

## Spiritual Maturity Part 6: Sweetgrass Teachings (with Scott Baker)

### Discussion Guide – October 19 2025

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. God saw that the light was good.

Then God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so. God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so. The land produced vegetation... and God saw that it was good.

And God said, “Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night... God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God saw that it was good.”

And God said, “Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth.” So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing... and God saw that it was good.

And God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.” And it was so. God saw that it was good.

Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, in our likeness.”

So God created humankind in his own image,  
in the image of God he created them;  
male and female he created them.

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. (Genesis 1 – select verses)

### Summary of Message

As the congregation passed around braids of sweetgrass to smell and hold, Scott shared that such teachings are meant to be *experienced* as well as spoken. The fragrance, colour, and texture of the plant each hold lessons: sweetness that lifts the spirit, a purple base that symbolizes love, and a strand with both a rough and shiny side — a reminder that people, too, have both sides.

Linking this to the Creation story in Genesis 1, we were reminded that God called all things *good* (*tov*), and that humankind, made in God’s image, was called *very good* (*tov tov*). That goodness is not lost; it’s part of who we are.

Grassroots joined in an embodied exercise using Sweetgrass Cards: each card had a “rough” word (like *lazy* or *bossy*) on one side and a “shiny” truth (like *relaxed* or *leader*) on the other. By standing on a rough word and then turning it over, participants practiced re-seeing themselves — and later, others — through the lens of kindness and compassion.

### Discussion Questions

1. How does the Sweetgrass Cards exercise help us see ourselves — and others — the way God might see us? Can you remember a time when someone recognized your “shiny side” before you did?
2. What does it mean that God called creation “good” and humanity “very good”? How might living from that belief shape the way we respond to others?
3. The Anishinaabe teaching calls sweetgrass “kindness medicine.” What helps you return to kindness when you feel impatient, angry, or tired?
4. How can Christians receive teachings like these in a way that honours both faith traditions? What might the church gain from learning about kindness through another lens?
5. Which comes more naturally — seeing your own goodness, or seeing someone else’s? What small daily practice might help you notice the “shiny side” more often?