

# LESSON #2

## EARTH, LOVINGLY CREATED

### SCRIPTURE

- Genesis 1:1–2:1    The Bible story of creation.  
Psalm 150:6        All the earth praises the Lord.  
D&C 163:4b        The earth was created for all life, but is hurting because of human misuse.

**The earth is lovingly created so life can flourish. But the earth is shuddering in pain. We must be careful how we treat the earth.**—*Doctrine and Covenants 163:4b adapted*

### OBJECTIVES

- Children will identify that the natural world has spiritual roots.
- Children will form their own creation to care for.
- Children will identify ways that our faith challenges us to treat the earth responsibly and with loving hearts.

### MATERIALS

- an illustrated children’s Bible (New Revised Standard Version)
- a children’s Bible (NRSV) for each child, if possible
- newsprint (or poster board) and markers
- air-drying clay and a reclosable plastic bag for each child
- a copy of scriptures printed on paper or cards, one for each child: D&C 163:4b adapted, Psalm 150:6
- a paper bag, backpack, or small suitcase for each child. In each bag, pack a copy of today’s scriptures, paper, crayons, and a healthy snack.

### DISCOVERY

Our relationship with the natural world has spiritual roots. That’s because God created the earth with love and compassion and “saw that it was good” (Genesis 1).

Persons on the spiritual journey often find a peaceful place when they withdraw into the natural world. John the Baptist shared his ministry from the wilderness, and Jesus withdrew into nature many times to pray. Early Christians often lived monastic lives in wilderness settings to be close to nature’s healing qualities.

If the weather permits, take a walk in a natural place rich with flowers, rocks, leaves, sand, shells, insects, etc. Have kids collect in their bags or backpacks whatever captivates their heart. They may also do rubbings of tree bark and leaves, make whimsical drawings of clouds, and write detailed descriptions of insects. If possible, take a healthy snack or picnic lunch to extend the time outdoors. Let this be a time of soaking in the beauty and healing powers of God’s creative gift of nature. If possible, the entire lesson can be done outside.

If doing the lesson inside, fill the space with meditative music, such as a music CD of birds, falling water, etc. Cover the walls with photos or artwork of natural things (available from magazines or Web sites). Have a tray of sand and dirt, leaves, flowers, shells, rocks, and other items that children can explore and touch—and wiping cloths to clean their hands after.



**ALIYAH** (ah-LEE-ah) is a new resource for children based on scripture, including Doctrine and Covenants 163. D&C 163 is an affirmation of paths taken and an encouragement of ways to move onward. ALIYAH is a Hebrew word meaning a journey toward God.

One lesson each month will be posted on this Web site to be downloaded and used for church school, junior church, or other times to connect children to the vision of the church. Parallel lessons are provided for youth and adults. Enjoy the journey together!



## UNPACKING THE SCRIPTURE

### GOD CREATES THE EARTH WITH LOVE

In the Bible tradition, the story is told of how God created the world. Share this story with children from an illustrated children's Bible with Genesis 1:1–2:1. Have children pull the copy of Doctrine and Covenants 163:4b from their backpacks to read in unison. Discuss: What does it look like to “shudder”? What does it feel like? Why do we “shudder” sometimes? Why does this scripture tell us that the earth is “shuddering”? How do we hurt the earth and things in it? Children by this age should know some facts about misuse of the earth, global warming, and other issues. Invite them to share what they know.

### CARING FOR GOD'S CREATION

The earth and everything in it has been created in a spiritual way. It has energy and reacts to how we care for it. What can we do to care for the earth? Children have various experiences about recycling and caring for animals and plants. Give each group of two or more children a poster board or newsprint labeled and illustrated with an environmental issue, such as deforestation, unclean water, pollutants, etc. Children brainstorm ideas for solving the problem and write or draw their solutions on the poster. When all groups are done, children can share their ideas with the whole class. This is a great activity for intergenerational groups.

### CARING FOR OUR CREATION

How would it feel to create something yourself? Give each child a ball of air-drying clay. Invite them to create something completely new: a new type of bug, flower, or animal. When done, have them share their new creation. How do they feel about it? How should others care for it? Give each child a reclosable plastic bag to put their creation in, then have them fill out the Owner's Guide on the children's page of how to care for their creation, Cut it out and include it in the plastic bag.



## PACKING FOR THE JOURNEY

It's time to pack for the journey ahead. Have children pack their clay creation and children's page into their backpacks or bags. Ask what they have learned today about God's creation. How will they care for nature differently? How will they share what they know with others?

## ARE WE THERE YET?

To extend this lesson for a rotation model or for intergenerational or additional learning, try the following:

- Share the story of creation from any of many beautiful children's books, such as *God Created* by Mark Francisco Bozzuti-Jones/Jui Ishida or *God's Quiet Things* by Nancy Sweetland/Rick Stevens.
- Hug a Tree—Children may find a tree to “adopt.” Have them create a notebook: doing a rubbing of the bark, a sketch of their tree from different angles, and research of the tree species. Evaluate its health by checking leaves, water, insects, etc.
- Research items that are made from recycled paper, plastic, wood, glass, and other products. Make a commitment to recycle and buy recycled products. Set up recycling in your congregation.
- Plant vegetables indoors to be transferred to an outside garden in the spring, or create a terrarium or aquarium for the congregation with plants, fish, or small animals. Learn together how to care for it.
- Hold an “earth friendly” fair for the congregation and community, inviting specialists to give classes and recycle centers to advertise. Give out recycle bags and facts on being earth friendly.

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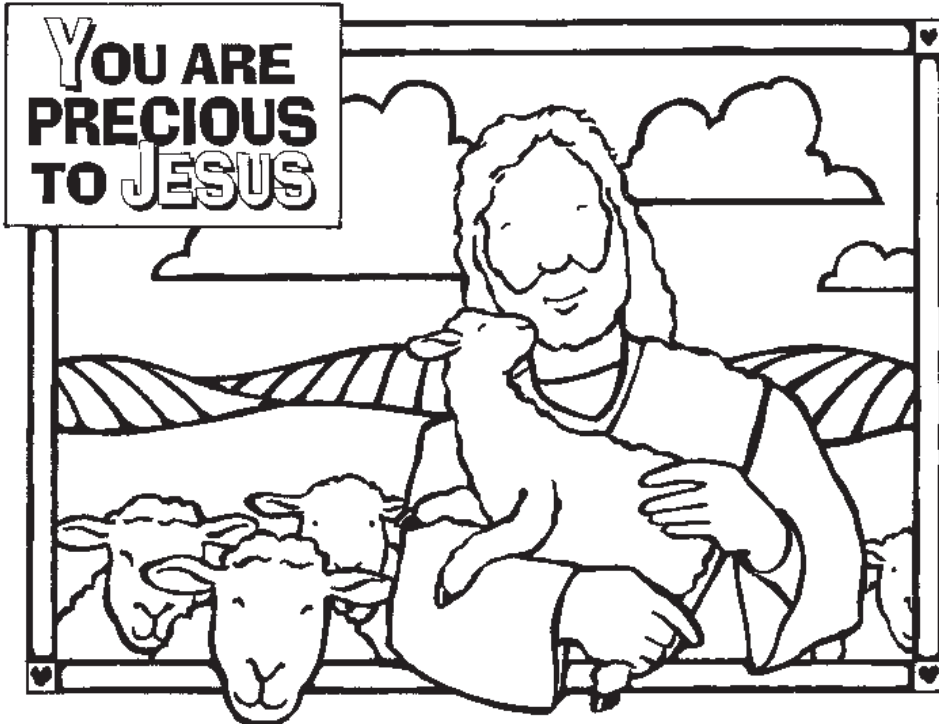
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# Aliyah

Equipping children and youth for the journey

**ALIYAH** is a Hebrew word meaning a journey toward God. Are you ready for **ALIYAH**?

**LESSON #2:**  
**EARTH,**  
**LOVINGLY**  
**CREATED**  
Children's Page



ALL of creation is precious to Jesus. What does "precious" mean?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What and who is precious to you?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## WORD SEARCH

EARTH, CREATION, SKY, WATER, CARE, CREATURES, LOVE, PLANTS, TREES, SAND, LIGHT, NATURE, US

C A R W V B P D N A S  
 R A T A Z E L W N E M  
 E A R T H T A N E O P  
 A E P E H E N R K L O  
 T I C R E A T U R E S  
 I L O V E B S S P E K  
 O V L I G H T J P X Y  
 N A T U R E U R S T V

## OWNER'S GUIDE

for \_\_\_\_\_  
 created by \_\_\_\_\_

How to care for my creation:

Community of Christ

