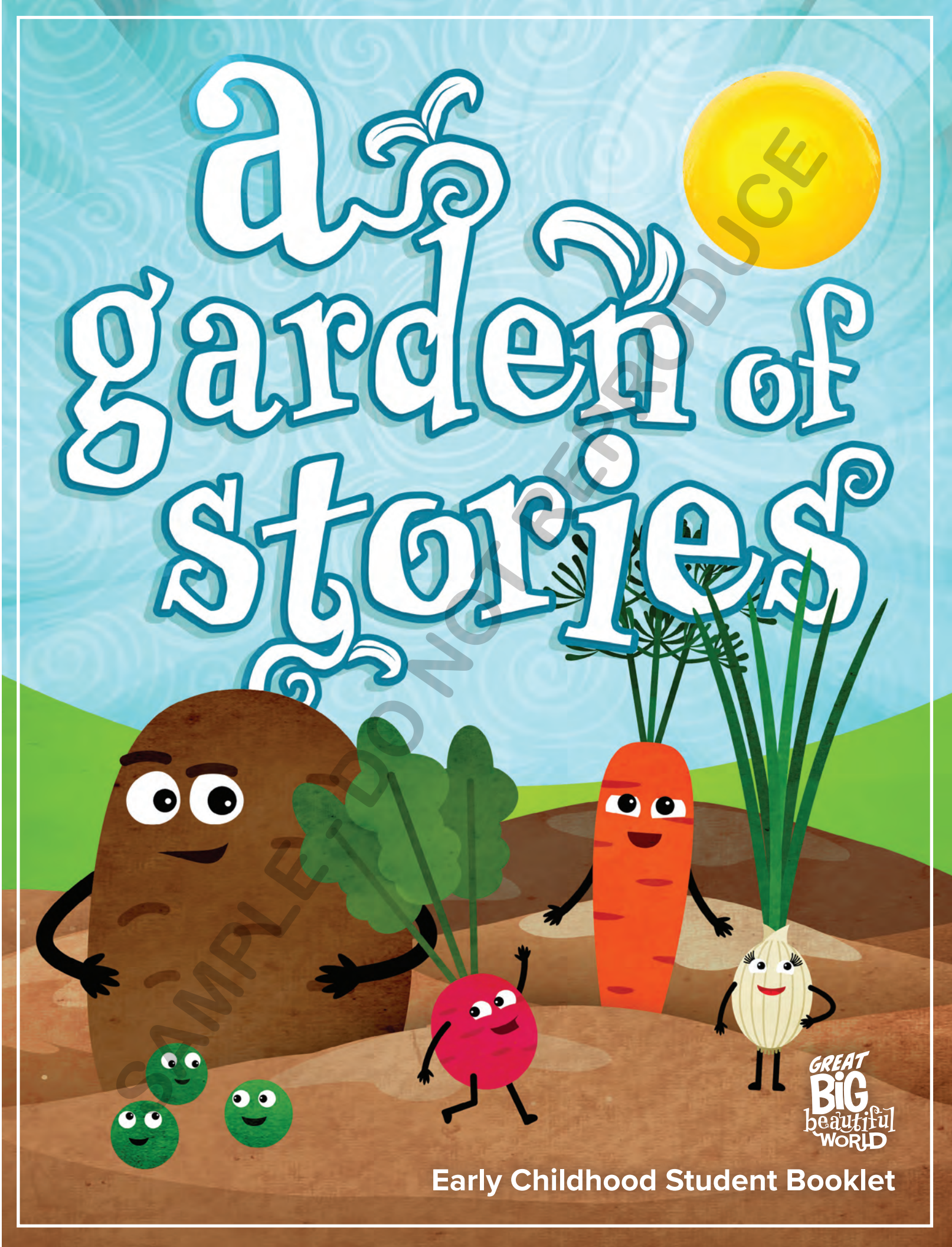
a garden of stories



GREAT BIG beautiful WORLD

Early Childhood Student Booklet

SAMPLE DO NOT REPRODUCE

DAY 1

GOD CREATES

Genesis 2:4b–23

God made the earth long ago.
God made the earth, but did you know?
At first there were no tigers or trees.
At first there were no rivers or seas.
No people, no plants. No bluebirds or bees.
No yummy fruit growing on beautiful trees.

So God made a person from dust on the ground.
God planted a garden with trees all around.
A river went through it, winding and long.
But there were no birds to sing pretty songs.

So God made some animals, short and quite small.
God made some animals, big and quite tall.
Each one was special; no two looked the same.
God said to the person, “Give each one a name.”

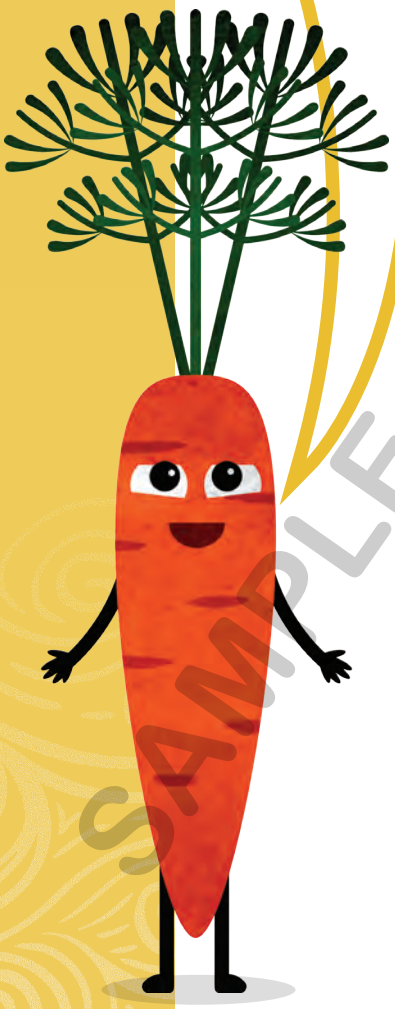
So one by one the animals came.
One by one, each got a new name.
First, there was cat, then rat and bat.
Then there was whale and snail and quail.
Don’t forget the frog and the hog,
followed by the furry dog.

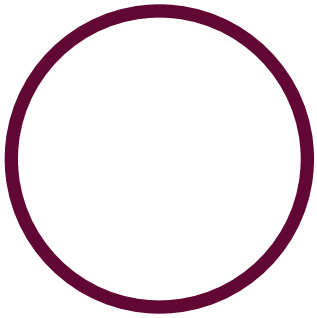
God’s world was made in a special way.
So now together we can say,
thank you, God, for plants and trees.
And thank you, God, for making me!

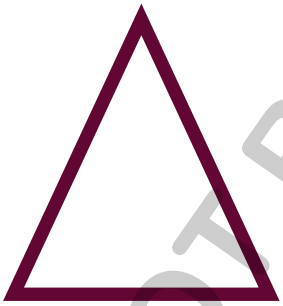
SAMPLE - DO NOT REPRODUCE

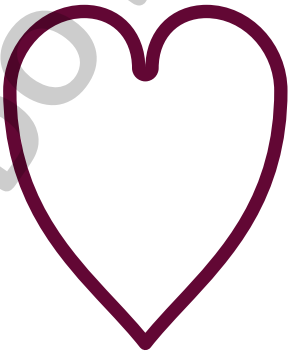
The Shape of Creation

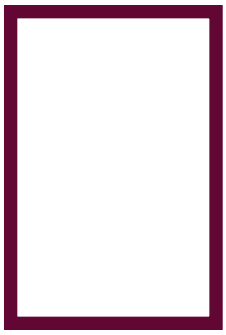
Draw lines to connect the shapes to something from creation that has the same shape.











SAMPLE - DO NOT REPRODUCE

DAY 2 GOD TENDS THE EARTH

Psalm 104:10–30

What a great God you are!
You made springs of water flow in riverbeds.
You made grass grow for cows,
and plants for people to eat.

The trees are homes for birds.
They build their nests there and sing.
The mountains are home to goats.
The rabbits are safe among rocks.

You made the sun and moon in the sky.
At night, forest animals come out and look for food.
When the sun comes up, they go back to their dens.
People wake up and do their work.

The ocean is full of creatures, big and small.
All animals look to you to feed them.
You open your hand and fill them with good things.
What a great God you are!

SAMPLE - DO NOT REPRODUCE

Midnight Snack

At night, animals come out of their dens to look for food. Put your game marker on the den. Decide if you will follow the bear's path or the raccoon's path. Mark one side of a coin with a sticker or small circle of paper. Flip the coin. If it lands on the unmarked side, move forward one space. If it lands on the side with the sticker or paper, move forward two spaces. After you reach the food, travel back to the den so you can sleep all day!

SAMPLE - DO NOT REPRODUCE

DAY 3

GOD'S KINGDOM IS LIKE A SEED

Mark 4:26–32

God's kingdom is like . . .

. . . a farmer scattering seeds on the ground.

The seeds sprout

and begin to grow and grow.

When the grain is ripe, the farmer cuts and gathers it.

God's kingdom is like . . .

. . . a tiny mustard seed.

The seed grows

and grows

until it is a large bush. Birds make nests in its branches.

SAMPLE - DO NOT REPRODUCE

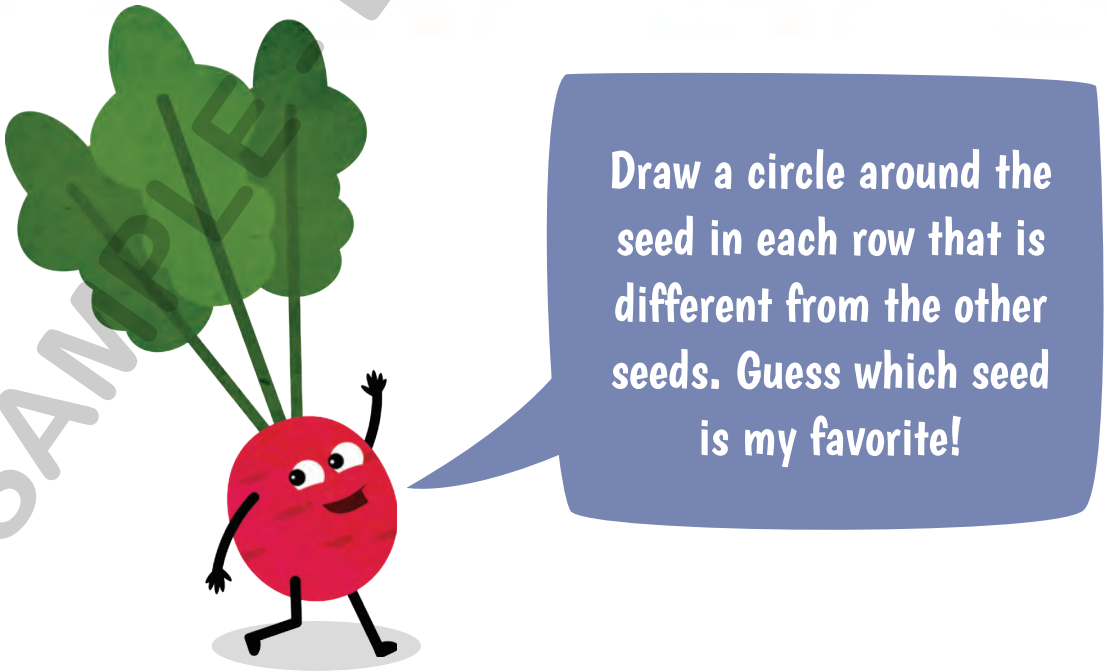
Which One Is Different?

Sunflower seed

Pumpkin seed

Maple seed

Radish seed



SAMPLE: DO NOT REPRODUCE

DAY 4 WE ARE LIKE TREES

I am like an olive tree,
growing strong in God's house.
I know that God's love
will never end.
I praise God
when I am with God's people.
I hope in God's good name.

—based on Psalm 52:8–9

People who follow God's ways
are like a palm tree.
They grow like cedar trees,
planted in God's house.
They bear fruit when
they are both young and old.
They stay fresh and green.
They say,
"God is holy. God is my rock."

—based on Psalm 92:12–15

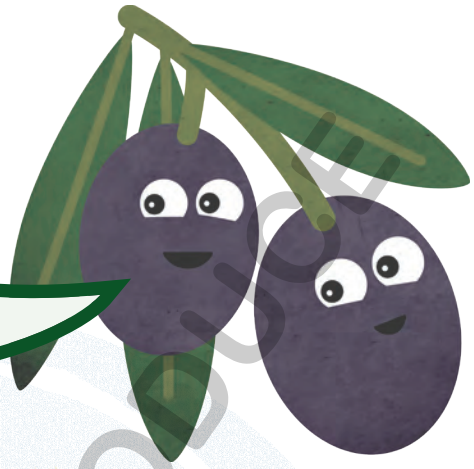
People who love God
are like trees
planted by a stream.
They aren't afraid
when it's hot
or when there's no rain.
They are near the water,
so their leaves stay green.
Their fruit keeps on growing.

—based on Jeremiah 17:7–8

SAMPLE - DO NOT REPRODUCE

Tree Search

Use a red crayon to circle all the olives on the tree. How many did you find? Use a blue crayon to circle the birds. How many did you find? Use a yellow crayon to circle other animals. How many did you find?



SAMPLE PROOF

DAY 5

A NEW CREATION

Revelation 21:1–4; 22:1–5

John saw and heard many amazing things!

An angel showed him a holy city. God's throne was there.

A voice from the throne said, "See, God's home is with people! God will wipe the tears from their eyes. There will be no more crying or pain or death."

A bright, shining river started at the throne. It flowed down the street of the city.

Next to the river, there was a Tree of Life. Twelve kinds of fruit grew on that one tree every month! The leaves could bring peace to the world.

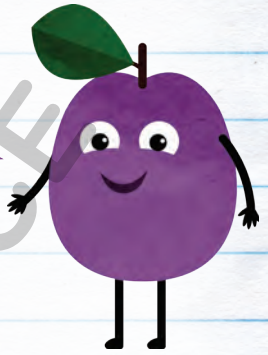
The people of the city loved God. They knelt before God. They sang joyful songs.

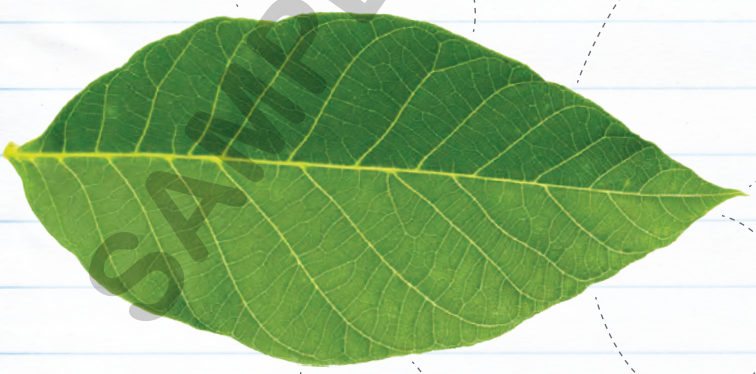
The people didn't need the sun or lamps to light the city. God was their light!

SAMPLE DO NOT REPRODUCE

New Creations

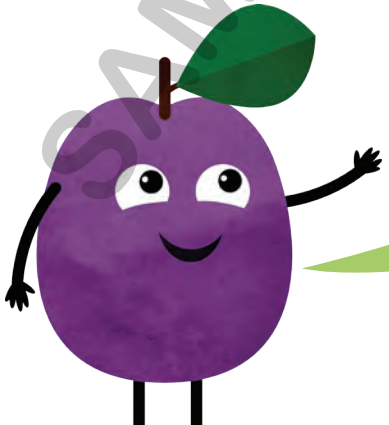
Trace the dotted lines to turn a pine cone into a butterfly, two stones into a spider, and a leaf into a fish.





SAMPLE - DO NOT REPRODUCE

CREATION BINGO



God made a great big beautiful world! Play Creation Bingo. Play alone or with a friend. Each friend will use his or her own booklet. The caller will name one of the pictures on the page: tree, sheep, water, birds, or children. Put a small item like a paper clip, coin, or slip of paper on one of the named items on the board. Play until someone gets five in a row.

SAMPLE DO NOT REPRODUCE

Creation Care Card

DAY 1 GOD CREATES

Today at VBS, we learned that God created our great big beautiful world. You can read about it in Genesis 2. Get out there and enjoy nature as a family! Take a walk, play outdoor games, feel the sunshine and the breeze on your face. Give thanks for such an amazing world!

I am challenging your family to HELP care for creation today! That means to *Heal* parts of the earth that are hurt or broken, *Enjoy* the natural world, *Learn* about creation, and *Pray* for the world. Choose one or more of the HELP ideas on the back of this card to complete as a family.

GREAT BIG beautiful WORLD

Creation Care Card

DAY 2 GOD TENDS THE EARTH

Today at VBS, we learned about some of the ways God takes care of the created world. God provides food, water, and habitats for animals. God causes plants to grow, many of which provide us with our daily food. You can read more about it in Psalm 104.

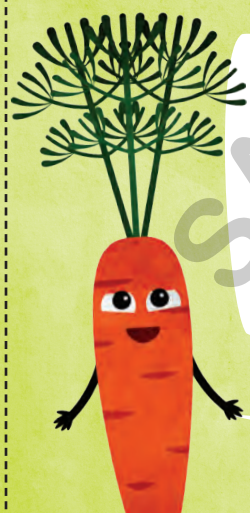
I am challenging your family to HELP care for creation today! That means to *Heal* parts of the earth that are hurt or broken, *Enjoy* the natural world, *Learn* about creation, and *Pray* for the world. Choose one or more of the HELP ideas on the back of this card to complete as a family.

GREAT BIG beautiful WORLD

Creation Care Card

DAY 3 GOD'S KINGDOM IS LIKE A SEED

Today at VBS, we heard two stories that Jesus told. He said that God's kingdom is like a tiny growing seed. It starts small but becomes a great harvest or a large shade tree. We can be part of God's kingdom. Every time we share God's love with others, God's kingdom grows!



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GREAT BIG beautiful WORLD

Creation Care Card

DAY 4 WE ARE LIKE TREES

Today at VBS, we learned how we are like trees that are rooted near a stream and growing strong. Just like God cares for the trees, we can trust that God loves us and will always care for us. Read more about it in Psalm 52, Psalm 92, and Jeremiah 17.

I am challenging your family to HELP care for creation today! That means to *Heal* parts of the earth that are hurt or broken, *Enjoy* the natural world, *Learn* about creation, and *Pray* for the world. Choose one or more of the HELP ideas on the back of this card to complete as a family.

GREAT BIG beautiful WORLD

SAMPLE - DO NOT REPRODUCE

Creation Care Challenges!

HEAL: If you don't already have one, put a recycling bin in your kitchen or garage. Collect recyclable materials, such as plastic, aluminum, metal cans, and paper.

ENJOY: Go outside and listen for birds. Then explore bird songs from around the world on the www.xeno-canto.org website. Use the search box in the upper right corner or the "Explore" tab to choose birds.

LEARN: Psalm 104 talks about nocturnal animals. Learn about animals that are awake at night, such as raccoons, bats, hedgehogs, cougars, owls, foxes, and badgers.

PRAY: *God, you made the bright sun that warms us and the green trees that shade us. You made amazing animals and birds. We praise you for your amazing creation. Help us take care of the beautiful world you made. Amen.*

Creation Care Challenges!

HEAL: Show that you care about animals. Get a bird feeder, walk a dog, visit a zoo or animal shelter, or donate to an organization that protects endangered species.

ENJOY: Play an animal sounds memory game. The leader starts a sequence of animal sounds (*moo*, *baa*, *oink*). The rest of the family repeats it. The leader repeats the sequence, adding one sound (*moo*, *baa*, *oink*, *baa*). Continue adding sounds (*moo*, *baa*, *oink*, *baa*, *chirp*) until the family can't remember the sequence anymore. ***Tip:*** If you have animal toys, line them up in the correct order as a reminder of the sequence.

LEARN: Read books or watch online videos about your favorite animals and plants.

PRAY: *Creator God, thank you for an amazing world filled with animals, plants, and people. Show us how to take care of your world. Amen.*

Creation Care Challenges!

HEAL: Save a tree! Use paper wisely: reuse it, use scrap paper, and use cloth napkins. Borrow, share, and donate books. Recycle paper and cardboard. Turn a box into a pretend car. Climb in and take a ride! Repurpose an empty tissue box to hold small toys.

ENJOY: Go for a tree walk. Count how many trees are within walking distance of your home. How are the trees similar and different?

LEARN: Look at online pictures of the trees named in today's Bible passages: cedars of Lebanon, date palm trees, and olive trees.

PRAY: *God, thank you for all the different kinds of trees you created. We are like trees, growing strong and trusting you to care for us. Amen.*

Creation Care Challenges!

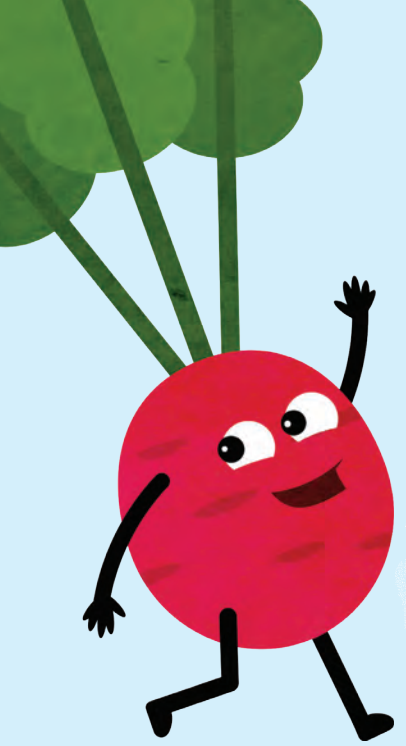
HEAL: The mustard seed in Jesus' parable grew up to be a safe place for birds to nest. Invite a family to eat a meal with you. You help God's kingdom grow when you welcome others.

ENJOY: Plant seeds in a pot or a sunny garden space. Take good care of your seeds by providing good soil, watering them, and making sure they get plenty of sunlight!

LEARN: Watch YouTube videos of growing seeds. Search for "Lima Bean Time Lapse" and "Bean Time-Lapse - 25 Days."

PRAY: *God, your kingdom starts small, like a tiny seed. We can plant tiny seeds of love, peace, and kindness wherever we go. Thank you that we are part of your growing kingdom. Amen.*

SAMPLE-DO NOT REPRODUCE



CREATION CARE CHALLENGES FOR YOUR FAMILY!

I am challenging your family to HELP care for creation! That means to *Heal* parts of the earth that are hurt or broken, *Enjoy* the natural world, Learn about creation, and *Pray* for the world. *Choose* one or more of the HELP ideas to complete as a family.

HEAL: Save water! Wash fruits and vegetables in a bowl of water instead of under running tap water. Then use the water in the bowl for your houseplants or garden. Turn off the water while brushing your teeth. This saves 4 gal / minute or 15 L / minute! Take short showers instead of a bath. A full bath can use up to 70 gal / 265 L of water.

ENJOY: Take a watering can and go for a "water walk" together. Look for plants and trees that could use some water. Carefully pour water on each one. Talk about the challenges that some people in the world face just to get clean water.

LEARN: Find out your family's water footprint! Search online for "Water Footprint Calculator" by Grace Communications Foundation to see how much water your family uses. Visit www.wateruseitwisely.com for lots of tips on saving water.

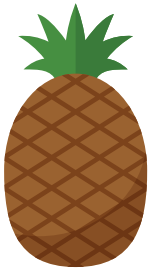
PRAY: *Thank you, God, for the rivers, lakes, and oceans all over the world. Help us to use water with care. Be with those who do not have clean water. Show us how we can help. Amen.*

SAMPLE - DO NOT REPRODUCE

GARDEN GIGGLES

Follow the lines to hear our favorite jokes!

What do you call a smiling pea?



A pineapple

What fruit do sheep like most?

Baaaaaa-nanas

What kind of apple isn't an apple?

Hap-pea

This booklet belongs to _____

SAMPLE - DO NOT REPRODUCE

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