

Season of Creation Art Competition

Teacher's Guide

Introduction

This guide is designed to support teachers to lead their students to reflect and respond creatively to the Season of Creation theme, Living Water, through art.

Theme for Season of Creation 2026

For 2026, the Season of Creation theme is '**Living Water**'. This is inspired by the prophet Ezekiel's vision of a river flowing from God's Temple that brings life wherever it goes. In the vision, the water starts as a tiny trickle and becomes a deep river that turns everything, even the Dead Sea (a symbol of lifelessness) into a place full of fish, trees, and healing. Wherever this river flows, "everything will live" (Ezek 47:9,12).

When introducing this theme to your students, some key ideas to highlight include:

- God's love is like **living water** that brings **life, healing, and hope** to even the most damaged places in creation.
- We are invited not just to look at this river, but to **step into it**. This means we are invited to let God change our hearts and then to **join in healing the Earth and helping people**, especially those suffering from environmental harm.

In a world where many people lack safe drinking water, rivers are polluted, and oceans are choked with plastic, the theme of 'Living Water' is also a **hopeful call to action**: God's grace is still flowing, and Christians are called to be part of that flow by protecting water, caring for creation, and seeking justice.

Connecting to Catholic Social Teaching + Laudato Si:

1. Links to Laudato Si'

Pope Francis' encyclical **Laudato Si'** teaches that the Earth is our "common home" and that everything is connected: people, land, water, animals, and climate. Pope Francis reminds us that rather than being separate from nature, "we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. *Gen 2:7*); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters" (para. 2).

Similarly, Ezekiel's river shows creation as an interconnected, living community, where land, water, trees, fish, and people are all renewed together.

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis also identifies water management as a significant ecological issue and concern facing our global community. He also warns against seeing nature (including water) as a "thing" to be used without limits and calls for a **conversion of the heart** where we reject a selfish, human-centred attitude, and commit to a loving, caring relationship with creation as an expression of our faith.

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2. Links to Catholic Social Teaching (CST)

Several key CST principles also connect directly to 'Living Water':

- **Human Dignity:** When people lack clean water or are forced to migrate because of droughts or floods, their God-given dignity is not upheld. This calls Christians to respond so everyone can live a life worthy of their dignity.
- **Care for our Common Home:** Creation is entrusted to our care, meaning care for creation is part of our faith, and not an optional extra.
- **Solidarity and the Common Good:** Christians are invited to act together so that water, food, and land are shared fairly for all, including future generations.

To learn more, you can also access Caritas Australia's CST Toolkit: www.caritas.org.au/cst

Student activities to engage with 'Living Water':

The Season of Creation Celebration Guide has several activities to help students connect the theme of 'living water' to Christian faith. Examples include:

1. River of Living Water Prayer and Art (p. 33-34)
2. Bowl of Water/Bowl of Tears (p. 32-33)

You can access the Season of Creation resource in full here: <https://seasonofcreation.org/>

Reflection Questions for Students:

Below are some reflection questions that may help to support students as they think about responding to the theme of 'living water' in their artwork. Students can discuss these in groups, write responses, or quietly reflect on these:

- Think about a river, lake, or beach that is special to you. What makes it special? What can you do (even in a small way) to help to protect or care for this gift from God?
- Why can't everyone (both people and animals) access the clean, safe water that they need? What changes do we need to make this possible?
- When have I experienced God's living water (e.g. through enjoying creation, receiving kindness, love or care from others)?
- What kind of words, actions, or choices in my life would show that living water is flowing from my heart?
- How can I be part of sharing God's living water, and help to bring healing to our world?



Season of Creation Schools Art Competition

For information and to enter, visit www.caritas.org.au/art-comp



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Catholic Earthcare
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