

The Mountains Are Calling

Trinity Sunday speaks to the abiding presence of the Trinity, told through God's love for creation. In this Earth-centred framework, humans are called to a dual responsibility of care and wonder. In these readings, we see the overriding call to love Earth as God loves it and to see God's love and abiding presence in it. "The mountains are calling, and I must go," wrote American naturalist John Muir. Read together, today's readings echo this call, highlighting the dynamic, trinitarian presence of God who delights in nature's order and patterns and beckons to us through nature.

Focus scripture: Genesis 1:1—2:4a

Genesis 1:1-2:4a shows God creating a beautiful and intricate order out of a formless void. God speaks the world into being. God as breath, or spirit, carries out the spoken plans. Later, the memory of God as human flesh inspires Paul's community toward restoration and peace.

In Genesis, days come and go steadily as God creates: "and there was evening, and there was morning," one reads six times, until the seventh day of rest. This passage stresses that the intricate order of nature can give daily comfort and signs of God's active and abiding love of creation.

What of humans in this created order? Many, today, interpret this passage as giving humans license for earthly domination, but a closer reading shows otherwise. God creates humans last, putting off their creation until an entire world of beauty already exists. The command for humans to have "dominion" might, to our ears, conjure ideas of domination over the land, but this interpretation is actually "peculiarly modern." Pre-Enlightenment era interpretations of this text assumed that "total control obviously belonged to God alone" (Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology*, 6). Dominion does not refer to limitless power, but to the steadfast care of a sovereign or caretaker for a domain or common home.

Filled with wonder, the psalmist in **Psalms 8** asks, "what are human beings that you are mindful of them?" (v. 4). The psalm ends with a grand exclamation of wonder—"O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth" (v. 9). Again, this passage highlights that humans exist not for dominance, but for active wonder, honouring God through the earth.

This love, coupled with the repeated emphasis on harmony and order in creation in Genesis 1, finds an echo in 2 Corinthians's discussion of human relations.

2 Corinthians 13:11-13 calls for harmony between people: "Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace" (v. 11). In other words, the true restoration of Earth goes hand in hand with a restoration of peaceful human relations. Through restorative actions, writes Paul, "the God of Love and Peace will be with you," highlighting again God's abiding presence that appears in the very first sentences of the Bible.

Matthew 28:16-20 The gospel of Matthew concludes with an invitation to humans to invoke Trinity's power across the world through baptism, coupled with a dramatic reminder of God's abiding presence: "and remember, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (v. 20). The dynamic, reliable presence of the Trinity endlessly invites humans to care for one another and the earth with wonder and humility.


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Trinity Sunday is a reminder to see God's word, presence, and active and redeeming love in Creation. In response, we are called to care for creation as humble servants and admirers. What kind of attention and service can you give to Earth? How does God speak to you through Earth and its creatures?



Focus scripture Genesis 1:1—2:4a

Additional scriptures
Psalms 8
2 Corinthians 13:11-13
Matthew 28:16-20

 *Seasons of the Spirit*
is based on semi-
continuous readings of the
Revised Common Lectionary.

God of abiding and active peace, guide us to sustained attention and wonder toward the bounty and rhythms of Earth. Help us to hear your voice and see your name written across this community of life, and to serve your creatures with love. Amen.

Lection Connection
links current events with this week's scriptures. Go to www.seasonsonline.ca and click on the link.

The Focus for Ages 5–12

Their curiosity about nature and creation is an interest that spans the ages of childhood. Children enjoy visiting zoos and aquariums. Along with this natural interest comes a sincere concern for how people care for creation. The increased emphasis on environmental awareness at school means that many of them will know about the delicate balance of nature and their place in it, and what we need to do to survive on this planet.

Older children in this age group often ask the “how” and “why” questions that help them make sense of the world around them and may question the story of a world that was created

in seven days. This session provides the opportunity to explain that this story is not meant to be a scientific account of creation. Children will explore why the story was included in the Bible, and examine what it helps them to know about God and creation.

Most children grow up with a healthy self-image and this week’s session can encourage children to acknowledge that they are included in God’s creation, a creation God describes as “very good” in the account in Genesis. Pray that children will hear in the story a confirmation of themselves and a call to care for God’s creation.

Prepare

Before the session

- ❑ Read and prayerfully reflect on this week’s focus scripture, Genesis 1:1—2:4a, and [biblical background](#) material (p. 3).
- ❑ Review “[About this Pentecost 1](#)” (p. 1) and “[This Pentecost 1 for Ages 5–12](#)” (p. 2).
- ❑ Set worship space with white cloth; bring candle and Bible with bookmark placed in focus passage.
- ❑ Bring [basic supply kit](#) (p. 2) and, if possible, *Seasons Songbook* (Volume 9), *Seasons Music CD* (Volume 9), and CD or MP3 player; downloadable sheet music and MP3 recordings are available at www.seasonsonline.ca.

Gather

- ❑ Bring song “Come, Holy Spirit” (p. 12 in *Seasons Songbook*, Vol. 9; #13 on *Seasons Music CD*, Vol. 9).
- ❑ Bring a paper bag containing a variety of items from nature.

Engage

- ❑ Bring resource sheet “[Good, Very Good,](#)” white poster board, blue and brown strips of construction paper, sun and moon shapes cut from yellow construction paper, star stickers, and copies of [child shape](#) (p. 108).
- ❑ **Mime group:** no additional materials needed.

- ❑ **Rap group:** copies of resource sheet “[Creation Rap](#)”

Respond

Choose one or more of the following activities and bring materials to set up the chosen zones.

- ❑ **Outreach zone:** construction paper, one copy of resource sheet “[Creation Cards](#)”; cut cards apart.
- ❑ **Art zone:** variety of art supplies, types of paper, glitter, craft materials.
- ❑ **Cooperative zone:** no additional materials needed.
- ❑ **Game zone:** two copies of resource sheet “[Creation Cards](#)”; copy onto heavy stock paper and cut apart.
- ❑ **Craft zone:** used nature magazines, sheets of poster board cut into quarters

Bless

- ❑ Bring, if possible, the song “As Long As We Follow/*Na Nzela Na Lola*” (p. 25 in *Seasons Songbook*, Vol. 9; #17 on *Seasons Music CD*, Vol. 9).
- ❑ Bring copies of resource sheet “[Letter for Families](#)” (p. 107).



June 7, 2020

The Mountains Are Calling

Scripture

Genesis 1:1—2:4a

FOCUS To celebrate that we are part of God's good creation

Gather

Welcome the children and explain that today we begin a new season in the church year called the Season after Pentecost. This first Sunday is called Trinity Sunday, a day when we celebrate the different ways we experience God in and around us. Introduce any newcomers to the group.

Opening ritual

Gather in the worship space and point out the white cloth, showing that this is a special Sunday. Invite a volunteer to light the candle as you say:

This candle reminds us
of God's presence with us.
In this space, we hear stories
about God and God's people.
(Place Bible beside candle.)

In this space, we know God's Spirit
is with us.

Sing or listen to, if possible, the song "Come, Holy Spirit" (p. 12 in *Seasons Songbook*, Vol. 9; #13 on *Seasons Music CD*, Vol. 9).

Pray (Invite children to repeat each line after you.)

Loving God,
thank you for this place
where we can learn and share.
May we be open to the work
of your Holy Spirit. Amen.

Receive the offering. Extinguish the candle to
signal that the opening ritual has ended.

Connecting with the focus

Hold the bag with the items from nature and invite children to take turns reaching in with their hand and trying to identify one of the items without looking at it. For each correct answer remove that item and place in the worship space. Continue until all items have been identified. Explain that the Bible story for this week is about God's creation.

Engage

Preparing for the story

Invite a child to bring the Bible from the worship area and use the bookmark to open it to the book of Genesis, noticing that this is the first book in the Bible. Explain that the word "genesis" means beginning. The Bible begins with the book of Genesis and the first chapters in the book have stories about the beginning of the world.

The Bible story

Use the resource sheet "[Good, Very Good](#)" to present the story based on **Genesis 1:1—2:4a**, invit-

ing children to participate as indicated. Distribute child shapes (from resource sheet "[Patterns](#)," p. 108) for children to decorate as themselves and add to the poster created during the story.

Wondering questions Use some or all of the following questions to wonder together:

- **In this story why do you think God keeps saying, "That's good"?**
- **What is one of your favourite parts of creation? Why?**
- **What does this story tell us about God?**

The Bible story and us – Exploring the story further

(To enable the children to explore the scripture reading further, according to their interests and abilities, explain the two options and have each child select one.)

Mime group This group will have the opportunity to celebrate the variety in God's creation by miming different parts, animate and inanimate. Review the parts of creation mentioned on the resource sheet "Good, Very Good" and invite children to choose one of these items to mime for the rest of the group.

As each item is guessed, talk together about what is good about that part of creation.

Rap group This group will have the opportunity to recall the story through a participatory chant. Distribute copies of the resource sheet "Creation Rap" and review together, learning the response. Establish a rhythm by clapping hands or slapping thighs and lead the group in saying the chant.

Reporting Invite the mime group to share some of their mimed actions for the other group to guess and invite the rap group to lead the rest of the children in the chant.

Respond

Invite the children to select a zone and work with the materials there.

❑ Outreach zone: Caring for creation

Knowing that God called creation good encourages us to care for creation. Place a set of cards from the resource sheet "Creation Cards" face down in the middle of the group. Invite children to take turns choosing a card and naming ways that they could care for that part of creation. *Option:* make a list of possible "creation service" projects for the group to engage in.



❑ Art zone: Art response

The biblical story of creation is full of beautiful visual images. Invite children to choose a day of creation to illustrate and use a variety of art and craft materials to illustrate the things created on the chosen day. Encourage them to incorporate the words "good" and "very good" into their designs.

❑ Cooperative zone: Storytelling

(for older children) Share the sections of the Genesis story of creation among the group and invite children to re-tell the story of each day in their own words. Encourage them to include information about where they live (for example, adding the name of their country to verse 9, listing some



indigenous plants and animals in verses 11, 20, and 24, or naming constellations in your night sky in verse 14). Have them take turns retelling each part of the story from their own perspectives.

❑ Game zone: Matching game

(for younger children) Invite children to remember some of the different parts of God's good creation by finding matching cards. Mix the two sets of cards from the resource sheet "Creation Cards" and arrange face down in rows. Ask the group to decide on the rules for playing the game. Each time a child makes a match remove that pair from the game as everyone says, "God said, That's good!" Provide blank cards for children to draw more pairs to add to the game.

❑ Craft zone: Creation collages

God included a wide variety of creatures, plants, and elements in the creation of the world. Distribute pieces of poster board and magazines and invite children to create individual collages that include pictures of as many different parts of creation as they can find. Then display all of the collages together to form a giant image of God's creation, adding a title such as "That's Good!"

Bless

Gather around the worship area and light the candle again.

Sing or listen to, if possible, the song “As Long As We Follow/*Na Nzela Na Lola*” (p. 25 in *Seasons Songbook*, Vol. 9; #17 on *Seasons Music CD*, Vol. 9).

Pray Invite children to repeat each line after you:

Creating God, we thank you

for this beautiful world

that we can enjoy.

Help us as we look after it. Amen.

Blessing Offer the following blessing: “(Name), you are a part of God’s good creation.”

Distribute copies of the “[Letter to Families](#)” (p. 107).

Reflect

How did the children express their appreciation for the wonders and beauties of God’s creation? In what ways can you encourage them to delight in and care for creation?



Good, Very Good

based on Genesis 1:1—2:4a

Movement and interaction within a story have the potential to interrupt the flow. Having supplies organized and preparing the children for involvement before the story begins keeps the focus on the story.

(Have the white paper, strips of blue and brown paper, sun and moon construction paper shapes, star stickers, glue stick, and markers nearby. Explain that whenever you say, "And God said," the children are invited to respond, "That's good.")

At the beginning of time, there wasn't anything... except God *(pause)*. So God created. The first thing God created was light. *(Put the large sheet of white paper on the floor.)*

The next thing God made was the sky. *(Invite a child to glue a strip of blue paper at the top of the white paper.)*

Then God created land and sea. *(Invite a child to glue brown paper along the bottom of the white paper and another child to glue blue paper over a section of the brown paper.)*

And God said,
"That's good."

Still, God kept creating... grass, flowers, bushes, trees... *(Invite children to draw some of these elements on the poster.)*

And God said,
"That's good."

After all that, God created the sun, the moon, and the stars. *(Invite one child to glue the sun on one side of the poster and another child to glue the moon on the other side. Give each child a star sticker to place on the sky of the poster.)*

Now there could be day and night.

And God said,
"That's good."

Next God created fish and other creatures to live in the water and all sorts of birds to fly in the air. *(Invite children to draw some of these elements on the poster.)*

And God said,
"That's good."

Then God created all sorts of animals on the land. *(Invite children to draw some of these elements on the poster.)*

And God said,
"That's good."

Now the world was ready, and God created people. *(Gesture your hands in a big sweeping motion to include all of the children.)*

Now God looked at creation, and said,
"That's good."
"That's very good."



Creation Rap

In the beginning there wasn't much to see.
God dreamed the world and all that it could be.
God made the light and called it day,
and the dark was made in the very same way.

Response: And it was good, good, very, very good!

God made the water, the earth, and sand.
God made the sky above the land.
God put in trees and fruit with seeds,
all sorts of plants that a new world needs.

Response: And it was good, good, very, very good!

Then God sprinkled stars in the sky at night
to help tell the time and give a little light.
The sun came up and the daylight shone.
The moon took a turn when the sun was gone.

Response: And it was good, good, very, very good!

Then the sea came alive when the fish were made.
And the sky filled with birds and the creatures came.
They came creeping, crawling, along the earth.
It was all so good when the earth had its birth.

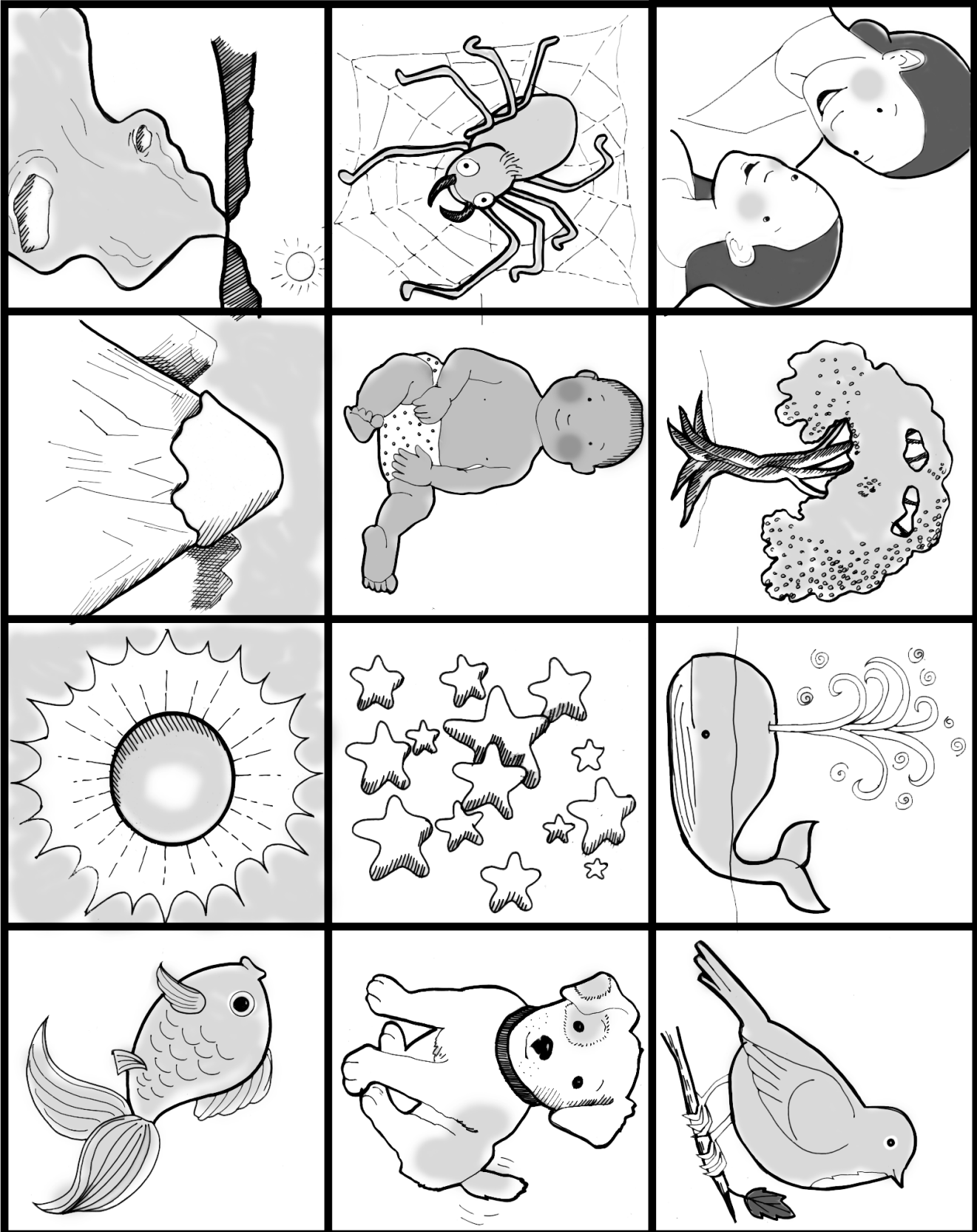
Response: And it was good, good, very, very good!

Then God sat back and thought, "Hang on!
I need something more – I need someone
to help look after the birds and trees."
Then God created you and me.

Response: And it was good, good, very, very good!



creation cards



Letter to Families

Welcome to the *Season after Pentecost*, the longest season of the church year, which begins on June 7, the week after Pentecost, and will end on the Sunday before Advent. Traditionally this season is considered to be a time of learning and growth in the life of the church as we explore what it means to follow God faithfully day by day.

This season begins with a story about the creation of the world from the first two chapters of Genesis. The following three weeks the children will explore some of Jesus' teachings from the gospel of Matthew.

The rest of the season focuses on some foundational stories of our faith. From the book of Genesis the children will hear the stories of Isaac and Rebekah (chapter 24), of their sons Jacob and Esau (chapter 25 and 28), of Jacob and his wives Leah and Rachel (chapter 29), and of Jacob's son Joseph and his brothers (chapters 32 and 37). The season ends with two stories about Moses from chapters 1 and 3 of the book of Exodus.

We encourage you and your child to follow these stories at home as they unfold week by week, perhaps reading from a book of children's Bible stories (see some suggestions below). Sometimes the lectionary (a series of weekly scripture readings) will skip over several chapters of the story from one Sunday to the next, so it can be helpful for you to read those missing parts together.

One question that can be asked this season is, "What does it mean to live in God's way?" By sharing your experiences you can help your child learn what it means to follow God in her or his everyday life. Take time to discuss how you choose to follow God's ways at home, in the community, or at work. Talk about the experiences that encourage you. Also talk about the times you have found it difficult to live in God's ways, and where you find strength and hope to live faithfully. Share with them the places and times where you see signs of God's presence. Talk about those who have shown you what it means to live faithfully. Discussing these topics helps children know that your faith is important to you.

During this season we will pray weekly for your child. We hope that you and your child will also pray for us and for our group. May this Season after Pentecost be one of growth and discovery for you and your child.

Blessings,

Suggested children's Bibles for using at home: For young children, *Family Story Bible* or *The Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*. For older children, *Read, Wonder, Listen: Stories from the Bible for Young Readers*. Both are available from the publisher of *Seasons of the Spirit* at www.woodlakebooks.com. Also available is the book *A Creation Story* by Carolyn Pogue to help children explore the stories of creation in the book of Genesis. Other books from Wood Lake Publishing which can help children explore life and faith issues: *Is That Story True* and *Jesse's Surprise Gift* by Laura Alary and *The Alligator in Naomi's Pillow* by David Giuliano.

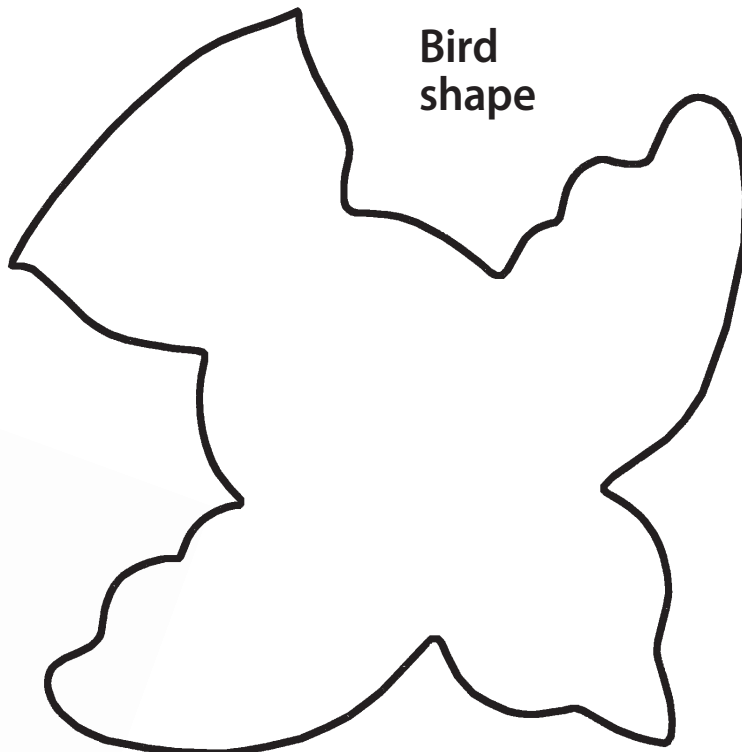


Patterns

Hand shape



Bird shape



Child shape



Flower shape

