



Lent 1

Me & You & the Creatures Too

February 18, 2018

Scripture: Genesis 9:8-17; Psalm 25:1-10; 1 Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:9-15

Focus statement: An everlasting covenant is made between God (Me), the people (You), and every living creature. God's intention for relationship with the earth is inclusive and expansive, yet in our narrow-mindedness, we often exclude. How are we invited to expand our understanding to realize that all are included in God's covenant?

Summary statement for bulletin: Between Me & You and all the creatures, God's promise and God's love grow wider.

Song suggestions

HWB 42 All People That on Earth Do Dwell
HWB 43 Christ Is Our Cornerstone
HWB 46 I Sing the Mighty Power of God
HWB 48 All Creatures of Our God and King
HWB 496 Like Noah's Weary Dove

STJ 24 Creation Is a Song
STS 36 Jesus, Tempted in the Desert
God's Love Is for Everybody by Bryan Moyer Suderman
I Will Bless You by Bryan Moyer Suderman

Between Me & You theme song

Between me and you,
and every creature, a covenant new,
a gift, a promise I'm giving to you,
I choose to be there with you.

Call to worship

Leader: The time has come; the kingdom of God draws near.
Repent and believe the good news.

People: **We have come.**
We are here.
We worship God together.

Confession

God of creation and salvation, too often we fear there is not enough,
and we want to keep what there is for ourselves,
including your love,
so we build barriers.
We want to decide who's in or out.
We fail to see the impact of our selfishness.
Help us to value all of your creation—
the earth, air, water, and all living creatures,
both the tame and the wild—the way you do.
Help us to preserve and not destroy them.
Forgive us for making your love too small.
Teach us to act with humility, grace, and mercy
as we seek to make things right.



Words of assurance

All the Lord's paths are loving and faithful
for those who keep God's covenant and laws.

Between Me & You enactment (children's feature)

Supplies: a large scarf, flat sheet, or blanket (*optional:* with pictures of animals on it)

Action and noticing

- Begin with the scarf folded lengthwise several times so that it is long and narrow.
- Have a volunteer help you so that each of you are holding one end of the scarf and it is stretched out between you.
- Ask: Do you see how the scarf is stretched out between me and you?
- Unfold the first fold of the scarf and invite others to notice that it is bigger (wider) and that it covers a bigger area.
- Keep unfolding the scarf, bit by bit, until it is its full size.
- At each stage, notice how big the scarf is.

Wondering

- Were you surprised by how wide the scarf is?
- Imagine if you could keep unfolding the scarf forever. Imagine that it just went on and on.
- God's love is like that! God's promises are like that! Even bigger than we can imagine!
- God's love and God's promises are so big that they include everyone. The Bible tells us that even the animals and the earth are included in God's promises!

Responding through song: "For Me, For You"

God's promises are for me, for you, and all the creatures too!
God's love is for me, for you, and all the creatures too!

Sermon seeds

Between

Covenant between God and Noah and all living creatures (Genesis 9:8-17)

- Covenant is an important theme, and is the Old Testament focus for several weeks of Lent, but it is not a word we use every day. Explore the concept of covenant. What images or language can be used to aid our understanding? (Contract, marriage covenant, promise, etc.) Who is included in God's covenant making?
- What implications are there when God includes all the creatures in the covenant with Noah? What does this tell us about our relationship with animals, with creation, creation care, and environmentalism? How does this inform our involvement in environmental conversations?

Benediction

You may choose to speak this benediction to one another by echoing: after the leader reads each line, the congregation repeats it.

We are people of God.
We go in God's love
to extend God's love
and live God's promise.