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OF GOD'S WORD
COME ALIVE!**

Urban Ministries, Inc. Christian Education Curriculum Sampler

Based on the International Uniform Lesson Series (IULS)

Featuring:

Preschool Playhouse® (Ages 2-5) • Primary Street® (Ages 6-8)
Juniorway® (Ages 9-11) • J.A.M. (Jesus And Me)® (Ages 12-14) • Inteen® (Ages 15-17)
Urban Faith® (Ages 18-35) • Direction® (Ages 36+)

GREAT FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL, SMALL GROUPS, FAMILY DEVOTION, AND PERSONAL STUDY



Who We Are

UMI (Urban Ministries, Inc.) is the largest independent, African American-owned and -operated Christian media company. We publish Christian Education resources, including Bible studies, Sunday School and Vacation Bible School curriculum, books, movies, and websites designed for African American churches and individuals seeking a Christ-centered perspective on faith and life issues.

Our Mission

We are called of God to create, produce, and distribute quality Christian education products; to deliver exemplary customer service; and to provide quality Christian educational services, which will empower God's people, especially within the Black community, to evangelize, disciple, and equip people for serving Christ, His kingdom, and church.



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To order: Call UMI at (800) 860-8642, visit our website at www.urbanministries.com, or contact your local bookstore.

Christian Education Curriculum Sampler



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Message from the Founder

Dear Valued Customers,

Thank you for your interest in and support of UMI and our products over the years. We compiled this sampler to feature lessons from each of our seven Christian Education quarterlies to highlight how our curriculum addresses the ever-growing need for all ages to learn the Word of God and apply it in our walks of faith. UMI continues to follow the International Uniform Lesson Series (IULS), which provides a six-year Scope and Sequence of Scripture references and outlines for lessons. Each age level, preschool through adult, studies the same lesson every Sunday throughout the year. Parents, children, pastors, and the entire church membership can study and learn together. We recognize you have a choice in Christian Education products and we appreciate your business.



UMI has a rich history and our beliefs remain as strong as they were in 1970 when I founded the company. We proudly uphold our belief that the whole Gospel should be taught and understood—this includes all Scriptures, especially those verses that demonstrate what sin is and those that teach us how to live godly lives that please and honor our Lord. Our values are expressed in our Statement of Faith, which I have included below.

Yours in Christ,

Melvin E. Banks Sr., Litt.D.

Dr. Melvin E. Banks, Sr.
UMI Founder & Chairman



Statement of Faith

WE BELIEVE in the great doctrines of the evangelical Christian faith.

WE BELIEVE that the Scriptures, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, are verbally inspired and without error in their original writings and are therefore our final authority in faith and life (Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39; Acts 1:16, 28:25; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21; Revelation 22:18, 19).

WE BELIEVE in God, who exists eternally in three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We believe that Jesus Christ, who was God from eternity, was begotten by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary and thus is true man and true God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 1:20-23; 28:18, 19; Mark 12:29; Luke 1:26-38; 2:7; John 1:14; Acts 5:3, 4; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Hebrews 1:1-3; Revelation 1:4-6).

WE BELIEVE that God created a host of angels who were sinless and spiritual beings. Some of them, led by Satan, fell into sin and now oppose God and those whom God blesses. The holy angels continue to minister as servants of God (Genesis 3:1-19; Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Luke 15:10; 2 Corinthians 4:3, 4; 11:13-15; Ephesians 6:10-12; Hebrews 1:13, 14; 2:6-10; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Revelation 12:9; 20:1-3, 10).

WE BELIEVE that Adam was created without sin, but through his transgression fell from his original innocence. Descendants of Adam are born in sin and subject to death and judgment, apart from divine grace (Genesis 1:26-27; Romans 3:23-26; 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:1-24, 51-58; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; Ephesians 1:20-23; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Titus 2:13, Hebrews 1:3 – 7:25; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 2:1; Revelation 1:5; 19:11 – 20:15).

WE BELIEVE that men and women can be saved from sin and come into possession of eternal life by realizing they are sinners, believing that the Lord



Jesus Christ loves them and has provided salvation through His own shed blood upon Calvary. Salvation is by grace through faith in Christ as personal Savior and Sin-bearer and is entirely a free gift of God. Salvation cannot possibly be achieved by humanity's works (John 3:14-18, 36; 5:25; 6:47; Acts 4:12; Romans 1:16, 17; 3:20-26; 5:1; 8:1; Ephesians 2:8, 9; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:18, 19; Revelation 1:5).

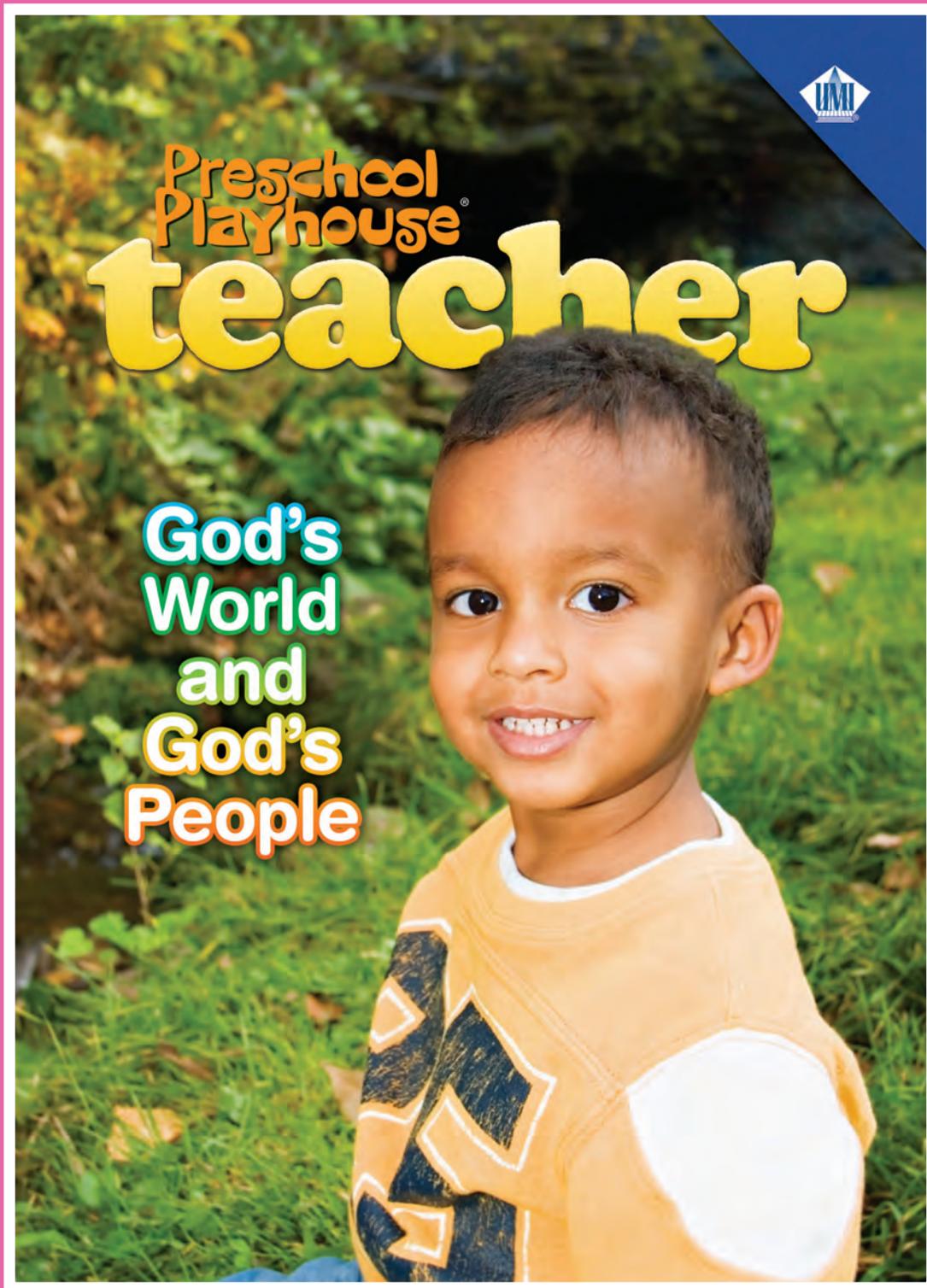
WE BELIEVE that at death the saved enter into the presence of God immediately to spend eternity with Him. At death, the unsaved go immediately into eternal conscious punishment. We believe in the future bodily resurrection of all the dead (Daniel 12:2, 3; Luke 16:19-31; John 5:28, 29; 1 Corinthians 15:22, 51-54; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 20:4-6, 10-15).

WE BELIEVE that the Holy Spirit convicts sinners of their need of Christ as Savior and regenerates those who place faith in Christ. The Holy Spirit indwells all true believers. As believers yield to His control He enables them to obey the will of God for them and to lead godly lives, separate from the sins of the world (John 7:37-39; 14:16, 17; 16:7-15; Acts 2:38; Romans 8:1-17; 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 5:18).

WE BELIEVE in the spiritual unity of true believers in Christ and that all believers are members of the Church, which is Christ's body and of which He is the Head (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:13-27; Ephesians 1:22, 23; 2:13-22; 5:23-32).

WE BELIEVE that all Christians are called and commissioned by the Lord to live to the glory of God and to win others to Christ (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 15:16; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 10:31; 2 Corinthians 5:20; Philippians 1:20, 21).

WE BELIEVE those who profess faith in Christ are called upon to demonstrate and validate their commitment by acts of love to God and to people of all races and stations in life. The Scriptures repudiate all forms of racism and paternalism in human relationships (Luke 10:25-37; James 2:8, 9; 1 John 2:10, 11; 3:14-18; 4:7-21).



Preschool Playhouse® (Ages 2-5)

Primary students need a strong foundation and consistent encouragement. Primary Street helps motivate young children to see their need for a Savior and inspire them toward personal spiritual growth.

A GREAT CREATION

WEEKLY THEME:

GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND EARTH

BASED ON:

Genesis 1:1–13, NIV

KEY VERSE:

Genesis 1:1, NIV

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Knowledge: Preschoolers will order the first three days of creation.

Attitude: Preschoolers will name parts of creation for which they are thankful.

Action: Preschoolers will sing about the order of creation.

DEAR TEACHER

Your preschoolers are learning that God created the world. He made light, sky, land, plants, and animals during the first three days of creation.

SUPPLY LIST

SECTION	MATERIALS
Focused Learning Center	8 oz. water bottles, water, small plastic plants, tiny pebbles

OPEN THE LESSON

Focused Learning Center

Have the children drop pebbles and toy plants into a bottle. Add a few tablespoons of water. Screw on the lid. Lay the bottle on its side. Ask them to talk about what they see. What colors do they see? What does the water do? Where can they put their water world at home?

PRESENT THE SCRIPTURES

Life Application Story

(Distribute student folders.)

Before reading, ask the children, “What are some things that God has made?” Tell them that in today’s story they will hear about three things God created.

During reading, pause after the sentence, “Why did you draw these?” asked Dad.” Ask the children why Cliff might have chosen to draw these things. (They are things he likes a lot.)

After reading, ask the children to name some of their favorite things in God’s creation.

Reading the Bible Story

A Great Creation

The Bible Story in the student folders is designed for preschool students to read. The Scripture Scene® is provided as a visual aid. Be sure to study the information on this Bible passage in the white pages of the Teacher Guide.

God is the Creator. He made everything.

On the first day, He made light. He called the light “day.” He called the dark “night.”

On the second day, God made the sky.

On the third day, God made dry land. He pushed the waters into seas. He made plants of all kinds. Some had fruit. Some did not.

God saw it was all good.

EXPLORE THE MEANING

Memory Verse

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (from Genesis 1:1, NIV).

Use hand signs to teach the words for this verse. For “In the beginning,” have the children

Preschool Playhouse[®]



For God's Little Children

Cliff was lying on the grass. He was busy coloring. "What are you up to?" Dad asked.

Cliff smiled. He showed Dad his notebook. It was filled with pictures he made. There was one of clouds. There was one of a flower. There was a twisted tree. "Why did you draw these?" asked Dad.

"God made these things. They are my favorite things. I draw, then I thank God," said Cliff.

"You love God's creation," said Dad. "I bet God loves your creation, too!"

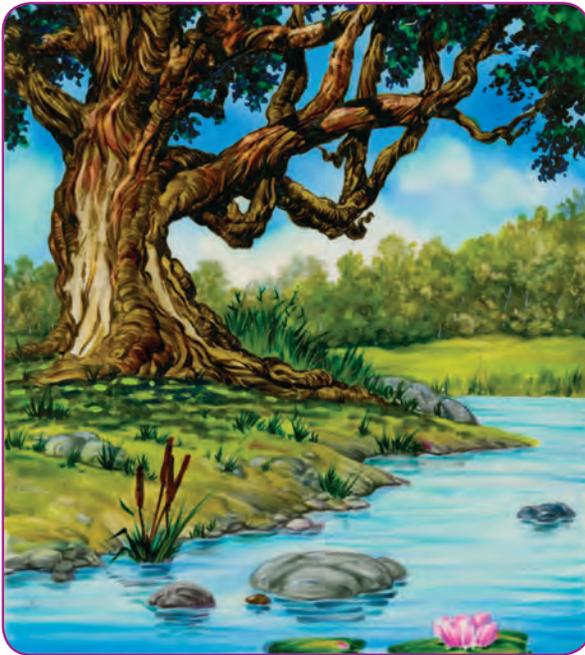


2

BIBLE STORY

"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" (from Genesis 1:1–2, NIV).

A Great Creation



God is the Creator. He made everything.

On the first day, He made light. He called the light "day." He called the dark "night."

On the second day, God made the sky.

On the third day, God made dry land. He pushed the waters into seas. He made plants of all kinds. Some had fruit. Some did not.

God saw that it was all good.

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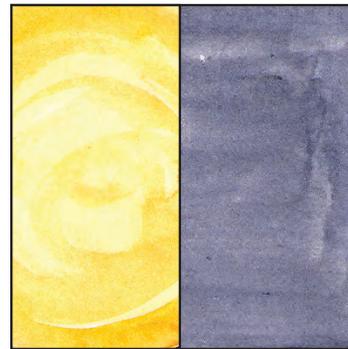
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KNOWING

3

Order of Creation

God is the Creator! What did He make first? What did He make second? What did He make third? Write 1, 2, 3, to show the order.



Memory Verse:

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (from Genesis 1:1, NIV).

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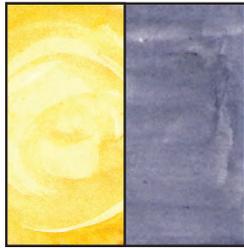
DEAR PARENTS

Your preschooler learned that God is the Creator. In the first three days, He made light and dark, the sky, and land with vegetation. Throughout the week, celebrate God's creation with your child.

GROWING

God Gives Us What We Need

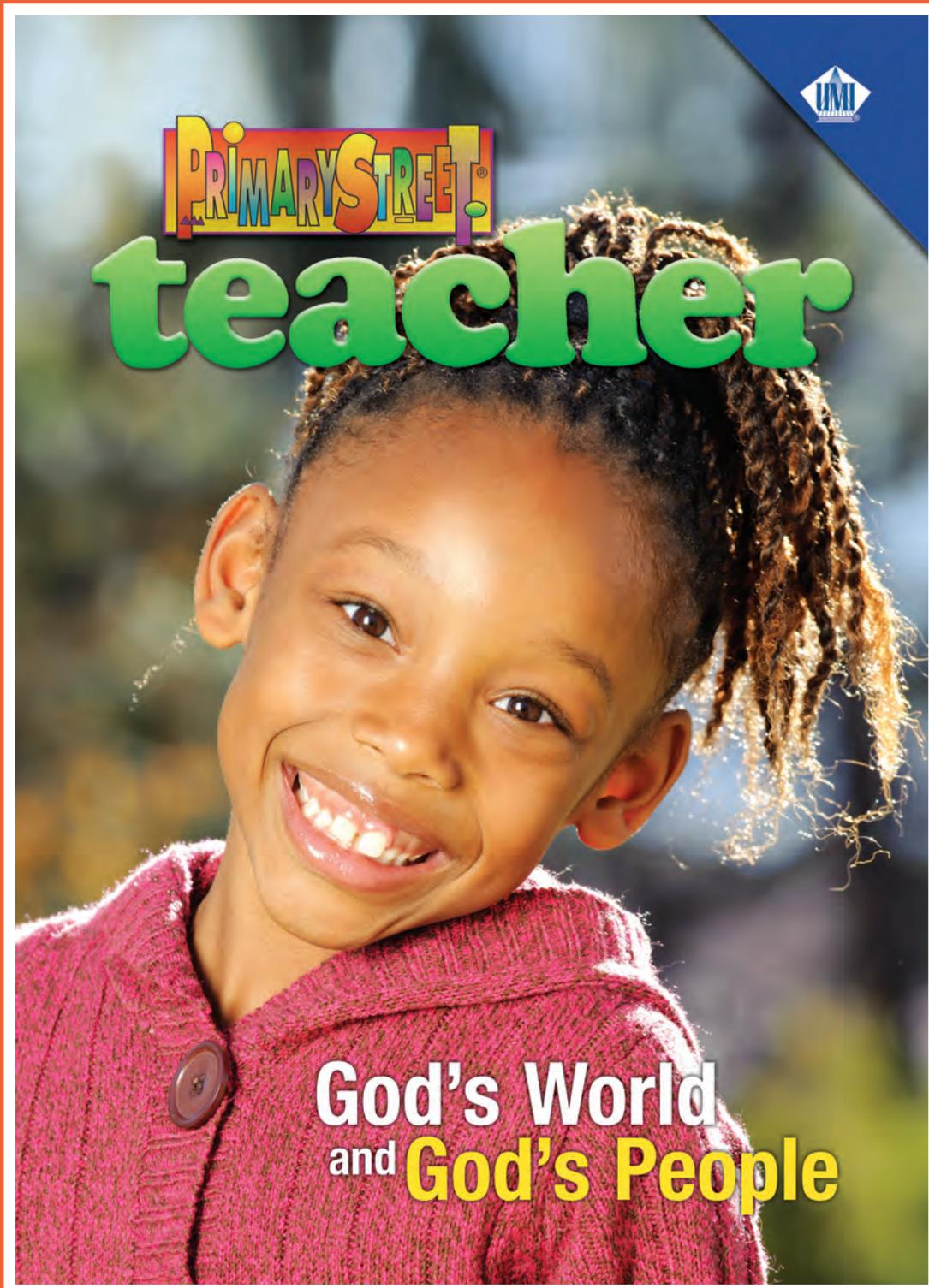
God's creation gives us what we need. Why do we need light and dark? Why do we need the sky? Why do we need the land? Match what we need to each creation.



Name _____

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Primary Street® (Ages 6-8)

Primary students need a strong foundation and consistent encouragement. Primary Street helps motivate young children to see their need for a Savior and inspire them toward personal spiritual growth.

A GREAT CREATION

WEEKLY THEME:

GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND EARTH

BASED ON:

Genesis 1:1-13, NIV

KEY VERSE:

Genesis 1:1-2, NIV

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Knowledge: Primaries will identify what God created the first three days of the universe.

Attitude: Primaries will recognize God’s power to create by speaking things into existence.

Action: Primaries will play a game to demonstrate how God spoke things in nature into existence.

DEAR TEACHER

Your primaries will learn about the awesome power of God to create.

SUPPLY LIST

SECTION	MATERIALS
Focus Activity	Items from nature (leaves, small rocks, shells, etc.)
Review	“God Said...And It Was” construction paper or foam game pieces
Memory Verse	Construction paper, glitter glue, markers, stickers, single-hole punch, yarn or string
Worship Time	Game pieces from <i>Review</i>

OPEN THE LESSON

Focus Activity

Before class obtain several objects from nature that children can touch without risk of injury (shells, smooth small rocks, pine cones, leaves, etc.). Place these items on a table in the classroom and invite children to examine them. Make a simple chart on a board to record the children’s observations about the items (texture, color, etc.). (Monitor the children closely as they make observations about the items to ensure safety.)

fishing, etc.). List some of their responses on a board. Tell the primaries that people often do activities outside because they enjoy the beauty of nature. Explain that today’s story is about a girl who enjoys nature. Begin reading.

Pause during reading to ask the primaries what other things in nature Aubrey may have seen on her trip. Record their responses on a board. Continue reading.

After reading, talk with the children about God’s ability to create just by speaking them into existence. This is a demonstration of God’s awesome power and creativity. Explain that God is worthy to be praised because of His awesome power to create.

PRESENT THE SCRIPTURES

Life Application Story

(Distribute the student folders.)

Before reading the Life Application Story, ask the primaries if they have favorite outdoor activities they like to do. If necessary, tell your favorite outdoor activity (hiking, bike riding,

Bible Story

A Great Creation

The Bible Story in the student folders is designed for primary students to read. The Scripture Scene®

PRIMARY STREET® TEACHING PLAN 1

is provided as a visual aid. Be sure to study the information on this Bible passage in the white pages of the Teacher Guide.

In the beginning the Earth did not have a shape. The Earth was empty. There was no light.

Then God said, “Let there be light.” There was light! God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light, “day.” He called the darkness, “night.” There was night. Then morning came. That was the first day.

God said He wanted a space between heaven and Earth. God made this space and called it “sky.” There was night. Then morning came. That was the second day.

God said He wanted water in some places and dry ground in other places. God called the dry ground, “land.” He called the waters, “seas.” Then God said He wanted plants, trees, fruits, and vegetables to grow on the land. And it happened! There was night. Then morning came. That was the third day.

EXPLORE THE MEANING

Review

Play a game called “God Said...And It Was” with the primaries. You will need to make the game pieces before the day of class. Make simple cut-outs of the following from construction paper or foam sheets: clouds (sky); waves or drops of water (seas); mountains or hills (land); trees (plants and trees); and various simple fruits and vegetable shapes (fruits and vegetables). Make colorful signs with the words “day” and “night.” The game pieces should be large.

On the day of class, distribute the game pieces to the primaries. Review with the primaries what each game piece or sign means. Have the children stand and begin the game. Tell them you will read words from the Bible Story of what God said He wanted. They must raise the game piece that is described, but only if you say the phrase, “God Said” before. Children who hold up signs when you do not say “God Said” first will return their signs and sit.

Memory Verse

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1, NIV).

To help with this week’s Memory Verse, have the primaries make a simple wall hanging craft featuring the Memory Verse. Write the Memory Verse on a board. Distribute construction paper and crayons or markers to children. Have them copy the verse and decorate the sheets. When the sheets are complete, punch a hole in either side at the top and pull a length of string through for hanging.

NEXT STEPS FOR APPLICATION

Be Smart

What God Created

Read the directions with the primaries. Children should find the days listed and write what God created in the appropriate space. **Answers:** Day 1. heaven, Earth, day, night; Day 2. sky; Day 3. land, sea, plants, trees, fruits, vegetables.

Good Attitude

Counting Creation

Read the directions with the primaries. Children should look at the illustration and write on the lines the number of listed items from God’s creation that appear. They can then color the illustration and draw animals or plants in God’s creation. **Answers:** flowers (2), trees (3), rivers (1), sky (1), sun (1).

Worship Time

Review the things in nature that God created as described in this week’s Bible Story. Distribute the game pieces from the review activity. Remind the primaries that God is worthy to be praised because of His awesome power and creativity. Have each child stand, hold up his or her game piece, and express thanks to God using this sentence frame: “Thank You, God, for _____.”

End the class with a prayer that the children will always appreciate God’s power and creativity.

Craft Kingdom®

Craft Kingdom® provides directions to complete craft projects that reinforce the lesson. Play the *Sing-Along* CD as students work.



PRIMARY LIFE APPLICATION STORY



Aubrey was taking the train to see her grandparents. Mom and Dad sat near her. Aubrey looked out of the window at the beautiful scene. There were lush, green trees. There was a wide, sparkling river. The sun was bright in the afternoon sky.

“Dad, where did trees come from?” she asked.

“All you see in nature was made by God,” said Dad.

“How?” Aubrey asked.

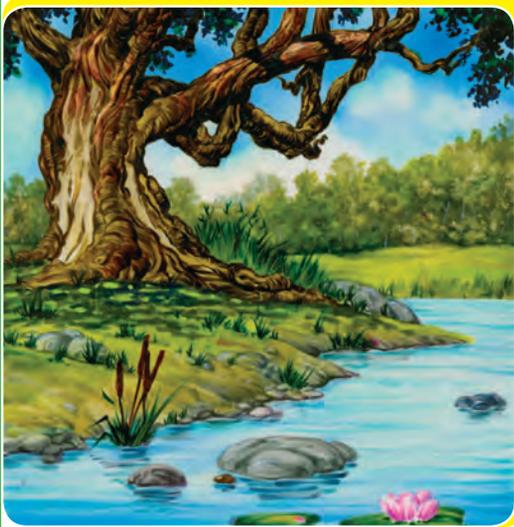
“He made it all just by saying so,” Dad replied.

“Wow,” said Aubrey, gazing at the sky. “God really is amazing.”

LESSON 1

“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” (Genesis 1:1–2, NIV).

A Great Creation



In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth did not have a shape. The earth was empty. There was no light.

Then God said, “Let there be light.” There was light! God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light, “day.” He called the darkness, “night.” There was night. Then morning came. That was the first day.

God said He wanted a space between heaven and earth. God made this space and called it “sky.” There was night. Then morning came. That was the second day.

God said He wanted water in some places and dry ground in other places. God called the dry ground, “land.” He called the waters, “seas.” Then God said He wanted plants, trees, fruits, and vegetables to grow on the land. And it happened! There was night. Then morning came. That was the third day.

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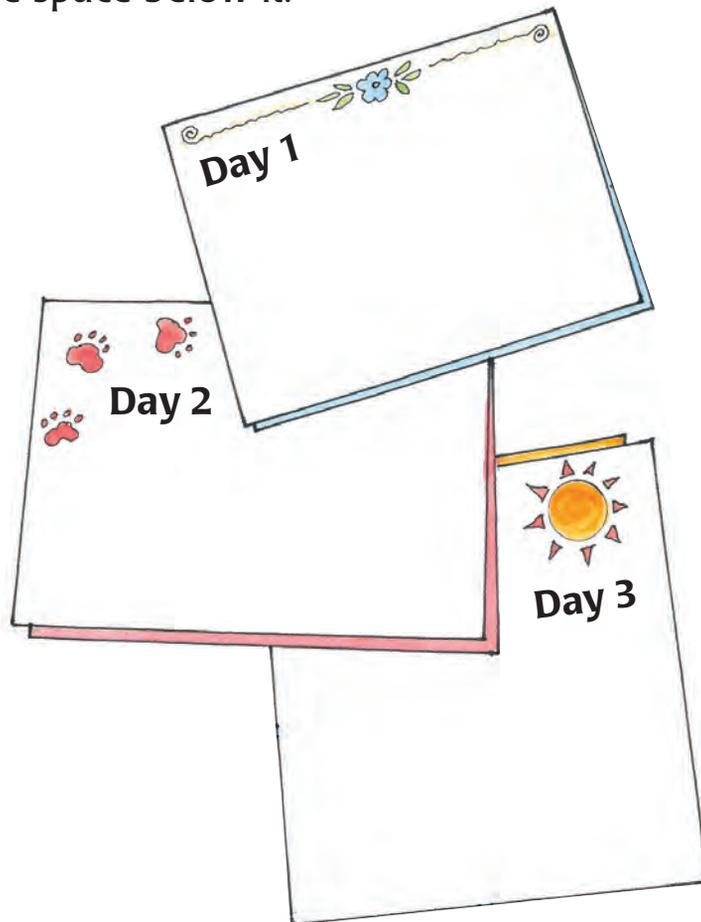
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What God Created

In today's Bible Story, God created many things in nature just by speaking them into existence. Do you remember what God created and the days He did it? Find the day and write what God created in the space below it.



Memory Verse:

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1, NIV).

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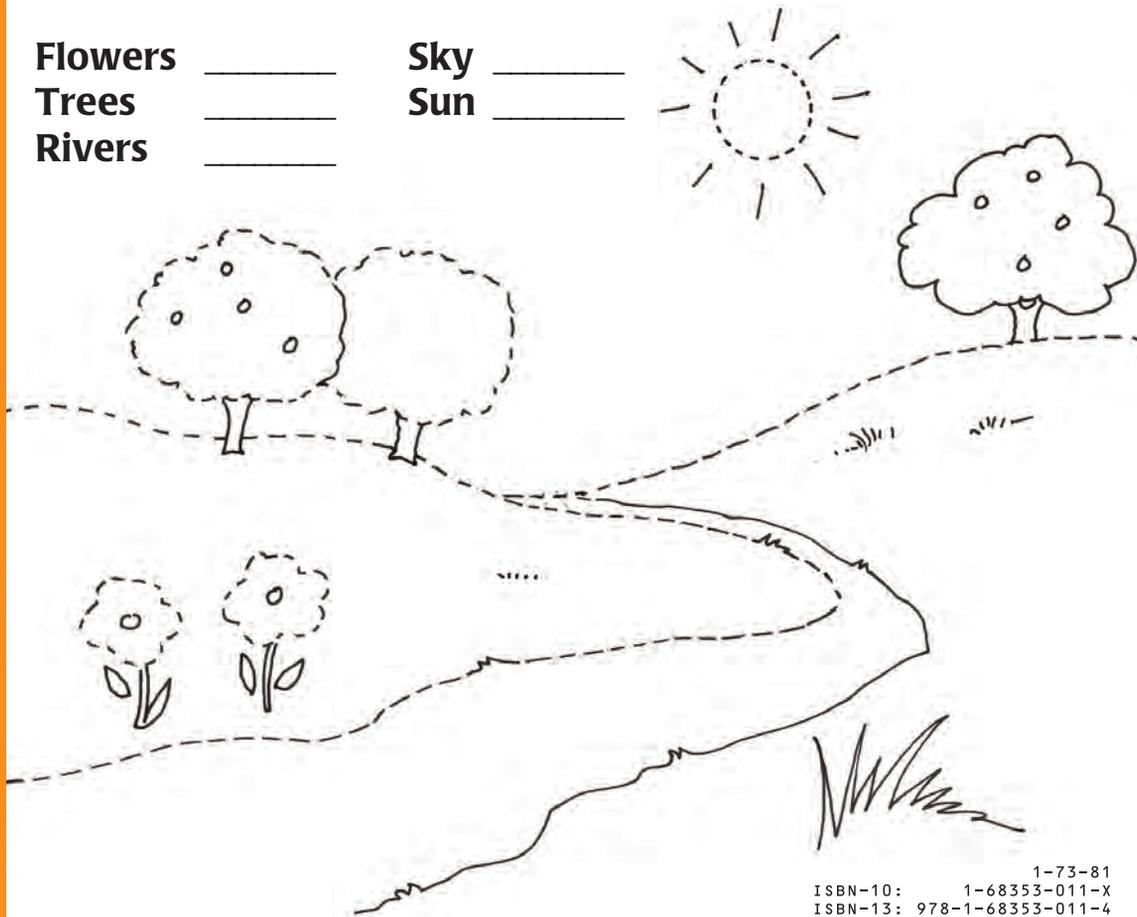
Good Attitude

Counting Creation

Aubrey was amazed at the beauty of God's great creation. Look at the picture. Help Aubrey count the things in God's great creation that she saw on her trip. Write the numbers on the lines. Then color the picture and draw other plants or animals in God's creation.

Flowers _____
Trees _____
Rivers _____

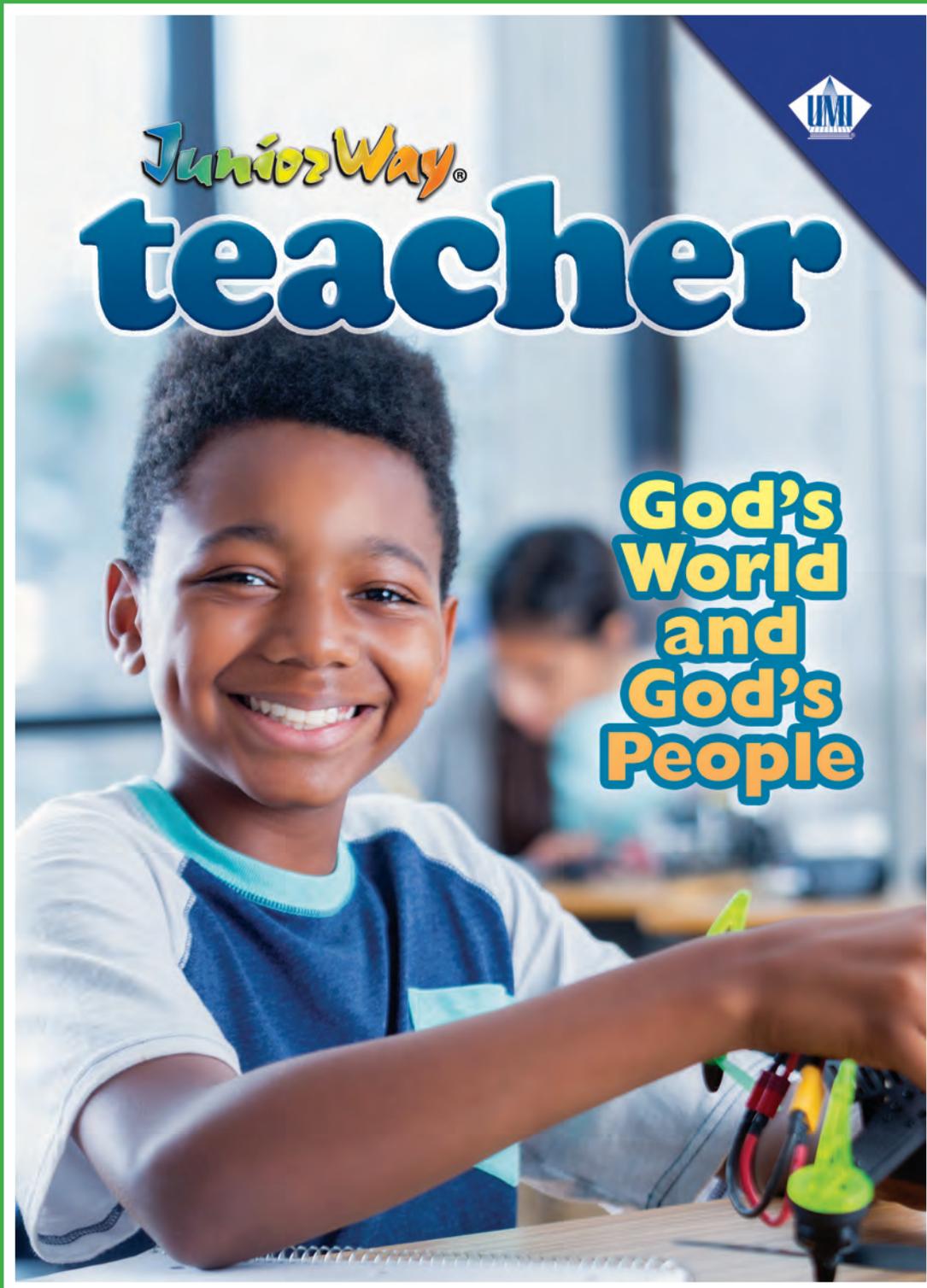
Sky _____
Sun _____



Name _____

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Juniorway® (Ages 9-11)

The lessons in Juniorway, combined with contemporary stories and fun activities, show how the Bible is relevant to everyday living.

1

JUNIORWAY® TEACHING PLAN 1

THE BEGINNING

WEEKLY THEME:

GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND EARTH

BASED ON:

Genesis 1:1–13

KEEP IN MIND:

Genesis 1:1–2

FROM YOUR BIBLE:

The Scripture text is in the student lesson under “Learning From God.”

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON

During this lesson, Juniors will recognize the importance of the biblical truth that the one and only God has created the whole universe; express awe and appreciation of God’s marvelous creation; and celebrate God’s creation through praise and prayers of thanksgiving.

BEFORE YOU TEACH

1. Suggested Materials—Bibles, student magazines, pens or pencils, prepare a KWL poster to use all month (see “Get Started Activity”), poster of “Keep In Mind” verse, and a computer for viewing the “Get Started Activity” video.

2. Lesson Background—For background information, read Genesis 1:1–13. Be sure to read the student lesson. Also see Bible Study Guide 1 in the white pages of this book.

Today’s passage covers the first three days of Creation. Genesis is a book of beginnings—the beginning of time, the beginning of variety and beauty in nature, the beginning of names—virtually, the beginning of *all* Creation. By God’s Word, time and creation were knit together to work succinctly and reproduce perfectly.

In the first three days, God created light. Throughout the Bible, light is contrasted to darkness. Without light, creation could not have been seen. In the early verses of John 1, one reads that the Word gave life and brought light. The New Testament reveals Jesus as the Light.

After creation of light, God made the firmament, an expanse, to separate the waters of the earth from the waters above the earth. Finally, God pushed the waters of the earth aside, giving

boundaries for the seas and dry land. He caused dry land for grasses to grow. In God’s infinite wisdom and design, everything needed for life was prepared by Him beforehand.

OPEN THE LESSON

Get Started Activity

Before class, prepare a poster with three columns. Label the columns: “Know, Want to Know, Learn.” Ask Juniors to help you fill in the “KWL” chart. Explain that during this month, they will learn about God’s creation and His planned relationship with humans. In the first column, list everything Juniors already know about creation. List their questions in the center column. Explain that they will add to the last column at the end of class and in the weeks to come. It’s possible they will even need to make corrections in the “Know” column as they learn more.

Share the video “The Gospel Project for Kids Bible Story Video Creation” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9MPef0FT7oY>) as an opening today. This video, using a narrator and visuals, summarizes the entire Creation story.

What’s It All About?

Teaching time about 4–8 minutes

Student Story: The Beginning

“Come on, everyone,” Mr. Harold pleaded. “This song is about how great God is! I’m sure the writer didn’t intend for the audience to be bored when hearing it.” He was disappointed in the choir’s lackluster performance. “Practice is over. We’ll try again next week,” he said.

JUNIORWAY® TEACHING PLAN 1

On the drive home, Mr. Harold prayed and asked God to help him reach the students. Suddenly, he had an idea. When he arrived home, he asked his wife if she would help him. They emailed invitations to the students in the choir to meet at church on Friday evening.

Andy, one of the students, was excited. When he arrived, Mrs. Harold tied a blindfold over his eyes and led him to a seat in the church van. “Don’t peek,” she said and laughed. He heard giggling from others already sitting in the van.

Soon they began moving.

“This is South Street. We just crossed the speed bump,” Andy called out. Soon everyone was announcing what they felt and guessing where they might be traveling. The ride became bumpier. Then, the van stopped. The Harolds led the students out of the van. Andy felt grass under his feet.

“Please leave your blindfolds on for a minute,” Mr. Harold instructed. “What are your senses telling you about this place?” After much chattering Mr. Harold said, “Without talking, take off your blindfolds. Look up.”

There was complete silence.

Andy stared in amazement. He was in awe of God’s handiwork. The dark sky shone with stars—more stars than he had ever seen before. The full moon was brilliant. Wisps of clouds could be seen in the distance.

Mr. Harold began softly singing the song from choir rehearsal. Others soon joined him. Andy and the other students found themselves singing their hearts out about God’s greatness.

How might thinking of God the Creator change the way the students sing? Describe a time when you have been in awe of God’s creation.

PRESENT THE SCRIPTURES

Learning From God

Teaching time about 10–15 minutes

Today we look at the account of creation in Genesis. “Genesis” is a Greek word meaning “original” or “generations.” Genesis tells us God existed before everything. The commonly used Hebrew word for God is “Elohim” which shows the unity and diversity of God; God the Father,

God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit is the Trinity. Let’s discover what God created on the first three days.

What I Have Learned

Teaching time about 5–8 minutes

Juniors will solve a puzzle about creation and fill in the blank of a sentence.

Answers: Across: 4. Earth, 5. Seeds, 6. Heaven
Down: 1. Night, 2. Darkness, 3. Seas
God saw His creation and thought it was **good**.

Juniorway® Bible Activities

For additional material, see the activity for this lesson in the *JBA® (Juniorway® Bible Activities)* book.

Keep In Mind

Teaching time about 2–3 minutes

During the next three weeks, Juniors will use voice and body actions to recall the “Keep In Mind” verses. Begin by reading the verse aloud from a poster. Elicit suggestions from Juniors for actions to illustrate this verse. You might wish to refer to American Sign Language online: handspeak.com/word/ for specific words and signs (beginning, heaven, earth, darkness, wind, God).

Say the verse and allow Juniors to choose their own actions. Ask, “What images come to your mind when you say this verse? Imagine God’s amazing ideas when He was creating this world!”

EXPLORE THE MEANING

Choosing What’s Best

Teaching time about 4–8 minutes

Juniors are asked what aspects of God’s creation causes them to appreciate Him more and to list three aspects of God’s creation for which they are thankful and why. They are to write about how they express their appreciation.

NEXT STEPS FOR APPLICATION

Doing My Part

Teaching time about 2–3 minutes

Juniors are challenged to observe God’s creation this week. Encourage them to tell someone about today’s lesson. Praise God together in prayer.

Junior Way

THE STUDENT MAGAZINE FOR URBAN JUNIORS[®]



God's
World
and
God's
People

a vault between the waters to separate water from water." 7 So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. 8 God called the vault "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day. 9 And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. 10 God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good. 11 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. 12 The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. 13 And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

2. God divided the light from the _____.
3. God called the waters _____.

Complete the sentence: God saw His creation and thought it was _____.

Keep In Mind

"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"
(Genesis 1:1–2, NIV).

Choosing What's Best

In our story, seeing the awesome sky prompted the students to appreciate God. What aspects of God's creation causes you to appreciate Him more?

On the lines below, list three aspects of God's creation for which you are thankful and why.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

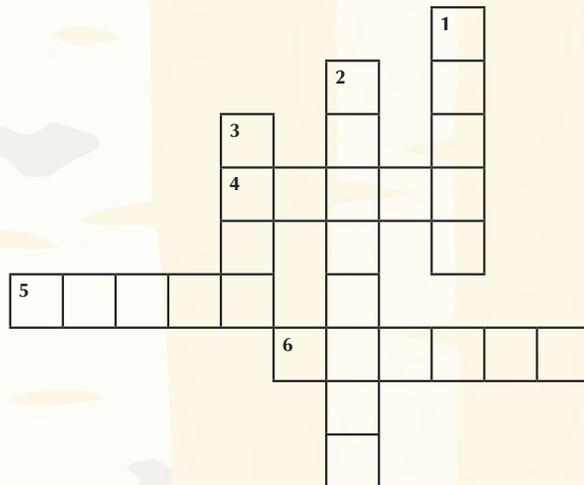
How do you express your appreciation?

- _____
- _____
- _____

What I Have Learned

Solve the crossword puzzle and complete the sentence below.

Creation Days 1–3



Across

4. God created the heavens and the _____.
5. God caused herb and fruit tree to grow from _____.
6. God called the vault _____.

Down

1. God called the darkness _____.

Doing My Part

This week you are challenged to go outside three times to look at God's creation and praise Him. You can go out in the morning to see the sun or at night to see the stars. You can look at how animals interact with one another. Tell someone about the marvelous things you see. Say a prayer of praise, thanking God for His handiwork. Be ready to share next week.



J.A.M. (Jesus And Me)[®] (Ages 12-14)

During these critical years when young people are being confronted with temptation, J.A.M. (Jesus And Me) is designed to motivate and inspire them to apply biblical truths to forge a strong relationship with Jesus Christ.

BORING SCIENCE CLASS

WEEKLY THEME:

GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND EARTH

BASED ON:

Genesis 1:1-13

LESSON AIM:

By the end of this lesson, students will:

1. Describe the creation story in their own words.
2. Demonstrate an appreciation of God’s marvelous creation.
3. Identify ways that they will connect more with God and respect His creation.

TARGET

In today’s world, people are often distracted by technology, and they rely heavily on science and human reason rather than faith in God. Because of this, students may be challenged or confused by the creation accounts in the Bible. They may be taught in school that the Bible is just a piece of classic literature and that the universe was created by a big bang. That’s why it’s so important that students stand strong in their faith and understand how and why God created the universe.

TOOLS

Student magazines, Bibles, pencils or pens, paper, string or yarn.

OPEN THE LESSON

1. Follow up on last week’s JAM Session activity. Ask volunteers to share their reflections.
2. Ask Jammers: Is there a time when you felt especially close to God or had a unique experience with God as a result of being outdoors? (Note: Be prepared to share your own examples.)
3. Using string, create an interconnected web among all Jammers. Discuss the way the interconnectedness of creation enables us to benefit from and contribute to others.

REALITY CHECK

Boring Science Class

Anya hurried home from school and pulled out her phone. She launched her favorite photo editing app and began editing photos. She loved expressing

her creativity by taking pictures and enhancing them with designs, emojis, and special filters.

“Anya, we need to talk,” her mom said, placing her hands on her hips. “I got an email from your science teacher today.”

Anya sighed. “Oh really?”

“He said you’re not doing well in his class,” her mom said. “He said you seem bored and uninterested.”

“It’s totally boring, Mom,” Anya said. “We’re learning about plants and how they work. It’s a snooze fest.”

“Maybe you need to look at it differently,” her mom said. “Since you’re so artistic and creative, try looking at plants from that perspective. For example, flowers are plants, and they are very beautiful.”

“That’s true,” Anya said. “I do like flowers.”

“Flowers are like God’s artwork. He designed them with science and artistry. If you paid attention in class, you might learn how God designed flowers and other plants. There are hundreds of flowers, all unique. I bet you could even take some pictures of flowers and use them on your design app,” her mom said, smiling.

Anya perked up. “That would be really cool,” she said. “I’m going to go outside and see if I can find some cool flowers and snap some pics of them. Then I’ll see what cool designs I can create!”

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why didn’t Anya like her science class? What did she like instead?
2. How did Anya’s mom help her have a better appreciation for science and creation?

JAM[®] TEACHING PLAN 1

PRESENT THE SCRIPTURES IN MY HEART

Recite this verse: “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” (Genesis 1:1-2, NIV).

WORD!

Encourage students to take turns reading the Scripture aloud. Consider using “Target,” “Open the Lesson,” and the TSK to help you teach this lesson.

SIDEBAR

God Created the Heavens and Earth

Creation is an act of God. We can see God’s awesome creativity throughout the wonders of nature and the universe. Everything has an intricate design, which reflects the creativity and power of God, the Creator. God structured, organized, and developed creation and spoke things into existence in a specific order. He took great care in His creation process, and everything He made was good.

EXPLORE THE MEANING

How to Respect God’s Creation

- R—Reflect on God’s beautiful creation.
- E—Enjoy quiet time outside with God.
- S—Spend time studying creation in the Bible.
- P—Protect the environment by recycling and picking up litter.
- E—Explore ways to increase your knowledge about nature.
- C—Care for others by being kind and helpful.
- T—Teach others about God’s creation and love.

GOT IT!

A. God Created

Jammers will use Word! to help them fill in the blanks for this activity.

“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” (Genesis 1:1-2, NIV).

B. Blessed by Creation

We are blessed every day by God’s creation. Tell students to list ways God has blessed us through creation—both in physical and non-physical ways. These can be things like fresh vegetables, sunshine, pets, and beautiful parks. Then encourage them to write prayers to thank God for His wonderful blessings. Allow volunteers to share their prayers with the class.

JAM SESSION

The Beginning

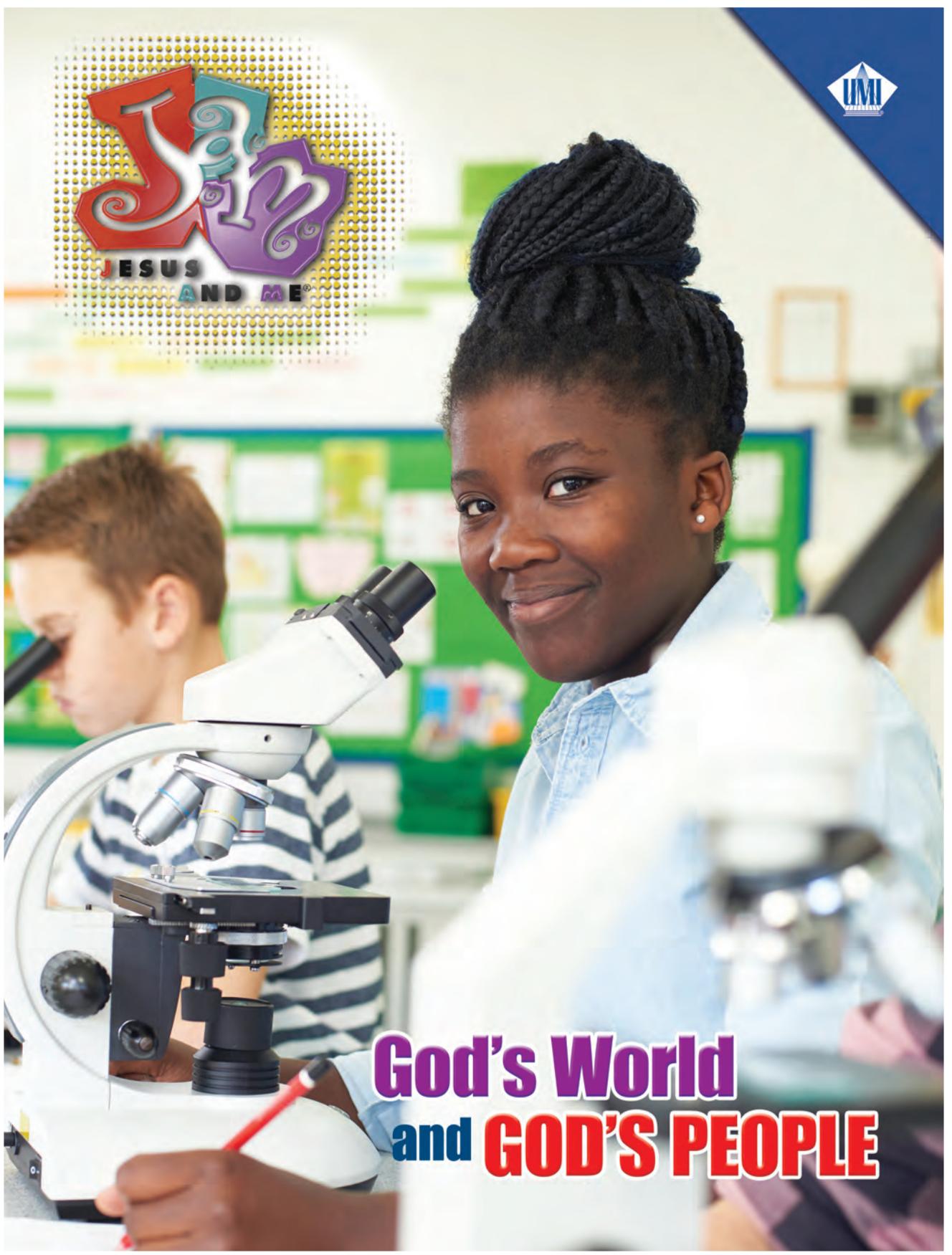
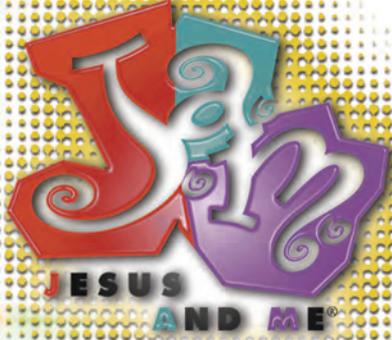
The wonders of the universe amaze even the keenest of human minds. *Who is responsible for such marvelous and breathtaking creativity?* Genesis 1 informs us that God is the Creator of all these marvelous wonders. A survey of God’s creation reveals God’s great creativity: the tiny gnat and the great blue whale, the sweet strawberry and the bright blood orange, the majestic redwood and tiny blades of grass, God made it all! Despite being surrounded by these amazing creations, we can often take them for granted and not appreciate how wonderful they are. This is what happened to Anya in today’s lesson. She wasn’t interested in the science lessons about plants until her mother helped her see the beauty that they possess. There’s a saying, “stop and smell the roses.” It’s a reminder to take time to appreciate the beautiful things around us. *When we do this, we are acknowledging God’s creation. When was the last time you stopped and smelled the roses?*

NEXT STEPS FOR APPLICATION

JAM ON IT!

Connecting with God

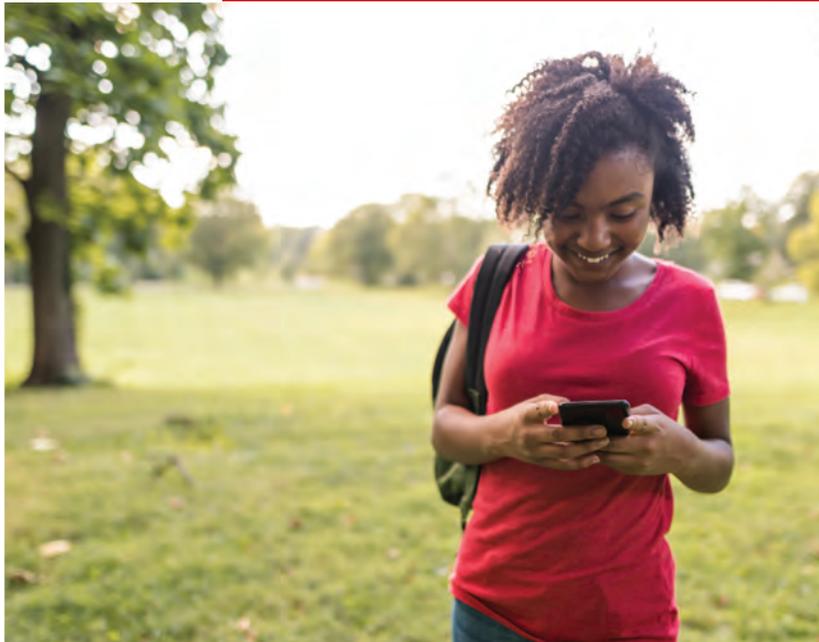
Jammers are encouraged to create a plan and schedule for connecting with God in nature. You may need to give them some examples to get them started. Suggestions are: Sit under a tree while reading your Bible, or pray while taking a walk in a park or biking around your neighborhood.



God's World
and GOD'S PEOPLE

1

Boring Science Class



Anya hurried home from school and pulled out her phone. She launched her favorite photo editing app and began editing photos. She loved expressing her creativity by taking pictures and enhancing them with designs, emojis, and special filters.

"Anya, we need to talk," her mom said, placing her hands on her hips. "I got an email from your science teacher today."

Anya sighed. "Oh really?"

"He said you're not doing well in his class," her mom said. "He said you seem bored and uninterested."

"It's totally boring, Mom," Anya said. "We're learning about plants and how they work. It's a snooze fest."

"Maybe you need to look at it differently," her mom said. "Since you're so artistic and creative, try looking at plants from that perspective. For example, flowers are plants, and they are very beautiful."

"That's true," Anya said. "I do like flowers."

"Flowers are like God's artwork. He designed them with science and artistry. If you paid attention in class, you might learn how God designed flowers and other plants. There are hundreds of flowers, all unique. I bet you could even take some pictures of flowers and use them on your design app," her mom said, smiling.

Anya perked up. "That would be really cool," she said. "I'm going to go outside and see if I can find some cool flowers and snap some pics of them. Then I'll see what cool designs I can create!"

3

In My Heart

"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"
(Genesis 1:1-2, NIV).

WORD!

Genesis 1:1-13, NIV—1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. **2** 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. **3** And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. **4** God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. **5** God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day. **6** And God said, "Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water." **7** So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. **8** God called the vault "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day. **9** And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. **10** God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good. **11** 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. **12** The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. **13** And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

SIDEBAR

God Created the Heavens and Earth

Creation is an act of God. We can see God’s awesome creativity throughout the wonders of nature and the universe. Everything has an intricate design, which reflects the creativity and power of God, the Creator. God structured, organized, and developed creation and spoke things into existence in a specific order. He took great care in His creation process, and everything He made was good.

How to Respect God’s Creation

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- E**—Enjoy quiet time outside with God.
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- E**—Explore ways to increase your knowledge about nature.
- C**—Care for others by being kind and helpful.
- T**—Teach others about God’s creation and love.

GOT IT!

A. God Created

Jammers, use “Word!” to help you fill in the blanks for this activity.

“In the _____ God created the _____ and the earth. Now the earth was _____ and empty, darkness was over the _____ of the deep, and the _____ of God was hovering over the waters” (Genesis 1:1-2, NIV).

B. Blessed by Creation

We are blessed every day by God’s creation. Make a list of ways God has blessed you through creation—both in physical and nonphysical ways. These can be things like fresh vegetables, sunshine, pets, and beautiful parks. Then write a prayer thanking God for His wonderful blessings and share it with the class.

JAM SESSION

The Beginning

The wonders of the universe amaze even the keenest of human minds. *Who is responsible for such marvelous and breathtaking creativity?* Genesis 1 informs us that God is the Creator of all these marvelous wonders. A survey of God’s creation reveals God’s great creativity: the tiny gnat and the great blue whale, the sweet strawberry and the bright blood orange, the majestic redwood and tiny blades of grass, God made it all! Despite being surrounded by these amazing creations, we can often take them for granted and not appreciate how wonderful they are. This is what happened to Anya in today’s lesson. She wasn’t interested in the science lessons about plants until her mother helped her see the beauty that they possess. There’s a saying, “stop and smell the roses.” It’s a reminder to take time to appreciate the beautiful things around us. *When we do this, we are acknowledging God’s creation. When was the last time you stopped and smelled the roses?*

JAM ON IT!

Connecting with God

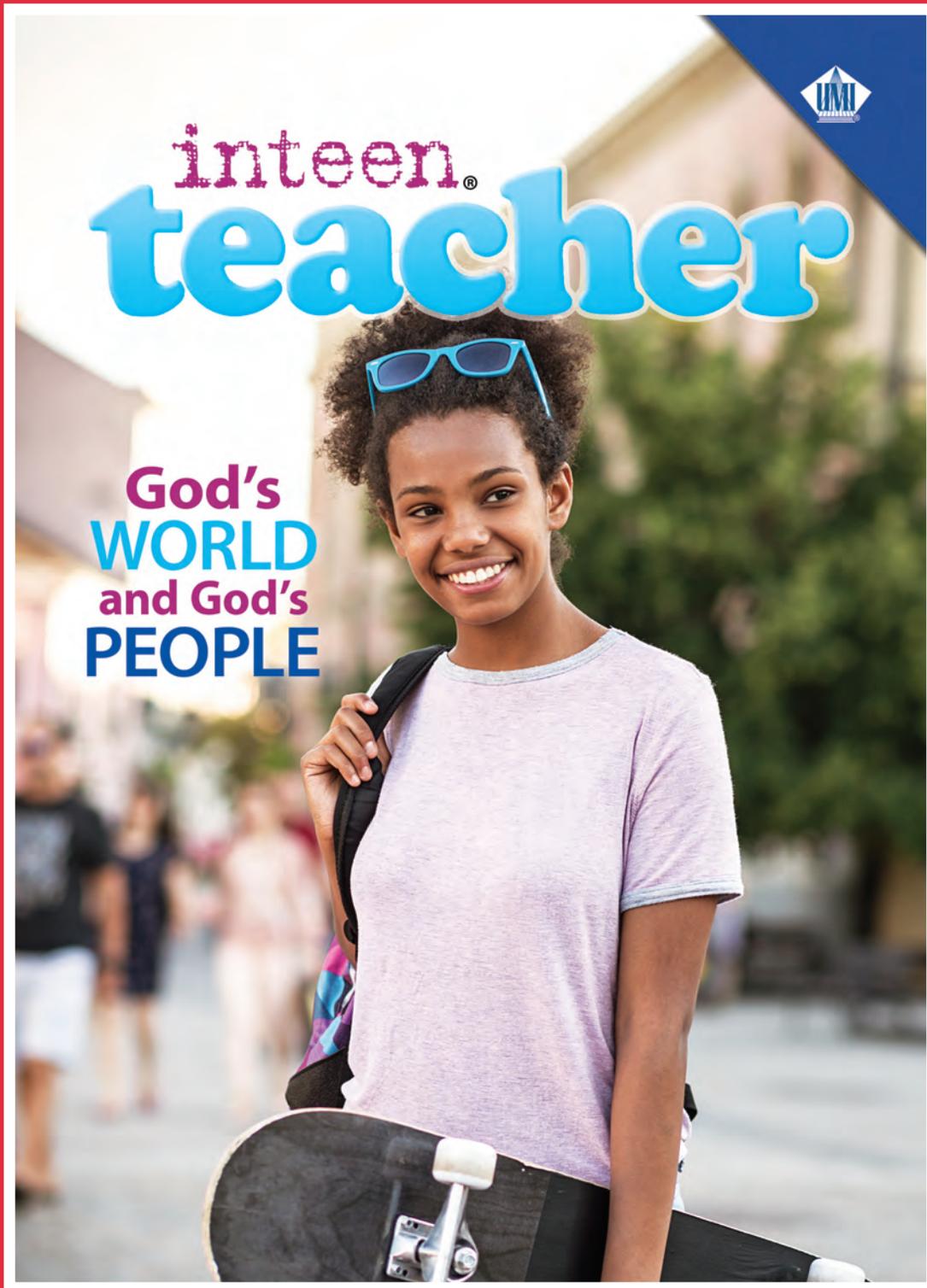
Sometimes we forget the importance of spending time with God in creation. Instead of spending time with God in nature, we often choose to sit in front of our electronic gadgets. This week, create a plan and schedule to connect with God in nature. Whatever you do, focus on God and His creation. Volunteers may share their experience in next week’s class.

LAST JAM

I will appreciate God’s blessings and God’s creation!

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS

Use this space to write down questions you have about this lesson.



Inteen® (Ages 15-17)

Teenagers need wisdom and guidance from the Bible in order to make independent and wise choices within God's will. Inteen encourages young people to continue their spiritual growth outside their home, church, and school.

1

INTEEN® TEACHING PLAN 1

THE BEGINNING
GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND EARTH

LESSON AIM:

By the end of the lesson, teens will:

- (1) discover the importance of the biblical truth that the one and only God has created the whole universe; (2) grow in awe and appreciation of God’s marvelous creation; and (3) celebrate God’s creation through praise and prayers of thanksgiving.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Bible, student magazine, pens or pencils, writing paper

OPEN THE LESSON

Open today’s lesson with a discussion. Compare the differences between evolution’s explanation of the beginning of the universe to the Genesis account.

What are the similarities?

End of Activity Discussion: Evolutionary explanations for the universe rely on accidental forces, randomly moving through space and time. Genesis explains the purposeful intention of God to create a world with life and meaning.

PRESENT THE SCRIPTURES

In today’s passage, we observe the beginning of creation designed by God! Genesis 1 illustrates the creation of the heavens, the earth, and life that exists on earth. Genesis opens with a definitive statement that tells readers who is responsible for the creation of the world in which we live. Time began with God. Genesis provides clarity on this point. The first chapter of Genesis is the earliest history we have of the earth and of God’s relationship with His creation. We read about God’s intentional and directional orchestration of the earth’s surfaces. Embedded in these verses are answers that apply to philosophy, science, geology, and anthropology.

Throughout the Scripture you will see how God created, hovered, spoke, saw, called, formed, and made everything from nothing. As we observe how God created, we see how the earth was furnished to support human-kind (Genesis 1:11–12).

EXPLORE THE MEANING

Have the students read aloud the story “The Beginning,” the Scripture passages, and the Scripture Discussion. Then have the students answer the questions in the Check It and Think It sections to make sure they understand the lesson. Talk to them about questions they might have about the passage.

In today’s story, we read about a mom’s desire to provide for her children. She designs and creates clothing that meets a need for her kids! She also creates to bring them joy and express her love. Genesis 1 begins with God expressing His love for us. It’s more than a creation story, but also an account of God’s love and intentional orderly design for life on earth. He did it just for us!

NEXT STEPS FOR APPLICATION

In this lesson’s Do It section, your students are asked to consider and make a list of all the creative works of God they have observed from the Scriptures. If possible, take students outside to a park or a place where they can see the beauty of God’s creation. Give them some time to write everything they observe.





1

The Beginning

the big idea: God Created the Heavens and Earth

My mother made all of our clothing when we were growing up. She would buy the pattern and the fabric and then gather all of her sewing equipment. There were gauges, pin cushions, seam rippers, needles, hand sewing needles, her specially crafted scissors, rulers, and more. Then she would double-check our measurements. Mom didn't cut any corners as she created her latest "masterpiece" of custom-made clothing for us. When Mom finished a new skirt, dress,

or shirt, she'd put a tag in the item that read, "Just for You, Mom." We would get so many compliments. People at our church would ask my mom to make clothing for them. But she always said, "Thank you for asking, but I only sew for my children." Back then I was too young to appreciate the labor of love and sacrifice it took for my mother to make all of our clothes. As I now reflect on what my mother did for us, it's amazing. She created a clothing line—just for us!

from your Bible

Genesis 1:1-13, NIV—In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.² 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.³ And God said, "Let there be

light," and there was light.⁴ God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness.⁵ God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.⁶ And God said, "Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water."⁷ So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from

4

the water above it. And it was so.⁸ God called the vault “sky.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.⁹ And God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so.¹⁰ God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good.¹¹ 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.¹² The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.¹³ And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

Scripture discussion

The first chapter of Genesis describes how God created everything from nothing! Every time God spoke something into existence, it appeared. The chapter also is an account of how God’s creations were not random. The chapter portrays God as being actively involved in every aspect and every detail of creation. God spoke the words and the world became a re-

ality. God had the ability to create, the power to bring it about, and the skill to arrange the earth, humankind, animals, and plants to have a symbiotic relationship. The first chapter of Genesis illustrates God’s love for His creation. Similarly, as we read in today’s story, we observe the intentional, creative power of a mother. She had the ability, the power, and the skills to meet her children’s needs. It was out of love for them that she provided for them.

make it real



check it

1. Why did the mom make clothing?
2. For whom did she make clothing?
3. Why didn’t she make clothing for other people?
4. In what way did people express appreciation for their clothes?



think it

1. List all the things that God did in Genesis 1:1-13.
2. What did you learn about God from your list?
3. Did God have any help in creation (Genesis 1:1)?
4. What is the Holy Spirit’s role in creation (Genesis 1:2)?



do it

The creative work of God is so numerous that we can take it for granted. Begin to list all of the various features or creative works of God.



keep it

“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” (Genesis 1:1-2, NIV).



Urban Faith® (Ages 18-35)

Targeted to young adults and millennials ages 18–35, Urban Faith addresses real-life issues of young African Americans while helping them to attain a higher level of spiritual development. Urban Faith offers access to a website (urbanfaith.com) to extend the impact beyond Sunday.

Lesson 1





Where We're Going

By the end of the lesson, participants will acknowledge God as Creator of the universe; appreciate the created world; and admire the beauty of the heavens and the earth God created.



Get Them Going

Begin by asking the class to share creation accounts that they have heard during their lifetimes, such as the Big Bang Theory. Using a blackboard, list their responses and discuss them. If there's time, you may want to discuss ways the students can introduce the biblical account of creation when challenged.



God Created the Heavens and the Earth

With rage running through his body, Allen listened to his biology professor explain how the world began. The aspiring med student couldn't believe what he was hearing. It wasn't as if he hadn't heard non-biblical theories before. His elementary and secondary science teachers always included such theories in the curriculum. However, the district in which Allen attended school also required that creationism be taught as a theory too. Allen was taught and believed wholeheartedly in the Bible. He now had a great appreciation for the inclusion of creationism in a public school curriculum, even if the teachers were required to call it a theory. At least students were exposed to truth, unlike in his biology class where the position of the instructor was made abundantly clear.

When he couldn't take anymore of his professor's "this is the only theory that makes sense" argument, Allen raised his hand. "Professor Neely, I find it disturbing that only one account of how the world began is being presented, particularly because I strongly disagree with what has been said so far."

"Oh, yeah?" A smirk crossed the professor's face. "Let me guess. You think we should discuss Genesis, huh?"

"As a matter of fact, I do. Not because it's what I believe to be true, but because I think it's only fair to present all viewpoints and allow each of us to decide what we want to believe instead of trying to force one theory down our throats."

The room fell silent as Professor Neely sighed. "Mr. Jackson, my objective is not to be fair, but accurate. There is scientific evidence supporting the Big Bang theory, and none supporting the myth that a supreme being created this marvelous world in which we live."

"I disagree," Allen said. "There are a lot of flaws with your theory, with science in general. That's why the supposed truth with science is always changing. When I was younger, Pluto was considered the solar system's ninth planet. Now it's not. If science is as accurate as you claim, why does it continue to change?"

Professor Neely's face showed incredulity. "Pluto had been classified as a planet, and is now considered a dwarf planet. But this is a biology class, not astronomy." Allen could feel the stares and hear the giggles of others in the class. "Let's continue with the subject matter."

Allen sighed, wondering if his outburst had been helpful or harmful to his witness.



Real Talk

1. Briefly share a personal experience of a science class or other setting where a description of the world's origin that omitted the biblical account was discussed. How did this make you feel?
2. In your opinion, should Allen have spoken up? Why or why not? If so, was the way he spoke up appropriate? Please explain.
3. Whether or not you think Allen should have spoken up, evaluate the strength of his argument. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate it and why?
4. It's not unusual for college instructors to say things that challenge one's deeply held convictions. Is it possible to have faith in God and accept scientific explanations of creation?



The Big Picture

God spoke the world into existence with mere words. Prior to His command of "Let there be . . ." there was nothing. The Earth was "formless and empty." Genesis 1:1-13 covers the first three days of creation.



Make It Stick

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters” (Genesis 1:1–2, NLT).



The Word (NLT)

Genesis 1:1, NLT In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

2 The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

3 Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

4 And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness.

5 God called the light “day” and the darkness “night.” And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day.

6 Then God said, “Let there be a space between the waters, to separate the waters of the heavens from the waters of the earth.”

7 And that is what happened. God made this space to separate the waters of the earth from the waters of the heavens.

8 God called the space “sky.” And evening passed and morning came, marking the second day.

9 Then God said, “Let the waters beneath the sky flow together into one place, so dry ground may appear.” And that is what happened.

10 God called the dry ground “land” and the waters “seas.” And God saw that it was good.

11 Then God said, “Let the land sprout with vegetation—every sort of seed-bearing plant, and trees that grow seed-bearing fruit. These seeds will then produce the kinds of plants and trees from which they came.” And that is what happened.

12 The land produced vegetation—all sorts of seed-bearing plants, and trees with seed-bearing fruit. Their seeds produced plants and trees of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

13 And evening passed and morning came, marking the third day.



The Players

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plant produces according to its own kind; that is to say, an orange tree produces oranges instead of apples. There is intentional diversity in God's creation. Not every plant is the same, but they all reproduce according to their species. God once again calls these creations and their relationships with the rest of the Earth good.

How does knowing that God created diversity influence what we think of differences in life?



Diving Deeper Quiz

Have the participants read BACKSTAGE and COMBING THROUGH from the BIBLE STUDY GUIDE. Then, have them answer the following:

1. What did God create on the first day?
2. Describe the earth prior to the creation of the sky.
3. What did God create on the third day, and what command did He give with that creation?
4. If someone asked you to explain how the Earth and people were created, what would you say to that person?



Next Steps

Take the time to admire God's handiwork. It doesn't take a nature-loving person to appreciate the beauty all around us. Take a five-minute walk outside with God each day and observe His artwork. Be

it grass, the animals, or other people, meditate on how awesome each of His creations is.



Put It Out There

A. Group Application

Have students discuss some ways in which humankind has abused the earth. Some people participate in recycling programs in an effort to save the earth. Others say that the earth is headed for destruction and so they don't bother. Survey the class' response on such issues as global warming. In the end, ask students if there is anything that can be done to "save" the earth. If so, write down their responses.

B. Personal Application

With His words, God framed the world. Proverbs 18:21 says that there is power of life and death in our tongues. Reflect on your speech. In what ways have you spoken death over your own life or someone else's? Repent and ask God to help your words and heart to be pleasing to Him (Psalm 19:14).



Wrap It Up

A. Daily Bible Readings

Ask participants to read a daily devotion of their choice throughout the week.

B. Talk to Him

Father, it is with awe that we read about the creation of this world. We acknowledge Your majesty and power. We repent for any time

we have entertained ideologies that go against Your Word. Help us remember the care You took in framing this Earth and not be careless in how we treat Your creation. If we have been blinded in any way to Your goodness, open our eyes and give us new sight to see You in each and every person and thing around us. It's in the name of Jesus that we pray. Amen.



Say Word?

Vegetation: ve-ji-tey-shun

SWAG
(Spiritual Wisdom and Guidance)

"People see God every day, they just don't recognize Him." — Pearl Bailey

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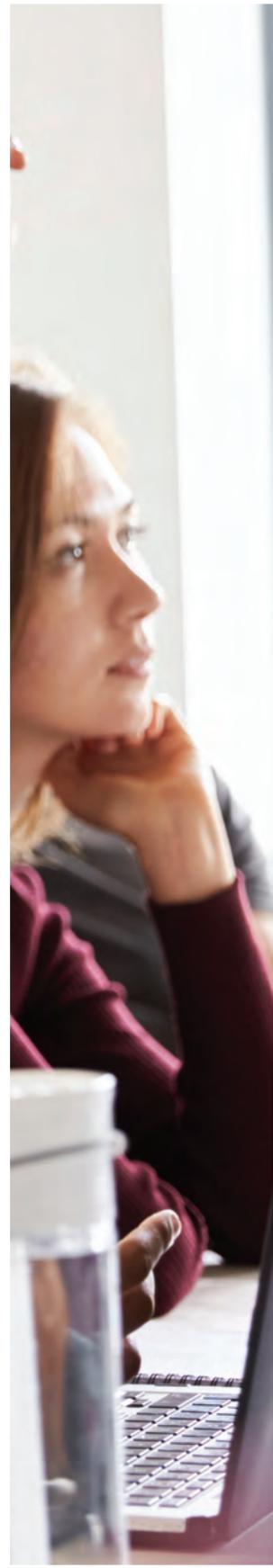


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Lesson 1





Where We're Going

By the end of the lesson, participants will acknowledge God as Creator of the universe; appreciate the created world; and admire the beauty of the heavens and the earth God created.



God Created the Heavens and the Earth

With rage running through his body, Allen listened to his biology professor explain how the world began. The aspiring med student couldn't believe what he was hearing. It wasn't as if he hadn't heard non-biblical theories before. His elementary and secondary science teachers always included such theories in the curriculum. However, the district in which Allen attended school also required that creationism be taught as a theory too. Allen was taught and believed wholeheartedly in the Bible. He now had a great appreciation for the inclusion of creationism in a public school curriculum, even if the teachers were required to call it a theory. At least students were exposed to truth, unlike in his biology class where the position of the instructor was made abundantly clear.

When he couldn't take anymore of his professor's "this is the only theory that makes sense" argument, Allen raised his hand. "Professor Neely, I find it disturbing that only one account of how the world began is being presented, particularly because I strongly disagree with what has been said so far."

"Oh, yeah?" A smirk crossed the professor's face. "Let me guess. You think we should discuss Genesis, huh?"

"As a matter of fact, I do. Not because it's what I believe to be true, but because I think it's only fair to present all viewpoints and allow each of us to decide what we want to believe instead of trying to force one theory down our throats."

The room fell silent as Professor Neely sighed. "Mr. Jackson, my objective is not to be fair, but accurate. There is scientific evidence supporting the Big Bang theory, and none supporting the myth that a supreme being created this marvelous world in which we live."

"I disagree," Allen said. "There are a lot of flaws with your theory, with science in general. That's why the supposed truth with science is always changing. When I was younger, Pluto was considered the solar system's ninth planet. Now it's not. If science is as accurate as you claim, why does it continue to change?"

Professor Neely's face showed incredulity. "Pluto had been classified as a planet, and is now considered a dwarf planet. But this is a biology class, not astronomy." Allen could feel the stares and hear the giggles of others in the class. "Let's continue with the subject matter."

Allen sighed, wondering if his outburst had been helpful or harmful to his witness.



Real Talk

1. Briefly share a personal experience of a science class or other setting where a description of the world's origin that omitted the biblical account was discussed. How did this make you feel?
2. In your opinion, should Allen have spoken up? Why or why not? If so, was the way he spoke up appropriate? Please explain.
3. Whether or not you think Allen should have spoken up, evaluate the strength of his argument. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate it and why?
4. It's not unusual for college instructors to say things that challenge one's deeply held convictions. Is it possible to have faith in God and accept scientific explanations of creation?



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Make It Stick

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters” (Genesis 1:1–2, NLT).



The Word (NLT)

Genesis 1:1, NLT In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

2 The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

3 Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

4 And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness.

5 God called the light “day” and the darkness “night.” And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day.

6 Then God said, “Let there be a space between the waters, to separate the waters of the heavens from the waters of the earth.”

7 And that is what happened. God made this space to separate the waters of the earth from the waters of the heavens.

8 God called the space “sky.” And evening passed and morning came, marking the second day.

9 Then God said, “Let the waters beneath the sky flow together into one place, so dry ground may appear.” And that is what happened.

10 God called the dry ground “land” and the waters “seas.” And God saw that it was good.

11 Then God said, “Let the land sprout with vegetation—every sort of seed-bearing plant, and trees that grow seed-bearing fruit. These seeds will then produce the kinds of plants and trees from which they came.” And that is what happened.

12 The land produced vegetation—all sorts of seed-bearing plants, and trees with seed-bearing fruit. Their seeds produced plants and trees of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

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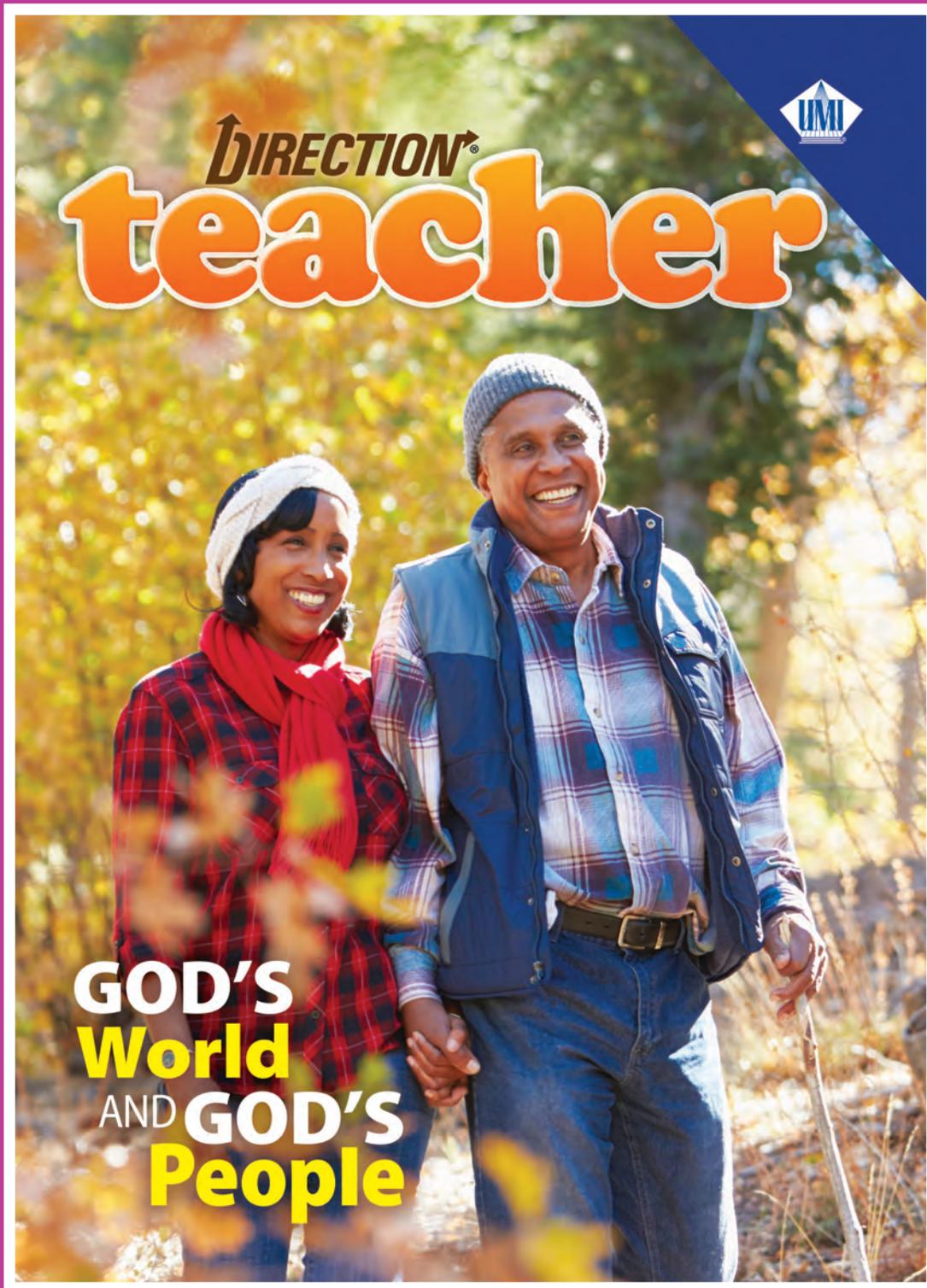
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"People see God every day, they just don't recognize Him." — Pearl Bailey





Direction[®] (Ages 36+)

It's easy for longtime church members and attendees to get locked into religious activity and lose sight of the importance of continually strengthening their faith. Direction encourages adults to seek God in Bible study and prayer, which will enable them to grow in their spiritual walk.

Teaching Tips

Bible Study Guide 1

Words You Should Know

- A. **Firmament** *raqiya'* (Heb.)—Heaven, sky.
- B. **Spirit** *ruakh* (Heb.)—Wind, breath.

Teacher Preparation

Unifying Principle—Out of the Darkness.

The wonders of the universe amaze even the keenest of human minds. Who is responsible for such marvelous and breathtaking creativity? Genesis 1 tells us that God is the Creator of all these marvelous wonders.

- A. Read the Bible Background and Devotional Readings.
- B. Pray for your students and for lesson clarity.
- C. Read the lesson Scripture in multiple translations.
- D. Invite members of the class to bring nature pictures they have taken and work together to create a display that your faith community can enjoy. Provide opportunities for them to identify the images and explain how they affirm their faith in the Creator God. Suggest that they label the images with qualities and characteristics of God that the images reflect: strength, beauty, love, care, faithfulness, for example.

O—Open the Lesson

- A. Begin the class with prayer.
- B. Have the students read the Aim for Change.
- C. Ask students how events in the story can weigh on their hearts and how they can view these events from a theological perspective.

- D. Have students read the In Focus Story.

P—Present the Scriptures

- A. Read the Focal Verses and discuss the Background and The People, Places, and Times sections.
- B. Have class share what Scriptures jump out for them and why, with particular emphasis on today's context.

E—Explore the Meaning

- A. Use More Light on the Text to help stimulate in-depth discussion of the lesson text.
- B. Discuss the Liberating Lesson and Application for Activation sections

N—Next Steps for Application

- A. Summarize the value of knowing God as Sovereign Creator.
- B. End class with a commitment to pray for families, natural resources, and scientists.

Worship Guide

For the Superintendent or Teacher
Theme: God Created the Heavens and Earth
Song: "Holy Holy Holy"
Devotional Reading: Psalm 33:1–9

God Created the Heavens and Earth

Bible Background • GENESIS 1:1–13
Printed Text • GENESIS 1:1–13 | Devotional Reading • PSALM 33:1–9

Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: **ACKNOWLEDGE** God as creator of the universe; **APPRECIATE** the created world; and **ADMIRE** the beauty of the heavens and the earth God created.



Alyse had always wanted to be a scientist. As a child, she would take her telescope outside with her father and look at the stars through it with wonder. Her father, a physicist, was part of her inspiration for pursuing natural science as a major in college. However, as she approached her senior year, she started having doubts about science after hearing a classmate say that he believed in science so he didn't believe in God. Alyse decided to talk to her dad about her dilemma. "How can you be a scientist and still believe in God, Dad?" she asked nervously.

Her father responded, "Alyse, science helps us understand our world, not give it meaning. I started doing physics because of my faith in God. I wanted to understand how this amazing world we live in works. I don't think that wondering and investigating how creation works bothers God. But at the end of the day, science is about asking questions and getting an understanding of what we see. It does not try to understand the meaning of life or the things that matter most to me, like the love I have for you and your mom. I have faith in God for those things."

Alyse was in awe. She decided that with her faith in God she could stay on her path to becoming a scientist and understanding God's creation.

What do you appreciate most about God's creation?

Keep in Mind

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:1–2, KJV).

Bible Study Guide 1

Focal Verses

KJV Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

9 And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

10 And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.

11 And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

12 And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

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The People, Places, and Times

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Is there a story of how something started that has particularly affected you?

Bible Study Guide 1

At-A-Glance

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2. God Creates Light (vv. 3–5)
3. God Creates Heaven (vv. 6–8)
4. God Creates Earth (vv. 9–13)

In Depth

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Bible Study Guide 1

once again calls these creations and their relationships with the rest of the earth good.

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Search the Scriptures

1. Why do you think the Scripture keeps repeating the phrase “God saw that it was good,” after God creates each part of the universe (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12)?

2. Why do you think God calls plants to grow out of the earth instead of simply speaking them into existence (v. 11)?

Discuss the Meaning

1. God creates by speaking everything into existence. What impact does that have on how we view the power of God’s Word?

2. How do you reconcile your understanding of science with your faith as a Christian? Do you believe in any aspects of evolution? Why, or why not?

Liberating Lesson

The Bible makes it clear that God is the Creator of the universe. God not only is the source of everything created, but He gives everything purpose and function. Yet God is distinctive in making different parts of creation unique, even allowing the earth to bring forth plants that naturally reproduce. God is purposeful and intentional in establishing diversity and boundaries in nature. As a result of the perfect wisdom of God, the visible world has good relationships between all created things despite their differences. We can observe this and conclude that we as humans should also value and appreciate the purpose of all things in nature from plants to animals, day and night, and water and land. We can also use God’s example of setting boundaries in our lives as perhaps good for us.

Application for Activation

Pause a moment to take in nature. Go for a walk, look at the sky, tend to a garden. Be intentional this week about engaging the natural world and thanking God for creation. Understand that God is the source of your life; everything that exists gives important meaning to what you can experience with your senses—sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch.

Reflect on beginnings. What good is there in the beginning of something in your life? How can you work with people in your community to begin something new for everyone’s benefit, such as a community garden? How can you show your appreciation for God’s goodness in nature?

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

More Light on the Text

Genesis 1:1–13

1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. **2** And the earth was without

Bible Study Guide 1

form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

The opening statement of the Bible declares, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” There are a few important embedded assumptions in this statement that are foundational to the Christian understanding of the universe. The first assumption is that “the beginning” here speaks to the beginning of history, the start of time. God exists in eternity beyond time. God does not have a beginning or end, God simply is. The beginning here gives context to the account of God creating the universe that follows. This beginning is the edge of human understanding that looks forward toward Creation; and the other side of the beginning looks backward, prior to human history, into the expanse of eternity mentioned in John 1:1: “In the beginning was the Word...”

The word for God here in Genesis is the Hebrew word *Elohim*, which is plural, which many Christian scholars argue is a revelation of God as Triune (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).

The word “created” here is the Hebrew *bara’* (**bah-RAH**), which communicates God being the source of Creation. This statement reveals the position of God as creator and an attribute of God as creative. The Bible contends that God is responsible for the existence of the heavens and the earth. It did not happen by accident or without intention. God created the universe on purpose. The opening statement of Genesis gives context for the story that follows; this is a story about God in relationship with heaven and earth.

The Bible assumes God exists; it is not a matter of debate or uncertainty: It is a given. Prior to the Enlightenment in 18th century Europe, this was an assumption that almost every culture in human history shared. Until the 20th century, there was no significant atheism that

denied the existence of God. We understand, as believers, that without God nothing exists. Without the decision of faith that God exists the rest of the Scriptures cannot be understood and the relationship that we have with God is incomprehensible. It is impossible to please God, let alone communicate or have right relationship with God, without this foundational assumption of God’s existence (Hebrews 11:6). This is the departure point for atheists: If one does not acknowledge the existence of God, then they cannot easily relate to God. In an increasingly secular, pluralistic society, Christians must know it is a faith decision to believe in God. God exists, and everything else flows from God’s existence. If God exists, it does not matter if humans believe in God or not, or if they question God. They are still subject to God because He created everything and transcends humanity (Job 38).

In Genesis 1:2, we are told Creation was “without form, and void,” which conveys the truth of the Earth being in an early stage of chaos. The text presents the Creation as undifferentiated and disordered. The Creation is not yet capable of producing life. The text goes on to report the gradual unfolding and development of the Creation. The Spirit “moved” This is the first reference to the Spirit of God in the Bible. The term for spirit, *ruakh* (**ROO-akh**), also translated as “wind or breath,” can be thought of as something like moving air. In this instance, the Spirit of God is present and ready to bring order to the formless Creation and to prepare the earth for habitation.

The implications of this verse in our modern context are remarkable. Many people debate whether there is a gap in time between verse 1 and verse 2 because it moves from creation to chaos that is reorganized. Some then contend that this is a re-creation in verse 2. The text itself does not worry about such a possibility. God created *ex nihilo* or from nothing.

Bible Study Guide 1

Some Christian apologists argue that this verse leaves room for evolution, that God creating would manifest as the evolutionary process: from nothingness taking form into somethingness as God speaks. Scientists are consistently astounded by the extreme circumstances that had to be fulfilled for our universe to exist as we know it—trillions of variables that had to act together in specific ways for the universe to function the way it does. The Scripture however is simply advancing the account of God and Creation. The account reveals another function of God: to bring order to chaos.

3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. 5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

Just the word “light,” translating the common Hebrew word *’or* (**ORE**), implies God, because He Himself is Light (1 John 1:5). Today we know human, plant, and animal life are all impossible without light. He spoke every aspect of known visible light into being, and it was so. What God commands, happens (Psalm 33:9). This sets a precedent for the power of the Word of God that is carried out through the rest of Scripture. All that exists came into existence by the spoken word of God (Hebrews 11:3).

It is also important to note that in Genesis 1, God creates by differentiating. God establishes order and right relationships by creating boundaries, an action of God that plays a major role in much of Bible. Boundaries and order are good; in creation they create right relationships between things. God separates light from darkness, day from night, and brings order to the chaos.

“Darkness” is from the Hebrew word *khoshek* (**kho-SHEK**). Though some contend that

darkness always represents evil, at Creation God takes the darkness that covered the formless void and calls it “night” (Heb. *layil*, **LAH-yil**). Today, we know sleep is a vital part of life; humans not only need sleep but the rest of creation requires regular rest cycles as well. The absence of balanced light and darkness cycles is a major cause of seasonal affective disorder (SAD), and light therapy is often used to treat it and other forms of seasonal depression. The light and darkness forms day and night. God continues to differentiate His creation and assign specific functions. He created for His world “morning” and “evening.” The combined cycle creates the very first complete “day” or *yom* (Heb. **YOME**), a word that contains a concept of time.

The debate is hot over the use of the word “day” in Genesis 1. Depending upon the context, it may mean what we conventionally understand to be a 24-hour period, or it may refer to an epoch or a period of time. God’s perspective on time is not the same as a human perspective; a day to God could be thousands of years to humanity (2 Peter 3:8). In this text, it certainly refers to God’s decision to act within a certain time frame. God dwells in eternity but acts in history for the sake of Creation. With that in mind, we must think of the text as indicating that God created within a particular frame of time, which could have been seven days, epochs, or periods of work. The seventh “day” was designated as rest (Exodus 31:15). Whichever it was, we must remember that the aim of the text is to tell us that the one true God created everything, not to determine when He performed this act.

The order of the day/night cycle here can be easily overlooked: first evening and then morning. The view of night as the beginning of a day continues throughout the Bible. The night to day cycle of counting days is reflected in the development of Israel’s calendar and that of

Bible Study Guide 1

other nearby cultures that were organized on a lunar calendar. One implication of this cycle is daily hope; the darkness will always give way to the light within the same day (cf. Psalm 30:5). Creation moves from darkness to light.

6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. 7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. 8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

At this stage of Creation, the waters separate, apparently making the distinction between liquid and vapor forms, and the atmosphere as we know it is called into existence. “Firmament” (Heb. *raqiya*’, **rah-KEE-ah**) is used only seventeen times in the Old Testament. Although the word can refer to where birds fly (Genesis 1:20), it usually refers to more than air. It is used as being “heavenly” in Psalm 150:1: “Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power.”

Reinforcing these uses of *raqiya*’, God called the atmosphere “heaven” (Heb. *shamayim*, **shaw-MAH-yim**), a word that is used 420 times in the Bible. Although “Heaven” is most often used like “firmament” to refer to God’s abode or a divine place beyond Earth (Genesis 22:15; Psalm 8:1; Psalm 11:4), *shamayim* is also a place where birds fly (Genesis 7:3; Job 35:11) and clouds can be seen (Job 38:37).

9 And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. 10 And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good. 11 And God said, Let the earth bring forth

grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. 12 And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. 13 And the evening and the morning were the third day.

One might think of “gathering together” as implying an orderly, even gentle act. However, the thought of the oceans of the world being gathered, while at the same time being separated from dry land, doesn’t necessarily evoke the image of a gentle act. Rather, it brings to mind a violent, explosive, even volcanic act of giant mountainous upheavals combined with equally deep gouging from the various waterways and bodies of water.

It is interesting to note that all the earth’s vegetation wasn’t created instantly but grew out of the soil. For all the water and dry land in the world to be sorted out in a day, the evolutionary timescale for wear and tear on rocks from water must have been radically increased. This could only have been done by God’s power. “Brought forth” is from the Hebrew word *yatsa* (**yah-TSAH**), which has several meanings including “growing vegetation” (Psalm 104:14). It is not surprising that God could grow trees overnight or order land and soil into existence from a formless void. Verse 12 points out that growth is a purposeful part of God’s creation. Although God could have simply spoken or created each type of plant life, God instead allows each to grow from the earth through reproduction. The herbs yield seed and the trees yield fruit after their kind. Each part of creation is created to reproduce itself; God sets in motion a cycle of reproduction, and calls it good. Seeds are the means by which God chooses to let creation multiply. Growth and multiplication are part of God’s

Bible Study Guide 1

creation before and after the introduction of sin and death.

It is awesome that God declares the natural world He has created as good, and the relationships and cycles in the natural world good. Scripture highlights the order of nature as valuable even before humankind is introduced to creation: The universe and the earth have value to God on their own as good creations. The complex systems we know today that make up the natural world are extremely delicate yet function consistently in orderly cycles as God created them to do. The natural sciences—such as biology, astronomy, chemistry, and physics—are all designed to help humanity understand the wonderful world that God has created

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“Seasonal Affective Disorder,” American Psychological Association. <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/seasonal-affective-disorder.aspx>.

Say It Correctly

Firmament. **FUHR**-muh-ment.
Genesis. **JEH**-nuh-ses.

Daily Bible Readings

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In Your Suffering Trust the Creator
(1 Peter 4:15–19)

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Renewed by the Creator
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God Is Great; God Is Good
(Psalm 33:1–9)

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God Created the Heavens and Earth
(Genesis 1:1–13)

Notes

Direction® (Ages 36+)



DIRECTION®

THE BIBLE STUDY GUIDE FOR ADULTS

GOD'S
World
AND **GOD'S**
People

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE 1

God Created the Heavens and Earth

Bible Background • GENESIS 1:1–13
Printed Text • GENESIS 1:1–13 | Devotional Reading • PSALM 33:1–9

Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: **ACKNOWLEDGE** God as creator of the universe; **APPRECIATE** the created world; and **ADMIRE** the beauty of the heavens and the earth God created.



Alyse had always wanted to be a scientist. As a child, she would take her telescope outside with her father and look at the stars through it with wonder. Her father, a physicist, was part of her inspiration for pursuing natural science as a major in college. However, as she approached her senior year, she started having doubts about science after hearing a classmate say that he believed in science so he didn't believe in God. Alyse decided to talk to her dad about her dilemma. "How can you be a scientist and still believe in God, Dad?" she asked nervously.

Her father responded, "Alyse, science helps us understand our world, not give it meaning. I started doing physics because of my faith in God. I wanted to understand how this amazing world we live in works. I don't think that wondering and investigating how creation works bothers God. But at the end of the day, science is about asking questions and getting an understanding of what we see. It does not try to understand the meaning of life or the things that matter most to me, like the love I have for you and your mom. I have faith in God for those things."

Alyse was in awe. She decided that with her faith in God she could stay on her path to becoming a scientist and understanding God's creation.

What do you appreciate most about God's creation?

Keep in Mind

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:1–2, KJV).

Bible Study Guide 1

Focal Verses

KJV Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

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13 And the evening and the morning were the third day.

The People, Places, and Times

Creation. The act of God by which the universe came into being is Creation. The Bible's chief account of Creation is Genesis 1:1–2:3. Instead of divine combat and struggle with a willful prehistoric force as other ancient cultures believed, Genesis tells of the sole, sovereign Master of the universe directing the work of Creation by verbal command. God is shown here making the world in six days and resting on the seventh. Bible scholars differ on whether the “days” were 24-hour days or longer periods.

Background

Genesis is the first book in the Bible, the first book in what is called the Torah, or Law, for the Jewish people. Genesis sets the foundation for understanding the rest of the Scriptures. In Genesis 1, we see the power of God as Creator of the universe who creates from nothing, bringing order to the chaos of nothingness. God exists apart from creation as God alone, not marked by time, space, or any other measurement. God is self-existent, all-powerful, and eternal. God also establishes cycles and patterns that make up nature and assigns the functions of each aspect of creation, from time to growth. Through creation, God shows that He is both orderly and creative. It is important to know that God calls not only creation itself good but also the relationships He establishes for the created order. The goodness and order of these relationships in the created world are challenged by the introduction of sin into the world.

Is there a story of how something started that has particularly affected you?

Bible Study Guide 1

At-A-Glance

1. God is Creator (Genesis 1:1–2)
2. God Creates Light (vv. 3–5)
3. God Creates Heaven (vv. 6–8)
4. God Creates Earth (vv. 9–13)

In Depth

1. God is Creator (Genesis 1:1–2)

God exists in eternity beyond time and space (Isaiah 57:15). God is eternal and limitless, but the book of Genesis begins with the account of Creation. God creates all that exists in the visible world, the heavens and the earth. The beginning here is the start of history, as eternity does not have a beginning or ending. God has not entered Creation, time, or space, but is acting on it by creating at this point in the story. God is Spirit and is the source of everything. God created the world and goes through the process of bringing order to it. This account of Creation in Genesis helps us know that God is the one who has created everything, and the one who can bring order to formless chaos. The earth was undifferentiated nothingness, as the Scripture says “without form, and void” (from v. 2). God is also revealed here as Spirit. God is not a created being, but Creator of the universe by God’s Spirit. The Spirit of God moved in darkness before speaking light into manifestation in verse 3.

What impact does knowing about God’s creativity have on your own understanding of creativity?

2. God Creates Light (vv. 3–5)

God speaks creation into existence. The power of God’s Word is that whatever God commands must be. God speaks and creation obeys. The first thing God speaks into the visible world is light. We know from science that nothing is visible to human eyes without light.

God creates light and calls the light good; God is pleased with His creation. Then God separates light from darkness and gives them names, Day and Night, and purpose. Everything that God creates has a purpose because God gives purpose to it. God creates the cycle of night and day to define how time will be viewed on earth.

What roles have light and darkness played in your life?

3. God Creates Heaven (vv. 6–8)

God speaks heaven into existence as a firmament or barrier. The word for heaven here refers to the space between the ground and the upper atmosphere, what we would typically call the sky, but also could mean more than that. The sky separates the earth and its waters from waters in earth’s upper atmosphere and the vast expanse of space beyond it. This continues God’s pattern of creating and establishing order, creating boundaries between things in the created world so that the world can exist in established relationships instead of jumbled chaos.

How can natural boundaries be seen as good on the earth?

4. God Creates Earth (vv. 9–13)

In earth-shaking fashion, God calls the waters on the earth together—and the land up from the waters. God gives them purpose by naming them seas and earth and calling them and their relationship with one another good. God’s creative intentionality is on full display. Then, God creates plant life; He calls it to grow out of the earth and gives each plant the ability to reproduce by using its seed. Each plant produces according to its own kind; that is to say an orange tree produces oranges instead of apples. There is intentional diversity in God’s creation. Not every plant is the same, but they all reproduce according to their species. God

Bible Study Guide 1

once again calls these creations and their relationships with the rest of the earth good.

How does knowing that God created diversity influence what we think of as differences in life?

Search the Scriptures

1. Why do you think the Scripture keeps repeating the phrase “God saw that it was good,” after God creates each part of the universe (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12)?

2. Why do you think God calls plants to grow out of the earth instead of simply speaking them into existence (v. 11)?

Discuss the Meaning

1. God creates by speaking everything into existence. What impact does that have on how we view the power of God’s Word?

2. How do you reconcile your understanding of science with your faith as a Christian? Do you believe in any aspects of evolution? Why, or why not?

Liberating Lesson

The Bible makes it clear that God is the Creator of the universe. God not only is the source of everything created, but He gives everything purpose and function. Yet God is distinctive in making different parts of creation unique, even allowing the earth to bring forth plants that naturally reproduce. God is purposeful and intentional in establishing diversity and boundaries in nature. As a result of the perfect wisdom of God, the visible world has good relationships between all created things despite their differences. We can observe this and conclude that we as humans should also value and appreciate the purpose of all things in nature from plants to animals, day and night, and water and land. We can also use God’s example of setting boundaries in our lives as perhaps good for us.

Application for Activation

Pause a moment to take in nature. Go for a walk, look at the sky, tend to a garden. Be intentional this week about engaging the natural world and thanking God for creation. Understand that God is the source of your life; everything that exists gives important meaning to what you can experience with your senses—sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch.

Reflect on beginnings. What good is there in the beginning of something in your life? How can you work with people in your community to begin something new for everyone’s benefit, such as a community garden? How can you show your appreciation for God’s goodness in nature?

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

Bible Study Guide 1

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Additional Sunday School Resources

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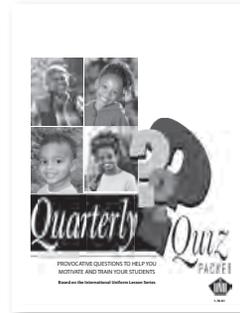
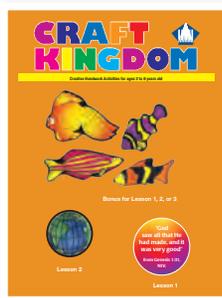
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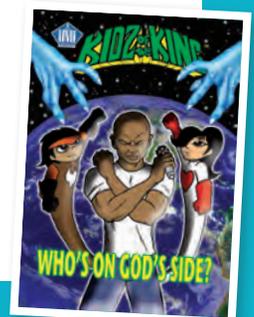


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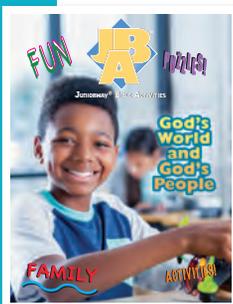
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