

Earth Sunday – Creation Care Skit Sermon

Characters

1. Narrator
2. Jesus
3. Skeptic
4. Earth
5. human
6. human
7. Denier
8. Judgy environmentalist
9. Powerless feeling person
10. Forest church person

Props:

- clothes
- firewood
- food
- matches
- hairdryer
- empty gas can
- two fidget spinners
- two bags of recycling
- monopoly money
- bike
- small bag of organic carrots
- forest church prayer book
- car keys
- phone for Jesus

Introduction

It's Earth Sunday and instead of a sermon, we've created a skit with a cast of characters who will help to illustrate the ups and downs of being a good creation care disciple. The Bible has plenty to say about how to love God, our neighbor and even our enemies – but what about the rest of creation – and the earth itself that sustains our life as human beings? The Bible has something to say about that too, and it's something we need to talk about a lot more in church in 2019. This skit is designed to help start that conversation with a bit of drama and some humor. Creation care conversations don't have to be 100% doom and gloom! The skit will unfold as a story, narrated by me, told in parable style based on the well-known story of the Good Samaritan with a few twists. While I'm narrating, our cast of characters will act out the story. Let's begin.

It was Earth Day, and a man appealed to Jesus in his prayer time, saying:

“it’s getting more complicated to be a Christian. People keep talking about climate change and the plastic in the ocean and species extinction – and with Earth Day this past week, the environment was all I seemed to hear about in the news. So, Jesus – you already told us to love God and love our neighbor – I’m clear on that. But what about all this other environment and Earth stuff that seems to have come on the scene in the last few years. What does that mean for us who are trying to be good disciples?”

Jesus replied: “Well, that *IS* a complicated question so let’s start at the natural place:

Dramatically

In the beginning...sorry...God created the earth -

Earth comes on stage

- and the day and the night, and the sea and the land – you know the story from Genesis. And God called it all GOOD –“

“Oh - was that Samuel Good?” asked the man – “He was my great great grandmother’s brother.”

Jesus interrupted: “Don’t even start playing that with me. Have you seen my family tree? Do you see *Adam and Eve* at the top of it?

Project family tree

I win this game *every* time. No – I’m talking about a time before God ever created humans – even Mennonites. But the point is – it was already GOOD. The earth was good before you all showed up. And then, God created humans – Shantz and Scheifeles, God created them, Baumans and Chatis; Klassens and Ninomiyas.”

“And Goods?” – said the man...

Jesus wept. Just a little bit, but he persevered with his parable.

He said: “Let’s continue with the story.

Humans enter

God created humans. And the humans saw that the earth was good. God told those humans – ‘this is all yours as a gift. I’ve given it to you so that you can prosper, and I’m counting on you to protect it.’”

Humans pull out clothes, firewood, etc from the box behind earth.

“And the humans did prosper – thanks to the earth – they had food, and shelter, clothes, warmth – everything they could ever need in abundance. And they protected the earth -

Humans strike Charlie's angels pose.

- and took great care of it – because they realized what a wonderful gift it was. And those humans were so curious and so smart that they discovered all kinds of things about how to use the gifts that the earth gave them. They discovered fire -

Human lights match

- that Prometheus story was fake news. They figured out electricity (my Father had to keep telling them for like 3000 years that Zeus throwing lightning from Olympus was just a myth).

Human plugs in hairdryer and runs it.

THEN they discovered coal, and oil and natural gas – the fossil fuels.

Humans pull out empty gas can.

Within a few centuries, they were doing things that, quite frankly, really impressed the Great I Am. They took the *prosper* part very seriously – *and at least some of them* were doing really well. (Humans have never been that great at sharing, but that's a whole other story). Back to fossil fuels – oh wow did they do a lot with that stuff – they could build higher and move faster than they ever dreamed. They even figured out how to fly – that was never part of God's plan, but God got over it. And plastics – who knew what these humans could make with that stuff? I mean, fidget spinners?

Humans spin fidget spinners triumphantly.

Those little miracles of human ingenuity will endure from age to age – in landfills.”

Project fidget spinner image. Humans look up at screen and look dejected.

“Sorry – that wasn't very merciful.”

“Anyway, the point is – they prospered...just like God told them to. Sadly though, the ‘protect’ part of God's instructions seemed to fade more and more into the background. Humans kept taking from the earth, but they didn't think about just how much they were taking, or how fast...and they didn't give much back to the earth, except for a lot of garbage; and pollution.

Humans hand the earth a few open bags of plastic recycling, which spill.

The earth started to feel pretty sick – and it spiked a fever too -

The earth slumps, looking sick, and hot.

– climate change began to set in. Thanks to all the earth’s generosity, people made a lot of money

Humans ‘make it rain’ monopoly money.

– and they saw that it was good!

Humans walk away counting money.

But God did not. Humans had become like robbers, taking whatever they wanted from the earth, then leaving it by the wayside, beaten and bruised, polluted, sick, with an unstable climate... practically half dead...”

“And as humanity journeyed into the 21st century, people started to notice the earth there by the wayside. Now, I never used to do this, but I find with the impact of the internet on my followers’ attention spans I need to be a little more directive. This is the teachable moment of this parable: pay attention to how each of these travelers responds to the plight of the earth. Which one is the disciple who takes the best care of God’s creation? There will be a quiz later.”

Denial woman walks on stage.

A woman noticed the earth there by the wayside, but she passed by on the other side of the road. She went into denial mode right away. She rationalized: “The earth looks fine, it’s just resting. Climate change my foot. Besides didn’t we just have a really cold winter? How could that kind of weather still happen if climate change is real?” (Looking back, I really wish I had gotten one of my apostles to write an epistle on the difference between weather and climate).

Woman walks by.

And she continued to rationalize her denial as she walked on by - “God wants us to prosper” she said aloud – and she went home and re-read the bible passages about how humans were made in God’s image and given everything on the earth to use, and she felt much better – but the earth didn’t.

Woman walks off stage.

Bike man rides on stage.

Next a man came by on his bike, and he saw that earth was in serious trouble! He got very concerned and upset! But then he started to look more closely at the situation and he saw that it would take a lot of work to clean up the earth and help it get healthy again. Did he really have the time and energy for all that? So, he crossed to the other side of the road on his bike, and bought a bag of organic carrots.

Man gets bag of carrots grandly, takes selfie with it and types madly on his phone.

Then he posted A LOT about it on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Pinterest and made his friends and family feel really bad about eating regular carrots. And he felt better – but the earth didn't.

Man bikes away.

Powerless feeling man walks on stage with car keys.

Another man came by in his Honda Accord, a sensible vehicle with good gas mileage, and he felt very bad for the earth, but he too wondered what he could do. It took centuries for the earth to get this unhealthy. Plus, he drove a sensible car, and what could he do anyway? So, he went home and read up on the news about climate change and felt very worried but overall pretty powerless. He didn't really feel better, and neither did the earth.

Man walks away.

So let's recap – these first three are examples of how NOT to be a good disciple when it comes to creation care...But wait – here comes somebody else – what will she do?

Forest church woman walks on stage.

This fourth person noticed that the earth was in trouble too. She's not a climate scientist, a CEO, a Hollywood celebrity or a world leader. Oh my phone –

Jesus pulls out phone.

- I just got another prayer request from (*insert world leader here*) about the next election.

Anyway – sorry for being distracted – this woman here decided that instead of walking away and ignoring the earth, she would start paying more attention to creation and try to appreciate what a gift it really is.

Forest church woman reads from a prayer book to people in front row.

She started a *forest church* to help people to reconnect with the earth. And she invited others to join her. Soon people were gathering to make creation a central theme of their worship. And they were taking time to reflect on what it means to *protect* the earth as well as *prosper* from its resources.

“So here's the quiz: Which of these do you think was a good creation care disciple?” Asked Jesus.

The man replied: “I guess the one who actually paid attention to the earth, and tried to reconnect with it – and did that ‘Jungle Jesus Revival’ thing.”

Forest church woman glares with hands on hips.

And Jesus rebuked him: “It was *Forest Church*, do you even have ears to hear?”

The man replied sheepishly: "Oh yeah – sorry – I guess that's a nice idea but I mean – what is she going to accomplish by teaching kids to pray in the woods with the animals – honestly, what's that gonna do?"

Jesus rebuked the man again: "Are you kidding me? That is a huge step in the right direction. For centuries, so many humans, sadly many of my followers too, have been so focused on *prospering* that they've forgotten all about *protecting* the earth. The gift that God gave them to take care of has been taken for granted and left by the wayside. I want to create a clean heart in these humans who have forgotten to care for creation – but they must open their hearts for that to happen. Incorporating an appreciation of creation into worship is an important part of creating a clean heart and renewing a right spirit. A spirit that is connected to the earth."

Forest church woman shakes hands with earth.

"That's deep". Said the man.

Jesus continued: "But it doesn't stop there. Creating a clean heart and a right spirit takes time and commitment. And it also requires action. One of my apostles *did* write an epistle about how faith without works is dead – remember James Chapter 2? It's among my all-time favorites."

"Creation care disciples are people of action!"

Jesus goes up the steps and strikes a more preachy posture.

I feel a sermon coming on actually – being up here on this mount must be bringing out my inner preacher. Do you remember the beatitudes? - Matthew wrote them down – some consider them my greatest hits. This little sermon is a reprise of those, interpreted with a creation care theme. Here are just a few of them:

Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.

Project image of woman caulking.

If you want any earth left to inherit, try practicing a little more meekness. Does everything always have to be bigger, faster, more convenient – just for you? You can put meekness into action by dialing back your daily energy consumption just a little bit, tread just a little more lightly on the earth. Run a bead of caulking around a leaky window. And there's no need to post about it on social media.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Project image of solar church.

Love your enemies I always say – well, with friends like humanity, the earth doesn't really need any enemies. You can start *making peace with creation* by cooperating with people in your community to develop some creative energy solutions – like solar panels on your

church for example. More local renewable energy means less fossil fuel extraction and burning.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for what is right.

Project image of climate march.

It's not right that humans have forgotten their duty to protect the earth. It's not right that the earth has been robbed and left by the wayside. People are starting to catch on to this – especially young people. They are speaking out all over the world – including here in (*insert location*)."

Then Jesus stepped down from the mount and looked the man right in the eye.

"Here' the main point of my parable ok – and it's a theme that you might recognize from many of my parables – if you've been listening. Remember the mustard seed, the loaves and fishes...what was the recurring theme?"

The man guessed: "Potluck lunch?"

Jesus rolled his eyes: "No, no – how did Menno's followers become so obsessed with potlucks? The point is that small actions taken with great faith can add up to a huge impact – like that tiny mustard seed that grows into a big tree or that small gift of food that fed the 5000. Like I said before, you don't have to be a NASA climate scientist, a Hollywood celebrity or a world leader -

Jesus takes out phone again.

– oh there's (*insert world leader*) with another prayer request, one second.

Jesus types.

Jesus continued: "Let me bring this parable home now. You don't need to be a VIP with a fancy title or a degree or a million dollars to be a good creation care disciple. You just need to have a little faith and put it into action – in your community. Action that reconnects you with creation, or that helps you tread a little more lightly on it. Action that helps your community make peace with the earth, action that pursues justice! I've shown you lots of examples here – and now "go and do likewise". Go do something creative that no one has ever seen before. Surprise me.

'Oh, I will" – said the man...

Man grabs table service, runs out centre aisle.

"Right after potluck lunch..."

Jesus looks extremely exasperated, then turns to the congregation:

“Peace out.”

Jesus walks off stage.

Wrap up:

Thank you to all our actors for bringing this skit to life! Like I said, It’s intended to start further conversation about how we at (*insert church name*) can become creation care disciples who take small, creative actions that make change. Small actions like sealing window leaks and praying in the great outdoors are great places to start – and terrible places to stop. We need to find ways to make our small, collective efforts add up to the big changes that will help to fulfill our calling to protect the good gift that God has given to us – the earth. This fall we will be launching a Sunday School series on creation care. If you’re interested in helping to shape that, please let us know. Stay tuned for more reflection, conversation and action to come.

Scott Morton Ninomiya (CANADA), 2019

[Creative Commons: Attribution Non-Commercial 4.0 International \(CC BY-4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)