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**Making Connections**

***An activity of contemplation on our relationship to other creatures***

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| **Objective**  **:**  This activity focuses on the axis of spirituality . At the end of this activity, participants discover a path of encounter with the Creator contemplating his creation and discovering a brotherhood towards other creatures . | **Equipment**  **:**  Microphone and lectern, small table  Laptop, projector and screen  Questions sheets for participants  Disguise of St. Francis of Assisi |
| **Duration**  **:**  - Activity   : 90 minutes | **Suggested place**  **:**  A quiet room, like a chapel, adjacent to a wooded lot |

1. INTRODUCTION (5 min.)

* Greetings at the entrance
* Handing over a small colored sheet with questions
* Recruitment of 3 young people for a skit
* Word of Welcome

2. TEACHING (25 min.)

*"*  *First question*  *: Where does the environment begin?* *At 100 km, 10 km, 1m, at my fingertips?*

*It's important to know where our environment begins, because the way we see our environment determines how we act.* *We are made of earth, water, and air.* *It is enough to go back to the first paragraphs of the Bible to understand this connection we have with our environment.*  *"*

* Ask the three young volunteers for the skit. Take the Bible and read theatrically. (Genesis 2, 4-9 and 15)

*"*  *When the Lord God made the earth and the sky, there was still no bush on the earth, and no grass had yet sprouted, for the Lord God had not yet sent rain on the earth, and he There were no humans to cultivate the soil.* *Only a sort of spring gushed from the earth and watered the surface of the ground.* *The Lord God took dust from the ground and shaped a human being.* *Then he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and this human being became alive.* *Then the Lord God planted a garden in the land of Eden, there eastward, to put the human being that he had fashioned.* *He grew all kinds of trees with pleasant appearance and delicious fruits.* *The Lord God took the man and set him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and keep him.*  *"*

*"*  *The important thing is not to believe that we have been modeled as a snowman.* *The* *bottom line* *is to* *feel deep inside ourselves that humanity has been fashioned with love, from the elements on the planet*  *: air, water and earth.*  *"*

*THE AIR*

*The first thing we need when coming out of our mother's womb is ... air!* *We breathe 20 to 40 times a minute and we need it until the last breath on our deathbed.* *It would be interesting to analyze our relationship with the air.* *With each breath, it is sucked into us.* *The air enters our lungs.* *Our lungs are made up of about 300 million cells, small bubbles all in a cluster. The smaller the bubbles, the more contact our body has with the air.*

*Imagine what happens after we exhale.* *We will follow that breath.* *[exhalation] Through convection currents you will have each breathed millions of millions of air molecules that were in my body.* *But the doors are open and the air will come out of the room, walk the streets of the city, the country, and travel around the world.* *The air does not belong to me and travels everywhere. What intelligent creature, knowing that we are made of air, would use the air as a dump ?*

*THE WATER*

*My body is about 70% water, just like the surface of the planet!*

*Do you know the concentration of salt in our blood?* *3.5%*

*Do you know the concentration of salt in the ocean?* *3.5%*

*This is another great proof that living things have evolved on our planet from the sea.*

*We are like a big drop of water with enough barriers not to dribble on the floor!* *The problem is that water is leaking from our body constantly*  *: it evaporates from the pores of our skin, through our mouth, through our eyes and genitals.* *And here is what is magic*  *: When we have a few milliliters too much, we want to go to the bathroom.* *When a few milliliters are missing, we are thirsty and drink water.* *We are so dependent on water that there are reflexes in our body to keep just the right amount.*

*What intelligent creature, knowing that we are made of water, would use the water as a dump for its waste ?*

*EARTH*

*We are the soil because every bite of food we eat has grown in or on the ground.* *And children are always surprised when I tell them that what they eat are the bodies of the plants and the muscles of the animals.* *Each part of who we are comes from the carcass of a plant or animal, which we put in our mouths, we dissect and incorporate the molecules from this living being into our own body.* *We are the soil by everything we eat.*

*What we eat comes from the earth!*

*What intelligent creature, knowing that we are made of soil, would use the soil as a dump for toxic waste, or by spraying chemicals and poisons on the food we are going to consume* *?*

*WE ARE THE ENVIRONMENT*

*So, we are air, water and soil.* *All beings, all creatures that live in our environment are made of the same elements.* *From a certain point of view, a very large extended family is formed!*

3. WORKSHOP (25 minutes)

* Do you feel like moving a little?

*Even if you tend to see birds, plants and rocks as decorations, you can change your look and see them differently.* *Let’s do an experience that requires an open mind.*

* Here's how it works:

1. Approach a creature slowly (animal, plant or mineral)

2. Observe and appreciate (questions on the slip)

3. Attempt to make a connection (by a touch, a look, a sound)

* Some instructions:

- Keep calm…

- Keep unpleasant comments for yourself (if this is the case)

- Observe carefully

- See differently and make connections

* Wait for the signal to try a second time

4. CELEBRATION (CONCLUSION) (20 min.)

* The example of Saint Francis of Assisi

*There are so many little stories where Francis has taken fraternal actions towards animals: For example, a rabid wolf had terrified the village of Gubbio.* *This wolf had killed and eaten cattle, chickens and even a man.* *Francis, filled with love, took it upon himself to settle this conflict: "Brother Wolf, come here.* *From Christ, I command you not to hurt neither me nor others.* *The wolf approached him.* *People were looking through the foliage.* *François leans towards the wolf: "Brother Wolf, everywhere you have done a lot of wrongs, killing creatures of the Lord, made in the image of God.* *You deserve to be tried as an assassin.* *I want peace to be between you and people.* *Francois understood that this wolf was hungry.* *He explained to the villagers that it would be nice if they offered him food.* *The wolf showed all the signs of submission and even stretched his paw.*

*While Francis was walking with two brothers (Angel and Massée) near Cannara, he said to them, "Stay here while I go to preach to our fellow birds.* *Then there were birds of all kinds watching him.* *He said to them, "My fellow birds, be grateful to God, who has done so much for you!* *Praise him for your freedom and your beautiful plumage.* *Praise him for the food he gives you, for the songs you know, for the air that sustains you.* *Must the Creator love you to give you all this!* *Brother birds, do not be ungrateful and celebrate the praises of him who fills you with his blessings.* *While he was speaking, the birds were dumb, but as soon as he finished, the birds began to sing, each according to his talents.* *Then he blessed them with a sign of the cross and they flew away.*

*The environment is a hot topic.* *I can get an environmental question like this*  *: What happens to the water when I let it run for nothing by washing his tank.*  *But today I am able to rephrase it as Francis*  *: "*  *Why I'm wasting sister water, which is helpful and humble and precious.*  *We can hear about reducing our greenhouse gases, that we need less use of the car. But, as a Christian who loves Creation, I can say*  *: "*  *Why I poison my brother the air, which keeps the life of every Creature.*  *"*

* Prayer

***The Canticle of the Creatures***

*by Saint Francis of Assisi*

*Most high, all powerful, all good Lord! All praise is yours, all glory, all honor, and all blessing. To you, alone, Most High, do they belong. No mortal lips are worthy to pronounce your name.*

*Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures, especially through my lord Brother Sun, who brings the day; and you give light through him. And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendor! Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.*

*Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars; in the heavens you have made them, precious and beautiful.*

*Be praised, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air, and clouds and storms, and all the weather, through which you give your creatures sustenance.*

*Be praised, My Lord, through Sister Water; she is very useful, and humble, and precious, and pure.*

*Be praised, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom you brighten the night. He is beautiful and cheerful, and powerful and strong.*

*Be praised, my Lord, through our sister Mother Earth, who feeds us and rules us, and produces various fruits with colored flowers and herbs.*

*Praise and bless my Lord, and give thanks, and serve him with great humility.*

* Pledge

*How can you take better care of the creation of God?*

*What is one thing you can do to reduce your ecological footprint?*

* Participants write this commitment on a scrap paper and slip it into their pocket.

5. EVALUATION (15 min.)

* In small groups, answer this question   :
* What have I discovered through this activity ?

NOTES

Colourful sheet with questions for participants   :

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| **Observe nature as Saint Francis of Assisi ...**    **1. Approach slowly. What is its colour? What is its texture? Does it smell anything? Does it make any noise?**    **2. Is it fast or slow?** **Is it fragile or solid?** **And if it were otherwise, could we recognize it?**    **3. Is it related to other creatures in a certain way?** **Does it hunt or is hunted?** **Does it help other creatures to live?**    **4. In your opinion, was it fashioned with love by God?** **Does this creature and you have the same Father in heaven?** **Basically, are you brother and sister?** |

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