens/markers/etc.

How: Give each camper a notebook and pens/ marker/etc. Invite them to take time each day to write a letter to God about camp, their thoughts about the campers they spend time with, what they wonder is happening at home... The journal is meant to be between the camper and God, unless they decide to share it with someone. The journal is also something that they can take home to both continue and to look back on when they miss camp. For younger campers, printable journal pages are included on the next few pages.

Shine the Light Art

Games

Invite Me

Supplies: None

How: Have campers form a large circle and begin with a caller in the center who calls out a trait (wearing white shoes, for example) and a style of movement (skipping, for example) and ask all campers who match the description to move in the assigned style to another place in the circle. The last one to claim a spot becomes the new caller. Campers in the circle can shout “Invite __,” listing types of movement they are willing to do. If the caller hears a camper shout a movement they want to see (walking on my hands, for example), they can choose a descriptor that will assure that camper moves with the next group.

State of the Matter

Supplies: Field markers to designate two end lines and a center point.

How: This is a large group adaptation of “Paper, Rock, Scissors” that puts “Ice, Mist, and Water” against each other. Water melts Ice; Ice is; Mist evaporates Water; Ice chills Mist. Campers work as two teams, each choosing a type of water to represent. When they come face to face at the center line, a leader counts down from three to one, then both groups do a motion to demonstrate their choice. Water is a flowing motion with both hands. Ice is hugging yourself and shivering. Mist is wiggling the fingers of both hands above the head. The winning team chases the losing team, who try to reach the boundary behind them before winning team members tag them. Tagged campers join the winning team. You can ramp up the fun by having hoses (Water), sprayers (Mist), and necklaces of ice (a string and a sandwich bag should work just fine) for campers to experience. You can play till all are on one team, or just play in the water to cool off.

Ground Sound

Supplies: Sound recording devices

How: Divide campers into teams with each having a recording device. This can be an MP3, a phone, or other old tech such as a tape recorder. Send teams out to record “clues” for other teams to guess where they were. Clues are created by the entire team stomping up and down rapidly in a space while recording the sound. After they make the sound, wait a few seconds and have someone state where they are. You can bring campers back together and let teams take turns playing clues for other teams to guess. Keeping score is fine but it may be more fun to see how many recorded the same clue or how many the combined teams can guess correctly.

Age Limits

Supplies: Depends on traditional game selected

How: Chose any group game, such as kickball, capture the flag, etc. Make sure you have all the supplies for the game and explain all the rules. Now explain an extra rule that requires campers to act a certain age based on what the leader calls out. So, if they are about to run to a base while others try to throw a ball at them, and the leader shouts “old man,” they all have to change their movements to reflect an old man. This should allow for some silly play and keep the game from getting too competitive. You might invite campers to form teams and assign each an “age” to act, then allow them to issue challenges to different ages to compete in a game their age would win. For example, the “baby” team might challenge the “adult” team to an obstacle course of crawling. The “old” team might issue the “teens” a sitting still challenge, or a historical trivia game. Celebrate the unique advantages that come with various seasons of life.

Pass It Moo

Supplies: None

How: Ask each camper to adopt an animal with a distinct sound. They can choose their own or you can assign them. This sound will be their only form of communication in the game. Line the campers up and space them a couple steps from each other in a large space. Share something with the first camper, such as a pattern, number, or song. Ask them to pass on the message. They must do their best with their animal sound to convey the message. The person receiving may only respond with their animal sound. See if the message can be shared to a person who speaks “human” at the end. Try some favorite camp songs or rhythm patterns, and then move on to a story that might be easy to act out such as “the Flood” or “Romeo and Juliet.” Mostly, have fun!

Mirror, Mirror

Supplies: Paper and marker

How: Pair campers, with each having a piece of paper and a marker. Have one sit a little below or at a distance from the other. The higher elevated of the two draws something slowly and simply on their paper. The other camper has to watch their movement and try to mirror them, almost in real time, to create the same drawing. Make sure the follower does not have a direct view of the other’s paper but can see their movements. Afterward, flip the paper over and let them change positions.

Group Building and Challenge Activities

Parting the Waters

Supplies: Large wash pan or kid-size plastic pool, water source

How: Invite campers to work together to divide the water into two or more sections. You can allow them to do this with their body or by using natural items from around camp. Set a time goal for keeping the waters divided. See how long they can keep the waters parted. You can make this a team vs. team challenge, or have small groups work together to work against the clock.

Debrief: What aspects of water make this challenge difficult? How did your group make decisions? What results surprised you? How could this task be a metaphor for life in community?

Pack It In

Supplies: Various sizes of rocks, sand or dirt, large jars

How: Provide campers with a large jar and various sizes of rocks along with some dirt and challenge them to fit as much as possible into their jar. You can set this up as a team challenge between various groups or as a group project where they seek to fit as much as they can. Encourage them to dump things out and start over with a new strategy if they think a different approach will work better.

Debrief: What did you learn as you completed this challenge? Does the order in which you put the objects in affect how much will fit? How did your group make decisions? What results surprised you? How could this task be a metaphor for your life?

Kinship Caucus

Supplies: None

How: Assign four people different animal identities that they must act out. The rest of the campers are free agents and can choose any animal group they wish. Give the original animals two minutes to convince as many people as possible to join their group. This can be done by asking nicely, showing off that animal's abilities, etc. Anyone who joins must act like that animal. After two minutes, pause to see how things are progressing. Allow another two minutes, if needed, as all campers who have chosen attempt to recruit any holdouts. Once all campers have claimed an animal identity, give them another two minutes to try and convince others to abandon their identity and become one of them. Pause again to see how things have changed. Now inform the campers that the smallest "herd" must be disbanded. Provide two minutes for them to choose who they will join. They can all join another group together or each take on different animal identities. Continue this pattern of eliminating groups till all are one.

Debrief: Ask campers what made this game difficult and ask the winning group how they came up with a strategy. As a group, ask campers to discuss what each "herd" did to attract other members, and why some were successful and others weren't.

Try This: If you have lots of friend groups at camp who tend to stick together, think about blindfolding campers and giving everyone a sound. Instead of talking to each other, campers can only make their animal sounds.

Evolving Story

Supplies: Timer

How: The goal is to tell a story as a group, with one person starting and the story “passing” through the group while everyone adds a component. Every team member will have 15-20 seconds to speak during their turn, and the story can cycle through the team as many times as necessary. Give teams about one minute to plan, and then they need to start. Teams will tell their story to a staff member, who will cut them off if the story starts to wander or doesn’t make sense. At that point they need to start over—they can take another 30-45 seconds to continue planning if needed. Teams are not finished with the challenge until a staff member judges their story to be complete.

Debrief: The first time you told your story, what was your plan? How did it work? If you tried multiple times, what did you learn as you kept trying?

Try This: You can use this as an end of day activity, asking cabin groups to weave the story while in their bunks, and having counselors call quiet time when they feel the story has fallen flat. Add an extra challenge by asking campers to make the story about the theme of the day.

Egg-selent Teams

Supplies: One raw egg for each team, assorted craft supplies.

How: At the beginning of the day, sort campers into teams and give each team one egg. Explain that their first team task is to decorate and dress their egg. After about 20 minutes, tell them the egg is their challenge for the day. The team must keep the egg intact and safe throughout the entire day (or some other amount of time you’ve decided). The egg must be in the possession of a group member at all times rather than left in a bunk or with a counselor. It must physically be with someone. If an egg is found alone, that team automatically loses the challenge. Group members must take turns, switching the egg every hour so that no one person ends up in charge. This is a great activity to do on a hiking day or with ropes courses activities.

Debrief: Did people feel comfortable letting one member of the group work on this project at a time? Why or why not? Did people forget about the egg when it wasn’t their turn, or did they worry? How is shared caring made more difficult when you can’t see what’s happening with someone else?

Science and Nature

Don't Forget Your Sunscreen

Supplies: Sunscreen and UV reactive fabric.

How: Give each camper a small piece of UV reactive fabric while inside and away from natural light. Invite campers to choose an item from nature to put on their fabric. Explain that whatever they choose will leave its silhouette on the fabric. On another sheet of UV reactive fabric, invite them to “finger paint” shapes or simple images with sunscreen. Let different campers use different strengths of sunscreen and label each person’s work with the SPF number of their sunscreen. Take all the pieces of fabric outside and let the sun do its work. Campers will create a fun camp souvenir with their personal piece and can come back together to evaluate the impact of the various sunscreens in protecting the cloth from UV exposure. This is a great time to talk about how the sun keeps us warm and helps things grow but how dangerous it can also be.

Water Takes a Spin

Supplies: Bucket, strong rope, water source

How: Firmly tie a rope to the handle of a small bucket. Fill it with water and ask campers what they think will happen if you keep swinging the bucket by the rope. After they share their thoughts, ask what they think will happen if you swing the bucket all the way over your head, upside down, and back in a circle. Encourage them to think about what shapes their hypothesis. Some may be guessing. Some may be saying the opposite of someone else. Some may be thinking about physics. Once they have all guessed, swing the rope quickly back and forth a couple times to get enough momentum to swing it all the way around. If you go too slow or too fast the water will come out and the rope will lose tension. If you find just the right speed, water will stay in the bucket. After demonstrating and experimenting with rates of speed with the campers, invite them to think about things in nature and things about

God that surprises and amaze them. Encourage them to look to nature and the love people share at camp, as places they might see more amazing things this week at camp.

Scratching the Surface

Supplies: Paper, pen, nails, various rocks that have not been cleaned or polished

How: Provide campers a collection of rocks to “test.” Ask them to clean off the rocks, then test them in two ways. Once rocks are dry, the first test is to rub them on the paper to see if they leave a mark. Ask campers to pay attention to how firm the rocks are and how easily some change while others stay the same. The second test is to try and scratch them with a nail. The rocks will either be scratched or get a silver streak on them. It depends on whether the rock or nail is stronger. Whichever is stronger will change the other. Invite campers to think about different types of rock where the camp is built and what challenges there might have been in constructing the camp. Is the rock really firm and difficult to move? Is the ground soft, requiring some extra support for foundations? Invite campers to imagine all the ways rock changes, even though we think about it as hard and unchanging. What might this teach us about God or each other?

In Nature's Time

Supplies: Paper, pen, camera

How: Start by asking campers to draw a straight line across the middle of a piece of paper and write 12 a.m. at the start and 11 p.m. at the end. Invite them to draw a second line that curves up and down depending on their personal energy at that time of day. If they tend to be asleep at 3 a.m., the line should be close to the baseline at that point. Whatever time of day they are most energetic should show the line furthest from the baseline. Spend a few minutes talking about what it means to be a “morning person” or a “night owl.” Ask the campers how other creatures in the world might answer, such as a bat or a bee. Then, move on to flowers and trees. Invite campers to take pictures of the same tree or flower at various times of day and see what changes from picture to picture. You could have a time-lapse slide show of a full day for multiple spots at camp. This could even become part of a nature center presentation used by other camp visitors through the year or shared on the camp website. If you want a technology free version, consider having campers draw pictures of that same spot at each point of the day.

God's Breath

Supplies: Small soda bottle with label removed, two balloons, scissors

How: In advance, cut the bottom off of the bottle, and discard the lid. Start your time with the campers by inviting them to breath in and out slowly and be attentive to how their body moves. Ask them to think about what is happening inside their bodies. Now invite the campers to hold their breath for as long as they can. How does that feel? Does any part of them still want to move? Invite the campers to work together to build a lung. Take one of the balloons, insert it into the mouth of the bottle, and then stretch the opening of the balloon over the mouth of the bottle. (This is the

lung.) Invite another camper to cut the narrow part off of the other balloon. Stretch the balloon until it can cover the entire bottom of the bottle. (This is the diaphragm. The bottle sides represent the ribs.) Invite the campers to squeeze the bottle and take note of what happens to the inside of the bottle and outside of the bottle. Invite the campers to blow into the mouth of the bottle/inside balloon, just enough to swell the inside balloon a little—what happens to the balloon on the bottom? Invite the campers to pull on the bottom balloon—what happens to the inside balloon? We breathe because we were created so that our whole system works toward drawing in and breathing out God's breath. After the model respiratory system has been created, invite the campers to see if they can imitate what each experiment does. When you squeeze the bottle, it is like breathing out. When you blow into the inner balloon, it is like breathing in. When you tug on the bottom balloon, that is also like breathing in.

Creation Speaks Journal

Day 1: Invited by the Light

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. —Genesis 1:1–5

- How or when does light make you feel better?
- What are some ways that light can guide us?
- I wonder what new thing you might do this week?

— Draw a picture of a light that makes a big difference for you.

Creation Speaks Journal

Day 2: Refreshed by Water

And God said, “Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. —Genesis 1:6–8

- What is your favorite way you interact with water?
- How does water connect people?
- I wonder how water might be part of your camp experience this week?

— Draw a picture showing water in action.

Creation Speaks Journal

Day 3: Shaped like Earth

And God said, “Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, “Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.” And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day. —Genesis 1:9–13

- What things have you seen change the most in your life?
- How do you think you will change in the future?
- I wonder how this week might shape you?

— Draw a picture of something you will help change or grow.

Creation Speaks Journal

Day 4: Purposes for Humanity

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. —Genesis 1:26–30

- Who or what relies on you to help take care of it?
- What do you think God will ask you to take care of in the future?
- I wonder how you have been caring for creation this week?

— Draw a picture of yourself doing something nice for creation.

Creation Speaks Journal

Day 5: Inspired by Creation

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation. —Genesis 2:1-3

- What is your favorite way to rest or relax?
- How does it feel to finish a big project or task?
- I wonder how you and God will spend time together when you get home?

— Draw a picture of your favorite moment from camp this week.

Camp Meets Home



We know that the most powerful influence on any person's faith life is those closest to them. For most children and youth, that is their family. All the camps, youth groups, and VBS programs in all the world can't equal the power of faith shaped by family and mentors.

The goal of these activities is to provide some practices for families at home. The themes follow the daily themes from camp. This provides another opportunity for campers to share their experiences with family and their family to join the conversation.

Each day has the same outline:

Scripture to Read – This can be done individually or as a family. You can use the other activities and questions to dive deeper, or just discuss the reading.

Questions for Reflection – Whether it is a meal time, in the car, or an intentional conversation together, these questions invite storytelling and idea sharing.

Activity to Share – Every activity is different. Some are more complicated. Some require a little planning. All of them will create quality family connections.

Challenges for Living it Out – These can be used for reflection in the moment, as an invitation to share stories from the past, or as goals to vision around in the future.

You don't have to do these in any order, or even have to do them all. The hope is that these questions, activities, and challenges will provide a buffet or options for your family.

These could also be activities you share with other families in your church community. There is no wrong way to use these daily sheets. They are for your use, and our prayer is that they will help campers and families grow closer to each other and to God.

Take Home Sheets



Day 1

Invited by Light

Scripture to Read: John 8:12

“Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.’”

Questions for Reflection:

- What is it like to be invited to an event?
- How are inviting and being invited different experiences?
- How can we make others feel welcomed in our home, our church, and our community?

Activity to Share:

As a family, plan an event that will require you to invite others. This can be a service project, a party for a special event, or simply inviting friends to church. Together, lay out a plan for the event, make a guest list, and let everyone be part of inviting others. You can do this by making invitation cards, calling people, or knocking on their door to invite them face-to-face. Once you have a plan, put it in action. After your event, spend some time talking about the experience of inviting others. Share some stories about other times you were invited, or maybe times you refused an invitation, and the outcome.

Challenges for Living It Out:

- Invite someone to church once a month.
- Invite someone you want to know better to do something fun together.
- Invite another family to do something together with yours.
- Invite people from church to do something fun in another setting.
- Accept an invitation to try something new.

Take Home Sheets

Day 2

Refreshed by Water

Scripture to Read: John 4:4–15

“But he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, ‘Give me a drink.’ (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?’ (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, “Give me a drink,” you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flock, drank from it?’ Jesus said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.’”

Questions for Reflection:

- How does access to water impact a person’s life?
- How have you experienced spiritual water, and what does it mean to you?
- How can we, like water, cross imagined barriers and divisions to share kindness?

Activities to Share:

1. As a family or a church, contact a local 5k, 10k, half or marathon race coordinator and offer to set up and run a water station. Offer encouragement to thirsty runners while giving them refreshing cool water.
2. As a family, make a list of boundaries or barriers you often let divide you from other people. Come up with a plan to show care to someone you might normally feel disconnected from.

Challenges for Living It Out:

- Make a plan to reduce your water use at home.
- Share a story of discovering that a stereotype was false.
- Try making friends with someone who might not expect it.
- Name imaginary boundaries that you notice and share your observation with others.

Take Home Sheets

Day 3

Longing to Be Heard

Scripture to Read: Jeremiah 18:1–10

“The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ‘Come, go down to the potter’s house, and there I will let you hear my words.’ So I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was working at his wheel. The vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter’s hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as seemed good to him. Then the word of the LORD came to me: Can I not do with you, O house of Israel, just as this potter has done? says the LORD. Just like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. At one moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, but if that nation concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will change my mind about the disaster that I intended to bring on it. And at another moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, but if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will change my mind about the good that I had intended to do to it.”

Questions for Reflection:

- How have you been shaped by your friends, family, and other people in your life?
- How have your experiences shaped your interests, skills, and abilities?
- If you could change something about yourself, what would it be and why?

Activities to Share: Let’s practice shaping something.

1. As a family or a church, clear a small plot of land and create a vegetable or flower garden. Take turns tending it, and share the bounty of your plot. If this is too ambitious, plant something in a plot and watch it grow and change as it matures.
2. Using clay that hardens as it dries, make some art! Shape a lump of clay into something that you find useful, beautiful, or both. Once it is dry and has hardened, paint and decorate it. You could do Christmas ornaments or a family nativity set. Another option would be fancy Easter eggs. This way your project becomes a special part of family celebrations for years to come.

Challenges for Living It Out:

- Take advantage of opportunities to make a difference—to shape others.
- Affirm and thank those who have shaped you on a regular basis.
- Don’t assume that you are done growing or that you know everything.
- Imagine how challenges or mistakes could lead to growth or new opportunity.

Take Home Sheets



Day 4

Purpose for Humanity

Scripture to Read: Genesis 1:26–31

“Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.’ So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.’ God said, ‘See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every best of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.’ And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.”

Questions for Reflection:

- What does it mean to be made in the image or likeness of God?
- What do you think God expects from us as caretakers of Creation?
- What can you do, individually, to live out this very special task?

Activities to Share:

1. Examine your family’s carbon footprint and make a plan to reduce your impact.
2. Visit a working farm, or family farm, nearby.
3. Watch *WALL-E* (Walt Disney Pictures Pixar Animation Studios, 2008) as a family or church. Discuss what happens when we do not accept our responsibility to care for God’s Creation. How does that affect the other things God created? Ultimately, how does being irresponsible affect people?

Challenges for Living It Out:

- Go out of your way to recycle, even when it is a pain.
- Remind others of the impact we can have on the environment.
- Try walking or riding bikes rather than driving to nearby events.
- Live out Creation care principles in community groups, at work, and at home.
- Try to imagine how each person you meet is created in the image of God.

Take Home Sheets



Day 5

Longing to Celebrate

Scripture to Read: Genesis 2:1–3

“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.”

Questions for Reflection:

- Why do you think God needed rest, and how do you imagine God relaxing?
- When have you been proud and excited when you looked back on something?
- How does Creation inspire you?

Activities to Share:

1. Find a park and spend time outside, without a phone, laptop, or device of any kind. Just be. Listen. Run around. Sit still. Notice the beauty God created right in your community.
2. Watch a documentary or take a visit to a national park. Take some time to thank God that those places are set aside and protected so that we can marvel at the beauty of Creation. Find ways your family can support those efforts to protect wildlife and land.

Challenges for Living It Out:

- Practice sabbath weekly.
- Spend time with family weekly.
- Give thanks for one thing you take for granted each day.
- Set an alarm on your phone to remind you to pay attention to Creation.
- Begin or end each day by stepping outside, taking a deep breath, and thanking God.

Creation Care Packet



**A compilation of resources from
Creation Justice Ministries**

Compiled by Alexander McBride and Colleen Earp

www.creationjustice.org



Light

Power Up!

Working in small groups, ask campers to draw a map of the camp before or while exploring the grounds. Ask them to put a number on each building that represents the number of electric outlets in that building. Have them put a star on the map to represent outside lights. These can be lights on poles, buildings, or even landscaping. Have them add extra dots for other places at camp that use electric, such as the swimming pool pump, kitchen appliances, musical instruments, projectors, etc.

Afterward, let the groups spend some time talking about the amount of power used at camp compared with at home. Reflect on issues of safety, comfort, and convenience. Ask the campers how we might save on electricity at camp.



Water

Where Did the Fish Go?

This is an adaptation of “Sharks and Minnows” that includes 2 or more people trying to “fish” in the same body of water.

Assign two or more (add one for every 10 campers) people to “go fishing.” The others line up as fish who will try to cross a large field, or “body of water,” without getting tagged. Each round, those fishing keep track of how many they tag, or “catch.” Those tagged sit outside of the play space and observe. Keep playing another round until all the fish are caught.

Afterward, spend some time reflecting on how the dynamics changed as there were fewer fish to catch. How did those fishing treat each other?

Play again with new campers “fishing” and a new rule: For every three fish still in the game, one caught fish can return, representing reproduction within the fish population.

Play again with new campers fishing and another new rule that allows those fishing to “release” those they catch if they choose. This allows them to catch the fish again and earn more points.

Afterward, spend some time talking about over-fishing and the impact it can have on our environment and economy.

Name That Water:

Divide campers into four teams and provide them with Bibles. Go from team to team, having them name a story in the Bible that explicitly includes water. For example, Jesus washing the Disciples’ feet works, but shepherds keeping the sheep does not. They probably did take the sheep to water, but it is not part of the story. Keep track of the stories each team names, and give a strike to any story they name that is a repeat or doesn’t really include water. This activity could be repeated with stories of “light,” “earth,” “animals,” etc.

Afterward, invite the groups to brainstorm ways the water is used in scripture. This might include drinking, washing, and as a symbol. Ask them how our use of water is similar and different, then how we might better protect this precious gift.



Earth

This Land Is My Home

Provide each camper with paper and something to draw and color with. Ask them to each draw a picture titled “Land.” Once everyone has had time to draw, ask them to share their work with a small group and talk about how each interpreted the assignment. Point out which ones included water, plants, light, etc. Notice how different images reflect the geographic location of “home” for different campers.

Afterward, spend some time talking about what makes land healthy and how our communities are dependent on healthy use of the earth.

Land Landing

Invite campers to imagine you are an alien landing on the earth for a visit. You have come to learn all about life on earth. Name different landing zones you might stop in, and have the campers tell you what that place is all about and how it impacts or reflects life on earth. Here are some suggestions: farm, landfill, national park, strip mall parking lot, forest, coal mine, golf course, orchard.

Afterward, spend some time discussing positive and negative uses of land. With older campers, you might want to discuss how we understand ownership of land compared with other cultures.



Celebration

Earth Day!

Plan an Earth Day party for your family, community, or church. There are resources for worship and education on the Creation Justice Ministries website (<http://www.creationjustice.org/earth-day-sunday.html>).



Humanity

Selfish Living

Invite campers to brainstorm things people need to live. Try to get them to focus on core resources. For example, they may say “shelter.” Ask what the shelter is built of and where it comes from. Make sure air, water, land, and light are on the list. Ask campers to identify the source of each thing on the list and how it’s being dirty, polluted, or limited impacts people.

Afterward, spend some time reflecting on this question: If these things are bad for us, why are we OK with them?

You can have a group conversation based on this question or let campers journal or pray about the issue. This is a complicated question with issues of denial, privilege, avoidance, greed, and leadership as contributing factors. There is no simple or easy answer, but it is an important conversation.