

YOUTH RESOURCES

15-18



SESSION 2

LAND

ECO  **CHURCH**
AN A ROCHA UK PROJECT



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LAND – SESSION 2

Youth leader note: if possible, lead this session outdoors to connect with God in nature together.



INTRO

In our last session we looked together at how God created things to be in the beginning between us and him and all of creation. We took time to acknowledge how this has gone wrong and to say sorry and lament. The story doesn't end there, and today we're looking at what Jesus' death and resurrection means for us and all things. We're going to look at how we can join in his restoration work now!



GAME

We're talking about joining in with the restoration of creation today so here's a couple of fun games you could kick off with:

Option 1: The Animal Game

You can see how to play this game here: <https://www.jubed.com/view/The-Animal-Game> This is similar to Signs and is a great one to get everyone out of their shells from the beginning of the session.

Option 2: Nature Bring Me

Info – If you're outdoors, you could play nature 'Bring Me'. The leader says 'Bring me' and names an item – everyone has to run and grab it and bring it to the leader as fast as possible to get a point. Person with the most points wins.

Equipment– Base your 'bring me' list on nature and stuff they'll have with them. E.g. a big leaf, a blade of grass, a twig, a rock, a sock, a water bottle etc.



BIBLE

Read Colossians 1:15–23 together

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+1%3A15–23&version=NCV>

- What stands out to you? What would be your summary of what Paul is saying here to the Colossian church?
- In this series we're looking at: land, lifestyle, worship and teaching, buildings and community and global engagement. Look at v16–17 – what does it have to say about all of these areas?
- How many times does it say 'all things' in this passage?
 - What does it say *about* all things? (v16, 17, 20)
- If *all things* have been created through Jesus and for him (v16) – what does this mean for how we should act towards creation? (land, plants, animals, people)
- We looked together in our first session at Genesis, how God created all things and declared it very good, and how when humans choose their own way instead of God's, brokenness enters our relationships – with God, each other and the environment. Read Col 1:20–22 together:
 - What does this mean for you and your relationship with God?
 - What does this mean for our relationships with each other and the environment?
- Jesus is the one doing the restoring and reconciling of *all things* – things on earth and in heaven, through his death on the cross. When we invite him into our life, he equips and empowers us by his Holy Spirit to do good works for him in all things. He gives us what we need and guides us to join in restorative work!
 - What do you think a fully restored world would look like?
 - Read Hebrews 13:20–21 together and take a moment now to pray and ask God together where he wants you to start with your good work towards creation. Ask him for his help to do this!
- Colossians 1:18b says that '*in all things Jesus takes first place*':
 - Have an honest chat – does Jesus take first place in your life?
 - What would it look like for Jesus to take first place in your actions towards the environment?





WORSHIP

Take some time together now to worship God, thanking Jesus for all he has done and that he is reconciling all things to himself. If you are outdoors – pause before you sing to be still and listen to nature around you – the rustle of leaves, bird song, the wind. Let it slow you and still you and help you focus on God's presence with you.

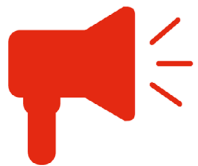
Here are some suggestions of songs you could use on this theme:

Resound Worship

- You Saw That It Was Good <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjfOphqiWZM> (4.28 mins)
- God the Maker Of The Heavens https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fyYw-CG4Tf_c&list=OLAK5uy_ni9wJGZYsmcD60De7HUJdHiCm_9XEJObs (4.50 mins)

Kings Cross Church (KXC) – All Things New <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRs-bZeWuYjQ> (5.33 mins)

Sovereign Grace Music – All Creatures Of Our God And King https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hhyCL4h64_s (4.49 mins)



ACTION

Restoration work!

Jesus equips and empowers us to be part of his restorative work! Choose one of the following ideas to do as a group:

Option 1: Use your hands

One way we can join in with God's restoration of the earth is to get our hands dirty and do some gardening or creating habitats to help nature out. You can grow your own veg so you don't have to buy it plastic-wrapped or shipped in at the super markets, you can plant flowers that are good for bees, you can put feeders out for birds – and more!

Here are a few practical activity ideas. Perhaps you could choose one to do with your youth group, and share the other ideas with them to do on their own at home:

- Start a youth veg patch **Youth leader note:** This will need regular visits to water/ weed and harvest you'll need to factor in time for that and find a few enthusiastic young people to commit to caring for the veg. <https://www.wild-lifetrusts.org/actions/how-grow-wildlife-friendly-vegetable-garden>

- Grow a wildflower meadow on church grounds, in a pot outside where you gather for youth group or at home. Wildflowers are great for bees, and bees are great for sustaining important ecosystems including pollinating for our food! The Bumblebee Conservation Trust has information and seeds available here:
 - <https://www.bumblebeeconservation.org/beethechange/>
 - <https://www.bumblebeeconservation.org/beethechange/resource/how-to-sow-wildflower-seeds/>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJj61gbdkCs> (3.39 mins)
- Make a bug mansion <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-build-bug-mansion>
- Or a bee hotel <https://friendsoftheearth.uk/bees/make-a-bee-house>
- Grow sunflowers: they're pretty and they're good for pollinators and birds! <https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/nature-on-your-doorstep/garden-activities/how-to-grow-sunflowers/>
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Option 2: If you are not able to do outdoor activities, you can use your voice. Another way we can join in with Jesus' restoration work is to speak up on big matters when the earth and environment are being damaged in big ways. Here are two suggestions where you could join the campaign and speak up, but feel free to joining other campaigns you're passionate about on this topic:

Help WWF in tackling forest loss and damage. Look at the five easy to help the Amazon here: <https://www.wwf.org.uk/what-we-do/tackling-forest-loss-and-damage>

Join Greenpeace in the battle against plastic pollution <https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/challenges/plastic-pollution/>

Make sure your church is signed up for Eco Church and activity pursuing an award <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/>



EXTRA RESOURCES

The Eco Church resources have lots of information about how to get your church to be involved more actively with land. Many will be interesting background reading and there may be suitable larger scale activities for young people such as planting trees, building a pond or regularly feeding birds: <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/resources/land/>