

# God's Good World

## AIM:

To learn that our role as humans include being responsible stewards of the environment

Theme : Christian Stewardship

UNIT 1, LESSON 2

## Genesis 2:8-15 (NRSV)

<sup>8</sup> And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. <sup>9</sup> Out of the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

<sup>10</sup> A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches. <sup>11</sup> The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; <sup>12</sup> and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. <sup>13</sup> The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Cush. <sup>14</sup> The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

<sup>15</sup> The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.

## Genesis 2:19-20 (NRSV)

<sup>19</sup> So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. <sup>20</sup> The man gave names to all cattle and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner.

## Teacher's Preparation

### Objectives:

The resources of the Earth need to be utilized wisely and responsibly

Humans are responsible for being the stewards of God's creation and should preserve the environment

To prepare for the lesson, the teacher might consider bringing pictures (electronic or hard copy) of natural wonders and asking students to identify where they might be found. Examples could include the Himalayas, the Grand Canyon, Moraine Lake in Banff National Park, Angel Falls in Venezuela, Great Barrier Reef, Ayers Rock in Australia. The teacher might want to consider introducing students to uncommon and unique places/animals/plants.



## Student Introduction

Our planet relies on a delicate balance for survival. However, modern human activities have started to cause major havoc to this delicate balance. Brainstorm the root cause for the below environmental problems:

- Climate Change
- Over exploitation of natural resources, deforestation
- Pollution of air, water and land masses

In 1988, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was created by the United Nations to review and suggest strategies for improvement. The study found that humans are the biggest cause for the increase in temperature because of the greenhouse gases we release. Many countries promised to reduce their greenhouse emissions (It is thought to be one of the leading causes for climate change) but few have been able to make any real improvements.

## Bible Exploration

There are two main ideas in this passage:

The four rivers of Eden are the Gihon, Pishon, Tigris and Euphrates

**God's perfect creation:** This passage mentions that God created all the animals and birds of the Earth from the ground. In the previous chapter of Genesis I, a breakdown is provided for what was created on each of the seven days of creation. The birds and creatures of the sea (created on the 5<sup>th</sup> day) and the animals of the land (on the 6<sup>th</sup> day) were each created by God with a purpose and with his stamp of approval "it was good". The Garden of Eden is also described in detail – with trees that were beautiful, filled with food and with a river that branched into four. The names of the rivers provide us with a reference point as to where the Garden of Eden may be located in today's world. Researchers have not been able to pinpoint the exact location of the Rivers Gihon and Pishon, but the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers flow even today.

Pishon – According to Genesis 25:28, this river may have been located in North East Arabia. It is also believed that this river flowed through the Indian subcontinent. The passage talks about the land around this river being rich in Gold, Bdellium (a transparent, yellowish resin from trees that is used as an aromatic substance) and Onyx Stone.

Gihon – The land of Cush is believed to be present-day Ethiopia. Though not confirmed, the River Gihon is perhaps the River Nile in Egypt.

Tigris – This River is referred to in Daniel 10:4 as the Great River. It flows through modern day Iraq and the cities of Nineveh and Assure are situated on the banks of this river.

Euphrates – This River is located very close to the River Tigris and flows through Iraq as well. There have been many historical finds along this river

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which have led researchers to believe that the places around them may have been the cradles of civilizations (where human civilization began).

**The role of man** :The second idea emphasized in this passage is the role of man within the Garden of Eden and on this perfectly-created planet. God allows man to be involved in the creation of the ‘creatures of the Earth’. In verse 19, it is mentioned that after creating all the animals and birds, he brought them to Adam so they could be named. However, man’s inclusion in the creation also comes with a price. After God puts Adam in the Garden of Eden, he tells him to “till it and keep it” (verse 15). This is a responsibility specifically given to Adam to be the caretaker of the environment and all of God’s creation. The birds, animals, trees and humans all need the resources of the earth. All of God’s creation needs to use the treasures God has gifted the planet with and as caretakers of the resources of the earth, we must be careful not to exploit them. Mahatma Gandhi once said “The earth provides enough to satisfy every man’s need, but not every man’s greed”.



## Activities

At this time, students might consider looking at the pictures prepared by the teacher and after guessing their names/locations, the class might want to think about the possible effect of the issues discussed earlier on the subjects in the pictures.



Increase of average temperatures by 2 C (4 F) would result in melting of glaciers and Arctic ice, rising sea levels, more frequent and extreme weather events, difficulties for global agriculture and changes in plant and animal life, including extinctions

(Credit: [mariusz kluzniak](#) via Flickr)

## Let’s Review

1. Name the four rivers that originated from the Garden of Eden?
2. The Earth is filled with treasures created by God.
  - A. Name some of the natural resources found in North America.
  - B. Name some of the endangered species of birds and animals in North America and/or Europe
3. Describe some ways in which humans are destroying the environment
4. What are some specific ways in which we can preserve our environment?

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## Values For Life

God's creation is constantly being endangered. We need to respect the Earth and all its inhabitants and natural resources. This can be done through reducing our usage and using only what we need, recycling and looking for alternatives. For examples, using recycled paper means fewer trees need to be cut down to make more paper. Also, by recycling aluminum cans, we would not need to mine as much for more aluminum. We can also give our old clothes, books and toys to organizations that will give them to someone else in need. Turning off lights, electronics, water taps when we are not using them also helps to preserve our resources and save the environment. We need to learn to be better caretakers of the planet and also educate people around us as well.

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## Faith In Action

If possible, students might consider using the information from the table below to make posters/signs and raise awareness within in church. Alternate projects for action might also be considered.



I can be a better steward of the environment by making these changes ( <i>The students should report back in 30 days and let the class know how many of these changes were successfully implemented by them</i> )
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At home:
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In church and community:
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## Memory Verse

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it.

**Genesis 2:15**

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## Closing Prayer

Thank God for the gifts of this planet and for His beautiful creation

Pray about the individual commitments made by your classmates to protect the environment

Pray about the future of the planet and for the people in power who can help protect God's creation