

Overview

Themes: England, Ocean Ecosystem and creatures, endangered species, greed, how much is enough?

Throughout history, humans have used God's creatures for their own needs, often to the point of extinction. Though he lived long ago, Saint Cuthbert models how one person can make a difference in protecting an endangered species. Students will gain knowledge and understanding of the legacy of Saint Cuthbert, and through discussion and self-reflection on how much is enough, discover what they can do to help conservation efforts today.

Through examining the Enoughness Pledge and the Praying with Colour activity, students will deepen their understanding of how much is enough and reflect on how their connection with God and nature can inform this.

Educational Objectives

- Children will understand how the Common Eider became endangered by exploitive human consumption, then protected through reforms put forward by Saint Cuthbert.
- Children will discuss how human greed impacts creatures and our world today.
- Through discussion, children will explore how much is enough and possible actions to help protect endangered species.

Materials

- *Amazing Friendships Between Animals and Saints* book
- world map
- (optional) online read-aloud image of border art to project on a screen

Directions

Step 1: The Story

Together, find England on the world map. Compare this to where you live.

Project the border art on a screen.

Read the story of Saint Cuthbert and the Otters, then read the story of the Eider (Cuddy Duck)

Step 2: Discussion

*Always choose questions appropriate to the age of your child(ren).

1. What are your reactions to this story?
2. How does it make you feel?
3. What do you find inspiring in the story?
4. Where did Saint Cuthbert live? Read about his ecosystem (see additional online resources provided).
5. Can you find the Magpie and creatures in the illustrated border?

Read the Creature Profiles (in the online resources) about each creature as it is found.

Greed

What is greed? (intense and selfish desire for something, especially wealth, power or food)

What does greed look like in your life?

Were humans greedy with the Eider Ducks?

Are there creatures today that humans are using in a greedy way?

Examples might be: ***use examples from your local area too!

- taking body parts: elephants for their tusks, bear gall bladders for medicine

- overconsumption: ocean fish (cod) whose stocks are declining from overfishing

***every major fish stock in the world is in decline right now

- loss of habitat (taking over the place in which they live and get their food): coral reefs dying, or migrating birds, Monarch butterflies whose habitat for living/migrating is being lost to cities/dams/development, causing their decline

What can you do to help endangered species (in your neighbourhood and in the world)? Visit the World Wildlife Fund for ideas. <https://www.worldwildlife.org/>

Activity – Exploring the Enoughness Pledge

Educational Objectives

- Students will explore the Enoughness Pledge as a way of reflecting on their own habits of consumption.

- Through discussion, students will explore how the concept of “Enoughness” can apply to their lives.

Directions

Together, read the Enoughness Pledge and discuss what it could mean in our society.

The Enoughness Pledge

I pledge to discover how much is enough for me
to be truly fulfilled, and to consume only that.

I also pledge to be part of the discovery
of how much would be enough for everyone
not only to survive but to thrive, and
to find ways for them to have access to that.

Through this commitment to restraint
and justice, I am healing my life
and am part of the healing of the world.

“Enoughness” isn’t something to “live up to”—it’s something to discover through the process
of truthful and compassionate living.

by Vicki Robin (originally published in *In Context*, 1990)

Further Discussion

How do you know how much is enough? How would this apply to your life?
How can you live this out?
Is this a pledge you could make?

Contemplative Activity – Praying with Colour

Educational Objectives

- Students will be able to engage in a guided prayer activity (colouring) in order to be introduced to the spiritual practice of noticing (the Examen).
- Students will reflect on this experience by using the Examen as a way of noticing – especially their deep connectedness to all.
- Through deepening their experience of the Cuddy Duck, students will become more aware of the interconnectedness of all life in creation.

Introduction for the Teacher/Parent

All over the world, praying with art has been around for centuries. This may be a new way to pray for you, but it can be a rich experience that does not require words or formal structure. It is not about creating a perfect product or something to hang on the wall. It is about “hanging out with God” in a relaxed way, without judgment, and noticing how the Spirit is moving in the experience.

When we pray with colour, it is visual and concrete so that our bodies are part of our prayer – such a good fit for so many kids! The focus of colouring can help us move gently to a more peaceful, meditative state. No matter what your age, colouring can be a prayerful and grounding activity.

You as the teacher/parent will be guiding this activity. Explain the activity to everyone before you all begin because participants are to do this activity without talking. Make sure everyone has everything they need before starting. ***Make sure you have given ALL instructions and fielded questions regarding what to do and how to do it BEFORE starting.

Directions

1. Create the setting. Peaceful sounds of the ocean or water playing softly in the background can help create the appropriate atmosphere. Use a calm, relaxed voice and speak slowly.
2. Centre. This may be new to people. The purpose is to come to a place of inner quiet before beginning the activity. You can do this in many different ways. Invite people to sit comfortably, close their eyes and focus on their breath. Slowly breathe in, then out. After several deep breaths, read the following prayer:

You, God, gave us the gift of creativity.
Be with us now as we enjoy that gift with You.
Guide our hands, our hearts, and our minds today – without judgment.
And through this, may we draw nearer to You. Amen.

When people feel ready, they open their eyes and, without talking, quietly begin.

3. There is no right way to colour, and this is not about getting a “good product.” Give yourself permission to be free. Notice what colours draw you and be playful with them. This is not about making it realistic, it is about “hanging out” with God and experiencing a different kind of prayer. Enjoy the movement of your body and the look of the colours as they go down. Feel free to add more to the picture.

4. Noticing (The Examen). When you are done, pause for a few moments and notice (without judgment) what you just experienced. What did you notice inside yourself while you were colouring? Did you experience any inner nudgings? What was fun and joyful? What was struggle? Did anything shift inside as you did this?

If there is time, share this with a partner or write down a few words on the back of your colouring page to remind you of what you noticed.

5. Journal entry (optional). Consider what actions you might be able to take in response to today’s experience.