

September 8, 2013

Lesson 1: Creation



Genesis 1:1-2:4

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

And God said, 'Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.' So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

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

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

And God said, 'Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.' So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.' And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

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

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

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

God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.' God said, 'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

Creation

Genesis 1:1-2:4

“God saw
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Big Story Truth: In goodness, God has created the heavens, the earth and everything in them... including us!

About This Scripture Passage: The beginning of Genesis as a whole and in particular this the opening chapter of the Bible, offers a glimpse of God's involvement in creating life. Without God's intervention, there is only a formless and empty darkness. But when God speaks, light is created. When God speaks, life is created. This pattern of God speaking and it being done is something to pay attention to. This is God's Word actively accomplishing what God says it will. (There will be other places in Scripture and in our worship where this will be important to remember!)

This passage is one that is much debated among Christians and non-Christians alike for questions about how it is consistent or not consistent with our modern day scientific understanding of

evolution and age of the earth. There are a couple of things to keep in mind as we read this passage. One is how the Bible talks about days. Other portions talk about a day being like a thousand years to God and a thousand like a day. Clearly God is not bound by time the same way we are. Secondly, even Genesis gives two accounts of creation. If you read a little further, right after where our passage leaves off today, another account of creation is given in which the order is entirely different even than what we read in this first

chapter. So what do we make of that? Does that mean the Bible isn't true? Not at all! The Bible is true, all of it-- but in a way that we are not accustomed to thinking about truth. These accounts were written by different people writing to different communities in which different aspects of God's nature were important for the people to hear. The writers told the story in a particular way so that the Word God would speak to the people could be revealed. As we read these stories, what these passages reveal about God's love and care for creation is very true. But Genesis isn't a science book. Nor is it a history book. So we have to read it a little differently than we are accustomed to. Genesis is a book about relationships. It's not a *how* book, it's a *who* book. The topic is the relationship between God and all of us humans living on this planet earth.

Making the Connection: For upper elementary/middle school students, this is where their faith will first be questioned by those who would not understand that their faith and scientific questioning can exist together. For these students, the most important thing will be to be taught how to read Genesis as a book about relationship, not science or history. For all students, regardless of age, it is important to hear that God knows them and loves them- God created them and rejoices over them!

Today in worship, we will be celebrating the 25th anniversary of our church denomination- the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The theme for this anniversary celebration is "Always Being Made New." Today in our lessons we will also emphasize that God's creative work isn't finished at the end of Creation. God continues to be actively present in the world, working and moving, creating, saving, and inviting us to participate in that work!

Where in the World Are We? Everywhere!

For Your Reflection:

Has your faith ever been questioned by a scientific finding? How did God work in your life to bring you to a deeper understanding of God's work in the world? How would you share that experience with a child who is wondering about the "truth" of Scripture?

GOING GREEN!



A couple of things to pay attention to in this passage:

1. Creation is declared "good." - This is a vision of right relationship between God and all creation. This is how God intended things to be.
2. God says, "let us make humankind in *our* image." Here, from the first chapter of Scripture, we meet the Holy Trinity.... God is a relationship in God's self (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.) We are created with the capacity to love and to think and to feel and to create, all characteristics we share in common with our God.
3. God gives humanity the responsibility of having "dominion" over the earth and its creatures. This entrusting of humanity with the care of creation is the basis for stewardship... understanding that everything is God's and we are caretakers. This should then influence our actions and decisions!

Intergenerational Lesson

(To kick off our Sunday School year, all age groups will be together for this first lesson. Parents, Grandparents, and others in the congregation should be invited to join in as well!)

Materials Needed:

- Inflated Balloons and/or streamers
- Bible Bookshelf poster
- Small Catechism
- CD Player
- CD of familiar upbeat music (this may be songs from this past summer's VBS or last year's Sunday School)
- CD or Sheet Music for "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands"
- Copy of creation story cut apart into seven sections
- Copies of the Faith 5 handout for this week
- Posterboard, markers, and other items that could be used for creation props
- Large Sun and Moon shapes
- Cupcakes
- Frosting (various colors)

Before Everyone Arrives:

- Decorate the space with inflated balloons and/or streamers
- Prepare signs (if necessary) to direct families from the entrance to the meeting space
- Talk with your pastor and the lector for the morning so they are ok with the plan for the SS to help with the reading during church.
- Divide cupcakes and frosting into plates so that each table/family group can easily get to the supplies they'll need
- Decide in advance if you will have any props made ahead for the creation play. (You may want to have already made a large sun and moon to mark the evening and morning of each day, or you may want to assign a group to make these during the Sunday School hour.)
- A few minutes before you expect your first families to arrive, start a CD playing of familiar upbeat music so that families are greeted with a sense of celebration and anticipation!

When all (or most) families you expect to attend have arrived,

Say: Welcome! It is good to see all of you here for Sunday School this year! As you can tell from all the balloons and decorations, we are having a celebration this morning! First of all, we are celebrating the start of a new Sunday School year! This morning we are also celebrating a birthday. Our church is part of a group of churches that are called the “Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.” For short, we say the ELCA. The ELCA is a partnership of churches that is having a very special birthday this year. The ELCA is turning 25 years old! Parents, Grandparents, adults here... do any of you remember when the ELCA was first born? (Wait for answers.) What do you remember about that time? (Invite anyone who would like to share.) The ELCA has a motto or a theme for the birthday party. It’s “Always Being Made New.” We’ll be hearing more about that in church this morning. It’s a reminder that God made us and that God is still with us. Kids, do you remember a story in the Bible about God making things and people? (Wait for answers.) What book of the Bible is that creation story in? (Genesis!) You are right! The very first book of the Bible is Genesis. (Point to the book of Genesis on the Bible Bookshelf poster.) And the very first story in the Bible is about how God made the earth, and the animals, and people too! That is the Bible story that we are going to be learning about today! Could I have a volunteer to help read that story?

Wait for a volunteer or ask one of the older students to read “Creation” from Spark Story Bible, pages 2-7.

Say: Thanks for your help in reading that story! Every time I hear that story it reminds me of how God loves and cares for us! We are going to be learning a lot this year in Sunday School about God’s love and care for us. In fact, every lesson we’ll hear in Sunday School this year will teach us about God’s love and care! This year in Sunday School we are also going to be learning about something called the Apostles’ Creed. How many of you have heard of the Apostles’ Creed before? A creed something that we say we believe. One

of the things that we say we believe about God is that he made us and takes care of us. Who can say the first part of the Apostles' Creed? (Ask for a volunteer to say the first article of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth.") Great! This year we are also going to be learning what that means. Martin Luther wrote about what that means. Would someone volunteer to read what Martin Luther wrote about this part of the creed? (Have the volunteer read from the "What Does This Mean" section of the first article of the Apostle's Creed: I believe that God has created me and all that exists. He has given me and still preserves my body and soul with all their powers. He provides me with food and clothing, home and family, daily work and all I need from day to day. God also protects me in time of danger and guards me from every evil. All this he does out of fatherly and divine goodness and mercy, though I do not deserve it. Therefore I surely out to thank and praise, serve and obey him. This is most certainly true.) When we say the Creed in church, we are saying that we believe that God made us and that God is still taking care of us even today! We'll be learning more about that in Sunday School this year. (Kids in preschool through second grade, you'll be memorizing the Apostles' creed this year. Those of you who are in third grade and up, we'll be working on memorize the meanings too! Parents, if you need a copy of the small catechism so that you can refresh your own memories... let me know. I'll be happy to get your family a copy!)

Right now, though, I'm thinking of a song I think we should sing. Adults, you may already know this one. If not, we'll learn together. It's called, "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands." How many of you think you know it? Let's listen to the first verse through once and then we'll learn it together.

Continue by teaching the song: He's Got the Whole World in His Hands. If you have someone playing the song for you live, invite the kids to make up their own verses too!

Say: Now I'm wondering if I could ask your help with one more thing. Today in church, we are going to be reading the story of creation from the book of Genesis. And what we would like to do is to have all of you help tell the story. Here's what I'm thinking. We'll divide into groups and have each group take one day. Then each group can decide how to act out what was created on that day so that the people who are in church this morning will be

able to learn about all the things God made. Are you up for it? Great! Let's divide into groups.

Help organize those in attendance into seven groups. Give each group one section of the morning's readings. You might choose to assign confirmation or high school students to take charge of the transition between days or this may be the responsibility of each group. Either way, be sure to specify how you would like the transition to happen so that things run smoothly. If kids will be doing the transitions, show them how one of them can run across the front of the church holding the moon and then the sun to demonstrate "there was evening and there was morning...." to transition between days.

Give the groups a few minutes to talk about how they will demonstrate their day of creation.

Bring groups back together again by singing another verse of "He's Got The Whole World in His Hands." Comment on the great acting that you saw in the groups!

Say: Now, before we all head off to church, I have one more assignment for your families. First of all, there are some creation cupcakes set up for you at the tables to go and enjoy eating together. Feel free to make them your own creation by decorating in any way that you want to! But while you are eating, I want you to be having some important conversation with each other in your family groups. Those of you adults who are here on your own can get together in your own groups of 4 or 5, but for parents or grandparents that are here, I'd like you to get into a group with your own families. This year in Sunday School, each Sunday morning we are asking that you come as a family for the first few minutes of Sunday School to do something called the "Faith 5" together. We'll be learning more about it as the year goes on, but the basic idea is for you to have time together as a family to talk about your highs and lows (the good things and not so great things) that happened this week, read a Bible verse together, talk about how the Bible relates to your week, pray together, and bless one another. So as you head over to the tables, I'd like you to find one of these sheets (hold up a faith 5 sheet to demonstrate) on your table and to use these directions to help guide your family's conversation while you eat. Okay! You can all find a spot at the tables!

When it is time to dismiss for church, close with prayer. You can use your own or this one:

Gracious Creator,

We thank you for all that you have made. We thank you for the gift of our families and for our church and for all that we will learn this year. We thank you that you made us and continue to provide all that we need. Bless us now as we go to worship in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Remind parents again to come with their children for the first 5 minutes of Sunday School next week.

Dismiss everyone to church with the reminder that you will call them forward at the time of the Bible reading to act out their portion of the Scripture!

CREATION READING GROUP PARTS:

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

And God said, 'Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.' So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

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

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

And God said, 'Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.' So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.' And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

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

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

God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'

God said, 'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

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Family Faith 5

September 8, 2013

1. Each person shares their high and low (the best and worst things that happened this week.)
2. Read together this Bible Verse:
“God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.”
3. Talk about how the Bible verse relates to your highs and lows.
4. Pray aloud for one another's highs and lows.
5. Bless one another. Make the sign of the cross on each other's heads and say these words: _____, you are God's good creation!

