



Green Blue Stewardship

Discuss, Plan, Do Environmental Work in your Community

Engage Others in both Discussion and Service

Make Disciples While You Transform the World

Reach Millennials:
Offer Holistic World Care



Sponsored by
The United Methodist
Stewardship Foundation

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If you are looking for a way to reach millennials, why aren't you speaking to them about the issues of environmental stewardship? Don't just talking about "greening" your church, invite the millennials to think "blue" too. We have air, sky, water stewardship to cover too. We want all the earth to thrive and our spiritual lives as well.

If you think science and politics have the only say in what we do with the resources God gives us and the care of his creation he directs us to take, think again. Stewardship is not about the things, it's about how we see them and why we think managing the world is larger than economics. Our practices and expectations are rooted in our beliefs and our hopes.

How does this curriculum work?

It is set up to offer you three formats: Vision, Intention, Mission. Based on Dallas Willard's idea of discipleship requiring us to have motivation, purpose, and action, we look at what our faith teaches and how that intersects with our work in a world of limited resources but an unlimited God.

You have a discussion forum, a strategy planning session, and/or a community outreach. Doing these three items in different orders will bring different results, but in the age of information, it is important to give choices. The success of your choices relies on your commitment to follow through and be accountable to one another.

You might find it easier to have a discussion before planning and doing something. What if your other participants want to learn by doing and then have the discussion or strategy? As a group, commit to trying all three components of the study in different order at least once. Of course, you can pick and choose what to do and what not to do, just consider that learning or doing something outside your comfort zone for the sake of others will teach them that you care about their learning and spiritual growth as much as your own.

LOVE

Vision

Discussion Forum. What does it mean to “love God and love neighbors as ourselves”?

If you could give a picture or example of the meaning without words, what would it be like?

Perhaps it is hard to show what love is. *What isn't love?*

How do unloving thoughts and actions relate to the environment? To one another?

Here are some interesting Bible passages to consider what someone does to their environment and does in their environment: 1 Kings 21, Luke 16:19-31, Genesis 11:1-9

Besides dealing with three problems against love—envy, indifference and pride, what are the other barriers or distractions?

Here are some more links to help you consider how love of God and love of neighbor affect environmental stewardship.

<https://www.biblegateway.com/blog/2014/02/five-bible-passages-about-love/>

<https://www.jellytelly.com/blog/3-bible-stories-to-teach-your-kids-about-love>

<http://www.whatchristianswanttoknow.com/bible-stories-about-love-5-encouraging-scripture-summaries/>

<http://www.biblestudytools.com/topical-verses/love-bible-verses/>

<http://www.allaboutgod.com/bible-verses-on-love.htm>

End this discussion time in prayer before you begin the next section.

Intention

If you don't take care of what you are given, is that because you don't think much of the gift or the giver? Is carelessness, mistreatment or neglect caused by factors in your inner or outer environment? Are these excuses or warnings for our problems?

Strategic Planning: Make a list together of the things you do for the environment and things you don't. Take into consideration what the word “environment” means—are you talking about the earth, about the conditions to make something happen like a “learning environment” or a “church environment” or are you defining environment as something else. Do this same type of listing for the words “resources,” “gifts,” and “creation.”

Create three categories to put your answers into and define what these are. For example, you could choose “animals,” “plants,” and “nonliving things.” You could choose “Positive,” “Negative” and “Neutral.” You could choose “Direct help,” “indirect help,” “no help.”

What are you missing? What isn't being done that could be part of loving God and loving your neighbor.

Create a plan to do something to fill in a gap. End in prayer and promise to pray for each other in between meetings.

Mission

The easy part for some, the hardest for others. How did you "love God and love your neighbor"?

What would you share about doing your plan if you made one? What would you do for a plan next time if you didn't make one?

Spending five-minutes freewriting without stopping on what you are thinking after your activity. It can be about anything, it just requires you writing it down even if you write you don't know what to write until you do. You must write on paper and not edit, just writing to "see what you are thinking."

You choose after you are done whether you wish to share or not. End in prayer.

JOY

Vision

Environmental stewardship is often thought of as killing joy, not looking for it. From love of God and our neighbor comes joy, but how does joy, a way of being that is not affected by our circumstances, relate to stewardship? In some instances, it seems all we do is stress the gloom and dire needs of our polluted and corrupted world. We do need people to take stewardship of our world seriously. Our circumstances are important. Ye what kind of stewardship can we have that incorporates joy?

What part of stewardship gives you joy? If it is a chore, is that good or bad? Some readings for you:

Ecclesiastes 2, Nehemiah 8, Matthew 20:1-16

Besides dealing with these three problems against joy – cynicism, regret, or assumptions – what are the other barriers or distractions?

Here are some more links to help you consider how joy affect environmental stewardship

<https://dailyverses.net/joy>

<http://www.biblestudytools.com/topical-verses/joy-bible-verses/>

<http://www.biblestudytools.com/topical-verses/joy-bible-verses/>

<http://www.kidsofintegrity.com/lessons/joy/bible-stories>

End this portion with prayer, joyfully.

Intention

Begin with prayer. Each of the Bible readings dealt with paradoxes and unexpected behavior. This strategy session is to do something that is a paradox. Take an environment issue and consider what strategy or promotion could be used that is the opposite of the normal response. How can there be joy emphasized to sharing, doing, and sustaining stewardship? Make a plan that would bring joy instead of guilt, joy instead of warning, joy instead of fear into caring for our many environments and various inhabitants within each.

Mission

Whatever mission project you take to incorporate joy into today as a group, come back together to celebrate God's gift of work with food or games. As you fellowship in joy, come up with one way you each can individually do a five-minute mission on your own to continue what you started and remember the joy of this time. End with prayer.

PEACE

Vision

In today's news, it seems that environmental stewardship is a battleground of mine/yours and good/bad. It is the fight for something or against something. If it ever brings people together it is just so that they can go to war against a common foe. What does it mean to try to bring peace? We often think of peacemaking as making compromises or concessions. It is hard to think of environmental stewardship as a way to bring peace if we think that we are dealing with adversaries instead of potential partners.

Look at how giving in and standing up for your rights both work:

Genesis 21: 22-34 versus Genesis 26:12-33

<https://www.theologyofwork.org/old-testament/genesis-12-50-and-work/abraham-genesis-121-2511/abrahams-dispute-with-abimelech-genesis-201-16-2122-34/>

There is some sense at times that environmental stewardship is sometimes peacefully dividing and going your own way. Read Genesis 13 as an example. It might be interesting in your discussions to talk about why Abraham and Lot didn't limit the size of their flocks or family which would be the expected solution today.

Check out these links for some ideas about peace. You can talk about what you noticed or what these verses mean to you and your experiences of peace.

<https://bible.org/seriespage/10-peace-be-still-matthew-823-27>

<http://www.biblestudytools.com/topical-verses/peace-bible-verses/>

<https://dailyverses.net/peace>

Discuss what peace is and its relationships to stewardship. End with a prayer that includes some of the thoughts or wishes expressed in the group.

Intention

Most strategies are set up like a battle plan. What's the best defense? What areas do we need to attack? How would it look to approach your next environmental mission project as a peace plan?

Pray for peace here. Consider who you would be making peace with and why. Talk about ways to settle any conflicts and to establish mutual agreements. Instead of picking a project like cleaning a park with trash or planting trees, how would you involve the community you want to help. Do they want your help? Do they want the kind of help you think they need? What if the kind of help they say they need is different from the one you want to offer?

What is your strategy to find out what you may be wrong in thinking or doing? What specific thing needs to happen to know you are effective? What difference does it make after you've tried to approach the plan and implementation with a peace centered focus?

Mission

Start a large enough project that you know your group cannot finish in the time allotted. How do you adjust? You will find some different peacemaking strategies in the readings of “going a different, harder direction,” “compromising or giving up” and “standing your ground.” You may also think of others that will involve getting the people most unlikely to help you involved. Abraham involved the leader he held responsible for his trouble even if the servants were the cause. The leader helped. Isaac didn’t involve those he could have and they decided to come to him because he was doing so well on his own. Whatever you try, pray that you don’t focus on the results to the detriment of the opportunities for peace in all the relationships. Peace is often something that is needed within the working group as much as outside of it! Pray that God will use your outreach to reach others while you serve.

FORBEARANCE

Vision

Patience. Do you put up with pollution, injustice, ignorance, selfishness? Do you accept slow or sometimes regressive or nonexistent change? We know love is patient. We know this fruit of the spirit is given to us. How do we balance the now and later? Isn't this a central dilemma of our needs now versus others later? OUR needs now versus OTHERS' needs later?

Genesis 25:29-34 Esau gave up the great thing for the lesser, more immediate. Discuss how we can ask others to give up the more immediate thing when they or even their direct descendants may not benefit. What can you say to "now" people and how are we "now" people in the results we want?

Luke 15:11-32 How do we promote environmental stewardship when people might decide God will forgive them anyway or allows them to do whatever they want with 'their inheritance'?

Your discussion today might be on what forbearance really means. What would it be like to rename some stories such as the patient (instead of persistent) widow or the patient (instead of good) Samaritan?

Here are some verses to apply to stewardship and the environment to create stewardship:

<https://www.openbible.info/topics/forbearance>

<http://www.biblestudytools.com/topical-verses/patience-bible-verses/>

<http://whatsinthebible.com/three-bible-stories-teach-kids-patience/>

<http://www.whatchristianswanttoknow.com/bible-stories-about-patience-5-important-scripture-summaries/>

End with a prayer that focuses on gratitude for God's patience rather than one asking for help with ours.

Intention

If you could build a strategy or plan to do some environmental stewardship program to learn patience, would you choose children or the elderly? Business people or unemployed? Fishermen or Farmers? Perhaps your answer is the place you should look to do something to provide environmental stewardship. Pray for them.

Mission

While the planning session notes were extremely brief, the project doesn't have to be. It can be some short-term things toward a long-term goal. It can be something that you loop back to in timing, in writing about and sharing, or even in the exercise of seeking ways to sustain or recognize impact. Pray for God's help.

KINDNESS

Vision

Kindness comes at a cost. Stewardship, not just giving things a chance to grow and thrive, but a chance to go deeper and flow freely, is risky. You are probably used to the stories of Ruth and the Good Samaritan as risk taking kindness. It's also important to discuss the examples that show extravagant kindness but could be criticized for "bad" stewardship.

Here are some readings to look into for environmental stewardship: 1 Samuel 25 and Luke 7:36-50

If kindness defies family or customs, what is the best way to be kind? What role does kindness have on status, circumstances, or timing? Is there a difference in how environmental stewardship is planned or done by gender?

What happens when kindness is repaid like in the readings? What if it is punished or taken advantage of?

The following links can give you more ideas about kindness:

<http://www.kidsofintegrity.com/lessons/kindness/bible-stories>

<http://www.bibleclassbooks.com/teaching-values/kindness.html>

<http://www.biblestudytools.com/topical-verses/bible-verses-about-kindness/>

<http://bible.knowing-jesus.com/topics/Acts-Of-Kindness>

<https://bible.org/seriespage/6-sweet-revenge-matthew-538-42-romans-1217-21>

End in a prayer to ask for kindness from God.

Intention

In your strategic plan for environmental stewardship, you might consider doing something that is advocacy or education in your practice this time. How can you be kind to those in power or to those you blame for problems in environmental stewardship? Have a prayer in the middle of your session and then continue. Many people might see environmental stewardship as angry protesters with harsh messages and bitter fervor. What challenges this? Who leads through kindness or repaying with kindness?

Mission

Begin in prayer. You are invited to go where the problem you see is. Interact with kindness. Who are the stakeholders, the participants, the people that need grace even if you never see them change what they are doing or not doing?

You are invited to risky kindness but it is up to you whether this is a group or paired people project to try.

GOODNESS

Vision

Genesis 1 and Revelation 21, 22:1-5

In our work, it is important to reflect on what God says is good and what God's plans are for the world and for us. This is the time to talk about "what if" dreams and how you would like the world to be more like heaven.

What are the ways God is accomplishing his plan? Where do you see God at work in people's lives? Where do you see him taking care of creation or guiding us to do so with him?

We can't do all of the work in environmental stewardship. Where are you being called to do something? Where can you see others being called (sometimes others see our call before we do or help confirm it with God's help.)

Some extra links for discussion God's goodness and our work to provide it are as follows:

<https://dailyverses.net/goodness/niv/kjv>

<https://www.openbible.info/topics/goodness>

<http://peopleof.oureverydaylife.com/stories-goodness-bible-11773.html>

Intention

Make your strategy session during a hike, a geocache, or at a different location. This will help with plans to bring God's goodness to people and creation through your work. Don't forget to offer a prayer that asks God to be the center of the project and the focus of the blessing others for his glory. See if your project can be done in secret to offer goodness without credit.

Mission

Begin with prayer and reading some of the verses from the Bible to stir your group to fuller understanding of using environmental stewardship as a way to build a closer relationship to God and all the goodness he provides. If it is a "secret mission," make sure you have notified any group members who didn't attend a previous meeting to make sure they don't spoil the surprise or tell later. End with prayer as well.

FAITHFULNESS

Vision

Start by reading Genesis 22: 1-19, Jeremiah 35 and Hebrews 3:1-6

Discuss how faithfulness to God is above environmental stewardship. What happens when we put a cause, person, or idea above God? List the ways your environmental stewardship is expressing your faithfulness to God rather than distracting or detracting from it. Share stories of faithfulness you've seen and how they equip you to do your ministry.

If you have time, look at these links for more to discuss.

<http://www.kidsofintegrity.com/lessons/faithfulness/bible-stories>

<http://bible.knowing-jesus.com/topics/Faithfulness,-To-God>

https://www.openbible.info/topics/being_faithful

End with prayer on faithfulness leading to greater calls and serve to God.

Intention

Start with a prayer for renewal. If you can start by charting out some of the journey you've had in environmental stewardship, what would it look like? A mountain, a winding road, a web, a dance? Whatever images you have imagined, see if they inspire you on how to approach your mission project. Perhaps there are ways to structure your strategy like an expedition, a road trip, a net, or a set of moves back and forth. End with a prayer for faithfulness to God no matter what the journey looks like right now.

Mission

One of the readings talked of a house. Is there a mission within the walls of a house, church, or other building your group could offer? How is environmental stewardship practiced inside a manmade dwelling? If this doesn't appeal to your group, the other readings talked of giving up something. How can you use this for environment stewardship projects? End with prayer to see more unexpected or unlikely places for environmental stewardship. End in prayer for faithful discipleship outside of stewardship.

GENTLENESS

Vision

By the time the meek inherit earth—who wants it? There’s a definition of meekness as “controlled power” like someone who knows his own strength and is gentle because of it. Gentleness is not a weakness!

Matthew 11:4-6, 28-30, 2 Corinthians 10

There’s much to unpack in discussion. Why did Jesus and his disciples claim gentleness as a key characteristic for him? When do we aspire to be like gentle Jesus? How does his gentleness help us when we are weary and burdened?

If you have the chance, also discuss Matthew 21:1-11 and find instances in your experience or others of where gentleness was admired, celebrated, or followed.

Here are some links to help your discussion:

<https://www.openbible.info/topics/gentleness>

<http://bible.knowing-jesus.com/topics/Gentleness>

<http://www.kidsofintegrity.com/lessons/gentleness/bible-stories>

End in prayer that is a strong whisper.

Intention

As part of your strategy meeting today, discuss how to help others gently when they are weary or burdened—you can choose those who are practicing environmental stewardship as a means of encouragement or those who are not as a means of inspiration. Remember to end in prayer.

Mission

Begin with prayer. You’ve heard of “random acts of kindness.” What are deliberate acts of gentleness? Pick a stewardship project that is too easy or too small for you. How will you and your group use the concept of “controlled power” to do this project? What reasons would you have or need to practice gentleness in your stewardship?

SELF-CONTROL

Read Exodus 16 first, looking for how self-control was an issue even when God told the Israelites what not to do. Imagine if you could have *Free Food*, what would you do? How are you at “all you can eat” buffets? The culture today depends on technology to solve its problems, even if that technology creates new ones. It is not too long ago when plastics were hailed as environmentally friendly because this would keep us from cutting down so many trees. Pesticides were used to grow more food, GMOs to grow it faster. The “root” problem in environmental stewardship actually comes down to our inner environmental stewardship.

Take the time to consider these Bible verses and discuss them: I Samuel 24:1-14, Daniel 1, Matthew 4:1-11

While it is easy to see where others lack self-control, where do we? How do these readings help?

Why do we want or support environmental stewardship? Why did you answer that? And for your next answer, why? Why and why again?

Using the five “whys can get us deeper into our true motivations or beliefs. Take the time to discuss the ways you incorporate self-control into your faith journey.

Some links to add to the mix:

<http://www.biblestudytools.com/topical-verses/bible-verses-about-self-control/>

<https://www.cbcb.org/files/public/children/resources/God's%20Kids%20Grow/God's%20Kids%20Grow%2019.PDF>

End in a forgiveness prayer.

Intention

What environmental stewardship research could you do to lead to future projects? What do you think now of “free energy” from solar or wind power? If you are going to address a problem to help solve it, what do you see are the drawbacks or new problems you might create. For example, one project in the west asked homeowners for their yards to grow vegetables. They would get some of the crop and have none of the work or cost (except water?). Who do you think got upset by this plan sponsored by the restaurants in the area? Why? End in prayer for guidance.

Mission

Go back to a mission project you did earlier as a group or individuals. Find out what unforeseen or unintentional problems were caused and focus on fixing them. What can you do to keep these problems or issues happening in other group’s environmental stewardship ministries? End in prayer for your future call and future fellow workers.