



Worship Service Theme: Creativity

Helpful Elements:

Green table covering (ordinary time)

Welcome: Welcome! It's so good to be together to celebrate faith and community today. My name is ____ and I'll be leading our worship time today. Our theme for today is **creativity**. We'll be looking at God as the great Creator and how that relates to our life of faith, wonder, and worship.

Please pray with me as we open our time together.

Opening Prayer: Great and loving God, we ask your Holy Spirit to bless our time together and to refresh us with your presence. In the midst of a world full of trouble and strife, we thank you for watching over us, guiding us, and as we confess our sins, for forgiving us. Enable us to enter your presence joyfully and reverently, and let us depart today with the assurance that our sins are forgiven. Fill us, O God, with the peace which passes understanding. Amen.

Opening Hymn: Doxology

Statement of Faith: Let us affirm our statement of faith by reciting Psalm 23 together:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

²He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

³He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

⁵Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Suggested Hymns:

For the Beauty of the Earth

Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us

Amazing Grace

First reading: This is the creation story from the Bible, Genesis 1. I've chosen a slight rewording of this famous story, as told in *The Jesus Storybook Bible* (pages 18-25), by Sally Lloyd Jones.

In the beginning, there was nothing.

Nothing to hear. Nothing to feel. Nothing to see.

Only emptiness. And darkness. And ... nothing but nothing.

But God was there. And God had a wonderful plan.

"I'll take this emptiness," God said, "and I'll fill it up! Out of the darkness, I'm going to make light! And out of the nothing, I'm going to make ... EVERYTHING!"

God spoke. That's all. And whatever God said, it happened.

God said, "Hello, light!" and light shone into the darkness. God called the light "Day" and the darkness "Night." "You're good," God said. And they were.

Then God said, "Hello sea! Hello sky!" and a great space opened up, wide and deep and high. "You're good," God said. And they were.

Then God said, "Hello land!" and there – splashing up through the oceans – came cliffs, mountains, sandy beaches. "You're good," God said. And they were.

"Hello trees!" God said. "Hello grass and flowers! ... Hello stars! Hello sun! Hello moon!" And everything everywhere burst into [being]. "You're good," God said. And they were.

...Then God said, "Hello animals!" And everyone came out to play, [birds and fish and every kind of animal]. "You're good," God said. And they were.

God saw all that he had made and he loved them. And they were lovely because God loved them.

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God. (We'll pick up the rest of the story in a minute.)

Suggested Hymns:

Holy, Holy, Holy Jesus Loves Me

Second reading: Where we left off in *The Jesus Storybook Bible*, God had just finished making all the earth and planets and animals. Then the creation story continues:

But God saved the best for last. From the beginning, God had a shining dream in his heart. He would make people to share his Forever Happiness. They would be God's children, and the world would be their perfect home.

So God breathed life into Adam and Eve. When they opened their eyes, the first thing they saw was God's face.

And when God saw them, he was like a new dad. "You look like me," he said. "You're the most beautiful thing I've ever made!"

God love them with all of his heart. And they were lovely because he loved them.

...God looked at everything he had made. "Perfect!" he said. And it was.

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Suggested Hymns: Softy and Tenderly Leaning on the Everlasting Arms

Interactive Homily: Let's think a little more about creativity.

- Who do you think is the first artist of all time?
 - God! God created everything out of nothing.
- In the beginning, what sorts of things did God create?
 - Light; heaven and earth; water, the seas; plants, stars, sun, moon; birds, creatures of all kinds
 - And finally, people: man and woman.
- What does God say about everything that he creates?
 - When God looks at everything that he made, God says it is "good"; and when he makes people, he says they are "very good."
- What are some of the most impressive and beautiful things you've seen in creation in your life?

- Grand Canyon; Yellowstone; Rocky Mountains; snow, oceans, deserts...
- What sorts of things do people create? What have you created in your life?
 - Music, art, sculpture, books, poems, dance, inventions, buildings ...
- Why do you think human beings create things? What's inside of us, our hearts and our minds, that causes us to want to create?
 - We are created in the image of God, who was and is the original Creator—so we have creativity in our DNA!
 - We create something that didn't exist before—a poem, dance, painting, music, even math formulas and computer programs—and in that way we exhibit a characteristic of God.
 - We have a divine, built-in impulse to make order from chaos, beauty from ashes.
 - Creativity and imagination, and the ability to use and enjoy them, come from God.
- I wonder *why* you think God gave us the ability to make things in this world?
 - To bring joy and delight to God, to ourselves, and to those around us.
 - To reflect *the wonder and beauty of truth*: truth about God, truth about our world.
 - To turn our eyes to God, to worship the Creator, not the creatures.

Let's take a moment to silently pray and reflect on the blessing of creativity and imagination, and to give thanks God as our Creator.

(Silent Prayer) ... Lord, hear our prayers. Now let us pray the Lord's prayer together:

Lord's Prayer: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever, Amen.

Suggested Hymns:

This is My Father's World

It is Well with My Soul

Standing on the Promises

Third Reading: Quotes on Creativity

Creativity is God's gift to us. Using our creativity is our gift back to God. —Julia Cameron, author of *The Artist's Way*

Why does anybody tell a story? It does indeed have something to do with faith, faith that the universe has meaning, that our little human lives are not irrelevant, that what we choose or say or do matters, matters cosmically. —writer Madeleine L'Engle

Don't let anyone rob you of your imagination, your creativity, or your curiosity. It's your place in the world; it's your life. Go on and do all you can with it, and make it the life you want to live. —Mae Jemison, first African American woman astronaut in space

Whenever you are creating beauty around you, you are restoring your own soul. —writer Alice Walker

Suggested Hymns:

**Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing
Shall We Gather at the River**

Fourth Reading: Quotes on God's Creativity, from all religions¹

Every house is built by someone but the builder of all things is God. — Christianity

This universe hath sprung from the Lord. In him it is established. He is the Cause of Creation. —Hinduism

All things originate from heaven. —Confucianism

It is he who made the earth by his power, who established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding stretched out the heavens. —Judaism

¹ *Oneness*, by Jeffrey Moses, pp. 119-120

Praise be to God, who created the heavens and the earth, and ordained the darkness and the light! He it is who created you. –Islam

God is ever true. He is the true Lord. He who made this world is and always shall be. Behold! His handiwork attests his greatness. –Sikhism

We do not see God, but all that we see are His works. –Ethiopia African wisdom

Every culture and wisdom tradition links the arts and spirituality. Music, dancing, singing, poetry, and painting are common avenues of adoration and praise. The arts convey our enthusiasm and house our yearning. –writers and spiritual teachers Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat

Suggested Hymns:

Blest Be the Tie that Binds

I Need Thee Every Hour

Closing Blessing: (Strike bell as you say the word “Lord”)

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and grant you peace. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Closing Hymn: Doxology (Reprise)

Extra Material:

Imagination is a Christian duty [because] you can't apply Jesus's Golden Rule without it. Jesus said, “Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them” (Matthew 7:12). We must imagine ourselves in their place and imagine what we would like done to us. Compassionate, sympathetic, helpful love hangs much on the imagination of the lover. –author and theologian John Piper

An artist creates out of the materials of the moment, never again to be duplicated. This is true of the painter, the musician, the dancer, the actor, the teacher, the scientist, the businessman, the farmer—it is true of us all, whatever our work, that we are artists so long as we are alive to the concreteness of a moment. –American poet and potter M. C. Richards