

# An Earth Day Sermon

## UPPER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

**Theme:** Earth Day

**Scripture:** Genesis 2:15

**Memory Verse:** Genesis 2:15 - The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

## The Children's Sermon

How are we supposed to take care of the Earth? That's a good question. Fortunately, the Bible provides help. In Genesis, when God placed the man in the garden and states "till it and keep it." This means we have the right to till the Earth in order to make it fruitful. But does this mean we are to till all of it? No, we also have the duty to "keep it" which means to protect it – to "keep" the Earth by conserving it. "Till it" yes, but know when to stop.

God speaks to me through the mountains – always has. Perhaps for you, you feel closest to God at the beach or the lake. For me, and perhaps for you, nature is the most real sign of God's presence. Our spiritual journey is still more mystery to me than understanding. But day by day, one step at a time, with God's help, the understanding grows, if we will take the time to listen for his guidance and read his holy word.

Now, let's talk a bit more about this special day, Earth Day. Earth Day is like a big birthday party for our planet. It's a day we set aside to think about the Earth and how we can take better care of it. Just like you might clean up your room or help out at home, Earth Day reminds us to clean up our planet and help it out too.

You see, every little thing we do can make a big difference. When we recycle our paper, plastic, and cans, we're helping to keep the Earth clean. When we turn off lights when we leave a room, or turn off the water when we brush our teeth, we're saving energy and water. These are small actions, but if everyone does them, they add up to a big help for our planet.

God gave us this beautiful Earth to live on, and it's our job to take care of it. We can think of ourselves as Earth's helpers. Just like superheroes, we have the power to make a positive change. We can plant trees, clean up trash in our parks, and even use less plastic by choosing reusable bottles and bags. Every choice we make can help protect our Earth.

Sometimes, we might wonder if our small actions really matter. But they do! Imagine if every kid around the world did one kind thing for the Earth every day. That would be a lot of kindness, and it would help our planet a lot. We can be leaders in taking care of the Earth, showing others how easy and important it is.

Let's remember, too, that taking care of the Earth is not just for Earth Day. It's something we can do every day. Every morning when we wake up, we can think, "What can I do today to help the Earth?" Maybe it's choosing to walk or ride a bike instead of asking for a ride in a car. Maybe it's picking up litter we see on the ground. There are so many ways we can help.

In the Bible, God talks about how everything on Earth is connected. The trees, the animals, the water, and us – we're all part of God's creation. When we take care of one

part of creation, we help all of it. It's like a big family. And just like in a family, we need to work together and take care of each other.

So, let's make every day Earth Day. Let's promise to be kind to our planet, to take care of it, and to love it just like God loves us. We can be Earth's superheroes, making sure our planet is healthy and happy for many, many years to come.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for the beautiful Earth you've given us. Help us to remember to take care of it every day, not just on Earth Day. Guide us to make choices that protect your creation, and inspire others to do the same. Help us to be superheroes for the Earth, showing love and kindness to everything you've made. Amen.

## Bible Memory Verse

### **Genesis 2:15 - The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.**

You Will Need:

- Construction paper (green, brown, blue, and other colors for flowers and animals)
- Scissors
- Glue
- Crayons or markers

Get Ready:

- Gather all the materials on a large table.
- Cut out shapes beforehand to save time: trees, rivers, flowers, animals, and a figure to represent the man.

Do This:

1. Have each child create their own version of the Garden of Eden on a piece of construction paper using the materials provided. Encourage them to think about what 'taking care of the garden' means as they design their garden.
2. Once their gardens are complete, ask the children to share their creations with the group and explain one way they can take care of God's creation in their own lives.
3. Conclude by reciting the memory verse together, emphasizing the responsibility God has given us to care for His creation.

## Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- A Bible or printed copies of Genesis 2:15
- Recyclable materials (plastic bottles, paper, cardboard, etc.)
- Seeds (flowers, vegetables, or any easy-to-grow plant)
- Small pots or recycled containers (like yogurt cups)
- Soil
- Gardening tools (optional)
- Decorative materials (paint, markers, stickers)
- A world map or globe

Get Ready:

- Gather all materials and set up a work area for the activity.
- Prepare a short explanation of Genesis 2:15, emphasizing the responsibility to care for the Earth.

Do this:

1. Start by reading Genesis 2:15 together and discuss what it means to "work it and take care of it" in the context of our planet.
2. Divide the children into small groups and challenge them to create something useful or decorative from the recyclable materials, promoting the idea of reusing and recycling.
3. Guide each child to plant a seed in their pot or recycled container, discussing how planting trees and plants is a way of taking care of the Earth. Decorate the pots as desired.
4. Use the world map or globe to talk about different parts of the world and how taking care of the Earth is a global responsibility. Encourage them to think of one action they can commit to doing regularly to help care for the Earth.
5. Conclude by having each child share their creation and their commitment to caring for the Earth, linking back to Genesis 2:15 and the importance of stewardship.

## Snack Activity: Eden's Garden Cups

You'll Need:

- Clear plastic cups
- Chocolate pudding (pre-made or ingredients to make your own)
- Crushed oreo cookies
- Gummy worms
- Mint leaves (for 'trees')
- Small plastic spoons

Get Ready: If making pudding from scratch, prepare it ahead of time according to the package instructions. Allow it to cool before starting the activity.

Do this:

1. Fill the bottom third of each clear plastic cup with chocolate pudding. This represents the 'soil' of the Earth that God entrusted us to take care of, as mentioned in Genesis 2:15.
2. Add a layer of crushed oreo cookies on top of the pudding to resemble the fertile ground of the Garden of Eden.
3. Place a few gummy worms into the 'soil' to represent the living creatures in the garden. Then, plant a mint leaf into the soil as a 'tree' to take care of, reminding us of our responsibility to tend and keep the Earth.
4. Enjoy your edible garden cup while discussing how we can be good stewards of God's creation today.

## Game Activity: Garden Guardians

You'll Need:

- A large open space (outdoors is best)
- Sidewalk chalk or tape (if indoors)
- Pictures of various plants and animals (real or drawn)
- Small objects to serve as 'pollutants' (e.g., small pieces of paper or plastic)
- A timer

Get Ready: Mark out a large area with chalk or tape to represent the 'garden'. Place the pictures of plants and animals around the garden area. Scatter the 'pollutants' within the garden boundaries.

Do this:

1. Divide the children into two teams: Gardeners and Polluters. The Gardeners' role is to take care of the garden by 'planting' more plants (placing pictures in the garden area)

and removing pollutants. The Polluters' role is to introduce more pollutants into the garden without getting caught by the Gardeners.

2. Set the timer for 10 minutes. The game begins with the Gardeners turning their backs while the Polluters scatter pollutants in the garden. After that, Gardeners turn around and start cleaning up the pollutants and 'planting' new plants.

3. The game ends when the timer goes off. Count the number of pollutants removed and the number of plants added. The team with the highest net positive impact (plants added minus pollutants removed) wins.

Genesis 2:15 teaches us that God placed man in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. This game emphasizes the importance of taking care of our environment and being guardians of the earth, reflecting the Scripture's message.

## Craft Activity: Caring for Creation: A Genesis Garden

You'll Need:

- A small plant pot for each child
- Potting soil
- Seeds (flowers, herbs, or vegetables)
- Watering cans or cups
- Decorative items (paints, stickers, markers)
- Bible verse cards with Genesis 2:15 printed on them

Get Ready: Prepare a workspace for each child with all the materials laid out. Print out or write Genesis 2:15 on small cards. Make sure there is enough soil and seeds for everyone.

Do this:

1. Begin with a discussion on Genesis 2:15, emphasizing the importance of taking care of the Earth as God's creation. Hand out the Bible verse cards.
2. Let each child decorate their plant pot using the paints, stickers, and markers. While they work, encourage them to think about how taking care of their plant is a way to fulfill Genesis 2:15.
3. Fill the pots with soil and plant the seeds. Teach the children how to water their plants properly. Conclude by reminding them that taking care of their plant is a daily reminder of our responsibility to care for God's creation.

## Prayer Activity: Guardians of Creation

You'll Need:

- A Bible
- Recycled paper
- Coloring pencils or markers
- A small plant or seed for each child

Get Ready: Prepare a comfortable, quiet space in your classroom where children can sit in a circle. Ensure you have enough recycled paper and coloring materials for each child. If possible, set up a small table in the center of the circle with the Bible opened to Genesis 2:15 and the plants or seeds.

Do this:

1. Begin by reading Genesis 2:15 aloud to the group, emphasizing our responsibility to care for the Earth. Discuss what this means in today's world, focusing on recycling, conserving water, and planting trees.



2. Hand out the recycled paper and coloring materials. Ask each child to draw or write a prayer for the Earth, focusing on how they can be guardians of creation, inspired by Genesis 2:15. Encourage creativity and personal commitment.

3. Once everyone has finished, invite the children to plant their seed or care for their plant as a symbolic act of their commitment to being Earth's guardians. Conclude with a group prayer, using the prayers the children wrote or drew, asking for God's help in fulfilling our duty to care for the planet.