

Hymns to Sing Praise

Part 5 of a curriculum series
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He's Got the Whole World in His Hands

Author: Kadir Nelson

Illustrator: Kadir Nelson

Publisher: Dial Books for Young Readers

ISBN: 9780803728509

Genesis 1-2; Psalm 24:1; Ephesians 5: 18b-20

Main Idea:

Psalm 24:1 declares, "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it." This spiritual celebrates this declaration in ALL CAPS! As God's creatures, we are connected one with another through all of time and space. As children of God, we are created to be in relationship with our Creator AND with each other.

Objectives:

Through this lesson the students will have the opportunity to...

- Create paper dolls to celebrate our connections as the family of God
- Celebrate people around the world
- Learn and sing the hymn
- Create a unique art piece to celebrate being a child of God

Something to Remember:

"The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it."
Psalm 24:1

Lesson Quick View

We GATHER as the people of God

- Make paper dolls to create families then tape all together to create one giant family of God
- Worship together with Psalm 24:1, Ephesians 5:18b-20 and this hymn

We HEAR God's Word

- Read *He's Got the Whole World in His Hands* by Kadir Nelson
- Read together Ephesians 5:18b-20
- Look at photos of earth taken from outer space and discuss our interconnectedness as God's creation

We RESPOND creatively

- Create unique works of art using handprints and/or thumbprints

We DEPART to serve

- Pray together in a circle prayer
- Close with a "high five" benediction

Additional enrichment activities are provided on the last page of this lesson plan.

You Will Need

Gather

- World map, globe
- Pictures of people from around the world
- Color copy paper, scissors, clear tape
- Worship Center items—green/blue cloth, candle, matches, snuffer, Bible
- Audio recording of this hymn

Hear

- Bibles
- Book, - *He's Got the Whole World in His Hands* by Kadir Nelson
- Printed pictures of earth taken from outer space

Respond

- Books/resource pages showing pictures drawn from handprints/thumbprints (optional)
- Ink pads and/or paint saturated sponges
- Copy paper, construction paper
- Scissors, glue/tape
- Paper towels, wet wipes for clean up

Depart

- none

Special Note to Leaders

You may find it helpful to read the book review of this book as part of your planning for this session.

Storypath: Connecting Children's Literature With Our Faith Story is part of the Union Presbyterian Seminary Library website offering resources for parents, educators, and pastors.

This book review can be found at

<http://storypath.upsem.edu/reviews/book-reviews-a-z>

Suggested Audience

- Preschool - Grade 5
- Multiage - preschool-elementary
- Intergenerational

Suggested Settings

- Mid-week gathering
- Summer Sunday School
- Family retreat/workshop
- VBS



We GATHER as the people of God

You Will Need

Nametags

Greet everyone by name as they arrive and welcome them to the session. If appropriate in your setting, give each person a name tag to encourage everyone to learn each other's names. Introduce newcomers to the rest of the group and invite everyone to make them feel welcome.

You Will Need

- World map, globe
- Pictures of people from around the world

Celebrating the World

Before the session begins, find and display a world map, a globe, and pictures of people (all ages) from around the world. Surround the room with these items to give a sense of the vastness of God's world that is filled with people.



You Will Need

- Thin copy paper in a variety of colors
- Patterns of people
- Pencils, scissors, clear tape

Paper Doll Families

As the children arrive, invite them to make a string of paper dolls to represent their own nuclear family. If time permits, children could add extended members of their family.

As children complete their own family string of paper dolls, invite them to join their family with another family until you have one GIANT string of paper dolls! Display these with the world map/globe to show our connectedness in God's world.



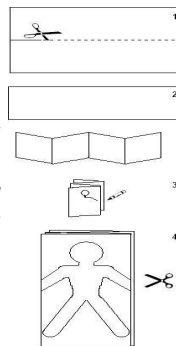
Paper Doll Option A:

Provide cardboard patterns of simple male/female shapes for children to trace and cut out. Then the different "people" can be taped together to create a family.

Paper Doll Option B:

Teach the children how to fold and cut paper dolls using an "old-fashioned method."

There are many versions of instructions for making paper dolls on the internet. Choose one that works for your setting and enjoy teaching this American Folk Art to a new generation!



Instructions:

1. Fold a piece of paper in half lengthwise.
2. Fold it into quarters accordion (pleated) style.
3. Draw a figure of a person on the top layer.
Be sure that the arms extend beyond the edge of the folds.
4. Cut the figure out and unfold. You will get a chain of dolls holding hands.

Opening Worship

When most or all of the children have arrived and everyone has had an opportunity to create their paper doll families and join them into one giant family, gather everyone together around the worship center you have created.

Invite everyone to join you in worship as you **light the Christ candle** saying, "Jesus says, 'I am the Light of the World. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.'" (John 8:12)

Read Psalm 24:1 & Ephesians 5: 18b-20

Teach the hymn *He's Got the Whole World in His Hands.* Sing it together.

NOTE ABOUT THIS HYMN: While the hymn in its original form uses the male pronouns, you can easily "contemporize" it by replacing the pronouns with "God."

Invite the group to join you as you pray the following prayer or one of your choosing:

Dear God of all creation, we praise you for the wonder and majesty of your world. Thank you for the gift of life and the gift of relationships. Help us to live as your family with love and care for all your creation. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen."

Close your opening worship time by extinguishing the Christ candle as you say, "The Light that was in one place, is now in every place."

You Will Need

Worship Center:

- Blue/Green cloth
- Christ candle
- Matches & Snuffer
- Bible
- Audio recording of hymn

Before the Session

Set up the worship center in a location where everyone can make a circle around it. A small table or piano bench works great.



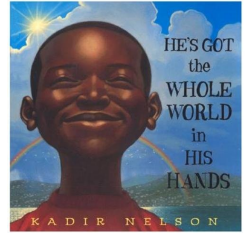
We HEAR God's Word

He's Got the Whole World in His Hands

Read the book, *He's Got the Whole World in His Hands* by Kadir Nelson. Note the way that Nelson has used his own family as models for the illustrations.

Talk with the group about the history of this traditional African-American spiritual. It was first published in the paperbound hymnal *Spirituals Triumphant, Old and New* in 1927 and has been recorded and sung by many throughout the years. Since the late 1950's, this hymn has been published in over 40 hymnals.

While the original version (and many subsequent versions) was written in language that reflected God as male, it would be very appropriate (and in keeping with the tradition) to re-write the verses without pronouns. Using the name "God" in place of a pronoun keeps our reverence for our Creator God without humanizing our Supreme Maker. Depending on the age of your group and your setting, you may want to elaborate further on how they feel about God as a "he" versus God as "God."



You Will Need

- A copy of the book *He's Got the Whole World in His Hands* by Kadir Nelson

You Will Need

- Bible

Genesis 1-2

Open your Bible and read selected verses from Genesis 1-2. Connect the verses that you read with the pictures in the book.

The World from God's View



Earth From Space - Apollo 17
NASA Langley Research Center
12/7/1972
Image # EL-1996-00155

Show the children pictures of earth that have been taken from outer space. (*space.com has some excellent photos taken by astronauts*) Talk about how God might see the world. What does seeing the world from God's view say to us about how we connect with God's creation and each other? How can we demonstrate our connectedness through our actions?

Brainstorm together ways that our actions speak louder than our words. In the way we live, money we spend, care for our earth, and show respect and care for those in our community and world.

You Will Need

- Pictures of earth taken from outer space



We RESPOND creatively

Handprint Art

Invite the children to celebrate their connections with each other by creating a piece of art using a handprint from each member of the group.

Handprints can be made using a variety of options:

- Giant inkpads containing washable ink - press hand firmly on pad, lift, press hand down firmly on paper to create print.
- Sponges saturated in washable paint - press hand lightly on sponge, lift, press hand lightly on paper towel to remove excess paint then press hand down on paper.
- Paintbrush - paint hand using a paintbrush then press down on paper
- Paper cutouts - trace hand on paper, cut out, tape/glue onto large piece of paper to create a picture.

Practice with a variety of techniques before you begin to choose the best one for your group.

Let the group decide what they would like to create - a heart, a circle of hands, etc.



You Will Need

- Washable ink pads in a variety of colors
- Sponges saturated in washable paint
- Paintbrushes
- Wet wipes
- Paper
- Scissors
- Tape/glue

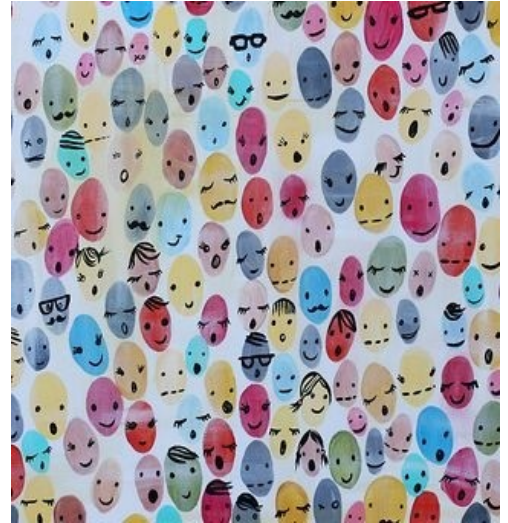
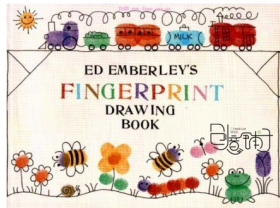
You Will Need

- Washable ink pads
- Thin markers
- Paper
- Wet wipes

Thumbprint Drawings

One of the most amazing things about God's creation of humans is that each one of us is different. While we may have similar characteristics in outward appearance, we are each uniquely different. One distinctive difference is in our fingerprints. Used for identification in many arenas, each fingerprint is different.

Using instructions from a book, or ones of your own, invite the children to create drawings using their own thumbprint to celebrate their uniqueness as a Child of God.

**We DEPART to serve****Closing Circle Prayer**

Join hands in a circle for a closing time of prayer.

As the leader, begin with a simple prayer of thanks to God for God's amazing world. When you finish your prayer, squeeze the hand of the person to your left and "pass the opportunity to pray aloud" to the next person. Assure the children that if they do not wish to pray aloud, they can simply "pass the opportunity" along by squeezing the hand of the person to their left. When everyone has had a chance to pray and your right hand has been squeezed, simply end the prayer time with a verbal "amen."

Benediction

Sing together one or more verses of the hymn and send each other out into the world with a "high five!"

Expanding the Lesson

Looking for ways to turn this one-hour session into a mini retreat or expanded session?

Here are some enrichment activities for you to consider as you plan for your unique time frame and group dynamics.

Gather

- Make PRAYER CUBES using pictures of people from around the world. Glue/tape pictures of people to the sides of a square mug box. Use pictures of people in your church, family, community, or world. Pray for these people each day.

**Hear**

- Research the history of African American spirituals and share this history with the group.
- Use the tradition of this spiritual as inspiration and create your own verses to add to the ones that have been handed down through the generations.

Respond

- Create a HANDPRINT SCARF for someone who could use a hug (an older person, someone who is sick, a family moving away, etc.)

Cut scarf strips from fleece material. Trace handprints on a fusible backing such as "wonder under" and iron on the back side of brightly color fabric. Cut out handprints, peel off backing paper and iron on scarf strip.

