

# Session 1

## How do we see our relationship with the Earth?

"Our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. [...] This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her."

- Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, 1-2

## What are we learning?

In today's session, we will:

- Understand what humans are doing to the Earth.
- Discern the differences between dominion and stewardship.
- Respond to our relationship with the Earth.

## Today's prayer

Dear God,

Together, we pray for your guidance as we explore our relationship with your amazing creation, the Earth.

We pray that we may grow with you as stewards of your beautiful creation, caring for our common home together in our school and community.

Praise be to you!

Amen



# *Activity:* What happened when we all stopped

Have you ever wondered what would happen if we all stopped? What would happen to the Earth if we stopped producing waste and greenhouse gases? This poem by Tom Rivett-Carnac thinks about that. It takes inspiration from the COVID-19 lockdowns, where the world slowed down as we stayed at home.

In this activity, we will talk about the environment and our relationship to it. How we see the Earth affects how we act, so let's take a moment to reflect as we read this poem together.

● Watch "What happened when we all stopped" together

● Write down your thoughts to the following questions:

In your own words, summarise the poem. What is it about?

Are there any images that stick out to you?

What is the mood of the poem? Does it stay the same throughout?

What makes the voice move from a 'whisper' into a 'thunder'?

● Discuss your answers with the people sat next to you

# What happened when we all stopped

by Tom Rivett-Carnac

It starts as a whisper  
A word on the air  
It can't quite be heard  
But you know that it's there

As gentle as sunlight  
As tenacious as hail  
in its route to the heart  
It could not but prevail

And the people looked up  
From their day-to-day tasks  
Their day-to-day jobs  
And their day-to-day masks

They heard or they felt  
Where the whisper could lead  
And they looked with eyes wide  
At what that might mean

And once they could see it  
They hadn't a chance  
To resist the sweet song  
Of the deep spell it cast

But the feeling it brought them  
At first glance was pain  
As they lifted their eyes  
On the land they had claimed

Since they saw at last  
As if raised from a dream  
They were almost alone  
On the land and the sea

For the trees had almost gone,  
And the bees had almost gone,  
And the creatures in their shells by the  
seas had almost gone

And the people felt sad  
As they saw their new Earth  
But they knew this was it;  
One wild chance for rebirth

Breaking new ground, seeds rolling  
down  
Smell of the earth on your hands and  
your brow

No time for sorrow, we're building  
tomorrow  
The sound of things growing now  
keeps us around

As the wildness grows  
And the deep wood grows  
And the sense that the future's  
come to meet you grows

There's no chance we can rest, we  
must do our best  
This moment can lead us back  
home, that's our test.

It starts as a whisper  
A word on the air  
It can't quite be heard  
But you know that it's there

It then spoke like thunder  
Until we all moved  
And we could, and we did  
And it's done

She's renewed.



# Activity: Dominion or Stewardship?

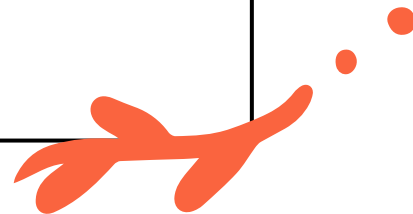


- Read the statements about different attitudes towards the Earth
- Write whether you think this fits with dominion or stewardship
- Think about the effect of those statements. Write the impact they would have on our planet



Here's an example!

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Stewardship or Dominion?</i>	<i>Their impact/effect</i>
We have power over all other animals and beings.	Dominion	This attitude allows people to harm animals. It could encourage people to eat more meat, which has a large environmental impact.
The Earth is God's creation, and we have a special role to protect it.		
We have a right to use natural resources as we see fit.		
It is our responsibility to look after the planet for future generations.		
We should live in harmony with nature and all the Earth's creatures.		
The Earth is a gift from God to use and rule over as we wish.		



# *Reflection:* Your last encounter with nature



In today's session, we've learnt about climate change from scientists and Pope Francis. We've also considered the differences between stewardship and dominion.

Take a moment to reflect on how this applies to your daily life. Does it change your relationship with the Earth? How will you act towards nature going forwards?

- Write a few sentences about your last encounter with nature

- Reflect on how you responded to nature in this encounter

Did you act with stewardship or dominion?

How did your actions impact the Earth?

- Would you act differently next time? How and why would you change your actions?