



Stewards of God's Creation

7

Key Themes

- God is faithful to His promises.
- God upholds His creation.

Key Passages

- Genesis 1:26–28, 2:15, 8:20–9:1; Romans 1:22–23

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe the role of mankind in God's creation.
- Recognize God's faithfulness in sustaining His creation.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

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Students get answers to some Big Questions about creation as they pull questions from the cup and determine the answers from the Bible.



Studying God's Word

page 5

In the beginning, God gave man the responsibility to provide good stewardship over His creation. But it is God who ultimately sustains and upholds all things by His power. We can turn to biblical principles in order to execute this God-given responsibility properly.



Activity 1: Dominion

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Students will watch a video clip entitled "Dominion." This video clip will reinforce the idea that God gave Adam responsibility for the earth and that responsibility is now ours.



Activity 2: Being a Good Steward

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Students will toss a ball around based on their decisions about what good stewardship of God's creation looks like.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



COME ON IN

- Gather Big Questions and answer key you used and prepared from the previous lessons. The information is on the Resource DVD-ROM, Lesson 1.

- Cup with Big Questions
- Big Questions answer key



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.
- Print the Lesson Board Work outline from the Resource DVD-ROM.

- Student Take Home Sheets
- Lesson Board Work outline



DOMINION

- Preview the video clip "Dominion" (1:49) from the Resource DVD-ROM.

- Video clip "Dominion" from the Resource DVD-ROM
- DVD Player and TV or computer



BEING A GOOD STEWARD

- Gather two sponge-style balls.
- Print one Being a Good Steward teacher's guide from the Resource DVD-ROM.

- Two sponge-style balls
- Being a Good Steward teacher's guide



Memory Verse

Exodus 20:11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

► **Pace your lesson!** You can use the provided clocks to indicate the time each section should be completed to keep the lesson on schedule. While teaching, you can compare your anticipated times with the actual time and shorten or drop sections as necessary.





Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

To prepare for this week's lesson, read Genesis 1:26–31, 8:20–9:1; 2 Peter 3:5–7.

Our God is the Creator and Sustainer of all the universe—everything we have comes from Him and it all belongs to Him. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). “The sea is His, for He made it; and His hands formed the dry land” (Psalm 95:5). “The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness” (Psalm 24:1). “For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills” (Psalm 50:10). “Your faithfulness endures to all generations; You established the earth, and it abides” (Psalm 119:90). God's creation clearly brings Him glory and He rejoices in His works (Psalm 104:31). We can rejoice, too, in God's graciousness to us each day as we appreciate the beauty and wonder around us. However, we must be diligent to respect it—because it does not belong to us.

When God created the world, it was perfect—it was all very good (Genesis 1:31). Man and all of creation lived together without any stress in a harmonious environment. But God did provide a hierarchy of authority. He intended that Adam and Eve be the ones to tend the garden and keep it (Genesis 2:15). He instructed them to multiply and fill the earth, and to have dominion over it and all of its creatures (Genesis 1:28). This “Dominion Mandate” ordained by God gives all of us, as the heirs of Adam, a special responsibility—to care for God's earth with diligence, concern, and from a biblical perspective.

What this means, however, is not always easily determined. Because of the high profile of this issue, you will come across many strong opinions. God did create resources for man's use in sustaining life. But we find today those who want to abuse the resources out of greed and selfishness, causing needless loss and destruction in other areas. We see also the overly enthusiastic conservationists who appear to worship the creation more than the Creator—clearly a position not ordained by God (Romans 1:25). What we need to remember is to consult the full counsel of God's Word in these matters. Because this is a sin-cursed world that is far, far from perfect, this may mean weighing each specific decision we make in this area based on the circumstances and expected results of that decision, while asking the question, “How does this line up with biblical principles?”

As you confront this issue, remember that Solomon

in all his wisdom reminds us that there is a time to plant and a time to pluck what is planted, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to break down and a time to build up, a time to keep and a time to throw away (Ecclesiastes 3:1–8).

Ultimately, this is an area that must be covered in prayer and balanced carefully between abuse to God's creation and environmental idolatry—while keeping in mind it is God's creation. He made it and He will destroy it by the Word of His mouth at His appointed time (2 Peter 3:7). Meanwhile, He has promised His faithfulness to preserve it: “While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease” (Genesis 8:22).

APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

The big issue surrounding the earth's environment today is global warming, or climate change. We are barraged with claims and facts being presented—leaving us more confused than ever. There appear to be five recurring claims. We'll take a quick look at those here.

- **Claim #1:** Global warming is really happening. Yes, this is true. According to the National Climatic Data Center, the average global surface temperature has risen approximately 1.2°F (0.7°C) since 1880. We do not know exactly what has caused this warming.
- **Claim #2:** Humans are causing global warming. Again, it seems to be true that addition of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere by man's activities has increased the global temperature. However, the CO₂ (carbon dioxide) in the atmosphere is not the sole cause of this warming. And it has been determined that the warmer climate itself can actually produce more CO₂—giving a distorted measure of the cause and effect of CO₂ in the atmosphere.
- **Claim #3:** Global warming will cause the extinction of animals. First of all, many animals had gone extinct long before the issue of global warming was considered, and species continue to go extinct all the time. The woolly mammoth and the Miohippus (a small three-toed, woodland horse) are examples of animals found in the fossil record that are today extinct. Although there are predictions that many animals will become extinct by 2050 due to climate change, currently there are no documented extinctions resulting from global warming.

- **Claim #4:** The oceans will rise dramatically in the next century. There is no hard scientific evidence currently available to back up this prediction.
- **Claim #5:** Global warming will cause more weather catastrophes. Again, there is not sufficient evidence to make this claim. In fact, there are conflicting reports. Some blame global warming for the increase in hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, droughts, and extreme temperatures, while other studies have determined that global warming is not to blame.

From a biblical perspective, we know that we live in a world groaning from the effects of sin (Romans 8:22). The earth has been established by God and its future lies in His hands. Because of the credibility of God's Word, we can be sure that the earth will be purged by fire in the future (2 Peter 3:10–12)—not destroyed because of CO₂ emissions.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In considering the history of global warming, we find that evidence does suggest that the created world was warmer than the world today. In fact, it wasn't until after the global Flood of Noah's day about 4,300 years ago—only about 1,700 years after creation—that conditions were right to form permanent ice which prompted the earth's one and only Ice Age. Scientists believe that the Ice Age peaked around 500 years after the Flood.

As stated above, we know that the average global surface temperature has risen approximately 1.2°F since 1880. We also know that the changes in atmospheric carbon dioxide—the alleged cause of global warming—do not always correlate well with changes in the earth's temperature. For example, the temperature of the earth rose from 1910 to 1940 at a higher rate

than the levels of carbon dioxide found in the atmosphere.

We also have indication that although the temperature of the earth has dropped since 2002, the carbon dioxide levels continue to rise. And it has been discovered that there were substantial changes in global temperatures in the ninth and seventeenth centuries, yet this could not have been a result of industry contaminating the air with CO₂.

Historically, there doesn't seem to be any conclusive pattern as to how the temperature of the earth reacts to those of us who live on it. We do know that the earth is God's and we are its caretakers. We have no idea how long the earth will last—but we are called to use biblical principles and judgment in maintaining it until Christ returns, and it is renewed in the Consummation (Revelation 21:1).

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Sovereign Lord, I praise you, for you have revealed to us great truths in your Word. As I study the lesson this week, help me desire truth. Because when I earnestly seek truth, I will discover you! Transform my mind to the mind of Christ. Don't let me be confused by what I have heard in the media about climate change. Help me convey your faithfulness as a promise keeper to the students, so they will not be fearful about the future of the earth. Help us all to recognize the difference between being good stewards of the earth and environmental idolatry.



COME ON IN

As student arrive . . .

- They will pick questions from the cup or container and read them aloud.
- They will look up the Scripture on the question slip to determine the correct answer. Refer to the Big Questions answer key for answers.



After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.



REVIEW

Using the Lesson Theme posters from previous weeks, quickly review the lessons with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you review the Lesson Theme posters. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.

Before we begin our lesson, let's review our memory verse. It is important to memorize God's Word. The Bible says we are to hide it in our hearts and meditate on it. The only way to do that is by memorizing. Let's get started reviewing today's memory verse. Using our Memory Verse poster, let's say the verse. *Say the verse together as a class.*

I am going to cover a few of the words on our Memory Verse poster. Then we can try saying it together again. *Do this several more times until all the words are covered. You can cover the words with post-it notes. Ask for volunteers to say the verse from memory.*



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

God created the earth and everything on it. Then He created man and gave man the responsibility to care for the earth. We are going to talk a bit about that today.

Let's turn in our Bibles to Genesis 1:26–28. I need three volunteers to read one verse each. *Assign readers.*

Genesis 1:26–28

EXAMINE THE WORD

Okay. So what did we just read? What is this telling us? Let's see

Dominion:
responsibility,
authority

Genesis 2:15

Observe the Text

Refer to the Bible Study poster to remind your students how to dig deeper into God's Word by asking the right questions.

- ? First of all, who is speaking here? Look in Genesis 1:26. *God.*
- ? God is making man in His image. What is God giving to man? We are still in Genesis 1:26. *Dominion over the fish, birds, cattle, earth, creeping things.*
- ? Who knows what dominion means here? Can anyone guess? *Allow for answers.*

Dominion means responsibility or authority over something. In Genesis 1:26 God is giving man the right to rule over the earth—or have dominion over it.

- ? Now go to Genesis 1:28. What is God saying to the people He just created? *Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth, subdue it, have dominion over it.*

Turn to Genesis 2:15. Will someone read that for me? *Assign a reader.*

- ? Based on this verse, what did God want Adam to do in the garden? *Tend it and keep it.*
- ? And what do you think that means exactly? *Allow for answers.*

It means that God gave man the responsibility to care for the Garden of Eden—he was to take care of the animals and plants that were there.

Discover the Truth

God created Adam and Eve and then gave them dominion—responsibility or rule—over the earth, to take care of the garden and all the animals God put there. This dominion or rule was given as a privilege and responsibility. They were to take care of these things, use them for their good, and manage it all well. God intended for man to live off the land—to use it in order to survive.

The dominion or responsibility that God gave to Adam has been passed down to us. Like I said, it is a very big responsibility. And it means that we all need to be involved.





Dominion

MATERIALS

- “Dominion” video clip on the Resource DVD-ROM
- TV and DVD Player or computer

INSTRUCTIONS

We are going to watch a short video clip about the privilege man has to take care of God’s earth. Pay close attention. We’ll discuss a couple of things when it is finished. *Show the video clip.*

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

? What did this video say was one of the first jobs God gave to Adam? If you can’t remember, turn in your Bibles to Genesis 2:20. *Allow students to look up the verse if no one can remember. Adam was to name all the animals.*

This was a very serious job, like when a parent names a new baby. When God gave this job to Adam, He was showing Adam that He trusted Him with the earth—and

since we are Adam’s descendants, we also have the same responsibility. The video showed some ways that we can obey God by managing the earth wisely.

? Who can remember some of those ways from the video? *Farming, gardening, caring for animals, recycling, studying streams and rivers, studying plants, etc.*

God gave man the responsibility to manage His creation. God gave man intelligence, creativity, and language to communicate and work together to produce food from the ground, care for animals, control the rivers and flooding, recycle our waste, and in general, be good stewards of this precious, unique planet.

God cares for the creation from far off—He is in charge of everything that happens. But, as descendants of Adam, we have the responsibility to care for it as well.



READ THE WORD

Although we have authority over the earth, some people are confused about what that means exactly. God warns us in His Word not to think more of His creation than we do of Him.

? I’d like you to turn to Romans 1:22–23. Will someone read that for me please?

Romans 1:22–23

EXAMINE THE WORD

What are these verses telling us? Let’s see!

Observe the Text

Refer to the Bible Study poster to remind your students how to dig deeper into God’s Word by asking the right questions.

Verse 22 is speaking about people who do not believe in God or trust Him. They are ungodly.

► Print the Lesson Board Work outline from the Resource DVD-ROM for easier planning.

Incorruptible:
immortal,
eternal,
everlasting

Corruptible:
mortal, not
permanent

? What does this verse say about these people? Look closely. *They think they are wise, but they are fools.*

Right. They talk about how wise they are—but actually they are foolish—especially when it comes to the things of God. They are fools.

? Verse 22 tells us why the Bible calls them fools. But first, let's look at the words incorruptible and corruptible. What do you think those words mean? See those words in verse 23? Write on the board, "corruptible" and "incorruptible." Allow for discussion. See if the children can come up with the answer based on the text around the words. Re-read the verses if necessary.

Incorruptible means immortal, eternal, everlasting. Incorruptible describes God, right? Write "eternal" and "God" under "incorruptible."

? So, what do you think corruptible means if incorruptible means eternal, immortal, and everlasting? Allow for discussion.

Good. Corruptible means mortal—not eternal. It refers to the fact that things on earth die, like a flower you might pick and put in a vase. It doesn't last too long. It eventually dies. Write "not permanent" under "corruptible."

The things on earth are corruptible. Everything on earth will one day die and decay. Write "things on earth" under "corruptible."

Someone read verse 23 for me again. Assign a reader.

? So this verse is saying that these fools—the ungodly—have stopped honoring God, who is the eternal, everlasting one and have begun to worship what? Read the end of verse 23 and tell me what they are now worshipping. *Images of man, birds, four-footed animals, and creeping things.*

All of these things will one day be gone. They are corruptible—not permanent. Yet these foolish men are worshipping them.

Discover the Truth

? What have we discovered in these verses? Allow for answers. Refer to the board work.

What the Apostle Paul—who wrote the book of Romans—is trying to say is that many people have stopped worshipping the eternal, incorruptible, everlasting God who is the Creator of all the heavens and the earth, and they have begun to worship corruptible things—things of the world and things in creation. They are worshipping the very things that God created—instead of God the Creator!

Yet we are not to worship anything other than God—not any man, bird, or animal. We are to worship the Creator, God, and not the creation—the earth—and what is on it.

Some people have made the earth their god. They care more for protecting the animals and the earth than they care about God—the Creator of it all. They have taken their responsibility of caring for the earth

too far. Instead of worshipping the Creator, they are actually worshipping the creation.

We are responsible for caring for the earth just like Adam was. But we are not to worship the earth. We are to use it and care for it for our good—and always to God’s glory!



Being a Good Steward

MATERIALS

- Being a Good Steward teacher’s guide
- Two soft sponge-style balls

INSTRUCTIONS

In this activity, students will determine if a certain activity is honoring to God and His creation or not. Using a couple of balls will make this activity fun and help the students pay attention.

- ? Do you think you know how to be a good steward of creation in a way that honors God as the Creator? *Yes/no.*

Let’s see! I’ll need you to stand in a circle for this activity. *Help arrange the students.*

Two of you will get a ball. Your job is to listen carefully while I read a short description of a situation. After I read, decide if the situation is describing a good steward of God’s creation or not. If it is, throw the ball to someone else in the circle. If it isn’t, pass the ball to the person on your right. Then I’ll read another activity and so on.

Pass out the two balls. Read the situations on the Being A Good Steward teacher’s guide one at a time to the students. Have the students pass and/or throw the balls as you go down the list

Great job making decisions about creation stewardship! Now let’s talk about why these situations were good stewardship or not. You can go back to your seats.

Read the situations again, discussing why they are or are not good stewardship according to God’s Word. Discuss the brief explanation listed with each situation on the teacher’s guide.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

When it comes to being good stewards of God’s creation we should remember this main point: worship the Creator, not the creation. And remember to honor and glorify God first in our enjoyment and protection of His creation.

God created everything in the universe for our benefit to be used and managed wisely. We need to do the best we can to preserve it without allowing it to become an idol in our lives.



READ THE WORD

Some people think that humans are destroying the earth by doing things to cause global warming. The Bible can even help us with issues like this. Let’s see what it has to say. Turn back to Genesis. We’ll read Genesis 8:20–9:1.

Genesis 8:20–9:1

- ? Can I have a volunteer to start reading these verses out loud please? Everyone follow along because I'm going to call on someone different to read each verse. *Have students read verses. Call on random students to read each verse until entire passage has been read.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

So, what does this have to do with global warming, climate change, and whether we are going to destroy the earth by our lifestyles? Let's see.

Observe the Text

Refer to the Bible Study poster to remind your students how to dig deeper into God's Word by asking the right questions.

- ? Who are the characters in this passage? Look back to Genesis 8:20. *Noah and God.*

Yes. God made a promise to Noah—about the earth—that has something to do with global warming and how concerned people are about it.

- ? Take a look at verse 21. What did the Lord promise there? Read it carefully. *God will never curse the ground for man's sake. God will never destroy every living thing again.*

- ? There is another promise in verse 22. What do you think verse 22 is saying? *Allow for discussion.*

God is confirming that the earth is His and He intends to keep it the way it is—with planting and harvesting, winter and summer, day and night—remaining the way He has created it to be. Nothing that happens to the climate, and nothing man can do, can change God's promise.

Discover the Truth

- ? Could this verse apply to global warming in any way? *Yes!*

Global warming and climate change are topics of great concern today. Some scientists are making claims that the earth's climate is warming at such a rate that serious changes in the earth will result. But we need to remember that God has promised to sustain His creation. He has told us to expect cycles in nature—that is how He designed the world! We can trust God to uphold His promise.

The weather cycles are part of God's plan for the earth. The earth is His and everything in it. We are merely called to care for it. He is the Creator, and He promises to be faithful in keeping it.





Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

God created Adam and Eve and then gave them dominion—responsibility or rule over the earth. They were to take care of the garden and all the animals God put there. This dominion or rule was given as a privilege and responsibility. They were to take care of these things, use them for their good, and manage them well. God intended for man to live off the land. The dominion or responsibility that God gave to Adam has been passed down to us. It is a very big responsibility that we all should take seriously.

Although caring for the earth and global warming are talked about a lot, and the temperatures of the earth have gone up and down over the past centuries, we know that God has promised to keep the earth as He wants it. And God is faithful to keep His promises. *Refer to Faithful on the Attributes of God poster.*

We all need to work at taking care of the earth according to God's Word and in order to honor and glorify Him. We must never be so consumed with the earth that we forget God, or Jesus Christ and the gospel. These are the things our minds need to be set on—even as we do our part to take care of our home—planet earth.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

You will see things on TV about global warming (or climate change), and hear about it in school, from your friends, family, neighbors. A lot of the information is telling us what we need to do to prevent it. A lot of people are very worried about it and concerned that we are destroying the world. I hope that you have a better understanding now. We ARE responsible to take care of the earth—God has given man dominion and authority over it, and He wants us to use it wisely. But God has promised to keep it as He wants it. And He is always faithful to His promises.

? Based on what we have talked about today, what could you say to a friend who is afraid the earth is being destroyed by humans? *Allow discussion.*

We don't need to fear. The Bible says God is in control. He has promised not to let the earth be destroyed. He sustains His creation which includes cycles like seasons, hot and cold, night and day.



FAITHFUL

(Refer to Attributes poster)

➤ Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the children to practice the memory verse this week.



MEMORY VERSE

Exodus 20:11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.



GROUP PRAYER TIME

Be sure to pray with your class before you dismiss them.

- Praise God for His wonderful creation and how He has promised to sustain it.
- Ask God to help us be good stewards of His creation according to His Word.