

RESPOND

Track Your Water Use

Pope Francis writes that "Access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right..." (Laudato Si). This is important because unlike here in the US, many people around the world do not have this access, or cannot afford it. In some places people even fight over water!

For one week, keep track of when, how, and for how long you used water. Make a chart with three columns: Time of Day, How I Used Water, How Long I Had the Water Running. (Visit DiscoverYourNeighbor.org to download a chart.)

Report your findings each day to a partner. Brainstorm ways that you can cut down your water usage. (Extension: find and use an online Water Use Calculator like the one from the State of Florida.)

Discuss: What surprised you about how you were using water? How difficult was it to reduce your usage? How can we remind ourselves that water is a resource we share with the world?

MAKE SOME NOISE

Make posters, videos, or presentations to share with your school community why and how to conserve water and honor God's Creation. Share what you are doing on Instagram [@MaryknollSociety](https://www.instagram.com/MaryknollSociety).

BE A GLOBAL NEIGHBOR

Did you know that you can participate in providing clean water for people around the world? Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers work with communities to harvest rainwater, install clean water filtering systems, and build dams and wells. Visit DiscoverYourNeighbor.org to support these efforts as a family, classroom, school, or parish.



S.Sprague/Cambodia 2006

DO AT HOME

Share what have you learned about why we need to care for Creation with the people in your household. Ask them to describe some of the things they love about God's Creation or where they see God in the world around them.

Brainstorm three ways over the next month that you can take better care of the environment together.

Extension: track your water usage together as a family and commit to using less water.

CARE OF CREATION

S.Sprague/Guatemala 2004



WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

By protecting God's Creation, we protect and care for one another. The natural environment is a gift from God, which nurtures and sustains our lives. To be in loving relationship with God and our neighbor, we must also be in a loving and balanced relationship with the Earth itself. Pope Benedict XVI reminds us that we all share in the responsibility to actively care for the environment. Pope Francis points out that countries with greater wealth now consume more than Creation can sustain, and as a result our neighbors at the global margins suffer the most immediate and severe consequences.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

OBJECTIVE: Students will reflect on what God's Creation means to their lives, and brainstorm ways to better care for Creation.

READ the *FAITH PERSPECTIVE* article as a class or in small groups.

IMAGINE if you wanted to share with someone in another country some reasons why you love God's creation. What in your hometown might you photograph to express this? **DRAW A PICTURE** of the place or piece of nature that you would share. On your drawing, write the answer to this question: What does this teach me about God? **EXTENSION:** Make a class mural

with images of where you find God in the world around you.

READ the *NEIGHBOR FOCUS* article and **DISCUSS WITH A PARTNER**, "Think through your day yesterday and describe all of the ways that you used water. How might your life be different if you didn't have water whenever you needed it?"

DISCUSS AS A CLASS: Why do we (both us as students at our school and the students at Mua Hills) need water? Why do we need to care for creation? **BRAINSTORM TOGETHER:** What are ways that your class can better respect and appreciate what God creates for all of us?



FAITH PERSPECTIVE

"As a young priest in Africa, I was arrested for taking a picture of a tree. At the police station, I was asked why I had taken a picture of a secret military base. I explained that I didn't know I was taking a picture of a secret base; I thought I was just taking a picture of a tree. The interrogating officer laughed and said, 'Why does a priest care about a tree?' I planned to use the tree photo to teach farmers and schoolchildren

to care for the land through planting and caring for trees. Luckily for me, the chief of police was raised a Catholic, and was willing to listen as I explained that all people, especially Christians who were raised to know that God created the heavens and earth, must understand that all God's creation is good (Gen.1). Many Maryknoll missionaries like me see the impact of environmental injustices and climate change on the poor and less fortunate people we serve. Everyone, not just priests, should be concerned about the environment. Through the works of the Creator we can begin to know the Creator." - Fr. Lawrence Radice, M.M.



SAVING RAINS OF AFRICA

The Mua Hills Girls High School in Machakos, Kenya, was in danger of closing due to lack of water. With 440 girls attending the boarding school on a remote hilltop 50 miles from Nairobi, water was severely limited. The school had an old pump at a spring in the valley to send up water, but it kept breaking down. From June to September-the dry season-the school would run out of water and have to pay to truck it in. Together and with the

help of Maryknoll Father John Lange, the school repaired the old pump, added a new pump as a backup and installed a large system for collecting rainwater from the roofs of the school buildings.

The impact of human-caused climate change can make rain patterns unpredictable and access to water difficult. Nearly two-thirds of laborers on the continent of Africa work on small farms and depend on the rains to survive.

REFLECT

READ ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

6TH GRADE: Genesis 1:1-12

7TH GRADE: Mark 1:4-13

8TH GRADE: Canticle of the Sun by St. Francis of Assisi

REFLECT: What does this reading say to you about how God feels about Creation? What does it tell you about how God cares for us through Creation?

Write a prayer with your intentions for how you will care for the natural world this week.

WHAT DOES THE CHURCH SAY?

Care for Creation is one of the seven major themes of Catholic Social Teaching (CST). CST guides us to understand that the ways that we treat the earth, and all forms of life, and the way that we use the Earth's resources reflect the way we feel about God, who created the earth and the universe.

Catholic Social Teaching uses the phrase "stewardship of creation." This means that that we are not to take it for granted, rather we are to be caretakers of the earth and its resources. Creation was given by God to all and it is our responsibility to share, care, and to only use what we need.

Want to know more? Visit DiscoverYourNeighbor.org to find a video about Pope Francis' Encyclical on the Care for Our Common Home.