

# EARTHKEEPERS

## Large Group Sessions

This document contains the Opening, Go Deeper, and Closing sessions, which we recommend holding with large groups.

### Sections

Each session is divided up into multiple sections, which may include:

- Preparations
-  Presentation and discussion
-  Bible verse
-  Songs
-  Hands-on or interactive activity
-  Creation care R's (actions starting with the letter R)
-  Home challenge
-  Story
-  Prayer

### Layout

We have organized the pages in this document so that even when making double-sided copies, you can duplicate and staple each session separately.

### Creation Care R's

Each session introduces one or more words beginning with the letter "R." These words name actions that we should take as EarthKeepers.

One way to emphasize and build on these words would be to prepare a large cut-out letter "R," perhaps cut out of a green poster board, for each group that will hear these sessions. Each day, you can write the new word(s) on it as you introduce it. It will also help you review the words from past sessions.

SAMPLE - DO NOT REPRODUCE

DAY

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# Opening Session



## ☑ Preparations

- Have “The Manna Song” playing as the children arrive with leaders in front leading the singing, if possible.

## 🔄 Welcome & Review

Welcome everyone and say: **Welcome back for day three of EarthKeepers. We're glad to see you back!**

Today's going to be fun, but first let's remember what yesterday was about:

- **Ways we can be good stewards of creation.**
- **What it means to take good care of all the gifts God has given us in creation.**
- **How being a creation caretaker means not just throwing things out because we think we can't use them anymore.**

Alternately, ask the kids what they learned yesterday. Just make sure you remind them of the key points.

## 🏠 Home Challenge

Ask: **Who did their home challenge yesterday? I want to hear about some of the great things you did!** Ask for examples of how they met the three parts of the challenge:

- **Reduce: use up one less thing.**
- **Reuse: use something a second time before throwing it away.**
- **Recycle: help turn something into something else.**

Encourage them to keep working on these goals as the week goes on.

## 📖 Bible Verse

Say: **We're going to hear a really important Bible story today from the Old Testament. It's a story about God giving people a special kind of bread called manna. It was exactly the right amount of food they needed every day to survive – not more and not less.**

**Our Bible verse for today comes from that story. The verse is:**

**Each gathered just what he or she needed. (Exodus 16:18)**

Repeat 2-3 times, asking everyone to join in.

The point is that the people who obeyed God didn't take more than they needed. When no one takes too much, there's enough for everyone to have what they need.

## 🎵 The Manna Song

Our song is also about that story. Sing “The Manna Song” together as a group. Optionally teach these simple hand motions for the chorus:

**When we take more than we need**

*(Extend hands palm-up, and make grabbing motion.)*

**Manna gets spoiled by greed**

*(Turn palms to face down)*

**But when nobody keeps too much**

*(Hug yourself)*

**Everybody has enough**

*(Extend hands/arms out)*

We’ll get to hear the whole story of what happened a little later today.

## 🗨️ Selfishness and Waste

God asks us to use only what we need, but that doesn’t always happen, does it?

Sometimes we use more than we need because we’re being selfish. When we’re selfish, we only think of ourselves. That’s when we use too much, keep too much, and waste too much. Caretakers think about and care for other people, too.

Let’s think about some ways we waste things without even using them. Ask the children for examples of when we do this. They may include:

- Water going right down the drain.
- Throwing things right into the trash.
- Leaving unused lights on.

Tell the children that Pope Francis gave a speech about wasting things, and this is what he said. Then read the passage below.

**We all need to take care of creation. But we have all gotten used to wasting and throwing away things. When we act like it’s okay when poor people don’t have enough to eat, it’s like we’re even throwing some people away. That’s not right! We shouldn’t waste things or people.**

**We shouldn’t waste and throw away food, especially when so many don’t have enough to eat. There was a time when our grandparents were very careful not to throw away any left over food. But now we do it all the time, without thinking about it.**

**Whenever we throw away food, it’s like we’re stealing it from the table of the poor, from the hungry! We all need to figure out how to waste less food, and share more with the poor.**

**Jesus fed a crowd of people with five loaves of bread and two fish. The**

This passage was adapted for children from Pope Francis’ General Audience message on June 5, 2013. See <http://bit.ly/1Q6Rxma> for the original text.

end of the story is very important: “Everyone ate and had enough. And they collected what was left over, twelve baskets of broken pieces.” Jesus asked the disciples to make sure that nothing was wasted: nothing thrown out! We need to do this too.

Pope Francis really wants us to waste less food. Why do you think it’s so important to him? Let the children come up with their own answers. Mention here that the Pope comes from South America, where he has seen a lot of hunger and poverty first-hand.

### Closing Prayer

Before we move on to our next activity, let’s ask God to bless our time here today.

Say a brief prayer thanking God for the food we eat and the rest of creation. Ask God to remind us to not be selfish or waste things (especially food). Ask God to bless our time together today. End with a hearty “AMEN!”

Play “The Manna Song” as the kids disperse.

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 Preparations

- Set aside items symbolizing the many kinds of things that are wasted when we waste food (for “Wasting Food” section below). Add some other items that are not wasted. Display them all on a table or somewhere else where they will be visible to the whole group. Cover them with a blanket or towel until the right moment, so the children won’t be distracted.

 Wasting Food

Today we’re going to especially focus on not wasting food. Let’s say we had ten loaves of bread. Who can guess how many of those loaves of food is usually wasted? Allow for some guesses.

**Believe it or not, one third or more of all food is wasted. That would mean three loaves of this bread get wasted before being eaten. That’s a huge amount to waste. In the United States, 240 lbs. of food is wasted per person every year. That’s more than what a refrigerator weighs!**

Explain that when we waste food, we also waste everything that was used to make that food and get it to us. Let the children see symbols of what is wasted when we waste food. Call on one child at a time and have them choose one item that symbolizes something that is wasted and explain why they think it is wasted when we waste food.

Here are explanations:

- **Water** (symbol: water in a glass) - Producing one hamburger consumes 2,392 liters of water. That’s over 12 bathtubs full! That counts all the water used in growing the plants the cows eat and through the food preparation process.
- **Money** (symbol: dollar bill) - Yes, it costs money to make, prepare, and buy food.
- **Plastic** (symbol: plastic food container)- A lot of food is packaged and/or stored in plastic.
- **Gasoline** (symbol: empty gas can)- Food has to be delivered to the store or restaurant for us to buy. Before that, the food has to be delivered from the farm to wherever it was packaged or prepared.
- **Cardboard** (symbol: cardboard box)- When food is delivered, it usually comes in cardboard boxes.
- **Electricity** (symbol: batteries)- Most food is refrigerated to keep it fresh, which takes electricity.

**If we only used the amount of food we need, we can save a lot of the above resources, too. Extra win!**

## Wasting Less

Ask the children why they think so much food is wasted, and have them voice their ideas. Here are some you might hear, or could share with them:

- The food goes bad when it isn't bought/eaten fast enough.
- Too much is bought at the store, or in packages that are too large.
- Too much is served at the restaurant.
- If someone doesn't like something, they throw it away and get something else.
- We throw away food before it goes bad because it's past the "sell by" date (even "use by" dates are not an accurate indicator of food safety).

Now help them share ways that they already keep from wasting food. Once they've had a chance to answer, ask if they have other ideas for how they can waste less. Here are some ideas:

- Eat leftovers before buying/making more.
- Store food well so it lasts longer.
- Don't buy/order more than you need.
- Don't buy in portions bigger than you can use (e.g. big loaves of bread).

**We're going to be especially careful at snack time, so we will take just the amount we need and don't waste any food here today!**

## Refuse

Say: **And that leads us right to our Creation Care "R!" Who remembers what our "R" words were so far? Help them remember:**

- **Respect** all creation, appreciating and not hurting it.
- **Reduce, reuse, and recycle** the things we have, which all come from creation.

**Today's word is "refuse." Who knows what that word means? That's right, it means to say "no" to something. As creation caretakers, we refuse to take too much or keep too much, so there will be enough for everyone.**

DAY

3

# Closing Session

## ☑ Preparations

- Have “The Manna Song” playing as the children arrive.

## 🗨 Gathering & Review

Welcome everyone back, saying: **What a great day today! Did everyone like their yummy worms at snack time? Let’s remember some of the things we learned.**

- **What’s the bible verse of the day?** Ask for a volunteer to repeat it, then repeat it twice for the group: **Each gathered just what he or she needed.**
- **What was the “R” word you learned today?** Pause to give a child the chance to answer. **That’s right, “Refuse” to take too much. We never want to throw away part of God’s creation.**

## 🎵 Sing “The Manna Song”

## 🎵 Sing “Worms in the Bread”

## 🏠 Home Challenge

Say: **Your “Home Challenge” for today is to work with your parents to put together a plan for wasting less food in your home. We’re sending home some instructions to help your family talk about different strategies.**

**We’ll hear what you came up with tomorrow!**

## 🌟 Announcements

Distribute the parent pages and give any other needed announcements. Then say a brief prayer thanking God for this day, the fun we had, and everything we learned. End with a hearty “AMEN!”

Add songs from previous days if you have time.

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