


Hope for Creation



Photo: ED :-) 

A Time for Worship and Action

Notes for study/discussion groups, based on the Lord's Prayer

*Prepared by Janet Scott for Churches Together in Britain and Ireland,
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These notes are intended to suggest some topics and approaches for church study groups during creation month. The material has been prepared to complement the 5 week framework for the Sundays in Creation Time based on the Lord's Prayer. The study material consists of four sessions, which can be used within the month bordered by the five Sundays.

Some of the suggestions are appropriate for use with children and young people. In each section, the 'A' is for adults; the 'B' is for use with adults or all-age (over 7) or older children's groups (8 and over). There is also potential for mix and match.

Week 1: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be your name**Theme**

Thankfulness and praise



Photo: © Matt Gruber

A**Biblical text: Psalm 19**

Read the psalm together. Note how it moves from creation to ethical conduct to personal inward disposition. (Possibly listen to Haydn's setting in his Creation). Go around the circle to ask everyone to talk about an aspect of creation for which they are thankful. Incorporate these into a final prayer which could also use the final verses of the psalm.


B

(suitable for adults and for young people)

Collect some objects which you either place on a central table or in an opaque bag. Examples: a small candle or tea light, a stone, a comb, a small seedpot, a coin, a piece of fruit, a leaf, a horse chestnut, a key, a pencil. If the objects are on the table, people take it in turns to choose one and talk about how it reminds them of a quality of God. The used objects can be placed into a central basket. If using the bag, it can be passed round and everyone takes an object; they then have a short period of silence to think about their object before talking about how it reminds them of a quality of God. Finish by reading Psalm 19: 1-6 or Psalm 104: 1-5.

Week 2: Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth, as in heaven**Theme**

God's purposes for creation and our place within those purposes

Photo: Laura Woolf **A****Biblical text: Genesis 6: 9-22**

Read the story and remind yourselves of what else you know about Noah. How did he carry out the will of God? Take a few minutes of silence to think about how you hear the voice of God and how you know what his will is. Go round the circle to let anyone who wishes share their experience. Finish with prayer, possibly the [Methodist covenant prayer](#).

B

(suitable for adults and young people)

Biblical text: Isaiah 11: 1-9

Paper and coloured pencils are needed.

If possible find a reproduction of one of [Hicks' Peaceable Kingdom pictures](#) and start by looking at it to see what you can see. He has depicted Isaiah 11: 6-9; look at the text to see how he has interpreted it. If you do not have a picture start with the text and talk about how the prophet has imagined the kingdom of God. Discuss whether we would imagine it in the same way. What would be our idea of a perfect world? Everyone should take a short time to draw one aspect of the way they would like the world to be, then each share these hopes. If appropriate, discuss what single steps could be taken to realise the hopes. Use these as the basis for a final prayer.

Week 3: Give us this day our daily bread**Theme**

Justice



Photo: matze_ott

A

Choose one of the following topics (or if the group is large enough divide it into four with one topic each): food; clean water; oil; rising sea levels. Consider the likely impact of climate change on your topic for (i) your area, (ii) your country, (iii) the world. Look at your predictions and consider what will be needed to establish justice and peace. What changes of heart and lifestyle will be needed to reach sustainability? Finish with a time for silent prayer and a reading of one of: Psalm 23, Revelation 21; 1-7

B

(suitable for adults and young people)

Biblical text John 6: 1-13

Read or tell the example of the boy who shared his food. Think of examples of times when we have shared. Why is sharing important?

Talk with an older person who remembers rationing. Find out about why there was rationing and what it was like for food, clothes and fuel to be rationed. Why was it important for everyone to be treated equally?

Work together to make as short a list as possible of things essential for life. What things are not necessary?

If we had only the necessary things how would we make life interesting? (sports, arts, dance, learning skills)

Consider the slogan 'Live simply that others may simply live'. How could we each live more simply?

Week 4/5: Forgive us our sins as we forgive and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for yours is the Kingdom**Theme**

Confession and hopeful action based on God's future

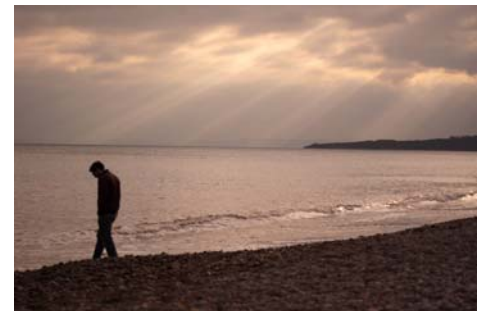


Photo: -Zoe-

A

Consider the seven deadly sins, one by one: anger, avarice, envy, gluttony, lust, pride, sloth. How does each one contribute to the ills of our society and our world? Give people time to think in silence of something they want to change in their own attitudes and life. Be prepared for a short ritual of getting rid of a burden e.g. writing it on paper and burning it, writing it on a hand and washing hands clean, modeling it in clay and squashing the clay back into a different shape.

Read Luke 4: 14-21 and discuss what is the good news for us now in our situation. How are our eyes opened? From what are we released? End with a time of open prayer to which all may contribute. Finish by saying the Lord's Prayer together slowly.

B

(suitable for adults and young people)

Talk about aspects of what we are doing when we pray, e.g. trusting God, listening to God, preparing to carry out God's will.... Look at the Lord's Prayer and discuss what each part of it might mean especially when we are thinking about in a time of change. Try to put the prayer into today's language. Everyone writes their own prayer based on a part of the Lord's Prayer, and these are used for the final prayer-time.