

## **Heal the Earth: A Restoration Imperative Invitations for Children's Class Teachers**

**The following ideas and suggestions can support your planning of Reunion 2024 as we explore the theme, *Heal the Earth: A Restoration Imperative*.**

### **Invite "Mother Earth" to share with the kids:**

The students are grouped by age (K-6, 7-8, 9-11) and rotate between 3 stations. At one of those stations, "Mother Earth" interacts with them, telling stories or teaching lessons related to the daily theme. "Mother Earth" can dress the part to add authenticity. The sessions are about 20 minutes long and are repeated for each group, with adjustments for age differences.

She could read picture books, used personal storytelling, or have object lessons or activities to explore the theme or scripture of the day. The Creation Story from Genesis is central to the theme, so it could be used on the first day. To expand cultural awareness, creation stories from the First Nation, the Polynesians, or Africans could be shared on subsequent days.

You could also coordinate with the worship planners, and schedule a time during each evening service for "Mother Earth" to share her thoughts on how we can better care for our planet. This could be an extension of what "Mother Earth" covered with the classes, but no longer than 10 minutes. The kids who participated in the morning session could help "Mother Earth" teach the others what they learned.

### **The Food Waste Challenge!**

Arrange for this weeklong challenge in advance by checking with the directors, the campground manager, and the kitchen staff. The goal of the challenge is to decrease the amount of food that is thrown away during the week of reunion. The children's classes do the work, but the challenge is for everyone!

You will need a large scale to weigh food waste, a large bucket to hold the food waste, protective gloves, and spatulas. Announce to the reunion participants at the beginning of the week that the children and youth are challenging every person to decrease the amount of food they waste. After finishing a meal, each person will scrape their food remnants into the common bucket before taking the empty plate to the dishwashing area. When all the plates have been scraped clean, the children take turns weighing the bucket. Record the weight after each meal on a large chart for all to see. Then put on gloves, empty the bucket in the appropriate receptacle, and rinse it out for use at the next meal.

Encourage the campers to consider well the amount of food they take each meal, in order to cut down on food waste. Announce the day's total after the dinner meal. How does rising awareness help decrease food waste? How well did the camp do in decreasing waste?

• **Ideas to Supplement Each Day:**

<p><b>Day 1: The Earth, Lovingly Created</b></p>	<p><b>Invite Mother Earth to visit the class each day:</b>          Arrange in advance for someone to play "Mother Earth." She can visit each day for 10-20 minutes to share a story, activity, or lesson. Today, "Mother Earth could share about the beauty of God's creation and ask the children to share their favorite place in nature.</p> <p><b>Scavenger Hunt for God:</b>          Invite the students to go outside, (right around the class space), and find a simple object in nature that represents God. Does it symbolize God's love, grace, power, creativity, mercy, or something else? Set a time limit, such as 5 minutes. When everyone has returned, stand in a circle, and invite students to share what they have brought and how it represents God. Then offer a prayer of thanks for creation.</p> <p><b>Creation Story from another culture</b>          Share a creation story from the First Nations, the Africans, the Polynesians or Asians. Compare it to the story in Genesis. How does it explain the relationship between humans and God? Between humans and the earth?</p> <p><b>Invite kids to calculate their carbon footprint.</b>  <a href="#">Carbon Footprint Worksheet For Kids - Little Bins for Little Hands</a>          Printable coloring worksheets help children identify their energy and carbon use.  <a href="#">ZerofootprintYouth</a>          This is a kid-friendly online tool, which you could demonstrate as an example of a carbon calculator. Provide the link to the kids in your class, so they can calculate their family's carbon footprint. You don't need a login or email address to use it, but you must name your school and birthday to use the tool.</p>
<p><b>Day 2: Immersed in Creation</b></p>	<p><b>Water:</b></p> <p><b>Teach the Water Cycle Song</b>          Hopscotchsongs – <a href="#">The Water Cycle Song - Bing video</a></p> <p><b>Planet Nutshell Video:</b>          Climate Science in a Nutshell #8: Climate Change in the Oceans  <a href="#">Bing Videos</a></p>

	<p><b>Plastics</b></p> <p><b>Plastic Burden on Mother Earth:</b></p> <p>“Mother Earth” can visit the class, ill because she’s covered in plastic waste products. Have the students remove the plastic, so she can be healthy again.</p> <p>If you don’t plan to have “Mother Earth” visit each day, provide a box of waste plastics (all clean) and masking tape. Ask for a volunteer to play the role of Mother Earth. Invite the other students to tape the plastic containers, bottles, and wrappers onto Mother Earth. With each addition, Mother Earth becomes more and more ill. Talk about what plastic waste is doing to the earth, animals, and environment. Then have students gently remove the plastic pieces and Mother Earth becomes well again. Sort the plastic pieces into those that can be recycled and those that can’t. (Check your local recycling station for guidelines. It’s not the same in all locales.)</p> <p><b>Organize a trash pickup to clean up your environment.</b></p> <p>Organize a field trip to clean up the trash from the spaces on and around your reunion grounds. Provide bags to collect trash, and gloves to protect hands. Put all the plastic items into one bag, and non-plastics in another. Which is larger? Why? What local wildlife might be hurt by the waste that is left lying around? By the plastics that won’t decompose?</p>
<p><b>Day 3: The Stewardship of God’s Goodness</b></p>	<p><b>Melting Ice, Rising Sea</b></p> <p><b>Aumsum Video clips:</b></p> <p>A whimsical, humorous approach to teaching a variety of topics. Each video has several short clips included (1 – 4 minutes), often with a variety of themes. Choose the specific clip that covers your chosen topic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What if All Glaciers Melted? <a href="#">What if Everyone became Overweight? + more videos   #aumsum #kids #science #education #whatif - Bing video</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Clip: 7:30 – 8:34      What if all glaciers melted</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What if Sea Levels Rise by 10 Meters? <a href="#">What if we had Magical Powers? + more videos   #aumsum #kids #science #education #whatif - Bing video</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Clip: 6:40 – 8:17      What if sea levels rise by 10 meters</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Mother Earth and Mini-Greenhouses</b></p>

Today Mother Earth with help the kids create mini-greenhouses. Use cardboard egg cartons, or tiny cardboard or clay pots. Fill with soil, plant small seedlings, water and place in a small saucer. Cover with a plastic glass or plastic food container. If you want to avoid plastic, cover with a small glass jar.

Mother Earth can explain how a greenhouse works: The sun shines through the glass, warming the ground, the water, the plants and air. The plants use the light energy to make food, and release heat back into the air. Light energy becomes heat energy, but it has a different wavelength than light. So it becomes trapped inside. The plants stay warm. In fact, a green house has to have a vent so the plants don't get too warm and back. That's what the greenhouse effect is: the tendency to hold heat in and overheat. Be sure to lift your greenhouse lid every day so the temperature inside doesn't get too hot and kill the plants.

**More Video Possibilities:**

- [What Is the Greenhouse Effect? \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)  
Ages 6-10 about the green house effect not climate change might be different?? Excellent primer on the warming of earth, sponsored by NASA.
- [Climate Change for Kids | A fun engaging introduction to climate change for kids \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)  
Ages 10+ Very informative about the green house effect – good information, but very long. Could be used over 2 or 3 days, instead of viewed all at one time.

**ClimateScience Videos:** The first in the series is appropriate for ages 6+. Later videos would be appropriate for slightly older kids. Selection seems limited, with several in the series not available.

- [Climate Change: How does it really work? | ClimateScience #1 \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)
  - Ages 6-10 reviews information – excellent. Clear, interesting, and short.

**Biodiversity skits**

- Divide students into groups and provide each with a problem card. Groups use their animal masks and create a skit showing how they would cope with the climate problem. Problems could include “It’s getting too hot.” “It’s getting too cold.” “The plants I need for food are dying for lack of water.” “The ocean is flooding my home.” “My home is covered with plastic bottles and wrappers.” “The salty sea water is moving into my stream and I can’t drink the water anymore.” “A fire destroyed my environment, and I barely survived myself.” Remind the students to react as if they were animals, not humans. What are the ways animals cope with these problems?

**Create a Biodiversity List**

- Encourage the students to start a list of all the animals they have seen in real life, but not in a zoo. Ask them to share with the class one animal they are glad they have seen.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a class list of the animals that 3 or more students have seen in real life, but not in a zoo. Put a check mark by those that they will probably see again. Be sure to include insects, marine life, and birds.</li> </ul> <p><b>Aumsum Videos about biodiversity:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What if All Insects Disappeared? <a href="#">What if Earth Stopped Spinning? + more videos   #aumsum #kids #science #education #children - Bing video</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Clip: 2:29 – 3:43      What if all insects disappeared?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Pollination <a href="#">Shadow, Rust, Pollination, Magnetic Compass, Neutralization and much more!!   #aumsum #kids #science - Bing video</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Clip: 2:19 – 3:39      Pollination</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Day 4: Finding Our Place</b></p>	<p><b>Poverty, migration – What if...?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students to balance a book on their head and walk across the room. Now imagine the book is a basket of fruit to take to the market a mile away or a bucket of water to take home—the only water you will have that day. Talk about what it would be like to have to rely only on what you could catch in the wild or pick from bushes to have food. How would your life change if the climate got too hot?</li> <li>• Imagine you had to move because the ocean was about to flood your house. You can only take one suitcase. What would you pack?</li> </ul> <p><b>Video: the Recycled Orchestra of Cateura:</b> <a href="#">Bing Videos</a> (2 minutes)</p> <p><b>Rubbish and Recycling Song</b></p> <p>Divide into groups and create your own song about recycling, reusing, and repairing. Or choose one of the daily topics as a specific focus. Use a familiar tune like “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star,” “Mary Had a Little Lamb,” or “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.” Or they can choose a popular song that all the kids in the small group know. Give them 15 minutes to write the song, and then enjoy sharing it with the class. Celebrate funny songs as well as serious ones!</p> <p>For the younger children, establish the theme and a tune, as above. Then ask each child to say one thing about the theme, and write it down. Try to fit phrases from their statements into the tune. Don’t worry about whether it flows together—just use their words and descriptive phrases as an expression of the focus idea, and sing it together!</p> <p><b>Biodiversity and Mother Earth</b></p> <p>Mother Earth arrives feeling sad because she can’t visit with some of her dear friends. She shows pictures to the children of the friends she misses: the dodo bird, the laughing</p>

owl, the black rhinoceros, the atlas bear, the monk seal, the great auk, and a kind of zebra called a quagga. (You can find photos of these animals on the internet.) She explains that all of these animals were hunted to extinction. No animal stands alone. When one disappears, all the others who interact with that animal are affected. Then she tells them about the bees, whom we rely on for pollination, and she worries because there are populations of bees dying out. Many people are working to save the bees. So she is hopeful that we will continue to enjoy the fruit, vegetables and flowers they pollinate. They have a significant place in our world, and we don't want them to be only a picture that is treasured by Mother Earth.

**Day 5: The Imperative to Act**

**Do-It-Yourself Skits**

Divide the students into groups of four, and ask them to create a skit showing how we can care for God's earth. Give them four words representing God's creation that they have to use in the skit. Provide 10 minutes for the students to plan, and then ask groups to share their skits with one another. Examples of four words: "Water, ocean, plastic, garbage." "Flowers, heat, butterflies, sun." "Ice, glaciers, global warming, sea." "Coal, electricity, cars, bicycles." "God, creation, stewardship, planet." "Poverty, drought, fire, hunger."

**Aumsum Videos on Solutions to Climate Change:**

A whimsical, humorous approach to teaching a variety of topics. Each video has several short clips included (1 – 4 minutes), often with a variety of themes. Choose the specific clip that covers your chosen topic.

- What if We Planted a Trillion Trees? [What if we Stopped Showering for a Year? + more videos | #aumsum #kids #science #education #children - Bing video](#)
  - Clip: 2:25 – 3:26      What If we planted a Trillion Trees?

Here's one of the environmental problems that nations united to solve: Ozone!

- Why is There a Hole in the Ozone Layer? [Why is there a Hole in the Ozone Layer? + more videos | #aumsum #kids #science #education #children - Bing video](#)
  - Clip: 0:21 – 1:21      Ozone, creating and repairing the hole in the ozone

**ClimateScience Video on Planting Trees:**

[Planting Trees: Can Trees Undo Climate Change? | ClimateScience #5 \(youtube.com\)](#)  
 Ages 10-12 Good information on climate change behaviors and how to help – but definitely for the 10-12 year olds.

## **Mother Earth needs helpers**

Mother Earth arrives for her last visit loaded with cloth bags, flower seed packets, sustainable water bottles and straws, Woolaid bandages, small signs saying “Love the Earth,” and beeswax wraps. She recruits the students to help her save the earth by decreasing plastic use, cutting back on waste, and planting more flowers. She hands each student a sign to display, and thanks them for their efforts to preserve animals, conserve water and energy, cut back on buying things, and talk about the things they are doing to protect God’s creation.

### **Use a children’s video from YouTube to introduce the theme each day:**

A variety of videos appropriate for children 6 and over are available on YouTube. Some specific examples are listed in the daily themes below.

#### **Planet Protectors! 52 ways to look after God’s world**

Paperback book by Ruth Valerio and Paul Kerensa. It includes a Bible hunt for scriptures, puzzles, activities, and craft suggestions for all ages.



#### **The Planet Protectors: Activities for Kids**

This website is not to be confused with the book listed above. The website is sponsored by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, and includes some educational activities in both English and Spanish. [The Planet Protectors: Activities for Kids | US EPA](#)

#### **ClimateScience**

ClimateScience is a website for kids and teachers that provides courses, activities, and educational materials, divided into age groups, for free use. Here’s the link to view the activities and crafts they provide: [Schools | ClimateScience](#)

#### **NASA Climate Kids**

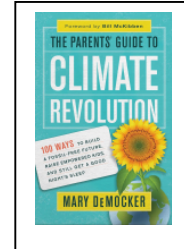
NASA Climate Kids is a website sponsored by NASA to assist kids in understanding a wide variety of topics related to climate. It's produced by the Earth Science Communications Team at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

[Watch Videos | NASA Climate Kids](#)

### Teach a Climate Song!

Hopscotchsongs – Climate Change Song - Solutions in a catchy song: [Climate Change Song - Bing video](#)

Hopscotchsongs – The Water Cycle Song - [The Water Cycle Song - Bing video](#)



Or create your own climate song as a class! – Choose one of the daily themes or a specific focus. You can divide the older kids into small groups of four and ask them to write their own lyrics around that theme, matched to a popular tune. It can be a tune like “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star,” “Mary Had a Little Lamb,” or “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.” Or they can choose a popular song that all the kids in the small group know. Give them 15 minutes to write the song, and then enjoy sharing it with the class. Celebrate funny songs as well as serious ones!

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### The Parents' Guide to Climate Revolution

*The Parents' Guide to Climate Revolution: 100 Ways to Build a Fossil-Free Future, Raise Empowered Kids, and Still Get a Good Night's Sleep* is a paperback written by Mary DeMocker with a foreword by Bill McKibben. It has hundreds of wide-ranging ideas and activities to help children and families take action to heal our planet.

- **Climate Science in a Nutshell #4: Too Much Carbon Dioxide - [Bing Videos](#)**

### Video on Food Waste

[Food Waste: The Hidden Cost of the Food We Throw Out | ClimateScience #9 \(youtube.com\)](#)

Ages 6-12 gives information of food waste, which we haven't had yet, and gives good solutions



