

Guidelines 2026-2027

Faith and Light international

Rodrigo Perez- USA East



Rodrigo


God's wonderful world





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Introduction

Raúl Izquierdo García
International Coordinator



God's Wonderful World

To the Faith and Light communities
that make up our international family,

As we do every year, we are pleased to present the guidelines for the coming year. This new edition was produced by a team representing the three provinces of North America (Canada East, USA East, North America West).

First and foremost, I would like to express our deepest gratitude to everyone who has dedicated their time, energy, and enthusiasm to creating this document, which will guide us as a community throughout the coming year.

These Guidelines offer us, month by month, reflections, meditations and illustrations created by people with intellectual disabilities. I would also like to thank our Secretariat, which made its publication and distribution possible.

Children have an extraordinary capacity for wonder, which we often tend to lose as we grow up. As long as we remain capable of being amazed and letting ourselves be surprised, we can still discern God's presence in this world. For indeed, God is the creative artist and the source of inspiration for everything we encounter in the world. His marvelous work found its fulfillment in human beings, created "in his image and likeness" (Gen.1:26).

As a true artist among artists, God infused His creation with joy and love, but also with meaning, beauty, and a profound purpose. And when he had finished His work, "God saw all that he had made, and behold, it was very good" (Gen.1:31).

This passage from Psalm 8 touches my heart: "When I see your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and stars that you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and a son of man that you care for him?" (Ps 8).

For all of creation, in addition to being a source of admiration and praise for its Creator, also places an immense responsibility upon us: we are called to care for it, protect it, and constantly renew it. With all its wonders, creation cannot be regarded as the exclusive property or privilege of certain individuals, institutions, or companies simply because of their wealth or power. It is a gift offered to all of humanity: to those living today, but also to future generations, whom we will leave it to our children and grandchildren.

May these Guidelines help us to better appreciate the wonderful gift that is our world and, through it, to praise God all the more for his creation and give him thanks, as we discover the traces of

his presence and the seeds of his love in each of its wonders. May it also help us to continue recognizing that God's greatest wonder is the human being himself, in all his fragility and vulnerability. I believe that at Faith and Light, we know this wonder particularly well.

Together with Andrew and Emilia, the vice-international coordinators for North America, we give thanks to God for the wonderful gift of His creation.

United in Jesus,

Raúl Izquierdo García
international Coordinator

Presentation of the theme of the year



Dear friends,

These new Guidelines have been produced by the three provinces of North America. The theme, **“God’s Wonderful World”**, was inspired by **Genesis 1:1 -2:25** and **Psalm 104**. Our chaplain from USA East, Dave Gullman, summarizes these verses well as follows; *“God is the Creator! When we look at creation, we see the amazing ways it is bound together and we marvel at God’s goodness. As humans, created in the image of God, our task is to praise God for this wonderful world, to respond to God’s call to care for and nurture the whole marvelous world, and to enjoy God’s goodness.”*

The theme was first suggested by one of our provincial coordinators, Joy Fuchs, who was a former schoolteacher. Her hope, and ours, is that with these guidelines, we will all be as little children who are in awe of everything. In her words, *“When interacting with our world, a reverence overcomes the human senses. A feeling of awe happens when we see a radiant sunset or the majestic flight of a*

great blue heron. We are filled with amazement and joy for our ability to be part of this glorious moment and are held close by our Creator!”.

Each month, we reflect on a specific wonder of the created world. It has been a joyful labor to produce these guidelines, with teams from each of the three provinces, and the monthly reflections shared among the three chaplains of each province, Canada East, USA East and North America West.

We asked our core members to be artists for the illustrations of these guidelines and they have not disappointed. We thank God for His wonderful creation, and for the wonderful team that He provided from our North American Faith and Light communities!

Andrew & Emilia

Vice International Coordinators
North America

2026-2027 team



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Practical information



Available for download from the website

<https://www.foietlumiere.org/en/community/guidelines>

- **Illustrations for each month**

<https://www.foietlumiere.org/en/community/guidelines/2026-2027-guidelines-illustrations>

- **Visuals from the Artists' workshop**

<https://www.foietlumiere.org/en/community/guidelines/artists-workshop-2026-2027-guidelines>

Available for download from the intranet

<https://www.foietlumiere.org/en/intranet>



- **The songs featured in each chapter** (lyrics, scores when they are available and the YouTube links).

To request the intranet access codes, you can email the Secretariat international@foietlumiere.org

Once you have logged in, click on “Booklets and documents” and then “Songs from the 2026-2027 guidelines”.

Prayer before each meeting

In a mysterious workshop, O my God, You fashioned for us
a wonderful world. You are the greatest of Artists,
who from nothing have created everything
with a Master's hand.

Your heart, overflowing with Love, wished to give us the most
beautiful gift : THIS WONDERFUL WORLD, with its many realities,
each one as colorful as the next.

You have given us the Light of Heaven,
shining in all its splendor.

You have given us Water, singing of life
through joyful, cascading laughter.

You have given us the Earth where promises grow as seeds.

You have given us the Air and the Wind
that brush our cheeks with a gentle breeze.

You have given us the Seeds that burst forth
through their hidden power of life.

You have given us the Trees, which stretch out their arms
to embrace us.

You have given us the Flowers, which brighten the horizon
and perfume the air.

You have given us the Fruits and Vegetables
which ensure a flourishing health.

You have given the Aquatic Animals, which dance upon the waves.

You have given us the Birds, which streak across the sky
with their majestic flight.

You have given us the Land Animals, which inhabit
all our surroundings.

And you created us, we Humans, in your image and likeness.

Grant us the grace to be faithful and diligent guardians
to preserve your Creation and all its wonders,
and thus give you rightful Glory.

Amen.

1

The Wonder of Light



Caroline Lubas
USA East



The word of the month

Reference Texts:

Genesis 1:1-5
John 1:1-5

In the beginning of time, before God spoke the world into being, the earth was shapeless and empty; everything was complete chaos and was covered in total darkness. It is hard for us to imagine such a scene but we know something of this disorder when we experience difficult situations in our lives that bring confusion, fear and turmoil.

What we read next speaks hope into the darkness; into the chaos. The Spirit of God hovered over the deep waters like a strong wind and God spoke saying, “Let there be light” - and there was light! What a wonder this must have been. We know how the light of a small candle can light a dark room. What must it have been like when the light, which God spoke into being, blasted into the wild darkness of complete desolation?

Light is essential to life as we know it. We read in John 1:1-5 that the Word was there in the beginning. The Word was with God and was God. It is through the Word that God made all things. Creation is only possible because of the Word. The Word, we are told, “is the source of life, and this life brought light to people.” We then hear some of the most hopeful words in the Bible, “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness

can never put it out.” We know Jesus to be the Word John writes so beautifully about. In John 8:12 we hear Jesus say, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will have the light of life and will never walk in darkness.”

In our Faith and Light communities we know intimately what this light of Jesus has done for us. When we are discouraged, the light of Jesus shining on us changes our outlook and gives us hope. When our lives or our world seem dark, the light we find in our communities changes our perspective. Our task is to spread the light of Jesus wherever we go!

Dave Gullman

Welcome and reunion

The team prepares a large yellow circle and places it on the floor.

At the entrance, a team member gives each person a ray of sunshine, saying, "You are a ray of sunshine."

Sitting in a circle, each person places their ray around the central sun, sharing what it offers (love, joy, peace, etc.).

The whole group responds: "You are a ray of sunshine for us."

Welcome Song

He's Got the Whole World in His Hands
(He's got the Sun and the Moon.....)

Sharing

◆ Together

Read John 1:1-5 out loud. Then just read John 1:4-5 out loud a second time. Listen for one or two words that stand out. Share the words.

Read John 1:4-5 a third time. Listen for one phrase or sentence that stands out. Share the phrase or sentence.

- 1- When you hear these words what do you see or imagine?
- 2- What does it mean for Jesus to be the “light of all mankind”?

◆ In small groups

Light is natural or man-made; it passes through some things; it is needed to make shadows; it reflects off of some things like mirrors; white light is made up of colors of the rainbow; when light is bent or refracted the colors are seen. The sun is our natural form of light.

Close your eyes and cover them (if you have lights turn them off) for at least fifteen seconds. Open your eyes and uncover them (turn on the lights if they are off).

- ◆ What do you see in the dark?
- ◆ What changes within us when we see light?
- ◆ When we feel dark on the inside what can we do to bring light?
- ◆ Who is someone who brings light to you or your community?
- ◆ How can we bring light to the world like Jesus?

Artists' Workshop (see page 97)

Stained Glass Tissue Paper Cross

Celebration

- **Game: follow a shadow.**

Shine a flashlight on a piece of chalk or thick crayon. Create its shadow, then grow and move its shadow by moving the light. It's fun to play with!

- **An Observation of Light**

You will need: a flashlight, white paper, black paper, a clear plastic bag, and red, yellow & blue cellophane.

- 1- A flashlight is man-made light – show everyone the batteries and try lighting the flashlight with only one battery. What does it need to light?
- 2- Shine flashlight light through different materials – black paper (opaque/blocks light); white paper (translucent); clear plastic bag (transparent); red, yellow, & blue cellophane.
- 3- Mix colors of light: shine flashlight through red cellophane with yellow; yellow with blue; blue with red. What new colors are created?
- 4- Rainbows form when light is bent: ROY G BIV (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet); Shine light through a prism or through a crystal to see rainbow colors.
- 5- Did any of these observations surprise you?
- 6- Describe how you feel when you see a rainbow? What colors have you seen in a sunrise or a sunset? God blesses us with light!

Prayer

O God, Source of Light, Source of all Life,
May your Light flow into our heart and our entire Being.
May your Light dwell within our soul like a flame of love
that radiates, warms, and soothes.

1 ● The Wonder of Light

May your Light illuminate and awaken our consciousness
to the sacred nature of all life and all things.

May your Light, given by Christ Jesus,
become an Eternal Presence within us.

May our communities spread your Light upon the Earth.

We give you thanks.

Prayer of praise

Praise be to God, Creator of Light.

Until next time

Practice bringing your light to the world. Your smile can bring light to another person. So let your light shine in all you do this month.

Song

This Little Light of Mine



2

The Wonder of Water



George Sarkis
Canada East



The word of the month

Reference Texts:

Genesis 1:6-10
Psalm 104:2-3, 6-11, 13
John 4:13-14

People long ago saw water as a mysterious, unpredictable, and mighty thing. They knew that water was necessary for all creatures to live.

Yet it also had power to destroy. The people saw that rain helped them grow their food. When the rain didn't come, their families went hungry. They also experienced floods, heavy rains that washed away soil and crops, and some people had been lost in storms on big lakes or the sea. However, throughout the Bible, God is more powerful than water. God puts water in the place it belongs.

Water is wonderful! It is essential. Water nourishes us, refreshes us, quenches our thirst, and cleans us. Water is beautiful. The movement of the ocean, the flow of a river, a waterfall, a calm lake, touch us, move us.

We are baptized with water. Remember how after Jesus was baptized in the River Jordan, God's Spirit came down upon him, and he heard the voice of his Father say, "You are my beloved in whom I am so delighted." Abba-God says the same thing to each one of us: *You are my son, you are my daughter whom I love very much – more than you know. You are precious and delightful to me.*

Jesus once told a sad, lonely woman who was thirsting for something more in her life, “Everyone who drinks the water that I will give them will never be thirsty again. This water that I will give them will become like a spring of living water in them that will bring them life in all its fullness”. Jesus was offering her, and offers to us, the gift of God’s life, God’s Spirit, God’s Love. This is what we all are most truly and most deeply thirsting for.

Tim Buckley

Welcome and reunion

The facilitator greets each person by saying, “Welcome, we’ve been longing for you.”

Sitting in a circle, each person receives a drop of water (drawn on a piece of paper), and after a moment of silence, places it on a large blue circle in the center. The whole group says to him: “You are precious.”

The immediate neighbors of this person mention a reason or a quality that makes him/her precious to them. They all say THANK YOU for his/her presence. We are like drops in the ocean, and each one matters, just as every member is important in the community.

Welcome song He's Got the Whole World in His Hands

Sharing

◆ Together

Water is the life blood of our creation. God's pouring out of blessings. Living things cannot survive without water. Water is a rich symbol showing us the many ways God interacts with His creation. In Psalm 104 there are lots of beautiful images of the living water of God and all that it provides. Let's read Psalm 104 together.

- ◆ List all the things that God has watered.
- ◆ What does the water that God sends do?
- ◆ How has God poured out His blessings on you?

Or

Mime the longer story of the Woman at the Well. John 4:7-14.

- ◆ Why does Jesus ask the woman for water?
- ◆ Why does the woman not want to give Jesus water?
- ◆ What is the living water Jesus talks about?
- ◆ How can we be living water for each other?

◆ In small groups

- 1- What is your experience of water? What do you think of when you think of water?
- 2- What are the ways you use water?
- 3 How does water help us to survive every day?
- 4- What can I do to protect water in my community?

Artists' Workshop (see page 98)
Musical Bottles

Celebration

An Observation of Water.

Water cleanses, refreshes, mixes, flows, magnifies, and supports. Let us look more closely at some properties of water.

Materials: A large, clear container of water, food coloring (red, yellow and blue), ice cubes, different items that sink or float.

- 1- Place your open hand in a large, clear container of water. Can you see your hand? (Water is clear.) Does your hand look bigger in water? (Water magnifies.) Take your hand out of the water and it is wet. Water clings to things.
- 2- Add a drop of food coloring to this water and watch what happens? Is that drop moving? Water is always moving and it will circulate that drop changing the water to that color.
- 3- Show an ice cube to everyone. Ice is frozen water. Does it float on top of water or sink to the bottom of the container? Why? Try testing some items that float or sink.

Game: sink or float?

Materials: A large container three-fourths full of water and items below: apple, potato, bottle cap, tennis ball, cork, pencil, plastic bottle, penny or add your own items.

- 1- Each person can predict whether each object will sink or float by recording it on a chart.
- 2- Test each object in the container of water and verbally express your findings.

How many of your predictions were right? Why do some things float and others sink?

Prayer

Sister Water, how pure and crystal-clear you are
when you flow down from the top of the hill,
and how beautifully you proclaim your love for the Creator
in your torrents, which reveal His Greatness.

Sister Water, how beautiful and essential your work is
in telling us about the Living Water
that comes to us from Heaven.

Continue to awaken our wonder at all times, to fill the needs,
where sometimes you are sorely lacking.

Refresh our sleeping memories of your necessity,
even as our indifference continues to pollute you.

Quench, again and again, our thirst for a clear world
like the one that awaits us for eternity
beyond this life.

Prayer of praise

Thank you, God, for our sister Water, source of life.

Until next time

Our planet is 71 % water and yet only less than 1% percent is drinkable or even accessible to us. Please try not to waste water nor pollute it. Use water to make coffee, tea, or lemonade. Share it with a friend. Let us give thanks for water.

Song

Come to the Water

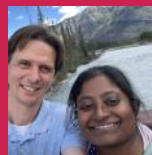


3

The Wonder of Land



Christopher and Harshini Murphy
North America West



The word of the month

Reference Texts:

Genesis 1:9-10, 2:4-7, 15
Matthew 5:5

Can you imagine a world without land? There would be no mountains, no meadows, no farming and no gardens.

There would be no place to walk and wonder at God's good earth. There would be no rocks to provide secure places for us to build. There would be no trees, no flowers, no people. Land, like light and water, is essential to life.

Before God spoke land into being, the earth was covered in water. There was no dry ground, no foundation on which to build the rest of life as we know it. Thus, God spoke land into being saying, "Let the waters beneath the sky flow together into one place, so dry ground may appear." And that is what happened. God called the dry ground "land" and the waters "seas." The wonder of land is that it provides so much for us especially when we care for it as God intends.

Land offers rootedness. Think of a tree planted in soil, spreading its roots so that it can remain secure while finding the food and water necessary for survival. Think of a farmer, cultivating her crops grown in the soil which sustains her life. Think of the nomad, Abraham, walking toward a land promised him by God while his cattle graze along the way. We can each be grateful for the land on which we live and depend.

We know that many people think of land as a possession to be held and used for their personal good with no regard for others. This breaks God's heart for land is a gift to be cultivated, celebrated, and shared. Listen to the words of Jesus as he speaks to the crowds in the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."

In Faith and Light we are called to humbly receive all of the gifts God has given us and to share them with others. This kind of humility results in great blessing - inheritance of the earth.

Dave Gullman

Welcome and reunion

Upon arrival, each person is welcomed with the following greeting: "You are good soil on which the community is built." and receives a card representing a brick.

Everyone sits in a circle, and each person takes turns placing their brick on a table in the center. A small house, a symbol of the community, can be placed on top of the bricks.

Welcome Song

He's Got the Whole World in His Hands

Sharing

◆ Together

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus promises the earth to the meek. As a group list all the synonyms you can think of for the word meek. If you can write them on a sheet of paper where everyone can see them. (Some synonyms for meek are: patient, gentle, mild, peaceful, reverent, forbearing, resigned.)

- 1- Are there any famous people with these qualities? (write their names next to the synonyms for meek you came up with).
- 2- Are there any members of your community who have any of these characteristics? (write their names next to the synonyms for meek you came up with).
- 3- Why does Jesus promise the meek the earth?
- 4- Why doesn't Jesus promise the earth to the rich or the strong or the powerful?
- 5- What do you think the meek will do with the earth once they have it?

◆ In small groups

God has given us the land for good. The land is made of soil, rocks and minerals to thrive, to grow and to care for. Soils are the life-blood of our ecosystem providing essential nutrients, water, and microorganisms for life on this Earth.

Rocks provide strength for building roads and houses; some rocks generate energy like coal, and they give us minerals like diamonds and metals like copper.

- 1- What does the land give you?
- 2- What is your favorite thing to do on or with the land: to hike, to farm or garden, to lay on the ground and watch the sky?
- 3- How can we each care for the small piece of land we live on?
- 4- What would you do if you "inherited the earth" like Jesus says?

Artists' Workshop (see page 99)

Painting rocks

Celebration

A) An Observation of Rocks.

Materials: Collect some rocks for testing. Coordinators can bring a collection of rocks. White paper, a coin for scratching a rock, acrylic or tempura paint, brush.

- 1- What are the shapes of your rocks? They can be round, flat, triangular.
- 2- What colors are your rocks? Brown, black, speckled, white, red.
- 3- Feel your rocks. Textures can be rough, smooth, jagged.
- 4- Test the hardness of your rocks. Can you write on white paper with your rocks? Can you scratch your rock with a penny?

B) An Observation of Soils.

(This activity can be done as a demonstration or given to each to do individually.)

Soils form from the breakdown of rocks with the addition of organic matter from living things. Soils can be sandy, clay, or rich and fertile. Plants can grow in different types of soils, but which soil do they prefer? Let us see where marigold seeds will grow best. (You can choose a seed that grows well in your area.)

- 1- Make holes in the bottom of 2 cups and fill each cup with a different type of soil – sand and garden soil.
- 2- Add several marigold seeds to each cup, gently pushing them into the soil.
- 3- Add water to each, only enough to dampen the soil.
- 4- Set your cups on a windowsill and watch their growth over several days. The seeds do need to be watered.

5- Which cup showed the best growth of marigolds? What did you conclude?

Prayer

My God, how beautiful and majestic are your works,
Especially the earth which rises
At the summit of your dreamlike ascent,
Forming a unique setting for humankind
Whom you wish to be a partner in your great design.
Thank you, my God, for this earth rich with your abundance.
Which shows how generous you are in your benevolence
And how much you desire that it sustain us on this pilgrimage
Until we reach, in your own time, the other shore,
where you will make us understand with perfect clarity
that it already bore all the marks
of your invisible fatherhood.

Prayer of praise

My God, I praise you for the riches of our earth.

Until next time

Can we be the “rock” to someone who needs strength and support today?

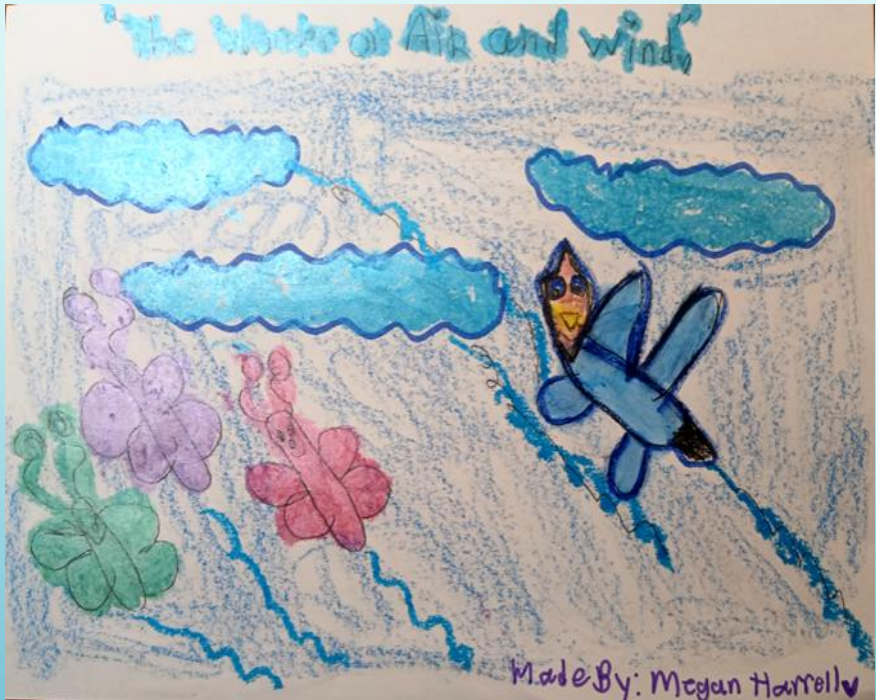
Song

Peace Before Us



4

The Wonder of Air and Wind



Megan Harrell
North America West



The word of the month

Reference Texts:

Genesis 1:2, 2:7
Psalm 104:3-4, 29-30
Ezekiel 37:1-10

The word for “wind” in both Hebrew and Greek is the same as the word for spirit and for breath. So, in the Bible, these meanings are often interchangeable. In the

beginning, when the Israelites tried to describe how everything was created, there was the Spirit/breath/wind of God hovering like a dragonfly over the waters. And when God created human beings, God breathed life into us. God’s breath in us, is what sustains us.

The prophet, Ezekiel, told a powerful story about a valley filled with lots of dry bones. God asked Ezekiel to speak God’s words over the bones – to tell them to listen to what God wanted them to hear. And then, God breathes on the old, dry bones, and they, little by little, become living human beings again, and they stand up – alive again. Wow!

A gentle breeze when it’s hot cools us. The wind plays with kites and leaves and, in some parts of our beautiful world, with snowflakes. Birds enjoy gliding on the currents of the wind. But we know that the wind doesn’t always play nicely. Sometimes it acts like it’s angry and wants to blow things away, pull things down, or break things apart.

Wind is wonderful! Air is necessary. We need to breathe to live. We need clean air to be healthy. We need God's breath in us to live as God wants us to live, moved by God's Spirit. But God's breath follows its own way. We can't guess where it might take us, or what it might move us to do in order to bring God's goodness, truth, justice, peace, and happiness into our world in the unique way that only we can.

God waits for our "yes" as we choose how to move with or stand against the wind of God's Spirit.

Tim Buckley

Welcome and reunion

Upon arrival, each person receives a fan and is told: "What good wind brings you here!" Seated in a circle, we cool our neighbours by waving our fans, and they add: "You bring a wind of gentleness, coolness and joy..."

Various wind instruments are placed on a table in the centre (flutes, harmonicas, etc.). Everyone plays and listens to the musical instruments.

Breathing exercises are suggested to help you become more aware of the air.

Welcome song He's Got the Whole World in His Hands

Sharing

◆ Together

We can relive together the story of Ezekiel. We can all lie on the ground like we are the bones. One of our members can come and blow life into/onto us.

Take a deep breath in. What does that feel like? Breathe out. What does that feel like? You can use different things to create the air: breath, a hand, a fan, etc.

Once we have the breath we stand. We are all a standing army filled with the breath of the Lord called to be his disciples on earth.

- 1- What was it like to lie on the ground together as “bones”?
- 2- What did it feel like when air was breathed into us?
- 3- What does the breath of God do as it breathes new life into the bones?
- 4- What does the breath of God feel like? Where do you feel it?
- 5- What does the breath of God sound like? Where do you hear it?

◆ In small groups

Our Earth is surrounded by air. Living things need it to stay alive. Air is made up of gases and is invisible. It takes up space, has weight, and pushes. It can be squeezed into a smaller space and can be heated or cooled.

- 1- What are the different ways you notice air?
- 2- What are the different forms that air can take?

- 3- Can you remember a time when you felt like you couldn't get enough air?
- 4- How can I let God's breath move me to take care of people and creation?

Artists' Workshop (see page 99)

Paper Airplanes

Celebration

An Observation of Air.

Air is everywhere. It moves; it pushes. Air can lift things.

Do these demonstrations for all to see.

A/ Material: One large, flattened plastic garbage bag.

Take the flattened bag and begin moving it, catching the air of the room into the bag. Tie the open end, let everyone feel the bag once filled. The air-filled bag pushes against your hand. It takes up space; it has weight.

B/ Material: an empty soup can and a balloon.

Can you pick up this can with just a balloon and air? Ask the group for predictions. Test the predictions.

Place an empty balloon inside the can and blow it up until the sides of the balloon touch the inside of the can. Squeeze opening tightly to prevent air escape. Now, lift the can. Air is strong and can move things!

Prayer

O God, we know the importance of air for life.
May you be blessed and may each of our breaths praise you.

Thank you for the air that fills the sails.

4 ● The Wonder of Air and Wind

Thank you for the air that makes music possible,
the music that enchants us
and songs of joy for our difficult days.

Thank you for the air that carries
the planes above the clouds
so that we can better contemplate
your great work.

Thank you for the air that bursts forth
like a great gust of wind
announcing the coming of your burning Spirit.

Prayer of praise

Thank you, God,
for your breath of life upon the world.

Until next time

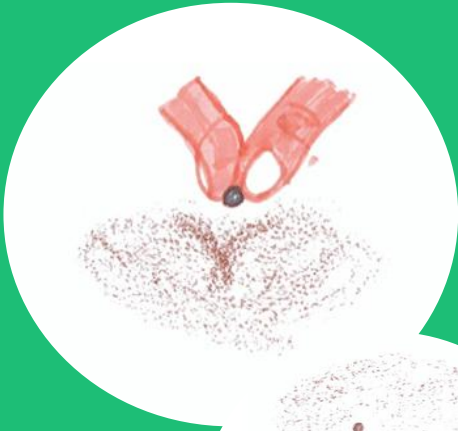
Thank you, Lord, for the invisible air we breathe that keeps us alive on planet earth. Feel it cool your skin, watch it move the clouds in the sky, and lift birds high into flight.

Song **Breathe**



5

The Wonder of Seeds



Christopher and Harshini Murphy
North America West



The word of the month

Reference Texts:

Genesis 1:11-13
John 12:24-26

Have you ever thought about the wonder of seeds?

I marvel at how a small seed can grow into a large tree.

Contained within the seed is

all that is necessary for it to be transformed from seed to tree.

The seed does not look like a tree when it falls into the ground.

Yet in the right environment, it splits open and begins to send

out roots going down, and a shoot going up. It then continues

to grow and grow. One day producing the same kind of seeds

from which it grew. Any gardener knows that this happens with

the seeds they plant in the soil. Farmers, too, know that the

seeds that they plant will produce many seeds which can then

be processed into the staple foods they need to survive.

Genesis 1:11-13 details for us the unfolding account of

creation when seeds and plants of every kind were spoken into

being. We are told that afterward God was pleased with what

he saw. Imagine God's pleasure in seeing that plants of all

kinds, both seed bearing and fruit bearing were able to

reproduce themselves ensuring continuation of life on this

planet.

Jesus often used seeds as important illustrators of truth. Seeds

are like the word of God sown into people's lives. The word of

God sometimes is snatched up before it can take root. Sometimes it is choked out by worries but sometimes as the word is received into the good soil of our hearts, it produces good fruit.

Like seeds that must fall into the ground and die in order to bear fruit, Jesus invites each of us to give our lives to him so that he can produce fruit in us.

Then we have the privilege of being a part of the Kingdom of God, spreading and sharing the seeds of faith, truth, peace and light with others. What joy we share when we, like mustard seeds, can grow into a precious community where the vulnerable bear fruit that is so essential to the world we live in.

Dave Gullman

Welcome and reunion

The facilitator greets each person, saying, "You are a seed of love." Sitting in a circle, each person receives a seed from our kitchens or the garden (tomato, apple, squash, sunflower, etc.). Guess what fruit this seed will produce.

Each person will place their seed in a bowl of soil in the center of the room, representing the community.

We can repeat: "You are a seed of love."

Let us recognize that the community is a fertile ground.

Welcome song He's Got the Whole World in His Hands

Sharing

◆ Together

Read the two passages from the text provided.

- 1- Why does God create a world full of plants and seeds in Genesis?
- 2- In the passage from the Gospel of John what happens when a seed falls on the ground?
- 3- What does it mean for the seed to die?
- 4- How are we like the seeds in both passages?
- 5- Do we give life like the seeds in Genesis?
- 6- Do we produce many seeds like in the Gospel of John?
- 7- What kind of “seeds” do we have in our hearts?
- 8- How can we make our “seeds” grow?

◆ In small groups

Seeds are considered the foundation to plant life on earth, because they grow, disperse and survive in many different environments. They contain a baby plant (embryo) and nutrients ready to start life after falling from a “mother” plant into the soil. Seeds produce the crops, trees, and grains we need to survive with nutrients to stay healthy.

- 1- What happens when you plant a seed?
- 2- How many kinds of seeds can you name?
What do they produce?
- 3- What is the biggest thing you know that has grown from a tiny seed?
- 4- How is your faith like a seed? What happens when you “plant” it?

Artists' Workshop (see page 101)

Make Maracas

Celebration

An observation of a seed.

Can you find the baby plant inside.

Materials: a variety of bean seeds and a magnifying lens.

A large, dry bean seed like lima bean, pole bean, or fava bean works best. You can wrap the dry bean with a wet paper towel and let it sit for an hour or longer before the meeting.

- 1- Gently remove the outer covering of the seed (the seed coat.)
- 2- Carefully separate the two halves (cotyledons) of the bean seed. These are the nutrients for the baby plant once it starts to grow.
- 3- Can you see the baby plant called the embryo on one end of the inside of the seed? Can you see the leaf and root?
- 4- Every seed has a baby plant inside ready to grow! God is so good!

Prayer

My God, we wish to give thanks
for the daily miracles that sprout
in the bosom of the earth for our good,
thanks to the seeds that die discreetly underground
to give us in due time our necessary food.

My God, what mysteries dwell in this humble beginning
which becomes so great as to rejoice our hearts
and dazzle our eyes with perpetual wonder.

Thank you, my God, for all these seeds of brotherhood
that each member has planted in the heart

of our community, showing that in simple,
fragile, and trembling beginnings,
you bring the power of your ever-present help.

Prayer of praise

Thank you, God, for your life
that is taking root within us.

Until next time

When you eat your fruits and vegetables tonight, give thanks
for the seeds that made these plants to nourish your body and
mind.

Song

It's Beginning to Rain



6

The Wonder of Trees



Gretchen Fuchs
USA East



The word of the month

Reference Texts:

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

Psalms 104:12, 16-17

Luke 6:43-45

The people in the Bible lived in or near deserts, where it's hot and dry almost all the time. Not much can grow there unless it doesn't mind the sun and

very little water. So, when they imagined the perfect place, they thought of a large oasis with lots of trees and water. This was the model for the Garden of Eden in the second creation story in the Book of Genesis. It's a cool place where lots of plants can grow. Trees play a big part in this story.

Trees give shade and offer a home and protection for many kinds of birds and smaller animals. People often use the wood from trees to build places of shelter for themselves and for their animals. Trees do an amazing thing that helps all of us creatures that breathe in air. They take in carbon dioxide (that we breathe out) and transform it back into oxygen that we need to live. Some people have described forests full of trees, like the Amazon, as huge lungs for our world.

It's delightful to climb a tree, sit along a branch and read, or dream. Sometimes it helps to climb a tree to be able to see further than you can on the ground. And we all can rest under the shade of a tree. Trees come in all sizes from short to majestically tall.

Jesus, in the parable stories he used for teaching, sometimes talked about trees. Once he said, "You can tell a good person

from a bad person by what they do (Good people are caring and do good things.) It's just like you can know a good tree from a rotten tree because of the kind of fruit they bear." We are called to bear only good fruit, to do good things for others, for creation, for ourselves. We do this by following Jesus.

Tim Buckley

Welcome and reunion

A designated person greets each member of the community by saying, "Welcome to the enchanted forest."

On a table in the center of the room, we find various items related to trees: photos, leaves or branches of trees, bark, pine gum, a plank, a wooden cross, a pine cone, etc. The members form a circle around the table and embrace their neighbors with both arms, saying "Let my branches envelop you."

Welcome song

He's Got the Whole World in His Hands

Sharing

◆ Together

Read the passages about trees. Form two teams. Ask members of one team to imagine that they are good trees and ask others to imagine that they are bad trees. Then have the groups mime the kind of trees they are. See if you can guess which is which.

1- How do you know if a tree is a good tree?

- 2- How do you know if a tree is a bad tree?
- 3- What would happen if you cut down all the trees (the good and the bad)? What is left?
- 4- How are we like trees? How can you tell a good person “a good tree” from a bad person “a bad tree”?
- 5- How can we show that we bear good fruit?

◆ In small groups

Trees are essential for life here on planet Earth. Their leaves make oxygen and clean the air for us to breathe. They provide food and medicine; they offer shelter and shade. They are important sources of wood and food. A tree is a flowering plant that grows from a woody stem or trunk; it branches into limbs and twigs that form different sizes and shapes.

- 1- Describe a tree that is important to you.
- 2- What do trees give you?
- 3- How is your community like a tree? Who is the trunk? Who are the branches? What is the fruit?
- 4- How can we share the fruit of our community with others?

Artists' Workshop (see page 101) Make leaf prints

Celebration

Observation.

- 1- As a group, go outside and find a tree to adopt.
- 2- Pay attention to how tall it is, its bark color and leaf shape.
- 3- Some details to observe:
 - ◆ What is its name? Date of your observation:
 - ◆ Give your tree a special “nickname”,
 - ◆ Does it get sunlight or is it in shade?
 - ◆ Feel the trunk's bark. Describe what you feel.

- ◆ Collect some leaves from your tree,
- ◆ What is one interesting thing about your tree?

Prayer

Thank you my brothers the trees
for giving me oxygen and fruit
and all these good times spent in your shade.

Thank you, my brothers the trees,
for welcoming our friends the birds
and for sheltering so many other animals.

Thank you, my brothers the trees,
for beautifying our horizons and for your wood,
so useful in our constructions.

Thank you, my brothers the trees,
for contributing to our redemption
by welcoming Jesus onto the wood of the cross.

Prayer of praise

God, how good it is to know we are rooted in You!

Until next time

Go outside and sit under a tree. Give thanks for all it does for us. Invite someone to your next meeting so that you can show all the “good fruit” it has.

Song

Here I Am Lord



7

The Wonder of Flowers



Alyson Ritzman
USA East



The word of the month

Reference Texts:

Psalm 103:15-18

Matthew 6:28-29

Imagine a world without flowers. Flowers bring beauty to creation. Flowers attract insects who carry pollen from flower to flower, thereby ensuring that the

plants remain fruitful. Flowers come in all shapes and sizes and grow in a variety of places from close to the ground to high up in tall trees. Flowers are intricately woven into the tapestry of God's wonderful world. Some flowers' only task seems to be to spread beauty. Others become the fruits we like to eat. Without flowers the world as we know it would cease to exist, it would be plain and fruitless.

Jesus spoke of the beauty of a flower saying, "Why worry about clothes? Look how the wild flowers grow: they do not work or make clothes for themselves. But I tell you that not even King Solomon with all his wealth had clothes as beautiful as one of these flowers. (Matthew 6:28-29 GNT)

Many years ago I was hiking in the high mountains of Colorado. As I made my way beyond the tree line I came to a sheltered spot among the rocks where to my surprise I saw some of the most beautiful flowers I had ever seen - the columbine. Imagine God delighting in this beauty on display where not many

people would venture. Such is the nature of the God we serve.

Faith and Light is like that alpine secret where we stumble upon beautiful people sharing the radiance of God's love and joy in unexpected ways and places. This may come through a smile, a simple gesture of love and friendship, or profound insight into the ways of God in the world. Without the gift of Faith and Light our world would not be the place of beauty we have discovered in communities where everyone belongs.

Dave Gullman

Welcome and reunion

Upon arrival, each person receives a flower and is told, "What a lovely fragrance you bring to us." Then, everyone sits in a circle and places their flower in a large vase in the center.

We then marvel at the beauty of the bouquet, which reflects the beauty of the community and each of its members. Everyone can reveal their favorite flower and explain why.

Welcome song

He's Got the Whole World in His Hands

Sharing

◆ Together

Read the two passages out loud. After the first time:

- ◆ What do the flowers look like?
- ◆ Where do we find flowers?
- ◆ Each person can reveal their favorite flower and explain why it is his/her favorite.

After the second time:

- ◆ Why has God made them?
- ◆ How are we like flowers?

After the third time:

- ◆ Take turns naming the different kinds of beauty everyone in your community brings to your meetings. It could be a smile, or a gentle word, or their laugh.
- ◆ What are we going to do with the beauty God has given us?

◆ In small groups

God's glory is shown through flowers! In most flowering plant life flowers use scent, color, and shape to attract insects, birds, and bats. Honeybees do not see color but are attracted to patterns on the flower petals directing them to the inner parts of the flower. There they find nectar and pollen to sustain life and to make their golden honey and pollen cakes!

Thanks to the animals that visit, a flower's pollen dispersal assures the continuation of its species. Flowers provide food for humans through the development of their fruits like apples, coffee and nuts!

- 1- Where do you see flowers in your neighborhood?
- 2- Make a list together of all the flowers you know.
- 3- What is your favorite kind of flower?
- 4- Do they last a long time or a short time?
- 5- How do you feel if you see a flower in a place that surprises you?
- 6- If your Faith and Light community were a flower, which one would it be?
- 7- How are flowers like the love of God?

Artists' Workshop (see page 102)
Make Tissue Paper Flowers

Celebration

Observation.

The BEAUTY of a Flower – Let's find its parts !

Materials: a flower for each person; magnifying lens.

It's best if all flowers can be the same so everyone sees the same thing in their specimen. Lilies and alstroemeria are really good samples. Their inner parts are easiest to see. It helps if someone can lead this observation giving each person time and help to discover the beauty of his/her flower.

What color are the petals of your flower? Does it have a scent? Carefully remove each petal and count them. Does every flower have the same number of petals?

- 1- Can you find the pollen makers (stamen) in the center of the flower? They may have pollen on them. Gently remove them and count how many you see.
- 2- In the very middle of the flower there is a pistil where the future seeds (ovules) reside. They will be at the very bottom. You can see them but they are very small. Use your magnifying lens if you have one.
- 3- In many flowering plants this bottom part of the pistil with its seeds inside forms the fruit. The fruit protects its seeds. The fruit can be a "true" fruit like an apple or a vegetable! Yes, a tomato is a fruit because it has seeds inside!

Prayer

O God of Love, Creator of Beauty!
Infinite gratitude for the flowers, their colors,

their fragrances, their diversity,
each one as beautiful as the next.
They are all filled with your Presence
and invite us to rejoice,
to celebrate life, Beauty and diversity.
May the colors of the flowers
lift our gaze toward the Beauty of Creation.
May the fragrance of the flowers
bring a balm of peace to our hearts.
May our communities be bouquets of flowers
radiating Beauty, Faith and also Light.

Prayer of praise

Blessed are you, Father,
for the beauty of the flowers.

Until next time

Give a flower to someone you know
and wish them well.

Song

Morning Has Broken



8

The Wonder of Plants for Food



Megan Harrell
North America West



The word of the month

Reference Texts:

Genesis 1:11-13

Daniel 1:8-16

John 15:1-5

In God's wonderful creation, there are so many kinds of plants that we humans can use to eat. They help to keep us healthy and strong.

Grains like corn and wheat and barley grow in fields. Fruit grows on trees, vines, and bushes. Vegetables grow on vines, stalks, underground – almost anywhere. People in every country of the world have favorite food-plants to eat.

There's a story in the Book of Daniel (Daniel 1:8-16) that talks about some young Israelite men who have been captured and taken away. The king of the country to which they are taken wants to see which of them might be able to help him rule his people. The king provides them with rich food and wine from his table, but these young men decide that it's better to follow God's Law about what they eat and drink. They ask for only vegetables and water. The man in charge of them is afraid that they will become weak and sick. The king will become angry with him, and he will be in trouble if that happens. The young Israelites ask to try it and see how they do. After a time, they are healthier than any of the other young men who serve the king, just because they obeyed what God wanted them to do.

In the Gospel of John (15:1-5), Jesus tells us that he is like a vine for us, and we are like its branches. God takes care of us, like a gardener takes care of grape vines, so that we can give good fruit. But for our lives to be able to give life to others, to help them to blossom and grow, we need to remain attached to Jesus. We keep connected with Jesus by doing what he teaches us to do.

Tim Buckley

Welcome and reunion

Upon arrival, each participant receives a piece of fruit or vegetable accompanied by the words: "How nourishing your presence is!"

Then, sitting in a circle, each person takes turns identifying their fruit or vegetable and placing it in the appropriate basket in the center (one for fruits, the other for vegetables).

Afterwards, everyone can name their favorite fruit and vegetable. Marvel at what each person can feed to the community.

Welcome Song

He's Got the Whole World in His Hands

Sharing

◆ Together

Focus on the reading from Daniel 1:8-16. Mime the passage. Imagine the table and all that would be on it.

Imagine the different kinds of people who would be around it, eating the food and wine. What are they like? What is Daniel like? What is he doing?

- 1- What do you imagine the royal food and wine was like?
- 2- Why do you think God tells Daniel not to eat it?
- 3- What does Daniel look like after eating vegetables?
- 4- What is your favorite fruit and your favorite vegetable?
Why?
- 5- Why does eating healthy food bring us closer to God?

◆ In small groups

Focus on the reading from John 15:1-5 Find a picture of a vine with branches.

- 1- What kinds of food grow on vines? Name as many as you can.
- 2- What is the relationship between the branches and the vine?
- 3- What does Jesus want us to do if we are the branches on his vine?
- 4- How can we show that we are the branches on Jesus' vine?

Artists' Workshop (see page 103)

Fruit Coasters

Celebration

Observation.

A Close Look at Fruits and Vegetables.

Materials: Coordinators need to bring in a variety of fruits and vegetables from your area. You can eat them after your observations! Fiesta!

1. Do you know the names of your fruits and vegetables? Name them.
2. Describe their shape, color, size. Fruits have seeds. Vegetables can be roots, stems, leaves or fruits.
3. Take the basket of vegetables from the welcome activity. Do your vegetables have seeds? All fruits hold and protect the seed/s inside them. So, even a vegetable can be a fruit, like the tomato! Move vegetables that are fruits into the fruit basket (you may need to cut open the vegetable to determine if there are seeds inside.)

Prayer

O God, how grateful we are for this abundance of food that satisfies our senses and appetites.

You always send us the “manna” that we need in the deserts of our lives.

Through Christ Jesus, you give us the Bread of Life and the Wine, fruits of your Love.

May we, by your grace,
also feel this communion
with all humanity so that
we may bear much fruit
in respect, mutual support and sharing.

8 ● The Wonder of Plants for Food

Prayer of praise

Thank you, God, for allowing us to bear abundant fruit.

Until next time

Take time to eat vegetables and make healthy choices. Be like Daniel and treat your body with good food that will make it healthy, the way God wants.

Song

Jesus Make Us One



9

The Wonder of Water Animals



Marie-Josée Bélanger
Canada East



The word of the month

Reference Texts:

Genesis 1:20-23
Psalm 104:24-27
Luke 5:1-11

Have you ever watched fish jump or porpoises swim? It is a thing of beauty to watch and to marvel at God's incredible artistry. Like all that has come before in the

account of creation, these water animals are a part of God's wonderful world.

Fish come in many shapes, sizes and colors. Some fill us with wonder while others fill us with fear. Fish filter oxygen out of the water in order to sustain their lives, while sea creatures, like dolphins or whales rise to the surface of the water to take in oxygen from the air. All of them are dependent on God to supply the food they need to survive. The water is their home.

In many parts of the world people rely on fish and other sea creatures for their daily food. These animals of the sea both give and receive life as a part of an ecosystem that holds together wonderfully when we take good care of it.

We read of the extravagant abundance out of which God provides for his people in our Gospel story for today. One day Jesus noticed some men washing their nets from a fruitless night of fishing. Jesus spoke to the one named Simon saying, "Go out where it is deeper, and let down your nets to catch

some fish.” Simon wondered at this command. They had tried all night but caught nothing. Reluctantly, he went to deeper water and threw out his net for another try. He caught so many fish that his net almost tore. After filling two boats so full of fish that they almost sank, Jesus said to Simon, “Don’t be afraid; from now on will be catching people.” Then we read that they pulled their boats up on the beach and leaving everything followed Jesus.

In Faith and Light we too have experienced God’s good gifts. We have heard this call to follow Jesus wherever he leads us. We know that the creator of the animals of the sea cares for each one of us as his children. We too, like Simon, can catch people in the net of God’s grace.

Dave Gullman

Welcome and reunion

Each participant is greeted with the words: "You are a beautiful fish in our aquarium." They are given a drawing or a photo of an aquatic animal.

Then, while sitting in a circle, those who have the same aquatic animal come together to form a school of fish. Then, by pretending to be fish, the groups will place the pictures on a large blue cardboard sheet (representing the water) laid out on the floor in the middle.

Welcome Song
He's Got the Whole World in His Hands

Sharing

◆ **Together**

Mime Luke 5:1-11.

Imagine how tired the men are. How would they show this? Imagine how heavy their nets would be even when they don't have fish. How many people would it take to bring in the nets? Have other boats come and help them. Don't forget that fish are slippery and don't want to be caught!

- 1- Why do you think Jesus wants to go out into deep water?
- 2- Why do you think the disciples are able to catch so many fish?
- 3- What does Simon Peter teach us?
- 4- Why do you think the disciples are willing to follow Jesus after they experience catching all these fish?

◆ **In small groups**

- 1- How can we take good care of the seas, lakes and rivers so that the animals of the water have a good place to live?
- 2- What do you think it is like to catch a fish?
- 3- What would you do if you caught so many fish you could feed your whole community?
- 4 What do you think it would feel like to catch people for Jesus?
- 5 What are ways that we can help catch people for Jesus?

Artists' Workshop (see page 104)
Rainbow Fish

Celebration

Observation.

A close look at a real fish.

Material :

The coordinator brings a real fish (tilapia) to appreciate its characteristics for survival. A fish does have a smell, so you will have to clean it well before the observation but do not cut it open.

- ◆ How big is the fish? Measure it. Feel its scaly skin.
- ◆ How does it swim? (Count its fins.) Describe how they feel? (Sharp).
- ◆ Where are its eyes? Why do you think they are on the sides of its head?
- ◆ Find its gill flaps? Gills help the fish to breath under water. Do we breathe with gills? (Lungs)

● **Game: Funny Aquatic Animals**

Materials: strips of paper, pencils.

Each player is given a strip of paper and a pencil. Each person draws the head of an animal with its neck at the very top of their strip of paper, then fold the strip twice over itself to hide the drawing, leaving only a small part of the neck visible.

Each player then passes their strip to the person next to them and, continuing from the neck, draws the upper half of the animal's body. They fold the strip twice so that only a small part of the half-body remains visible, and then passes it on to the next person.

Each player then draws the other half of the body in continuation, folds paper strip, and passes it to their neighbor, who will complete the drawing. When the drawing is finished, everyone unfolds their strips and the players will be delighted to discover some funny animals!

Prayer

Water, you are a wonder because of
the incredible diversity of your inhabitants
who glide on your waves like children on slides,
And who fill your depths
with an infinite palette of colors,
and who pay tribute to the Most High
with their whole being.

Yes, my God, these streamlined creatures
with their graceful movements
wish to bear powerful witness to Jesus who came from Heaven,
and who, against all odds, commands the raging waves
to calm their wrath with a harmonious gesture
allowing us to taste his Life in the peace that has been restored
and continue contemplating the scene.

Prayer of praise

Oh my God, I praise you for all this fantastic aquatic life!

Until next time

When you take a drink of water today, think about the many
creatures that depend on it to survive just like you. Thank God
for the water that sustains us, blesses us, cleanses us.

Song

Peace Is Flowing Like a River



10

The Wonder of Air Animals



Sonia Courcy
Canada East



The word of the month

Reference Texts:

Genesis 1:20-23
Psalm 104:16-17
Matthew 6:25-27

Seeing birds and butterflies gracefully filling the air, we can be amazed at God's creativity, playfulness, and love of beauty. The variety of sizes, shapes and colors

flashing before us, floating around, soaring high above is delightful. Then there's the symphony of songs and calls of the birds. But we need to take time to look, to see, to listen and to savor God's work that surrounds us.

The butterfly is often used as a symbol for transformation, passing through stages before it comes out - a butterfly. Jesus invites us to change so that we can become our fullest, most beautiful self.

These creatures of the air have a very important role in helping to keep this world of ours healthy and well. Birds, butterflies and bees spread pollen from plant to plant so that the plants can produce fruit and seeds. Birds carry seeds from place to place so that trees and other plants can sprout and grow in new homes. Everything in creation works very well unless something destroys its delicate balance.

Jesus asked us to look at the birds of the air. There's plenty of God's good gifts for everyone and for every creature. Besides,

worrying is a waste of time and energy. Worry never makes anything better. It can't! Worry turns us in on ourselves, and we can get lost inside ourselves. We will then spend our lives in fear, asking ourselves, "Will there be enough of what I need?" We might even forget about other people and their needs. Jesus invites us to trust our loving Abba-God who cares for us more than we can even imagine. Don't worry! There's enough if we share with one another.

Tim Buckley

Welcome and reunion

A member of the coordinating team greets each person, saying, "Hello, my beautiful bird!" and they are given a bird (picture, origami, etc.).

In the center of the circle formed by the participants, a brown or green "mat" is placed on which a cylindrical container filled with branches is set, representing a tree.

Each person will take turns placing their bird on the branches and then will express the sense of wonder that the birds inspire in them.

Welcome song

He's Got the Whole World in His Hands

Sharing

◆ Together

Read Matthew 6: 25-27.

- 1- When do you worry? What do you worry about?
- 2- What can we do to stop worrying?
- 3- What does Jesus mean when He says life is more than food?
- 4- What does it mean for the body to be more than clothes?
- 5- What can our bodies do? How can we use them to serve the Lord?

◆ In small groups

From our scripture readings we hear about birds: doves, pigeons, song birds, yet there are other animals that need air for flight and survival: bats and also insects like butterflies and bees!

Animals that fly have unique physical characteristics: wings or skin membranes, lightweight or hollow bones, strong chest muscles, and rapid heart rates.

- 1- What would it be like to be a bird, a bee or a butterfly?
- 2- What could you see? What would you feel?
- 3 How are the birds, butterflies and all creatures like a community? Like Faith and Light?

Artists' Workshop *(see page 105)*

Peace Doves

Celebration

Observation.

Do you have a favorite bird? Why?

Smallest bird on Earth: Bee Hummingbird is about 2 ½ inches (5.5cm) long and weighs less than a penny (1.8-2.5 gm) and

found in Cuba. Its wings beat up to 80 times per second! It laps up nectar from flowers. Its nest is the size of a sewing thimble and his egg is about the size of a coffee bean. Be sure to show how small this bird is!

Largest bird on Earth: The Ostrich is our largest bird native to Africa. It does not fly but can run up to 70km/h (43 mi/h). It stands 2.8m (9.2 feet) tall, and it weighs over 156 kg (about 346 lbs.) It lays the largest egg, too. Show an example of size.

Materials: Coordinators bring in a variety of bird photos/ drawings, some of them in large format. Notice the beaks, feet and tail of these birds. Feathers are great to observe if you have them. Move them in the air to feel how light weight they are.

Can you name one or two of the birds you see every day? Learn more about them from books, magazines, photos or internet!

In small groups, take the images in large format, then cut it into pieces numbering the back of each piece. Give one piece to each person then call numbers to put the picture back together.

Prayer

God, how magnificent are your works!

Everything in your Creation has a purpose.

Thank you for the variety of birds, their beauty, their song, their strength, and their precious role in nature.

Thank you for giving us the courage of the butterfly which invites us to transformation and to welcoming a new life.

10 ● The Wonder of Air Animals

We give you thanks for the white Dove,
symbol of the Holy Spirit, may it come and place
in us the Presence and Peace of Christ Jesus.

Amen.

Prayer of praise

Thank you, God, together with the birds,
we sing of our love.

Until next time

Go outside and listen to the birds, give thanks for the songs
they sing every day praising God.

Song

What a Wonderful World



11

The Wonder of Land Animals



Rodrigo Perez
USA East



The word of the month

Reference Texts:

Genesis 1:24-25; 7:1-3
 Psalm 104:20-22
 Luke 19:28-38

What a wonder to watch horses gallop across an open meadow, or to smile as young lambs or kid goats playfully dance through

fields of clover. What a wonder to see the slow ways of a turtle or the speed of a cheetah. Wherever we live and work we find God's wonderful creation of animals of the land which God created on the sixth day.

Both domesticated and wild animals are a part of God's good creation. The turtle's shell is her home and provides protection. The cheetah's speed helps it catch its prey. Some animals are scavengers and function as garbage collectors. Some convert grass and other vegetation into useful protein. Some swing from tree limbs while others plod along low to the ground. All are important to the give and take required to maintain the "good" pronounced at creation. Each animal is uniquely adapted to fulfill its role in the orchestration of creation's symphony. When we remove one kind of animal from the whole picture, we change the balance of creation everywhere.

Donkeys are among the most mentioned animals in the Bible. Balaam's donkey spoke to him. Joseph's donkey carried pregnant Mary to Bethlehem. And Jesus chose a young donkey to ride into Jerusalem. The donkey was a sign of the peaceful mission that he came to fulfill.

Like the animal kingdom we in Faith and Light come together as a diverse yet good creation. We each bring different gifts to offer to the whole. When we function as a community with each member playing their part it is a beautiful thing to behold. No one goes too fast and no one is too slow for we value each person as an intricate part of the whole community. Like Jesus, we choose to gather and serve in ways that bring peace.

Dave Gullman

Welcome and reunion

Each person is greeted with the words: "Welcome, friends of the animals" and is given a photo, a picture, a drawing, or a figurine of a land animal. It's a great opportunity to bring your pet along. In the center of the circle formed by the participants, a large brown cardboard (representing a soil-like surface) is

placed, featuring images of various terrestrial habitats (farm, jungle, desert, forest, mountain, North Pole, etc.).

Each participant will place their animal in the appropriate habitat, while imitating its call. A brief moment of wonder may follow.

Welcome Song He's Got the Whole World in His Hands

Sharing

◆ Together

Mime Luke 19:28-38. Imagine Jesus coming into Jerusalem. Have members of your community create a passage for Jesus to walk down. Throw coats or leaves on the ground for Jesus to walk on. Shout “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord.” Have different members of the community take turns being Jesus while the crowd praises Him.

- 1- When you think about kings what do you imagine? How would they come into a city?
- 2- Why does the crowd throw coats or leaves on the ground in front of Jesus?
- 3- How did you feel when you walked through the crowd? How do you think Jesus felt when he entered Jerusalem?
- 4- Why does Jesus ride a donkey? What kind of king enters a city on a donkey? What will his kingdom be like?

◆ In small groups

Animals that live on land are as vast in numbers as those that live in the water! There are those with backbones (vertebrates) and those without (invertebrates).

Vertebrates have internal skeletons protected by muscles and skin, well developed body systems with brain, heart, lungs or gills, liver and kidneys. They are fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals.

Invertebrates are animals without backbones and include insects, spiders, crustaceans (crabs, scorpions), mollusks (snails), worms. Many have a hard exoskeleton that must be shed to allow for growth (butterfly).

Many of these animals are pollinators essential for our food crops; many are sources of food for larger animals; many are decomposers breaking down organic matter that enrich our soils. We are all interconnected as God has planned living together in harmony!

- 1- What animals did Noah bring on to the ark?
- 2- What did Noah need to take care of all the animals on the ark?
- 3- How do you imagine that Noah made sure all the animals on the ark lived in harmony?
- 4- How can we take care of all of God's animals?
- 5- If we imagine that our Faith and Light community is like Noah's ark, who is on the ark? Who is missing from the ark? How can we make sure that everyone in our community is well taken care of? How can we make space for everyone?

Artist's Workshop (see page 106)

Animal Masks

Celebration

Observation.

Look at mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians.

Materials: This can be a “bring in your pet day”! Share how you feel about your pet. Hold a parade of pets where everyone can see and touch the animals if its safe to do so.

Or

Coordinators bring in a variety of animal photos or drawings and look at the characteristics. Check out the website for animals on the next page.

Game: categorize animals into 4 Vertebrate types; Mammals skin is covered with hair/fur; Birds are covered with feathers; Reptiles have scaly skin; Amphibians have smooth, slimy skin. You can do this activity in teams or individually, asking each person to choose a drawing and place it in the correct animal category.

Land Animals websites:

https://www.magnific.com/search?format=search&last_filter=selection&last_value=1&query=Land+animals&selection=1#uuid=d0751742-210b-4e3c-85c2-9025c1ded877

Prayer

Praise be to you, my God,
for all these land animals, many of whom serve humanity.

May they be treated with care and respect.

Let me see you in their eyes
and feel your presence in their company.

May I receive your love

through their signs of affection,
and remain faithful to you, Divine Creator.
Just like the ox and the donkey beside Jesus,
may I be a loving presence
that comforts and warms hearts.
Amen.

Prayer of praise

Thank you, God, for our friends the land animals.

Until next time

We thank God for all the creatures who share the planet earth
with us.

Song

All God's Critters



12

The Wonder of Humans



Victorine Clément
Canada East



The word of the month

Reference Texts:

Genesis 1:26-31; 2:7-25

Psalm 8:1-9

Psalm 139:13-15

We come to the awesome mystery that is us, all of us, and each one of us! Human beings have a special place and role within God's magnificent

creation. The Book of Genesis has two different stories about how God created, and two descriptions of how God made humans. In the first God calls us into being as the final masterwork. We are made in the image and likeness of God. We can imagine, laugh, think, dream and love.

In the second story, God carefully forms us out of clay and then breathes the Holy Spirit into us. God recognizes that we can't live well alone, so God fashions a helper for us. We need others. We need community. We need to be careful because we can choose to do what God wants us to do or choose to do what God doesn't want us to do.

Think of it! We're all so unique and different. We each have gifts, and we each have limitations. Our backgrounds, personalities and abilities are like a tapestry of colors, shapes, and sizes. All our diversity mirrors something of the mystery of God. We are entrusted with a tremendous task – to reflect the glorious, loving image of God to our world, especially to the

people around us. It's only together that we can present a true picture of God.

God gives us the responsibility to take care of all of creation, including ourselves. We need to treat the air, the water, the soil, and all living beings in a way that others who come after us will have a healthy, beautiful home filled with a variety of good things for everyone. After all, God saw that all of us, and every part of creation, are very good.

Tim Buckley

Welcome and reunion

Before the meeting, the coordinating team cut out some hearts in cardboard. On each one is written a Bible verse about love (examples : 1 Chron 16, 34 ; Nehemiah 9, 17 ; Ps 129, 7 ; Ps 6, 5 ; Ps 142, 8 ; Ps 32, 5 ; Ps 12, 6 ; Jn 13, 34 ; Jn 13, 35 ; Jn 15, 10 etc.)

Upon arrival, each person is given one of these hearts and is told: « Jesus loves you. »

Sitting in a circle, each person takes turns reading aloud the Bible passage written on their heart.

Welcome song

He's Got the Whole World in His Hands

Sharing

◆ Together

Pick one of the reference texts. Read it out loud.

- 1- What does God create?
- 2- How does God create humans?
- 3- What special gifts does God give humans?

Read the passage again. This time listen for the words that describe humans.

- 1- What words do you hear? Share those words.
- 2 How are you like the way humans are described?
- 3- How are you not like the way humans are described?

◆ In small groups

We, Humans, are wonderfully made! We are male and female created in God's image! We have brains and specialized body systems that keep us alert and able to adapt to changes in our environment. We are social and curious. We are plant and animal eaters; we walk upright on two legs and have genetic characteristics that allow us to develop unique skills.

- 1- When I think about God creating me in a special and loving way, what do I feel about this?
- 2- What does it mean for me to be in charge of creation?
- 3- What can our Faith and Light community do to celebrate God's gift of creation?
- 4- How can we help make our world better for those who are coming after us?

Artists' Workshop (see page 107)

Paper Bag Puppets

Celebration

Observation.

A) Let's look at our genetic characteristics.

We inherit our genetic characteristics from our parents through their genes.

Materials: Small mirrors or one big mirror to share with group

You can chart the results for your group.

- 1- Eye colors – brown, blue or different (green, purple, hazel).
- 2- Attached or Unattached ear lobe – Ear lobe bottom is free & moveable or not.
- 3- Tongue roller or non-tongue roller – sides of tongue roll into a “U” or not.
- 4- Touch nose tip with your tongue or not able to touch nose tip with tongue.
- 5- Straight or bent “pinky” fingers – two little finger outer edges together or bent?

B) How important is your thumb?

Materials: medical tape, a variety of large and small items to pick up.

Tape the thumb to the inside of a dominant hand. Now see how many items each person can pick up using only the other four fingers.

Prayer

Lord, we give you thanks,
for having created humankind,
the masterpiece of your Creation.

May we, through faith and the grace of the Holy Spirit,
be witnesses to your love,

your mercy, your humility, and your wisdom.
You have entrusted us with the responsibility
to care for all of Creation
with respect and compassion.

In the footsteps of Jesus Christ,
May we live in brotherhood and become peacemakers,
worthy sons and daughters of God.
Amen.

Prayer of praise

Thank you, Lord, for creating us
in your image and likeness.

Until next time

How wonderful our Creation is! Thank you, God, for our
amazing bodies!

Song

Celebrate in Every Land



Christmas

**“Hail, thou that art highly favored,
the Lord is with thee.”**

Luke 1:28

At this unique moment in history, Mary is invited to share in the joy of the fulfillment of the promise made to her ancestors. We too, within Faith and Light, two thousand years later, are called to rejoice with Mary in this same grace that is granted to us each day.

For us, it all began with a project organized by the Diocese of Argenson. Parishioners were invited to take part in a pilgrimage to Lourdes. A family with two children, both of whom had intellectual disabilities, had signed up. Camille and Gérard were looking forward to the pilgrimage with great joy. However, the organizers rejected their request to participate because of their two sons' disabilities.

Faced with this refusal, their joy turned to deep sorrow. Against all odds, though troubled and disappointed, the parents nevertheless decided to go on this diocesan pilgrimage, alone, as a family, as a small domestic church. They faced many obstacles. No one wanted to host them. There was no room for them in the hotels in Lourdes. Faced with so much rejection, the parents felt just like Mary and Joseph, anxious at the thought of not being able to find a place for their family.

Meditation - Christmas

After being turned away many times, they finally found an accommodation. However, they were not allowed into the dining room. They had to eat their meals in their room every day of their pilgrimage.

Upon returning from Lourdes, they were filled with deep sorrow, profoundly hurt by their experience as parents of children with disabilities. They were not allowed to join the diocesan pilgrimage group and were not welcomed in the same way as the other families. Their family has endured the painful experience not only of rejection but also of isolation, and a lack of kindness and concern.

Faced with so much rigidity and intolerance during this pilgrimage to Lourdes, Camille and Gérard, the parents of Loïc and Thaddée, children with intellectual disabilities, decided to set out on their own journey. Since they knew Jean Vanier, they shared with him the burden of their pain at not having been able to experience the fellowship and welcome of their different family, even though God had visited them through their children. Jean then put them in touch with Marie-Hélène Mathieu, who worked with children with disabilities.

Together, they decided to organize a pilgrimage to Lourdes. After two years of perseverance and tireless work, 12 000 people answered the call to join them on a pilgrimage to Lourdes. It was a pilgrimage long desired and eagerly awaited. Parents, friends, children with disabilities, and volunteers from all walks of life, coming from every corner of the world, are united by a shared reality and gather in Lourdes, driven by a common spirit of compassion.

Meditation - Christmas

A celebration, a gathering, an outpouring of joy then erupted, overwhelming everyone present. At Easter in 1971, Faith and Light was born from this vast crowd gathered on pilgrimage in Lourdes, in a new Bethlehem! Families like Loïc's and Thaddée's have found a bright light there - the kind you'd place on a streetlamp. Since then, these families have been lighting up our world.

New life has sprung from the darkness. The wound of a painful cross becomes a "kairos" from God, the moment of His active Presence. From immense distress, God brought forth joy, the very joy of Mary.

This joy has been transformed into a new life sheltered by God. Rejoice, families overflowing with grace; God is with you. Rejoice, family at last recognized! Become a missionary! The Church awaits the Good News that only you can reveal in this world.

Merry Christmas! A wonderful Christmas! A joyful Christmas!
May the Holy Family be with you!

Father Pierre Desroches
Chaplain, Eastern Canada

The Feast of Light

“Simeon went to the temple [...] Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, for my eyes have seen your salvation, [...] a light for revelation to the Gentiles”

Luke:2, 29-30,32

It is also the patronal feast day of Faith and Light. Forty days after Christmas, the Church invites us to celebrate the light. Although Jesus is only forty days old, barely a month and a half, his coming into our world is already stirring up a new energy. He sets things in motion. Through his presence, he enlivens and illuminates both the liturgical treasure of the Temple and the ancient hope of the people of Israel.

In the presence of Jesus, the elderly prophetess Anna and the elderly Simeon are moved by the Holy Spirit; whereas Mary and Joseph are guided by traditional law, moved by their faith.

The act of circumcision is deeply rooted in the sacred history of the Jewish people. Through this gesture, it is marked in their very flesh. Three weeks later, the Holy Family sets out for the Temple to present Jesus to the Lord. The Circumcision and the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple are two events in which Mary and Joseph, amid the loss and separation they are experiencing, recognize God as the primary authority and master of the history of the infant Jesus entrusted to them.

Traditional rites, though often performed mechanically,

Meditation - Feast of Light

nevertheless contain a liberating power that sheds light on both the mystery of the Church and that of our families. God, in the uniqueness and particularities of our child, does not entrust to us a failure of His creation. It is no longer a matter of seeking which personal or genetic traits explain the difference in our child, but of awakening to what God wishes to accomplish, in him and with us, his parents.

Our child is a gift from God. He or she has been entrusted to us, placed in our care. To confine the child to his or her disability is to lose sight of the incredible trust God places in us through him or her. He entrusts us with the responsibility of revealing the beauty and the incredible mission of this tiny, different being, called to lead us toward a liberating place. To fully accept his or her disability is to protect ourselves from rebellion and allow ourselves to enter into this gift from God, the very best for us.

Clearly, their arrival moves us deeply. Yet it also serves as a reminder of what truly matters. It challenges our certainties, our visions, and our plans for our child's future. But doesn't their arrival touch us deeply, like a breath capable of changing our perception of the greatness and infinite value of their presence with us?

When I heard God calling me to make room in my life for Claude, who was seven years old at the time, much like Joseph, I first felt my own smallness and a sense of unworthiness. However, this call never struck me as a burden, a weight, or a burden, but rather as a path in life to fulfill the mission God had entrusted to me.

Meditation - Feast of Light

After forty-eight years of walking alongside Claude, who has severe cerebral palsy, I can say that his presence has transformed my life. It has given deep meaning to my priestly vocation. Claude, my son, has enabled me to become a meaningful witness to so many men and women who have heard the same call, each following their own unique path.

Claude made me his father, and I made him my son. This fatherhood was meant to grow. I was invited to grow alongside Claude's childhood, adolescence, and adult life. Each of these stages was a time of transition for the family, moments of death and resurrection, like those of Easter.

My son confirmed through the Word that I was meant to share this with parents going through a situation similar to mine, as well as with families facing other challenges.

God brought together two or three people - a priest and a child, a couple and a child with severe physical disabilities, a family and a child with an intellectual disability - so that each of them might bring light. This light dispels the darkness and reveals God's infinite love to those who live in the shadows.

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.
(Isaiah 9,1) ; (Mt. 4, 16)

Happy Feast of Light! May it shine brightly among you! "Carry the light, and life will spring forth. Carry the light, and hope will be reborn." (Paraphrase of the hymn "Porter la lumière" by S. Madeleine Dubé)

Father Pierre Desroches
Chaplain, Eastern Canada

Easter

**"Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel!
Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem!"**

Zeph 3 (14, 17)

In Mary, who leads us to her son Jesus:

Let us lift up our hands and acclaim our King. He is risen! Christ is alive!

His joy fills the earth. God is clearly and resolutely on the side of joy. He awaits us in his joy and opens up before us a path of life in Jesus, the source of all new light.

We, the members of Faith and Light, have encountered this joyful God in the little ones and the poor. In the wounded humanity of Jesus, we have recognized Christ's victory. How can we not leap for joy? Where sorrow and despair once reigned, joy and hope have sprung up and given new meaning to our family life.

Let us not allow our fears and anxieties to cast a shadow over this moment of faith. The One who is coming is already here. Death has been defeated. Evil has been vanquished forever. In his victory, the promise of eternal life is fulfilled. A mystery hidden since the dawn of time, our salvation is revealed in the

Meditation - Easter

Risen One, until the end of time. On this Easter night, a light bursts forth where there was once only chaos and darkness. This Paschal light transforms us from within; it leads us out of darkness and into a new life. A joyful mystery, now made radiant.

Easter reveals the heart of our faith. God leads us through the Paschal mystery of ascending, descending, and emerging. In other words, ascending to the cross, descending into the tomb, and emerging alive. This is the path He offers us. This is our path in life. We are no longer alone. The triumph of the Resurrection lies in sharing in God's presence among us, as our partner in our families.

Who would have thought that bringing together children with severe disabilities would bring such immense joy? Who would have thought that Faith and Light would have its humble beginnings with two parents and two young boys with intellectual disabilities?

Who would have thought that in this small, humble church, where they were barely recognized, underestimated, and harshly rejected, God was blessing that initial spark and dwelling within His home? From those fragile beginnings, all the way to the great Easter celebration in Lourdes in 1971, with twelve thousand witnesses gathered around families of children with disabilities, a deep joy sprang from their shared sorrow. A Word resounded and spread throughout the world.

Now more than ever, this Word of fullness, of complete and

Meditation - Easter

total joy, placed within us at Lourdes on Easter Sunday, speaks to our fragile, wounded, wandering, and chaotic world. This full light does not belong to us. This Word has been entrusted to us. To keep it for ourselves, among ourselves, would be to lose sight of our mission and to greatly misunderstand it.

We are the custodians and privileged witnesses of this Word from *a God who is with us, who finds joy in us.*

May the power of the Risen One's love be revealed in our weakness and frailty. May our hope shine upon those who seek God, as they journey toward a life of abundance in Christ, who lives among us.

Happy Easter, Happy Easter, Happy Easter!

Father Pierre Desroches
Chaplain, Eastern Canada

Pentecost

“They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit”.

(Ac 2,3-4)

In its early days, during a pilgrimage to Lourdes in 1971, Faith and Light found its true identity in the reality of a Pentecost. In the presence of Mary, amidst the deep wounds of our families, joy took on the form of exultation. It gushed forth like a living, radiant, overflowing spring. A purifying and healing fire passed through hearts, transforming suffering into fertile seeds of peace and freedom.

Until that miraculous day of founding, our families lived on the margins, filled with anxiety. They remained in the background, sometimes hiding in their guilt. Silent. On this new Pentecost, they have stepped out of the shadows, immersed in the joy of a communion they have found. A light renewed them to the very depths of their being. It consecrated them as prophets. The Spirit that hovered over the waters at the dawn of the world now hovered over these humble families and those around them. The radiant light of a new day dawned within them.

Meditation - Pentecost

Parents, friends, and people with disabilities discovered that their presence and fellowship brought joy to share. Moved by the Spirit, the fear that had paralyzed them began to fade. They moved from withdrawal to boldness, from silence to the Word, from fear to mission.

Moved by this profound experience, they realized they were bearers of *Good News* that they could not keep to themselves.

True, the fire of Pentecost did not remove their limitations. But it transformed them. In the Holy Spirit, their reality was no longer a paralyzing obstacle: it became a path, a passage, a place of encounter and communion. Where everything seemed closed off, the Holy Spirit threw the doors wide open. Families living with severely disabled children became a living Word of communion and joy.

Today, as the years go by, we face new challenges. The aging of our communities and major global migration patterns are profoundly changing our reality. Since its founding, Faith and Light has spread throughout the world. While in some countries Faith and Light remains thriving, in many Western countries our aging families bear the burden of old age. Some have joined the Triumphant Church, as we well know. Their lives have left a mark that continues to bear fruit for us today. A Word of fire.

Isn't the reality of aging communities a Sign from God calling us to transform our understanding of our mission? Could this passage not be a return to the original inspiration of Faith and

Meditation - Pentecost

Light - a renewed, unprecedented impulse?

At the very heart of our condition, now made fragile by age, a grace emerges for us who are immersed in the mystery of death and resurrection. A new call is taking shape through communities formed by migration. These communities are a new hope revealed to us. We have the grace and the privilege of bearing witness to them. They are a Word offered to us, a Word in the myriad hues of their cultures.

We should learn from them. We should welcome the gift that they have become. We should commune with them. We should receive them with open arms, like the Prodigal Father. In them, a transfigured Word continues to sprout and blossom, beautifully.

The Sign of these new local communities, passionate and vibrant, taking root within Faith and Light is a continuation of the initial dynamism of our founding: a Pentecost in which the fire of the Spirit spreads to all languages and all nations.

What we are witnessing today is not merely a sociological phenomenon, but a sign of a luminous, universal mystery. Our God is at work, he who makes all things new. Light in the gaze. Light in the Word. Light in the humble gestures of daily life. Light in a welcoming and fraternal silence. The joyful delight of new beginnings.

How can we not rejoice and give thanks to the Spirit of Pentecost, when everyone hears the same Good News in their own language? How can we not welcome this fire that gives us

Meditation - Pentecost

the courage to love? How can we not acknowledge God's faithfulness, who entrusts us even today with the mission to bear witness through our steadfast presence and our loving kindness?

Thus the Church's communal presence endures. Thus communities are formed, called to shine their light upon the world's lampstand, wherever shadow, isolation, and despair reign. Through the Holy Spirit, Faith and Light remains a lampstand, illuminated by a communion overflowing with the Living God.

Happy Pentecost! Have a wonderful Pentecost!

Father Pierre Desroches
Chaplain, Eastern Canada

Artists' Workshop

The images can be downloaded from this link:

<https://www.foietlumiere.org/en/community/guidelines/artists-workshop-2026-2027-guidelines>

1 • The Wonder of Light

Stained Glass Tissue Paper Cross

Materials: for one cross (*multiply by the number of participants*) wax paper, clear packing tape, colored tissue paper, black construction paper or cardstock, ruler, tape, scissors.



Preparation (for one cross)

BEFORE THE MEETING

Cut black cardstock pages into 1-inch (2.5 cm) strips, then use ruler to cut 1-inch strips in the following lengths:

- ◆ Two that are 5 inches (12.5 cm) long,
- ◆ Eight that are 3 inches (7.5cm) long

Cut two of the eight in half to fill in the four ends of the cross.

DURING THE MEETING

- 1- Give each person 2 sheets of wax paper, tissue paper, scissors, and strips of black cardboard.
- 2- Cut tissue paper into small pieces (about 1 inch / 2.5 cm).
- 3- Cut wax paper about 8-1/2 by 11 inches (A4 size).
- 4- Assemble black cardstock strips on wax paper to make an outline of a cross. Start at bottom and assemble up to the top. Slightly overlap where pieces meet.



Artists' Workshop



- 5- Put strips of tape sticky side down over the cross and wax paper with about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (1 cm) of overlap.
- 6- Slowly peel the cross and tape off of the wax paper.
- 7- Turn over and lay down on top of wax paper with the sticky side up.
- 8- Cover entire inside of the cross with the tissue paper. Overlapping is fine.
- 9- Place more strips of tape on top - sticky side down –smooth it out so it sticks all over.
- 10-Trim around the black edges of the cross but leave a small clear border around the outside.

Beautiful when displayed in a window!

2 ● The Wonder of Water

Musical Bottles

Materials: 5 or 6 clear glass bottles, food coloring, water, wooden spoons or sticks.

Preparation

- 1- Fill the bottles with water to different levels.
- 2- Add the coloring.
- 3- Line the bottles up against one another in decreasing order.
- 4- Tap with sticks and listen to the tones.



Can you play a song?

3 ● The Wonder of Land

Painting Rocks

Materials: rocks (flatter work better), bright acrylic paint or water-color, paintbrushes.

Preparation

- 1- Gather rocks and wash them with soap and water before the meeting.
- 2- Decorate them with paint, be sure to put your name on it.
- 3- Bring home someone else's rock and pray for him/her during the month.



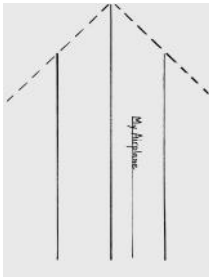
4 ● The Wonder of Air and Wind

Paper Airplanes

Flyer #1

Materials: A4 paper, paper clips

Download the diagram and follow the folding instructions.



Artists' Workshop

Flyer #2



Flyer #3



5 ● The Wonder of Seeds

Maracas

Materials: empty plastic Easter eggs to fill or paper cups, popcorn kernels or rice or dried beans or lentils, plastic spoons or craft sticks (optional to hold Easter eggs), decorative tape.

Preparation

1. Fill plastic egg or paper cup with popcorn kernels or other seeds.
2. If using eggs, nest them between two spoons.
3. Secure the maraca by wrapping tape around the egg and spoons, or if using cups use tape to hold the cup closed.
4. Shake it!



6 ● The Wonder of Trees

Leaf Prints

Materials: leaves of different shapes and sizes, washable paint Or colored markers, paintbrushes for paint, cardstock or paper.

Preparation

- 1- Gather your leaves, pick a variety of leaves, the larger the better (this can be done before the meeting, or people can bring from home).
- 2- **Paint.** Apply thin layer of paint or marker to one side of the leaf, use multiple colors on one leaf.



- 3- **Press.** Place painted side of the leaf face down on cardstock. Gently press from middle of leaf outwards and then peel leaf back to reveal your print.
- 4- **Dry.** Let paint dry and add extra details if desired.



7 • The Wonder of Flowers

Tissue Paper Flowers

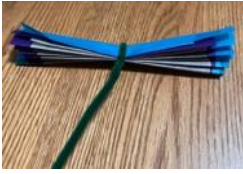
Materials: tissue paper (at least 4 different colors), pipe cleaners



Preparation

- 1- Use scissors to cut tissue paper into 3×5 inches (7×12 cm) or 6×10 inches (15×25cm) pieces depending on size of flower desired.
- 2- Set 4 pieces of cut tissue paper evenly on top of each other, alternating colors.
- 3- Accordion fold the tissue paper by folding the short side over about a half inch (1.5 cm) and then flip over and fold the opposite direction a half inch (1.5 cm).

Artists' Workshop



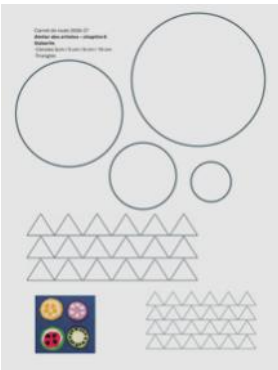
- Keep flipping and folding until all folded.
- 4- Center tissue paper 2 inches (5 cm) from top of pipe cleaner.
 - 5- Fold pipe cleaner around center of tissue paper and twist to make it secure and hold paper tightly.
 - 6- Gently pull edges of tissue paper up one-by-one.
 - 7- Use your hands to form the flower into a more rounded shape.



8 • The Wonder of Plants for Food

Fruit Coasters

Materials: cardstock for the template, different colored felt or construction paper (also white and black), cardstock (for backing), scissors, glue, fine-tip markers.



Preparation

BEFORE THE MEETING

- 1- Print 2 or 3 copies of this template on cardstock as a full 8-1/2 x 11 (A4) page to get the different circles and seeds sizes. (You can download it on the web site).
Then, cut along the outline of the circles and triangles in order to make the templates.



2- Use the templates to create different size circles and triangles onto felt or colored papers.

For the seeds, you can also use the black colour.

DURING THE MEETING

1- Assemble by layering circles on top of each other with glue.

2- Apply seeds on top.

3- Optional: cardstock can be glued to bottom for sturdiness.

9 • The Wonder of Water Animals

Rainbow Fish

Materials: paper plates of different colors and sizes (the cheaper flexible ones work best), paper cupcake cases of different colors (or colored tissue paper), wiggly eyes, scissors, glue.

Preparation

1- Cut cupcake cases into quarters, or tissue paper into small squares (2x2 inches or 5x5 cm), for the scales.

2- Glue point side of scales down on big plate, all in one direction, overlapping.

3- Cut out fish face from small plate and stick it on using glue.



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- 4- Use the rest of the small plate to cut out the tail, cover with scales like body.
- 5- Glue tail to the body.
- 6- Add wiggly eye.
- 7- Optional: cut fish lips out of a small plate and glue on.



10 • The Wonder of Air Animals

Peace Doves

Materials: white paper plate, colored markers or crayons, scissors, glue.



Preparation

- 1- Fold both sides of paper plate toward middle until sides just touch, then cut across both folds to get the wings.
- 2- Middle piece – Body and Head – on the back of the inner circle of plate, draw smaller circle on top for head and then an oval below the head that reaches to bottom of circle.
- 3- Cut out tail in diagonal to bottom edge of plate.
- 4- Attach wings to back side of body with glue.
- 5- Draw on eyes and beak and feet.



- 6- Decorate wings with different colors if you like.
- 7- Write your name on back of dove and share with a friend.

11 • The Wonder of Land Animals

Animal Masks

Materials: paper plates, construction paper, craft sticks, markers, scissors, glue.

Preparation

- 1- Cut out center of paper plate.
- 2- Glue construction paper circle onto paper plate.
- 3- Mark out two circles for eyes and two ovals for the ears. Carefully cut out ears and eyes holes.
- 4- Glue on ears for animals
- 5 Use markers to decorate mouth, face and ears.
- 6- Glue on craft stick for handle.



12 ● The Wonder of Humans

Paper Bag Puppets

Materials: Paper bags (lunch size), crayons or markers, glue stick or glue.

Optional: construction paper for puppet clothing and yarn for hair.

Preparation

- 1- Lay bag flat so that bottom flap is facing up and at the top.
- 2- Draw the face on the bottom flap of the bag, locating mouth on the edge of the flap.
- 3- The rest of the bag will become the body – decorate using all materials available (yarn for hair if desired, construction paper for clothing)



Everyone can create a puppet of themselves or be assigned someone else. Just make sure there is a puppet for everyone in attendance.

When you have finished, exchange puppets so everyone has a person other than themselves!



Faith and Light prayer

Jesus, you came into our world
to reveal the Father to us, your Father and our Father.

You came to teach us to love one another.

Give us the Holy Spirit, according to your promise,
so that he will make us instruments of peace and unity,
in this world of war and division.

Jesus you have called us to follow you
in a community of Faith and Light.

We want to say "yes" to you.

We want to live in a covenant of love
in this big family you have given us,
where we can share our sufferings and difficulties,
our joys and our hope.

Teach us to accept our wounds, our weakness
so that your power may be revealed.

Teach us to find you in all our brothers and sisters
especially in those who are the weakest.

Teach us to follow you in the ways of the Gospel.

Jesus come and live in us and in our communities
as you first lived in Mary.

She was the first to welcome you.

Help us to be faithfully present, with her,
at the foot of the cross, near the crucified of the world.

Help us to live your Resurrection.

Amen.