

GOD'S CREATION

Teacher's Preparation

One of our major beliefs that is constantly being challenged by our world is the existence of God, and His role in creation. Children are facing this struggle between these two divergent theories in school. As teachers, it is important that we explain to children our faith.

Teacher's need to reiterate

- Creation was not random but part of God's overall plan
- Man/woman were made for a specific purpose
- This plan and purpose existed before the world

Teachers should have a basic understand Darwin's Theory of Evolution to be able to answer questions that may arise. Darwin's Theory of Evolution states that all organisms evolved through natural selection. Natural selection is based on genetic variations that occur over time that would increase the ability of the organism to survive and reproduce. These changes directly influence the characteristics that will eventually become dominant in a particular species.

In this lesson, it is important that God, from the beginning of time, had a plan for all of creation. As such, the Bible from beginning to end points to this. The Bible is about God and His love for creation. Moreover, God's plan includes a specific purpose for His creation. We were created to worship and serve Him. This contrasts with a naturalistic view of creation. Within naturalism (evolution) there is no concept of higher purpose outside of survival of the species. Furthermore, the foundations of our morality will be very different if we accept evolution as the originator of humanity vs God as the Creator of nature and humanity.

Within this framework of God being the creator and having a plan, we must also understand that we were created perfectly without sin. As part of His creative work, God created humanity in His image, which in-

cludes the ability to make choices on our own (having a free will). It was through the misuse of this free will, both by Adam and Eve, and today by us as individuals, that we deal with its consequences. Sin did not enter the world because we were created poorly, rather sin came into the world because of our misuse of the free will God gave to humanity.

Aim:

- To understand God's plan and purpose for His creation.

GOD'S CREATION

Theme : God's Plan and Purpose

Grade 9 - Unit 1 Lesson 1

Genesis 1

1 In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ² the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.

³ Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. ⁴ And God saw that the light was good; and God 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 dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." ⁷ So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. ⁸ God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

⁹ And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. ¹⁰ God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. ¹¹ Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. ¹² The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. ¹³ And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

¹⁴ And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, ¹⁵ and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. ¹⁶ God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷ God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸ to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

²⁰ And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky." ²¹ So God created the great sea monsters and every living

creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. ²² God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." ²³ And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

²⁴ And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so. ²⁵ God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

²⁷ So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." ²⁹ God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food.

³⁰ And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. ³¹ God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Aim:

- To understand God's plan and purpose for His creation.

Student Introduction

If everything around us, including our own selves were the results of random, meaningless occurrences, then we have no higher purpose. But as the handiwork of a Creator, you and the entire universe have a higher purpose and a plan. If man was an accident or just an end-point of several chemical and biological processes, then dignity and honor become almost meaningless, because man would have no greater value than a cow, lizard or amoeba. When God is in the picture, there is a greater law in the universe than “survival of the fittest”. When God is in the picture, it helps us answer the questions of who we are, why we are here and what is our purpose in life. We can only understand who we are when we understand God’s role in creation and the best place to begin that understanding is in Genesis.

One day, students of Albert Einstein were deep in discussion about the existence of God, and they came to the conclusion that “God did not exist”. Einstein asked them collectively, how much worldly knowledge they possessed. The students deliberated for a while and concluded that all together they probably had about 5% of all human knowledge. Einstein replied, “Is it possible that God exists in the 95% that you know nothing about?”

These first few verses in the Bible, reveal to us God as the creator. Why is it important for the reader to “know God as the creator”? The very question of our existence should lead us to know our God as the creator. Everything we are and what we will become, hinges on us understanding God as the creator. Our purpose in studying Genesis is not to question God’s existence or the verity of creation, but to understand the divine plan and purpose for creation as a whole, and for each of us individually. The first chapter of Genesis outlines the process of creation, in which God in His divine power, created everything. Let us take some time to review these steps of divine creation outlined in the chapter.

Bible Exposition

The Magnificence of Creation – “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” – the Bible is straightforward about this declaration that the world did not come into being by chance. It was God who thought, decided and brought the world into existence. Creation is an eternal statement of an eternal God. In Genesis 1:1, the original Hebrew translation uses the word “bara” meaning “to create out of nothing”. Our creator God did not have any pre-existing material from which He created everything. In His divine power, God thought and spoke and we are the outcome. God did all of this “in the beginning”, yet there was much more before the beginning. “Your throne is established from of old; You are from



*The Hebrew word **Bara***

means

“to create out of nothing”

Activities

Divide in 2 groups with each group taking one of the following positions:

Group 1 - Take the position that we all are the result of evolution and that there is no ultimate plan or purpose for our existence.

Group 2 - Take the position that we are the result of God's creation and have a purpose and plan for our existence.

Based on your group's position, discuss from your view point the following questions:

- How was man/woman created?
- What is the difference between man and other animals?
- What happens after you die?
- Examine the foundations for morality and ethics. Are we responsible for our actions? Describe why/why not?

everlasting" (Psalm 93:2). "Before the mountains were brought forth, or You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God" (Psalm 90:2). What a magnificent God we serve!

Although the Bible states creation as a simple fact, it is not merely a fact, not a blip in time, not a mere dot on a chronological timeline. It is in fact magnificent and a window into the awesome power of God as the creator. Let us consider the little we know and understand about the universe: a typical galaxy contains billions of individual stars; the Milky Way alone contains 200 billion stars; the Milky way is a giant spiral and would take 250 million years for it to make one complete rotation; there are many other galaxies that we are only now learning about; we know and understand very little about the universe.

But God did this all by Himself; "Indeed My hand has laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand has stretched out the heavens; when I call to them they stand up together." (Isaiah 48:13)

Man in God's Image – "Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.' So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." (Genesis 1: 26, 27).

To understand who we are in God, we need to begin knowing that we are made in the image of God. We are special, the crown of His creation. We are unique and different from every other aspect of divine creation. Man is distinct in his moral, intellectual and spiritual capacities. Truly, human life is valuable because every human being, even with all our flaws and faults are still made in the image of God.

What is man's purpose in creation? God gave man "dominion" over all creation. When God said, 1. "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and 2. have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth", he had the "big picture" in mind. In the original Hebrew text, "dominion" does not mean "to dominate", "to exploit" or "to control", instead, it means "to be responsible for". God appointed man as "stewards" over His creation; He gave us a responsibility.

Creation is the Perfect Plan of a Perfect God – We are not here by chance. Chance is the mere probability for anything to happen. Chance does not make things happen. Chance has no power. Inherent in God's creation is a plan and a purpose; a perfect plan and a perfect purpose. Nothing in His divine plan is an accident. The Bible also tells us that God's plan and purpose were good; He was satisfied. God's purpose in creation was eternal, "to gather together all things through Christ" (Ephesians 1:10). In the beginning, God planned salvation for His most cherished creation - Man. God wove

the plan of salvation into His plan of creation.

i. Jesus was ordained before the world was created: *He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.* (1 Peter 1:20)

ii. Eternal life was promised before time began: *in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began.* (Titus 1:2)

iii. The mystery of the gospel (the cross) was ordained before the world: *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory.* (1 Corinthians 2:7)

iv. The grace given unto us was given before the world began: *who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.* (2 Timothy 1:9)

v. Believers in Jesus Christ were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world: *just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.* (Ephesians 1:4)

God's Plan for You – Do you know what it means to you personally to be created in “His image”? Knowing that God has a special plan for your life means that you are not here by chance. He knew you before you were born, he thought about who He wanted you to be, way before time itself! "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." (Jeremiah 1:5). Everything that happens in your life, from the small, insignificant, seemingly irrelevant activities to the most critical, crucial life-changing actions all happen within the greater scheme that is God's will. Think about whether you have a relationship with your creator and if you do, what that relationship is like. Do you see God's Son Jesus as your Savior, or just someone you have been learning about for many years?

God created humanity perfect, which means without sin. He also created humanity in His image, which means we are able to make a choice as to whether we will use our lives to fulfill God's purpose, or whether we will rebel against Him and choose our own path (ie sin). The choice of Adam in the past and the choices we make today show that we have chosen to go our own way. This is contrary to God's design and purpose and thus we see creation today does not function the way God planned. Yet there is hope. For those whom God has chosen, He also planned their salvation before time. Jesus paid for their salvation, so He could fulfill God's plan.

God knew before time that you, personally, would have faults, that you, personally, would be a sinner. The big question is do you find hope and redemption because of the Grace and Mercy of God, paid for by Jesus Christ, or do you find hope and redemption in something else? Have you asked God if you are one of His redeemed or have you tried to earn redemption on your own. Without a relationship with Christ, started by the Holy Spirit, a person cannot fulfill the amazing plans God has for His creation.



Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

Jeremiah 1:5

Lesson Review:

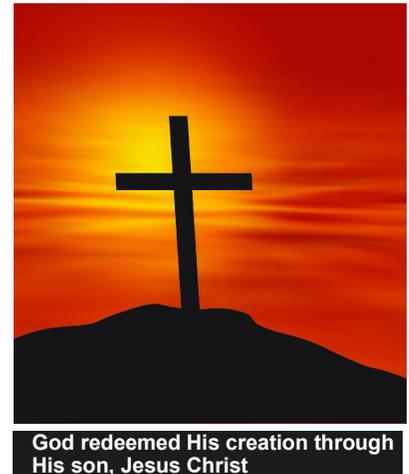
1. The Hebrew word “bara” means _____ .
2. What 2 things did God command man to do?

3. Identify what was part of God’s plan for the world, even before it was created.

Values For Life

What is man’s purpose in creation? God gave man “dominion” over all creation. When God said, 1. “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and 2. have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth”, he had the “big picture” in mind. In the original Hebrew text, “dominion” does not mean “to dominate”, “to exploit” or “to control”, instead, it means “to be responsible for”. God appointed man as “stewards” over His creation; He gave us a responsibility

Our stewardship of creation is often diluted to only include our immediate environment; rarely do we go so far as to include our extended environment. Our stewardship of God’s creation should not be superficially restricted to recycling and waste management which are all critical and relevant, but should extend to the value we place on human beings, the way we view the unborn and the born, the dignity we afford to the disabled, the aged and the not-so-perfect, the stand we take against discrimination and injustice, and even our politico-social opinions on stem cell research, cloning and genetic engineering.



Memory Verse:

God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” **Genesis 1:28**

Closing Prayer:

Heavenly father, we thank You for creating us for a purpose and plan. Let us understand this each day we breathe so that our thoughts and actions are aligned with Your purpose for us and this world. Help us treat all of creation with dignity and respect. Give us strength and courage to stand up against the evils of this world that go against Your creation and Your purpose. Fill us with Your Spirit to do Your will and if we have yet to be touched by Your Holy Spirit, we pray that you will redeem us so that we may serve and honor you every day of our life. Amen.