

GREAT BIG beautiful WORLD

Early Childhood Leader Guide

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**Growing Up
Catholic**
A ministry of The Pastoral Center

Welcome to GREAT BIG beautiful WORLD

Great Big Beautiful World is a one-week Vacation Bible School (VBS) curriculum that embraces Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si* and our call to care for our common home. It begins with the creation story in Genesis 2 and includes psalms, stories of Jesus, and the vision of a new heaven and new earth in Revelation. This comprehensive look at the biblical story reveals God's deep love for all of creation, including each child. *Great Big Beautiful World* invites children to see the ways God cares for the earth and challenges them to be part of caring for and preserving the created world.

Each day starts with relationship-building, joint worship, music, prayer, and a dramatic presentation of the Bible story. This is a time to SOW seeds of friendship, joy, generosity, and wisdom. These seeds will GROW as children explore, create, play, and learn about God's story at three response stations. In closing worship, children will be challenged to GO out into the world to care for the beautiful world God made.

SOW (30-35 min)	GROW (75-115 min)	GO (5 min)
Seeds of Friendship (5 min) (welcome, get to know you) Seeds of Joy (5-10 min) (songs, prayer) Seeds of Generosity (3-5 min) (offering) Bible Story, Questions (10 min) Bible Memory (3-5 min) <i>A Garden of Stories</i> student booklet (5 min) Snack Time (15 min)	Creation Station (art activities) Sprout (active games) Nature Explorers (science explorations) <i>Optional:</i> Rest Time or Free Play (15-20 min)	Blessing Song Creation Care Cards Dismissal

Items you will need from the VBS Starter Kit:

- *Early Childhood Leader Guide*
- Early Childhood electronic files
- Early Childhood Area Poster
- Sample copy of *A Garden of Stories* student booklet

The **electronic files** include related teaching aids and materials. Each leader should be given access to the relevant materials. The files include the following:

- 4 songs (videos, audio, and lyric slideshows)
 - "A Rightful Place"
 - "Great Big Beautiful World"
 - "God's Green Earth!"
 - "God the Great I Am"
- Sheet music for songs
- Day 1 Story Cards
- Days 1-5 Bible Memory Cards
- Day 2 Bird Cards
- Day 2 Storytelling Puppets
- Day 2 Nature Scavenger Hunt Cards

- Day 2 Magnifying Glass Template
- Day 2 & Day 5 Play Dough and Salt Dough Recipes
- Days 2-5 Bible Memory Strips
- Day 3 Mustard Seed Tent Cards
- Day 3 Farmer Tent Cards
- Day 3 Seed Cookies Recipe
- Day 4 Tree Cards

Media Connections are included in this guide and posted on the "Great Big Beautiful World VBS" board on the *Growing Up Catholic* Pinterest page for ease of use, organized by day. Additional songs, snack ideas, and offering-related videos are also included on Pinterest. See <https://pinterest.com/GrowingUpCatholic/great-big-beautiful-world-vbs>.

DAILY SCHEDULE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

Each Early Childhood session is 2½ hours and includes three major sections: **SOW**, **GROW**, and **GO**.

SOW

Each session begins by helping children **SOW** seeds of friendship (“get to know you” activities), seeds of joy (songs and prayers), and seeds of generosity (offering project). Children will hear an interactive retelling of the Bible story, respond to wondering questions, learn a Bible memory verse, do activities from the *A Garden of Stories* student booklet, and have a snack. The amount of time spent as a large group for **SOW** can vary significantly depending on the needs of your group. The chart on page 2 of this guide provides an approximate use of time, but you will need to tailor it to your situation. You may want to start with 10–15 minutes of free play with play dough or favorite toys to aid the transition from parents and caregivers.

The Bible memory passage is Psalm 52:8b.

I trust in God's constant love forever and ever. —Psalm 52:8b (GNT)

GROW

There are three types of activities provided for **GROW**:

- **Creation Station:** There are three arts and crafts activities provided for each day. There are Talk About It prompts that will help you connect the activity with the Bible story.
- **Sprout:** There are three active games provided for each day. These are designed to be done outside if you have adequate space and supervision but could be adapted for smaller indoor spaces. Talk About It prompts can be used at the close of each game to help children relate the game to the Bible story and their own experience.
- **Nature Explorers:** There are two nature-related science activities provided for each day to get children actively exploring God’s world. Each activity includes Talk About It prompts to guide conversation.

If you have several leaders/assistants, these activities can be done as rotations. This would mean setting up activities in different areas and having children rotate between them. A leader would need to be at each area to coordinate and supervise each activity. Alternatively, keep the whole group together. Clean up one activity before moving to the next one. If you choose this option, it’s helpful if the materials for each activity are already organized so they can be pulled out easily.

GROW also includes a list of Media Connections to use as you see fit. Depending on your time frame, you may want to also include 15–20 minutes of rest time or free play.

GO

Each session closes with the song “A Rightful Place.” Pass out the Creation Care Cards that are on page 13 of the *A Garden of Stories* student booklets. These cards include at-home activities to encourage families to explore, learn about, and care for God’s creation together.

Each session plan also includes a **Bible essay** to read in preparation for leading, and an **At-a-Glance Chart** to aid in planning.

Setting Up

Inside: If space is available, set up the main room with these areas:

- **Gathering place:** This should be open floor space where all the children can gather in a circle for group activities and the Bible story. It's helpful to provide a carpet square or hand towel for each child so she or he knows where to sit throughout a large group activity.
- **Table area:** Set up tables for snack time as well as student booklet and art activities.
- **Reading corner:** Set up a small comfortable area that has creation-related books, pillows, blankets, and stuffed animal toys. Children can use this area if they arrive early, finish an activity before other children, or if they need a quiet space to rest or be alone.
- **Rotations:** If you will conduct the **GROW** section as rotations, you could set up and decorate a Creation Station area, a Sprout area, and a Nature Explorers area.

Outside: If possible, use an open grassy area where children can safely run and play. For safety reasons, this area should be away from the street or parking lot. A parking lot *could* work if it has been blocked off from all car traffic. Games can also be played in a gym or large empty room.

Decorating

Decorating is an important part of *Great Big Beautiful World!* Decorations set the tone and generate excitement for learning about and experiencing creation. For instance, hang up pictures of animals and plants or ask someone to paint a large nature scene(s) on poster board. Calendars often have nature-themed photos. Bring in nature items, such as branches, leaves, vines, and flowers. Shower curtains often have flowers or other nature-related items on them. Hang one up as a backdrop.

Create a large tree in your room. Refer to the *Director Guide* and the "Great Big Beautiful World VBS" board on the *Growing Up Catholic* Pinterest page for ideas about decorating to make this area look like a *Great Big Beautiful World!* It has a section on decorating, including ideas about how to make trees, flowers, and a waterfall.

Creating a Safe, Welcoming Environment

Young children thrive when there is consistency and predictability. They enjoy repetition and feel safe when they know what will happen next. The Early Childhood sessions are written to provide this sort of predictability and repetition from day to day. Challenges are bound to come up, especially because the children may not know each other or the leaders. Here are some ideas for responding:

- **Support children as they address conflicts.** When conflict arises, stop what you are doing to address the situation. Use simple language and coach children about how to communicate with each other. Say something like, "Hands are for helping, not for hurting," or "How does that make you feel?" Cue children to say things like, "I would like a turn," or "I was using that. Please give it back."
- **Speak calmly and respectfully.** Your tone of voice and choice of words is important when giving instructions, redirecting behavior, and communicating with individual children. This sets an example of how you want the children to interact with each other. Use children's names when speaking to them. This shows that you know and respect them as individuals.
- **Use proximity.** If a child is struggling, it can help to sit near the child. This communicates that you care for the child and allows you to redirect the child quietly as needed.
- **Respond to the needs of individuals.** Some children have a hard time separating from parents or do not like sitting in a large group. Do what you can to attend to the needs of individual children. A child might need to go sit in the reading corner alone for a bit or might need to hug a stuffed animal toy. These small accommodations can make a big difference.

Music

Young children love music, rhythm, and movement, so it's important to include songs throughout the day. Four recorded songs are used in the same way each day (as indicated below) so that children can learn them and associate them with specific parts of the session.

- “God's Green Earth” (Seeds of Friendship)
- “Great Big Beautiful World” (Seeds of Joy)
- “God the Great I Am” (Seeds of Generosity)
- “A Rightful Place” (sending song)

Several additional songs would work well with younger children. They could be used throughout the week and/or serve as background music while children complete **GROW** activities. The electronic files contain sing-along videos, audio files, lyrics, and descriptions of body motions. Contact the Worship Leader or VBS Director to access those files. Additional songs from YouTube are suggested in Media Connections. Feel free to include other creation-related or praise songs that you already know.

Seeds of Generosity Offering Project

Consult with the VBS Director to find out what the offering project is for the week. One of our recommendations is to choose an option related to providing clean water, so the Seeds of Generosity activities in this guide are focused on water. However, if your VBS program chose a different creation-related offering project you may need to adjust that section of the session plan. Offerings are collected in an empty watering can throughout the week. Add your contributions to what the rest of the children in VBS are collecting, or make your own offering display and track what you've raised. For instance, print out the waterdrops (Director folder in the electronic files) or cut out large water droplets from blue paper. Write an amount, such as \$1 or \$5 on each one. Post them on the wall as you collect those amounts.

Snack Time

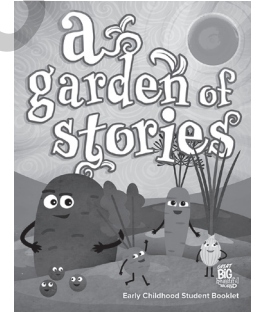
There are several snack options provided in each session. Some are simple, while others are more time-consuming. Some could be prepared with the children. Otherwise, invite youth and adults to prepare and serve the snacks. Provide napkins or small plates, as

well as cups for juice or water. Be sure children wash their hands. Say or sing a prayer before eating together. Be aware of any food sensitivities or allergies and provide alternate foods as needed.

Using A Garden of Stories Student Booklets

The *A Garden of Stories* student booklet is used during **SOW**. Each day includes a simple retelling of the story and a related activity.

Each *A Garden of Stories* student booklet contains Creation Care Cards that are sent home on Days 1–4. These half-sheet cards contain activities to encourage children and their families to learn about, experience, and care for God's world together. The cards will be distributed at the end of each day, so remove all the cards from page 13 of each booklet, cut them apart, and organize them by day. The back cover of the booklet contains Creation Care Challenges for families to do after VBS, so be sure to send the booklets home at the end of the week.



Using Media Connections

Each session includes a variety of books and online resources to extend children's understanding of the Bible story. These can be used in a variety of ways:

- Set up a book corner for children to read books independently.
- Set up a media center with a laptop or tablet that has the chosen videos or websites bookmarked. A volunteer will need to staff this area to help children view the chosen items.
- Show a video or read a book to the entire group.

Preview both books and videos and cue videos to avoid watching ads.

Compiled Booklists are included in the Director folder in the electronic files. Ask a volunteer to go to the library and gather books for the entire week.

DAY 1

GOD CREATES

Scripture Text: Genesis 2:4b–23

Laudato Si': #62–69, 75

Seed of Faith: God created a beautiful world.

Story Summary:

From the dust, God formed and breathed life into a person. Then God made every tree and a river that flowed from Eden. God planted a garden in Eden as a home for all created things. God gave instructions to care for the garden and to eat the fruit from every tree except the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. God made all the animals and brought them to the person to be named. While the man slept, God took one of his ribs and created a woman as a helper and companion.

Bible Essay:

As we prepare to share God's *Great Big Beautiful World* with children, we begin at the very beginning—in the book of Genesis. We are perhaps more familiar with the creation story from Genesis 1, where God speaks creation into being and pronounces it good, but we have chosen to focus on the second account of creation in Genesis 2. Here, we see a more intimate view of God's handiwork.

God's hands get dirty in this creation story! God forms a human being out of the dirt and breathes life into him. God creates trees and plants, and then rivers of water to nourish them. God plants a garden in Eden to be a home for the man and instructs him “to till it and keep it,” not to “dominate and subdue” it as some have wrongly interpreted before (*LS* #66–67). God invites the man to join in the creative process and gives him the fruit of all the trees—except for the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

All is not good in this story, for God sees that the man is alone. God creates animals and brings them to the man to name, but none among these is a suitable partner for the man. So God creates a woman from a rib taken from the man's side. The man and woman live together in the garden, caring for and enjoying God's beautiful world.

Children can easily relate to a God who digs in the dirt, forming animals and people. They can imagine kneeling beside God, getting their hands dirty, and squealing with delight at what they create. Like a loving parent, God provides a safe and comfortable home for the man and woman and attends to their needs. As you dig into this story with children, help them to notice the many good things in this beautiful world that God has created.

Children are typically on the receiving end of caregiving. Parents, teachers, trusted adults, and extended family members care for children's daily needs. This story invites children to consider how *they* can become caregivers for creation. Just like the first person in the garden, we too have a responsibility to tend to the world God made (*LS* #68–69).

Day 1 At-a-Glance

Advance Preparation

- Read Genesis 2:4–23 and the Bible essay for Day 1 on page 6 of this guide.
- Pray for the children and adults who will participate in VBS today.
- Read through the session plan and decide which activities you will use. Be sure to have one *A Garden of Stories* student booklet for each child.
- Communicate with volunteers about their roles and tasks.
- Create a worship area where children can gather in a circle.

	SUPPLIES	TO DO
SOW <i>Seeds of Friendship</i> <i>Seeds of Joy</i> <i>Seeds of Generosity</i> <i>Bible Story</i> <i>I Wonder . . .</i> <i>Bible Memory</i> <i>A Garden of Stories</i> <i>Snack Time</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Childhood Area Poster • <i>A Garden of Stories</i> student booklets (one per child) • Songs (electronic files) • Day 1 Story Cards (electronic files) • Audio player • Bible memory boxes • Rhythm instruments, ribbons, or streamers • Nature sounds recording • Watering can • Stuffed animal toy • Large bowl • Small cups of water • Gardening gloves • Large brown circle (felt, paper, cloth) • Blue strips of paper or cloth • Pencils, crayons 	<p>Hang up the Early Childhood Area Poster.</p> <p>Make Bible memory boxes using the Days 1–5 Bible Memory Cards in the electronic files.</p> <p>Practice telling the Bible story.</p> <p>Learn about the VBS offering project chosen by the Director.</p> <p>Access items from the electronic files:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “God’s Green Earth!” • “A Rightful Place” • “Great Big Beautiful World” • “God the Great I Am” • Day 1 Story Cards • Days 1–5 Bible Memory Cards
GROW <i>Creation Station</i> <i>Sprout</i> <i>Nature Explorers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplies for chosen activities • Media player with Internet connection 	<p>Choose GROW activities based on the age and interests of children, the amount of time you have, and available supplies.</p> <p>Check books out of the library.</p>
GO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day 1 Creation Care Cards • “A Rightful Place” (electronic files) • Audio player 	<p>Remove and cut apart the Day 1 Creation Care Cards from page 13 of each <i>A Garden of Stories</i> student booklet.</p> <p>Access “A Rightful Place” from the electronic files.</p>

SOW

Seeds of Friendship

Play nature sounds as background when children arrive (search on YouTube). Gather children in a circle. Sing “God’s Green Earth.”

Pass a stuffed animal toy from child to child. Whoever is holding the toy can say his or her name and an animal he or she likes. Some children may not want to name an animal, which is fine. Simply pass the toy to the next child.

Seeds of Joy

Play rhythm instruments while singing or listening to “Great Big Beautiful World” (electronic files). For a quieter option, have children wave ribbons or streamers instead of playing instruments.

Do a movement poem together. Use whatever movements flow most naturally for you. Pause after each line for children to copy your movements.

Standing tall like a giraffe
Then like a clam, folding in half

Feet lifting high, like a horse over a hurdle
Pulling in tight like a little turtle

Opening wide like a soaring hawk
Moving like a rabbit from rock to rock

Back arching high like an angry cat
Sniffing the air like a hungry rat

Heavy feet stomping with elephant power
Then light as a butterfly on a flower

Pray:

Thank you, God, for making a great big beautiful world. Thank you for each animal and each plant that grows. Thank you for the friends who are here today. Amen.

Seeds of Generosity

Tell children that you will be collecting money this week. (Consult with your VBS Director for specifics about the chosen offering project.) Set out a large empty bowl. Give each child an opportunity to pour a small cup of water into the bowl. Invite children to name ways that we use water (*wash, bathe, drink, clean, swim*). Have children put their offerings in an empty watering can as the group sings “God the Great I Am” (electronic files).

Teaching Tips

The Bible memory boxes are used every day, so be sure to prepare them using the Days 1–5 Bible Memory Cards from the electronic files. Use six boxes that are a similar size so they can be easily stacked. Shoeboxes work well. There are also Days 2–5 Bible Memory Ordering Strips (electronic files) that will be used in later sessions.

There is a Creation Sensory Bin that is used Days 1–4 during Nature Explorers. The supplies are varied somewhat from day to day, but it will serve as a familiar independent activity for children to enjoy.

Sprout includes active, outdoor games. Be sure to have adequate supervision and a safe location for children to run and play. Young children will need more than just four cones to mark the corners of the play area. Line the perimeter of the game area with cones for a better visual of the boundaries, or lay out jump ropes or ropes around the perimeter so it is clear where children need to stay.

Bible Story

Put on a pair of gardening gloves in preparation for telling the story. Tell children what the gloves are, explaining that you are going to tell a story about an amazing garden that God made.

Lay out a large brown circle cut from poster board, felt, or fabric for the earth. In addition, you will need strips of blue fabric, felt, or paper to represent water, and the Day 1 Story Cards from the electronic files to lay out on the brown circle when indicated.

In the beginning, God made the sky above (*raise hands above head*) and the earth below. (*Reach to the floor and smooth out the brown circle of fabric.*) God made streams on earth (*lay strips of blue fabric on the brown circle*) that watered the land, but nothing else was on the earth. God's work was not done.

God planted a big garden. God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground. (*Lay the two tree cards on the brown fabric.*) The trees were beautiful and good fruit grew on them. The garden was full of trees and plants, but God's work was not done.

God formed a person from the dust of the earth and named him Adam. (*Lay the man card on the fabric.*) Adam lived in the garden and took care of it. God told Adam, "You can eat any fruit on any tree in the garden except one. Do not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Adam cared for the land, but God's work was not done.

God made all the land animals and the birds in the sky. God brought them to Adam and Adam named each animal. (*Add the animal cards as each animal is named.*) He named the jumpy animal, frog. Adam heard a buzzy creature and called it bee. He saw a black and white animal and called it cow. He heard a great roar and named that animal bear. He saw an animal with many, many teeth and called it alligator. Two little creatures were running and playing together. He called them cats. He heard a "hoot, hoot" sound. He called that bird owl. He saw a red furry animal with a fluffy tail and named it fox. Adam named all the animals in the garden, but God's work was not done.

God did not want the man to be alone. God made a woman to be with him, and to help him care for the earth. (*Lay the woman card next to the man card.*) Then God rested from the work of creating.

I Wonder . . .

Ask several wondering questions to help children explore the story. They may want to share their thoughts and ideas, so allow time for that.

- Imagine God planting seeds in the earth. Imagine God watering the growing plants.
- I wonder how many animals God made.
- Imagine thinking up names for so many animals!
- I wonder what jobs the man and woman did to take care of the garden.
- (*Point to the animal cards.*) Which of these animals do you like best?

Bible Memory

Line up the prepared Bible memory boxes in order from left to right. Read the verse to the children, pointing to the words on each box as you do so. Explain the verse by saying:

God's love goes on and on. It never stops. No matter what happens, God's love will never end. We can trust this, which means we can be sure it is true.

Read the verse again, pointing to the boxes as you read the words. Have children repeat the words of each box after you. Vary the volume of your voice to keep children engaged.

**I trust in God's constant love forever and ever. —
Psalm 52:8b (GNT)**

A Garden of Stories Student Booklets

Read the story poem on page 2 of the *A Garden of Stories* student booklet. Then ask children what shapes they see on page 3 of the booklet. Show children how to draw lines to match the circle on the left with the flower on the right. Continue with the other shapes.

Snack Time

Have children wash their hands and gather at the table. Choose one or two children to serve as snack helpers and pass out napkins or plates and cups. Say or sing a short prayer before eating together.

Option 1: To make the earth cookies ahead of time, use your favorite sugar cookie recipe or a prepared cookie dough. Split the dough in half and add blue food coloring to half and green food coloring to the other half. Combine parts of the blue dough with the green dough and form into balls. Don't let the colors completely blend together; you want the separate doughs to remain their respective color. Bake in the oven according to your recipe. Allow time to cool before serving.

If you want to make the cookies with the children, prepare the dough with food coloring. Then give each child portions of blue and green dough to roll into balls. Bake, cool, and eat.

Option 2: Work together to make a creation snack mix. As children pour in various ingredients, talk about things God created:

- Mini animal crackers: God created the animals of the earth.
- Pretzel sticks: God created tall trees.
- Blueberries or dried fruit: God created fruit trees.
- Fish crackers: God created fish.
- Yogurt-covered raisins: God created the clouds in the sky.

GROW

CREATION STATION

Creation Scavenger Hunt

Collect some nature magazines or gardening magazines for children to do a scavenger hunt of colors. Tape several large pieces of construction paper to the wall. As children find pictures of creation that match the colors, they can cut (or tear) and glue the pictures to the corresponding paper/color. If possible, include real nature items, such as flower petals, leaves, and grass.

Alternative: Skip the cutting and gluing. Cut out a large variety of pictures ahead of time for children to sort into various colors.

Talk About It

What is your favorite color? What kind of pictures are you finding (*animals, plants, people*)? What other kinds of animals could go on the brown paper? What kinds of fruit could go on the red paper?

Supplies

- Large pieces of paper labeled white, blue, green, yellow, red, pink
- Scissors
- Nature magazines and calendars
- Glue or tape
- Flower petals, leaves, grass

God Made Me

Roll out butcher paper and have each child lie down one at a time on the paper and trace their image. Children will decorate their images using yarn for hair, crayons to color their clothes and eyes, and stickers to decorate their clothing.

Tip: If paper is limited, trace each child's foot or hand and decorate it. Cut out and combine the footprints or handprints to make a display.

Talk About It

God made each of us in a very special way. What color is your hair? What color are your eyes? How are you the same as your friends? How are you different?

Supplies

- Crayons
- Butcher paper
- Scissors
- Stickers
- Yarn (various colors)

God Made the Earth

Have children color a coffee filter with wide washable blue and green markers. Encourage them to fill the entire space, using the side of the wide marker rather than just the tip to get more coverage. Place the coffee filter on a plate and help the child spray it with a water bottle until thoroughly wet. Watch the colors mix to create land and water. Carefully pick up the wet coffee filter and lay it on a paper towel to dry.

Alternative to spray bottles:

This project can also be done by dropping small amounts of water onto the coffee filter using droppers/pipettes. You could also cut straws in thirds. Put a small amount of water in a bowl. Show children how to stand the straw in the water, plug the top of the straw with their finger, lift it up, and then release to let the water flow. This will take some practice but is a good alternative.

Talk About It

The earth has land and water on it. What things live on the land? What things live in the water?

Supplies

- Blue markers
- Green markers
- Coffee filters
- Paper towels
- Plate
- Spray bottle of water
- Droppers/pipettes/straws and bowls of water (alternative)

SPROUT

Animal Freeze

God created all the animals and Adam named them. Set up cones along the perimeter of the play area or use jump ropes stretched out to create the play area. Children should not go beyond the play area. When you say “Go,” children can run in the marked area, and when you yell an animal’s name, children stop and pretend to be that animal. For example, if you say “kangaroo,” children should stop and hop like a kangaroo. If you were to call out “lion,” children should stop and get down on all fours and roar. Other ideas include: frog (“ribbit” sounds and hop), monkey (“oh oh ah ah” sounds, curl arms up at sides), rabbit (hop), and bird (flap arms and tweet).

Talk About It

(Pretend to be a bird.) What kind of animal am I? If you could give me a new name, what would it be? I wonder how many animals Adam named.

Supplies

- Cones or jump ropes to mark boundaries

God Made Us

God made each one of us! At the whistle, all children but one (the “finder”) will run or walk around in a large play space marked out by cones or jump ropes. When the whistle blows, children should freeze. The adult leader then gives an instruction to the “finder,” who must go locate one or more children who match the description. For instance, the leader could say, “Find friends who have brown hair.” The finder would then go tag all the people with brown hair. Choose one of those children to be the next “finder.” Other examples include clothing color, shoe color, taller than you, shorter than you, and similar attributes.

Talk About It

Who has the same color hair as you? Who is wearing the same color of clothes as you? It’s fun to have things that are the same as our friends.

Supplies

- Cones or jump ropes

Gardener Race

Children will race to collect the dress-up clothes to be a gardener. Place a pair of gardening gloves, a gardening hat, and boots or sunglasses next to each cone. Divide into teams of four. Have each team sit a distance away from each cone. One at a time, the first three people on each team will race down and collect the dress-up clothes—one person gets the gloves, another person the hat, and the third person the boots or sunglasses. The last person will put on all the items the teammates collected, race around the cone, then sit back down with the team. As time and interest allow, play multiple times so children get a chance to dress up. You could also vary the clothing items for things that are more readily available, such as a flannel shirt.

Talk About It

God created a big, beautiful garden and gave people the job to care for the garden. What jobs would you like doing in a garden—planting, weeding, watering, picking the flowers or vegetables?

Supplies (one set per team)

- Gardening gloves
- Gardening hat
- Boots or sunglasses
- Cones

NATURE EXPLORERS

Creation Sensory Bin

Create a sensory bin with the listed supplies. Children will use the materials to create the garden of Eden. Choose a container that suits your space and number of children. If you have a large group, you may want to have two bins or use an under-the-bed storage container.

Note: This activity will be available all week, with variations for each day.

Talk About It

What is your favorite animal? What do you like to do outside? Have you ever seen or gone in a river?

Supplies

- Large clear plastic container
- Dark dry beans for “soil” or actual potting soil
- Branches and sticks
- Plastic animals
- Blue strips of paper

Seed Sort

Give each child a bowl of seeds/beans. Have children sort them into the cups of an egg carton. Children can work individually, in pairs, or as a large group. There are different ways to sort, such as by color, shape, and size. Allow children to pick out several beans to take home with their Creation Care Card for use at home.

Talk About It

God made each seed unique, and each one makes its own kind of food that feeds people and animals, and that grows more seeds/beans.

Supplies

- Bag of mixed dried beans
- Egg cartons

Media Connections

- *A Green, Green Garden* by Mercer Mayer
- *Baa! Oink! Moo! God Made the Animals* by Rhonda Gowler Greene
- *The Colors of Us* by Karen Katz
- *When God Made You* by Matthew Paul Turner
- *From Head to Toe* by Eric Carle
- *Farmyard Beat* by Lindsey Craig
- *The Little Gardener* by Emily Hughes
- *Cha-cha-cha en la selva* by Debbie Harter
- *De la cabeza a los pies* by Eric Carle
- *El gran granero rojo* by Margaret Wise Brown
- Internet search for “natural paintbrushes for kids” and make some together
- Image search for famous gardens
- “Man Gave Names to All the Animals” song by Bob Dylan
- “God Made the Earth” song by Karyn Henley
- “And God Said” song by Colin Buchanan (YouTube)

GO

Gather the children in a circle. Sing “A Rightful Place.” Use motions:

Give each child the Day 1 Creation Care Card from the *A Garden of Stories* student booklet to take home. The card contains activities for children and families to do together to enjoy, learn about, and care for God’s creation.

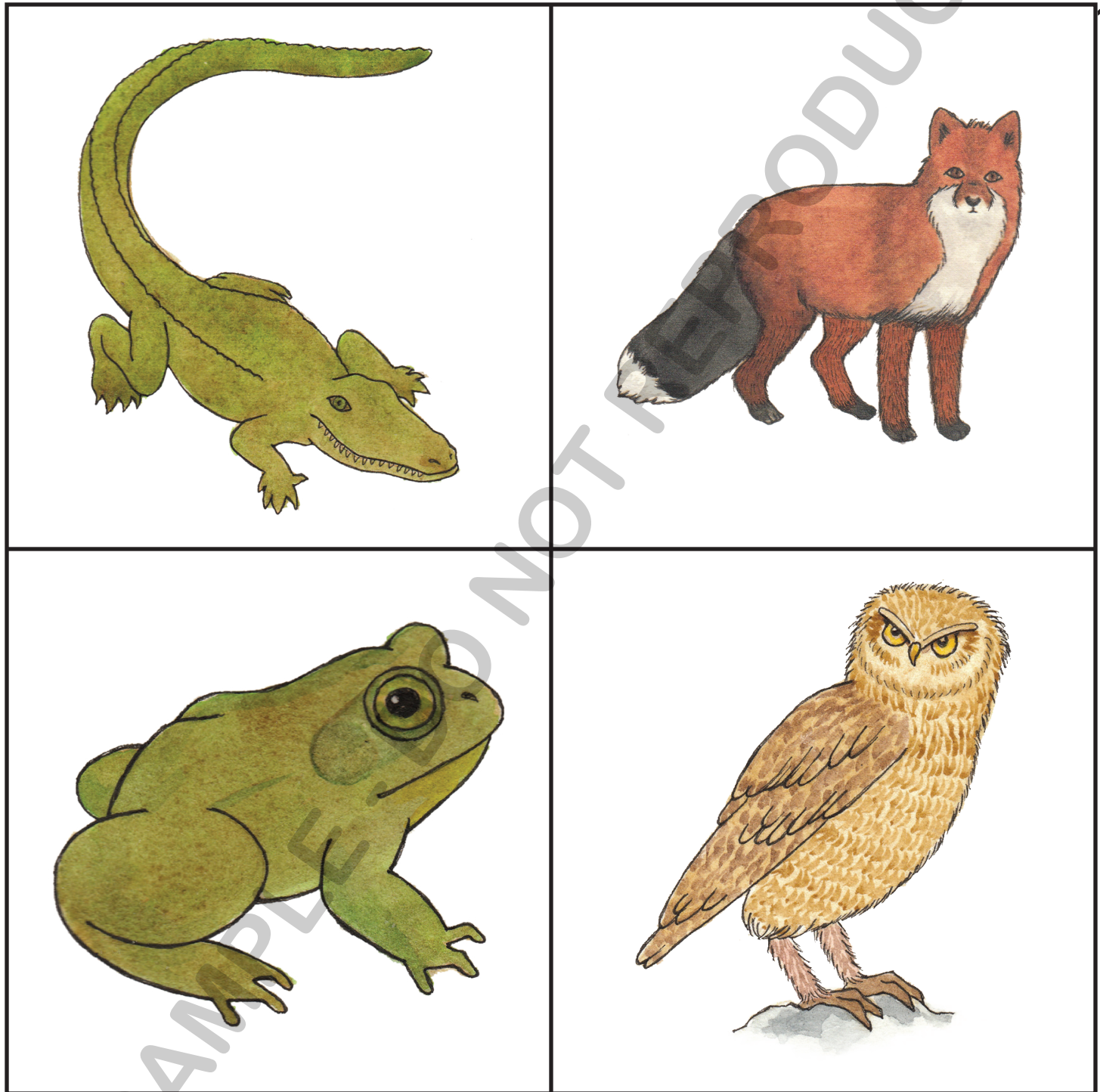
Day 1 Story Cards

Print and cut apart these cards for use in telling the Day 1 Bible story.



Day 1 Story Cards

Print and cut apart these cards for use in telling the Day 1 Bible story.



Day 1 Story Cards

Print and cut apart these cards for use in telling the Day 1 Bible story.



Days 1–5 Bible Memory Cards

Print and cut apart the cards. To make Bible memory boxes, tape each card to the side of a shoebox or another type of box that can be easily stacked.



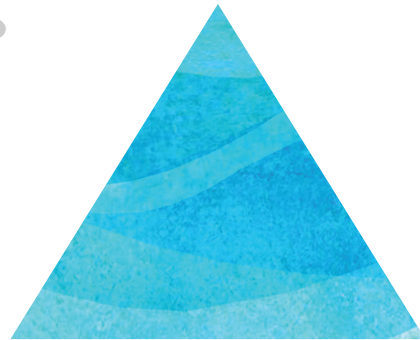
I trust



in God's



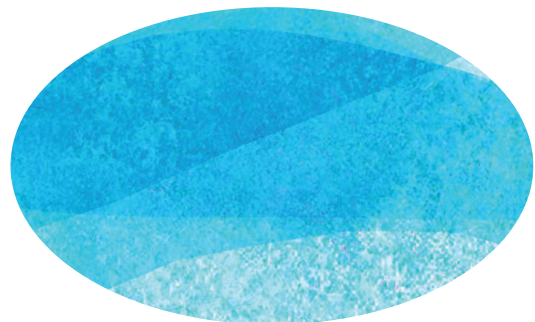
constant love



forever



and ever.



Psalm 52:8b (GNT)