

# What is A CARETAKER?

## Session 1



Caretakers of God's Creation

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



### What will students learn?

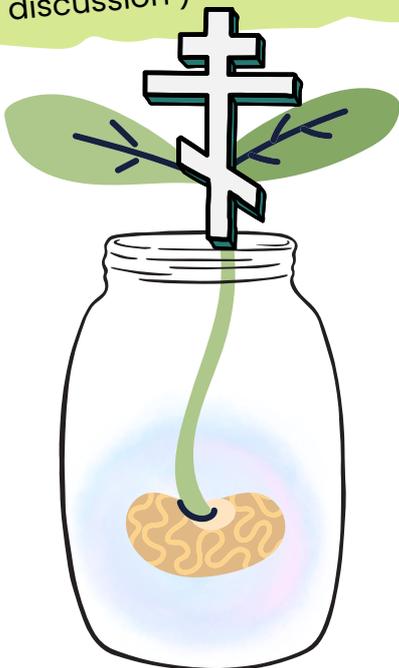
The objective of this session is to have youth begin thinking about what it means to be a caretaker and what this has to do in relation to God.

### How long will it take & ages?

30 minutes - 1 hours and teenagers

### What do you need?

- Bibles
- Journals
- Post-it Notes
- Parking Lot ( a parking lot is somewhere for participants to place questions or thoughts for consideration for discussion )



### For Session Leader

**Opening:** Using the post-it notes, ask participants to write types of caretakers on the post-its. They will take turns placing them on a designated wall, or board. Keep going until they have exhausted answers. 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.

Adapted for use from Teenage Conference  
Fr. Bohdan Hladio & Natalie Kapeluck

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**Discussion Starter:** Begin by saying, "Did you ever receive a gift that you liked and treasured? It might have been something expensive, like a piece of jewelry, or it might have been something of no monetary value at all, like a hand-made card or craft. The important thing is that you treasure it. **Give them time to share some gift that meant something to them.**

Why? Why did you treasure it? **Give them a moment to answer if the wish.** Whether it was valuable in a monetary sense or not, it was valuable to you. What was it that made it valuable to you? Probably the fact that it came from a special person in your life, it was a concrete symbol of their love.

We believe that only two things exist in the universe: God, and Creation. In other words, everything that isn't God, is Creation. God is uncreated, and creation is, well, created. But why did God give us this wonderful universe of comets and cows and clouds, planets and people and pets, snow and sun and sea, music and mussels, forests and friends, brothers and sisters, parents and children, aunts and uncles, cousins and . . .

He gave it as a gift. Out of love for us.

But what is our response? One of God's greatest gifts to us is the gift of free-will. We are free to receive His gifts, or to spurn them. We are free to ignore His blessings, or to embrace them. **Take a moment and ask if they remember what free will is.**

Why should we care about being "caretakers of God's creation?" There are two reasons, both related to each other. **Ask if they can guess what these are.**

The first is that this world we live on is God's creation for us, and gift to us. Remember that gift we talked about in the first paragraph? The normal response of a normal human being is to treasure a valuable gift. And what greater gift is there than our life, our community, our world?

The second is that we – you, me, all of us – are also God's creation, and in caring for the world around us, for the environment, the economy, our church, community, social and governmental structures, etc., we are caring for each other.

Being a caretaker of God's Creation means caring for ourselves, our family, friends, and neighbours, and the environment in which we live.

I'm sure you know people in your life who care about you. People who would drop everything to come and help you if you were in need. People who would sacrifice even their life for you. This is the way God feels about us. When you think about this how does it make you feel? If you are like me, it makes me feel both very special and a bit embarrassed, after all, who am I? What have I done which is so great?

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus mentions flowers, animals, and us – people. He tells us how important His creation is. And if what he says is true, this should be more than enough reason for us to want to be caretakers of His creation. Let's take a look!

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### Wrapping it Up!

**Praxis:** Break up into groups if you have a large number of youth. With a small group maybe break into pairs or groups of three. With a very small group let them work together.

Pass out the bibles. Have them read Chapter 5 Versus 1 - 16. Have them discuss what this might have to do with being caretakers. After a designate time. Have them share what they discussed.

You can write their thoughts on a dry erase board for future reference or add some of their notes to the post-it wall.

**Taking it Home!:** In the coming month, continue to read the Sermon on the Mount with your youth. Have them discuss with you the sections they read. Have them journal about the section in the following ways:

- How can this apply to my life
- How can this apply to my relationship with God
- How can this apply to being a caretaker of God's creation

Either Pass out journals to your youth or have them

**Activity:** Allow your youth time to personalize their journals. Provide markers, colored pencils, paper icons, glue sticks and some prayers.

**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>