

A Summer Creation Care Guide for Churches & Families

Summer is a perfect time to connect with God's creation. Whether you're at home or on vacation, at the beach or in the mountains, basking in sunshine or listening to the rain, there are many ways to make the most of your summer by caring for creation and letting nature bless in you in return.

Things to do in families or with groups

- If you go on vacation or take a youth trip, plan an afternoon to pick up litter or clean up a local river area, to leave the place better than you found it.
- Organize a mild hike or nature walk—by yourself, as a family, or a church group. Have everyone be looking while they walk. When you reach your destination, name the things you heard, saw, or even smelled on the way. Keep a list of the plants or animals you passed by and see who found the most.
 - As you walk, pause every few minutes to say a prayer or read a poem. (Creation prayers from around the world can be found [here](#) and [here](#).) Or read a different Bible verse. (Lots of [creation-themed Bible verses are listed here](#).)
- Have a movie night about creation care and/or environmental justice. Examples include faith-based films like [Behold the Earth](#) and [Renewal](#), as well as other educational films like [The Story of Stuff](#).

Things to do as a church

- Plan a Creation Service Day. Invite people of all ages from your church to meet up for assignments. Organize groups to pick up litter at local parks, clear out trash from rivers and ponds, start or work in a community garden, replace incandescent light bulbs in your church with energy efficient bulbs, and do landscaping on the church grounds with native plants, especially ones that encourage pollinators.
- Give out seeds for families to plant.
- Include creation care themes during worship. Lots of worship resources (prayers, hymns, sermons, invocations, benedictions, liturgies, and kids' activities) can be found [here](#) and [here](#), and [here](#).
- Much like other holy seasons of the year, you can start a Season of Creation at your church in September. (Info and [resources to do that are here](#).)
- Good hymns to sing: All Creatures of Our God and King, All Things Bright and Beautiful, Come Ye Thankful People Come, For the Beauty of the Earth, For the Fruit of All Creation, How Lovely Is Thy Dwelling Place, I the Lord of Sea and Sky, Morning Has Broken, When Morning Gilds the Skies

Want to learn more about how you and your church can practice more creation care? Creation Justice Ministries has [a great list of resources here](#) with suggestions for all ages and settings.

Need some good summer reading? Try these books:

- *Praying with The Earth: A Prayerbook for Peace* by John Phillip Newell
- *Serve God, Save the Planet* by Matthew Sleeth
- *50 Ways to Help Save the Earth: How You and Your Congregation Can Make a Difference* by Rebecca Barnes
- *Creation as Sacrament: Reflections on Ecology and Spirituality* by John Chryssavgis
- *Climate Church, Climate World: How People of Faith Must Work for Change* by Jim Antal
- *Old Turtle* by Douglas Wood (a beautiful book for kids)
- Collected poems and writings of Mary Oliver, in her books *A Thousand Mornings*, *Why I Wake*, *American Primitive*, and *Devotions*.

Don't just stay in a house, car, or hotel room. Here are simple things you can do for God's creation to bless you:

- During the days, go on a short walk or just sit outside. Think about what brings you joy or inspiration, and jot down notes or write in a prayer journal the thoughts you have and things you notice.
- In the evenings enjoy stargazing by yourself or with others—from your backyard, porch, or out in the woods.