

All of Creation Rejoices: Welcome to the Zoo!



An Overview

PreK-5th Grade Unit

In the All of Creation Unit, students explore our relationship with animals from the time of Adam's creation to the Saints of the 19th century. The leading theme throughout is God's creation, how it rejoices in glory to God, and how it strives for communion with God's will.

This unit is designed that it can be used one of three ways:

1. As a Vacation Church School curriculum spanning 4-5 days. Each day would be one lesson including the games, craft, and snack. The final day would be the culminating activity in the overview. If a 4 day unit is preferred, then the culminating activity could be added to the end of the fourth day.

VCS Sample Daily Schedule:

Introduction: prayer and priest introduction—5 minutes

Station 1: lesson—25 minutes

Station 2: games—25 minutes

Station 3: craft—25 minutes

Station 4: snack—25 minutes

Closing: prayer and questions—5 minutes

2. As a month long Church School themed unit. Each week one of the lessons would be used. The teacher can decide which portions of the lesson to keep in and which ones to remove based on their Church School timing.

3. As a single lesson. Each lesson is complete and can stand on its own.

6-12th Grade Youth Connection

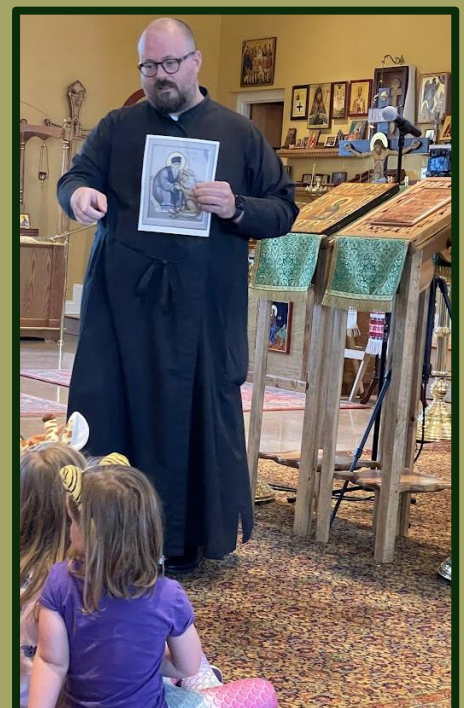
The youth connection contains mini lessons that mirror the VCS themes found in the PreK-5th grade unit. Each day contains a mini lesson and a short activity that should take 30 minutes. This leaves time for an offsite activity, such as bowling, swimming, kickball, or hiking. Try choosing activities that excite the youth in your parish. At the end of the unit, the youth group would join the parish for the culminating activity.

Day 1: Creation

Day 2: Birds in the Bible

Day 3: Lion Legacy: Daniel & St. Gerasimos

Day 4: Bear Buddies: St. Seraphim



Decorations

Jungle Elements

- Collect brown packaging paper from your parish members. Twisting these creates easy and inexpensive vines.
- Green tablecloths can be cut or streamers can be hung to create vines.
- Construction paper leaves can be cut out and taped onto the brown vines.
- Real or fake house plants can be borrowed from parishioners.
- Tree stumps and rocks add to the jungle atmosphere.
- Animal print or jungle themed tablecloths can be used on tables.
- Play jungle sounds in a few of the habitats or in the church entry way.

Animal Habitats

- Stuffed animals can be borrowed from parishioners for display.
- Classrooms can be designed as zoo exhibits with different animals residing in each room.
- Windows can be hung with vines and leaves along with animals such as monkeys, snakes, sloths, birds, and butterflies.
- Cardboard boxes can be painted as animals.
- Blue tablecloths and blue cellophane with Christmas lights under it can make a pool of water or cascade them down a wall to make a waterfall. Pink yard flamingos or printed pictures of goldfish can be added.

Costumes

- Teachers can wear zoo keeper hats and button down tan or green shirts to look like zoo staff.
- Students can be given animal ear headbands.
- T-shirts could be made that say "Welcome to the Zoo" or have the title of the VCS and year on them.



End of the Unit Celebration

Vespers & Ice Cream Social



- Decorate tables with jungle or zoo themed tablecloths. Small stuffed animals, plants, or brown paper vines could create simple centerpieces.
- Use one of your decorating focal points, such as the waterfall or zoo animal exhibit, as a photo spot. Set up chairs, create a sign, or even consider having a volunteer snap pictures. Make printable animal masks or zoo photo booth items available for people to hold up in their pictures.
- Have older students offer animal encounters where they hold stuffed animals outside of the exhibits and the younger students can visit them, pet them, and pose for a picture.
- Display the icons of saints with animals that students learned about during VCS, so they can visit the animals and the icons. Students can tell family members about the stories.

Ice Cream Topping Themes

- Ice cream = polar bear snow
- Chocolate syrup = hippo mud bath
- Crushed Oreos = dirt
- Cherries = lady bugs
- Whip cream = penguin snow
- Sprinkles = worms
- Red Hots = fire ants
- M&M's = cheetah spots
- Gummy worms = snakes
- Peanuts = elephant treats
- Banana slices = monkey snacks
- Hug Hershey Kisses = zebra stripes
- Pretzel sticks = lion manes
- Teddy Grahams = bears
- Animal Crackers
- Cheese curls = tiger tails
- Veggie Straws = jungle vines

Business card templates work as themed labels for food items like below.

**Zebra
Stripes**

