

1

Appreciate God's Creation

GENESIS 1:1-5, 14-19; ECCLESIASTES 3:1-8



GOAL

After engaging Scripture from Genesis and Ecclesiastes, children describe the story of the first elements of creation and express their appreciation for time and seasons.

- A** Art
- AM** Active/Movement
- C** Conversation
- D** Drama
- F** Food
- G** Game
- M** Music
- NS** Nature/Science
- QC** Quiet/Contemplative
- S** Service
- T** Technology
- X** Extra Prep

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



PRAYER

Holy God, slow me down and give me the words and energy to appreciate all you have created and all that you call us to be. Amen.

THIS SESSION

According to Genesis 1, God created specific patterns to shape our lives and the earth's life. We alternate between light and darkness. Our world experiences seasons that encourage growth and transformation for all living things. While we may prefer some seasons to others, all seasons are part of God's pattern of care for the world that we are invited to participate in.

THE BIBLE STORY

Each session in this unit focuses on the creation story from Genesis 1 and pairs it with another Scripture that emphasizes the same practice of care. In this session, the creation of light and darkness, and thus time and seasons from Genesis 1:1-5, 14-19 is paired with Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 to help children appreciate other kinds of time and seasons. Seasons of our lives may help us understand different periods we experience. Just as with time and seasons in the natural world, those in our lives come and go as well.

CONNECTIONS WITH CHILDREN

Children develop affinities for the patterns found within creation from a young age. They may recognize within themselves the necessity for being active and for resting or also have preferences for a particular season. Children may appreciate God's patterns of creation with joy before they recognize the wisdom within the patterns.

SESSION PREPARATION

- "Graffiti Sheets" (p. 8): Prepare six sheets of newsprint with the questions provided on page 8. Display in the room.

Depending on the options you choose:
- "Appreciating the World Around Us" (p. 10): Obtain *Outside In* by Deborah Underwood (Clarion Books, 2020) or use the YouTube video "Outside In Read Aloud—A Great Kids Picture Book about How Nature Affects Our Everyday Lives" (bit.ly/FMOutsideIn, 4:28).
- "Season Stations" (p. 10): In this section you may choose one or more options. If you choose multiple options, set them up as stations and invite the children to move between the stations as they choose. Recruit adult helpers as needed. For "Winter Snow Trees," obtain light blue and black construction paper and black and white tempera paint. For "Summer Flowers," obtain paper cupcake liners, straws, and pipe cleaners (green and a variety of colors). For "Spring Butterflies," obtain round, fluted coffee filters and washable markers. "Autum Falling Leaves" needs no special preparation. Make a sample of the item to be made at each station.



GETTING STARTED

- Newsprint
- Tape
- Markers

GRAFFITI SHEETS



Greet the children as they arrive. Invite them to take one or more markers and answer the questions on each sheet of newsprint prepared with the following questions:

- ✦ What's your favorite thing about summer?
- ✦ What's your favorite thing about winter?
- ✦ What's your favorite thing about spring?
- ✦ What's your favorite thing about fall?
- ✦ What do you do during the day?
- ✦ What do you do at night?

Tell them that they can write or draw pictures as answers. Assist with reading and writing as needed and encourage children to help one another with reading or writing as well.

After all the children finish, comment on some similarities you find in their answers and ask questions for clarification. Wonder who has a favorite season or favorite time of the day and why.

- Internet-connected device

THE WORLD IN OUR CARE



Show the YouTube video “Touch the Earth Lightly” ([bit.ly /FMTouchTheEarth](https://bit.ly/FMTouchTheEarth), 2:18, stopping after the first verse at 0:33). Teach the children the first verse, showing the video again, pausing after each phrase, and inviting the children to repeat it with you. Show the video again to 0:33, inviting the children to sing the first verse together.

After singing, ask the children what they think it means to “touch the earth lightly” and “use the earth gently.”



INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

- Resource Pages 1 and 2
- Paper
- Construction paper
- Markers, crayons, color pencils
- Scissors
- Glue sticks

GENESIS 1



Tell the children that, in this unit on the practice of *Care for Creation*, they will be exploring the biblical story of creation that God's people told and then recorded long ago to describe the world around them and how it came to be. Comment that the Bible is not a science book with facts, but a book of faith that tells the stories of God and God's people. Explain that, today, they will consider what the Bible tells us in its first book, Genesis (which means “beginning”), on the first and fourth days—light and darkness—which in turn created time and seasons.

Form two groups and give one group Resource Page 1 and the other group Resource Page 2. Invite a volunteer in each group to read aloud the Scripture passage from Genesis 1 to their group. Assist with reading as needed. Invite the children to illustrate the Scripture passage they heard. Suggest that they can draw and color on their paper, cut or tear construction paper and glue it onto the paper, or a combination of techniques.

After the children have illustrated their passages, bring the groups back together. Have a volunteer from each group take turns reading aloud their Scripture passage while the children in that group show their pictures.

Engage the children in conversation using the following questions:

- Why do you think creation started with light?
- According to the story, how did these things come to be?
- If you were creating a world, what would you start with?
- We are going to continue this story in the next session. What things do you think God might create next?

Display the pictures along with their corresponding Resource Pages somewhere you can add additional pictures in sessions 2, 3, and 4.



FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

TIMES AND SEASONS



Form small groups of three or four children, or work together as one group. Give each group paper and a pencil. In each group have a volunteer be a recorder, or assist with writing as needed. Tell the children that you will give them 3 minutes to brainstorm and write down the things that all the people in the group do almost every day.

Then have the groups turn over their papers. On the other side, have them write the things that everyone in their group does every year. Suggest that they may want to think in general ideas rather than specific, such as “go on vacation” rather than “go to the beach” or “go to Gulf Shores.” Again, give the groups 3 minutes to complete this task.

Invite one group to read aloud their daily list, and have the other groups raise their hands if they had similar ideas. Ask the groups to share any things their group did daily that were not mentioned. Then do the same for the yearly ideas. Affirm everyone’s work.

Recall that the children read passages from Genesis 1 and drew pictures about light and darkness, the sun, moon, and stars. Comment that those elements of creation in turn create time and seasons. Tell the children that another Bible passage that they will hear today is about time; it is from the book of Ecclesiastes. Explain that it’s not about time on a clock or the days of the week, but rather times in our lives that we experience certain things.

Have the children keep their lists in front of them while you read aloud Ecclesiastes 3:1–8. After you read each couplet that starts with “A time for . . .” stop and ask children if anything on their list fits with that particular phrase. For example, if you say “A time to throw away stones and a time to gather stones together,” wonder if anyone has something on their list that feels like a time of getting rid of things or gathering together. Suggest that they may need to use their imaginations a bit and think not so much of stones but of the actions of throwing away and gathering. If no one has an answer to a particular *time for*, ask children to name something they might do that fits into that category.

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- Paper
 - Pencils
 - Timer
 - Bible



FINDING THE PRACTICE ALL AROUND US

Choose one or both options.

- Internet-connected device
- Rhythm instruments
- Scarves and/or ribbons for dancing

DANCE AND TURN



Recall with the children that the story of God creating the world began with day and night, which also created time and seasons. Tell the children that there is a song that tells about different purposes for time, such as a time for work and a time for play, a time to sleep and a time to wake. Invite the children to listen for the different times mentioned in the song as you show the YouTube video “Dan Zanes & Elizabeth Mitchell with You Are My Flower—Turn! Turn! Turn!” (bit.ly/FMTurnTurnTurn, 4:25).

After the video, ask the children the following questions:

- ✦ What were some of the different kinds of time you heard in the song?
- ✦ What times are your favorite times, even ones not mentioned?
- ✦ Why do you think the writer of this song added the words “Turn, turn, turn”? (*possibly related to the turning of the earth, creating time and seasons*)

Show the video again and invite the children to dance or play a rhythm instrument along with the song. Tell them that it is a time to dance and a time to make music.

- Outside In* by Deborah Underwood (Clarion Books, 2020) or internet-connected device

APPRECIATING THE WORLD AROUND US



Ask the children who prefers being outside and who prefers being inside by raising their hands for each option. Invite volunteers to say what it is they like about their choice. Wonder how someone can be inside when they are out and then how the outside can be in. Tell the children that they are going to hear a story about God’s world around us even when we are inside.

Read aloud *Outside In* by Deborah Underwood or show the YouTube video “Outside In Read Aloud—A Great Kids Picture Book about How Nature Affects Our Everyday Lives” (bit.ly/FMOutsideIn, 4:28). After the story, engage the children in conversation using the following questions:

- ✦ What part of the story did you like best?
- ✦ When have you noticed and appreciated the outside when you are inside?
- ✦ What is another way, that wasn’t mentioned, of appreciating God’s creation outside when you are inside?



PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

SEASON STATIONS



Choose one or more options of the seasonal crafts described below. If you choose multiple options, set them up as stations and invite the children to move between the stations as they choose. Before the children move to stations, walk them through each station and describe what they will do there. Tell the children that they will be making art pieces to represent seasons and then decorate your space with them.

WINTER SNOW TREES

Set up two tables in an L-shape for this station, one with the paint supplies and one with the paper supplies. Place Resource Page 3 and your sample of a winter snow tree where the tables meet.

Tell the children that they will make a winter snow tree at this station. Explain that they can make their tree with paint or paper and then use their fingertips or a cotton swab to make the snow. Have an adult helper ready to assist children with reading directions, tracing, and cutting, as necessary.

Display the winter snow trees in one area of your room to remember the season of winter. While displaying the pictures, ask the children what some of their favorite things about winter are. Encourage them to think of things from God's creation, or connected to it. For example, someone may like playing hockey on ice, or another may like hot chocolate made with milk from a cow and cocoa from a tree.

SUMMER FLOWERS

Set up supplies for making flowers at a table. Place Resource Page 4 and a sample flower on the table.

Tell the children that they will make a summer flower, or bouquet of flowers, at this station. Have an adult helper ready to assist children with reading directions and bending pipe cleaners, as necessary.

Display the flowers in one area of your room to remember the season of summer. While displaying the pictures, ask the children what some of their favorite things about summer are. Encourage them to think of things from God's creation or connected to it. For example, someone may like swimming in cool water or eating ice cream: milk and cream from cows, sugar from sugar cane plants, and so forth.

AUTUMN FALLING LEAVES

Set up supplies for making autumn leaves at a table. Place Resource Page 5 and a sample picture on the table.

Tell the children that they will make a picture of falling leaves during the autumn at this station. Have an adult helper ready to assist children with reading directions and cutting as necessary.

Display the pictures in one area of your room to remember the season of autumn. While displaying the pictures, ask the children what some of their favorite things about autumn are. Encourage them to think of things from God's creation or connected to it. For example, someone may like carving pumpkins, or another may like wearing warm sweaters made from cotton or the wool from sheep.

SPRING BUTTERFLIES

Cover a table and set up supplies for making spring butterflies at a table. Place Resource Page 6 and a sample picture on the table.

Tell the children that they will make coffee filter butterflies that they might see in the springtime at this station. Have an adult helper ready to assist children with reading directions and bending pipe cleaners as necessary.

Display the butterflies in one area of your room to remember the season of spring. While displaying the butterflies, ask the children what some of their favorite things about spring are. Encourage them to think of things from God's creation or connected to it. For example, someone may like rain puddles, or another may like the end of school and the opportunity to be outdoors.

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- Adult helper (optional)
 - Resource Page 3
 - Paint shirts
 - Table covering
 - Blue construction paper
 - Black tempera paint
 - White tempera paint
 - Small plates
 - Large paintbrushes
 - Cotton swabs
 - Hand wipes
 - Black construction paper
 - White crayons
 - Scissors

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- Adult helper (optional)
 - Resource Page 4
 - Straws
 - Pipe cleaners, green and a variety of colors
 - Scissors
 - Tacky glue
 - Paper cupcake liners

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- Adult helper (optional)
 - Resource Page 5
 - Tan construction paper
 - Brown markers
 - Red, yellow, and orange tissue paper
 - Scissors
 - Glue sticks

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- Adult helper (optional)
 - Resource Page 6
 - Table covering
 - Paper towels
 - Round, fluted coffee filters
 - Washable markers
 - Pipe cleaners
 - Spray bottles with water
 - Pencils
 - Hair dryer (optional)



FOLLOWING JESUS

SHARING APPRECIATION



Have the children form a circle. Tell them that for a closing prayer, they will go around the circle and take turns naming one thing they appreciate about God’s creation that starts with the first letter of their first name. Start the prayer by saying, “Dear God, we thank you for [*name your item*],” and then invite the child on your left to continue. Close the prayer by saying, “We know you are with us always. Help us to appreciate you and know you in all we do. Amen.”



When God began to create the heavens and the earth, the earth was complete chaos, and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. And God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness [God] called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

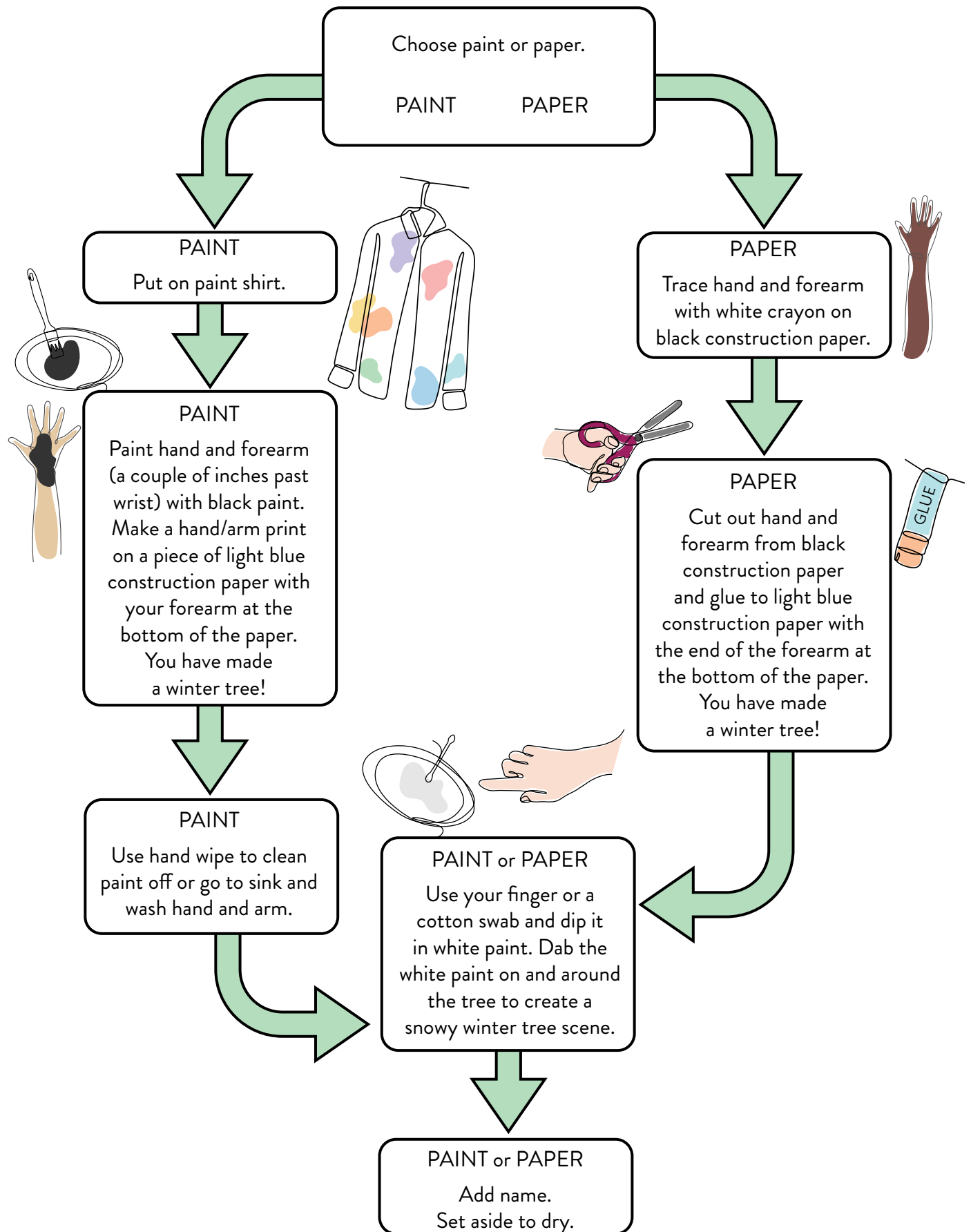
—Genesis 1:1–5



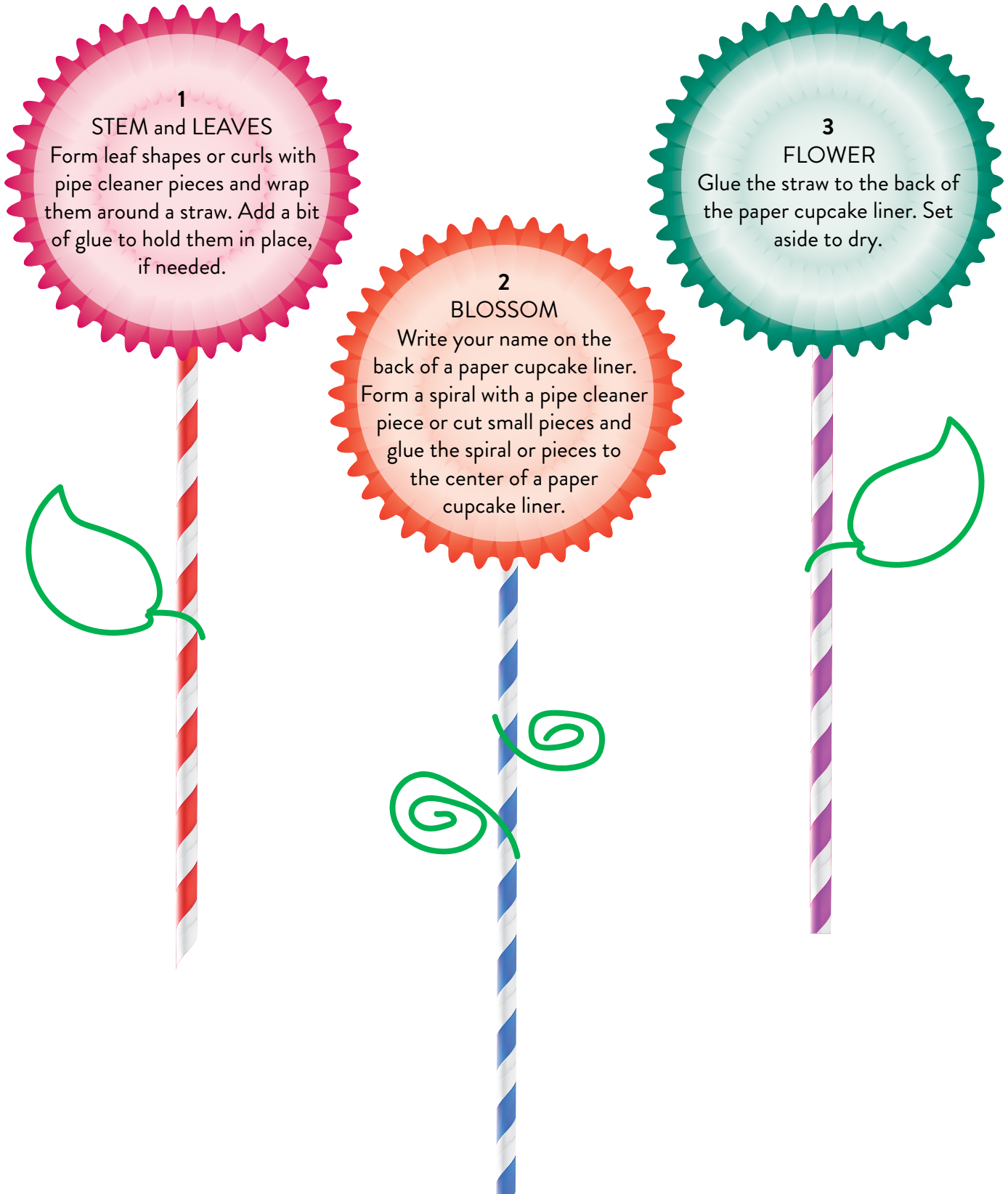
And God said, “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

—Genesis 1:14–19

Winter Snow Trees



Summer Flowers



Autumn Falling Leaves



Spring Butterflies

