

Youth Group Online Gathering: Earth Day April 22, 2020

By Pamela Evans

Purpose of this Gathering

The purpose of this time together is to notice and honour Earth Day, give thanks for all of God's creation and take notice of our actions and the ways we might be stewards of the earth, supporting and helping to heal and nurture God's world.



Preparing ahead of time:

- This gathering assumes you are using Zoom to connect with your group. You will also need to know how to share your screen and a video on this platform. If you are new to using Zoom, go here for helpful tips <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us>
- Ensure you have set up a safe connection with the online platform that you choose to use, follow the security practices for online gatherings. See this article for more information:
http://www.pmrfirstthirdresources.ca/uploads/1/4/0/1/14012171/pmr_first_third_resources_1_0_security_practices_for_hosting_online_gatherings_with_children_and_youth.png
- Join the call 10 minutes before the Zoom call is set to happen so you can greet participants as they arrive.
- When you send the link to your youth for your meeting, ask each participant:
 - o to have a Creation Tool on hand: something they like to create with – so, it could be pencil crayons or felt pens and paper OR playdough or modelling clay or lego or building blocks OR collage materials OR pen and paper or ?
 - o Take some pictures – two or three photos that express the beauty of God's creation
- Make sure you have the following items on hand, ready to go for your gathering:
 - o Christ Candle and matches, your choice of something to create with
 - o Your Bible
 - o Bookmark the videos from WingClips.com and have them ready to stream to your group.

OUTLINE OF THE GATHERING

Greeting and Welcome

- Greet each participant as they come into the online room.
- Encourage that the youth to use their video and audio on their computers if they are able as it allows for us to be fully present to one another and support caring for one another.
- Remind your group of the online gathering covenant that you have created together. If you have not built an online covenant with your group, do this now. There are ideas in the following website link to support building community online with youth:
<http://www.pmrfirstthirdresources.ca/building-community-online.html>
- When all of your group has gathered, light your Christ Candle and share a prayer of your own or this one:
Holy, Gracious One – we gather together today to celebrate the risen Christ! We give thanks for new life, new hope and joy in this time. In your loving name, we pray. Amen.

Check in with One Another

- Deepening connections online is important as it is in face to face gatherings – there are ideas for questions you might ask each participant in your group at
<http://www.pmrfirstthirdresources.ca/building-community-online.html>.
- Share by invitation – a good habit to start with your group regardless of how you meet! Ask one person to go first and then after they are done sharing they invite someone else in the gathering who shares and then asks another participant and so on until everyone has had a chance to share. If participants do not want to share or speak, ask them to invite another participant so the “circle” keeps going.
- Invite each person as they check in to share the picture/image (you will need to allow participants to share their screen) that represents the beauty of God’s creation with everyone in the group. If they didn’t bring a picture or you don’t wish for them to share using an image, ask them to describe an image that comes to their mind of God’s beautiful handiwork in creation.

Game: Guess that Word!

- Play a round of online Guess that Word. Give each participant a different word in a private chat and then have them try and get others to guess the word with one word descriptors. They get a point for each word they need to share for people to guess the correct word (or you can choose not to make it competitive – it is still fun!)
Some of your words might focus on Earth Day:
 - Climate
 - Earth
 - Water
 - Environment
 - Wildlife
 - Creation
 - Natural
 - Trees

- River
- Mountain

Watch the Video Together

**please note – you need to be on www.wingclips.com and stream the clips live, there is no way to download them without a membership*

<https://www.wingclips.com/movie-clips/the-lorax/plant-the-seed>

“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better”

- what do you think that responsibility would feel like? What do you think of what the Lorax is asking Ted to do? Do you experience this kind of ask from adults in your life? What does it feel like?
- What seeds of change are you planting in your life? What seeds of change do you wish adults in your life would plant? What seeds are you planting together?

Bible Reflection

With your group – read Jeremiah 1:4-8 (from the CEV or NRSV) twice:

- After the first time – ask the question, what word or phrase did you notice?
- After reading it the second time – ask the question, what is most important about this story?
- You may choose to have one or two minutes of silence after each reading (ask the question and then pause for 2 minutes) so that youth could respond using their creative tools (draw something, write something, etc)

Prophets are those who came so close to God and God came so close to them that they knew what God wanted them to share with the people. Once such prophet was Jeremiah. Listen to the story of God’s call to Jeremiah to be a prophet to the people of Judah.

And the prophet Jeremiah said,

The LORD said:

“Jeremiah, I am your Creator, and before you were born, I chose you to speak for me to the nations.”

I replied, “I’m not a good speaker, LORD, and I’m too young.”

“Don’t say you’re too young,” the LORD answered. “If I tell you to go and speak to someone, then go! And when I tell you what to say, don’t leave out a word! I promise to be with you and keep you safe, so don’t be afraid.”

Bible Reflection

With your group, read John 20:19-22.

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

- What do you think Jesus sending the disciples out to do?
- As disciples of Jesus what do you think he is sending us out to do?
- What is our action as disciples around taking care of God’s creation?

Watch the Video Together

<https://www.wingclips.com/movie-clips/the-lorax/let-it-grow>

“I am Ted Wiggins and I speak for the trees”

Creative Moment: Seeds of Change

As the youth ponder the video and the questions below, ask them to create something using their tools to express their answers. You might want to list the questions on your Zoom whiteboard so they can refer back to them. After 4-5 minutes, ask each participant to share their creative piece as they wish, sharing the answers to one or more of the questions.

- *what do you speak for?*
- *Is there anything you would you suffer embarrassment or rejection from others for?*
- *What is your passion? What is something you want people to listen to you about?*
- *What seeds are you planting?*

Closing Prayer

Ask each person: What is your prayer going from this time together? Ask participants to share by invitation.

Closing Blessing for your Group:

Jesus said to them, "Peace be with you."

He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

As God has sent me, so I send you."

—John 20.21-22

Meditate on this. Go slowly. Give it time.

He comes to you, present with you now,
in this very room as you read this,
He says, "Peace be with you."
You are all right, safe and whole and beloved.
Allow that deep peace to surround you,
embrace you, protect you.

...

He breathes his Spirit into you:
his love, his healing will, his joy,
his profound trust in God.
You breathe it in.
It fills you, every cell,
every aspect of your mindfulness.
With all your imperfections and weaknesses
you are a perfect vessel for his spirit.
Breathe deeply. You receive it. It becomes you.

...

He sends you, just as he was sent:
into this day, into your life,
to bear that love into this world,
with humble authority, with courage,
with grace, with mysterious power,

with joy and delight.

Go.

...

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Reflection for Leadership

- What did you notice about the group's participation?
- What worked really well?
- What might you change for next time?