

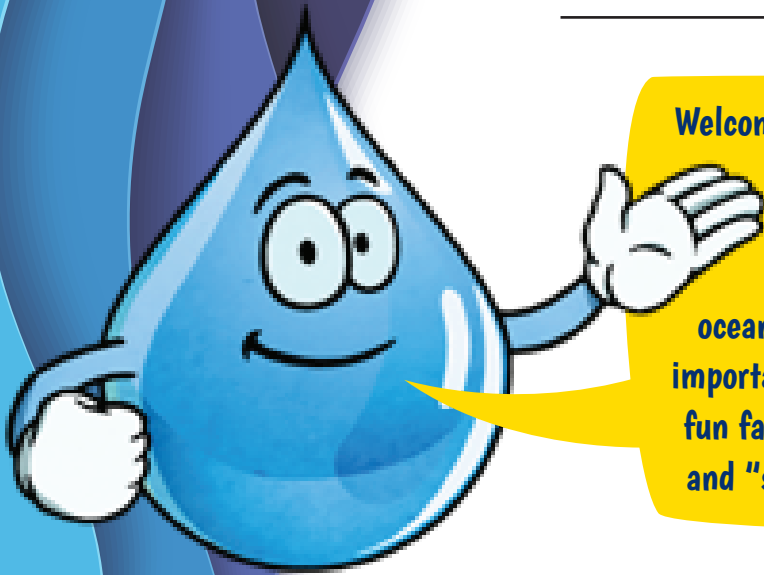
Creation Connection

SAMPLE - DO NOT REPRODUCE

GREAT
BIG
beautiful
WORLD

Student Booklet

This booklet belongs to



Welcome to Vacation Bible School (VBS)! My name is Kai! It rhymes with "high" and means "sea" in Hawaiian. Did you know that Hawaii is a small chain of islands in the middle of the ocean? Why am I here? I'm going to show you how important water is! Follow me through this booklet for fun facts about water, creation, and the Bible. Come and "sea" God's Great Big Beautiful World with me!

DAY 1

GOD CREATES: God created the world, including people. Find out what it was like in the garden.

DAY 2

GOD TENDS THE EARTH: People in the Bible praised God for the plants and animals. They were so thankful for the way God takes care of everything in the world.

DAY 3

GOD'S KINGDOM IS LIKE A SEED: Jesus told stories about God's kingdom. It's like a tiny seed that grows and grows.

DAY 4

WE ARE LIKE TREES: Are you like a tree? People in the Bible wrote about being like trees.

DAY 5

A NEW CREATION: We haven't always taken good care of the earth. Someday God will make a new heaven and earth! Come along to find out what it will be like.

Creation Connection is for kindergarten through grade six. *Great Big Beautiful World* from *Growing Up Catholic VBS*. Portions of this work copyright © 2021 The Pastoral Center / PastoralCenter.com. Bible memory verse taken from the *Good News Translation in Today's English Version: Second Edition*, a translation approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Copyright © 1992 by American Bible Society. Used by Permission. Adapted and reprinted with permission from *Great Big Beautiful World*. © 2020 MennoMedia, Inc., Harrisonburg, VA 22803. All rights reserved. *Creation Connection* credits: Anita Brock Bryant, writer; Chrissie Walls, Joan L. Daggett, and Rachel Nussbaum Eby, editors; Reuben Graham, senior designer. Photos not otherwise credited are from Getty Images.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owners. Printed in the United States of America.

GOD CREATES

Genesis 2:4b–23



In the day that God made the earth and the heavens—before plants or animals or people—before it had ever rained, a stream rose and watered the ground.

Then God formed a person from the dust of the ground. God breathed into the nostrils and the person became alive.

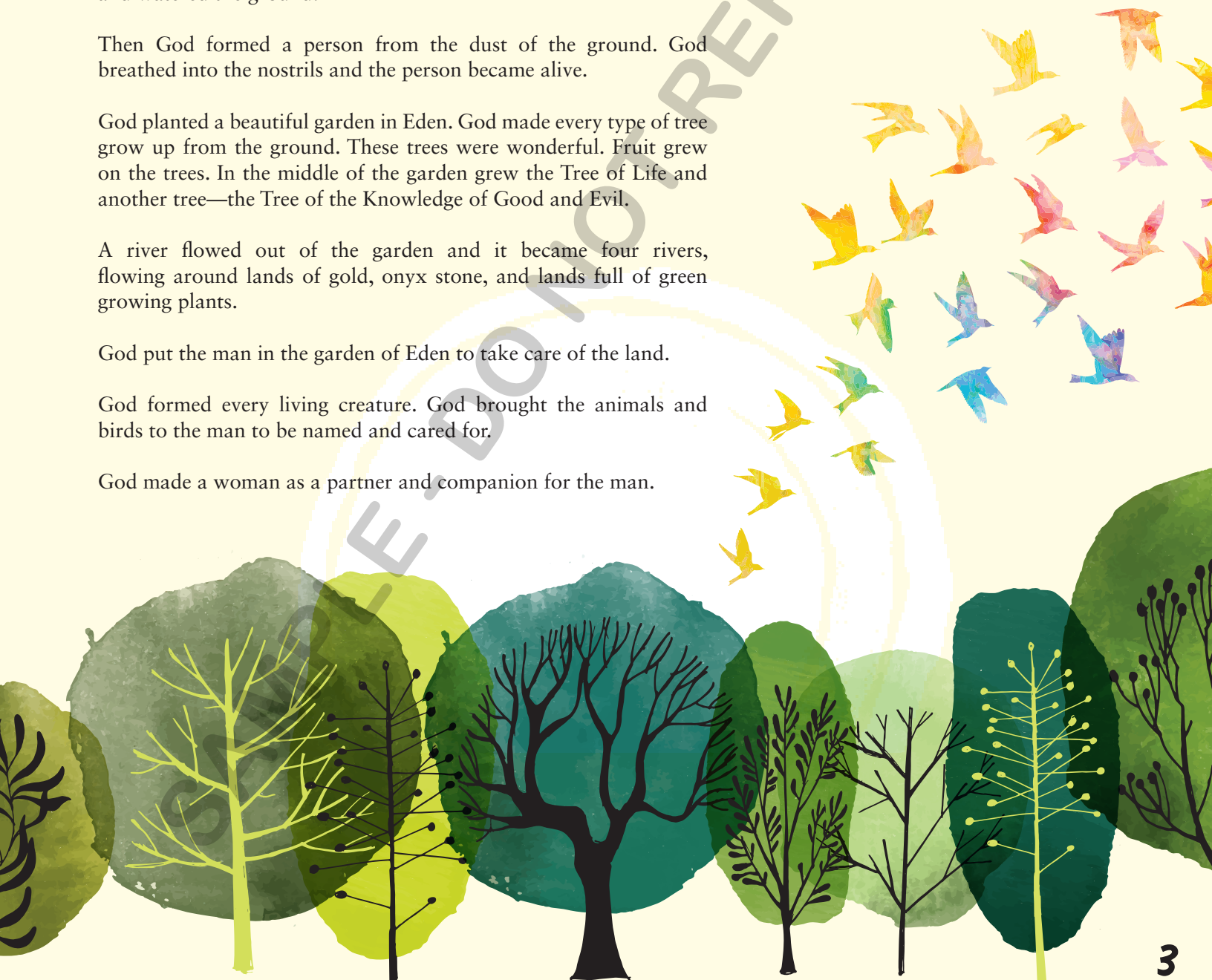
God planted a beautiful garden in Eden. God made every type of tree grow up from the ground. These trees were wonderful. Fruit grew on the trees. In the middle of the garden grew the Tree of Life and another tree—the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

A river flowed out of the garden and it became four rivers, flowing around lands of gold, onyx stone, and lands full of green growing plants.

God put the man in the garden of Eden to take care of the land.

God formed every living creature. God brought the animals and birds to the man to be named and cared for.

God made a woman as a partner and companion for the man.

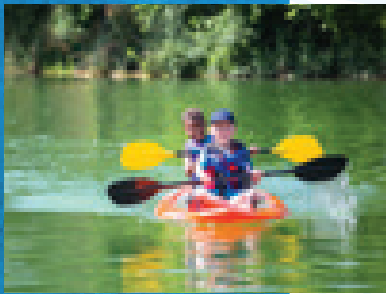




A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
○	○	24	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
○	○	○	○	9	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	1
4	22		24	26	13		24	26	9	22		
		21	12	9		20	12	23	8			
	24	9	22	26	7	18	12	13				

Decipher the code and solve the puzzle.

WATER WATCH



Wash hands



Brush teeth



Shower



Wash dishes



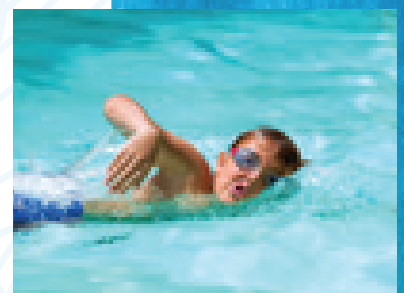
Wash clothes



Cook



Swim



Water gardens



Drink



Paddle

God provides water for animals, plants, and people. Draw a line from the action words in the middle to the pictures to discover the many ways we use water. How else do you use water?

GOD TENDS THE EARTH

Psalm 104:10–30

God, you make valley streams
so that every bird and animal has water.
You grow grass for cattle to eat.

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

Trees are homes for birds.
The mountains are home to wild goats.
Rabbits find homes in the rocks.

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

God, you made so many different things.
In wisdom you made them all.
The earth is full of your creatures.

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

You made the great wide sea.
Too many things to count live there;
living things both big and small.

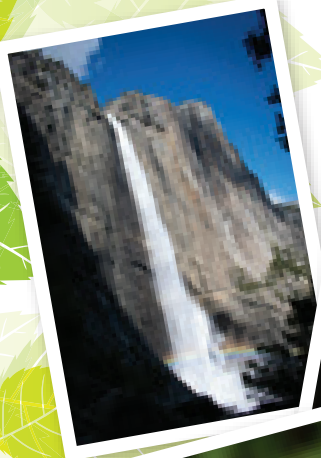
Bless the Lord, O my soul.

God, all the creatures look to you for food.

When you open your hand,
it is filled with good things.
New life comes from you, God.
Your spirit renews the land.

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

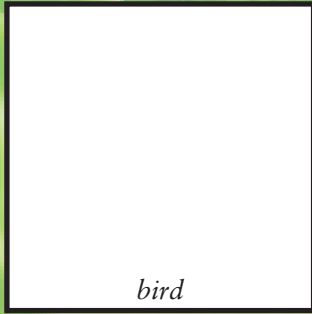
DAY 2



PICTURE PRAYER

Creator God, I praise you for making an amazing world.

The



bird

flies high in the sky and sings happy songs.

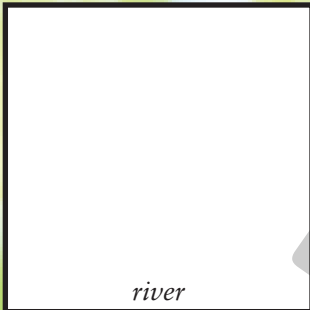
On a sunny day, the



tree

gives me shade.

The



river

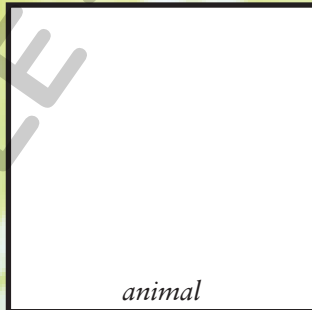
and the



waterfall

are beautiful to see.

I am thankful for the



animal

because _____ .

Creator God, I praise you for making an amazing world! Amen.

Draw the named part of creation in each box to create a picture prayer.

WATER THE WORLD



Drought (rhymes with "out") is a long period of dry weather with no rain or very little rain. Streams can dry up and crops can die. If this happens year after year, people have no way to water their crops. They may run out of food and even starve.



Wikimedia Commons, public domain



Treadle pumps are used in parts of Africa and Asia where there are droughts. Watering a garden is as easy as riding a bike! The water is pumped from the ground or a stream using a standing pedal pump. It is pumped through a hose to water the crops.



Water Word Search

I	T	K	W	E	R	P	A	C	B	C
C	R	E	D	R	O	U	G	H	T	R
Z	E	R	S	T	U	M	I	N	H	X
V	A	S	I	G	S	P	O	R	C	S
F	D	E	L	G	A	H	X	B	W	G
C	L	D	U	Z	A	M	G	R	A	Q
R	E	S	U	F	L	T	B	P	T	U
T	U	N	J	L	R	Y	I	F	E	O
W	M	A	E	R	T	S	X	O	R	T
Y	H	A	N	P	R	K	Z	G	N	V
M	K	T	N	O	D	B	E	Q	C	E

Words:
 drought
 treadle
 irrigation
 stream
 water
 pump
 crops

GOD'S KINGDOM IS LIKE A SEED

Mark 4:26–32

Characters: Andrew, Jesus, James, John, Peter

Andrew: Jesus, you talk a lot about the kingdom of God. Will there be a castle and king? Can I be a prince?

Jesus: No castles! The kingdom of God is more like a farmer scattering seed on the ground. The farmer sleeps and eats for many days. The seed sprouts and grows. The farmer doesn't understand how it happens, but it does. The stalk appears, the head, and then the full grain. The scattered seeds become an entire field full of grain. The farmer gathers in all that grain.

James: If I had that much grain, I would make food for my family.

John: I would store some to eat later.

Peter: I would keep some to plant next year.

James: I would give some to my neighbors.

John: Come to think of it, I would have a big party and invite everyone I know. It sounds like it was a big crop.

Andrew: I still don't understand this kingdom of God.

Jesus: Okay. Here's another story. The kingdom of God is like a tiny mustard seed. When it's planted, the mustard seed grows and grows until it has large branches. Birds come and build their nests in the safety of the branches. Does that help?

Peter: I think I've got it. God's kingdom starts out small, and it doesn't look like much of anything will come from it.

James: But then God's kingdom grows and grows until it becomes like that huge field of grain.

John: We don't know quite how it happens, but it does. It gets bigger and bigger.

Andrew: I know that people aren't birds. But it sounds like maybe God's kingdom is a safe place where people can make a real home—like those birds building their nests in the mustard bush.

Jesus: You have some good ideas! I have a lot of other kingdom stories to tell you. I'll tell them on our way to lunch. Let's go!



A HARVEST OF GOODNESS

Read about people whose kindness spread and grew

Jeremiah Mussmon, from Purcellville, Virginia, found out that some people didn't have shoes. He asked others at his school to help. They brought enough shoes to line the halls of the entire school. Jeremiah and his family traveled to Haiti to deliver the shoes. They measured kids' feet, washed their feet, then gave each one a pair of shoes.

Janeece Edroff of Vancouver, British Columbia, has a condition that causes tumors to grow on nerve pathways in her body. She has had many surgeries. Over the years, she has done many projects to raise money to help children with disabilities. She has sold hot dogs and asked people to give coins. Now other kids have begun to do fundraisers because of Janeece's example.

Sharleen Wambui of Nairobi, Kenya, saw a boy by the roadside who needed help. His nose was bleeding. She stopped, got some water from a nearby security guard, and put a wet towel on the boy's face. Then she cleaned up his face and gave him money for a bus fare before going on her way

Maria Keller, from Orono, Minnesota, loved to read. When she was 8 years old she found out that not everyone had books, so she decided to do something about it. Maria did book drives asking people to donate books. She gave the books to hospitals and schools around the world. She gave away a million books by age 13.

Roberto Clemente was a professional baseball player from Puerto Rico. He was a great player for the Pittsburgh Pirates, he is remembered best for sowing kindness. His Catholic faith was very important to him and during the off season, he helped people in need. He died in a plane crash in 1972 when he was delivering emergency relief to earthquake victims in Nicaragua.





GOD CREATES



GREAT
BIG
beautiful
WORLD

Creation Care Card

Today at VBS, we learned that God created our great big beautiful world. You can read about it in Genesis 2. Get out there and enjoy nature as a family! Take a walk, play outdoor games, feel the sunshine and the breeze on your face. Give thanks for such an amazing world!



We Create!

Collect leaves, twigs, seeds, grass, and flowers to make a creation collage. Lay out the items in different patterns, shapes, and designs. Take pictures of your creations or glue them to card stock or cardboard. Talk about your favorite parts of the natural world.

Hi! I'm Kai. My name means "sea" in Hawaiian. I am challenging your family to HELP care for creation today! That means to Heal parts of the earth that are hurt or broken, Enjoy the natural world, Learn about creation, and Pray for the world. Choose one or more of the HELP ideas on the back of this card to complete as a family. I can't wait to "sea" what you will do!



GOD TENDS THE EARTH



GREAT
BIG
beautiful
WORLD

Creation Care Card

Today at VBS, we learned about some of the ways God takes care of the created world. God provides food, water, and habitats for the animals. God causes the plants to grow, many of which provide us with our daily food. You can read more about it in Psalm 104.

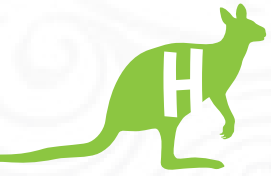
Family Psalm

Work together to write your own psalm of praise for the things your family loves about creation. You could pattern it after Psalm 104 or come up with your own style, such as rhyming poetry. You could set it to the tune of a simple song or try speak it in a certain rhythm. Include favorite animals, plants, and people. Talk about the types of homes that animals have and about the joy you get from experiencing God's world.

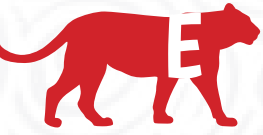
Hi! I'm Kai. My name means "sea" in Hawaiian. I am challenging your family to HELP care for creation today! That means to Heal parts of the earth that are hurt or broken, Enjoy the natural world, Learn about creation, and Pray for the world. Choose one or more of the HELP ideas on the back of this card to complete as a family. I can't wait to "sea" what you will do!



Creation Care Challenges!



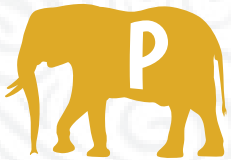
HEAL: Show that you care about animals. Get a bird feeder, walk a dog, visit a zoo or animal shelter, or donate to an organization that protects endangered species. Talk together about other actions you can take to protect and value animals.



ENJOY: Play an animal sounds memory game. The leader starts a sequence of animal sounds (*moo, baa, oink*). The rest of the family repeats it. The leader repeats the sequence, adding one more sound (*moo, baa, oink, baa*). Continue adding sounds (*moo, baa, oink, baa, chirp*) until the other players can't remember the sequence anymore. **Tip:** If you have small animal toys, line them up in the correct order for younger players as a reminder of the sequence.



LEARN: Explore the Nat Geo Wild website and YouTube channel to learn about animals you're interested in. Read *One Small Square: Backyard* by Donald M. Silver and *The Water Hole* by Graeme Base (read-aloud available on YouTube).



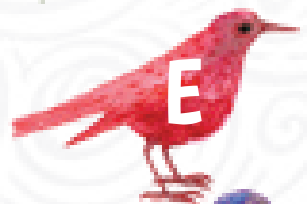
PRAY: *Creator God, thank you for an amazing world filled with animals, plants, and people. Each one is made in a special way. There are many animals at risk of extinction, and many pets that are not properly cared for. Some animals are not able to find food or water. Please protect the animals and show us how we can take care of them. Amen.*



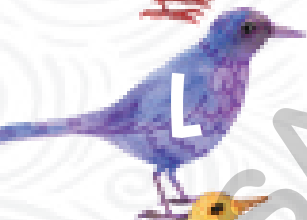
Creation Care Challenges!



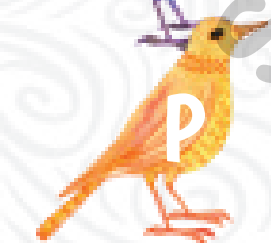
HEAL: Read books or search online to learn about the habitats (homes) of various animals. What habitats are at risk for being destroyed? Donate to an organization that is helping to protect animal habitats. Or look for ways to protect the animals in your neighborhood—pick up trash, keep food and trash secure so animals can't access it, and avoid using pesticides.



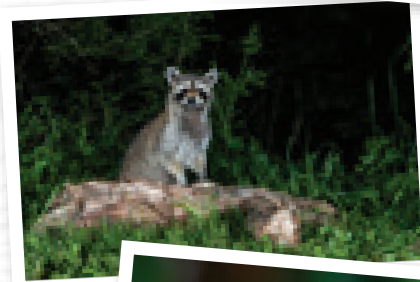
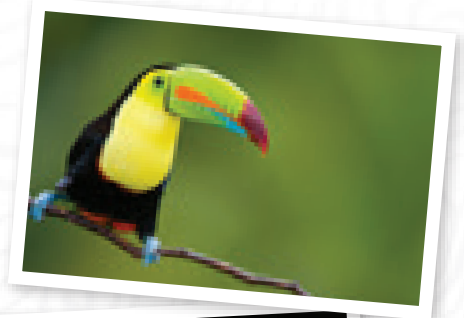
ENJOY: Explore bird songs from around the world. Choose birds to listen to on the www.xeno-canto.org website. The site includes maps of where each bird lives. The map will be at the top; scroll down and click on the arrow(s) on the left to play the sounds.



LEARN: Psalm 104 talks about nocturnal animals. Learn about animals that are awake at night, such as raccoons, bats, hedgehogs, cougars, owls, foxes, and badgers.



PRAY: *God, you made the bright sun that warms us and the green trees that shade us. You made amazing animals and birds. We praise you for your amazing creation. Help us take care of the beautiful world you made. Amen.*





GOD'S KINGDOM IS LIKE A SEED



GREAT
BIG
beautiful
WORLD

Creation Care Card

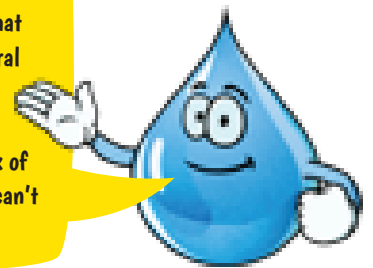
Today at VBS, we heard two stories that Jesus told. He said that God's kingdom is like a tiny growing seed. It starts small but becomes like a great harvest or a large shade tree. Seeds can be all shapes and sizes, just like us! Seeds can grow fast or slow and become all sorts of plants, just like churches around the world! We are a part of God's kingdom, and when we share God's love with others, God's kingdom grows.

Seed Mosaic

Make a seed mosaic using dried beans and other seeds from the fruits and vegetables you eat. Draw a very simple tree on card stock or cardboard. (The blank side of an empty cereal box would work well.) Glue the seeds onto the tree to make a mosaic.



Hi! I'm Kai. My name means "sea" in Hawaiian. I am challenging your family to **HELP** care for creation today! That means to *Heal* parts of the earth that are hurt or broken, *Enjoy* the natural world, *Learn* about creation, and *Pray* for the world. Choose one or more of the **HELP** ideas on the back of this card to complete as a family. I can't wait to "sea" what you will do!



WE ARE LIKE TREES



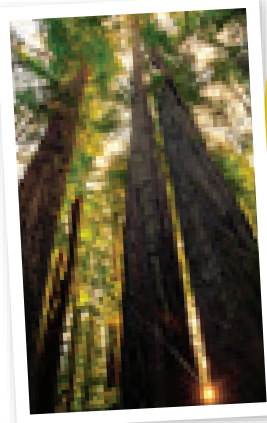
GREAT
BIG
beautiful
WORLD

Creation Care Card

Today at VBS, we learned how we are like trees that are rooted near a stream and growing strong. Just like God cares for the trees, we can trust that God loves us and will always care for us. Read more about it in Psalm 52, Psalm 92, and Jeremiah 17.

Family Tree Talk

The psalmists compared themselves to olive trees, cedar trees, and palm trees. Which kind of tree are you like? What qualities do you share with that tree? (*growing, changing, tall, strong, helping others*) Learn more about the trees you chose. Maybe you'll even discover other ways you are like those trees!



Hi! I'm Kai. My name means "sea" in Hawaiian. I am challenging your family to **HELP** care for creation today! That means to *Heal* parts of the earth that are hurt or broken, *Enjoy* the natural world, *Learn* about creation, and *Pray* for the world. Choose one or more of the **HELP** ideas on the back of this card to complete as a family. I can't wait to "sea" what you will do!



Creation Care Challenges!



HEAL: Seeds can help feed the world. Pass along some seeds. For instance, make bean soup to share, roast some pumpkin seeds and serve them to your friends as a snack, or donate vegetables to a local food bank.

ENJOY: Plant seeds in a pot or a sunny garden space. Take good care of your seeds by providing good soil, watering them, and making sure they get plenty of sunlight!

LEARN: Search online to discover how many churches there are in your city or neighborhood. How many did you find? _____ Explore the website for your church or another church near you to find out its history. Say a prayer for the churches and the important work they do to grow God's kingdom.

PRAY: *God, your kingdom starts small, like a tiny seed. We can plant tiny seeds of love, peace, and kindness when we are at home, at work, at school, and at play. Thank you that we are part of your growing kingdom. Amen.*



Creation Care Challenges!



HEAL: Save a tree! Use paper wisely: reuse it, use scrap paper, and use cloth napkins. Borrow, share, and donate books. Recycle paper and cardboard so it can be used again in other paper products. Don't forget those empty toilet paper rolls!

ENJOY: Make "tree people" using leaves for the body and head and twigs for arms and legs.

LEARN: What kinds of trees grow in your neighborhood? Take a walk with your family, and try to identify the trees that are within walking distance of your home. (Search online to find a leaf identification guide.) List them here:

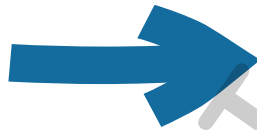
PRAY: *God, thank you for all the many kinds of trees you created. Help us to grow and follow your ways throughout our whole lives. Show us how we can share your unfailing love with everyone we meet. Amen.*



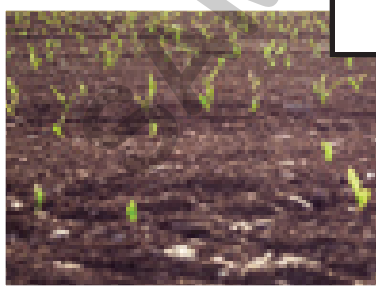
WATCH IT GROW!



In the left column, write a number in each box to show the correct order for the growth of the seed.



In the right column, draw a picture in each box to show the mustard seed, the growing mustard plant, and the full-grown plant with birds in the branches.



Did You Know? The mustard tree is also called the "toothbrush tree." Just peel the bark off a stick and chew! It has been used for hundreds of years as a natural toothbrush, and it's even recommended by the World Health Organization. The leaves can be eaten in a salad and used for medicine.



DAY

4 WE ARE LIKE TREES



I am like an olive tree,
growing strong in God's house.
I trust God's everlasting love.
I praise God
whenever I'm with God's people.
I hope in God's good name.

—BASED ON PSALM 52:8–9



People who follow God's ways
are like a palm tree.
They grow like cedar trees,
planted in God's house.
Even when they are old,
they bear fruit.
They stay fresh and green.
They say, "God is holy.
God is my rock."

—BASED ON PSALM 92:12–15



People who trust God
are like trees planted by a stream.
They aren't afraid
when heat and drought come.
They are near the water,
so their leaves stay green.
They keep on bearing fruit.

—BASED ON JEREMIAH 17:7–8



HEART PRAYERS



Have you ever prayed with a Celtic heart knot? It's easy. Place your pointer finger anywhere on the lines of the heart. Then just follow the line with your finger. You will eventually end up where you started. Try it and see! The Celtic heart knot is a pattern made with one continuous line. It is a symbol of eternal love. We can trust that God will love us forever, so this heart knot is a great way to pray. As you slowly trace the line, say your prayers to God. Use one of the prayer ideas at the bottom of this page or use your own words.



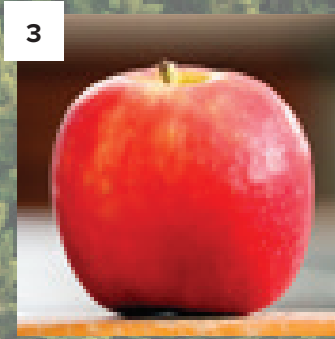
Thank you, God, for creating a beautiful world. My three favorite things in nature are _____, _____, and _____. **Amen.**

God, help our world! There are parts of creation that are in danger. Show me how I can help care for the earth. **Amen.**

God, you created me and you love me. Today I feel _____ because _____. Thank you for always being with me. **Amen.**

TREE CROSSWORD

Across:



Down:



		1				2
					3	
4				5		p
		6				
		e			7	
8						

- apple
- cedar
- maple
- olive
- orange
- palm
- pine
- willow

A NEW CREATION

Revelation 21:1-4; 22:1-5



John saw a new _____ and a new _____. He heard a voice from the _____ say,
 neheva thare ethorn

“Look! _____ now lives with the _____. God will _____ every tear from their
 oGd opleep ipwe
 _____. There will be no more _____ or _____ or _____!”
 seey dathe ryngic ipan

Then the _____ showed John the river of _____. The _____ of Life was next to the
 lenag file erTe

river. It had _____ kinds of fruit growing on it. The _____ were for the _____
 welvet slevea linghea

of the _____. Everyone could see God’s _____. God was their _____.
 snoitan cefa glith

throne face heaven life twelve healing
 death crying earth God wipe angel
 pain Tree eyes leaves nations light people

HOPES FOR THE WORLD

God promises a new heaven and earth with no more pain, sadness, or death. Creation will be brand new! What are your hopes? Fill in the blank in each box, then draw a picture or write about your hopes and dreams. For instance, you might include your hopes for yourself, your family, your school, creation, town, or the whole world.

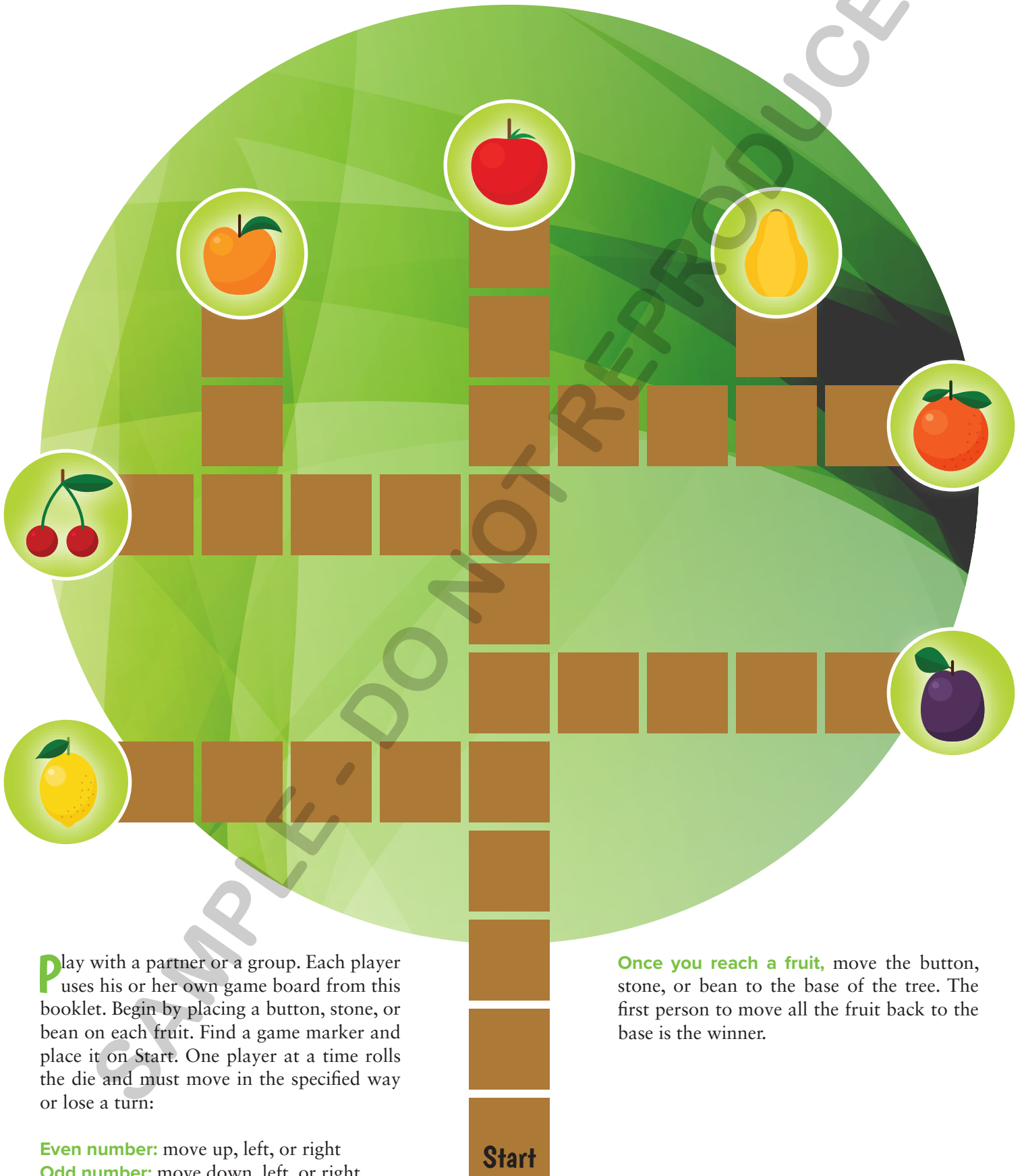
My hope for _____.

My hope for _____.

My hope for _____.

My hope for _____.

TREE OF LIFE GAME



Play with a partner or a group. Each player uses his or her own game board from this booklet. Begin by placing a button, stone, or bean on each fruit. Find a game marker and place it on Start. One player at a time rolls the die and must move in the specified way or lose a turn:

- Even number:** move up, left, or right
- Odd number:** move down, left, or right

Once you reach a fruit, move the button, stone, or bean to the base of the tree. The first person to move all the fruit back to the base is the winner.

BIBLE MEMORY

Using a pencil, begin at Start and find the next word in the Bible memory passage by going up, down, backwards, diagonally, or sideways to put the words in order. Try doing it from memory. If you get stuck, the verses are printed at the bottom of the page.

START

I	trust	in	name	constant	in	the	presence
people	good	God's	hope	what	you	have	done
God	constant	help	and	for	your	the	in
all	love	People	God	name	cry	presence	love
forever	praise	thank	you	done	of	mine	your
and	faithful	always	real	forever	your	that	you
ever.	will	you	get	people	faithful	proclaim	are
I	For	good	out	I	will	believe	good.

I trust in God's constant love forever and ever.
I will always thank you, God, for what you have done;
in the presence of your people I will proclaim that you are good.

—PSALM 52:8B–9 (GNT)

Draw lines to connect the large and small water drops to figure out my water jokes.



How do you cut the sea in half?

Starfish

What did the ocean say to the beach?

It gets wet.

What is the strongest creature in the sea?

They live in schools.

Why are fish so smart?

What runs but never walks?

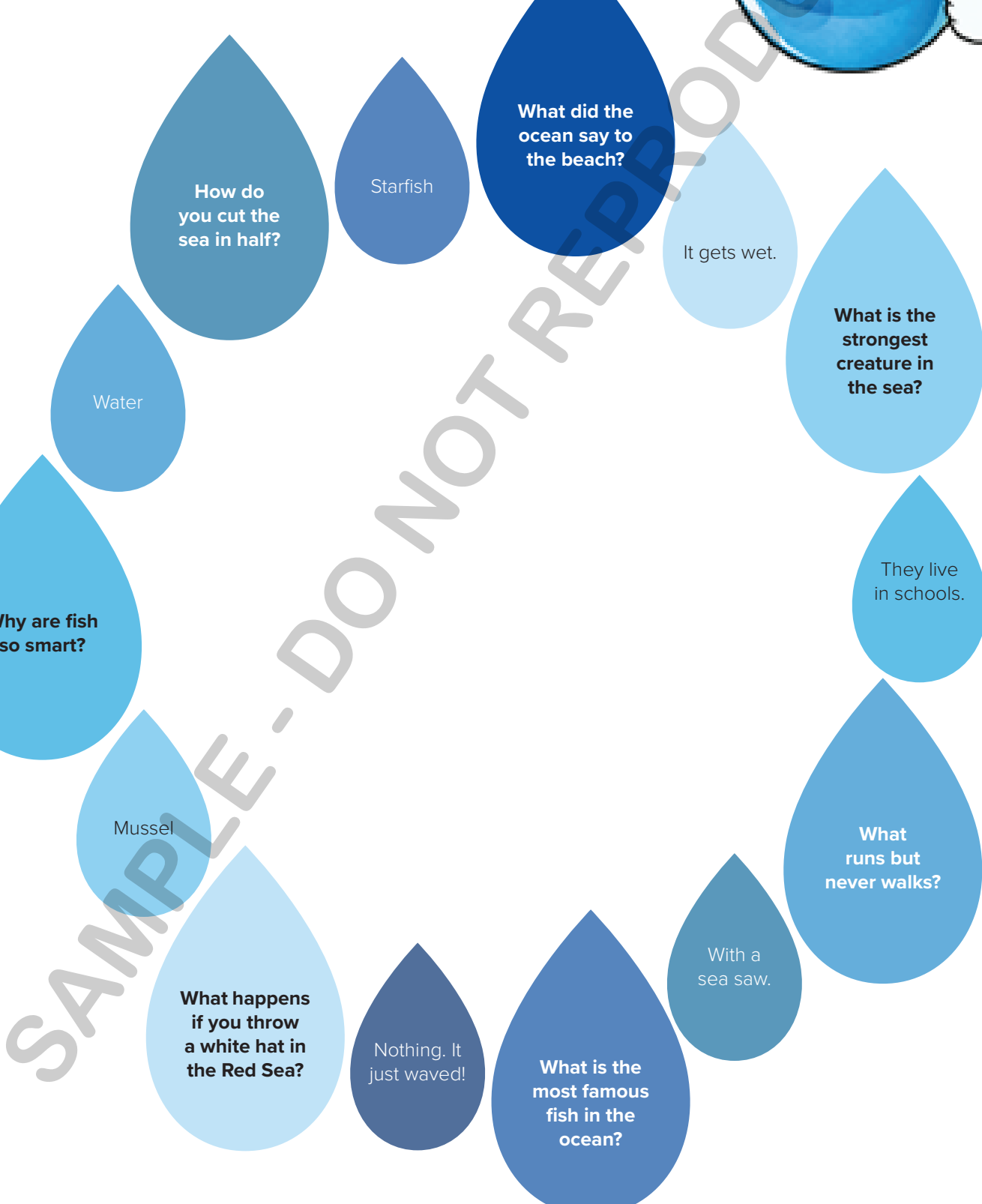
Mussel

With a sea saw.

What happens if you throw a white hat in the Red Sea?

Nothing. It just waved!

What is the most famous fish in the ocean?



CREATION CARE CHALLENGES FOR YOUR FAMILY!



Thanks for floating around with me this week! I've been talking a lot about water. It is one of the earth's most precious resources, and we all need it. My friends and I came up with a list of things *your family* can do to save water. We hope you'll try some of our ideas! And remember—have fun in God's *Great Big Beautiful World!* I'll "sea" you around!

Make sure the faucets are turned off. (One drip / second = 5 gal / day or 21 L / day!)

Turn off the water while brushing your teeth. (Saves 4 gal/minute or 15 L / minute!)

Wash fruits and vegetables in a bowl of water instead of under running tap water. Then, use the water in the bowl for your houseplants or garden.

Take 5-minute showers instead of a bath. A full bath can use up to 70 gal / 265 L of water. You can save 1,000 gal / 3,875 L per month just by taking shorter showers!

Run the dishwasher and washing machine only when they are full.

Have a fish? When cleaning out the tank, use the water from the tank to water your houseplants.

Drop an ice cube? Don't put it in the sink. Place it in the dirt of a houseplant.

Waiting for the water to get hot for your shower? Place a bucket in the shower to catch the extra water and use it to water plants. Or pour the water into a pitcher with a water filter and use it for cooking or drinking.

Find out your water footprint! Search online for "Water Footprint Calculator" by Grace Communications Foundation to see how much water your family uses.

Visit www.wateruseitwisely.com for lots of tips on saving water. Watch the "Home Water Challenge" video on YouTube.