



On your marks

The following activity was originally developed for Education Sunday 2009. Education Sunday is the annual national day of prayer and celebration for everyone in the world of education. You can find resources for a church service or an assembly in a primary school at educationsunday.org.uk.

The theme is set by an ecumenical steering group, and in 2009 it was 'Caring for God's World'. Given the ongoing relevance of the theme, we have retained it as a resource here for use with school or church groups.

What follows is an interactive workshop that acts out the story of creation and how we have misused this great gift. It ends with the challenge of what our response will be. This active drama is designed to complement the other resources that are available.

Get set

You will need the following:

- foil stars
- blue cloths
- ripped-up dustbin bags
- bits of cushion stuffing/cotton wool
- cardboard cut-out guns

Go!

1 Warm-up

Put the children into a circle and number them off 1 to 5.

Those with the same number now belong to a group that will represent elements in creation story, as follows:

- 1 = plants, trees, flowers
- 2 = fish
- 3 = birds
- 4 = animals
- 5 = people

Play a game of 'cross the circle' with the different groups of plants, animals and people.

Next call out a number, and those in the group of that number should go into the centre and make a statue of their part of creation.



Play this at speed.

Then play at making statues that interrelate, for example trees and people; birds and animals; trees and animals; fish and people.

Alternatively, if you are working in a smaller space and with fewer children, divide into number groups and ask for a **freeze-frame** at * in the story that follow and to hold it for a moment.

Now explain that, as you tell the story, the appropriate group should go into the centre as statues until they hear a bell or are touched on the shoulder, when they should sit back anywhere in the circle again.

2 The story

Choose (carefully) one person to stand in wonder looking up, turning slowly round, as you narrate this first part of the story. Hold a star in your hand or place tiny foil stars on the floor around the circle.

I wonder if you've ever stood and looked at the night sky and wondered how big it is... how far it stretches... how immense the universe is...

Have you ever wondered at the beauty of the stars in the sky?

Or how there are thousands upon thousands of suns, stars, planets and moons... thousands of solar systems and galaxies...? Some people say that the universe may roll on for ever, and there are large parts of it we may never see or understand.

And I wonder how you feel when you look up into the vastness of space and think that you are part of it... *(Place a star in the hand of the person in the middle.)* and that it is also part of you.

And God held the beauty of the universe in his hands and said, **'That's good.'**

In the vastness of space there was one small and minute planet.

(Place an imaginary tiny earth from the air in front of you into the palm of your hand.)

And God took this planet in his hand and said, **'That's good.'**

(As the story grows, encourage everyone to join in and say the words, 'That's good.')

Earth, when seen from space, looks like a great swirling mass of blue, for a large part of it is made up of water.

(Spread out blue cloths inside the circle but leaving space in the centre, so that you have a polo-mint shape.)



And God said, '**That's good.**'

1) Trees

As you come closer to earth, you see great masses of fertile land.

And the land grows all sorts of wonderful **plants**.*

And God said, '**That's good.**'

(Clear space.)

2) Fish

And the oceans teemed with life... with **fish*** great and small.

And God said, '**That's good.**'

(Clear space.)

3) Birds

And the air was bright and colourful with thousands of beautiful **birds***.

And God said, '**That's good.**'

(Clear space.)

4) Animals

And the land was filled with amazing **animals*** of every kind.

And God said, '**That's good.**'

(Clear space.)

5) People

And God took some of the land and moulded it and breathed his breath into it and made **people***.

He made them to be like him, to have children and to rule over the earth and all the creatures in it.

And God said, '**That's good.**'

And when God saw the **plants***, **the fish***, **the birds***, **the animals*** and **the people***, he laughed and cried and sang for joy all at the same time, and said, '**That's good.** That's all so very good. It's time to take a rest.'



(Clear all.)

6) And the **people*** made houses to live in. And they said, '**That's good.**'

7) And they made ways of travelling quickly from one place to another. And they said, '**That's good.**'

8) And they worked out ways of making things to make life more comfortable. And they said, '**That's good.**'

9) And some lands had many wonderful treasures that the people enjoyed. And they said, '**That's good.**'

10) But they forgot they were not alone on the planet: that the planet was also home to **trees*** and **fish*** and **birds*** and **animals***.

11) And the houses grew into villages and towns and cities and the people had to cut down forests to make room for them. So some of the trees were lost and some of the animals and birds had no place to live.

*(Tap some of the trees, birds and animals and send them back to the outside circle.)**

And some of the people said, '**Is that good?**'

12) And the ways that they found to travel meant making choking exhaust fumes. The air was hard to breathe and the smoke made the air heat up and there were floods on the land.

(Spread out some cotton wool / stuffing and spread the water from the sides over some of the remaining animals and people.)

And some of the people said, '**Is that good?**'

13) And the factories made not only good things but produced dirt and poisons as well. And these poisons washed into the land and the seas and made the waters dirty and killed the fish.

(Spread out ripped-up dustbin bags as poisons and send fish back.)

And some of the people said, '**Is that good?**'

14) And some of the people wanted the treasures where other people lived. And the other people tried to stop them taking the treasures.

(Place large cardboard guns among the people.)

And some of the people said, '**Is that good?**'

(Dramatic pause)



And God looked at the world and God said...

3 Reflection on the story

Hold the scene for a short while and then lead into a time of reflection about the story.

I wonder what God said.

I wonder which part of the story you liked best.

I wonder where the changes were in the story.

I wonder how you felt about different parts of the story.

I wonder what might happen next.

I wonder what might be done to change this story.

I wonder how God feels.

I wonder what the world might say to God.

I wonder what you would like to do next.