



**WELCOMING  
CHILDREN  
in WORSHIP**

**THE CATHOLIC  
UNIVERSITY  
OF AMERICA** 

# **Awe of Creation**

## **April**

# **Adaptive Activities for Children**



**National Catholic  
Partnership on Disability**

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# Introduction

Welcome and thank you for your ministry that serves the liturgical formation of children for their participation in the Eucharist, the “source and summit of the Christian life.” This resource is provided by the Committee on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities of the National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD). It aims to offer an adaptive catechetical opportunity for all who have a heart for disability ministry to reflect on the liturgical year. We welcome you to this virtual community and hope you find this resource beneficial.

Here you will find reflections to guide children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, or diverse learners, through the current liturgical season with adaptive catechesis to help them to participate fully. Each offering includes prayer, Scripture, activities and more that incorporate the senses and take into consideration the needs of all learners. We invite you to gather children around the table of the home or the table of the classroom as preparation for their participation at the sacred table of the Eucharist.

**Each monthly edition incorporates the following:**

- 1. Prayer**
- 2. Sacred Scripture**
- 3. Reflection**
- 4. Faith in Action**
- 5. Activities**
- 6. Saint**
- 7. Resources/Bibliography**

# Prayer

## A Pray for Our Earth

Leader: This month we are going to learn about our earth and how to care for it. Pope Francis wrote an encyclical (a letter from the pope) about this topic. The following prayer is from that letter. I am going to say a line and then you repeat it after me.

*Sign of the Cross.*

Leader: All-powerful God,

All: **All-powerful God,**

Leader: you are present in the whole universe

All: **you are present in the whole universe**

Leader: and in the smallest of your creatures.

All: **and in the smallest of your creatures.**

Leader: You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

All: **You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.**

Leader: Pour out upon us the power of your love,

All: **Pour out upon us the power of your love,**

Leader: that we may protect life and beauty.

All: **that we may protect life and beauty.**

Leader: Fill us with peace,

All: **Fill us with peace,**

Leader: that we may live as brothers and sisters,

All: **that we may live as brothers and sisters,**

Leader: harming no one.

All: **harming no one.**

Leader: O God of the poor,

All: **O God of the poor,**

Leader: help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,

All: **help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,**

Leader: so precious in your eyes.



Photo by Atlantic Ambience from Pexels

All: **so precious in your eyes.**

Leader: Bring healing to our lives,

All: **Bring healing to our lives,**

Leader: that we may protect the world and not prey on it,

All: **that we may protect the world and not prey on it,**

Leader: that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

All: **that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.**

Leader: Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain

All: **Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain**

Leader: at the expense of the poor and the earth.

All: **at the expense of the poor and the earth.**

Leader: Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,

All: **Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,**

Leader: to be filled with awe and contemplation,

All: **to be filled with awe and contemplation,**

Leader: to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature

All: **to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature**

Leader: as we journey towards your infinite light.

All: **as we journey towards your infinite light.**

Leader: We thank you for being with us each day.

All: **We thank you for being with us each day.**

Leader: Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

All: **Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.**

Leader: Amen

All: **Amen**

*Sign of the Cross.*



Photo by Matthis Volquardsen from Pexels

Encyclical: Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home by Pope Francis

Learn more about Pope Francis's Encyclical on Climate Change at: <http://igsol.net/pope-ecology>

## Reading of Sacred Scripture

Genesis 1:1-31

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and



Creation of the World by Janson. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

And God said, “Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

And God said, “Let the waters under the sky be gathered

together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, “Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.” And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

And God said, “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky." So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and



Creation of the Animals. Jacopo Tintoretto, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons

over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Gospel Reflection

In the 'First Story of Creation,' God is depicted as a respected director who creates the heavens and earth by the mere sound of his voice. The narrative unfolds over seven days. On the first day, God establishes light, distinguishing light from darkness. He then forms the sky, separating it from the waters of the earth below. On day three, God creates land and vegetation, followed by day four with the production of the sun, moon, and stars. On day five, the world welcomes the birds of the air and on day six, God forms animals and humans. Prior to resting on the seventh day, God said, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it."

### Be Fruitful, Multiply, and Subdue

In the spring, the grass turns green and trees begin to bloom. It is a sign of new life. It is also the season of Lent, a time for spiritual growth. During Lent, we reflect not only on the 40 days that Jesus was in the desert, but God's love and greater plan for humanity.



Image by Karl Egger from Pixabay

The creation stories, though typically read at Mass in the fall, are good to reflect upon during the Lenten season. This is because new life is central to the creation stories as well as man's purpose within God's design. What the first creation story teaches us is that God loves us and his creations. As part of that love, God wants us to be **fruitful, multiply, and subdue**. But what does that mean?

To be **fruitful** means we bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Just as fruit is a sign of life and a source of food and nourishment, God wants us to be a source of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. He wants us to be life-giving! By following Jesus in loving, serving, and praying like him, we become co-creators of our lives. Just like God in the creation story, we have the choice to distinguish the light of God from the darkness of evil. When we choose life-giving actions like forgiveness, kindness, meekness, and patience, we experience a growth in maturity, friendships, opportunities, and our relationship with God. God's plan of creation calls for humanity to be fruitful and to nurture each other. How will you care for others in your life?

God also tells us to **multiply**. God not only want families of faith, but he wants us to grow his Church. In Mass, we are reminded of the multiplication of loaves, and the Eucharist is a symbol of this multiplication. As Christ's body, we consume the Eucharist, then meet the physical and spiritual needs of our community. Part of God's plan for creation was for humankind to multiply God's love. Can you think of a person you could invite to Mass? How will you share God's love today?

God also tells us to **subdue**. To subdue means to conquer and cultivate. How better to cultivate or shake up society, than to subdue or conquer evil with the light of Christ and waters of baptism? When we go to church and live out our baptismal promises, we set an example for the conversion of hearts in need of God's love. We are also called to care for the earth. This means recycling, reusing, and reducing our waste. It also means planting seeds and caring for plants and animals. Part of God's plan for creation was for people to subdue the earth. How will you care for God's creations today?



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This spring and Lent, let us remember we can also live lives that are life-giving. We do this by bearing fruit such as love, joy, peace, patience, and kindness, and by multiplying God's love through word and action. We subdue the earth by caring for God's creation with gentleness and responsibility and planting seeds of faith through our Christian example. As we watch the grass turn green and trees begin to bud, let us bloom for Christ, devoting ourselves to the fruit of his love.

#### Vocabulary

Subdue: To conquer and bring into subjection. To bring (land) under cultivation.

Dictionary.com

## Faith in Action

*“The Lord God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it.” Genesis 2:15*

The very first story that we hear in sacred Scripture is about how God created the earth and everything in it. The catechism (CCC 2402) tells us that all of God’s creation is a gift. God gave all people this gift so that we could use it to provide for our basic needs of food, shelter, and clothing. God also gives us the responsibility to care for the earth. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops remind us that, “We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God’s creation.” We can show our love and respect for the Creator by learning to take good care of the natural world around us.

### **Fostering Awe and Wonder:**

*“God looked at everything he had made, and found it very good.” Genesis 1:31*

When we love and appreciate something, we want to take care of it and protect it. Pointing out the beauty in nature and reminding children that God created it helps cultivate this sense of wonder. Share your own amazement when you see



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a rainbow, a beautiful sunset, a tree with vibrant leaves in the fall, or a squirrel eating a nut in your backyard. Remind children that each of these is a beautiful creation of God. Finding joy in the everyday world around you will be contagious! Go for a walk and invite children to engage with nature while also modeling the principle of “leave what you find”:

- ◆ When you touch this stick, how does it feel? Let’s put it back in case any insects or birds need it for their home.
- ◆ What colors do you see in this leaf? We can pick leaves up after they fall, but we don’t pull them off trees because they help keep the trees healthy.
- ◆ Point to which cloud is your favorite. What does it look like to you? Isn’t God a wonderful artist?

## Make Connections:

*“Every perfect gift is from above.” James 1:17*

Verbalize to children how God’s creation meets our needs every day. Air, water, plants, and animals are not just things for us to use up, however, but gifts to be cherished and protected.

- ◆ God gives us air to breath. Take a deep breath in and out. We need clean air for our lungs and hearts to keep our bodies moving. Dirty air can make us sick.
- ◆ God gives us water. Notice where you see water in nature, in rain, streams, ponds, rivers, and oceans. Talk about all of the ways clean water is important for people and animals. Without clean water, many animals would not have a safe home to live in, plants would not grow well, and we wouldn’t be able to bathe or drink.
- ◆ God gives us plants and trees. Explain where the food you eat comes from, and how eating fruits and vegetables keeps us healthy. Plant a small pot or garden and tend it together.



Photo by Jan Kopřiva

## Caring for the environment is caring for our neighbor:

*“The earth is the Lord’s and all it holds, the world and those who dwell in it.” Psalm 24:1*

Pope Francis (Laudato Si, 213) tells us that it is in the family where we are taught to show respect for all life. Home is where we learn how to use things properly and how to care for all creatures. Taking care of the earth means we all stay comfortable. Small daily actions can help

reduce the impact that we have on our environment, and that helps us and our neighbor. As a family, brainstorm and agree to some easy and sustainable changes that you can make in your home. Create a chart with visuals to remind everyone how they can do their part:

- ◆ Trade single-use bags for reusable ones.
- ◆ Use an reusable water bottle rather than disposable plastic bottles.
- ◆ Turn off the water while you brush your teeth to reduce waste.
- ◆ Pick up trash someone else left behind when you are out in public (with supervision to determine safety).
- ◆ Turn off the lights when you leave the room.

God is a loving Father who created many things to help us grow and live. We share the earth with other people, animals, and plants. When we live out our call to care for the earth, we help care for our common home and one another. When we honor creation, we show honor to the Creator. Let us thank God for this precious gift!



Image by Arek Socha from Pixabay

## Activities with Children

Let's Talk: Talk with you child about creation and how God made all things! Focus on what happened on each of the 7 days and why it is important. Let's break it down:

What happened: In the beginning, God created the world. Over six days, he made light and darkness, the sky, land and seas, plants and trees, the sun, moon, and stars, fish and birds, and animals. On the sixth day, God made people in his image to care for the earth. On the seventh day, God rested and saw that everything he made was very good.

Why is this important: Creation teaches us that God made everything with care and purpose. People are special because we are created in God's image and given the responsibility to care for the earth. It also reminds us that rest and thankfulness are part of life.

Discussion questions:

- ◆ Who made the world?
- ◆ What are some things God created?
- ◆ What is your favorite thing God made?
- ◆ Why do you think God made animals and plants?
- ◆ How can we take care of the earth God made?
- ◆ Why is it important to rest like God did on the seventh day?



Photo by Ketut Subiyanto on Pexels

Let's Read: This month we can read the sacred Scripture about creation. These help us see that God created everything and his creation is good!

- ◆ Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."
- ◆ Genesis 1:31: "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good."
- ◆ Nehemiah 9:6: "You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them."
- ◆ Psalm 19:1: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."

Let's Pray: This month, our prayer will focus on thanking God for all his work in creating the world and everything in it!

Dear God, Thank you for making the world and everything in it. Thank you for the sun, the sky, the animals, the plants, and the people you created. Help us to take care of the earth and appreciate the beautiful things you made. Thank you for loving us and for giving us such a wonderful world to enjoy. Amen

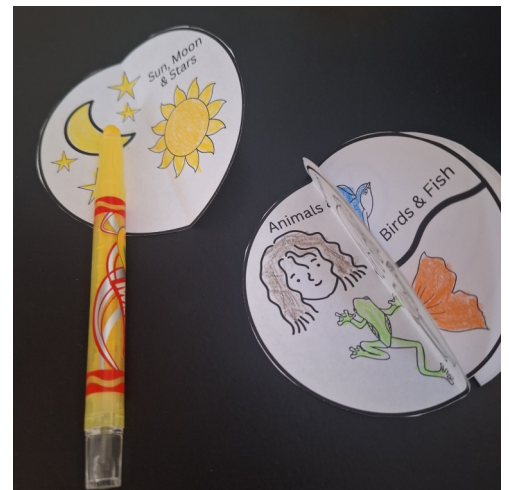
Let's Create: Create a fun craft that shows all seven days of creation!

Supplies:

- ◆ Days of Creation Bible Craft Template like this one: <https://faith-filledfun.com/creation-story-globe/>
- ◆ White cardstock, markers, scissors, glue stick
- ◆ Red yarn, hole punch

Directions:

1. Print the template on white cardstock and color each day.
2. Cut out each circle and fold in half vertically.
3. Starting with the title circle, glue the left half of Day 1 to the title.
4. Continue folding and gluing each day in order.
5. After gluing Day 7, place red yarn in the middle, glue the halves, and tie a loop for hanging.
6. Your Creation Globe is ready to display!



## Let's Cook: A tasty way to explore what God made each day!

### Ingredients (per child):

Mini Oreos, Frosted Mini-Wheats, raisins, M&M's, pretzel sticks, Goldfish crackers, animal crackers, mini marshmallows

Directions: Make this one day and enjoy the whole week while talking about your favorite parts of creation.

Day 1 – Light & Dark: Add mini Oreos.

Day 2 – Sky & Water: Add Frosted Mini-Wheats for clouds and ground.

Day 3 – Plants & Fruit: Add green M&M's, pretzel sticks, red M&M's, raisins, and blue M&M's.

Day 4 – Sun, Moon & Stars: Add orange and yellow M&M's.

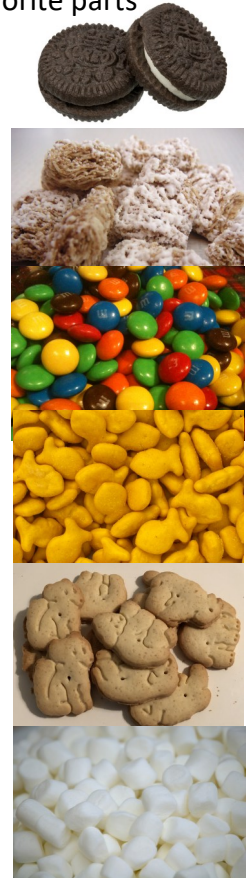
Day 5 – Birds & Fish: Add Goldfish crackers.

Day 6 – People & Animals: Add animal crackers.

Day 7 – God Rested: Add mini marshmallows.

God saw everything he made and said, "That looks good!"

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## Sensory Play: Explore creation through touch, sight, and smell!

### Materials:

- ◆ Dark items (soil, rice, or black beans) – chaos
- ◆ Yellow paper, lemon slice, or candle – light
- ◆ Water – oceans
- ◆ Leaves, flowers, or colorful fruits – life and growth

Steps: Create your world

- ◆ Chaos: Let your child touch and look at the dark items. Ask: “Imagine the world before anything existed—what do you feel?”
- ◆ Light: Introduce the yellow object. Say: “Light appears, separating from the darkness.”
- ◆ Water: Pour water over the dark base or let your child dip fingers. Optionally add a drop of lemon for aroma. Say: “Oceans and rivers begin to form.”
- ◆ Life & Growth: Add leaves, flowers, or fruits. Say: “Life emerges in all its colors and forms.”

You can repeat this activity throughout the month or leave it in a sensory bin for your child to explore anytime.



Photo by [www.kaboompics.com](http://www.kaboompics.com)

# Saint for April

## St. Margaret of Castello

April 13

This month we'll learn about Saint Margaret of Castello, the patron saint of persons with disabilities, persons who are blind, poor, or marginalized. She is also an inspiration to the pro-life movement and activists who advocate for the life of unborn children.

St. Margaret was born in the castle of Metola in the papal state of Massa Trabaria, near Florence, Italy in 1287.<sup>[1]</sup> She was the firstborn of Emilia and Parisio, a noble family in the region whose father was the governor of a military garrison.<sup>[2]</sup> Her parents initially delighted in Emilia's pregnancy, but were quickly embarrassed at Margaret's deformity and disabilities at birth. Margaret suffered from Achondroplasia, better known as "Dwarfism," and was said to have had multiple physical deformities.<sup>[3]</sup> Margaret not only had a hunched back, but was blind and could barely walk. Thanks to a chaplain and trusted maid, Margaret was baptized and named after a daisy Margherita, which in Greek means "pearl," a symbol of beauty.<sup>[4]</sup> She was kept in the castle and educated by the chaplain until age five, when she was mistakenly seen by a castle guest.<sup>[5]</sup>



Sailko, CC BY 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Margaret was then banned to a cell in the woods that was built by her father next to a chapel. At age twenty, Margaret's parents took her to Cita de Castello, in hopes of a miracle and cure, but after realizing Margaret had not changed despite prayers at the town's shrine, Margaret's parents abandoned her.<sup>[6]</sup>

Margaret was taken in by poor beggars and later became a member of the Dominican Third Order. She served the poor and sick and opened a school where she taught children the psalms she had memorized.<sup>[7]</sup> She also nursed and consoled the dying as well as visited prisoners.<sup>[8]</sup>

Margaret died at age 33 and many attended her funeral. Margaret possessed the gift of healing and was said to have healed many people late in life and obtained visions of Christ despite her blindness.

Margaret was canonized by Pope Francis on April 24, 2021.<sup>[9]</sup> She is viewed as a model of faith because she united her sufferings with Christ's. We can learn from St. Margaret's story by upholding the dignity of all persons and adopting a spirit of service to others.



Robert444444 aka Philip K, CCO, via Wikimedia Commons

[1] The Beauty of St. Margaret of Castello — Co-Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist

[2] Blessed Margaret of Castello - Catholicism.org

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[6] The Beauty of St. Margaret of Castello — Co-Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist

[7] Blind and disabled, St. Margaret of Castello overcame unimaginable hardships in her lifetime - Sunday Mass

[8] St. Margaret of Castello: A saint for the disabled | Simply Catholic

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