

Introducing the Season

To introduce leaders to the focus scriptures, art images, and music offered by *Seasons of the Spirit* for Season of Creation/Pentecost 2, 2018

Before the session

- ❑ Remind leaders of the meeting and ask them to review their Season of Creation/Pentecost 2, 2018 materials and bring them to this session.
- ❑ Bring newsprint, markers, and refreshments.

Gather

- ❑ Bring name tags (optional), matches, and taper.
- ❑ Bring, if possible, the *Seasons Music CD, Vol. 7*. Downloadable sheet music and MP3 recordings (including full CDs) are available for purchase at www.seasonsonline.ca.
- ❑ Bring copies of the resource sheet “[Prayers for Gathering and Blessing](#)” (p. 5).
- ❑ Bring a length of aqua coloured fabric, four items to symbolize Planet Earth, Humanity, Sky, and Mountains.
- ❑ Bring a length of green fabric, Bible with a bookmark placed in the gospel of Mark, pillar candle, a stone (to serve as a “talking stone”).

Engage

- ❑ **Setting the scene:** copies of “This Season at a Glance” (from “Planning” section of website) and some copies of “About this Season of Creation/Pentecost 2” (p. 1); and the shared article “The Mystery of Wonder...and Worship,” and the song, “O Great Earth,” from the resource pages at the end of each age-level package.
- ❑ **Engaging the scriptures:** Bibles and copies of the resource sheet “[Bible Discussion](#)” (p. 6); cut sections apart.
- ❑ **Engaging the art:** copies of the resource sheet “[Art Reflection](#)” (p. 7) and, if possible, copies of article “Spotlight On: *World’s Smallest Seed*” (p. 88, Ages 6–8); display seasonal posters, arranged

(Option: play Seasons music in the background as people are arriving and distribute name tags, if appropriate.)

Welcome participants and invite them to gather in the worship space. Point out the colours and symbols in the worship space and explain that this time of

according to the order in article, “Connecting with the Art,” from the resource pages at the end of each age-level package. (Note: Ages 3–5 and Ages 6–8 materials also have *Storytelling* and *Story Props* posters, respectively. Option: bring a variety of art supplies (such as charcoals, oil pastels, markers, crayons) and drawing paper.

- ❑ **Engaging the music:** copies of Volume 7 of the *Seasons Songbook* and *Seasons Music CD*, if available, and CD or MP3 player. Downloadable sheet music and MP3 recordings (including full CDs) are available for purchase at www.seasonsonline.ca. Option: invite a music leader to teach and lead the songs.

Respond

- ❑ Bring copies of “Introducing *Seasons of the Spirit*” and “Seasons Session Flow” (from “Planning” section of website) for new leaders.
- ❑ Bring copies of articles as needed from the booklet *From Start to Finish* (in Library on website), such as stages of faith development, multiple intelligences, creating a respectful learning environment, building community.
- ❑ Bring copies of Registration Form and Leader Record (from “Planning” section of website) if needed.
- ❑ Bring copies of several recent postings to *Lection Connection – Spirit Sightings* (on website).

Bless

- ❑ Bring copies of Lectionary Bookmarks for this season (from “Planning” section of website).

the church year includes two seasons: the four-week “Season of Creation” and the second half of the Season after Pentecost. If there are new leaders for these seasons, invite group members to spend a few moments in pairs, sharing something about what has “called them to give” to this ministry.

PREPARE

GATHER

(10 minutes)



Opening ritual

Sing, or listen to, if possible, the refrain of the song “To You, O God” (p. 40 in *Seasons Songbook*, Vol. 7; #17 on *Seasons Music CD*, Vol. 7).

Season of Creation

The Season of Creation, observed on the first four Sundays of September, invites us to celebrate God the Creator, and the many ways in which God is made manifest throughout creation.

Aqua is the colour for this season, representing the blue-green colour of the planet as seen from outer space. *(Place aqua cloth in the worship space.)*

On the first Sunday we focus on planet Earth. *(Place symbol on the fabric.)*

On the second Sunday we focus on Humanity. *(Place symbol on the fabric.)*

On the third Sunday we focus on the Sky. *(Place symbol on the fabric.)*

On the last Sunday we focus on Mountains. *(Place symbol on the fabric.)*

Pray Distribute copies of the resource sheet “[Prayers for Gathering and Blessing](#)” (p. 5) and lead the group in reading the “Litany for the Season of Creation.”

Making connections Invite participants to take a moment to gaze out a window and think about the ways in which God is manifest right outside the walls of your church. Invite group members to name some of their favourite places in the world.

- **What do you love about creation in those places?**

Season after Pentecost

During the second half of this Season after Pentecost we return to the season of “ordinary time,” when we will explore some of Jesus’ teachings about discipleship from the gospel of Mark.

Green is the colour of growth and a symbol of the journey of discovery. *(Place green cloth in the worship space.)*

We light a candle as a symbol of God’s presence. *(Place candle on the green fabric and light it.)*

We will hear wise stories from the Bible. *(Place Bible, opened to the gospel of Mark, beside candle.)*

We will share our own stories together. *(Place “talking stone” beside candle.)*

All are welcome in this place.

Making connections Invite participants to spend a few moments thinking about what it means to be “hard-hearted” and “soft-hearted.” Take turns holding the “talking stone” and sharing responses to the following questions:

- **In what ways does having a hard heart hurt our relationships?**
- **What difference does a soft heart make to our relationships?**

(Adapted from the October 7, 2018 session for Ages 9–11)

ENGAGE

(45 minutes)

Setting the scene

Introducing the seasons Review the introductory material, “About this Season of Creation and Pentecost 2” (p. 1 in resources). Then distribute copies of the chart “This Season at a Glance” (from the “Planning” section of the Library) and review the information together, noting the focus passages and titles for each week. Invite participants to read p. 2 in their resources, noting specific rituals and other information offered for their age group.

Reviewing the articles In the Season of Creation we explore the ways we are “immersed and enmeshed” in creation, a theme in the shared article for this season, “The Mystery of Wonder...and Worship,” from the resource pages at the end of each age-level package. Form pairs to read this article and review together. Also, if possible, sing the song “O Great Earth.” Invite participants to find the extra resource sheets and articles at the back of their age-level resources and note what is included there. The article “How to Become an Environmentalist” is included



in these pages in the youth (Ages 15–18) and adult materials; copies can be made to share with the rest of the congregation.

In the Season after Pentecost we explore what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

Engaging the scriptures

Form two groups and give each group one of the sections on the resource sheet “[Bible Discussion](#)” (p. 6). If possible, the group that will be exploring the readings for the Season after Pentecost should be larger, so that it can be further divided. Invite participants to use the questions to help explore the scripture passages in their section. Ask each group to record some responses and then gather as a whole group to review and reflect on these responses.

Engaging the art

These two seasons call us to affirm our kinship with all of creation and to explore how we will live in the created world as followers of Jesus.

Gallery Invite participants to find the article, “Connecting with the Art” in their age-level materials; distribute extra copies as needed. Invite participants to view the posters one at a time and read the information about the images on the resource sheet.

If possible, distribute copies of the article, “Spotlight On: *World’s Smallest Seed*” and review together.

Personal reflection Invite participants to find the posters in their packages or to sit where they can see the displayed posters. Distribute copies of the resource sheet “[Art Reflection](#)” (p. 7) and invite participants to use the questions to guide their reflections. (Option: gather as a large group afterwards to share insights.)

Artistic response If time permits, invite participants to respond to the art image they have chosen by using the art supplies provided to write a prayer or a poem, or to create a drawing or painting that captures their feelings or insights.

Engaging the music

(Use this section if the Seasons of the Spirit music resources have been purchased for use in your congregation. Downloadable sheet music and MP3 recordings (including full CDs) are available for purchase at www.seasonsonline.ca.

Introduction In this season we are continuing to use music from Volume 7 of the *Seasons Songbook* and the *Seasons Music CD*.

Review music Invite participants to look through their *Seasons Songbooks* noting the types of music included. Point out the songs that could be used for gathering and blessing (“Listen Now for the Gospel,” “Light of Christ,” and “To You, O God”) and the songs that help explore the season’s themes (“Children of the Spirit,” “Friend to Friend,” “Come Build a Church,” and “Pulsing Spirit”). Draw attention to the margin notes with tips for leading the music in groups. Discuss together the ways you can use these songs in church school, youth group, and in adult study groups.

Sing or listen Invite a music leader to lead the group in singing some of the pieces mentioned above, or listen to the recordings on Volume 7 of the *Season Music CD*. Note that this music CD also includes a recording of meditative music (“Adagio,” #29), and a chant (“The Wind Blows,” #18) for use during times of meditation and reflection.

Moving into Respond

Invite participants to spend a few moments in silent reflection on the ways in which the scriptures, art, and music for this season have spoken into their lives.

- **What are some words, images, or melodies that might guide your leadership in these seasons?**
 - **Review materials** Provide time for leaders to review and become familiar with their *Seasons* age-level materials. If some leaders are new, review the session flow, either as a group or by pairing off new and experienced leaders. Pay particular attention to any suggestions in the session materials for working with other groups or sharing in worship.



RESPOND

(20 minutes)

- ❑ **Service and outreach projects** Review suggestions for service and outreach projects that have been included in the age-level materials. Note the following resource sheets, which describe outreach projects: “A Caring Generation” (Ages 6–8, 9–11; and Multiage) and “Discipleship Projects” (Ages 12–14, 15–18, and Adults). What information is there about ongoing church projects that would be helpful for age-level groups? How might children and youth connect with congregational projects?
- ❑ **Leadership tips** Distribute additional articles from the booklet *From Start to Finish*, if desired, and review together. Point out that this booklet is in the Library on the *Seasons* website. Distribute copies of Registration form and Leader Record for this season, if these are used in your program.
- ❑ **Lection Connection-Spirit Sighting** Explain that *Lection Connections–Spirit Sightings* are weekly postings to the *Seasons* website that make connections between the themes of each week and current news stories or films. Distribute copies of recent *Lection Connection–Spirit Sightings* postings and review together. Encourage leaders to read these each week (information for accessing is included on each week’s biblical background page).

BLESS

(10 minutes)

Gather in the worship space and light the candle again.

Sing or listen to, if possible, the song, “Come Build a Church” (p. 14 in *Seasons Songbook*, Vol. 7; #16 on *Seasons Music CD*, Vol. 7).

Pray Lead the group in the “Blessing prayer” on the resource sheet “[Prayers for Gathering and Blessing](#)” (p. 5).

Blessing Offer the following words of blessing: “Go in peace to love and serve as followers of Christ.”

Distribute copies of the Lectionary Bookmarks for participants to use at home.



Prayers for Gathering and Blessing

Litany for the Season of Creation

One: I praise you, Lord God, with all my heart.

All: We praise you, O God, with all our hearts.

One: You are glorious and majestic, dressed in royal robes surrounded by light.

All: You spread out the sky like a tent,
and you built your home over the mighty ocean.

One: The clouds are your chariot with the wind as its wings.

All: The winds are your messengers, and flames of fire your servants.

One: You built foundations for the earth, and it will never be shaken...

All: Then your voice thundered! And the water flowed down the mountains
and through the valleys to the place you prepared...

One: You created the moon to tell us the seasons.

The sun knows when to set, and you made the darkness,
so the animals in the forest could come out at night...

All: Our Lord, by your wisdom you made so many things;
the whole earth is covered with your living creatures...

One: You created all of them by your Spirit,
and you give new life to the earth.

All: Our Lord, we pray that your glory will last forever,
and that you will be pleased with what you have done.
We praise you, Lord God, with all our hearts.

*(Based on Psalm 104:1–5, 7–8, 19, 30–31; Scripture taken from the Contemporary English Version;
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(From the opening ritual for the Season of Creation, in the resources for Ages 15–18 and Adults)

Blessing prayer

May we be inspired
by the beauty of the Earth
and become wise caretakers.

May we listen to others in need
and reach out in love.

May we recognize God's presence
in the world and in our lives. Amen.

(From the resources for Ages 12–14)



Bible Discussion

Season of Creation Scriptures group

Read the following focus passages for September 2, 9, 16, and 23 and discuss the questions; record some thoughts in the spaces provided.

Planet Earth Sunday:

Genesis 1:1–25

Humanity Sunday:

Genesis 1:26–28

Sky Sunday:

Jeremiah 4:23–28

Mountain Sunday:

Isaiah 65:17–25

- What does each passage say about the wonder and mystery of creation and God as Creator?

- How does each passage inform your understanding of what it means to live with respect in creation?

Season after Pentecost Scriptures group

Form three groups to read a section each of the focus passages for September 30 to November 25. Review the readings and discuss the questions; record some thoughts in the spaces provided.

Stumbling Blocks:

Mark 9:38–50

Broken and Blessed:

Mark 10:2–16

Faith Essentials:

Mark 10:17–31

Power to Serve:

Mark 10:35–45

Take Heart:

Mark 10:46–52

Love, Love, Love:

Mark 12:28–34

Called to Give:

Mark 12:38–44

Future Hope:

Mark 13:1–8

Reign of Christ:

John 18:33–37

- What is revealed about the journey of discipleship in each reading?

- What challenges have you experienced practicing the teachings of Jesus in the world today?



Resource sheet

Art Reflection



Look at the posters in your package or sit where you can see the displayed posters.

1. Spend some quiet time looking at each poster, reflecting on the colours, shapes, and movements of the image.

■ What might each image say about God and/or the created world?

2. Reflect on the title of each piece, given by the artist:

Love One Another
The Prey

■ If you could give your own title to each piece, what would it be?

3. Review the titles of the session materials for each week in this season and consider where you see these themes reflected in the poster images:

Getting Out of the Way
Tough Questions Along
the Way

Finding Our Way
A New Way
The Way of Exclusion

The Way of Love
The Way of Giving and
Receiving

The Way of Faithfulness
Reign of Christ

■ What is the story that these art images are telling about God's world?