

Caretakers

OF OURSELVES & OTHERS!



Session 4 – Youth

Caretakers of God's Creation

Consistory Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministry
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA



What will students learn?

Objective: Youth will continue with story of Creation. Beginning to instill the idea that man is more than just one of God's creations and to develop an understanding of man's creation in the image and likeness of God

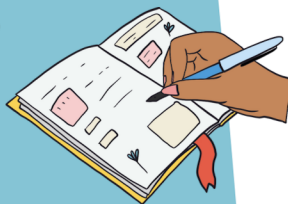
How long will it take & ages?

30 – 1 hour and youth ages 8-11



What do you need?

- Bibles
- Journals
- Post-it Notes
- Creation Icons found at <https://www.uocyouth.org/caretaker>
- White board



For Session Leader

Opening:

Using the post-it notes, ask participants if they want to add any types of caretakers to their post-it note wall. Let them know that no answers are incorrect. Each session, they can add to the board.

Discussion: Use the text provided to begin the discussion. Allow time for questions. Take time to be acquainted with the text, so that you are not reading to your group but presenting!

Adapted for use from Caretakers of God's Creation
Curriculum 2001 UOC Office of Youth Ministry &
Teenage Conference by
Fr. Bohdan Hladio & Natalie Kapeluck

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Session 3 – Youth ages 8 – 11

Discussion Starter: God neared the completion of His Creation. On the sixth day He created the crown jewel in His masterpiece, Us! Ask, **why do you think God created people?**

In His own image and likeness He created Man and then entrusted His Creation to man.” And God said, ‘Let Us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them’”(Genesis 1: 26-28). “The Lord took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it”(Genesis 2: 15). “So out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name”(Genesis 2: 19). God not only gave us grace by being created in His image but He then bestowed upon us the awesome trust of caring for His work.

Take a moment to look at the creation icons associated with these passages. Why did God have man name the creatures of the earth?

The most important, impressive and magical of all the things God created is us – people, human beings. We have the ability to do things which no other creature can: though hyenas may laugh, they don't seem to have a sense of humour. Though birds can sing, they don't compose operas. Unlike anything else in the universe we can think – not only that, we can think about thinking! As we read in the book of Genesis, man and woman are the crown of God's creation. So caring for creation means caring for each other, and for ourselves.

How special are we? On December 25th/January 7th we celebrate the Nativity of our Lord – Christmas. We believe that God Himself became a human being, just like us. Think of it – God identifies completely and totally with us, with you, and with me. So if God thinks this highly of us, we should certainly think just as highly of ourselves and others, and treat others, and ourselves, with dignity, respect, love, and compassion. **Take a moment to ask them what they think about this. Ask them if they have every heard, “Created in the image and likeness of God.” What does this mean?**

I'm sure many of you know about our traditional Ukrainian Christmas Eve Holy Supper (Свята Вечеря). One of the beautiful things we do is to leave an empty spot at the table to remind us of loved ones who aren't with us like our deceased family members as well as those who are away at school, for work, etc. The empty place is also there in case a stranger or hungry person comes to the door. It reminds us of those who have no one to share the joy of the holiday with, and that we should be ready to welcome them at our table. The empty place reminds us of what it is to be lonely; to miss the presence of a loved one; to have no one to share a celebration with. **Ask the youth if any of them practice this tradition – maybe they can start!**

Everyone needs love. The knowledge that I am loved is probably the most important piece of information that any human being has or needs (by the way, it's the central message of Christmas – God loves you).

Being a caretaker of God's Creation means being caretakers of ourselves and the people around us. Weaving a net of healthy, supportive relationships is important for our spiritual and mental well-being, and for the well-being of the people around us.

There are many ways we can be better caretakers of ourselves and other people. Let's take some time to brainstorm how we can do this!!



Leave PEOPLE & THINGS BETTER THAN YOU FOUND THEM!



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Session 3 – Youth ages 8 – 11

Wrapping it Up!

Praxis:

Needed items: Colorful cardstock or scrapbook paper, markers/colored pencils, stickers/gems, glue sticks, paper icons, paper decorations or other cards to cut out from.

Have the youth create "thinking of you" cards for people who may need a special reminder of God's love. Use the list you just brainstormed or have a list of parishioners who are elderly, in elderly care centers, are sick or injured. Have the youth make a card to take home to give to someone they know. If you are able to set-up a time for the youth to deliver the cards to parishioners, this is a wonderful way to make relationships!

Activities for the Month & Taking it Home:

- Devise a project in which the youth can write or make icons of their individual patron saints as an iconographic window into heaven and something concrete to reflect their saint as an example to follow in living the life of God. Relate this to being made in God's image. We can use our patron saint icons in our prayer corners to deepen prayer and aid in our spiritual health.
- Create care packages for you local essential workers (fire/police departments, those working in elderly care facilities, emergency room doctors/nurses, emergency responders). Let them know that you are thinking of THEM as they care for others. Say prayers for them. Arrange with these locations for your youth to drop off the care packages and say "thank you"
- Continue with or start visiting the elderly or shut-ins from your parishes.
- Create RAK (Random Act of Kindness) bags. These should have things like a water bottle, package of crackers, package of cookies, an prayer card, etc. Have the youth take one or two to keep in their cars that they can give to someone who is homeless. You can also take these to a local homeless shelter as a group. If you take on this project, discuss with youth that they should pray for each individual they give these to. They are not "helping" someone but sharing what they have with a brother or sister in made in Christ's Image.
- Have the youth create a mobile or collage of man and the rest of creation that can be displayed in the parish.
- Have youth create a collage or chart, "Taking Care of God's Image" poster for their room. Have them list ways that they can take better care of themselves spiritually, physically, socially and mentally. They could create a daily/weekly/monthly check-list. Provide your youth with resources to aid them with their lists. They could split the chart in two and on the other side list ways they can take better care of others. They can use photos, stickers, drawings on their poster.

Prayer: Finish the session in prayer. You could take sections of the Akathist Glory to God for All Things and us it through out the year at each of your session. You can find it downloadable here <https://www.stvladimirpgh.org/files/112620-akathist.pdf>