

The Lord hath created the earth that it should be inhabited; and he hath created his children that they should possess it (1 Nephi 17:36).

My Father in Heaven Loves Me

By Karen Ashton/Illustrated by Scott Greer



Sharing Time

If someone you love very, very much was going on an important journey, how would you help him prepare? You might give him a special gift to use while he was away. You would want the gift to be something that would show him every day how much you love him. It would be exciting for him to find the gift when he arrived at his destination. You would have to plan carefully. You might ask someone to help you prepare your special gift.

If you planned and prepared a special gift for someone you loved and he didn't even take time to look at it, you would probably feel sad. If he never said thank you for the gift, you might think that he didn't like it.

Your Father in Heaven loves you. You lived with Him before you came to this earth. It was part of His plan that you would leave Him for a time to receive a physical body, to hear and accept the gospel, and to return to Him someday. Because He wanted you to have a wonderful place to live while you were away, He planned the creation of an earth filled with beautiful gifts such as sunlight, air, water, trees, flowers, animals, sunsets, and rainbows. He chose Jesus to be the Creator of the earth. Jesus followed His instructions exactly and created an earth filled with gifts of beauty and love for you.

You can see Heavenly Father's beautiful gifts all around you. Take time to look at the stars at night, take a deep breath of fresh air, hold a puppy, listen to the birds sing, smell a flower, make a snowball, feel the rain on your face, run with the wind, jump into a pile of leaves, watch the ocean, splash in a rain puddle, roll down a hill. The beauties of the earth are all gifts of love from Heavenly Father. When you see and enjoy these gifts of love, take time to thank Him for them.

SHARING TIME IDEAS

1. Discuss with the children the account of the Creation as found in Abraham 4. Point out the immense variety of God's creations. Give each class a piece of paper and pencil. Announce a category such as flowers, then give the children thirty seconds to write down the names of as many flowers as they can. Have each class stand and read their list, emphasizing those things that have not previously been mentioned. Continue, using other categories—birds, trees, fruit, dogs, etc. Sing "My Heavenly Father Loves Me" (*Children's Songbook*, p. 228).

2. Hang on the wall pictures of some flowers and vegetables that grow from seeds. Discuss with the children the miracle of a seed growing into a plant that then bears other seeds. (See Abr. 4:11–12.) On a table, place a selection of seeds the children might recognize, such as watermelon, sunflower, and pumpkin seeds; peas, corn, peach pits, avocado pits. Number the seeds, and give every child a paper and pencil. See if they can identify which flower or vegetable grows from which seeds. Share with the children that our faith in Jesus and Heavenly Father is like a seed that can grow. (See Alma 32:28.)

3. After discussing with young children the good foods Heavenly Father and Jesus placed upon the earth, play "What's for dinner?" Place a blindfold over the eyes of a child and let him guess which vegetable you are planning to cook for dinner or which fruit you will use for dessert by smelling and feeling it. Several children could play the game at the same time, each with a different vegetable or fruit. Talk to the children about being thankful for these delicious foods Heavenly Father and Jesus created for us. (See D&C 89:11.)

4. Talk with the children about the beauties of each season. Then divide them into groups. Have one child from each group come to the front, give that child a large crayon and a drawing pad, and whisper into his ear the name of a Primary song that talks about a season. The child must then draw a picture that will help his group guess the song and season. Let the child in each group who guesses correctly lead the other children in singing the song. Use songs such as "Once There Was a Snowman," "Autumn Day," "Popcorn Popping," "Oh, What Do You Do in the Summertime?" (*Children's Songbook*, pp. 249, 247, 242, and 245.) Talk with the children about the earth and all the things that come from the earth that were created by Heavenly Father and Jesus for the benefit of man. (See D&C 59:18–21.)

5. Place a large world map at the front of the room. Discuss how different areas of the earth vary in climate, water sources, elevation, etc. Talk about the variety of landscapes the Lord placed here for us to enjoy: mountains, hills, rivers, lakes, oceans, deserts, etc. Explain that Heavenly Father and Jesus made all these beautiful places because They love you. Dress some of the children in simple costumes, or show pictures of children from different areas of the world. Have the Primary children guess, by listening to clues about the geography of his country, where each costumed child might live. For example: (1) My name is Hans Sanderson. I live below sea level in a place that is known for the tulips we grow. There are many canals that carry water throughout my country. I have spent holidays in many other European countries because they are so close. I live in a city named Amsterdam. In which country do I live? (Netherlands) (2) My name is Mikel Ramirez. I live in the largest city in the western hemisphere. My country has many beautiful beaches because it is bordered by the Pacific Ocean on the west and the Gulf of Mexico on the east. The name of my country and my city are the same. Where do I live? (Mexico City, Mexico)



Instructions

To make your earth decoration, remove this page and mount it on a piece of construction paper. The outer circle represents space and is covered with stars. The middle circle represents the sky and clouds that surround the earth. The center circle is the earth. Color the background for the stars in the outer circle, and the clouds and sky in the middle



circle. Then color the picture of some of the gifts of the creation in the center. Punch tiny holes with the tip of your scissors at each end of the dark lines, then cut along them. Fold the paper to form right angles along the dotted lines (see illustration). Punch a hole at A, thread a piece of string through it, and tie the ends together. Find a special place to hang your earth decoration.