

Οικονόμος
An Eco-Stewardship Ministry Plan
Woodland Baptist Church
2021-2022



“Οικονομος” (οικονόμος) is the Greek word for stewardship; and it is the name of a new initiative in ministry at Woodland which calls attention to our Christian responsibility (“stewardship”) to God’s earth. Woodland’s plan for creation stewardship in 2021-22 includes:

Immediate Initiatives

- (1) Conduct an Energy Audit similar to the ENERGY STAR® Action Workbook for Congregations created by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
- (2) Green Campus Classification – Discover organizations that award institutions with special designations for being environmentally conscious in hopes that

Woodland can work toward receiving recognition for being one of those campuses.

- (3) Move to Virtual Committee Meetings – One of the things we’ve learned in the Pandemic is that we can hold meetings without having to burn energy by driving to the Church.
- (4) Associate with “Build SA Green” and/or “Sustainable San Antonio” – The idea is to partner with these local organizations that have already made commitments to being environmentally conscious.
- (5) Incorporate environmental lessons and activities in Children/Preschool Sunday School or Vacation Bible School. (See Below for Example.)
- (6) Incorporate environmental emphases in youth Sunday night activities or VBS (See Below for Example.)

Initiatives in Development

- (1) Maintain the Woodland Garden through involvement of the international population as well as asking SS classes or groups to be involved in the garden’s maintenance.
- (2) Host an Organic Market – The idea is for Woodland to host a monthly organic food market on our parking lot.
- (3) Work with the Building & Grounds Committee to eliminate using materials that are harmful to the environment (e.g. Styrofoam, non-recyclable plastics, etc.).
- (4) Become Better Stewards of Paper – Examine and implement ways to use less paper for reports and worship guides by using virtual technology
- (5) Host a Meatless Food Feast where dishes are prepared to be sampled, accompanied by the recipe.

- (6) Work with the Building and Grounds Committee to utilize rainwater barrels to water lawn and garden areas.
- (7) Create a Monarch Way-Station near the garden where Woodland could provide support for the Monarch Butterfly migration.

Initiatives Under Study for Implementation in 2021-2022

- (1) Develop the idea and reality of Woodland being a “food forest” where people can come to find food.
- (2) Study the reality of “food deserts” – Examine the areas that are food deserts in San Antonio and develop a strategy to become active in ministries in those regions.
- (3) Research the possibilities of clearing the invasive juniper species around the church campus.
- (4) Indigenous Planting – Create a resource by which people in our area can landscape their properties with plants and grasses native to south Texas.
- (5) Study the possibility of using solar energy to assist in providing power for the Church.
- (6) Consider the possibility of using permeable paving for water infiltration.
- (7) Consider partnering with Habitat for Humanity to plant trees -- The city of San Antonio will provide trees if we will be responsible for planting them. The proposal here is to plant trees for Habitat for Humanity homeowners.
- (8) Consider hosting a Ducks Unlimited or similar organization for a wild game meal with accompanying lecture on the importance of managing the environment for the preservation of fish and wildlife.

- (9) Host a regular forum with speakers presenting programs on various issues of environmental stewardship (e.g. landscaping with plants that attract pollinators, food forests, food deserts, etc.

Children Activities for Sunday School/Vacation Bible School

Activity 1: Outdoor Scavenger Hunt

Take children out into the playground, playing field or local park and get them to locate various environmental sights. Who can collect 5 different leaves? Who can spot the biggest tree? How many ladybirds can they see?

A scavenger hunt will get children thinking about the world around them and encourage them to pay attention to the different plants and beasts that live on their doorstep. Use this online picture scavenger hunt as a template.

Activity 2: Minibeast Safari

This game is fun for younger KS1 children; head to the park or school playground and see how many different insects you can spot. Did they know that so many different species lived just outside their school?

Activity 3: Make a Rain Gauge

A perfect science-based activity for KS2 children to teach them about rainfall and weather.

Activity 4: Make a Leaf Collage

Younger students will love this fun art activity. You could choose to go and collect fallen leaves as a mini class field trip or ask them to bring some in from home.

Identify all of the leaves that your class have found and then challenge your students to make a picture using only paper, leaves, pens and glue. Try the Natural History Museum's 'Tree Identification Key' for more help.

Activity 5: Make a Weather Map

If you're looking for an educational activity about climate, why not try re-creating your very own classroom weather map? Get hold of a large map of the US and create some sunshine, cloud, thunder, etc. symbols and then re-create the weather forecast for each day. Ask students to make a habit of finding out what the weather will be the night before and then stick on the forecast for different parts of the US.

Activity 6: Make a Wind Turbine

This science activity is great for KS2/KS3 children who want to learn more about the weather as well as how wind turbines can be used as a source of renewable energy. Create your lesson plan around green energy and the different sources that can be used and then recreate your own windmills to take outside. Try this simple pinwheel turbine from Alliant Energy for younger kids.

Turbines

Turbines are often used to produce electricity. Find out how they work!

SUPPLIES AND TOOLS:

- an empty half-gallon milk carton
- a hammer and a nail
- masking tape
- a pitcher of water
- string

DIRECTIONS:

1. With the hammer and nail, punch a hole in the bottom right corner on each side of the milk carton. Also punch a hole in the center of the top ridge of the carton, for hanging.
2. Tape each of the bottom holes with masking tape, and put the string through the top hole.
3. Hang the carton outside, where the ground underneath can get wet (from a tree branch, for example).
4. Open the carton flap and fill the carton with water.
5. Pull the tape off one of the corner holes. What happens?
6. Pull the tape off two opposite corners. What happens?
7. Pull the tape off all corners. What happens?

You've rediscovered Sir Isaac Newton's principle—For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. When water pours out of the small hole, its force pushes the carton in the opposite direction, causing it to turn. The more holes, the faster the turn.



Note:

Would you like to receive this newsletter via ecological, economical email? Just let us know by sending us a message at secondnature@alliantenergy.com. Be sure to include "Second Nature E-Newsletter" in the subject line.

Head outside into the playground or local park and give each of your KSI/KS2 students a nature bingo card. Who can spot all of the things on their card? Choose sights such as a tall tree, an acorn, a bird and a ladybug to get children learning about the world around them and the other wildlife and plants that live there.

Youth Studies for Sunday Night/VBS Gatherings – An Example

Bible: Genesis 1

Bottom Line: Earth Day is a reminder that God values all of His creation. Take time to appreciate our planet and the One who created it.

OPENING GAME: EARTH DAY TRUE/FALSE TRIVIA

Ask your group stand up.

Say: Today we're going to see how well you know the planet you live on!

I'm going to ask you several trivia questions.

If you think the answer is TRUE, hold out your fist and give it a thumbs-up.

If you think the answer is FALSE, hold out your fist and give a thumbs-down.

If you get it right, stay standing and keep playing.

If you get it wrong, have a seat.

We'll keep playing until we get a winner... or I'm finished asking questions!

1. True or False: The Earth moves around the sun at approximately 67,000 miles per hour. (TRUE)
2. True or False: The Earth is 193 million miles from the sun. (FALSE – it's only 93 million.)
3. True or False: The world's longest mountain range is actually underwater. (TRUE)
4. True or False: The lowest recorded temperature on Earth was minus 128.6 degrees Fahrenheit in Antarctica. (TRUE)
5. True or False: The highest reported temperature was 138 degrees Fahrenheit in the country of Brazil. (FALSE – it was in Libya.)
6. True or False: Earth is the only planet not named after a Roman god. (TRUE)
7. True or False: 80% of the Earth's surface is covered with water. (FALSE – 70%)
8. True or False: The highest point on Earth is Mount Kilimanjaro. (FALSE – Mount Everest)

9. True or False: It takes about 15 minutes for light from the sun to reach the Earth.
(FALSE – it's closer to 8 minutes.)
10. True or False: The Amazon rainforest is home to nearly one third of the Earth's land species. (TRUE)
11. True or False: You would weigh more if you lived at the North Pole than you did if you lived at the Equator. (TRUE – a person who weighs 150.8 lbs at the North Pole would only weigh 150 lbs at the Equator because of the gravitation pull at the Earth's poles.)
12. True or False: Lightning strikes somewhere on the Earth 5.2 million times per day.
(FALSE – it's actually 8.6 million times.)
13. True or False: The first photo from the Earth taken from space was in 1958.
(FALSE – 1968)
14. True or False: The Nile River, the longest on Earth, is 4,160 miles in length.
(TRUE)
15. True or False: The Earth is round. (FALSE – it's actually flattened at the poles!)

Great job everyone!

I know some of those questions were pretty hard.

Turns out even though we've lived here our entire lives, we may not actually know a lot about or fully appreciate our home planet.

Maybe that's because we tend to take the earth for granted.

Today's lesson is all about appreciating our planet and the One who created it.

TEACH

Raise your hand if you have a pet dog.

Do your dogs go crazy when they see you get the leash to take them outside?

Most dogs truly love being outdoors.

They get so excited when they get a chance to roam the earth – I don't think they ever take it for granted.

What are some things in life we experience or take advantage of everyday that we tend to take for granted?

Let your students throw out some random answers.

They might say things like family, friends, money, homes, food, etc.

All of those are great answers.

But the Earth itself might be the gift from God we take for granted the most.

Be honest... when was the last time you simply gave thanks to God for the planet we live on?

For most of us, living on planet Earth is something we simply consider a birthright. After all, it's the only world we've ever known.

We really have nothing else to compare it with.

But when you think about the facts we learned in our game earlier, and when you really look into the detail and creativity on display on our planet...it might help you gain an appreciation for the Earth.

Now, Earth Day isn't typically celebrated as much as other holidays.

Your family probably doesn't have a big Earth Day cookout or get-together.

For many, you may be hearing about Earth Day for the first time today.

Your awareness of the holiday is probably related to what area of the country (or world) you live in.

So, does anyone here actually know what – or when – Earth Day is?

According to EarthDay.org, Earth Day is celebrated annually on April 22nd.

It began in 1970 and the celebration “marks the anniversary of the birth of the modern environmental movement.”

Founders of the Earth Day celebration say it was a response to anti-war protests as a way to shift the power of that movement toward environmentalism.

You might think Earth Day to be an odd holiday to celebrate.

But, there is something to be said for giving thanks and celebrating the Earth.

After all, the Earth is the first of God's creations we learn about in the Bible, mentioned in the very first verse of the very first book (*Genesis 1:1*).

In fact, let's take a look at that first chapter of Genesis.

It might have been a while since you've looked through it.

Have several students volunteer to read through the first chapter of Genesis aloud.

Break it off into sections and have each student stand to read.

Separate the verses like this: 1-5, 6-8, 9-13, 14-19, 20-23, 24-26, 27-31.

When we dig into the first chapter of Genesis, we're reminded of how all this got here.

We see the importance of giving thanks for God's creation... for the light... and the water... and the sky... and the land... and the animals.

Also...there's a certain line of thinking where people wonder if taking care of the Earth matters at all.

Well it does. God gives us the job of taking care of the earth.

In Genesis 1:26, God commands human beings to *“reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.”*

It’s our job to be good stewards of what He has given us. Including the earth. After all, we want a healthy Earth for ourselves and for generations to come.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What are some random things about planet Earth that you’re thankful for?
- How do you sometimes take God’s creation for granted?
- How can you appreciate God’s creation more in your everyday life?