
Faith on Earth

Worship Resources

For Worship Planners, Green Team members, and other lay leaders



The Faith on Earth worship resources are designed to help us give thanks for the beauty of the good creation, but also to reflect on the harm that we humans are doing to it every day. It calls us both to celebration and to confession.

The following prayers, poems, songs, and reflections were chosen from a variety of faith traditions. For more extensive worship materials specific to your religion or denomination, we have included a list of online resources in this booklet.



Web Resources

There are *many* online resources that have been compiled by different faith groups. The websites below can also provide you with an abundance of inspiration and ideas.

Web of Creation has year-round resources for incorporating creation into worship. They also have links to several different Earth Day services, and a list of environmentally themed hymns from several different hymnals.

<http://www.webofcreation.org/Worship/services/earthday.htm>

<http://www.webofcreation.org/Worship/liturgy/hymns.htm>

Earth Ministries, our Interfaith Power & Light partner in Washington State, has many wonderful resources on their site, including hymns, litanies, and sample services.

<http://www.earthministry.org/resources/worship-aids>

The Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) has essays on Judaism and Earth Day, as well as resources on how to have an “Environmental Shabbat.”

<http://www.coejl.org/~coejlor/celebrate/index.php>

<http://www.coejl.org/~coejlor/celebrate/shabbat.php>

The Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences website provides engaging tutorials and “The Muslim Green Guide to Reducing Climate Change,” explains the connections between Islamic teachings and environmental stewardship.

http://ifees.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=75&Itemid=99

http://www.ifees.org.uk/Muslim_Green_Guide_Print_Final_V3.pdf

The folks at the African American Lectionary have put together a tremendous amount of material for planning your worship. On the calendar page, scroll down to Earth Day Sunday. 2009’s materials are accessible in their archives.

<http://www.theafricanamericanlectionary.org/main.asp>

The National Council of Churches of Christ has ten years’ worth of Eco-Justice themed Earth Day resources posted online.

<http://www.nccecojustice.org/EarthDay/index.html>



Songs and Hymns

He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands, Spiritual

Morning Has Broken, Eleanor Farjeon

All Things Bright and Beautiful, Cecil Alexander

All Creatures of Our God and King, Francis of Assisi

How Great Thou Art, Stuart K. Hine

For the Beauty of the Earth, Folliott S. Pierpoint

This is My Father’s World, by Maltbie D. Babcock

Jewish Homily

Ecclesiasted Rabbah

"God says to Adam (humankind): 'Before I made this world, I created many others.

This one is very good.

I am putting it in your hands.

Take good care of it, because, if you mar it, there is no one to fix it after you...
and besides you will be responsible for the loss of myriads of my creatures.'"

A Prayer

From the U.N. Environmental Sabbath Program

Great Spirit,

Give us hearts to understand;

never to take

from creation's beauty more than we give;

never to destroy wantonly for the furtherance of greed;

never to deny to give our hands for the building of earth's beauty;

never to take from her what we cannot use.

Give us hearts to understand that to destroy earth's

music is to create confusion;

that to wreck her appearance is to blind us to beauty;

that to callously pollute her fragrance is to make a house of stench;

that as we care for her she will care for us.

Amen



Members of the Baha'i faith believe that God has sent Messengers throughout history, including Buddha, Abraham, Jesus, and Muhammad. Bahá'u'lláh was the most recent of these messengers.

Baha'i Prayer

by Bahá'u'lláh

Blessed is the spot, and the house,
and the place, and the city,
and the heart, and the mountain,
and the refuge, and the cave,
and the valley, and the land,
and the sea, and the island,
and the meadow where mention
of God hath been made,
and His praise glorified.

Tips for your Faith on Earth Worship

- ❖ Move your worship outside! There is no better place to praise creation than in the midst of it.
- ❖ If you can't be in nature, evoke it in your worship space. If you usually use cut flowers in your space, try using dried grasses and flowering branches instead. Better yet, replace your arrangements with potted plants that will continue to grow and flourish.
- ❖ If you take up an offering during worship, dedicate part or all of the collections to your faith community's green ministry, to Faith in Place, or to another environmental organization of your choice.
- ❖ Choose this week to focus on your faith community's consumption. Awareness of water and energy use is the first step towards reducing it.
- ❖ Dedicate a time in your worship to conspicuously celebrate the green successes that you have already achieved, and to advertise any plans you have for the future. For example, you might:

- ~ Plan a community gardening day on your grounds,
- ~ Promote a "Bike to Worship" month in May, or
- ~ Measure your house of worship's carbon footprint (go to www.CoolCongregations.com) and pledge to reduce it.

Have fun, and don't forget to be creative!

A Prayer for Gratitude

St. Francis of Assisi

Most High, all powerful, good Lord,
to you all praise, glory and honor and all
blessing;
to you alone, Most High, they belong
and no one is worthy of naming you.

Praised by you, my Lord,
with all your creatures,
especially Milord Brother Sun,
who brings day, and by whom you
enlighten us;
he is beautiful, he shines with great
splendor,
of you, Most High, he is the symbol.

Praised be you, my Lord, for sister Moon
and the Stars:
in the heavens you formed them,
clear, precious and beautiful.

Praised by you, my Lord, for Brother Wind
and for the air and for the clouds,
for the azure calm and for all climes
by which you give life to your creatures.

Praised by you, my Lord, for Sister Water,
who is very useful and humble,
precious and chaste.

Praised by you, my Lord, for Brother Fire,
by whom you enlighten the night:
he is beautiful and joyous,
indomitable and strong.

Praised by you, my Lord,
for Sister our mother the earth
who nourishes us and bears us,
and produces all kinds of fruits,
with the speckled flowers and the herbs.

*From: Interfaith Declarations and Worship Observance Resources;
The North American Conference on Religion and Ecology; 5
Thomas Circle, NW, Washington, DC 20005*

Litany of Commitment

Leader: As we seek to relax our grip so that the earth, our fragile sister, might rest from our labors, help us to see our world more vividly than we have done in the past.

People: Grant us vision for the challenges of this age and give us hearts full of courage for the future.

Leader: As we seek to be wise stewards of the gifts of the earth in timber and oil, coal, and gas, help us to know your world more humanely than we have in the past.

People: Make us learn that wisdom which we see among those wise and humble people of the earth, that we might walk with care and reverence so as to caress our fair sister.

Leader: Sharing God, draw us to contemplation and silence so that we might see, in wonder, our lives intertwined with the squirrels and the cardinal, the creatures great and small, the beauty of each season. Help us to see the birth, growth, death, and rebirth so as to give us courage in the ongoing creation of our Creator.

People: Deepen our faith and enliven our thinking, nourish our bodies and strengthen our souls, that we may be your message in the world, your servants for the common wellness of the earth. Make us weavers of a new order, crafters of a new earth.

Leader: Grant us grace through the Christ of the Cosmos. Call us to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, in the love with earth, and with our brothers, and sisters. Give us a measure of the Spirit that these commitments we make before you might make our work holy.

Leader: Let us go forth from this sacred ark with steady hand up lifted heart, with clear eye and alert mind, with firm step, and willing hands. May we arrive at fresh springs of renewal through God's holy Word, in our communities of faith, and in deep solidarity with all creation.

People: Amen. Let all the creation hear and bear witness. Amen

Written by Jay C. Rochelle, 1990; posted on www.webofcreation.org

The Lake of Beauty

Let your mind be quiet, realizing the beauty of the world,
and the immense, the boundless treasures that it holds in store.

All that you have within you, all that your heart desires, all that your Nature so specially fits
you for – that or the counterpart of it waits embedded in the great Whole, for you.

It will surely come to you.

Yet equally surely not one moment before its appointed time will it come. All; your crying and
fever and reaching out of hands will make no difference.

Therefore do not begin that game at all.

Do not recklessly spill the waters of your mind

In this direction and in that,

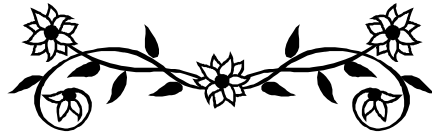
Lest you become like a spring lost and

Dissipated in the desert.

But draw them together into a little compass, and hold them still, so still;

And let them become clear, so clear- so limpid, so mirror-like; at last the mountains and the sky shall glass themselves in peaceful beauty,
And the antelope shall descend to drink and to gaze at her reflected image, and the lion to quench his thirst, and Love himself shall come and bend over and catch his own likeness in you.

Written by Edward Carpenter and reproduced in *A New Zealand Prayer Book (Harper Collins 1997) at 157.*



Words from Islam

The world is green and beautiful and God has appointed you his stewards over it.

~The Prophet Muhammad

Whosoever plants a tree and diligently looks after it until it matures and bears fruit is rewarded.

~The Prophet Muhammad

There is not an animal (that lives) on the earth, nor a being that flies on its wings, but (forms part of) communities like you. Nothing have we omitted from the Book, and they (all) shall be gathered to their Lord in the end.

~Qur'an 6:38

Have you not seen that it is God to whom all the beings in the earth bow themselves down - and so too the sun and the moon and the stars and the mountains and the trees and the beasts?

~Qur'an 22:18

The Messenger of Allah commands you. Do not kill a child, nor a woman, nor an old man, nor obliterate a stream, nor cut a tree.

~Hadith (Ahmad)

Assuredly the creation of the heavens and the earth is a greater (matter) than the creation of men: yet most men understand not.

~Qur'an 40:57



Litany: A Prayer of Healing

from "Only One Earth," a UN Environment Programme publication for "Environmental Sabbath/Earth Rest Day," June 1990

We join with the earth and with each other.

To bring new life to the land

To restore the waters

To refresh the air

We join with the earth and with each other.

To renew the forests

*To care for the plants
To protect the creatures*

We join with the earth and with each other.

*To celebrate the seas
To rejoice in the sunlight
To sing the song of the stars*

We join with the earth and with each other.

*To recreate the human community
To promote justice and peace
To remember our children*

We join with the earth and with each other.

We join together as many and diverse expressions
of one loving mystery: for the healing of the earth and the renewal of all life.

*(For the complete Sabbath, visit
<http://www.earthministry.org>)*