

## September Lesson Plan: Care for Creation

**Focus:** Franciscan ecology — Creation as a precious gift and a shared responsibility rooted in care and respect. *Laudato Si'* and the Franciscan tradition guide our understanding, showing how St. Francis' love for all creatures and the natural world informs contemporary ecological teaching. As we prepare for the Feast of St. Francis (Oct. 4), we reflect on practices and attitudes that encourage reverence, simplicity, and solidarity with creation.

Key question: **How do I live an ongoing ecological conversion in daily choices, prayer, and community action?**

**Love in Action:**

### Compassion for the Suffering

- Visit someone who is sick, elderly, or lonely.
- Write letters to people in hospitals, nursing homes, or prisons.

Reflect: **Compassion for the Wounded Christ**

- Hold in prayer those who suffer silently—by name if you can.
- Offer a gentle word or gesture to someone who seems burdened.

Place a bowl of water, a leaf, stone, or candle at the center — symbols of creation's beauty.

**Opening prayer:**

*“Creator God, open our eyes to the beauty of Your world. Teach us to honor all creatures as our brothers and sisters and to care for creation with reverence and love. Amen.”*

**Opening**

### Suggested Scripture Passages

- **Genesis 2:15** — Humanity's vocation to “till and keep” the garden.
- **Psalms 104** — A hymn of praise for creation's harmony and diversity.

**Reflection prompts:**

- What part of creation helps you feel close to God?
- What responsibilities flow from seeing the earth as “home” and not just a resource?
- How does God speak through creation to you personally?

## Teaching Content

### A. Franciscan Ecology: Creation as Kin

- St. Francis recognized all creatures—sun, moon, fire, water, animals—as brothers and sisters.
- He praised God *through* creation, not *apart from* it.
- This worldview invites humility and wonder: we are part of creation, not its masters.

### B. Laudato Si': An Ecological Conversion

Key themes from the Church's contemporary teaching:

- **Integral ecology** — everything is connected; care for the earth is inseparable from care for the poor.
- **Ecological sin** — harm to creation harms the human community.
- **Daily conversion** — small, consistent choices toward sustainability, gratitude, and solidarity.

### D. Practicing Reverence, Simplicity & Solidarity

- Reverence: treating creation as holy.
- Simplicity: reducing consumption, waste, and excess.
- Solidarity: advocating for those affected by environmental harm—especially the poor and marginalized.

*Prompts for deeper dialogue:*

- *Where am I being called to greater ecological responsibility?*
- *What daily choices reveal my relationship with creation?*
- *How can our fraternity model ecological conversion for others?*
- *What changes (big or small) could strengthen our solidarity with the earth and the poor?*

### Love in Action: Compassion for the Suffering

✓ Visit someone who is sick, elderly, or lonely.

Care for creation includes caring for vulnerable people.

✓ Write letters to people in hospitals, nursing homes, or prisons.

Offer comfort and connection to those who may feel forgotten.

## Reflect: Compassion for the Wounded Christ

- Hold in prayer those who suffer silently—by name when possible.
- Offer a gentle word or gesture to someone burdened or overlooked.
- Recognize in every suffering person the face of Christ.

## Monthly Prayer

*“Lord, open my heart as You open my door.”*

- **One eco-conscious habit** (*reduce single-use plastics, conserve water, compost, walk more, buy less*).
- **One practice of reverence** (*spend time outdoors in prayer, bless meals mindfully, learn about local ecosystems*).
- **One act of compassion** from the Love in Action section.

*Encourage them to track their ecological practices in a journal.*

## **Prayer (3 minutes)**

*“Creator God, You formed all things in beauty and goodness. Teach us to walk gently upon the earth, to honor every creature, and to live in harmony with Your creation. Through the example of St. Francis, may our lives proclaim Your praise. Amen.”*