



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; Romans 1:25; Genesis 8:22

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

page 5

Students will review the books of the Old Testament. (There are many songs online that could make this easier and more fun for your students.)



Studying God's Word

page 5

At creation God gave man the responsibility to be good stewards of His creation. But it is God who ultimately sustains and upholds all things by His power. We do not need to be afraid that the earth will be destroyed because God has promised it will remain until Jesus returns.



Activity 1: Dominion

page 7

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: Stewart the Steward

page 9

Students will help Stewart decide which activities demonstrate good stewardship of the earth.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



COME ON IN

- If you haven't already done this, print and cut out sets of the Books of the Old Testament cards from the Resource DVD-ROM, Lesson 1 (on cardstock). Make one set for every 4–5 students.

- Books of the Old Testament cards, one set for every 4–5 students



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.
- Print one copy of the Memory Verse Song sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM, Lesson 1.
- Print one Lesson Board Work outline from the Resource DVD-ROM for your use.

- Student Take Home Sheets
- Memory Verse Song sheet
- Lesson Board Work outline



DOMINION

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

- Resource DVD-ROM to show the "Dominion" video clip
- DVD player and TV or computer



STEWART THE STEWARD

- Print one Stewart the Steward worksheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Keep the teacher's guide for your own use.

- Stewart the Steward worksheet for each student
- Stewart the 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; Genesis 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. 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 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 temper-

ature 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 students arrive . . .

- They will work together in groups of 4–5 to put the Books of the Old Testament cards in order. They can use the Books of the Bible poster and their own Bibles.
- They will read (or sing) aloud all the names of the books of the Old Testament.



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.



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. Follow along while I read these verses. *Read Genesis 1:26–28.*

Genesis 1:26–28

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

Remind the students of the Bible Study Questions!

- ? Who is speaking here? Did you get that? *Genesis 1:26. God.*
- ? Who is God creating in this verse? *Genesis 1:26. Man. Adam.*

God created man in His own image and then gave man some jobs to do. He gave him “dominion” over the fish, birds, cattle, all the earth, and every creeping thing. Let me read this to you one more time. *Reread Genesis 1:26.*

- ? What does that mean? To have “dominion” over something? Anyone know? *Allow for answers.*



Dominion:
responsibility,
authority

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

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

- ? God gave Adam other jobs. Let me read this to you again. Listen carefully and tell me what God told Adam to do in this verse. *Reread Genesis 1:28. Have the children look in the text. As children answer, write on the board, “God gave Adam jobs:” and underneath it, write, “be fruitful and multiply;” “fill the earth;” “subdue it;” “have dominion over it.”*
- ? Let’s talk quickly about these jobs God gave to Adam. What does “be fruitful and multiply” and “fill the earth” mean? *Allow for answers.*

Very simply, “be fruitful and multiply” means start your family! And “fill the earth” means just that. God was telling Adam to fill the earth with his children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren. Remember, Adam and Eve were the very first people. All the rest of the people on earth would come from them! *In a second column to the right of the first one on the board, write the heading, “What does this mean?” and underneath it write, “start your family;” “with children, grandchildren, etc.”*

- ? God also told Adam to subdue the earth. Does anyone know what that means? *Allow for answers.*

In this verse, it means that God was telling Adam he should have control over the animals and plants on the earth. *Write “control it” on the board in the column to the right of “subdue it.”*

- ? And then we see the word “dominion” again. Who remembers what we said that meant? *Allow for answers.*

Right. Man has responsibility and authority over the earth. *Write “take responsibility for it” on the board in the column to the right of “have dominion over it.”*

God told Adam something else. Listen carefully to this verse and tell me what it is. *Read Genesis 2:15 emphasize “tend” and “keep.”*

- ? What did God ask Adam to do in the garden? Look in Genesis 2:15. *Reread the verse if necessary. Tend and keep it. Write on the board, “tend and keep the garden” at the bottom of the first column.*
- ? What does that mean? Tend and keep the garden? *Take care of it. Work in it. Write “take care of it; work in it;” in the column to the right of “tend and keep the garden.”*

God told Adam to take care of everything in the garden. God called Adam to be a good steward of the garden and the earth. To take care of everything. Subdue it. Have dominion over it. *Refer to the board work as review.*

We call all of this being a steward. Can you say that word with me? *Write “being a steward” in the first column on the board.*

Being a steward means you take care of something for someone else. You don’t own it but you are in charge of making sure it is taken care of. *Write “taking care of something for someone” on the board in the column to the right of “being a steward.”*

Genesis 2:15

Steward: a
person who
takes care of
someone else’s
property

Discover the Truth

? OK. Take a look at the board. And let's review a bit. God created Adam in His own image. Remember, Adam was not like any of the animals. God gave Adam jobs to do. Who can tell me one of the jobs and what it means? *Refer to the board list. Have the children read the five jobs and the definitions of each job.*

Then we said that Adam was called to be a good steward of the garden and the earth. God called him to take care of these things. God created the earth but called Adam to take care of it.

And, guess what? The responsibility to be good stewards—to take care of God's wonderful earth—has been passed on to us as well. We can all help to take care of the earth. Even in what may seem like small ways!



Dominion

MATERIALS

- Resource DVD-ROM to show the "Dominion" video clip
- TV and DVD player or computer

INSTRUCTIONS

We are going to watch a short video clip about the privilege we have to take care of God's earth. Pay close attention. I think you will see ways you can become a good steward of God's earth. *Show the video.*

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

What did this video say was one of the first jobs God gave to Adam? *If they can't remember, read Genesis 2:20 for them. Adam was to name all the animals.*

This was another very serious job for Adam. When God gave this job to Adam, He was showing Adam that He trusted him with the earth. God was confirming that Adam was to subdue the earth, have dominion over it, and take care of it. *Refer to the board work.*

Who can remember some ways we can help care for the earth 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—He is in charge of everything that happens. God owns it. It is His creation. But He has asked us to be good stewards—to take good care of it. God expects us to take responsibility and care for it.

Remember we said a steward takes care of someone else's property. So we take care of the world, but it does not belong to us. It belongs to God.



READ THE WORD

Although God wants us to take care of His earth, we have to be careful we don't get confused and start caring more about the earth—the creation—than we care about God—the Creator. Turn in your Bibles to Romans 1:25.

Romans 1:25



EXAMINE THE WORD

Listen while I read it. *Read verse.*

Observe the Text

- ? Who were these people worshipping? *Reread the verse, emphasizing the answer as you read. The creature.*
- ? Who should they have been worshipping? *Read the verse again, emphasizing the answer. The Creator.*

I believe this is an example of people getting confused. The people in this verse were worshipping and serving the creation—not the Creator.

Discover the Truth

There is an important lesson in this one verse. It is a warning to us—that we should worship God above all things always. Many people have stopped worshipping our holy Creator God. Instead they worship the things that God created, like the sun, moon, stars, trees. Some people have made the earth their god. Instead of worshipping the Creator, they are worshipping the creation.

But we are called to worship the Creator and NOT the creation.

- ? What are some ways people might put the creation above the Creator? *Listen for ideas.*

Let's think about it. How about the stars and the planets? Have you ever heard people talk about the stars showing them what to do? Or reading a horoscope to find out what they should do or what their future will be? This is worshipping the creation. These people are turning their back on the sovereign, holy, Creator and turning to what God created for advice. That is not right.

Have you heard people refer to “mother earth” or “mother nature”? They often talk as though “mother”—not God—is in control of the weather. The earth is not your mother. Neither is nature. The earth is God's creation. And we should take care of the earth out of obedience to God who calls us to do just that.

- ? When we find a wonderful shade tree on a hot sunny day, should we thank the trees for the shade they give us? *No, we should thank God for providing the trees.*

- ? When we get a wonderful grilled cheeseburger for lunch, should we thank the cow for the food? *No, we should thank God for providing food to fill us!*
- ? Who do we thank for our food? *God.* Who do we look to for guidance? *God.* Who watches over us and protects us? *God.*



Stewart the Steward

MATERIALS

- Stewart the Steward worksheet for each student
- Stewart the Steward teacher's guide
- Pencils or crayons

INSTRUCTIONS

Hand out sheets to each student. You can read each activity. Students will determine if it is honoring to God as Creator or not and then circle Yes or No. Encourage discussion on being good stewards. Use teacher's guide for discussion of each answer.

We are going to read each of these situations. I want you to think about it and circle Yes if this is honoring God as the

Creator or No if it is not honoring God as Creator. We'll discuss them as we go along.

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. Remembering to do this will always honor and glorify God.

God created everything in the universe for our good to be used and taken care of wisely. We need to do the best we can to take care of our world, but not to worship it!



READ THE WORD

One more thing I want to talk to you about from God's Word. Have you heard of global warming? Some people think that humans are causing the earth to get warmer and warmer and that we will eventually destroy the earth ourselves because we are not caring for it. God's Word has something to say about that.

EXAMINE THE WORD

Turn to Genesis 8:22 in your Bibles. What I am about to read happened after the Flood. God is speaking to Noah. We know that God told Noah that He would never again Flood the earth, but listen here and see what else God said to Noah. *Read Genesis 8:22.*

Genesis 8:22

Observe the Text

- ? God made a promise in this verse. Do you know what it is? Listen again as I read it. *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

Global warming and climate change are things you will hear more about as you get older. Some scientists are saying that we are not caring for the earth as we should and we are causing the weather to change. But God has promised to sustain His creation.

The weather cycles are part of God’s plan for the earth. The earth and everything in it belong to God. We are merely caretakers. He is the Creator, and He promises to be faithful in keeping His creation the way He wants it.



Applying God’s Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

God created Adam and Eve and then gave them jobs in the garden. He gave them dominion—responsibility or rule over the earth. They were to take care of the garden and all the animals God put there. They were to take care of these things, control them, and use them responsibly. This is called stewardship. We need to be good stewards also. We do not own the world, but we are to care for it. It is a very big responsibility that we all should take seriously. *Refer to the board work.*

You will hear a lot about caring for the earth and global warming as you get older. You need to remember that our God is faithful to His people and His promises. He has promised to keep the earth as He wants it. We do not need to worry that the earth will be destroyed because God promises to take care of the earth until Jesus comes back. We do not need to be afraid. He is faithful to keep His promises. *Refer to Faithful on the Attributes of God poster.*

FAITHFUL

(Refer to Attributes poster.)

We do need to do what we can to take care of the earth according to God's Word and in order to honor and glorify God. We are responsible for caring for the earth just like Adam was. We should never worship the earth, but we are to use it and care for it for our good—and always to God's glory! We are to always worship the Creator and not the creation!

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

You will see things on TV and in movies and hear about things in school and from your friends, family, neighbors—things about the earth being destroyed and what we need to do to prevent it. A lot of people may seem very worried about it and concerned that we have to keep the earth from ending. There are lots of movies that show the earth being destroyed. We ARE responsible to take care of the earth and be good stewards of it. But God has promised it will not be destroyed until Jesus comes back. And He is always faithful to His promises.

We don't need to fear. The Bible says God is in control. He has promised not to let the earth be destroyed. He is sovereign over everything—including His planet and the weather! *Refer to the Attributes of God poster.*

God has put us in charge of taking care of and ruling over the earth. But the earth does not belong to us. It belongs to God.

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

We are to worship the Creator, not the creation!

SOVEREIGN

(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.

The verse can be sung to the tune of the ABC song. See the Memory Verse Song Sheet on the DVD-ROM, Lesson 1. Students should know the verse by this week.



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 take care of it.
- Ask God to help us be good stewards of His creation according to His Word.

