

Worship Ideas for Earth Day Weekend

(Earth Day is Monday, April 22, 2013)

by Carol Meyer

Having special speakers, classes, outings, or events for Earth Day at your congregation would be wonderful. However, nothing is quite as valuable as placing the welfare of the planet at the center of your worship service. It gives a strong message that creation care is at the heart of faith, and not a peripheral concern.

Here are some ideas that might interest you and spark your creativity:

- As the rest of this packet strongly suggests, if possible devote your sermon to the connection between faith, spirituality, and our obligation to care for the Earth. Additional sample sermons can be found on the SSC website (www.sustainablesanctuary.org) under *Worship Resources*.
- After the sermon, time could be given for everyone to fill out a small index card saying what action they will take to be better stewards of the Earth. They could be taken home or put in the offering basket and blessed at the altar.
- Take up a special collection for an environmental organization like SSC
- Have the teens write and pray prayers of petition focused on their greatest Earth concerns.
- Younger children could draw pictures on an Earth Day theme, which could be prominently displayed in the worship space entrance for all to see
- The service could have a penitential rite that focuses on our wrongs against the earth and asks for God's forgiveness and pledges repentance
- Visuals could include a statue of St. Francis; a globe or big picture of the Earth; the elements of earth, air, water, and fire; an environmental banner; a display of sacred objects from the Earth brought by members; or a mobile of Earth objects.

- Incorporating the Arts would be great, for instance liturgical dance, the display of original Earth artwork or photographs, a special choir piece or solo relating to the glory of God’s creation, or a nature story/testimonial used somewhere in the worship
- It might be a perfect occasion to call your Green Team forward and give them a blessing, or if you don’t have one, various other people, like the grounds keepers, the recyclers, the facilities managers, etc. who help make the parish more “green.”
- If you have a smaller congregation, you might have a handout for people as they leave church. It could be an Earth prayer, a flower, a sticker, or a packet of seeds. I’ve known churches who’ve given away trees.
- You might include a flier in the bulletin or order of worship with stories of hope, highlighting people of faith who are making a difference for the environment
- Tables could be set up in the back of the worship space for folks to sign a petition or write a congressperson related to an Earth care issue
- You could bless your grounds (and garden if you have one) after the service. A sample blessing prayer can be found on the SSC website

Doing something special on Earth Day is great for building community, getting people involved, spicing things up, helping people make connections between their faith and the environment, and certainly good for our beloved Earth and its hurting people, so desperately in need of some serious prayer and beneficial actions.

If you need more information, or need help in implementing any of these ideas, please contact Carol at carolm@ssckc.org or call 913-677-8672.

