

## OPENING PRAYER: Echo Prayer of Daniel 3:74-81

Leader: Let the earth bless the Lord;  
**Youth: Let the earth bless the Lord;**

Leader: Praise and exalt him above all forever.  
**Youth: Praise and exalt him above all forever.**

Leader: Mountains and hills, bless the Lord;  
**Youth: Mountains and hills, bless the Lord;**

Leader: Praise and exalt him above all forever.  
**Youth: Praise and exalt him above all forever.**

Leader: Everything growing on earth; bless the Lord;  
**Youth: Everything growing on earth; bless the Lord;**

Leader: Praise and exalt him above all forever.  
**Youth: Praise and exalt him above all forever.**

Leader: You springs, bless the Lord;  
**Youth: You springs, bless the Lord;**

Leader: Praise and exalt him above all forever.  
**Youth: Praise and exalt him above all forever.**

Leader: Seas and rivers, bless the Lord;  
**Youth: Seas and rivers, bless the Lord;**

Leader: Praise and exalt him above all forever.  
**Youth: Praise and exalt him above all forever.**

Leader: You sea monsters and all water creatures, bless the Lord;  
**Youth: You sea monsters and all water creatures, bless the Lord;**

Leader: Praise and exalt him above all forever.  
**Youth: Praise and exalt him above all forever.**

Leader: All you birds of the air, bless the Lord;  
**Youth: All you birds of the air, bless the Lord;**

Leader: Praise and exalt him above all forever.  
**Youth: Praise and exalt him above all forever.**

Leader: All you beasts, wild and tame, bless the Lord;  
**Youth: All you beasts, wild and tame, bless the Lord;**

Leader: Praise and exalt him above all forever.  
**Youth: Praise and exalt him above all forever.**

Conclude with a “Glory Be.”

## GAME: Can You Read This Sentence?

By trying to read a sentence wrongly typed due to misplaced hands on a keyboard, participants see that small misalignments in our way of living can result in major problems, and that small improvements can make a big difference.

### Materials:

Copies of the lower portion of this page. Cut it into individual strips (one strip per participant)

### Instructions:

Distribute a strip of paper to each participant. Ask volunteers to try to read the sentence out loud or to guess what it says. After a few tries, explain that you had accidentally typed a sentence with your hands misplaced on the keyboard (one key to the right).

**Comment:** In the same way, relatively minor misalignments in our living and thinking can result in major problems. Similarly, just small improvements can result in a markedly better quality of life. [The sentence was supposed to read: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1)]

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**Om yjr nrhommomh hpf vtrsyrf yjr jrsbrmd smf yjr rstyj**  
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## OPENING ACTIVITY: Ball Pass

By working together to more effectively achieve the same goal, participants recognize the impact of making a paradigm shift and are challenged to relate it to changing from an attitude of “dominion over the earth” to “stewardship of the earth.”

### Materials:

ball, stopwatch

### Instructions:

- Ask participants to stand in a circle. Give one person the ball to start. Explain that they will pass the ball to one another, but they need to remember who they receive the ball from and to whom they are passing it. They will need to maintain this pattern for the rest of the activity; the last person to receive the ball must pass it to the leader.
- Allow participants a few minutes to establish a pattern.
- Once the pattern has been established, tell the group to repeat it.
- Once the group has established the pattern, explain that the goal of the activity is to pass the ball as fast as possible (and you will be timing them!). The only rules are that they must maintain the initial pattern and that when the ball is dropped, they must begin the pattern again.
- Continue to challenge the group to cut their time each round; at some point, one of the participants may suggest a strategy to achieve the goal of passing the ball more quickly (such as standing closer together). If this is not suggested, prompt it; remind them that the only rules are that they must maintain the same pattern and that they must begin again if they drop the ball.
- Continue to challenge the group to cut their time each round until someone suggests that the group line up in the order in which they pass the ball; this will allow them to achieve their goal the quickest.

**NOTE:** To make this activity more challenging, ask participants to pass the ball in the normal pattern, and then pass it in reverse.

**Comment:** While the goal never changed, participants discovered one or more better ways to achieve the same goal. This happened when the group looked at the process differently. This change in perspective is sometimes referred to as a “paradigm shift.”

One way to interpret the biblical phrase in Genesis, “you will have dominion over the earth,” is that we can do whatever we want with God’s creation. Over the last several decades, we have come to realize that we have actually been charged with stewardship of the earth—that we have been entrusted with taking care of all of God’s creation. While creation must be used to sustain us, we must also maintain it for future generations. How does this paradigm shift affect how we think of creation?

## **CLOSING PRAYER: God in All Places**

Where can we find you, God?

Where can we go to meet you?

You, who love your creation, are present within it.

You, who made all things good,  
dwell within that goodness.

What wonders do you reveal to us, Creator God,  
when we gaze up at the tall oak tree?

What do we glimpse of your beauty  
when we stand upon the shoreline?

What music do you sing through the chirping of birds,  
the chattering of chipmunks, the buzzing of bees?

God, you speak to us through the wind,  
the rain, the snow.

We climb the highest mountains  
and journey deep into hidden valleys—  
and there we find you.

Creator God, your creation is full of your glory.

May we live in harmony  
as good stewards of your wonders.

Amen