

# Sensing Creation

This reflection invites you to appreciate the beauty and rich variety of creation, ponder its fragility and consider our God-given responsibility to care for it.

The first section suggests some different ways to pray, engaging with different senses. We then seek to learn from Scripture about our role in creation, and finally consider ways in which we can participate in stewarding God's creation.

## PRAY

### Speak: A creation prayer

My dear King, my own King,  
Without pride, without sin,  
You created the whole world,  
Eternal, victorious King.  
King of Mysteries,  
You existed before the elements,  
Before the sun was set in the sky,  
Before the waters covered the ocean floor,  
Beautiful King,  
You are without beginning and without end.

King, You created the land out of shapeless mass,  
You carved the mountains and chiselled the valleys,  
And covered the earth with trees and grass.  
King, You measured each object  
And each span within the universe:  
The heights of the mountains  
And the depth of the oceans;  
The distance from the sun to the moon,  
And from star to star.

And you created men and women  
To be Your stewards of the earth,  
Always praising You for Your boundless love.

*From Celtic Psalter (ninth century)*

*Taken from Aidan Readings from Northumbria Community's Celtic Daily Prayer published by Collins.*

## Sense: God's creation presence around you

Either go for a brief walk or sit by an open window paying particular attention to the elements of nature you encounter with your senses right where you live.

- What can you **see** around you? Notice the colours, textures, shapes, movement of creation.
- What can you **feel**? Notice the sensation of wind, rain or sun, warmth, cold. You may want to touch a flower, the bark of a tree, a leaf, a grass shoot, a feather.
- What can you **hear**? Notice the different sounds around you: the animals and the elements. Notice manmade sounds. Notice the contrast. Notice where your attention is drawn.
- What can you **smell**? You may notice differences in smell depending on where you are.
- What can you **taste**, if anything? Are there tastes you associate with nature?

## Reflect:

On your own or in a group spend time reflecting on your experience:

- What took you by surprise?
- What subtle changes did you notice?
- How did you encounter God?

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## LEARN – God’s heart and our call to care

### Read: Psalm 8 - Divine Glory and Human Dignity

LORD, our Lord,  
how excellent is your name in all the earth!  
You set your glory above the heavens!  
Out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies  
you have established strength  
on account of your adversaries,  
in order to silence the enemy and vengeful foe.

When I look at the heavens,  
the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars that you established –  
what is man that you take notice of him,  
or the son of man that you pay attention to him?  
You made him a little less than divine,  
but you crowned him with glory and honour.  
You gave him dominion over the work of your hands,  
you put all things under his feet:  
Sheep and cattle – all of them,  
wild creatures of the field,  
birds in the sky,  
fish in the sea –  
whatever moves through the currents of the oceans.

LORD, our Lord,  
how excellent is your name in all the earth!

### Think about:

1. What response does creation evoke in you? How does it speak to you of God?

2. Looking at verses 4–9, what does the text say about our responsibility? The text says “*You gave him dominion and placed all things under his feet*”. In other places we are called to be “stewards” of God’s work. How would you describe what stewardship means in your own words?
3. How do you see our caring for God’s creation as a missional activity?

## PARTICIPATE – taking part in God’s mission to care

*“It is not possible to love an unseen God while mistreating God’s visible creation.”*  
– John Woolman, Quaker and abolitionist

James in his letter asks:

*“Do you think you’ll get anywhere in this if you learn all the right words but never do anything?”* (James 2:14, The Message)

In what practical ways do you sense God calling you to participate in creation care right now? You may want to consider things to do differently:

- different ways to travel to reduce carbon footprint
- different ways to eat to reduce food airmiles and contribution to carbon emissions
- different ways to shop – local, ethical, with less packaging
- different ways to combat waste
- places you would like to appreciate more
- things you would like to do less of

If you are interested in learning more about different aspects of creation care, resources from our friends at A Rocha might be helpful. Visit [arocha.org](http://arocha.org) for more information. For more resources for churches visit A Rocha UK’s introduction to eco church [ecochurch.arocha.org.uk](http://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk)