

Caretakers

OF OURSELVES & OTHERS!



Caretakers of God's Creation

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



Session 3 – Youth ages 8 – 11

God neared the completion of His Creation. On the sixth day He created the crown jewel in His masterpiece, Us!

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.



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

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.

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!!

