



Teacher's Notes: Junior and Senior Infants

Background for Teachers

Laudato Si' is a letter sent by Pope Francis to the world. In *Laudato Si'*, which means 'Praise be to you', Pope Francis reminds us that the earth is a gift from God. This gift is for everyone; it is our common home. Pope Francis goes on to describe the terrible things that are happening to the earth. He reminds us that as Christians we are called to share God's love; a love that extends right throughout creation. During Catholic Schools Week 2017 we will celebrate God's gift of the earth; we will learn about St Francis; and we will investigate ways we can love and protect the earth.

Each day's lesson begins with a reflective quote from *Laudato Si'* (LS) to put our learning into context with the message of Pope Francis in his encyclical.

The entire document is available at: w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

Alternatively, you can view a brief animation exploring the encyclical at: vimeo.com/140633325

The activities included in the following lessons encourage active ways we can care for our common home.

From the Curriculum: Level 1

Christian Faith

Mystery of God

- God is always with us
- God loves and cares for every family

Creation

- God created everything
- God cares for all creation
- God's creation is good

Liturgy and Prayer

Formal Prayer

- Glory be to the Father

Spontaneous Prayer

Additional Prayer

- Praise the Lord (Ps 104)
- Praise the Lord (Ps 150)

Word of God

God's Loving Plan of Salvation

- Creation Story (Gn 1–2:3)
- Psalm of Praise (Ps 8:1, 3, 7–9)
- Creation is Wonderful (Ps 66:5)
- Praise the Lord (Ps 104)
- Praise the Lord (Ps 150)

Jesus' Public Life

- The Ten Lepers (Lk 17:11–19)
- Jesus Feeding the Five Thousand (Jn 6:1–13)

Christian Morality

Social Teaching of the Church

- I can respect and care for all creation



Monday: Seeing the beauty of our common home

Reflective Quote: 'When we can see God reflected in all that exists, our hearts are moved to praise the Lord for all his creatures and to worship him in union with them.' (LS 87)



Let's Look

Where possible, the class might begin this lesson outdoors.

Discuss the children's experience of the world around them.

- Encourage them to name what they see/hear/smell/feel.
- What is their favourite sight/sound/colour/smell/texture?
- Why have they chosen their favourite thing?
- What does it remind them of?
- How do they feel when they think of their favourite thing?

Prayer

Together let us **praise** God for the beauty he has shared with us.

Invite the children to finish each sentence and the whole class to pray the response.

Child: Praise God for the ...

Response: Praise God.

Dear God, thank you for the beautiful world in which we live.

Thank you for the beauty I can see, hear, smell and feel.

Amen.

When we praise
God we are giving
him thanks.



Let's Learn

In the Bible we read many stories about God's gift of the earth. We remember that God's gifts are for everyone. We call this gift our world. It is our home. It is a home for everyone. When we read the beginning of the Bible we remember all the wonderful things that God created.

Share the Creation Story with the children.

Note: Adapted version of the scripture is available in:

- *Grow in Love*, Junior Infants, Theme 2: Our World, Lesson 1: God created the world, pp. 58–60; Lesson 2: God created us ... we are special, p. 64
- *Grow in Love*, Senior Infants, Theme 1: Our World, Lesson 2: God created our world, p. 32–3; Lesson 4: God asks us to care for the world, p. 43

God asks us to look after the beautiful world that we call our home. It is a home for the whole world to share. When we care for the world we are sharing God's love.



Let's Live

The children may record their reaction to the beauty of our common home using Monday's Activity Page under the title 'Look at all that God has made'. This can be done in a variety of ways, e.g. paint, draw, collage, etc. Display the children's work around the class Prayer Space.

Song: 'Thank you, God, for our world' (Bernard Sexton)

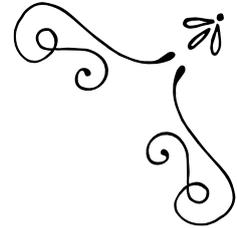


Monday: Seeing the beauty of our common home – Activity Page

Draw and colour God's wonderful creation



Look at all that God has made ...





Tuesday: Caring for our common home

Reflective Quotes: *'Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it.'* (LS 139)

'I believe that Saint Francis is the example par excellence of care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically.' (LS 10)

'What is more, Saint Francis, faithful to Scripture, invites us to see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness.' (LS 12)



Let's Look

Remind the children of yesterday's activity.

- Who created the world?
- List some of the beauty of God's creation.

Yesterday's lesson focused on a special word: **praise**.

Today we will be using a new word: **care**.

- How do we care for our friends/our teeth/our body/our family/our environment?
- What would happen if we didn't care and instead left it up to other people to care for all the important things?

God asks us to care for each other and for our beautiful world. When we care for each other and the environment we know we please God our Father. God is happy because we have done what Jesus asks us to do.

Prayer

Loving God, we give you praise for the wonderful gifts you have shared with us.

Help us to be loving and caring just like your son Jesus.

Help us to remember to always care.

Amen.



Let's Learn

Show the children the image of Pope Francis. Encourage discussion about him. The image may be printed and included on the Prayer Space.

Pope Francis has a special job. He has been chosen by God to teach us how to live the way God wants us to. Pope Francis chose his name because he learned about caring for the environment from another man called Francis. Pope Francis refers to St Francis as his 'guide and inspiration' (LS 10).

Note: See *Grow in Love*, Junior Infants, Theme 2: Our World, Lesson 3: We can care for the world





St Francis loved everything about God's wonderful creation. Many stories have been written about Francis and the ways in which he helped people to understand that the world is a beautiful gift from God. St Francis taught people to care for God's creation and to praise God for all he has done.

Look and Respond

Show the children the image of the fresco called 'Sermon of the Birds' on the next page. This fresco, which is a painting on a wall, is by Giotto di Bondone (1266–1337) and shows St Francis speaking to a flock of birds. Ask the children the following questions.

- What do you see?
- How many people are in the image?
- Who do you think the people are?
- What kind of creatures are in the picture?
- How many do you see?
- Describe the different birds.
- Can you name any of the birds?
- What, do you think, is the man nearest the birds doing?

St Francis and the Birds

Once, St Francis came across a flock of birds that did not fly away as he came close. As he approached, the birds looked up at him and waited. St Francis greeted the birds and began to speak to them. He called them 'Brother Birds' and told them to praise God with their voices. The birds waited patiently for the holy man to finish his sermon. When he did finish speaking he blessed the birds and only then did they fly away, singing as they flew.

St Francis called all creatures, big and small, by the name of 'brother' or 'sister'. This helps us to understand that we should care for all God's creation the way we care for our brothers and sisters.



Let's Live

Consider

- How do we care for God's creation?
- How do we care for the birds in winter?
- What will we do for the birds in winter?

Give pupils a copy of the picture of St Francis and the Birds on Tuesday's Activity Page to colour as they reflect on the story.

Note: Ideas for bird feeders available on: www.pinterest.com/onepartsunshine/diy-bird-feeders-to-make-with-kids/

Prayer

(Based on Psalm 104)

(Children repeat after teacher)

O Lord, my God,

We praise you

for the beautiful world

that you have created.

We see the wonder of this world around us.

Just like the birds,

we use our voices to praise you.

Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord.





Tuesday: Caring for our common home – Activity Page

Colour the picture of St Francis and the Birds





Thursday: Protecting our common home

Reflective Quotes: *'I urgently appeal for a new dialogue about how we are sharing the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all.'* (LS 14)

'The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth.' (LS 21)

'The problems of pollution and waste are closely linked to a throwaway culture ...' (LS 22)

'Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us. We have no such right.' (LS 33)



Let's Look

Revise what we mean when we refer to the gift of creation.

Recall who reminds us to care for creation. (Pope Francis and St Francis)

Today we are going to investigate what Pope Francis refers to as our common home.

Prayer

Praise to you, God,

for the wonderful gifts you share with us.

We give thanks for all you give us.

Help us to mind and care for your creation.

Amen.



Let's Learn

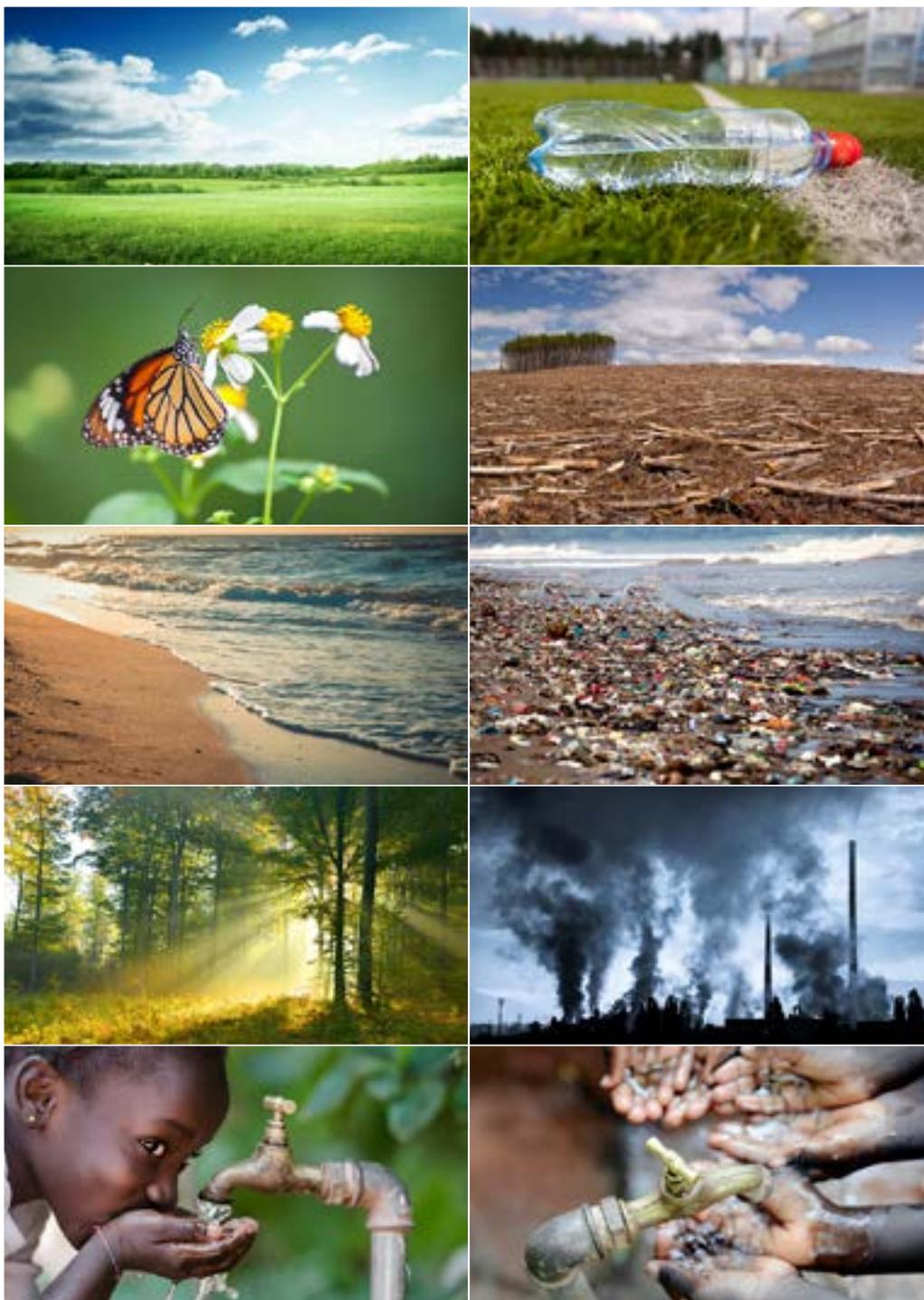
In his letter Pope Francis speaks about the earth hurting.

- Did you ever get hurt? What happened?
- Did someone care for you? What did that person do?
- How can the earth hurt?
- What might make the earth sad?
- Have you seen anything in God's creation that might make you sad?



Look and Respond

Display the below images on the IWB for the pupils to discuss.



- Describe what you see in each picture.
- What do you like/dislike about what you see?
- Looking at the negative images: What is wrong with this picture? How did this happen?



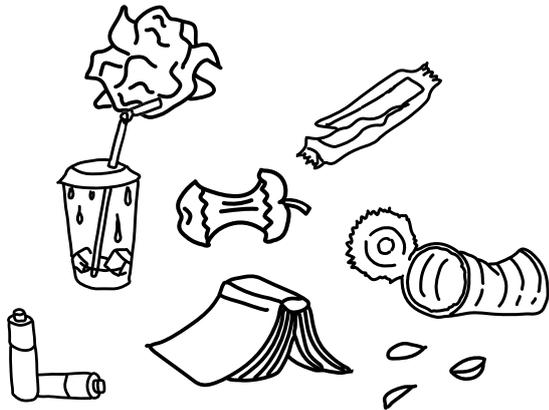
Let's Live

Consider a spring clean of our school bags, the classroom or the school environment. (This may provide an opportunity to revise how we dispose of waste.) Take 'before' and 'after' photographs. Encourage the children to continue the spring clean at home.

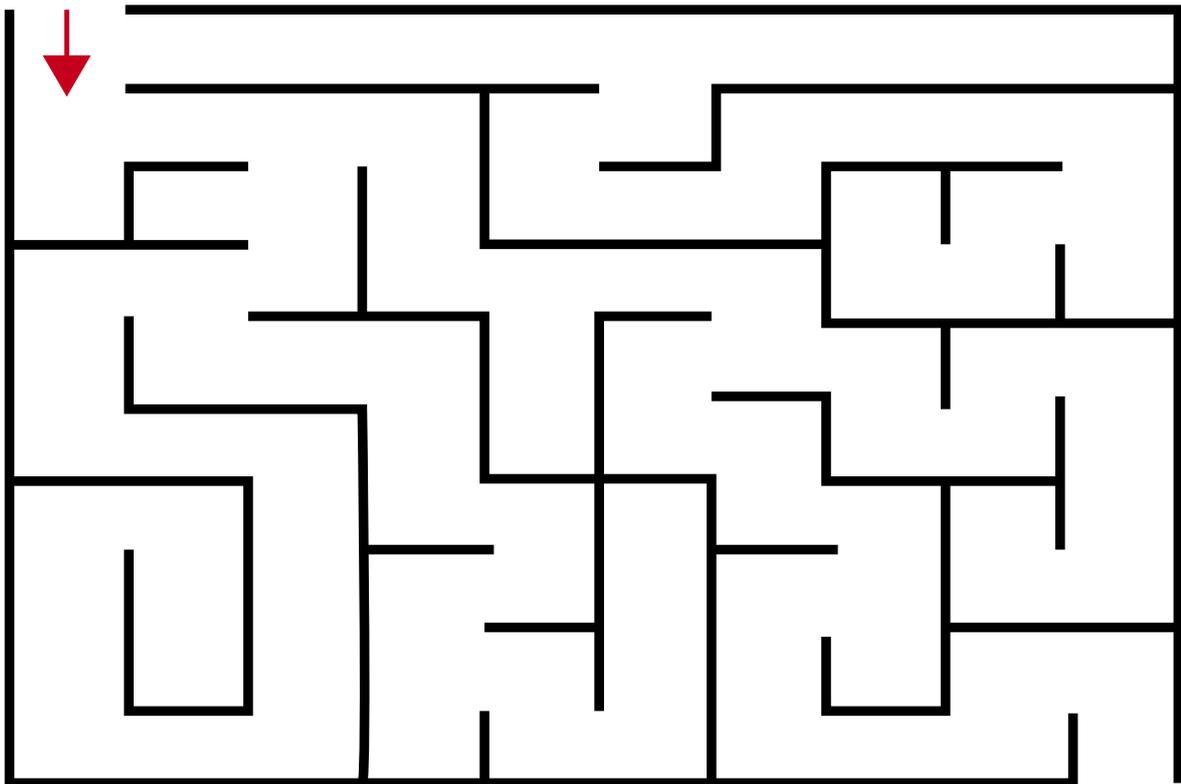
Give the pupils a copy of Thursday's Activity Page. Pupils need to direct the rubbish into the bin through the maze.



Thursday: Protecting our common home – Activity Page



**We take care of the world
God gave us**



Put the waste in the bin





Friday: Sharing our common home

Reflective Quotes: *'Our insistence that each human being is an image of God should not make us overlook the fact that each creature has its own purpose. None is superfluous. The entire material universe speaks of God's love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God.'* (LS 84)

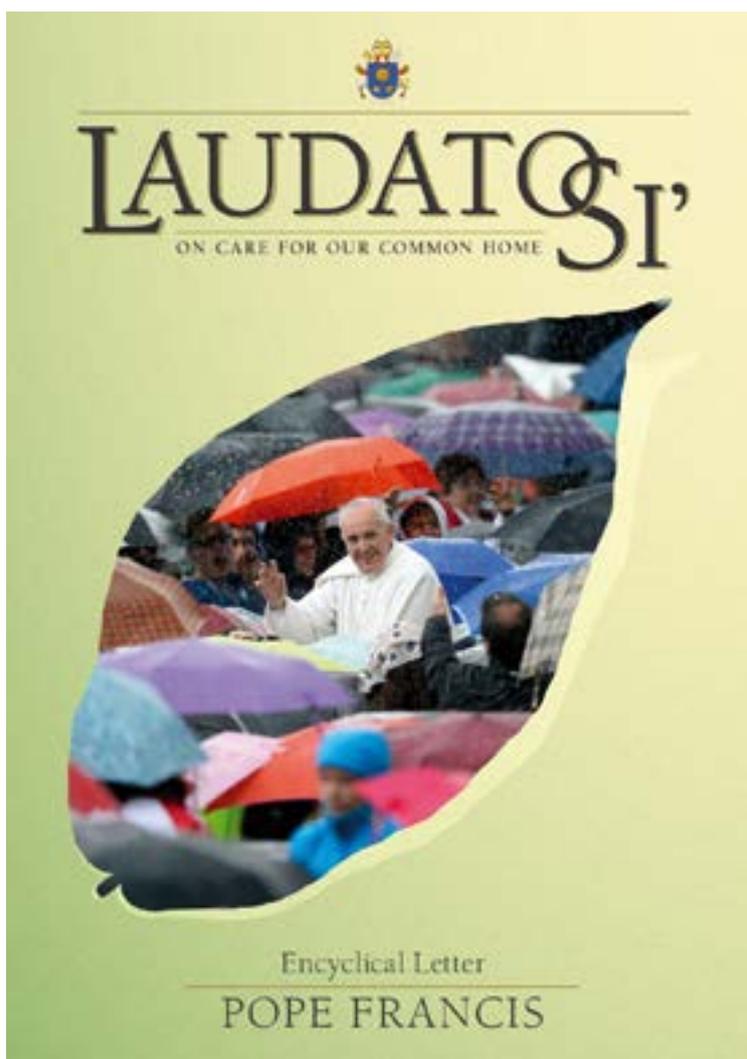
'... we realise that the world is a gift which we have freely received and must share with others.' (LS 159)

'A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal.' (LS 202)



Let's Look

This week we have looked at God's creation. We have given praise to God and we have said thank you to God for the world, this home that we all share. We listened to a story about St Francis and heard how he reminded the birds to use their voices to praise God. Pope Francis sent a letter to the whole world. In the letter he asks everyone to mind and care for our home.





Let's Learn

When we care, we don't just think about ourselves, we think about other people and the environment too.

Using the images from Thursday, link each negative image to the children's experience of the Green-School's programme.

Recall the children's experience of the Green-Schools programme.

- What do we do with litter and waste?
- How do we save energy?
- How do we conserve water?
- How do we keep healthy and cut down on air pollution?
- How do we care for plants and animals in our locality?

Note: Information available at: www.greenschoolsireland.org/



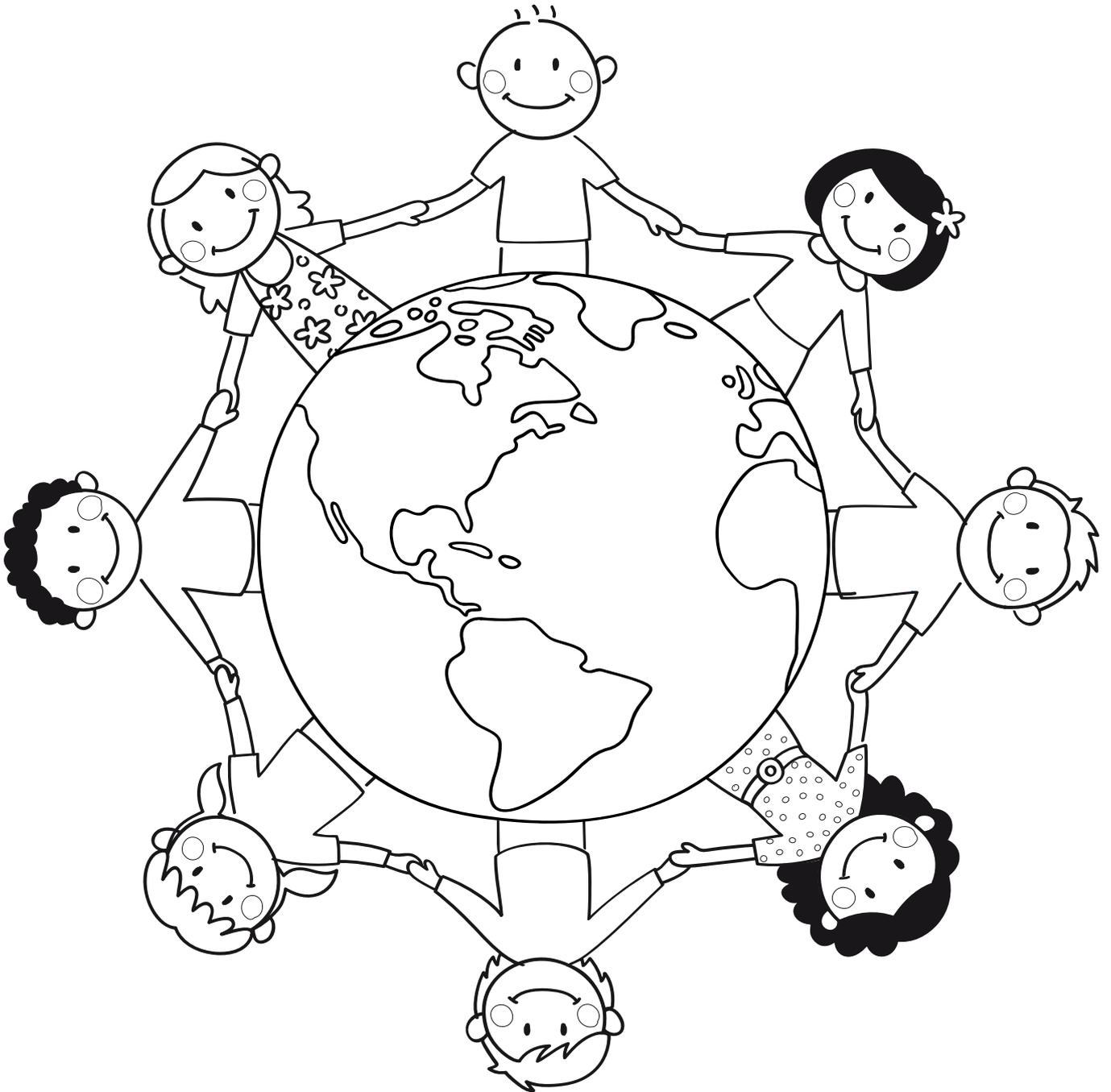
Let's Live

Decide on what you as a class will focus on over the next few weeks to protect our common home.

Ask the pupils to colour the poster on Friday's Activity Page and help them to write the words 'We share our home' on the line provided. Display the posters around the school and in the porch of the local church.



Friday: Sharing our common home – Activity Page



We share our home
