CARING FOR PEOPLE & THE PLANET

Why should creation care be a priority for Christians?

- Urban Farmer Jason Adkins
- Gentleness
- Human Impacts on the Planet
- Restoration Project
- Biblical Basis for Creation Care
- Love Earth to Love People
- Making All Things New
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Unit Overview

Unit 13: Caring for People and the Planet helps students to see the biblical basis for creation care and introduces practical ways we can be good stewards of all God has made.

This unit features:

- A video introduction to urban farmer Jason Adkins.
- A devotional Bible study on the virtue of gentleness.
- An investigation of the biblical foundations of the creation care mandate.
- A discussion of the ways humans negatively impact the environment.
- A chance to get involved and participate in a local ecological restoration project.
- An opportunity to practice communicating the value of creation care to those who aren’t convinced it’s important.

Learning Outcomes

What will students know or be able to do after this unit?

- Reflect on how gentleness equips Christians to care for creation.
- Explain how a proper understanding of dominion over creation motivates stewardship, not exploitation.
- Justify caring for creation as a Christian scriptural mandate.
- Propose ways people can balance caring for people with caring for the earth using examples of human activities that can harm or restore the environment.
- Explain how environmental degradation limits human flourishing.
- Practice creation care strategies.
- Participate in restoring an ecosystem and reflect on the experience.
How to Use This Unit

Please see the User Introduction and Overview (biologos.link/user-intro) for important information and links, such as the difference between the five module types (Meet, Grow, Experience, Engage, and Integrate); our terms of use (how documents may be modified and distributed); and advice for communicating with parents or others in your community about potentially controversial topics.

This document contains lesson plans for the entire unit. Other files, such as student handouts, images for the Grow module, teacher instructions for specific activities, answer keys, and slide presentations, are accessible via links within this document.

Teacher’s Notes and sample answers are formatted with italics.

Scope and Sequence

This unit introduces students to the theological basis and current need for creation care. After completing Unit 13: Caring for People and the Planet, you can continue with other units (biologos.link/units-list) that pair well with your science or Bible course (biologos.link/course-pairing). The modular design gives you flexibility to pick and choose the activities that best suit your goals, time constraints, and students’ interests.

This unit provides an introduction to the Bible’s commission to exercise careful dominion over creation through godly stewardship. It lays the foundation for a Christian response to the evidence for climate change, a topic presented through the lens of rational hope in Unit 14: Climate Change and Our Commission. The biblical view of stewardship presented here also motivates Christian involvement in conservation work, which is explored further in Unit 15: Biodiversity and Conservation. The focus on human participation in creation care in these three units is balanced by Unit 12: Seeing God in Creation, which focuses on the wonder of God’s sustaining provision for and involvement in his creation.

For an introduction to questions at the intersection of faith and science, see Unit 1: Faith and Science Foundations. A comparison between theological and scientific knowledge and the methods scientists and theologians use to arrive at a consensus are explored in Unit 2: Ways of Knowing. To help students consider whether God may be leading them to work in a scientific field like ecology or conservation, see Unit 3: Science as a Christian Vocation.

Open questions and debated issues about how to best reconcile theological and scientific knowledge are explored in Unit 4: Cells and Design, Unit 5: Genetic Diversity and Human Dignity, Unit 6: DNA Technologies and Ethics, Unit 7: Fearfully and Wonderfully Made, Unit 8: Bible Interpretation and Science, Unit 9: Evolution and God’s Creation, Unit 10: The Fossil Record and Faith, and Unit 11: Humans and the Rest of Creation.

Pedagogy of Hospitality

Integrate presumes acceptance of, or directly teaches, the scientific consensus on some matters of controversy within the Christian community: namely, modern cosmology, the age of the earth, evolution, and anthropogenic climate change. At the same time, we as authors recognize that in any community of Christians, there is likely a diversity of viewpoints. Our goal is education, not indoctrination. As such, we include opportunities to explore various Christian perspectives within the Integrate units. Reflection assignments and discussion questions are intentionally open-ended, without an expectation that students adopt any one “correct” perspective. We also
believe practicing gracious dialogue is more important than winning an argument. For this reason the curriculum includes opportunities for respectful engagement with others who think differently. For tips on how to create a welcoming environment in your community, see biology professor Kerry Fulcher’s article A Pedagogy of Hospitality (biologos.link/hospitality).

Corequisite Science

While Integrate is flexible and may be used as a standalone resource for enrichment, it is designed to supplement, not replace, science instruction. Students will be prepared to engage with the material in this unit assuming concurrent or previous study of ecology.

NGSS Alignment

The Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS; biologos.link/ngss) are research-based, cutting-edge K-12 science standards. They set expectations for what students should know and be able to do. While not an NGSS curriculum, Integrate has many points of alignment with NGSS. If you refer to NGSS in your lesson planning, please see the NGSS Alignment for Integrate (biologos.link/ngss-alignment).
Vocabulary

The following terms and concepts are used in this unit or in the additional resources. Definitions and explanations are found in the Unit Glossary at the end of the unit. Many additional terms are included in the main Integrate Glossary (biologos.link/glossary).

- anthropocene
- anthropogenic climate change
- biodiversity
- climate change
- conservation
- creation care
- dominion (over creation)
- environmentalism
- environmental justice
- fossil fuels
- greenhouse effect
- greenhouse gases
- image of God
- scientific consensus
- stewardship (of creation)
- sustainability
- two books metaphor
- urban ecology
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