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Christian Education in Relation to Creation  
Final Curriculum

This curriculum is intended for learners who are either junior or senior high, although it could probably work for adults, or an intergenerational group. There is an opening and closing ritual, then three activities, which are loosely related to each other. This is probably too much to do all of it during an hour Sunday school class. It may work well in at least 1.5 hours, or during a retreat. Feel free to change any aspects of the curriculum to match your needs or context. This curriculum is intended to be adaptable for urban, suburban, and rural settings. I was specifically thinking of urban settings when I wrote this, but I think other rich conversation can grow from the activities in both suburban and rural settings.

Opening Ritual  
Materials Needed: Globe (map may be an adequate replacement)

If possible, gather the group in an outside area. If you are able, have the group sit in a circle or a group on the ground. Produce a globe, and pass it around the group. Tell the group today you will be talking about the world. There are two ways to think about the world. One is the earth sitting beneath us. To illustrate, pat the earth beneath us and invite the participants to join you in patting the earth. The other is the world as humans have made it. God worked on the earth before any of us came along; planting trees and lifting mountains. We have placed borders on parts of the world and given distinct cultures to people who live in the world. Ask each member of the group to think of a country in the world. If possible, have them name the country aloud.

When the globe has come back to you, place it in the center of the group/circle. Then begin a prayer to God. Thank God for all the work God has done on the world. Pray that we can help God to care for the world. Tell God we are specifically praying for certain countries. Then ask members of the group to name in prayer the countries they have chosen. Close by asking God to guide you as you think about God’s creation.

Bioweb  
Materials Needed: Ball of yarn,

Arrange the participants to stand in a circle. Bring a ball of yarn into the circle. Toss the ball to someone else in the circle, but hold on to the end of the string. Ask the person who just caught the ball to also hold the string, and toss it to someone else (If your group does not all know each other, this is a good time to practice names. Simply say the name of the person to whom you are throwing the ball of yarn.). Continue this process until everyone has caught the string at least once, and then ask someone to toss the ball of yarn back to you.
Tell the group to look at the people with whom they are directly connected to through the yarn. (Make sure they can say those people’s names). Tell the group about the web of life. We are all connected to one another. This is why we all need one another. Select one person to let go of their yarn. Then ask those who were directly connected with the first person to let go. Ask those who are connected to those people to also let go. Continue until no one is holding the string.

Ask the group:
• What happened?
• How many people had to let go to affect everyone else?
• Were you surprised at the rate of effect?

Points to be made:
• The web can have two meanings. We, as humans, are all connected to one another. We are like the body of Christ, described in 1 Corinthians 12. When one of us is mourning, we all have to mourn with him or her. When one is joyful, that joy will spread to the rest of the group.
• The other meaning is about how all creatures are connected with one another. When one species goes extinct, then those who needed that one for survival will also die.
• These two meanings are really the same meaning. We were designed to live together as a community. We live in community with other people in a social society. We also live in community with the rest of creation. We do not have to have an encounter with those species to be affected. In fact, we are affected by species we do not even know exist! God has placed the whole creation in an intricate system. We all need God for life. God provides life through God’s creation.

Web of Witnesses

Materials Needed: Paper, Writing Utensils, Bible

Give all participants a piece of paper and a writing utensil. Ask the participants to fold the paper into quarters, and then unfold the paper. In the upper left corner ask participants to write down all those people or experience which have had an impact on their faith in a positive way. Then ask the participants to list people or experiences that have had a negative impact on their faith in the lower left corner. In the upper right corner, have the participants write people or experiences the participants think they have been a positive impact on their faith. Finally, in the lower right corner, ask the participants to write people or experiences the participants think they have had a negative impact on their faith.

Ask someone in the group to read 1 Corinthians 12:12-14. Then ask someone else to read verses 15-16. Then ask someone else to read verses 17-20. Then ask someone else
to read verses 21-25. Then ask one last person to read verses 26-27. Ask the following questions:

- How are parts of the body connected to one another?
- How do all these diverse parts coordinate themselves to do something?
- How are you connected to the people you wrote on your paper?
- What have you learned from the people you wrote on your paper?
- What would happen if any of the four groups were suddenly eliminated from your life?

Points to be made:

- We need each other. God’s earth cannot live to its full potential unless we have a web of humans, plants and animals. We will inform one another about the fullness of God.
- Our different gifts all contribute to the common good. We will do another activity to emphasize this later. For the moment, it is enough to say that the gifts of a variety of people are needed. Even plants and animals contribute something to creation.

Web Connection Walk

Take short walk. Ask the participants to watch for systems where something is contributing to something else. The systems can be as simple or as complex as people want to think about them. Some examples include: dragonflies eat the mosquitoes that bite us; trees convert our deadly carbon dioxide into oxygen; someone digging through the garbage is finding useful or valuable things that someone else thinks is junk; snow insulates the side of a building. As you go along the walk, point out some systems and ask others to point out other systems.

After the walk, try to make a list of all the systems you saw on the walk. Ask how these systems related to 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. Ask the following questions:

- What needed to work together to survive?
- Did any parts seem to be mourning, sad, or dilapidated? Did any thing seem to be rejoicing?
- What parts had greater honor? What parts had less honor?

Look at your list of faith influences. Ask the group whom they have influenced. Where would they fit in the four quadrants of someone else?

Points to be made

- We can observe how the web of the world interconnects. Many of our systems we pointed out are very simple. However, most systems are much more complex and extensive than we can see.
- The point of the walk is twofold. One is to be able to learn in the outdoors, instead of inside a building. The other is to observe the world operating. Even if you are in an urban area, the world still works.
• Humanity fits into the web of the world. We are a profound influence on how the world operates. We build up and destroy very easily. It might be worth your time to discuss how humanity influences the web of the earth.

Closing Ritual
If possible, gather in a circle outside. If not, perhaps you can gather around some natural object, candle, or a makeshift alter. Place in the center of the circle the quadrant lists you made, the ball of yarn, and anything you collected during the walk. These are to serve as visual reminders of what lessons you learned during your time together.

Ask the group to share any insights they may have gained during your time together. Find out what they actually learned. This is not a test; it is simply an opportunity to bring out any important points to the participants.

Close with a prayer to God, thanking God for working in the world. Ask participants to list a part of creation for which they are particularly thankful. Pray you may be able to work within the web of the world to be a positive influence. Pray for any concerns the group may have. Close with the Lord’s Prayer.