

Dear Parents & Caretakers,

Greetings and thank you for partnering with us at Trulls Road Free Methodist Church in this *Loving God's Creation*, children's series. We are excited for this opportunity to journey through the Story of God together with our kids (and families)! Now you may be asking questions like... *what is this and what do we do with it.*

Loving God's Creation is a 12-part discipleship series designed for children. It evolved from a sermon, "Salvation Means Creation Healed"¹ into a 7-part Bible Trail Guide for individuals/groups.² Now we are putting this out there for kids and families to engage with in this new format. *Loving God's Creation* will help us journey through the narrative of Scripture, paying attention to one of the core themes: salvation means Creation healed. Beginning in the Garden of Creation, we travel all the way to the City of God in Revelation, making many stops in between. Taking these two images as book-ends to the narrative of the Bible, we see that God's plan has always been to live in a peaceful and loving relationship with Humanity and the rest of Creation.

To do so we will be going through this 12-part series. Each session will have a short **Video** that seeks to bring out a core theme from Scripture and a **Trail Guide** designed to help you go further. These are designed to be flexible with everyone's needs. You could sit down and do a full session in one "sitting"... or you could break it up throughout the week.

In the Trail Guide, you will "*find the trail*" by reading different Scripture passages³ and discussing it together. There are some questions provided, but this is not an exercise in checking boxes. The Bible passages and questions are discussion-starters, not discussion-enders. They kick-start us to go somewhere; so don't be afraid to follow the Spirit's guidance and the interests of your specific group. The next step is to "*walk the trail*" by doing something active. *You* are the Guide. Depending on the children in your care (age, development, etc), you may feel the need to alter some of the components. Go for it!

We are excited to offer this opportunity to others and are eagerly anticipating the Holy Spirit working through this.

With love, grace, and peace.

Pastor Caleb + Chloe Blankenship



¹ You can access this at [Salvation means Creation healed.](#)

² This could be a helpful tool for any adults/teens in the family to work through. It could allow some of the deeper dives and questions you may be seeking. You can access the Green Bible Trail at our website or [this link.](#)

³ Some good translations are the *New Living Translation* and the *Common English Bible*.

Loving God's Creation:

Notes:

Just a few additional notes to help launch you into this process. This series, in many ways, is designed around a simple principle: we need contemplation *and* action. We can often be good at one of these elements, but blending them together is a source of true power. Seeing something as it truly is can change the way we speak, think, and act. In this context, contemplation is being present with and seeing things as they are. Contemplation with God is experiencing the presence of the Divine and allowing that experience to shape us and transform us. Contemplation is about things like wonder, love, grace, and union.

This can be difficult for us busy, compartmentalized, cynical adults. But children are natural contemplatives. They are naturally spiritual. So this process will not be so much trying to teach them to be contemplative, but to encourage them not to forget how to be contemplative. Children don't need to be told how amazing Creation is. They are present with it and experience things in, what seems to adults, a magical way. So as we journey through the narrative of the Bible trying to teach our kids things like contemplation and right action, they may just teach us...⁴

This is a 12-part series. **Sessions 1-5 focus on a 3-act drama of Scripture.** Session 1 introduces this, followed by the 3 "acts" and a recap session. **Sessions 6-11 focus on a cycle/pattern that has been revealed in that Story,** what we're calling a (re)cycle. This is a 4-step process to recycle over and over. Session 6 introduces this, followed by the 4 steps and a recap session. **Session 12 serves as a summary of all of the sessions,** helping us succinctly conclude the core message of this series.

Outline:

1. **Story** - *this is a Christ-soaked Creation*
2. **Shalom** - *this is good, you are good*
3. **Sickness** - *sadly, a sickness has entered a good Creation*
4. **Salvation** - *salvation means Creation healed*
5. **So what?** - *we live in the untold parts of the story, between two gardens*
6. **(Re)cycle** - *seeing something new changes everything*
7. **Contemplation** - *God is found in Creation*
8. **Connected** - *everything is connected*
9. **Caretakers** - *Humans are called to serve, to be caretakers*
10. **Compassion** - *we need to wake up to justice and compassion*
11. **(Re)cycle(d)** - *contemplation should lead to action, and back around*
12. **Love** - *loving God = loving your Neighbour = loving Creation*



⁴ For a great book about this check out *The Spiritual Child: a new science on parenting for health and lifelong thriving.*
<https://www.lisamillerphd.com/>