



IN APPRECIATION OF CREATION

GETTING STARTED

Enjoy a brief encounter with nature:

- Step outside and take a few breaths of fresh air
- Stroll through the park or around your backyard
- Open the window to hear the sounds of nature

Now, settle into the moment...

- Find a silent or peaceful place
- Close your eyes and breath deeply
- Recognize that God is with you

PRAYER

God made the earth, blessed her with riches, and appointed us to be responsible for her. I am sorry for the times when I have misused and abused the earth's resources. I am sorry for the times when I have used her resources to satisfy my own greed, pride, fear, and selfishness. I am sorry for the times when I neglected the earth and ignored my responsibility to protect her.

Add your own: I am sorry for the times when I...

READING: [Sirach 42:15, 22-25, 43:1-12](#)

Now will I recall God's works;
what I have seen, I will describe.
How beautiful are all his works,
delightful to gaze upon and a joy to behold!
Everything lives and abides forever;
and to meet each need all things are preserved.
All of them differ, one from another,
yet none of them has he made in vain;
for each in turn, as it comes, is good;
can one ever see enough of their splendor?

The sun at its rising shines at its fullest,
a wonderful instrument, the work of the Most High!
At noon it scorches the earth,
and who can bear its fiery heat?
Like a blazing furnace of solid metal,
the sun's rays set the mountains aflame;
its fiery tongue consumes the world;

the eyes are burned by its fire.
Great indeed is the LORD who made it,
at whose orders it urges on its steeds.
It is the moon that marks the changing seasons,
governing the times, their lasting sign.
By it we know the sacred seasons and feasts,
a light which wanes in its course:
The new moon like its name renews itself;
how wondrous it is when it changes.
The beauty of the heavens and the glory of the stars,
A shining ornament in the heights of God.
By the LORD's command the moon keeps
its appointed place,
and does not fade as the stars keep watch.
Behold the rainbow! Then bless its Maker,
for majestic indeed is its splendor;
it spans the heavens with its glory,
the hand of God has stretched it out in power.



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THOUGHTS ON THE READING

The wise Ben Sira, author of [the book of Sirach](#), had a marvelous love for God. In this passage he writes about how creation boldly shows God's greatness; how each expression of creation is an expression of the will and purpose of God. Creation, in other words, is the ever-constant sign of God's presence and power in the world. Though originally Earth Day was created to raise awareness about environmental conservation, it has moved toward fostering a deeper appreciation for creation. Beyond the earth's ability to sustain us, she primarily shows us the wonder of God's work, which in turn teaches us more about God.

REFLECTING ON THE READING

Take a few moments to think about (or even write down) your responses to the following:

- *How has creation helped you grow physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually?*
- *How has creation helped you experience God's presence and gain a better understanding of yourself and those around you?*
- *Name three things contributing to the preservation or prosperity of creation.*
- *Name three things adding to the destruction of creation.*

PRAYING FOR THE COMMUNITY

God, thank you for the beauty of the earth and all its splendor.

God, thank you for the nourishment creation provides us.

God, thank you for giving me the responsibility to care for your creation.

God, give us greater respect for the intricacy, fragility, and delicacy of creation.

God, give us the wisdom to make prudent and ethical use of the gifts of creation.

God, give us a deeper fellowship with creation in order to increase our work to care for it.

God, bless the earth so that it may replenish itself and continue to bear good fruit.

God, bless the creatures of the earth so that they may teach us more about you.

God, bless us so that we may have the drive to minister to creation as it ministers to us.

Add your own: God, thank you... God, give... God, bless...

MAKE A COMMITMENT TO THE EARTH

Using your reflection responses as a guide, make a doable personal commitment for 30 days (or beyond!) that will aid in the care of God's creation.

CONCLUSION

God, you created the world and each one of us with your loving hands. On this Earth Day, we give you thanks for the wonder of creation. May earth's abundance continue to be a blessing to each one of us. Help us to always strive to maintain its beauty, protect its resources, and advance its ability to sustain our brothers and sisters for many generations to come. Amen.