

Module 2 Response *For Our Common Home*

Introductory Lesson

# Sacred Spaces

## Learning objectives

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis affirms the inherent beauty and dignity of all of Creation. He encourages us to find and dwell in nature's sacred spaces, therein deepening our connection to nature, our sense of self, and our relationship with God. (For your use at the end of the lesson, there is a handout with the *Laudato Si'* excerpt dedicated to St. Francis of Assisi.)

Students will explore their connections to sacred spaces and consider what citizens can do to protect sacred spaces.

## TEACHER PREPARATION

**Print**

this lesson plan

**Read**

GRASPS Citizenship Engagement Planning Process document, for teacher

**Print/Copy**

My Sacred Space: Graphic Organizer, one copy per student

**Print/Copy**

GRASPS Placemat (Citizenship Engagement Planning Tool) double-sided, one copy per student

**Download and Set Up**

the accompanying PowerPoint presentation, prepare to project the video on Slide 1

We were not meant to be inundated by cement, asphalt, glass and metal, and deprived of physical contact with nature. (*Laudato Si'*, 44)

## LESSON PLAN

### IGNITE

Play [Love video](#), in which two sisters sing a song which celebrates the ways in which nature nurtures them.

While students view, ask them to reflect on which of the *three worldviews* regarding humankind's relationship to the rest of the created world the song affirms. (Dominion, Stewardship, Kinship – as per Module One Lesson 1.)

After the video, invite students to do a 2-minute free write, answering the above question – *Which worldview about humankind's relationship with the created world is represented here?* – providing details / evidence from the video to support their answer.

Ask students to share their thinking and evidence, first in small groups, then with the large group.



**Video links:**

[Lennon and Maisy Love](#)

### IMMERSE

**Share** the following quote from Laudato Si'. Give the students a moment to reflect on the quote.

*“The history of our friendship with God is always linked to particular places which take on an intensely personal meaning; we all remember places and revisiting those memories does us much good. Anyone who has grown up in the hills or used to sit by the spring to drink or played outdoors in the neighborhood square; going back to these places is a chance to recover something of their true selves.”* Laudato Si', 84

Then invite students to think of a *place in nature* they love to be. Give them time to identify this special space. Invite them to close their eyes and think about this place – what do they see, smell, hear, feel, taste? What emotions do they feel? What specific memories come to mind?

Using the *My Sacred Space worksheet*, invite them to respond to each reflection prompt and record some of the memories of a place in nature that is sacred to them.

Invite students to form groups of four and to take turns sharing their 'sacred place' reflections. Encourage the listener to share something that they appreciate about their peer's representation, and to pose questions to learn more about their peer's thinking.

*Close with a short reflection* on the importance of sacred places in nature to nourish our spirits.

### COALESCE

Explain to students that their elementary school playground, a public and communal space which has provided endless hours of playtime for the children and the community, is going to be ripped up in its entirety to be made into a Seniors' High-Rise Complex with guest parking. *Ask the students to imagine and remember the time they spent in that playground.* It will all be gone forever. What will be lost for the school and the community?

Inform students that they have an opportunity to defend this important place against destruction. It will take some important strategic planning, and they need to begin now.

Provide students with the *GRASPS Placement handout* with its questions for planning. In groups of four, ask students to work through the GRASPS questions together in order to thoughtfully design and plan a *citizenship action*.

When each group has worked through the questions together, and placed their responses on the placemat, ask a spokesperson from each group to share their action, one at a time. After each person shares, the rest of the class provides suggestions that may make their peer's action even more likely to succeed. Students adjust their plans in response to peer feedback.

## **CREATE**

Form a large circle. The teacher invites students to *identify patterns or common themes* they noticed in one another's proposed citizenship actions.

Please consider making a donation to support our mission at Development and Peace – working with partner organizations in the Global South who promote alternatives to unfair social, political and economic structures, and educating Canadians about the causes of poverty and mobilizing towards actions for change.

## Saint Francis of Assisi, excerpts from *Laudato Si'*

10. I do not want to write this Encyclical without turning to that attractive and compelling figure, whose name I took as my guide and inspiration when I was elected Bishop of Rome. I believe that Saint Francis is the example par excellence of care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically. He is the patron saint of all who study and work in the area of ecology, and he is also much loved by non-Christians. He was particularly concerned for God's creation and for the poor and outcast. He loved, and was deeply loved for his joy, his generous self-giving, his openheartedness. He was a mystic and a pilgrim who lived in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature and with himself. He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace.

11. Francis helps us to see that an integral ecology calls for openness to categories which transcend the language of mathematics and biology and take us to the heart of what it is to be human. Just as happens when we fall in love with someone, whenever he would gaze at the sun, the moon or the smallest of animals, he burst into song, drawing all other creatures into his praise. He communed with all creation, even preaching to the flowers, inviting them "to praise the Lord, just as if they were endowed with reason".<sup>19</sup> His response to the world around him was so much more than intellectual appreciation or economic calculus, for to him each and every creature was a sister united to him by bonds of affection. That is why he felt called to care for all that exists. His disciple Saint Bonaventure tells us that, "from a reflection on the primary source of all things, filled with even more abundant piety, he would call creatures, no matter how small, by the name of 'brother' or 'sister'". If we approach nature and the environment without this openness to awe and wonder, if we no longer speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world, our attitude will be that of masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters, unable to set limits on their immediate needs. By contrast, if we feel intimately united with all that exists, then sobriety and care will well up spontaneously. The poverty and austerity of Saint Francis were no mere veneer of asceticism, but something much more radical: a refusal to turn reality into an object simply to be used and controlled.

12. What is more, Saint Francis, faithful to Scripture, invites us to see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness. "Through the greatness and the beauty of creatures one comes to know by analogy their maker" (Wis 13:5); indeed, "his eternal power and divinity have been made known through his works since the creation of the world" (Rom 1:20). For this reason, Francis asked that part of the friary garden always be left untouched, so that wildflowers and herbs could grow there, and those who saw them could raise their minds to God, the Creator of such beauty. Rather than a problem to be solved, the world is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise.

## My Sacred Space: How does it nurture me as a whole person?

To deepen your thinking about your sacred space and answer the questions you find in this adapted Holistic Framework.

### SPIRIT

Does being in this space awaken a sense of peace? awe? wonder? What does your spirit experience there?

### BODY

What does it feel like, physically, to be in this space? Is 'being' in this space good for your body? How?

### ME IN MY SACRED PLACE

### MIND

What do you think about and learn which you're there? How does 'being' in the space shape and alter your state(s) of mind?

### HEART

What emotions do you feel when you are there or imagine being there?

Permission is granted by Development and Peace – Caritas Canada to reproduce for classroom use.

# My Sacred Space Graphic Organizer

Fill the spaces of this page with your responses as you reflect on your sacred space

## MY SACRED SPACE

**WHERE**  
IS THE PLACE?

**WHAT**  
DO YOU SEE?

**WHAT**  
DO YOU  
SMELL?

**WHAT**  
DO YOU  
HEAR?

**WHAT**  
EMOTIONS  
ARE YOU E  
XPERIENCING?

**WHAT**  
ARE YOU DOING  
WHEN YOU ARE  
THERE?

**WHY**  
IS IT SPECIAL  
TO YOU?

Permission is granted by Development and Peace – Caritas Canada to reproduce for classroom use.

## Summary of Citizenship Action Plan

(adapted from GRASPS, Wiggins & McTighe)

What's the Goal?

What's my Role?

Who's my Audience?

What's the Situation?

What will we produce & do?

What standards will we strive to meet? How will we assess our impact?

Permission is granted by Development and Peace – Caritas Canada to reproduce for classroom use.

## Prepare for engaged citizenship

What action(s) will be most effective in within my own sphere(s) of influence?

What action(s) can I take to support, partner with, and motivate others whose sphere of influence exceeds mine?



<b>G</b> GOAL	<p>Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely; Addresses Root Causes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What specific change(s) do we seek?</b></li> <li>• <b>What difference(s) do we want to make?</b></li> <li>• <b>What goal(s) do we want to achieve?</b></li> </ul> <p>Changes in attitude, understanding, policy, legislation, actions, norms, equity, well-being?</p>
<b>R</b> ROLE	<p>Authentic, Strategic, Allied</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What role do/can we play in relation to the issue?</b></li> <li>• <b>What positions can we speak from?</b></li> <li>• <b>Who or what do we represent?</b></li> </ul> <p>Leader, Member, Youth, Citizen, Ally Representative</p>
<b>A</b> AUDIENCE	<p>Specific, Strategic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Who or what should we direct our action towards?</b></li> <li>• <b>Which individuals &amp; organizations hold the power and bear the responsibility to do what's needed?</b></li> <li>• <b>What are they key things we need to know about this audience as we plan and act?</b></li> </ul> <p>Individuals, Groups, Levels of Government (Municipal, Band Councils, Provincial/Territorial, Federal, International), relationship to issue, disposition (un)friendly, (un)aware, (un)committed</p>
<b>S</b> SITUATION	<p>Specific</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What specific situations or contexts will we need to access and act within / upon to reach our target audiences?</b></li> <li>• <b>What are the key things we need to know and keep in mind about this context as we plan and act?</b></li> </ul> <p>Face-to-face, digital, (in)formal; norms:, expectations, laws: individual, cultural, institutional</p>
<b>P</b> PRODUCT	<p>Matches Purpose, Makes Effective Use of Form / Conventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What, specifically, do we need to communicate to our target audience(s)?</b></li> <li>• <b>What would be the best way to communicate this message?</b></li> <li>• <b>Speak? Write? Represent? A combination of mediums and text-types?</b></li> </ul> <p>protest, interview, blog, speech, video, photo essay, cartoon, model, letter, art, brochure, ad</p>
<b>S</b> STANDARDS	<p>Clear, Meaningful, Measurable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What criteria will we hold ourselves to and strive to meet as we engage?</b></li> <li>• <b>What evidence will indicate the extent to which we have achieved our goals?</b></li> <li>• <b>How will we assess the effectiveness of our preparation, action, and reflection?</b></li> </ul> <p>Co-Construct with Students; Connect to Grade-Level Curricular Outcomes</p>

Adapted by S. Van Hesteren from Wiggins & McTighe, 2010 and Concentus Essential Citizenship Competencies