

FAITH REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH

SUNDAY SCHOOL

CURRICULUM PROJECT ©

**** Grades 3-4, Year I ****

Robert C. Walton, Editor

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THE SIX DAYS OF CREATION

by Laura Sweet

**Grades 3-4
Year 1
Quarter 1**

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INTRODUCTION -

THE SIX DAYS OF CREATION

Through the lessons of this quarter you have the opportunity to lead your students to examine, contemplate, and celebrate the creative work of God as He brought our universe into existence. Each week we will take a look at a different element of the creation, discuss its importance to us, and make spiritual application to our own lives. Much of the material in this quarter is devotional in nature, with the hope that it will cause our students to look at the world around them in a new way. The information passed on to them should cause them to wonder, and to praise God for His glory, power, wisdom, and goodness to us.

It seems only fitting that a quarter that celebrates God's creative work should also be a quarter that encourages our students' creativity. Unlike the worksheets that are used in the second, third, and fourth quarters, this quarter's lessons use activities or art projects to reinforce the teaching. None of the activities is elaborate, but most will require some extra materials, which are listed below. Asterisks indicate lessons that include suggested alternative activities.

- Lesson 1 - drawing paper, flashlight or lamp
- Lesson 2 - bubble soap (for blowing bubbles)*
- Lesson 3 - construction paper, old magazines
- Lesson 4 - construction paper, assorted seeds*
- Lesson 5 - drawing paper, pastels or chalk
- Lesson 6 - plastic margarine tubs, birdseed*
- Lesson 7 - paper, fish-shaped crackers, glue
- Lesson 8 - marshmallows, chow mein noodles
- Lesson 9 - paper plates
- Lesson 10 - paper plates, construction paper, craft sticks
- Lesson 11 - rocks, paint, felt
- Lesson 12 - construction paper, old magazines
- Lesson 13 - writing paper

Several of these projects also require crayons or pencils, or scissors, which we assume you have in your classroom. Rather than trying to gather or purchase all of these materials yourself, we suggest you print a list of your needs for the quarter in your church bulletin so that your church members can help. This should bring in enough plastic margarine tubs, old magazines, marshmallows, etc., for the whole class to use.

In addition to the craft projects, each lesson also has a Fact Sheet that can be photocopied and passed out to each member of the class. These Fact Sheets reinforce the main points of the lesson; they also present amazing facts about the lesson's subject that will interest your third and fourth graders. For example, the Fact Sheet for Lesson #6 compares the world's smallest bird (the hummingbird) to the world's largest bird (the ostrich), and the Lesson #2 Fact Sheet explains the unique qualities of the earth's atmosphere.

These lessons also contain suggested hymns or choruses that will reinforce the lesson theme. While these are listed at the end, you may wish to use them before the lesson if that is when you usually sing.

Finally, you may wish to use the following poem in your class to help your students learn the order of the days of creation:

The Days Poem

On the first day, light;
On the second day, air;
On the third, sea and land,
And all the plants that grow there.
On the fourth day, the sun,
Moon, and stars of the sky;
On the fifth day, the fish,
And birds and bugs that fly.
The sixth day brought animals
Both big and small,
And then Adam and Eve
To rule over them all.
All these things our God did bless.
Then the seventh day was one of rest.

Laura N. Sweet

May these lessons bring you and your students to a greater appreciation for God's work of creation, and a new sense of wonder for the world around us.

GOD CREATES LIGHT

Genesis 1:1-5

Lesson Aim

To help students understand that God created light on the first day of creation, and that He is able to shine the light of truth in sin-darkened hearts.

Memory Verse

Genesis 1:1 - "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Lesson Background

The words of the first chapter of Genesis are so simple and so clear, and so beautiful in their simplicity. There is no attempt made to explain or defend this account of the world's birth in a scientific manner. The account is given simply as the truth and should be accepted in the same way. And yet, an awesome beauty lies behind a phrase like "And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light" (Genesis 1:3). To think about God bringing light into a formless, empty world, and thereby making that world possible, and life possible, and all of human history and the history of redemption possible! Paul saw in this first act of creation a picture of the reclamation of the human race, as he wrote in II Corinthians 4:6, "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." For what is as dark as the human heart, empty of all knowledge of God, and filled only with sin? And what light can penetrate such a darkness if it is not the Light of the world, Jesus Christ? In this week's lesson, we will look at both the literal creation of light on the first day of creation and the way light is symbolically used in Scripture. Let us emphasize to our students that their hearts are just as empty and void of life as our universe once was if they haven't experienced the light of truth in their lives.

For this week's lesson, you will need a candle for the introduction and some drawing paper for the project. You will also need some type of light to use for drawing silhouettes - perhaps a powerful flashlight or a small lamp with the lampshade removed. If your classroom has windows without shades, you will probably need to bring something to put over the windows to make the room as dark as possible.

Lesson Procedure

After your students have arrived, make your classroom as dark as possible by turning out the lights and covering up any windows you may have. Then light a candle and set the candle in the middle of your class table or discussion area. Remark on the ability of even a small candle to shed light in a darkened room. Ask the following questions: "What if I were able to make this room totally pitch black - without any light penetrating it whatsoever - and then lit this candle? Would the darkness overpower the candle, or would the candle still light the darkness?" Obviously, the candle would still penetrate the darkness. "What if I were to go into a deep, dark hole, miles under the surface of the earth, where light has never shone, and then light this candle? Could that darkness overpower my candle?" No amount of darkness can ever overpower and conquer the feeblest of lights - light will always penetrate the darkness.

"Suppose I were to blindfold you and take you into a pitch-black room with which you were unfamiliar. Even with the blindfold off, would you be able to tell if the room was beautiful or ugly, clean or dirty, big or small? What would you need in order to make some judgments about this room?" You would need a light; even a small light would reveal your surroundings to you and show you the condition of the room that had been hidden by the darkness. After this discussion, bring the lights back on and have your students open their Bibles to Genesis 1:1-5.

1. God Brings Forth Light on the First Day of Creation (Genesis 1:1-5)

Read the passage aloud in class, and bring out the following points:

- "In the beginning, God . . ." God has always existed, and He was there before the beginning of time. We are not told where God came from, or what He was doing before the creation of the world. We are told simply that He was there from the very beginning of all things.
- Discuss the condition of the universe before God's creative work was begun and ask your students to point out some of the words used to describe what our world was like, such as "empty" and "formless."
- Point out that God brought light into existence by merely speaking the commandment. It is His will that creates and His word that brings it to pass.
- God's sole creative work on this first day of creation was to bring light into the universe. This light made God's creative work visible and life on the planet possible. Without light there could be no life, since plants use light to make food, and animals and people eat plants to live. God was pleased with the creation of light, and saw that it was good.

2. The Bible Compares Truth to the Light

Just as God's light penetrated the darkness of our universe, so there is another kind of darkness that must be overcome by light. The Bible describes sin as being a form of darkness.

Sinners stumble about in the darkness, unable to see the truth, unable to see their way, unable to see the reality of the world around them. But there is a light that can pierce the darkness of sin, and that light is the truth of God.

Like light, God's truth can pierce even the deepest darkness and show the world as it really is. Like light, God's truth can show what our world and our hearts and our minds are really like.

A. God's Truth is His Word

Have your students look up Psalm 119:105. God's Word is a light that can dispel the darkness of sin and guide people in the right "path" or way to live their lives.

B. God's Truth is His Son

In John 8:12, Jesus says that He is the light of the world, and that whoever follows Him will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. Have your students look up John 3:19-21; tell your students that Jesus will show the way of truth to those who turn from the darkness of sin and believe in Him.

C. God's Truth Can Shine in Our Hearts

In II Corinthians 4:6, we read that, just as God made light shine out of the darkness of creation, He can cause His light of truth to shine in a sin-darkened heart.

Conclusion

"What is your heart like today? Is it like the world was before God brought the light into being - empty, dark, without hope? Or do you have the light of God's truth in your heart? Are you following Jesus and trusting in His salvation? Are you making the Bible a guide for your life? If you want God's light in your heart and life, then you need to come out of the darkness and repent of your sins. And you need to ask Christ to save you, and follow Him in the light of life." Encourage your students to see you after class if any of them has a question about his or her own salvation.

Art Project - Silhouettes

You can do these silhouettes in a number of ways. Perhaps you might like each child to do a silhouette of his or her own hand - something they can take turns doing with the bright light. Or you may have one child sit while another traces his or her silhouette on a piece of paper taped to a wall where the child's shadow falls. Then you could have the students take turns drawing and sitting for the silhouette portrait. Or perhaps you might place a simple object in the light and have each child take a turn copying the silhouette. As the children are working, you should comment on the clear line between light and shadow; the two do not mix, but are complete opposites. "That's the same with truth and falsehood. They are always opposed. Don't let anyone tell you that there is no such thing as something being 'absolutely true.' Truth is always true and cannot change. And a lie can never, ever be the truth."

Fact Sheet

Make copies of the fact sheet for your students to take home.

Related Music

“Lord, the Light of Your Love is Shining”; “The Light of the World is Jesus” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #476).

The Facts of “Light”

1. On the first day of creation, God created light - and that was all He created that day.
2. God created light before He created the sun, moon or stars.
3. Light is energy; light was necessary on the first day of creation to make God’s work visible and to make life possible.
4. Without light there could be no life! Plants use light to make food and animals and people eat plants to live. Even coal and oil come from plants, which get their energy from the sun.
5. God’s Word is a light to show us the right way to go (Psalm 119:105).
6. Jesus said He was the Light of the world (John 8:12).
7. God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all (I John 1:5).
8. Christians are also to shine like lights. Jesus wants us to let our lights shine before everyone, so that they may see our good works, and glorify our heavenly Father (Matthew 5:16).

Memory Verse

Genesis 1:1 - “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

GOD CREATES THE ATMOSPHERE

Genesis 1:6-8

Lesson Aim

To help students understand the importance of the earth's atmosphere to all living creatures and to appreciate and praise God for this creative work.

Memory Verse

Genesis 1:2 - "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."

Lesson Background

The NIV Study Bible suggests that there is a structure to the six days of creation that is suggested by the condition of the world before God's work began - "formless and empty." Although the world began formless and empty, it was to be formed and filled. The first three days of creation show the forming of our universe, with the creation of light, the atmosphere, and the separation of the land from the sea. The next three days involve the "filling" of the world, as the sun, moon and stars fill the sky, and plants, animals and man fill the earth. We see an orderliness and purposeful advancement in the creative work, and we must realize that every creative act was pushing toward the ultimate goal of the entire process - the creation of man himself. Adam was not an afterthought in the work of creation; God made the earth so that it would be the perfect environment for mankind. The atmosphere plays an important role in this environment, as we'll learn in today's lesson.

For this lesson you will need some "bubble soap" for blowing bubbles. If possible, you'll want to take this activity outdoors and have several bottles of bubble soap and wands for your students to use. You can also provide eye-droppers, for blowing tiny bubbles, and bubble wands for making large bubbles if you

can go outdoors. Be sure to hide the bubble soap until after the lesson time to keep your students focused on the lesson! [NOTE: If you know you cannot go outside for this activity, you may wish to use the optional activity, which involves inflating clear balloons instead (see page 11).]

Lesson Procedure

Begin the lesson by asking your students to imagine that they are a group of scientists and astronauts planning to begin the first colony on the moon. Have them list some of the things they would need to have or to build in order to sustain life on the moon. Your students will suggest many things, but someone is bound to remember that there is no oxygen on the moon and that elaborate steps must be taken just for humans to breathe there. Living on the moon would be like living in the sea - you couldn't go out on the moon's surface for more than a minute or two without oxygen tanks, and any housing built would have to include a way to maintain the oxygen levels that people need. "We take the air that we breathe here on earth for granted, but did you know that the earth is the only planet in our solar system that has oxygen? God created light on the first day of creation, but after that the first order of business was to create an atmosphere that could sustain life. That's what we're going to talk about in today's lesson."

1. God Creates the Atmosphere (Genesis 1:6-8)

Read Genesis 1:6-8 aloud in class. Referring back to verse 2, remind your students that the world at this time was covered with water, but there was no atmosphere to sustain life. The "expanse" between the waters that God caused to exist by speaking is the atmosphere, a "sea of air" made up of oxygen, other gases, specks of dust, and water. Some Creationist scientists believe that the "water above" the atmosphere refers to a special "vapor canopy" that existed before the Flood. This vapor canopy would have kept the earth at a tropical temperature and would have caused a greenhouse-like condition, where mists from the earth would water the vegetation without rainfall (see Genesis 2:5-6). This would also account for the "floodgates of heaven being opened" during the Flood (see Genesis 7:11) to produce the great amount of rain needed to flood the earth in Noah's time. (Evolutionists also believe a vapor canopy existed on the earth, but they date it according to their evolutionary "calendar," many millions of years before they think man came into being.) For more information on the vapor canopy, Dr. Henry Morris, the founder of the Institute for Creation Research, deals with the subject in his book, *The Genesis Record*.

Have your students imagine themselves adrift in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, where all they can see as far as they look is sky and water. This must be what the world looked like after the creation of the atmosphere; at this point there was no dry land upon the earth.

2. The Wonder of Earth's Atmosphere

The atmosphere on this planet is truly a marvelous thing. Earth is the only planet we know of with oxygen present in the atmosphere; 21% of our atmosphere is oxygen. The water present in our atmosphere gives us the weather that we have on earth. Another thing to consider about our atmosphere is the remarkable ozone layer. Without it, the ultraviolet rays of the sun would soon destroy us and every other living thing on the planet. But God designed the ozone layer above the earth's atmosphere - which is also produced from oxygen - to protect us by filtering out these dangerous rays. And our atmosphere protects us from the ozone layer, because ozone is a poisonous substance to us.

“Because we can’t see air, it is possible that many of us have taken it for granted. It is getting harder and harder to do so, as man continues to pollute the air we breathe and harm the ozone layer. The effect of pollution on our atmosphere shows the delicate balance that must be maintained for humans and other creatures to live. Yet there are some people who want us to believe that all of this just “happened,” that it was simply an “accident” that our planet has the right mix of oxygen and other gases, and a protective ozone layer, and all the other things that make life possible here. What would you say to someone who believed this?” As your students express their opinions on this question, remind them that our greatest defense of what we believe isn’t science, but God’s Word. God’s Word says that He created the atmosphere, and for that reason we should believe it. But it is also clear from science that our atmosphere is a wonder that couldn’t just have happened by “accident.”

3. Praising God for the Air We Breathe

Hopefully, we praise God for many of His good gifts to us. We thank Him at mealtimes for the food He has provided. We thank Him for our families and our homes and our church, our country and our health, etc. But have we ever thanked the Lord for the air that we breathe? The Bible makes it clear that we are dependent on the Lord for every breath we take. In many places, breath and life are used synonymously. Have your students look up the following verses and discuss them in class - Job 12:10; Isaiah 42:5; Psalm 150:6. These verses make it clear that the very fact that we are alive and breathing is by God’s grace. Psalm 150:6 - the last verse in the Psalms - reminds us that breath alone is reason to praise God. “Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!” Encourage your students to praise God this week for the air He created and for the life He has given them to enjoy. You may wish to give your students the opportunity to pray and praise God for the air they breathe at this time.

Activity - Blowing Bubbles

Bring several empty containers out and ask your students what is inside of them. If they reply, “Nothing,” remind them that something very important is inside - air! “One of the reasons we take air for granted is because we can’t see it. But there is one way I know of to make air ‘visible’; we can do that by blowing bubbles.” Get your bubble paraphernalia out and allow each student an opportunity to blow some bubbles, experimenting with different sizes and shapes. Remind your students that bubbles are really just air surrounded on all sides by soapy water. Remind them also that air takes up space, which is why all bubbles are different sizes depending on the amount of air blown into them.

Optional Activity - Blowing Up Clear Balloons

Inflating balloons is another way of making air visible and showing that it takes up space. If you can obtain some clear, see-through balloons (available at many party stores), you can have your students write their memory verse down on a small piece of paper, insert the verse into the clear balloon and then inflate it. This should result in a balloon with the memory verse visible on the inside.

Fact Sheet

Make photocopies of the Fact Sheet for each member of your class to take home.

Related Music

“Bless the Lord, O My Soul (Bless His Holy Name)”; “Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow”
(*Trinity Hymnal*, #731).

The Air That's There

1. God created the atmosphere on the second day of creation (Genesis 1:6-8).
2. The earth is the only planet in our solar system to have oxygen in its atmosphere.
3. Our atmosphere is 21% oxygen. It is also made up of other gases, specks of dust, and water.
4. The water in our atmosphere gives us our weather.
5. The ozone layer above the atmosphere protects us from the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays. Without the ozone layer, all living things on the earth would die in a very short time.
6. In the Bible, "breath" and "life" are sometimes used to mean the same thing. Isaiah 42:5 says, "He who created the heavens and stretched them out . . . who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it."
7. We need to praise God for everything - including the air we breathe. Psalm 150:6 says, "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!"

Memory Verse

Genesis 1:2 - "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."

LAND AND WATER

Genesis 1:9-10

Lesson Aim

To encourage students to consider the power of God, which separated the land from the seas, and to praise Him for this mighty act of power.

Memory Verse

Genesis 1:3 - "And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light."

Lesson Background

Our text this week simply states that God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let the dry ground appear," and that "it was so." But can you imagine watching this take place? Did the waters part like the Red Sea when the Israelites crossed over? Did the mountains emerge out of the seas, pushing the water back as they appeared? I can imagine tremendous earthquakes and winds and volcanic eruptions during this awesome display of God's power. The psalmist describes the scene this way: "But at your rebuke the waters fled, at the sound of your trumpet they took to flight; they flowed over the mountains, they went down into the valleys, to the place you assigned for them. You set a boundary they cannot cross; never again will they cover the earth" (Psalm 104:7-9).

This week encourage your students to imagine this scene for themselves so that they might truly appreciate the power that God displayed on the third day of creation. Pictures of mountains, the Grand Canyon, volcanoes, and other impressive land formations will also help to show the complexity and variety of the earth's "dry ground." We will also be using pictures from magazines in our activity today to make "land and sea collages"; nature, science and geography magazines will work best for this project.

Lesson Procedure

Begin the lesson by having your students imagine that they are going to build a man-made mountain on a flat piece of ground - perhaps to make a ski resort, as many have done in colder climates. Ask your students what they would need to make even a “small mountain.” You would need engineers and surveyors and workers to plan your mountain. You would need dump trucks and bulldozers and steam shovels and other powerful equipment. And you would need dirt, or course, but the right kind of dirt that would not erode or wash away easily. In other words, even a small man-made mountain would take time, talent, expertise, planning, and powerful equipment to construct.

“In today’s lesson, we’re going to talk about how God created all of the mountain ranges, canyons, plains, valleys, seashores, and how He established the boundaries of the seas - all in the third day of creation. As you’ve just used your imagination to think about this man-made mountain, I want you to use it during this lesson so you will understand the great power and wisdom of God, which separated the dry ground from the sea.”

1. God Separates the Land and the Seas (Genesis 1:9-10)

Review last week’s lesson on the creation of the atmosphere and discuss how the earth looked after the second day of creation - nothing but sky and sea. Then read Genesis 1:9-10 aloud in class.

Inform your students that today, if the earth were completely smooth, with no mountains and no valleys, the entire earth would be covered with water almost two miles deep! Apparently this is the way the world was before God began to separate the land and the seas. Have your students look up Psalm 104:5-9. From these verses, it would appear that as the mountains began to form by God’s commandment, the waters rushed off their surfaces and fell into place in the lower spots of the earth, which God had designed for their boundaries. Have your students close their eyes and try to imagine what this would look like, as tremendous movements of the earth took place to form the Rockies, the Alps and the Himalayas. If you have pictures, this is a good time to show them to the class. Remark on God’s power to create these land formations, and His wisdom, and His love for beauty and form. Ask your students if any of them have seen mountains or cliffs or canyons in person, and ask them what they thought of their beauty.

After you’ve considered the variety of the earth’s land masses, take a few minutes to think about the seas. Our planet is mostly covered by water; if we took a spaceship far away from the earth, our world would look like a blue-green ball. Water is absolutely essential to life, whether it’s plant life, animal life or human life. People can go many days without food, but we’d be dead very quickly without water. There are 350 million cubic feet of water on the earth, but there is not a single drop of liquid water on any of the other planets in our solar system! Once again, we see that God designed our planet to sustain life - the lives of human beings in particular.

Now the scene was set for life, but at this point there was nothing alive on the planet’s surface. The land was bare, without grass, vegetation, or even moss. The seas were empty of plants, fish and plankton. The earth now had shape and form, but it was waiting to be filled.

2. Our Response to God’s Work

As we consider God’s work of separating the dry ground from the seas, what should be our response? The Bible itself suggests several responses to this work.

A. We Should Marvel

Look up Job 38:8-11 and read it aloud in class. As the Lord speaks to Job, He points to this work of creation, of setting boundaries for the seas, as something that should awe and silence Job. When we think about the tremendous energy and power required to move and shape and form the earth, we should marvel at the greatness of God.

B. We Should Fear God

Read aloud in class Jeremiah 5:22, which makes it clear that we should not take God lightly when we consider this powerful act of creation. “Should you not fear me? . . . Should you not tremble in my presence? . . . I made the sand a boundary for the sea, an everlasting barrier it cannot cross . . .” A God capable of doing this is the God we must live to love and serve.

C. It Should Reveal to Us Truths About God’s Divine Nature and Power

Romans 1:20 tells us that creation itself is a witness to God’s eternal power and divine nature. This is certainly true when we consider the separation of the land from the seas. The work of creation is inexplicable apart from the existence of a wise, powerful and good God, and even those who have never heard about the Bible should know just from creation that God exists.

“Maybe this is something you’ve never thought about before. Maybe you’ve never stopped to think about the power that caused the mountains to come into existence or the power that holds the seas in their place. How would you like to respond to this right now, as we’re still in Sunday School?” Students may suggest praising God aloud for His work, praying to Him and thanking Him for what He has done, or perhaps they’d like to sing a song of praise, such as “I Sing the Almighty Power of God!” Or perhaps you’ll get some original answers from your students - I hope you do!

Activity

Today we’ll make “land and sea collages.” Have your students find different landscape and seascape pictures in old magazines, cut them out, and arrange them collage-style on construction paper. If you have a small class, you may decide to do just one “class collage,” and if your class is larger, everyone can work on their own. Encourage the students to show a variety of different land and sea pictures (mountains, valleys, forests, beaches, glaciers, plains, etc.).

Related Music

“My God is So Great”; “What a Mighty God We Serve”; “I Sing the Almighty Power of God”
(*Trinity Hymnal*, #119).

Landscape, Seascape

1. On the third day of creation God separated the seas from the dry land. This is the day He created the mountains, canyons, plains, etc. It is also the day that He pushed back the seas into the lower areas of the earth and set boundaries for the seas.
2. If the earth were totally smooth today, with no mountains and no valleys, everything would be covered with water almost two miles deep!
3. Most of the earth is covered with water. We have 350 million cubic feet of water on our planet, but there is no liquid water on any other planet in the solar system.
4. Water is absolutely essential for life - plant life, animal life, and human life.
5. God's tremendous, eternal power is seen in the separation of the land from the seas (Jeremiah 5:22; Romans 1:20).
6. God's wisdom and love of beauty are seen in the beauty and variety of earth's land masses and seas (Psalm 104:24; Romans 1:20).

Memory Verse

Genesis 1:3 - "And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light."

GOD CREATES PLANT LIFE

Genesis 1:11-13

Lesson Aim

To enable students to consider the goodness of God as evidenced in the creation of plant life and to praise Him for it.

Memory Verse

Genesis 1:11 - “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.”

Lesson Background

The plant life on our planet is the basis for all life. As plants feed on the energy from the sun through the miraculous process of photosynthesis, they turn that energy into starches, proteins, and other substances required for animal life. Animals and humans then feed upon the plants, obtaining their energy from them.

Of course, one kind of plant, covering all the earth, could, theoretically, provide the energy needs of all animal life. But we see God’s goodness not only in the provision of vegetation, but in the beauty and infinite variety of the plants around us. God created plants of great beauty, numerous fruit trees, grain, legumes, vegetables, berries, etc. - a variety that not only makes our life possible, but brings us enjoyment and pleasure. Psalm 104 makes it clear that God not only sustains us, but blesses us with His goodness - “wine that gladdens the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread that sustains his heart” (Psalm 104:15). God’s goodness fills the earth with His provision of plant life, the beauty and variety of plant life, and the continuation of plant life - all points that we will discuss in this lesson.

For the “seed picture” activity, you can use sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, bird seeds, popcorn kernels, dried beans and peas - use your imagination! [Note: There is an alternative activity if you are in a location and climate that allow you to go outdoors.]

Lesson Procedure

Begin the lesson by having your students imagine themselves in a different kind of world - a world where no color exists. Everything is black and white and gray, like an old movie. Then have them imagine that they had to eat the same thing for every meal, every day - oatmeal. “It’s good and filling and nutritious,” you’ll say, “but it’s the only thing you’ve ever tasted.” Then have them imagine that everything smells the same - an antiseptic smell, like the doctor’s office or a hospital. “Now,” you’ll ask them, “how would you describe a world like that?”

Your students will probably declare that such a world would be dull or boring (or worse, depending on their feelings about oatmeal!). “You know, that’s just what our world could have been like - a place where people could live and work, but without beauty or colors or a variety of foods and tastes and scents. But God didn’t make that kind of world for us, did He? No, He made a world that meets not only our physical needs, but our needs for beauty and pleasure and enjoyment. A great deal of this beauty was brought forth on the third day of creation, when God covered the earth with grass, flowers, trees, fruits and vegetables, and other marvelous plants.”

1. God Fills the Earth with Vegetation (Genesis 1:11-13)

Read Genesis 1:11-13. The third day is also the day in which God separated the land from the seas, as we discussed in last week’s lesson. Now the time had come to cover the earth with vegetation. This was to prepare the earth for animal life and human life. As was discussed in the Lesson Background, plant life is the basis of all life. As animals and people eat plants (or eat animals that eat plants, like sheep and cows), their life is sustained with the energy those plants provide.

Notice that the system to sustain plant life is built into the vegetation; as the plants bear seeds, these seeds will also eventually grow into plants, which will also eventually bear seeds. Notice also that “like produces like”; God did not create one kind of tree to evolve into other kinds of trees, but rather a variety of trees and plants were created, bearing “seed according to their kind.” Evolutionists would have us believe that plant life began with simple mosses, and then slowly evolved into more and more complex kinds of plants and trees and vegetation. But as Dr. Duane Gish writes in *The Amazing Story of Creation* (page 36):

If this is true, then scientists who study fossils (paleontologists) should have discovered many fossils of plants that were changing from seed-bearing to flowering plants. Natural history museums should have many thousands of such in-between kinds . . . Just as you would expect on the basis of creation, however, fossil hunters have not been able to find these in-between kinds, or transitional forms. Right from the start, mosses always have been mosses; seed-bearing plants, like pine trees, always have been seed-bearing plants, and flowering plants, like roses and apple trees, always have been flowering plants.

As God filled the earth with vegetation, it became a beautiful, colorful, flourishing garden of life. There were grasslands and meadows, forests and jungles, valleys and mountain ranges, all covered with vegetation peculiar to each environment. There were potatoes and squashes and berries

and apple, peach, and pineapple trees, grains and beans and sugars, all created to satisfy the animals and people that God would create. And there were flowers - from the lowly daisies and violets to the most fragrant rose, all created for their scent and beauty. Is it any wonder that verse 12 states, "And God saw that it was good"?

2. We See God's Goodness in the Earth's Plant Life

In all the acts of creation we see different attributes of God demonstrated - such as His wisdom and power. But the earth's flowers and fruits and grasses and trees remind us especially of God's goodness to us and all the creatures of the earth. We see God's goodness in several ways.

A. The Provision of Plant Life

Have your students look up and read Psalm 104:13-17, 27-28 aloud in class. Then look up Psalm 65:9-13. God's goodness is seen in the way He provides His people with crops of grain and food from the earth. Psalm 65:11 states, "You crown the year with your bounty, and your carts overflow with abundance." Every time we bow our heads and thank God for our food at mealtimes, we are acknowledging His goodness to us in providing us with food.

B. The Beauty and Variety of Plant Life

Read Genesis 2:9 aloud, which tells us that God placed trees in the garden of Eden that were "pleasing to the eye and good for food." God cares about our need for beauty and color - He created us to appreciate different shapes and colors and tastes and textures. He created the earth's vegetation to meet those needs as well. In fact, in Matthew 6:28-30, Jesus says that the simple lilies of the field are clothed with more beauty than Solomon "in all his splendor." How wonderful to realize that roses were created to delight us with their beauty and fragrance! How good of God to provide us with all of these things.

C. The Continuation of Plant Life

God created plants to perpetuate themselves through the process of producing seeds, which man can cultivate in his gardens. Genesis 8:22 contains a promise that God made to Noah, but it's a promise to us as well. As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest will endure, ensuring the continuation of human life as well.

"The next time you bow your head to thank God for His goodness to you - whether it's at mealtime or at bedtime or whenever - will you stop and think about the things we've learned in this lesson? Will you stop to consider His goodness in providing food for us, for giving us flowers and grass and trees and fruits and vegetables of all different kinds of variety? I hope you'll do that, and praise Him for His goodness to you, and to us all."

Activity - Seed Pictures

Using a variety of different kinds of seeds and dried legumes, have your students create seed “mosaics” by gluing the seeds in different patterns on construction paper - they may wish to create pictures of flowers and trees to remember this particular lesson. You may wish to make a sample project beforehand to inspire them.

Alternate Activity

If the weather is nice, you may wish to take your students outside on a foliage hunt; see how many different kinds of plants, flowers and trees you can point out in the area around your church.

Related Music

“God is so Good”; “I Sing the Almighty Power of God” - especially verse 2 (*Trinity Hymnal*, #119).

The Green Scene

1. On the third day of creation, after God separated the land from the seas, He covered the earth with vegetation - grasses, vegetables, flowers, trees, mosses, and all other kinds of plants.
2. God did not create just one kind of plant that would develop or “evolve” into many different plants; He produced a great variety, bearing “seed according to their kind” (Genesis 1:12).
3. Scientists have discovered that green is the most soothing color to the human eye; that’s why surgeons wear green garments in brightly-lit operating rooms.
4. Plant life is the basis of all life on earth. As animals and people eat plants (or eat animals that eat plants, like sheep and cows), their life is sustained by the energy the plants provide.
5. God’s Word promises in Genesis 8:22 that “seedtime and harvest” will continue until the end of the world.
6. God created plants to be more than just functional. He created them to be beautiful and delicious, and He created many, many different kinds of plants to please us. We should be thankful for His goodness to us.
7. Jesus said we shouldn’t worry about the clothing we will wear because God will provide for us, just as He clothes the lilies of the field. Even the simple lilies are more beautiful than King Solomon in all his splendor!

Memory Verse

Genesis 1:11 - “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.”

THE SUN, MOON, AND STARS

Genesis 1:14-19

Lesson Aim

To help students realize that the God of the universe, who created the sun, moon and stars, is the same God who is concerned for and cares about us.

Memory Verse

Genesis 1:16 - “God made two great lights - the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars.”

Lesson Background

Nothing tends to make us feel so insignificant and puny as the contemplation of the vastness and enormity of space! The sun and moon, the planets, and the millions of stars, which we can't begin to count, remind us of how small each of us really is - just one person in a world filled with millions of people, on a small planet in the midst of many solar systems and galaxies. As we consider the wisdom, power and majesty of God, who created these bodies and set them in motion, it should comfort us to know that He is also the God who loves and cares for us. Just as the stars in the heavens are too numerous to count, so are God's thoughts of us. “How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How great is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand” (Psalm 139:17-18). And Psalm 40:5 states, “The things you planned for us no one can recount to you; were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare.”

For this week's activity you will need some plain white paper and pastels or chalk to create “sunset pictures.” Let me encourage you to draw a sample project beforehand that your students can use as a model.

Perhaps you are one who feels that you do not have “artistic talent,” and you shrink away from such activities. Don’t be afraid to try your hand at this or any other suggested project. Quite often young children benefit more from seeing a simple treatment than they do an artistically elaborate one. No matter what kind of artist you may be, chances are your third and fourth graders will be in awe of your skill and talent!

Lesson Procedure

Ask your students if any have ever been on a camping trip where they slept out all night under the stars. Or perhaps they’ve been out in the country on a clear night when the stars are very visible. Ask them to estimate how many stars they could see on a clear night (millions, of course); ask them what kinds of things they think about when they spend time looking at the night sky.

“When David was a shepherd boy, he must have spent many nights gazing at the stars in the heavens. Later, he wrote a psalm about his thoughts when he looked at the stars.” Have your students turn to Psalm 8 and read verses 1-5 aloud. “When David looked at the moon and the stars, he became very impressed with God’s power and creative work. It made him feel small and puny in comparison. He wondered why God would even bother with a human being at all! Today we’re going to talk about the fourth day of creation - the day God created the sun, moon and stars. And we’re also going to look into David’s question - why does God care about puny, insignificant people, and how much does he care?”

1. God Creates the Sun, Moon and Stars (Genesis 1:14-19)

Review the events of creation up to the fourth day. You may wish to use the rhyme below:

On the first day, light;
On the second day, air;
On the third, sea and land
And all the plants that grow there.

Read Genesis 1:14-19 aloud in class and discuss why God created the heavenly lights (as “signs to mark seasons and days and years”), and which light was to govern which time. The words “sun” and “moon” are not used here, perhaps because the words summoned up images of pagan deities; the sun is referred to as the “greater light” and the moon is the “lesser light.”

One of your students might bring up the question of God creating light on the first day but waiting until the fourth day to create the sun. If one of them does question this, you should remind them that God Himself is light, and that He will be the only light of heaven someday when the sun is no longer required (Revelation 21:23). The light that shone on the first day of creation could have been a light other than the sun, perhaps the “glory of God” that John describes in his revelation. Other scholars believe that the sun was made to shine on the earth on the fourth day, though it had been created earlier, since the word translated “made” in verse 16 is different from that used earlier in the chapter.

As you discuss the creation of the sun, moon and stars, discuss the complexity of the universe as the planets and stars are all set in motion. The earth’s course around the sun, for example, is regular; we know it takes 365 days to complete one revolution. Likewise, the courses of the other planets in the solar system are regular and predictable - all designed by the wisest of Designers.

You'll also want to comment on the preciseness of the creation. For example, the earth is at exactly the right distance from the sun. If it were any closer, the planet would be much too hot for us to survive. But if it were a little bit farther away, the water on earth would freeze, and it would be too cold for us! God has placed the earth at exactly the right distance from the sun. The earth is also tipped at just the right angle, allowing the sun to reach a large part of the earth during the summertime. If the earth weren't tipped at an angle during its rotation, only the areas around the equator would get enough sunshine and warmth to grow plants - most of the U.S.A. and Canada would never get warm. But God has designed the earth's position and angle of rotation to be precisely right in the universe!

2. Consider the Vastness of the Universe and the “Puniness” of Man

Psalm 19:1-4 states that “the heavens declare the glory of God”; as we look at and think about the beauty and power of the sun, and the creation of the moon and an infinite number of stars, we can only stand in awe of God's creative work. How vast the universe is, and how precise and beautiful! It is no wonder that David asks the question in Psalm 8:4, “What is man that you are mindful of him?” One person among millions of people on a planet among millions of planets - why should God care about you and me?

But we know that He does care. He cares so much that He sent His Son to become one of us, to die for us, and to be raised again to live for us! That's what the Gospel is all about! God loves us, and He was not willing to have us die in our sins. Because of His love, He sent His Son Jesus, “born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons” (Galatians 4:4-5).

And God does not only give those who believe in Jesus salvation, He also gives them the Holy Spirit to make them more like Christ (Galatians 4:6). And He has prepared an eternal home for His children. The apostle Paul writes in I Corinthians 2:9, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him.”

The great God of the universe is our God. The God who holds the sun, moon and stars in place is the God who draws us to Himself, who leads His children in the way He wants them to go. Encourage your students to think about that the next time they gaze into the star-filled sky. If they know the Lord and belong to Him, they can take comfort that they are not lost among the stars of the universe; they are personally and lovingly known by their Creator. If they do not know the Lord, implore them to think about what they are missing - a relationship with the all-powerful, all-wise Creator of the universe, who invites them to come to Him and have their sins forgiven. As you close this part of the lesson, remind your students that you are available after class to talk to anyone who is concerned about their own salvation.

Activity

The heavens truly do declare the glory of God, and one of the most “glorious declarations” is a beautiful sunset. Using pastels or chalk, have your students draw a sunset on the horizon, blending the different shades of colors together with their fingers. You might want to write Psalm 19:1 at the top of each picture. [NOTE: If you don't have pastels or chalk, watercolors might also work; crayons or markers, however, will be more difficult to blend.]

Choral Activity

Read aloud together as a class Psalm 136, which discusses God's love as shown in His work as Creator and Redeemer. This psalm can be read responsively; you may read the first part of each verse, and your students may read the chorus - "His love endures forever." If your students all have different versions of the Bible, you may wish to photocopy the poem so you can all read the same thing.

Related Music

"My God is So Great"; "Great is Thy Faithfulness" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #32).

The Heavenly Lights

1. God made the sun, moon and stars on the fourth day of creation. He created the universe and set it in motion.
2. God created the heavenly lights to mark the seasons, days and years - to help us measure the passage of time.
3. The earth is exactly at the right distance from the sun. Any closer, and it would be too hot on the earth for us to survive. Any further away, and we would freeze!
4. The earth is also tipped at the right angle to allow the sun to reach a large part of the earth in the summertime. If the earth weren't tipped, most of the U.S.A. and Canada would never get warm enough to grow plants.
5. David writes in Psalm 8 that when he looks up at the moon and the stars, he feels small and unimportant in the universe. He wonders why God thinks about mankind at all, but praises Him for crowning man "with glory and honor."
6. Psalm 19:1-4 says that the heavens announce God's glory to everyone who sees them, and that people of every land and language can understand God's glory from seeing His work in the heavens.

Memory Verse

Genesis 1:16 - "God made two great lights - the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars."

GOD CREATES THE BIRDS

Genesis 1:20-23

Lesson Aim

To help students appreciate that God created the birds, and that the Bible compares our freedom in Christ to the freedom of a bird in flight.

Memory Verse

Genesis 1:20 - “And God said, ‘Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of sky.’”

Lesson Background

The first animal life appears on the earth on the fifth day of creation in the form of sea creatures and flying creatures. While “birds and fish” make up a large part of these creatures, there are also mammals (whales, dolphins, etc.) and insects - the term “winged bird” in Genesis 1:21 refers to any creature with wings. We will be discussing sea creatures in the next lesson and insects in Lesson 8, so this week we will concentrate fully on the birds.

Is there any person on the planet who has not been envious of the birds at some point in his life - who has not longed for the freedom and ability to fly? I don't believe so; children especially dream about flying, and children's literature is filled with images of flying heroes like Peter Pan, Mary Poppins, Aladdin, Superman and others. You may wish to have your students discuss their own fantasies of flying during the lesson introduction, to remind them of that latent desire within us all to escape the power of gravity and feel complete freedom in flight. This will help them better understand the Bible's comparison of the freedom of the birds to the freedom of the believer in Christ.

Lesson Procedure

Begin your class discussion by asking your students if any of them has ever wished he or she could fly - not fly in an airplane, but really fly like a bird. Have your students share their thoughts and fantasies on the subject. Inform them that man has always longed to fly, and some of our earliest stories are about that desire. For example, the ancient Greeks had a story about an architect named Daedalus who made wings for himself and for his son Icarus so they could escape from King Minos (you may wish to share the entire tale if you know it). Early inventors like Leonardo Da Vinci watched the birds for hours, sketching them and then designing flying apparatus from the things they observed. The birds have always been our inspiration for flight; we long for the freedom and exhilaration that must accompany their flight. "Today's lesson is about the creation of birds, how they enrich and inspire us, and how we, too, can experience a freedom that's like the freedom of the birds."

1. God Creates the Birds (Genesis 1:20-23)

Review the events of the past four days of creation. You may wish to use the rhyme below:

On the first day, light;
On the second day, air;
On the third, sea and land
And all the plants that grow there.
On the fourth day the sun,
Moon and stars of the sky;
On the fifth day, fish,
And birds, and bugs that fly.

Read Genesis 1:20-23 aloud in class. Remind your students that the fish and the birds are the first non-plant life, or animal life, that God had created on the earth. Discuss God's blessing on these creatures in verse 22 as He commands them to be fruitful and increase over the entire earth. God desires for the earth to be teeming with life - plant life, animal life, and, eventually, human life.

Birds fulfill many purposes on the planet, not the least of which is their graceful beauty and songs. Who can imagine Florida, for example, without the elegant pink flamingo, or a walk in the woods without the sound of singing all around? Some birds, like the canary or finch, are so lovely and have such sweet songs that some people take them into their homes to be part of their daily lives. But birds also provide us with eggs, help to keep the insect population controlled, and even provide us with food (like turkeys, pheasants and chickens). Many birds, like crows, buzzards and vultures, help with the disposal of dead animals - a very necessary function. Discuss some of the great variety of birds on the planet, with your students giving examples - like the ostrich, penguins, hummingbirds, owls, eagles, buzzards, etc.

2. The Freedom that God's People Have

The Bible compares the freedom that birds symbolize to us to the freedom that God's people are privileged to experience. As you explain this to your students, you might say that one of the reasons we all wish we could fly like the birds is because then we would be free to escape the problems and worries around us. Sometimes we may feel "weighed down" with family problems or school problems, or just weighed down with the pressures we often face. But the Bible lets us know that we don't have to live burdened and weighed down; there is freedom in Christ.

A. Freedom from Sin

Have your students look up Psalm 103:1-5 and read the passage aloud in class. In this psalm David is praising God for forgiving his sins, for healing his diseases, and for redeeming his life from the pit (a metaphor for the grave). Have your students name the different things for which David is thankful in this psalm. Then ask them, “To what does David compare this forgiven, healed, redeemed man?” To a young eagle, the symbol of strength and vigor and freedom. “Picture an eagle flying up into the skies - ascending to mountaintops and treetops where man is unable to go. This is the kind of spiritual freedom and strength that is available to those who come to Christ for forgiveness of sins. Knowing that you are right with God, that your sins are forgiven, and that you no longer must bear the burden and guilt of your sins is a freeing thing. It is such a wonderful feeling that David can only compare it to the flight of an eagle.”

B. Freedom from Weariness and Fear

Read Isaiah 40:30-31 aloud in class. Sometimes the problems around us seem insoluble. We don't see any help or hope in the situation at all, and it makes us weary and weak, and perhaps fearful. But the Lord wants us to know that we can take those problems to Him and wait upon Him for His help. He will be there for us and will renew our strength, causing us to “soar on wings like eagles.” He can give us freedom from weariness and fear.

C. Freedom from Worry

In Matthew 6:25-27, Jesus points out that the birds are free from worry about their next meal because our heavenly Father feeds them. He asks His listeners, “Are you not much more valuable than they?” Like the birds, we too can be free of worry about where we will live, what we will wear, and what we will eat. We do not have to fear tomorrow, because we know we are precious in the eyes of our heavenly Father and He will take care of us.

“How would you describe your own life? Are you soaring with the eagles, or are you tied to the earth by your sins, or by the problems and pressures all around you? The Native Americans used to capture eagles for their feathers, but rather than killing them, they would tether the bird to a post so it could fly around the post, but not up to the sky. Can't you picture an eagle like that - pulling on that tether, but not able to soar where it longs to be, feeling the freedom of flight. Maybe that's how you feel - tied down, but longing for freedom. If you do, I have good news for you: God offers you that freedom in Christ! But you need to come to Him for it. If it's forgiveness from sin that you need, you must ask Him for that and give your life to Him. If it's freedom from worry or weariness or fear, you need to bring your problems to Him in prayer and ask Him to help you with them. Let's bow in prayer right now and ask the Lord to help us with the things that weigh us down so that we can experience freedom in Jesus.”

Activity

Have your class work on some bird feeders to take home. Simple bird feeders can be made by punching holes in a plastic margarine container and tying string through the holes for hanging. Then the tub can be filled with birdseed. [NOTE: These are not the sturdiest of all bird feeders.]

One thing that my family does, and that you could do if you have access to a church kitchen: toast some bread, and then poke a small hole in the middle of each slice. Spread peanut butter on the piece of toast and sprinkle birdseed or wheat germ on the peanut butter. Then run a piece of string through the middle of the slice so you can tie it to a tree limb. Birds love this - although, unfortunately, so do the squirrels!

Related Music

“Give Thanks With a Grateful Heart”; “Arise, My Soul, Arise” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #305).

For the Birds!

1. God created the birds on the fifth day of creation - the same day He created the fish and the creatures of the sea. This was the first animal life on the planet.
2. Many birds are beautiful, and many sing beautifully. But birds are also very helpful to the planet. They provide us with eggs and poultry meat. They help to keep the insect population controlled. And some birds, such as buzzards and vultures, take care of the bodies of dead animals.
3. The smallest bird is the hummingbird; it measures about 3½ inches long. A hummingbird will beat its tiny wings fifty-five times a second to hover in the air like a tiny helicopter!
4. The largest bird is the ostrich, which can grow to eight feet in height. Its wings are useless for flying, but it can run very fast - up to fifty miles per hour. An ostrich egg weighs about three pounds.
5. In Psalm 103:1-5, David compares a man who has had his sins forgiven to a young, strong eagle.
6. In Matthew 6:25-27, Jesus tells us that God takes care of the sparrows, and we are much more valuable than these little birds in God's sight. That means we don't need to worry about what we will eat, or where we will live, or what we will wear for clothes.

Memory Verse

Genesis 1:20 - "And God said, 'Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky.'"

THE CREATURES OF THE SEA

Genesis 1:20-23

Lesson Aim

To help students realize that our God is the Creator and Lord of the sea realm, and that all mysteries are known to Him.

Memory Verse

Genesis 1:21 - “So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.”

Lesson Background

The ancient Israelites were many things, but one thing they were not was sailors! Their country had a harborless coastline, they were basically farmers and shepherds, and sailing held little attraction for them. For the Israelites, the sea was a mysterious realm - and a dangerous one. “On the whole, the Bible views the sea as a hostile element, dangerous, and separating men from one another” (*The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*). Because of this attitude, the Old Testament writers often compare the Lord’s wisdom and sovereignty to His creation and rule over the sea. God created the sea and its bizarre and beautiful inhabitants. He established its boundaries and rules over its mysterious moods. There is nothing outside of His power and understanding! In the New Testament, we see this power in Christ as He quiets the storm on the Sea of Galilee by the power of His words, “Quiet! Be still!” His disciples, who had seen several miracles by this time, were shaken at this display of Christ’s sovereignty over creation. “Who is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!” (Mark 4:35-41). The only answer, of course, is that He is God Himself, Creator and Lord over the realm of the sea.

Lesson Procedure

Begin the lesson by asking your students if any of them ever read Jules Verne's classic *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* - or, which is more likely, if any saw the movie. Tell them that Jules Verne wrote this book more than a hundred years ago (the 1860s), when exploration of the seas was just beginning, and he used much of the science of his day in this adventure story. For example, he wrote about the Nautilus, a submarine, long before submarines had been invented. But Verne's book also had sea monsters, gigantic octopi, and other unusual creatures. Before the days of modern exploration, there were a great many things we still didn't know about the seas.

"Now, of course, we have scuba divers and underwater cameras and submarines that are able to explore the depths of the ocean. But there is still much we don't know about the undersea world - much that remains a mystery. There are depths of ocean to which man has never descended. Like outer space, it is an area of mystery that needs further exploration. But our God is the Creator of this world and rules over it. All of its mysteries are known to Him, just as all other mysteries are known to Him. And that's what we're going to discuss in our lesson today."

1. God Creates the Creatures of the Sea (Genesis 1:20-23)

Read Genesis 1:20-23 aloud in class. Discuss the great variety of life that is found in our lakes and rivers and oceans and ponds and wetlands. Some of the smallest living creatures live in water - tiny, microscopic protozoa and algae. The largest living creatures are also found in the seas - most notably, the blue whale. There are many millions of types of fish, but there are also sponges, lobsters, crabs, clams, oysters, worms, and snails. And there are bizarre creatures like octopi, starfish, sea horses, jellyfish, and barnacles. The undersea world is often a beautiful place of coral reefs; it is sometimes the dangerous world of the great white shark. But while man can visit this world, he will always be an alien in it. For the water that these creatures need to survive will kill a man if he stays too long, just as living without water for any length of time will kill these inhabitants of the sea.

As you discuss the variety and beauty of various sea creatures, be sure to point out how awesome and marvelous our God is to create so many unusual, exotic and wonderful animals. There is no end to His imagination and creativity. Surely He, too, was delighted in what He made, for Genesis 1:21-22 says, "And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them . . ."

2. God Rules Over the Seas

Our God is the ruler of the sea and all of its creatures. He controls the winds and the storms that rage across the waters. He rules and cares for the animals He has created and sustains their lives. Many of the psalms point to God's creation and rule over the sea in many places and praise Him for His wisdom and control over the watery world.

A. God Rules Over the Seas as Creator

Read Psalm 104:24-26 aloud in class. God is praised because of the vast number of His creative works, and for their variety. The psalmist particularly points to the seas, which are teeming with life "beyond number," and in the living things that exist, "both large and small." [NOTE: No one is certain what "leviathan" refers to; some believe it may be a crocodile or a mythical sea monster. Some Creationists believe leviathan may refer to the

plesiosaurus, a dinosaur with fins that inhabited the waters, or to the gigantic kronosaurus with its crocodile-like teeth (for a description of leviathan, see Job 41).]

B. God Rules Over the Lives of the Seas' Inhabitants

Continue reading Psalm 104:27-30. Here we see that God is responsible for the life and care and feeding of all the sea creatures. He decides when to open His hand; He decides when they will live, and when they will die. He is in control of all aspects of their existence.

C. God Rules Over the Winds and Waves

Psalm 107:23-32 describes the plight of a group of sailors caught in a terrible storm on the sea. They cry out to the Lord, the ruler of the winds and the waves, and He delivers them from their peril. "He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed" (verse 29). You might ask your students if they can remember a story from the New Testament in which this happened; hopefully, someone will recall the story of Jesus stilling the storm.

3. God Knows All Mysteries and All That is Incomprehensible to Us

When the psalmists wrote about God's control over the seas and its creatures, they were expressing their praise of God's wisdom and power. The sea, to them, was a mysterious, frightening world, and it comforted them to know that God was in control of it. Today, we know a lot more about the seas than the people of Bible times. But there are other things that we don't understand - things that are mysterious to us. We don't know what the future will be. We don't know what God has planned for us to do with our lives. We don't know what dangers may lie ahead, or what opportunities. We don't know what heaven or eternity will be like, or what the results will be of the time we spend here on earth. But we do know that God knows all these things, and that He is in control of our lives and of the future. He knows the answer to every mystery and to every question that confuses us, and we can take comfort in His knowledge.

Have your students look up Isaiah 46:8-11 and read these verses aloud in class. "The reason that God knows all things that have been, are now, or will be is because He is in charge of the universe. His purposes are being fulfilled, and His plans for you and me have been made from the beginning of time. We don't need to be worried or afraid about anything that comes our way because God is in control. He has a purpose for each of us."

Activity

Let's make "Under the Sea" pictures using little fish-shaped crackers. Have students draw a picture of the undersea world, and then glue fish-shaped crackers to the picture to represent the fishes. [NOTE: Oyster crackers make good shells, and some dry cereals might make a good ocean floor - use your imagination!]

Related Music

"Thou Art Worthy"; "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #38).

Something Fishy

1. God created the fish and the creatures of the sea on the fifth day of creation - the same day He created the birds.
2. The seas are filled with some of the most bizarre and beautiful animals on the planet. Not only are there millions of types of fish, but there are also sponges, lobsters, crabs, clams, oysters, worms, snails, whales, octopi, starfish, sea horses, jellyfish, barnacles, and many, many others.
3. Man has never reached the deepest parts of the oceans. One spot on the floor of the Pacific Ocean is 36,198 feet deep. Compare this to Mount Everest, which at 29,028 feet is the highest mountain in the world!
4. The blue whale is the largest animal in the world today. The largest blue whale ever caught weighed 340,000 pounds - the weight of over 2,000 men! Because of its enormous weight, the blue whale could only exist in water, which helps to support its bulk. When whales are washed ashore, their lungs are usually crushed by their tremendous bodies.
5. Our God knows everything there is to know about the sea and its creatures. He created them, He rules over them, and He rules over the winds and the waves. Psalms 104 and 107 talk about God, the ruler of the sea and its creatures.
6. God also knows the answer to every mystery or problem that may face us. We do not need to be afraid of the unknown, because He knows all and will take care of us!

Memory Verse

Genesis 1:21 - "So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good."

MICROSCOPIC LIFE AND INSECTS

Genesis 1:20-23

Lesson Aim

To help students realize that God is concerned with the “small things” of this world, and that they need to entrust Him with both the large and small matters of their lives.

Memory Verse

Genesis 1:22 - “God blessed them and said, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.’”

Lesson Background

If we had been present on the fifth day of creation, we would have seen the sky and earth filled with birds and the sea filled with fish. But there was other life created on this day that would not have been as apparent to the human eye. When God said, “Let the water teem with living creatures” (Genesis 1:20), this included the microscopic life forms of protozoa and algae - life forms that man didn’t even know existed until the invention of the microscope. And the term “winged bird” used in Genesis 1:21 means anything with wings - both birds and insects. Both the microscopic world and the insect world are often overlooked when we consider the Lord’s work of creation. But these tiny creatures are fascinating, and form the basis of the food chain for all animals. As we consider microscopic life and insects this week, let’s praise our God for being the God who made “living things both large and small” (Psalm 104:25) and for being concerned about the small details of our lives as well.

For this lesson you will have the usual Fact Sheets to photocopy and pass out to your students. There is also a sheet on protozoans to photocopy, which is designed to explain and illustrate two different forms of microscopic life.

Lesson Procedure

Introduce today's lesson by informing your students, "There once was a janitor who lived in Holland who discovered the existence of another world. No, this is not science fiction! This really happened to a man named Anton von Leeuwenhoek [LAY-ven-hook]." Read the story below to your students.

Leeuwenhoek and the "Little Beasties"

The year was 1648. Sixteen-year-old Anton von Leeuwenhoek had to drop out of school to work in a linen shop, where he learned to use a magnifying glass to look at the store's cloth. The magnifying glass was very helpful in examining the threads, and Anton found it to be a fascinating and useful tool. When Anton quit his job at the linen shop and began work as a janitor in the town hall of Delft, Holland, he kept his magnifying glass. He used it in his spare time to look at wood, seeds, insects, and scrapings from his own skin and teeth.

Anton didn't have a lot of education, but he did have great curiosity. He continued to regrind his lenses so they would make images even bigger and clearer. He eventually put lenses together to make a simple microscope.

One day he wondered what a drop of rainwater would look like under his microscope. When he examined it, he discovered a brand new world - a world filled with tiny little animals that swam and ate and lived, all unseen by human eyes. Anton wrote a letter to the Royal Society of London - a group of scholars and scientists - to tell them what he had discovered. At first the scientists could not believe that this tiny world of "little beasties" - which Anton called them - really existed. But the great British scientist Robert Hooke confirmed Anton's discoveries and the science of microbiology was born.

Anton's curiosity had led him to discover the smallest forms of life on the planet. He was made an honorary member of the Royal Society and was visited by people like Peter the Great and the Queen of England. Anton made almost 400 microscopes during his lifetime, which he used to study the tiny world of the "little beasties."

Conclude your lesson introduction by saying that, while it is natural to consider the plants and fish and birds and animals when we discuss creation, we sometimes forget about the tiny things that God created as well. There are millions and millions of insects, which, while sometimes annoying, provide food for fish and birds and many animals. And there is also the microscopic world of protozoa and algae, which we can't even see with the naked eye but which live and die and produce food for the creatures of the sea. We may forget about them, but God took care of even these tiny details, and that's what we're going to learn about in this lesson.

1. God Creates the “Little Creatures” of the World - The Insects and the Microscopic Animals (Genesis 1:20-23)

Read Genesis 1:20-23 and discuss the fact that the flying insects and the microscopic creatures were created the same day as the birds and the fish. Have your class name some of the common insects they know: flies, mosquitos, grasshoppers, crickets, ladybugs, fireflies, ants, bees, and beetles are some that will likely be named; you may have a few surprises mentioned, too! Ask your students if they can think of any reasons why God would create insects, since we think of most of them as nuisances and pests. Of course, it is easy to understand why God created bees; they pollinate the flowers and they provide us with honey. Lead your students to see that other insects are useful as well, since they're a source of food for so many other animals, including some that we eat. Birds, fish and land animals all have insect-eaters among them; in fact, in some cultures, human beings eat beetles and bugs as well!

The microscopic world is also a source of food for many sea-dwelling creatures. These are the very smallest and simplest of animals and are generally known as protozoa. Protozoans thrive in moisture and most live in water, while others live in damp soil. They are one-celled creatures, too small to be seen with the naked eye, but must be examined with a microscope. Ask your students if any of them ever saw microscopic animals in a science class. Pass out the drawings of the amoeba and paramecium and discuss the information as a class.

Point out to your students that, just as our God shows His creativity and love of variety in His other creative works, so we also see this in the creation of these smallest animals. Scientists who study insects and microbotics will tell you that there are an almost limitless number of different insects, and about 30,000 different types of protozoans! While these are creatures we tend to forget about, God created them, cares for them, and knows everything there is to know about them. He is the God in charge of the vast universe of spinning planets and stars, but He is also the God of “small things” - small animals, small problems, small details.

2. God is Concerned About Small Matters as Well as Great Ones

“Sometimes we think that we should only bring the ‘big’ problems or questions or concerns we have to God. But the Bible makes it clear that God wants us to bring all of our cares and concerns to Him. He is interested in us, even in the little details of our lives.” Have your students look up the following verses:

Psalm 139:1-6 - These verses tell us that God knows when we sit or stand, when we go out or lie down, and that He is familiar with all our ways. He knows how we spend our time each day and He is interested in it.

I Peter 5:7 - God wants us to cast all of our anxieties, or cares, upon Him. Why? “Because He cares for you.”

Philippians 4:6-7 - Again, we are told not to be anxious about anything, but to bring “everything” to the Lord in prayer.

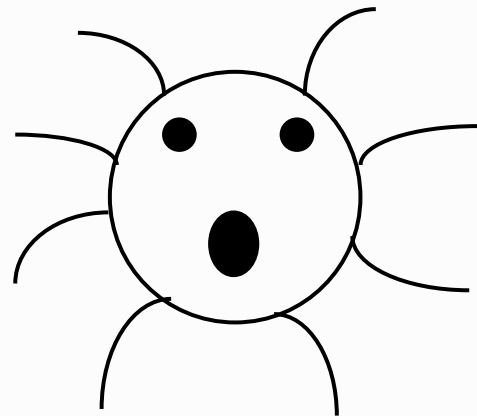
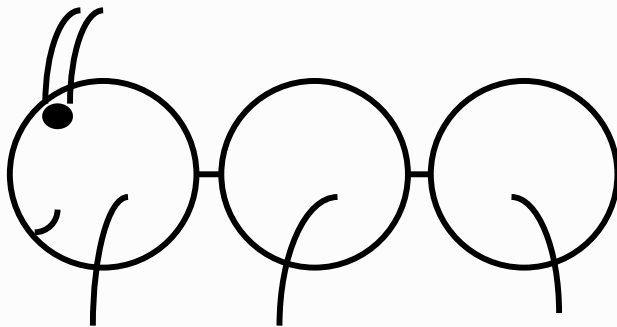
“What does this mean? Does this mean God wants us to bring every decision to Him? Should we pray, ‘Lord, should I have a cola or milk for lunch today? Tuna or peanut butter? Potato chips or cookies?’ No, of course not! But if a problem is causing us anxiety, then we should bring

it to the Lord. Or if we're struggling with the answer to a question about right or wrong, we should ask God for wisdom."

"For example, maybe you are nervous about a visit to the dentist. That's not a big thing, but God doesn't want you to be anxious over anything. Bring that anxiety to God and ask Him to help you to be brave. Or perhaps you're afraid to stand up for someone in your class; perhaps you're afraid everyone will make fun of you, too. That's another 'care' that you can bring to the Lord. You can ask Him for the wisdom and courage to do what is right. He will do that for us, because He cares about us - even the small details of our lives!"

Activity

Make "edible insects" out of marshmallows and chow mein noodles. Use the chow mein noodles as legs and antennae for the insects by sticking them into the marshmallow bodies. Or eight chow mein noodles in a marshmallow could make a spider - use your imagination! If you have a small class and lots of marshmallows, you might want to stick three marshmallows together with toothpicks to form an ant's body, and then use chow mein noodles for the legs and antennae. Also, a little bit of frosting or peanut butter will hold raisins on the marshmallow to form eyes and mouths. By the way, these are yummy - let each child make at least two so they can have one to eat there and one to bring home and eat later!

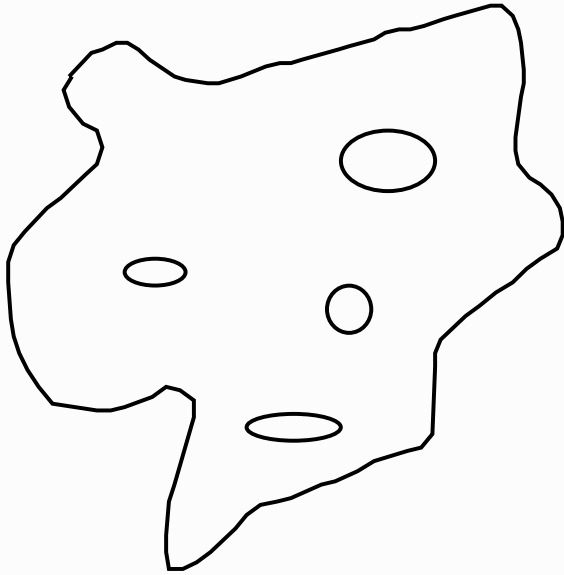


Related Music

"Cares Chorus (I Cast All My Cares Upon You)"; "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" (*Trinity Hymnal*, #629).

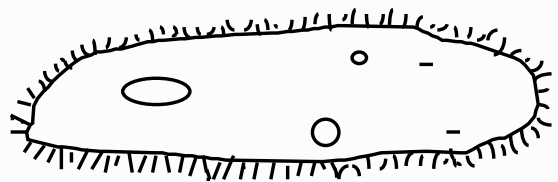
MICROSCOPIC ANIMALS

Here are some creatures you might see if you were to use a microscope to look at a drop of water from a lake or swamp or stream.



Amoebas - These jelly-like creatures eat by just surrounding their food. When it's time to make a new amoeba, the animal simply splits in two!

Paramecium - This animal is shaped like a slipper. When it wants to move, the little hairs all around it are used like oars to paddle it through the water.



The amoeba and the paramecium are two of the smallest animals that God made!

“Little” Known Facts

1. God created some of the smallest animals on the fifth day of creation when He filled the waters with microscopic life and created the winged insects.
2. The term “winged bird” in Genesis 1:21 means anything with wings, including insects. God created more than 800,000 kinds of insects.
3. Not only are there many different kinds of insects, but there are many insects of each kind. For every person on the earth you can probably find one million insects!
4. There is no place on earth you can go to get away from insects. They live on all kinds of land, in fresh water, and some even live in the ocean.
5. The smallest and simplest of animals are so small they cannot be seen without a microscope. They are known as protozoans.
6. God created about 30,000 different kinds of protozoans.
7. Our God is in charge of the vast universe of spinning stars and planets, but He is also the God of “small things” - small animals, small details and small problems. He cares about us!

Memory Verse

Genesis 1:22 - “God blessed them and said, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let birds increase on the earth.’”

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

Genesis 1:24-25

Lesson Aim

To encourage students to consider the creation of the reptiles and amphibians, and also to consider if we are truly “new creatures” in Christ.

Memory Verse

Genesis 1:24 - “And God said, ‘Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind.’ And it was so.”

Lesson Background

This week’s lesson aim may seem strange until you consider the unique nature of amphibians, which we will explore in this lesson. Amphibians begin their lives in the water, but spend their adult lives on land. This process can only take place as the amphibian becomes a “new creature”; for example, a tadpole must lose its tail and gills and grow legs and lungs to become a land-dwelling frog. We will have more to say about this in the lesson notes.

If you’ve been using “The Days Poem” to learn and review the sequence of events during the six days of creation, this week would be a good week to begin working on the next four lines of the poem (for the complete poem, see the Introduction at the beginning of the quarter).

On the first day, light;
On the second day, air;
On the third, sea and land,
And all the plants that grow there.
On the fourth day, the sun,
Moon, and stars of the sky;
On the fifth day, the fish,
And birds and bugs that fly.
The sixth day brought animals
Both big and small,
And then Adam and Eve
To rule over them all.

Lesson Procedure

Using a chalk board or a large piece of poster board, write the word “Snake” at the top. Then ask your students to give you words or phrases to describe this animal. You will probably get adjectives such as slimy, sneaky, poisonous, dangerous, gross, disgusting, etc. You will probably NOT get words like loving, friendly or cuddly. After everyone has had a chance to contribute to the list, read the words back to the class aloud.

Discuss with your class the fact that there aren’t many creatures as loathed or feared as the reptiles - or as misunderstood. Your class may have come up with some adjectives that are really untrue of snakes - for example, snakes are never actually slimy, and many are neither poisonous nor dangerous. “Today we’re going to be discussing the creation of the reptiles and amphibians of the earth. We’re going to talk about what they are, what they’re like, and what we can learn from them.”

1. God Creates the Reptiles and Amphibians (Genesis 1:24-25)

Read Genesis 1:24-25, noting that the phrase “creatures that move along the ground” no doubt refers to many in the reptile and amphibian world. As Henry M. Morris writes in *The Genesis Record* (page 71),

Very likely, the term “cattle” refers to domesticable animals, “beasts of the earth” refers to large wild animals, and “creeping things” refers to all the animals that creep or crawl close to the surface of the ground. This classification has no correlation with the arbitrary system of man-made taxonomy (amphibians, reptiles, mammals, insects), but is a more natural system based on the relation of the animals to man’s interests. Thus the term “beasts of the earth” includes the large mammals such as lions and elephants, and probably also the large extinct reptiles known as dinosaurs. “Creeping things” includes the insects and smaller reptiles, and probably also most amphibians and many small mammals.

Let’s consider the two animal groups and their characteristics separately.

A. The Reptiles

As the quotation from Dr. Morris indicates, we know that there were many reptilian creatures in the world's beginning that are no longer among us. Most scientists believe that the dinosaurs were gigantic reptiles, but all that remains of them is the fossil record. Other reptiles, however, include snakes, turtles, lizards, alligators and crocodiles. Contrary to popular belief, reptiles are not wet and slimy; they all have dry scales on their skin. Most reptiles live on land all of their lives, while some (like the crocodile) spend time in the water. Their young are born on land - hatched from eggs.

Have your students stop to imagine what God's new world must have been like. As explained in Lesson 2, the climate on the earth was probably tropical. The vegetation was lush and green, the water was clean, and the air was pure. Now imagine seeing a giant brontosaurus quietly feeding from the tops of trees. Imagine a herd of triceratops grazing in a field. Imagine harmless snakes and lizards and crocodiles. Now ask your students if they wouldn't want to see such a world with their own eyes - a perfect world created by God before it was spoiled by sin (some of your students may have seen the popular movie *Jurassic Park*, some scenes of which hinted at such an experience).

B. The Amphibians

The term "amphibian" comes from the Greek and it means "double life." This refers to the amphibians' unique life cycle, which begins in the water and ends on land. Amphibians include toads, frogs and salamanders, all of which hatch from their eggs in fresh water or swamps or marshes. When they first hatch, most amphibians look nothing like the creatures they will become. For example, the frog begins life as a tadpole. Tadpoles have no legs and no lungs - they breathe through gills and swim with their tails. As they mature, however, changes begin to take place. Legs and lungs begin to develop; the tail and gills disappear. Eventually the tadpole is transformed into a new creature - the frog. And he is capable of living in a different realm - the dry land.

Have your students look up II Corinthians 5:17, which speaks of the believer in Christ as a "new creation." Explain to your students that amphibians like the frog can be a picture of the new birth. When Jesus Christ saves someone, that person becomes a new creature. The changes may not be evident at first, but gradually they happen, until the Christian is no longer the person he or she used to be, but rather the person God meant for him to be from the foundations of the world.

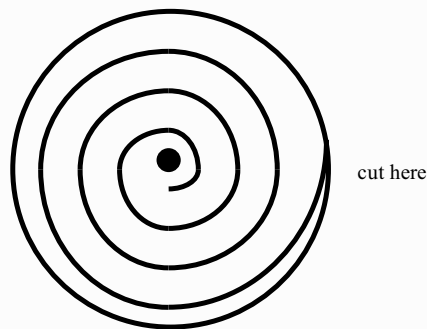
"The changes that take place in a tadpole are to prepare him for his life in a new world - the dry land. What new world do you think Christ wants to make believers ready for?" Heaven, of course; have your students look up I Corinthians 15:48-49. "God is changing His children to get them ready for heaven. I Corinthians 15:49 says that believers will 'bear the likeness of the man from heaven.' Who do you think that man is?" That man is Jesus, and God wants us to become more and more like Him so we can be at home in heaven. Explain to your students that this doesn't mean that we will physically "look like" Jesus, but that we will act and think and behave more like Him. We will be holy, gentle, loving, fair, unselfish, etc. [NOTE: The "amphibian" illustration, like all illustrations, can only go so far. Use the illustration in general terms without stretching it too much; for example, it's not necessary to equate the water with the "world" or Jesus Christ to a full-grown frog! We don't want you to get "bogged" down.]

Conclusion

Ask your students to look at their own lives to see if they are truly “new creatures” in Christ. Do they live like everyone else all around them? Do they only look out for their own happiness? Or do they desire the things that God wants for them? Do they want to be the people God wants them to be? “If you are truly born again, then you have the Holy Spirit within you and you will care about what God wants you to do and be. That doesn’t mean you’re perfect, but it does mean that you are changing and growing and becoming the new creature God wants you to be.” Encourage any student who does not know for certain if he is saved to speak with you after class.

Activity

Let's make “slinky snakes.” For this activity you will need white paper plates (cheap ones work great!) and some string. Give each student a paper plate with a spiral drawn on it like the one below:



Have the student cut the spiral out beginning at the tail to create the slinky snake. Attach a string to the snake’s head to slink the snake up and down like a yo-yo. Your students may wish to color their snakes and attach a felt or construction paper “tongue” to the head.

Related Music

“New Life in Christ”; “More Love to Thee, O Christ” - especially verse two (*Trinity Hymnal*, #649).

Snakes, Toads, Gators and Frogs

1. God created the animals on the sixth day of creation. Reptiles and amphibians were among the animals created.
2. Reptiles include animals like snakes, turtles, lizards, alligators and crocodiles.
3. Some people think snakes are slimy and wet, but most snakes really have dry scales.
4. Scientists believe that many of the dinosaurs were gigantic reptiles. These reptiles were created by God, but have since become extinct.
5. Amphibians like the frog begin life in the water, but they live their adult lives on land.
6. Frogs begin life as tadpoles; they have no legs or lungs, but they breathe through their gills and swim by moving their tails. As they grow, they become “new creatures”; legs and lungs develop, and the tails and gills disappear.
7. II Corinthians 5:17 tells us that believers are also “new creations” - new creations in Christ!

Memory Verse

Genesis 1:24 - “And God said, ‘Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind.’ And it was so.”

THE WILD ANIMALS

Genesis 1:24-25

Lesson Aim

To help students consider the creation of the wild animals and the effects that man's sin has had on the natural world.

Memory Verse

Genesis 1:25 - "God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good."

Lesson Background

We tend to think of sin in terms of how it has affected the lives of people and the suffering it has brought to humans. But sin has also caused a great deal of devastation in the natural world. When God first created the animals, they lived in peace with each other and with man. But Adam's sin caused changes in the animal kingdom, and the creatures Adam was to rule over soon became his enemies. The earth itself changed because of sin - it was cursed because of Adam's sin and would produce "thorns and thistles" for mankind (Genesis 3:17-19). Certainly man's poor stewardship of the earth, and his continual pollution of the environment, has cost the world dearly, and we see those effects all around us. Is it any wonder that Paul writes in Romans 8 that "the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time" because of the effects of sin (Romans 8:22)?

This week we'll be discussing the effects of sin on the natural world. We'll also talk about our hope for the future, when Christ sets up His kingdom, and when "the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay, and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Romans 8:21).

Lesson Procedure

Divide a chalkboard or piece of posterboard into two halves and write “Wild” on one side and “Tame” on the other. Ask your students to suggest the names of different animals to be written on each side. Some of the suggestions may elicit discussion - for example, some may feel a snake is a wild animal, while some will remember that snakes are sometimes kept as pets. Write the suggestions on the side that seems most reasonable to the majority.

Discuss with your students the fact that “wild” has come to mean violent, dangerous and hostile; but what it really means is any animal that is living in a state of nature, that has not been tamed or domesticated. Therefore, “tame” animals include livestock like sheep and cows and horses and pigs, and wild animals include both dangerous animals like lions and tigers and peaceful animals like deer and giraffes. Now your students should have a good grasp of what we mean when we talk about the wild animals.

1. God Creates the Wild Animals (Genesis 1:24-26)

Point out to your students that verse 24 divides the animal kingdom into three groups - the creatures that move along the ground (like the reptiles and amphibians we studied last week, and the small mammals), the livestock (or tame animals), and the wild animals. These were all created on the sixth day of creation - the same day that man was created. Note also that in verse 26, God originally planned for man to rule over all of the animal kingdom. Have your students look up Psalm 8:6-8, which states that God has made man the “ruler over the works of Your hand,” including “all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field . . .”

“Is this entirely true today? Do all the beasts of the field obey man as the supreme authority under God?” No, it is not entirely true, as Hebrews 2:8 reminds us. There are animals over which man does not rule - the wild animals of the earth.

2. The Effects of Sin on the Natural World

Man was intended to be the ruler over all the creatures of the earth, but something happened to change all that. Ask your students if they know what changed God’s original design; hopefully one of your students will say “sin.” Sin did change the entire nature of God’s creation. It brought death, disease and devastation to man. It brought about a fallen nature in all of mankind, which leads us all to sin. It brought forth the thorns and thistles of the earth, when God cursed it as part of Adam’s punishment (Genesis 3:17). And sin also affected the animals of the earth.

“Before Adam’s sin, he and Eve had nothing to fear from the animal world. But after they sinned, some of the animals were no longer friendly. Some of them were dangerous! Some of them came to eat meat, while others became poisonous. Whether these were gradual changes or whether they took place immediately isn’t clear, but things certainly did change!” Show your students Genesis 1:30, which states that God gave all the animals of the earth plants to eat; everything, including man, was vegetarian before Adam sinned. Evidently many animals became meat-eaters only after the Fall.

Have your students look up Romans 8:19-22 and read these verses aloud. “All of creation - the whole world - is groaning because of man’s sin. Think of it! We destroy our planet through war and pollution. The animals are perverted by our sin from being the creatures they were created to be; the natural world is so often a cruel and violent place. Even the plants and the earth itself

suffer from the effects of sin. Nothing lives forever; everything dies and decays. Our sin not only brings devastation to us, it brings devastation to the entire planet!” Help your students to see this ugly picture of the effects of sin before you show them the beautiful promise of the earth’s restoration.

3. Restoration of the Natural World in the Future Kingdom

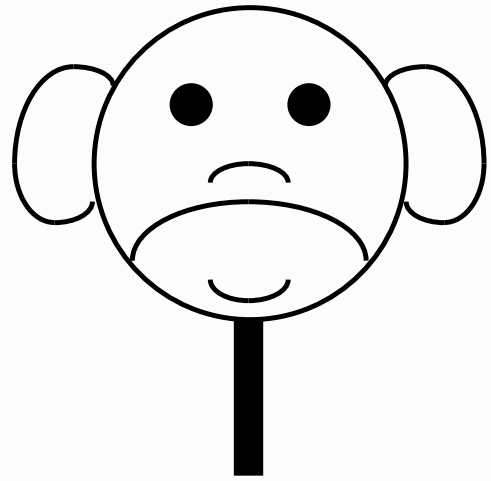
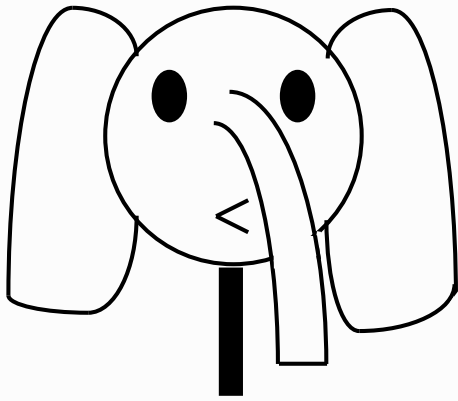
Remind your students that God could have allowed people and the earth and the animals just to continue in sin’s destruction and devastation. Instead, God sent His Son, Jesus, to pay the penalty for the sins of His people. And God’s Word promises that some day Jesus will establish His kingdom and the earth will be restored to what it should be; in that day the creation will be liberated from its bondage to decay.

Have your students read Isaiah 11:1-9 aloud in class. Explain that this is a description of a future perfect earth. The peace of Christ’s kingdom is described by these words: “The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together, and a little child shall lead them.” Revelation 21:1 tells us that there will be a new heaven and a new earth. Christ’s reign will be a reign marked by peace and justice. There will no longer be anything to fear - not death, not dangerous animals, not disease, not sin. It will be a world in which children can live in peace.

“Are you looking forward to that day? Do you know for certain that you will be with Christ in His kingdom forever?” Encourage your students to look forward to that day if they know Christ. If any are unsure of their salvation, remind them that you are available after class to talk to them about it.

Activity

Let’s make “wild animal” masks. For this project you will need paper plates, popsicle or craft sticks, construction paper, scissors, crayons . . . and a little imagination! Give each child a paper plate and have them cut two eye-holes. Then have them decorate the plates to look like the faces of wild animals, coloring the facial features and using construction paper for ears, noses, etc. I’ve drawn two examples, but your students might choose to do a lion, a bear or even a rabbit (you may wish to make an example to “inspire” them). After your students complete the mask, you can attach the popsicle sticks to the bottom so they can hold the masks over their faces. Encourage your students to be creative and have fun!



Related Music

“Fairest Lord Jesus, Ruler of All Nature” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #170).

Wild About You

1. God created livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals on the sixth day of creation.
2. “Wild” sometimes means hostile or violent, but a wild animal is simply an animal that lives in the state of nature, untamed by man. Therefore, lions and tigers are wild animals, but so are deer and giraffes.
3. When Adam was created, God told him to “rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground” (Genesis 1:28).
4. When Adam and Eve were first created they had nothing to fear from any of the animals. Genesis 1:29 tells us that man and the animals were given the plants of the earth for their food. It was only after Adam sinned that some of the animals became meat-eaters. And many became dangerous!
5. Romans 8:21-22 tells us that the creation groans because of man’s sin. It continues to suffer in death and decay until the day when God brings about a new heaven and a new earth.
6. Christ will reign in the new earth, and His reign will be marked by peace. Isaiah 11 describes that peace by saying, “the wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat.” There will no longer be anything for God’s children to fear!

Memory Verse

Genesis 1:25 - “God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.”

THE TAME ANIMALS

Genesis 1:24-25

Lesson Aim

To help students consider the service of tame animals to man and our own attitudes of service to God.

Memory Verse

Genesis 1:26 - "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea, and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.'"

Lesson Background

This week we are looking at those members of the animal world that are closest to man - his livestock and his pets. While we have not been able to subdue all the animals as God originally commanded Adam, we do have many species that have been tamed and have become quite useful to us. We will be listing some of the many services that the tame animals provide for man - and it is a long list indeed. If your Sunday School class comes from a rural area, your students will probably be more familiar with the good things that animals provide for us. If you live in the city, you may be more challenged to get your students to think about tame animals as workers and helpers rather than pets. If this is the case, remind your students that in many parts of the world, a family's livelihood is still dependent on the number of sheep or cattle that the family possesses. Sometimes these families do not go to the fast-food restaurant or even the grocery store for meat or eggs; these things must be obtained from their own livestock. In such places, tame animals are a necessary and important part of daily life. Thinking along these lines will help your students appreciate God's goodness in providing these animals; it will also help them to understand this lesson's spiritual application.

Lesson Procedure

Show your students a common rock and begin your lesson by saying, “This is my pet rock, Herbie (or Fred, or Fido, or whatever). Herbie and I have lots of fun together. We drive together in the car and we watch T.V. together; sometimes I take him out for a hamburger. I just can’t imagine having a better pet than Herbie.” Wait a few minutes for your students to react to what you’ve just said; no doubt someone will tell you that a rock is a stupid pet.

“You may think that a rock is a stupid pet, but did you know that in 1975, some people made a lot of money selling pet rocks? It’s true - sometimes the rocks were decorated to resemble pets or people and sometimes they were left plain. Millions of Americans bought pet rocks because they thought they were funny and cute. When you go home later today, ask your parents about them; maybe some of them owned pet rocks, too.”

Discuss with your students the fact that a rock can never really take the place of a pet. They cannot provide the companionship and play that a cat or dog or rabbit or bird can provide. Ask your students what kinds of pets they may have at home and what they like best about them.

“Last week we talked about the wild animals that God created, and this week we’re talking about the tame animals. This includes dogs and cats and many other animals we think of as pets. But it also includes livestock like cows and pigs and sheep. It includes animals like horses and mules and camels that help man with his work. It includes all the animals that man has tamed to serve him.”

1. **The Tame Animals, and Their Service to Man (Genesis 1:24-25)**

Read Genesis 1:24-25 aloud in class, pointing out that the “livestock” mentioned in these two verses includes many of the tame animals. Then have your students turn to Psalm 8:3-8; discuss man’s rule over the flocks and herds and beasts of the field. As we pointed out last week, man’s rule over the natural world is only partial; sin has changed much of creation, and man finds that some of the animals are his enemies. But God has still given him the rule over many of the animals of the earth, and those tamed by man are of great service to him. Discuss the following areas of service with your class.

A. Companionship

As discussed in the introduction, many of our pets provide us with companionship, and this really is important. Researchers have found, for example, that senior citizens in nursing homes respond better to treatment when they are allowed pets. Pets give us something to love and care for and something to return that love.

B. Strength, Speed, and Endurance

Many animals have greater physical capacities than humans, and humans use those capabilities in many ways. Horses have been used for centuries for transportation and for farming; camels are also used in the Middle East for their endurance. Oxen are used for hauling and plowing, while mules and donkeys may be used to carry cargo.

C. Food and Clothing

Sheep, cows, pigs, goats and other livestock are sources of food and clothing (wool, leather, etc.) for man. “While many of us do not use animals in our daily lives, just think how much our own country owes to them. How would the West have been settled without horses? How would a farm family survive without the cows and the chickens and the pigs? Our nation was once a nation of farmers, and a farmer was very dependent on his animals.”

2. Our Attitudes of Service

“Most of us like to think that we are smarter than a cow or a donkey or a sheep, don’t we? But sometimes the Bible compares us to these animals to show us our own attitudes about serving God.” Have your students look up the following verses and discuss the questions that follow:

A. John 10:14-15 - Do I Know God?

Jesus says that sheep know their shepherd, and that His sheep (or followers) know Him. In order to serve God, we must first know who He is and realize that He is our Shepherd.

B. Isaiah 1:3 - Do I Know What I Owe God?

In this passage we are told that the ox knows His master and the donkey knows his owner’s manger - the place where his food is found. These creatures understand their dependence on their master, but God says, “My people do not understand.” When we understand what we owe God - our lives, our salvation, our food, and homes and families, etc. - then we will serve Him with full hearts.

C. Psalm 32:8-9 - Do I Follow Where He Leads?

We are reminded that the horse and the mule must be guided by their bit and bridle because they have no understanding. God could also force us to do His will, but He doesn’t want that to be necessary. He wants us to follow His instruction and guidance. He wants us to come to Him with our problems and ask for His wisdom. He wants us to be happy, wise servants who follow Him in all ways.

Conclusion

Last week we discussed the difference between wild and tame animals. Wild animals, we said, are those that still live in a natural state; they are untamed and perhaps even hostile to people. Tame animals, on the other hand, are able to give man useful service. Have your students think about whether they are “wild” or “tame” in God’s sight. “Are you still living like a ‘wild creature’ before God - unwilling to call Him your Lord and Master? Or have you given yourself to Jesus and do you wish to serve Him all your days?” Read John 10:27-28 aloud to your class and point out to them that Christ’s followers not only have the joy of serving Him, but of knowing that they will have eternal life. Encourage your students to make certain that they have come to Christ for forgiveness of sins and have given themselves wholeheartedly to Him.

Activity - Pet Rocks

These may be as simple or as elaborate as you choose to make them. Give each child a rock to decorate as a take-home pet. You may wish to have students just paint the face of a cat or dog on the rock and then cover the bottom with felt. If you'd like to get fancy, you could glue small pebbles on the larger rocks for noses and ears or use stick-on wobbly eyes, etc.

Related Music

“Make Me a Servant”; “Take My Life, And Let It Be” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #585).

Of Mules and Men

1. God created many animals to be of service to mankind. Some animals, like cats and dogs, are good for companionship. Others are useful as livestock or as beasts of burden.
2. Many tame animals are useful because of their strength, speed, or endurance. For example, a horse may be used for transportation or for hauling and plowing.
3. The camel is known for its endurance - that's why it is so useful in the desert. A camel can store water in its body for a long time because it does not have to keep its body at a regular temperature, as people must do. So a camel can go without water for as long as a week, or even two weeks in the winter!
4. While many Americans no longer use animals in their daily lives, they have played an important part in our past. Our nation was once a land of farmers, dependent on its sheep and cows and pigs and horses. And the western states were settled as horses pulled the wagons of pioneers across the plains.
5. Psalm 32:8-9 reminds us that horses and mules must be controlled with bits and bridles because they have no understanding. God wants us to be wiser than that. He wants us to come willingly to Him for direction and to be happy servants who follow Him in all our ways.

Memory Verse

Genesis 1:26 - "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea, and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.'"

THE CREATION OF MAN

Part I

Genesis 1:26-31

Lesson Aim

To help students realize that man is different from the rest of creation because he is made in the image of God.

Memory Verse

Genesis 1:26 - “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’”

Lesson Background

Genesis 1 gives us an overview of the creation of man, while Genesis 2 gives us a more detailed account of Adam’s creation, and then Eve’s. We will follow this example; this week we’ll discuss the creation of Adam and Eve in the image of God. Next week we will study the more detailed account of Genesis 2 and discuss God’s establishment of marriage and the family.

Many today speak of man as if he were just another animal. Many animal rights activists denigrate the belief that man is above the animals, calling it “speciesism” and making it akin to racism or sexism. But God’s Word makes it very clear that man is more than just another animal. He is created in the image of God and worthy of respect and honor. He is put in charge of the other creatures of the earth and commanded to rule over them. While Christians believe it is good and right to take care of the earth and to use its resources wisely, as good stewards, we do not look on animals as having the same rights and position that we as people

have. God did not send His Son to the earth to redeem puppies and kittens; it is human beings who are “bought with a great price” (I Corinthians 6:20). By emphasizing the creation of man in God’s image, we will help our students develop a right view of man in relationship to God and to God’s other creatures.

Lesson Procedure

Begin your lesson by asking your students, “Who do you look like?” Ask how many of your students have been told that they look like their mothers, and how many have been told they look like their fathers. Perhaps some have been told that they look like a grandparent, or an uncle, or a cousin. Discuss the fact that physical family traits are often passed down from one generation to the next - hair color, or stature, or facial features. [NOTE: Be sensitive to any adopted children in your class by reminding them that, even if they don’t know what their natural parents looked like, they do know certain features, such as their race and physical size, are inherited from them.]

“Genesis 1:26 tells us that we don’t just bear the images of our mothers and fathers and grandparents - this verse tells us that we were made in the image of God. What does that mean? We know that God does not look like us because He is a Spirit. But there are many ways in which we do show God’s likeness, and that’s what we’re going to talk about today.”

1. Man is Created in the Image of God (Genesis 1:26-31)

Read Genesis 1:26-31 aloud in class. Compare and contrast the account of man’s creation to the accounts of the creation of the other creatures. What is the same? (God blesses man as He does the other creatures and tells them to be fruitful and increase in number.) What is different? (Man is made in the image of God, and he is given rule over all the other creatures and commanded to subdue the earth.) Point out that in verse 27 both male and female are created in God’s image, and that both are blessed, and both are commanded to be fruitful, to subdue the earth, and to rule over the other creatures. Point out also God’s pleasure with man and with all He created in verse 31 - “God saw all that He had made, and it was very good.”

2. God’s Image Makes Us Different from the Animals

What does it mean to be made in God’s image? How does that affect us and what we are? How does it make us different from the animals? Our concept of man as created in the image of God is very complex and requires a good understanding of all of Scripture to comprehend it fully. But there are some basic points that we can bring out to our students.

A. God’s Image Makes Us Worthy of Respect and Dignity

The psalmist writes in Psalm 8 that man is “crowned . . . with glory and honor” (verse 5). Because every human being is created in the image of God, God demands an accounting for murder. “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man” (Genesis 9:6). Following this line of thought, James writes in James 3:9 about the hypocrisy of praising God with our tongue, and then says “with it we curse men, who have been made in God’s likeness.” God’s image makes all people worthy of respect and places a high value on our worth as individuals.

B. God’s Image Means That We Have Immortal Souls

Unlike the animals, man has an immortal soul that lives on after the death of the body. This soul goes on to know either eternal life in Christ or eternal death in hell. Jesus continually reminded His audience of the reality of the soul; over and over again He stressed that His listeners had to be concerned about their souls’ destinies. “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul,” He told His disciples. “Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28). Like God, we will continue to exist throughout eternity, and only those who know Christ will have the joy of being with Him in heaven.

C. God’s Image Means We Have the Ability to Know God

Adam was created to have fellowship with God - to know God in a personal, intimate way. This was not true of the other animals. Even after Adam’s sin God continued to reveal Himself to man, but man continues to shut God out. Have your students look up Romans 1:18-23, and read the verses aloud in class. Point out these phrases: “what may be known about God is plain to them . . . God has made it plain to them . . . God’s invisible qualities have been clearly seen . . . although they knew God, they neither glorified Him . . . they became fools . . . men are without excuse.” God’s image upon us gives us the ability and privilege to know God Himself! But man’s sin has darkened his own mind and heart and has made this kind of relationship impossible apart from the grace of God.

“As we read this passage in Romans, we can tell that sin has changed the image of God that Adam had when he was created. There isn’t too much in many of us that would remind you of God, is there? We have lost so much, but there is a way to restore that image. There is a way for us once again to remind people that we are made in the image of God.”

3. Christians Should Bear the Image of Christ

God’s image is being restored in those who believe in Christ. In Christ, we are given a new self which is created to be like God in righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:24). In Christ, our knowledge is renewed in the image of our Creator (Colossians 3:10). While the image of God will only be partly restored in this life, we have the wonderful promise in I John 3:2 that “when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” Encourage your students that, if they belong to Christ, they can look forward to the day when God’s image in them will be fully restored and fully seen by all. They will be like Him in holiness, righteousness, and knowledge, and they will be glorified with their Savior, Jesus Christ. Also remind your students that being made in the image of God means they have an eternal soul that lives on after death; encourage each one to make certain that he or she truly is saved.

Activity

Using old magazines, make a “people” collage to hang in your Sunday School classroom. Have your students cut out pictures from the magazines of people of all races and ethnic types. Arrange these pictures in collage fashion. You may wish to write “Created in the Image of God” at the top of your collage.

Related Music

“In My Life, Lord, (Be Glorified)”; “Have Thine Own Way, Lord” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #688).

In God's Image

1. God created man on the sixth day of creation - the same day that He created the land animals.
2. Unlike the animals, man is the only creature created in God's image.
3. Because we are created in the image of God, the Bible says it is wrong to murder a man (Genesis 9:6), or even to curse him (James 3:9).
4. Because we are created in God's image, we have eternal souls that will either spend eternity in heaven with God or separated from Him in hell. Only those who know Jesus as their Savior will be with Him in heaven.
5. We were created to be friends with God, but sin spoiled that fellowship. Jesus died on the cross to pay for the sins of His people so they could be right with God. When we know Jesus, we have a new relationship with God.
6. Man was the last creature God created. He put man in charge of all the other creatures of the earth, to rule over them and subdue the earth. After the sixth day of creation, God rested from His creative work on the seventh day.

Memory Verse

Genesis 1:26 - "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.'"

THE CREATION OF MAN

Part II

Genesis 2

Lesson Aim

To examine the creation of Adam and Eve and God's establishment of the family.

Memory Verse

Genesis 1:27 - "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

Lesson Background

"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). This verse is almost always quoted at Christian wedding ceremonies to remind us that the marriage union is also a separation - two people come out of two separate family units to begin their own family unit together. This has been God's plan for the family since the beginning of the world. Philosophers and politicians have tried throughout the centuries to reshape or redefine the traditional family. Our own time period has seen an enormous effort on the part of many to change the Christian concept of marriage and family. While sociological studies are only beginning to prove what we've known all along - that God's ways are best and His plan for the family is best - it is important for us to show our students that God designed the family and that God has told us what that family should be like.

As we discuss God's plan for the family and the idea of a one man - one woman relationship for life, be sensitive to any of your students who may not come from such an ideal family background. Children from divorced or single-parent families need to know that this is no reflection on them and has no bearing on

God's blessing in their lives. Hold God's model for the family as something that your students should plan on and look forward to some day in the future.

Lesson Procedure

Make photocopies of the skit "Are We Almost There?" and assign four students to play the parts of Mother, Father, Terry and Sandy. (Note that Terry and Sandy can be either male or female; try to choose students who will have fun playing the bickering siblings!) If you like, you could set four chairs up like the seats of a car for the children to use as a stage. After the skit is read aloud, make the following comments:

"I hope that doesn't sound like you and your family when you get ready to go on a trip! Tell me, do you think the Andersons are going to enjoy their vacation? Why or why not? This could be a really enjoyable time for everyone if Terry and Sandy would make an effort to get along. But sometimes we take our families - our Moms, Dads, brothers and sisters - for granted, don't we? But our families are something really very special; God started the family on the day He created Adam and Eve - the sixth day of creation. That's what we're going to discuss today."

1. God Forms Adam Out of the Dust of the Ground (Genesis 2:4-8)

Read Genesis 2:4-8 aloud in class. Explain that Genesis 2 is not a different account of creation or contradictory to Genesis 1. Rather, Genesis 2 fills out some of the details of man's creation; it gives us more specific information as to how Adam and Eve were created. But these events still took place on the sixth day of creation. Point out that man was formed out of the dust of the ground and that God Himself breathed the breath of life into his nostrils. Also point out that God had created a beautiful garden so Adam could "work it and take care of it" (Genesis 2:15).

2. Adam Gets a Helper (Genesis 2:18-23)

Read verses 18-23 aloud in class. Explain to your students that Adam by himself was incomplete. He needed a partner and a helper to be the creature that God wanted him to be. God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him" (verse 18). The Lord wanted Adam to understand his need for this helper as well, so the Lord brought all of the animals to him for him to observe and name. Adam exercised his first act of dominion over the animals by naming them, but it soon became clear to him that none of the animals would make a suitable helper for him. Perhaps Adam also observed, being the bright fellow that he was, that all of the animals were created as male and female - except for him.

Now Adam was ready for his partner, and the Lord put him to sleep and took one of the man's ribs to form the first woman. When Adam awoke, the Lord presented him with his helper. Adam was delighted with her. He recognized immediately that the woman was not only like him; she was a part of him. "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh," he declared. He named her "woman" (the Hebrew for woman sounds like the Hebrew for man). Remind your students of their memory verse, which states that both the man and the woman were created in God's image.

3. Adam and Eve Show Us God’s Plan for the Family (Genesis 2:24-25)

Read Genesis 2:24-25 aloud in class, explaining that this is not a continuation of what Adam was saying in verse 23. Rather, it is an explanation given by the author (Moses) to comment on God’s plan for the family. Eve was made for Adam. God intended them to live with each other forever as man and wife. God intended Eve to have one husband - Adam. Adam was to have one wife, and the two of them were to be like “one flesh” or body. Together Adam and Eve were to begin the first family and raise their children together as partners. This is what verse 24 is saying.

“The family isn’t just a ‘good idea’; the family was designed by God as the place for children and adults to live together and work together and live with one another. Now, like so many other things, the family has been damaged by sin, hasn’t it? We all know that moms and dads sometimes get divorced. We know that sometimes children live with two different families; perhaps they spend some time at their Mom’s house, and then go to their Dad’s house for the weekend. But this isn’t what God wants for His children.”

Have your students look up Ephesians 5:22-31. Explain to your students that this passage describes what a Christian marriage should be like. A wife should respect and honor and submit to her husband. A husband should love his wife as if she were a part of his own body. He should love her even as Christ loved the church - enough to die for it! When there is love and respect for one another, the bond of the Christian marriage is strong.

Again, emphasize to any students who may come from divorced or single-parent families that they are not responsible for their home situations, and that, as children, their job is to love, respect and obey both of their parents as much as is possible. Let all your students know that God expects a marriage to last until one of the partners dies. Encourage them to begin to pray even now for their future husbands or wives and to plan to have Christian marriages and homes when they are grown.

Activity

As a class, write a “sequel” to the skit, “Are We Almost There?” Write it so that Sandy and Terry learn how to compromise and get along with one another. You can suggest one of the following scenarios, and as a class choose one:

- On the way to their vacation at the beach, the Andersons stop for pizza. Sandy wants mushrooms and anchovies on the pizza, and Terry wants black olives and onions.
- When Terry and Sandy get to the beach, they discover that Mom has only packed one inner tube, one sand pail and shovel, and one beach towel.
- The Andersons discover that the cottage they have rented for the week only has two beds. Mother and Father will share the big bed, but that only leaves one small one. Who will sleep in the bed and who will sleep on the floor?

After you choose a scenario, have the children write the dialogue for the skit (you will probably have to take the dictation). Once it is finished, if you have time, you can have some of your students read the parts of your sequel. An idea: if your students really enjoy this activity, you might make copies of both parts of the skit for the children to take home next week. Or you might consider performing it as a class in front of the parents at an appropriate time!

Related Music

“The Family of God”; “The Earth, With All That Dwell Therein” (*Trinity Hymnal*, #68).

“Are We Almost There?”

The Andersons are getting in their car, about to leave for summer vacation.

- FATHER: On the way to summer vacation! I look forward to this family together-time all year long.
- MOTHER: Oh, so do I, dear. Don't you, Terry and Sandy?
- TERRY: Hey! I wanted the seat behind Mom. Move over - now!
- SANDY: I don't have to! You can't make me!
- MOTHER: Children, that's enough. Sandy had the seat first, Terry. You move over and sit behind your father.
- SANDY: Mom, Terry hit me!
- TERRY: I did not!
- SANDY: You did too! Right on the head!
- TERRY: I bumped your stupid head 'cause you made me crawl over you to get to my seat.
- FATHER: Kids, you heard your mother. I don't want this kind of arguing.
- MOTHER: Now, are we all ready to go?
- SANDY: Mom, Terry looked at me!
- TERRY: Did not!
- SANDY: Did too!
- TERRY: Yeah, well, Sandy touched my side of the seat.
- MOTHER: (turning to FATHER) Next time we decide to have a family together-time, dear, let's do it separately!

The First Family

1. God created Adam from the dust of the earth. But Adam was incomplete all by himself; he needed a helper and a partner.
2. Up until Adam's creation, God saw that everything He had made was good. Now for the first time God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him" (Genesis 2:18).
3. God removed a rib bone from Adam's side and created Eve. Adam saw that Eve was not only like him, she was a part of him. "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh" are Adam's first words recorded in the Bible (Genesis 2:23).
4. The family was designed by God as the place for children and adults to live together and work together and care for one another.
5. God wants a Christian marriage to last until one of the partners dies. In Ephesians 5:33, Paul tells husbands that they must love their wives as they love themselves. And he reminds wives to respect their husbands.
6. Children are an important part of the Christian family. They are God's blessing, and Christian parents must bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. And children are commanded to obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1-4).

Memory Verse

Genesis 1:27 - "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."