

Caring for creation

To reflect on the call to live sustainably, set up different prayer stations that will encourage people to think about how we can all share in the responsibility of caring for God's world. Here are some suggestions for different stations, based on the seven days of creation found in Genesis 1:1–2:4. You can use some or all of these ideas – or come up with your own creative ways to think about going green with CAFOD!

On day one, God created light from darkness...

You will need:

- a sheet of black paper or card
- a sheet of white paper or card
- a black pen
- white chalk

On the first day of Creation, God made the heavens and earth, light from darkness, night and day... quite a busy day! We often associate light with the good, bright and happy things of life. And darkness can represent the things that aren't so good. At this prayer station, you're invited to think about the way you view our world. Write all the good things about our world on the white paper, and thank God for them as you do so. Then write down the stuff that you'd like to change on the black paper – praying for a better world as you write. Even when things do seem dark and gloomy, we're reminded that God calls us to shine with the light of faith – so don't lose heart!

How to go green! Remember that darkness is sometimes ok – like when you switch off lights that you don't need, for example! Let your light shine – but if you can make it an energy-efficient light, even better!

On day two, God created the sea and the sky.

You will need:

- two pots of water
- straws
- protective plastic sheet

Anolaska lives in Zambia. Like other people in her village she used to walk miles just to collect the water she would use for the day. Now, thanks to a project supported by CAFOD, the village has a solar-powered water pump, providing the water they need. Water is a precious gift – but it's perhaps something that we easily take for granted. In Europe, the average person uses 200 litres of water a day – imagine having to carry that for miles.

To help you think about and pray for those people who still have to walk to find water, play this water-collecting game. Set up two pots of water at opposite ends of the room and use a straw to move the water from one pot to the other as quickly as you can. (You might want to put down a plastic sheet!) But be careful not to spill any – it's too good

to waste. If you wish, you can set up a league table with your friends. Remember to pray as you play – the game's a bit of fun, but it's not much of a joke if you've got to carry heavy buckets many miles just to drink or wash.

How to go green! There are lots of ways that you can save water at home – like turning the tap off when you brush your teeth, or fitting a water saver to your loo, or having a shower instead of a bath. See how much water you can save!



On day three, God made the plants and the trees.

You will need:


- a tree / houseplant or branches
(it can be an illustration of a tree if you prefer)
- leaf-shaped tags
(to add to the branches)
- pens

An ancient proverb says, "Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach him how to fish and he will eat forever!" What's that got to do with creating plants and trees? Well, not a lot. But it has got something to do with people like Nugamong from Cambodia. He is a resin tree tapper whose livelihood was under threat when illegal companies tried to buy his trees for timber. All very well – but getting rid of his trees would mean an end to Nugamong's long-term income. CAFOD supported Nugamong, encouraging him to keep the trees so that he could keep collecting resin –and keep earning some money. This helped him support his family.

Making positive decisions that can positively affect others is part of our responsibility as citizens for the world. So, add to the tree of life by thinking of just one positive action you can do to help others – whether that's someone in your local community, a friend or family member, someone in your school or parish, or someone from another country. Write down your commitment on a tag and hang it from the tree. See what other people have pledged to do as well!

How to go green! Hug a tree! Do your greenest best to respect God's creation by looking out for recycled paper products, using both sides of a piece of paper, and recycling paper after you've used it.

Look out for the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) logo on paper and timber products – it's a sign that the product isn't contributing to global forest destruction.



On day four, God made the sun, the moon and the stars.

You will need: • access to a computer

Ah, the cosmos... it's amazing to look out at a starry night and think about how we form just a tiny part of God's amazing creation. And yet we have so much influence over the earth – including its atmosphere and environment. For example, we've all got a 'carbon footprint' – the size of which depends on things like the transport we choose, the amount of power we use and so on. If you can, work out your own carbon footprint using an online calculator (you can find one at <http://actonco2.direct.gov.uk>). Think about how you could reduce your impact on the environment. How green is your school or parish? What changes could you make?

How to go green! Ditch the car! Can you walk to school instead – or use public transport? Exercise consumer power at home by going for low energy-rated items like fridges and washing machines. Plant trees to offset your carbon emissions.

On day five, God made animals and fish.

You will need: • strips of coloured paper
• pens

We're able to enjoy a rich variety of foods – but how often do we think about the people behind the products? People like Erik, for example, from Honduras, who has recently benefited from CAFOD's help in setting up an organic farming scheme. This has led to a healthier style of farming, and an increase in skills and income. The organic coffee that Erik helps to harvest is enjoyed across the world.

Martin Luther King once said, "Before you've finished your breakfast this morning, you'll have relied on half the world." Even if you haven't enjoyed breakfast this morning (and you really should!) draw up a food diary from the last couple of days. Do you know where your food comes from? And we don't just mean Tesco... what about the country of origin? Any ideas? Write down as many foods and countries as you know on slips of paper – and join the pieces of paper together with other people to create a food chain. As you write, think about the people behind the products – and pray for them.

How to go green! Choosing Fairtrade goods like bananas, coffee and chocolate guarantees a better deal for farmers and food producers. See if you can increase the amount of Fairtrade items you buy – or try a tasting event with your friends.

And on day six, God created human beings.

You will need: • copies of Psalm 139:13-16
• mirrors
• lipstick

All that amazing creative activity – and then God trumps it all by creating human beings, putting us in charge of the whole lot. As Uncle Ben told Peter Parker in Spiderman "With great power comes great responsibility..."

In this prayer space, read the words of the Psalm – they speak of how God knows us all intimately. Then look into the mirror at your reflection (this can be quite hard to do unless you're really vain!) What do you see when you look at yourself? Remind yourself that God sees an amazing and wonderful person! Then think about how you can show great responsibility for the world by using the gifts that God has given to you. Choose just one of these gifts and write it on your mirror using the lipstick. Of course, the greatest challenge is then to go out and use that gift!

How to go green! Be a responsible member of God's earth! Know that you have great power as a young citizen – through the things you choose to do, the things you buy, and the way you use the earth's commodities. Don't forget that you can also help to influence others by the choices you make!

On day seven they rested...

You will need: • a comfortable space
(with cushions or beanbags maybe)
• gentle music

After all that creative activity, it was time for a good rest! In this prayer space, just provide a comfortable chill-out zone with some relaxing music and cushions. This could be a space where people share their experience of the prayer – or it could just be a place for quiet reflection and prayer.

How to go green! Well if you've followed all or some of the suggestions here, you'll be well on your way. But as you choose to go green with CAFOD, remember that we do it as God's creation, recognising our responsibility to care for one another and for our world. So thank God for the amazing world we've been given – and pray that we can safeguard our planet for future generations.

Remember – for more information on 'Go green for CAFOD', visit www.cafod.org.uk/bigdeal

