



MTAL
Movimiento de Mujeres Anabautistas
HACIENDO TEOLOGÍA DESDE AMÉRICA LATINA

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World Day of Prayer 2018

Liturgy

“Community, Faith and Ecology”

Background Justification.

Nowadays, the ecological imbalance that shakes our planet has impacted, and will continue to do so, communities and ecosystems around the World, taking them to a global crisis point that perhaps has not happened previously in the Twentieth Century. This global crisis threatens not only the pollution of land and water, but the extinction of entire species, and the emergence of new diseases and social crises. We, as communities of faith, without being conscious of it, have played a double role in this respect. At the same time, we see ourselves as stewards of creation and responsible for its care, preservation and benefit (Gn. 1:26-28, 2:15; Prov. 12:10), we are also producers and consumers of supplies and processes that not only hurt the environment, but also make it sick. This is why, this year we want to intercede before God asking forgiveness for our lack of stewardship, and also a more sensitive heart toward the cries of the earth (Rom. 8:19-23). At the same time we recognize and celebrate the efforts that men and women of faith make throughout the world to stop the scope of imbalance that affects our planet.

General objective.

To celebrate the efforts of organized communities and women in the world who reflect a holistic understanding about what it means to be God’s people, called to proclaim the good news to every creature (Rom 8:19-23); at the same time we also raise awareness about our participation in this work of restoration and collaboration with our Creator God.

Specific objectives.

- To intercede (identify) for the faith communities that fight for environmental preservation in various ways.
- To become aware, as members of the people of God, of the care that our world needs.
- To carry out some simple and specific actions that reflect our commitment to the stewardship of creation.

Prayer requests:

The theme for this year invites us to pray for our local, national and regional needs in regards to the environment. Nevertheless, we also invite you to join in prayer for:

- **The Global Network of Anabaptist Women Doing Theology.**

In the last Mennonite World Conference assembly carried out in Pennsylvania in 2015, we held an informative session about the activities and objectives of MTAL (Movement of Anabaptist Women Doing Theology from Latin America). On that occasion, we evaluated the possibility of creating a global network with other Anabaptist women movements in other parts of the world, with the purpose of being connected to pray for each other, carry out projects together, and express solidarity in our needs and the needs of the World.

We pray that this network can be formed, according to God's will.

- **During 2017, some sister countries on the American continent** suffered earthquakes, hurricanes, and storms. Please remember Puerto Rico, Mexico and the Caribbean, who were all impacted by these natural phenomena.

Introduction.

All of us being submerged in the day's occupations at home, school or work, it is easy for us to lose sight of the world around us, and not only of our neighbor, but of the environment of which we are a part. Those of us who live in large cities and do not have access to parks, gardens or nature reserves, run the risk of forgetting that the very existence of the city is linked to the rural regions that surround it. The water that we consume every day, for example, comes from dams that supply the needs of cities in all their complexity: industry, commerce and inhabitants. The few trees that survive in the streets fight to give us oxygen, protection from the sun's rays and heat, and are a refuge for the small species of birds and mammals that cohabit with us in the city.

Those who live in rural environments could account for the processes that occur on the other side of the fence: deforestation, depletion of the land due to the use of agrochemicals, extinction of animal species, pollution, and diversion of currents or hoarding of water in dams. When we listen to our grandparents or great-grandparents talk with nostalgia of "how things used to be," we realize that for the greater "advance" of the human being, greater losses and negative changes in nature appear everywhere.

This year, the focus of our liturgy for the Day of Prayer, takes up one of the aspects forgotten in our spiritual and community practices, but that nonetheless forms the basis of our own existence: the environment. Ecology is the field of study that refers to the relationship between biodiversity (animals, plants, bugs, bacteria, water, fungi, soil types and air quality), and society (that is, us). What do we mean when we talk about "relationship" between this and the other? When the Lord put Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, He gave them a task. Do you remember it? By subjecting living beings to their domain (administration, care), the Lord bound forever human beings and other living beings in a relationship that implies on our part: conscience (we are the administrators, not the owners), interest (how do you care for a plant? What is the best way to care for an animal species? Why should I care for so many bugs on the earth?), and spirituality (we are made in the image and likeness of the Creator God, let us live this reality with dignity).

But today, we live in the midst of ecological imbalance, overexploitation of natural resources, disease, poverty, consumerism and pollution, which are reflected in the desertification of forests, jungles and plains, global warming, massive migration of human beings and animals that seek water, land and food; disappearance of species, political and military crises for the control of scarce resources, among other things. The ecological imbalance generates social, spiritual, cultural and physical imbalance of humans and animals as a reflection of the sin of the human being, of which we are all responsible (Rom. 3:23).

Nevertheless, there is good news! Throughout the world there are small communities of faith or other groups who, faced with such an imbalance, have taken actions of defense, protection, restoration and reconciliation from a perspective of Christian faith, for the good of creation. Perhaps you, if you are a farmer and resist the use of hybrid seeds, or if you own your own food business and do not buy disposable products, or you are a student and take advantage of the clean sides of photocopies, you are already doing your part.

¿What Anabaptists believe about...?

Community

Jesus is the center of our faith. 1 Corinthians 15.14

Community is the center of our lives. The Scriptures are interpreted in community. Reconciliation is the center of our work. Reconciliation includes the relationship between human being and the whole creation. (*What is an Anabaptist Christian?* Becker, *Missio Dei*, no. 18, 2008)

Faith

God is known to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Creator who seeks to restore fallen humanity by calling a people to be faithful in fellowship, worship, service and witness. (*Shared Convictions*, MWC, 2018)

Ecology

"We believe that the earth and everything in it belongs to God and that it originated by God's creating word (Ps. 24:1,2). ... God not only gave beginning to creation, but continues to care for creation and is sustaining it with God's word and Spirit....

The powers of evil and human rebellion mistreat and cause God's creation to deteriorate, offending the Creator. But God takes the initiative to restore what he has created. God has never abandoned the work of his hands (Ps 138.8).

Furthermore, with the sending of Jesus Christ and with the pouring out of the Spirit, God continues the work of new creation.... Those who follow Christ... become agents of restoration." (Alfred Neufeld, *What We Believe Together*. New York: Good Books, 2015, pp 22-23)

Preparation

- Form work teams according to gifts and abilities.
- Before the assigned prayer day, conduct a small survey of the knowledge and understanding that your families, communities of faith, and neighbors have about ecology, environment, global warming, and pollution, etc. Include comments if these are matters that concern you personally, collectively, or they are the sole responsibility of your leaders. For example: what do you know about global warming or pollution? What will your contribution be to this problem?
- From the national and local news, gather information on environmental crises, extinction of species, diseases associated with pollution, etc., to make a mural with the main ecological problems of the countries that are included in the liturgy for the day of prayer, and from your own region or location. This mural can be placed as a background for the liturgy.
- If possible in your church, place plants in front, images of animals in danger of extinction, images of Adam and Eve before sin, and so on. If you prefer, make a PowerPoint presentation with these images.
- On a world map, locate the countries we are praying for and indicate your own country. As a visual aid, draw a line on the map that unites your country with all the others.
- Have prepared a place in the garden of your church, and a tree or bush to plant, which will serve as part of the closing liturgy. If you do not have that space, bring a pot, soil and a plant to plant.
- Review the annex that contains suggestions for practical actions to take care of the environment: "The Three Rs".

Material needed

- Locate beforehand the videos suggested in each of the moments that take place in the liturgy. All are available on You Tube.
Optional: If you do not have Internet access in your congregation, review and prepare the proposed alternatives that are attached at the end of this document.
- The proposed songs are public domain, but if you have a song that is well known in your church, do not hesitate to include it. Share in advance the lyrics, melodies and chords of the new songs with the musicians of your congregation. The lyrics of the proposed songs can replace the videos, reading the lyrics as poems. Some texts also appear in the annexes.

¡Attention!

This year we include the children of our communities, so we have designed a resource for the Sunday school teachers that can be used together with the liturgy. Also we offer some practical ideas to reduce our negative impact in ecology, by recycling and reusing the materials we have at hand. Both tools are found in the annex.

Liturgy of the World Day of Prayer, 2018

Welcome

Invocation

Music that refers to God as Creator, for example (1 or 2)

- How great Thou art
- I want to worship you
- Psalm 150

Read together Psalm 148

First moment. Our reality (become aware)

Do a power point presentation with data that indicates how our life styles, methods of production, and consumption habits are putting our common earthly home in danger.

Optional: you can watch the video “Man and the planet earth” available on YouTube:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=uEGxpryp91Q

Reflecting together (if possible, make four groups and give a theme to each one):

- What is my individual responsibility/or how am I modeling the care of the creation for the next generation?
- What is the responsibility of the local community (including family, school, church, workplace, etc.) in the environmental degradation?
- What is the responsibility of the government in relation to an economic model that is degrading the environment?
- What is the responsibility of big corporations in the degradation of the environment and in the ecological imbalance?

First prayer time. Let’s pray for the ecological imbalance in our home location. If you shared in groups, ask the participants to briefly share their responses. When one group or person has finished, pray interceding and seeking God’s forgiveness for our responsibility as human beings regarding these issues.

Second moment. Being in harmony with creation. (What is our role in this world?)

Suggested song “Hoy canta Dios,” Elizabeth Hernández (words are in the Appendix)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rvKKKz6RliU>

As an alternative you can read Psalm 8 or create a power point about this psalm. Or you can express aloud a phrase of reconciliation or commitment toward the care of creation.

Reflecting together.

Read Numbers 22. 21-33, Balaam's Donkey.

- Who are the living beings, for us? Our servants? Our partners? Our resources?
- While Balaam was unable to open his eyes to the spiritual reality surrounding him, his donkey could see the angel. What does this story tell us about the relationship that God has with His creation? Why did the angel rebuke Balaam for hitting his donkey?
- Who are we for the living beings? Who is going to judge us for the way in which we relate to them?

¿**Did you know?** The Bible says that because of our sins, the earth suffers (see Romans 8.19-23). Could you name some ways in which, because of our sins, the animals, plants, water and mountains suffer?

Second prayer time. For countries/churches who suffer because of the ecological imbalance created by the overexploitation of natural resources.

Research about some of the next topics: mining and pollution of the earth, water and air; lack of water; pollution and overexploitation of earth; air pollution; extinction of species; diseases associated with the ecological imbalance; deforestation, etc. We suggest the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kHhspf5lfdE>, or another similar one.

Third moment.

Let's ask God for courage, wisdom and an open heart to take concrete actions to reconcile us with the creation, and honor Him as Creator. (What can we do?)

Read. Poem "The whole of nature," in Appendix 1, or another poem about the beauty of nature, and Romans 8.19-23

Reflecting together.

- What is our responsibility before God and his creation?
- What do the living beings expect/need from us?
- What measures can we take to change our negative impact on the creation?

Third prayer time: Let's ask God for a sensitive heart towards creation. Ask God for the needs of our sister churches in Puerto Rico, Mexico and the Caribbean, and our region. Make faith commitments to honor our role as stewards of creation and to teach new generations the beauty and dignity of our world. In this way we also build community in the faith of Jesus Christ, Lord and master of all that exists.

Liturgical gesture:

Plant a tree (or plant). It is suggested to involve the children of the community.

- If it is inside: one person brings the earth and thanks God for it; another the container where it will be planted, and offers her hands to make community and join the work of her sisters; another brings the tree or plant and speaks of hope and faith that brings the presence of God the Creator by germinating the seed, sending the rain to make it grow; some others can decorate the tree with written prayers of commitment or plant flowers around the tree.
- Everyone holds hands and can repeat a Scripture used before.

Closing Prayer: As women and men making community and strengthening our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, center of our life, this year we also intercede for the strengthening of the Network of Anabaptist Mennonite Women throughout the world: a) May God our Father give us wisdom to be visible signs of Your kingdom in an integral way. b) That we can always build hope in a spirit of love, solidarity with our neighbors and creation. c) May we put our efforts toward the care of our common home, d) And to actively wait, with enthusiasm, for God to make all things new, in the spirit of the exhortation in James 5: 7-8: "Notice the husbandman: how he waits patiently until he receives the early and late rain, hoping for the precious fruit of the earth." Maranatha, yes, come, Lord Jesus!

Close with a joyful song of your choice.

Please share your testimonies with us:

1. Send an email to Ester Bornes: esterbornes@hotmail.com
2. Send your testimonies through the co-coordinators: Mary Cano (marysolcano@yahoo.com) Ángela Opimi (angelitaopimi@gmail.com).

We appreciate willingness for the elaboration of the liturgy:

- Ruhama Pedroza García, Alba Castillo, Mary Cano; Ofelia García, coordinator
- Ruhama Pedroza, Milka Rindzinski and Karen Flores, translators; and Janet Breneman, English editorial support

Special thanks for feedback: Olga Piedrasanta, Linda Shelly, Milka Rindzinski, Mary Cano.

Blessed are the people whose God is the Lord!

APPENDIX 1. SONGS AND POEMS

God sings today

Author: Elizabeth Hernández, México, 2002

God sings today and his voice is carried by the wind
God sings today and the whole forest dances with joy.
And it's by listening to your voice, oh Lord,
That all creation responds with emotion.
God sings today in all this greenery
And across the mountain and the sky, his voice is heard.

God sings today and his voice I hear through the wind,
God sings today and with forest I dance of contentment
And my heart is filled with emotion
Before you I bow with all devotion.
I thank you Lord, for I can hear your voice,
Because I am also part of all creation.

In his song God asks me to take care of life.
Trees, seas, mountains and animals.
And humanity; color does not matter
We are brothers and sisters with all creation.
Thank you Lord that I can hear your voice
Because I am also part of all creation.

To listen to the song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rvKKKz6RliU>

The whole of nature

Author: Moisés Barbosa, Mexico, 1980

The whole of nature is full of voice
Everything in it is canticle and music and sound
The songs of the cicadas, the crickets and the frogs
Magpies and chocoyos tell us about God

And the grass is a handkerchief with the initials of God
That He has let fall for us to remember Him
The songs of the cicadas, the crickets and the frogs
Magpies and parakeets tell us about God

All creation proclaims
Stridently as a heartbeat
The existence and beauty of God's love

APPENDIX 2 – Workshop “The Three R’s

*The following activity is a support resource and is intended **to follow up on the initial liturgy** and perhaps on another occasion could be used as one or several workshops, as decided in each context.*

Dear sisters, something that could help us strengthen this aspect of "Community, faith and ecology" would be to send images and testimonies about the implementation of this workshop to <https://www.facebook.com/mujeres.anabautistaslatinoamericanas>

You could also include a brief account of what you are doing in your context to help care for the environment, and your ideas of what you would like to do next year to care for creation.

Future generations are unlikely to condone our lack of prudent concern for the integrity of the natural world that supports all life.

Rachel Carson

COMMITMENT TO OUR PLANET

“Now God saw all that he had made, and indeed, it was very good! Genesis 1:31

In the context of the celebration of the MTAL 2018 Day of Prayer, and under the theme "Community, Faith and Ecology" we wish to make a brief contribution so that in a timely manner and from our daily lives we can help to restore and protect our planet Earth.

In the Genesis account we find a wonderful description of creation (Genesis 1 and 2) which is crowned, says Psalm 8, with the creation of human beings. (Genesis 1:27 to 30) We are commanded to be stewards, good stewards of everything nature offers us, under the premise that "To Him belong the earth and everything in it" (Psalm 24:1 and Deut. 10:14).

Creation as such, offers relationships of reciprocity. Therefore we need to take responsibility to protect it and ensure that our future generations will be able to enjoy its wonders. Otherwise, negative consequences will increase, reflected in the variation of the climate, depletion of natural resources – mainly water, air and the loss of biodiversity. For that reason the invitation is to create radical changes in our lifestyles. Since Christian spirituality also manifests itself in this way (Romans 12: 2), it is urgent for us to reflect on the ways we produce and consume.

One of the many ways we can help protect our planet is through the three "R" rule: reducing, reusing and recycling.

Background

During the **G8 summit** held in June 2004, Koizumi Unichiro, Prime Minister of Japan, proposed the "3R initiatives" (reduce, reuse and recycle), aimed at building a sound material recycling. In a meeting of ministers in 2005, the United States, Germany, France and 20 other countries discussed how to implement international actions related to the initial proposal.

The three "Rs" are committed to a healthy and clean world. To achieve this, we have to be aware of the large amounts of garbage that we produce. For example, according to the environmental profile of Guatemala 2010, 2012 each Guatemalan produces 12 ounces of garbage daily. If that amount is multiplied by the total population, which exceeds 17 million, an exaggerated amount of garbage results. That trash affects our health, the environment, (soil, water, air, biodiversity) and of course our economy and our spirit. For this reason, in the context of the day of prayer we propose to assume at least the commitment to incorporate in our daily practices the three "R's" in the different spaces where we move.

REDUCE. Begin the topic by brainstorming with the group.

We can achieve reduction in two ways: reducing consumption of goods and reducing energy consumption. In that way we produce less waste, therefore achieving a minimum of garbage in all the spaces where we move (home, church, school, work)

Suggestions for practical actions:

- ✓ Using cloth bags when we go to market. This will reduce the consumption of plastic bags
- ✓ Reducing the use of toxic products and pollutants
- ✓ Limiting the consumption of disposable products. (disposable diapers, expanded polystyrene)

REUSE. Begin the topic by brainstorming with the group.

- ✓ Choose to buy products with less packaging
- ✓ Reduce the use of energy. Disconnect everything we are not using
- ✓ Reduce water consumption, close the spigot after use. Drop by drop water is wasted

The system in which we move makes us fall into a "discard culture" without becoming aware of the negative consequences. On the other hand, reusing allows us to give maximum utility to objects before totally discarding them. Most goods we acquire can have a longer life, by either being repaired or used creatively.

Reusing will help us:

- ✓ Prevent goods and materials from entering the final waste cycle
- ✓ Contribute to preserving biodiversity

- ✓ Contribute to our economy
- ✓ Reduce the generation of garbage.
- ✓ Increase our creativity
- ✓ Reduce the impact on resources such as water, air, biodiversity

RECYCLE. This refers to rescuing material that no longer serves a purpose, that is already considered garbage, and that through a process can become a new product. The recycling process requires the discipline of "sorting garbage" and getting it to specialized places. The classification requires separating cardboard, glass, and metal.

Regarding plastics, notice that most have in the lower part a number within a triangle formed with arrows. For example, plastics identified with numbers 1, 2 and 4 are recyclable. Number 3 PVC and vinyl are highly toxic.

We can recycle organic waste at home, and obtain our own compost.

In conclusion, recycling reduces consumption and waste.

GET TO WORK. Suggested practical activity related to recycling.

Objective: That participants may know and relate the origin of solid waste to the importance of recycling.

Content: It is important to note that most of the things we throw away can be reused or recycled. Organic waste (60% of the total) comes from living matter, food remains, paper, cardboard and manure. The inorganic waste (remaining 40%) comes from inert material such as glass, plastic and metals.

Materials: Each participant should provide containers and paper packaging, magazines, newspapers, cardboard, aluminum and plastic. In other words, any product that can be recycled.

Activity: Divide participants into groups. The number will depend on the overall group size and the number of facilitators available. The first task will be a brief presentation on the importance of garbage classification. Then brainstorm about the remaining materials the group has remaining.

The facilitator should previously choose some projects to carry out with the products participants were requested to bring for the activity. For example, make piggy banks, containers to store pens, vases and so on. You can teach how to turn paper into craft paper which can be used to make cards and other sub-products. It would be great if the facilitator could bring some models prepared beforehand!

Elaborated by Alba Castillo, Guatemala.

Appendix 3

LITURGY FOR THE MTAL DAY OF PRAYER 2018 FOR CHILDREN

"THE PERFECT CREATION OF GOD"

Central idea: That the children of our community can join this celebration of the Day of Prayer as part of the community of faith in Jesus Christ, and God creator and sustainer of everything that exists.

With the purpose of:

- ✓ Thinking of yourselves as active subjects in the care of creation
- ✓ Express your gratitude for God's sustenance and the reciprocity of creation
- ✓ Pray for needs related to the environment, especially for countries that during 2017, were affected by natural phenomena (Puerto Rico, Mexico and the Caribbean)
- ✓ Pray for people who struggle to improve the environment in different ways
- ✓ Carry out at least one activity of the three R's

Have ready:

- ✓ An adequate space for the class, if possible, also the equipment to watch the video
- ✓ Various objects/drawings that speak to us about creation (trunks, leaves, pebbles, water, honey, flowers, bread, milk, stuffed animals or drawings, etc.)
- ✓ Three sets of more or less large cards, with the words of the verse to memorize
- ✓ Recyclable material for the planned craft and/or seeds to plant in a pot or in an appropriate space in the temple
- ✓ Suggested material for the closing of the class (cleaning tasks. See appendices)
- ✓ Very brief information (photos of people, landscapes, etc.) of the countries to be prayed for
- ✓ Information about some ecological problem in your country of origin
- ✓ Plan to unite with the adults at the end of the liturgy for the closing
- ✓ Tape, crayons, pencils, magazine clippings, scissors, glue stick/white glue, recyclable paper
- ✓ A box wrapped as a gift

Activities:

- Songs
- Pantomime or drama in the reading of the creation; or an expression of gratitude with object
- Biblical text memorization by the team
- Sample of the chosen craft
- Prayer activity for the countries
- Teams creating posters with messages about environmental care
- Work in teams

WELCOME:

Briefly explain the specific reason for this class/workshop

Choose songs, or we suggest: (I am from the creation), <https://youtu.be/RFYloJKNJJo> or (Everything is the work of God), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MRIX_kxxMPQ (Both in Spanish)

Prayer: Each child take an object, which you have previously prepared, to express their gratitude for what God and the creation provide in their community and in the world. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for the world that you have given us and because the earth continues to produce! In the end, we all say Amen.

FIRST MOMENT

Let's begin:

1. Reading of Genesis chapter 1

This can be done in an alternating manner asking each child who, while reading, represents it with a mime. An alternative is to watch one of the following videos <https://youtu.be/asC27KnW3wE>, <https://youtu.be/TQ94WcPDkRs> or another about the creation.

2. After watching the video, do a round of questions previously prepared by the facilitators: What has impacted you the most? Why? Which of the things that God created would you like to have most? Do you know all the animals? Which do you have in your region? Do you know if they exist or not? If they do not exist, why not? What things can we do to conserve our earth? **ALL OF THESE CAN BE DONE IN RELATION TO READING, OR WATCHING THE VIDEO.**

KEY ASPECT: What will be the greatest learning of all this? *"A responsibility of my mission here on earth is to take care of the creation that God has given us."* Today we will work on this responsibility and we will also join in the Day of Prayer with many women from our continent who are talking about the same thing.

THE VERSE TO MEMORIZE

Give a set of cards to each team (3) with the words of the verse Gn. 1.31

Use a wall and place a flip chart with the words "Good, Excellent"

- a) Represent any element of the creation (only one), very colorfully
- b) Then, over that drawing, place the verse in order and
- c) Create a song, or chant or a declamation with the memorized verse.

Everyone applauds and shouts, **"And everything that God made, He made it very good!"**

SECOND MOMENT: Biblical story (We suggest two options)

1. It can be a story given by the facilitator (attached/or ask the children to read the chapter in teams/pairs; those who cannot read can listen carefully to those who do) and then choose which of the creation moments they want to represent.
2. With a facilitator who has previously prepared the exercise, give a few minutes for the team to get ready, choose some of the materials on hand, and agree how they will do it.
3. Afterwards, a narrator can read slowly and the teams/pairs, one by one, move to the center of the room, taking their place, according to the days of creation (light, darkness, sky, earth, water, etc.) The idea is to create a flexible picture.
4. When everyone has participated with their creativity, each facilitator can make various applications, for example: Before anything, there was God, Creator, Love; He gave us a home because he loves us and wants us to live well; He made water so the land produces fruit, for ... etcetera.
5. At the end of the interactive story, everyone sits down in a circle and asks a round of questions. What did we learn? What did we like more? Why? The facilitator can conclude according to the general purpose.

Before the creation of man and woman, we see that God had placed beauty and order in the world, gave us a place in magnificent conditions to live. But, from the pure and perfect creation that God made, the world has deteriorated because of the disorder in which people tend to live and by our misuse of the resources that God has given us.

6. **Closure:** "Our gift box." Who likes gifts? Someone comes forward to open it, another comes forward to take out what is inside. What has touched you? ... Do you like it? ... What do you want to do with this? ... How will you take care of it?

Pray a prayer of commitment for God to help us be responsible. Applaud and shout "Everything that God made is very good! I want to take care of it!"

THIRD MOMENT

- Before starting to develop the craft, present the photographic panorama of the countries for which MTAL is praying this year, briefly explain and choose three children to pray (you can have a written or guided prayer)
- Prepare for the activity/craft
- Have a sample of the finished craft(s), emphasizing that everyone can do it according to their own creativity
- Have a small snack ready
- Put the room back in order and clean whatever is necessary (recycled plastic bags or cans to collect the garbage, separating it (organic, inorganic and recyclable). Make sure each child knows where to put each item.
- Closing: Song, guided prayer and blessing.

Appendix 3.1 - Biblical story (2)

HAVE READY: *Figures of the creation that you have prepared in advance. A blanket, banner, display or flannelgraph where the figures can be pasted while the story is told.*

THE PERFECT CREATION OF GOD

(Based on Genesis chapter 1)

Before there was nothing ... there was God.

And God looked into space and everything was dark. Darkness of a hundred midnights together. And God said: "I am going to give order the world."

So God smiled, and said, "Let there be light," and the light burst out (spread out your arms with amazement and joy) and the darkness came to one side (go backwards and roll the arms again and again sideways) and thus separated the light from the darkness. From that moment there was a clear day and a dark night, God was very happy with what He did, and God said: **(all the children will say in a loud voice): "THIS IS GOOD!"**

And that was the first day in God's world.

Then God said: "Let there be expansion in the midst of the waters", and He separated the water from the dry land (those who have the waves come forward) And God called the expansion "heavens." Clouds appeared with water droplets, (stick figures of clouds to the display or banner) and also rivers and lakes, and seas around the land. He called the dry part earth and what was over it, He called heaven. At the end of that day, God said: **"THIS IS GOOD!"**

Then on the third day, God looked and thought. "Ummm, the earth is very empty, Something must be done with this ... and He began to decorate it with plants of all types and sizes, and made flowers of all colors, and trees that would serve as food, and for medicine and to provide oxygen for us ... He created trees of oranges, guavas, avocados ... (Ask the participants to help you mention types of trees they know. The children come forward with plants, flowers, bushes, etc.) And God said: **"THIS IS GOOD!"**

On the fourth day God said: "May the lights shine in the heavens both in the night and in the day" (those who have the sun, the moon and the stars come forward), so God made the warm sun to shine by day and the silver and cold moon to illuminate the sky, and the stars to blink and shine with the moon. And God said, **"THIS IS GOOD!"**

God was looking at all the beauty of the sea and the plants that were on earth, and everything was very beautiful but ... wait a moment ... there was nothing that moved. Then God said: "Let there be animals in the water" and Zaz! A small fish jumped here, another one over there (the children with the fish come forward to stick their figures on the display); some are small and colored, and in the sea others were very big like the whale, but all lived as friends. He also made many birds that flew over the beaches and

fields; they could be heard whistling the most beautiful notes ... it was all parties and joy. And God saw all the living creatures and said: **"THIS IS GOOD!"**

On the sixth day God made more living creatures, there were already fish swimming in the water and birds flying in the air; now he made animals to walk on the land, animals in the field (let the participants mention some) and animals that crawl on the ground ... all kinds of animals such as dogs, cows, lions, tigers ... and all lived in peace, playing as friends. God was very happy to see the animals happy (paste the rest of the animals).

Suddenly, God thought that something was missing ... someone with whom He could talk and have fellowship. Someone who could take care of all that beautiful world that He had created. So God made man and woman (stick the figures on the display) and asked them to care and protect the creation ... and both were very happy. God looked with great satisfaction at that perfect work that He had made and said: **"THIS IS VERY GOOD!"**

Out of the empty darkness, God made the world. The world of God is full of warm light and many colors. The world of God is full of plants and creatures and mountains and rivers and the joyful sound of life. And even today, God loves the world, and keeps saying: **"THIS IS GOOD"**, please take care of it...

APPLICATION TO DAILY LIFE: Before the creation of man and woman, we see that God had placed beauty and order in the world, gave us a place in magnificent conditions to live, but, from the pure and perfect creation that God made, the world has deteriorated due to the disorder in which people tend to live and the misuse we make of the resources that God has given us.

ACTIVITY 2:

Have a gift prepared in advance (a small box with wrapping paper and a striking ribbon). When you finish telling the story, show the gift and say: If I give you this gift, what would you do with it? Try to get as many ideas as possible.

Undoubtedly, most will say that they will open immediately and that after seeing what is inside, they would keep it, take care of it, and so on. Then take this moment to reflect, say that animals, trees, rivers, seas, parks, etc. are part of a great gift that we have received from God.

We have received nature as a gift from God, and He left us the task of supervising it, taking care of it, protecting it (in other words, being its stewards) because the earth belongs to Him.

There is harmony in the creation and we have to take care of it. Remember that plants give life to everything that moves in the earth; polluting the water, air, and vegetation can destroy the species, bring diseases to humans, etc.

Now, let's recall the story...

- How did God feel about the creation?
- What did God request man and woman to do for the creation?
- What can we do to help God's creation?

Is the environment in which you live, nice? Does it need care? What can we do to take better care of it? If this world (nature, our house, the church, the school, the street) are part of that environment in which we live, what should we be doing? What do you think is our mission? Listen to their answers and discuss their responses for few moments.

We human beings are selfish and nothing seems to be enough for us. Unfortunately we destroy the forest, dry up and contaminate the water sources, and infect the food and air we breathe with chemicals. The ambitious actions of some are slowly destroying the earth by using destructive gases that have generated problems in the ozone layer. Others have satisfied their selfish desires by indiscriminately using non-renewable resources to the point that those resources considered renewable, today are in extinction. There are more important things than money and ambition.

Faced with all this, what should we do as children of God? We are called to:

1. **Respect** the creation of the Lord
2. **Restrict** the use of natural resources and
3. **Re-affirm** the dignity of everything created.

CONCLUSION:

Conclude by reflecting how you would feel if today's world were as described in Genesis 1.1-2, or how the entire creation would be today according to the account in Genesis 1.3-31. Help the participants to make the connection between the intention that all creation was good, and our intentions to help the creation return to be good as in the beginning.

CLOSING ACTIVITIES:

Encourage children to perform the following activities:

- During the week, the children will choose a care activity for our environment such as: watering the plants, throwing the garbage in its place, planting a tree, using electricity and water carefully, etc.
- Make some posters that indicate the place where to put the garbage and/or write thoughts that help us care for nature and our resources.
- Recycle material that can be reused, such as: using paper on both sides (all paper that we discard, represents the cutting of many trees from which the paper is extracted); using the waste of raw fruits and vegetables, as fertilizer for plants; re-using plastic material, newspapers, magazines, cans, etc.
- Propose a specific project such as management of garbage or recyclable material (follow-up on actions that we will give as a church, to take care of the environment in our community - see Appendix 2, "Workshop of the 3'R")