

Genesis 1; 2:1-7

Aim of Lesson

To help make the children aware of the greatness of God's power and the wonder of creation, and to highlight the uniqueness of man as the climax of God's work.

Background study

Exodus 20:11; Psalms 8; 33:6-9; 90:2; 104; 148; Proverbs 8:22-31; Hebrews 11:3; 2 Peter 3:3-5.

Suggested outline of lesson

Here is an ideal opportunity to explain the truth and beauty of creation. You may have studied the creation and may have views of their own; it is best not to raise controversial issues yourself, though you will need to be prepared with questions and doubts which the children may raise. That God is the Creator should be presented as the positive basis of Christian truth.

There was a time when the earth, as we know it today, did not exist. That which became the earth was a dark, empty waste, until God began to work on it. At the beginning of the lesson you should try to help the children imagine the kind of intense darkness in which nothing can be clearly defined, the formless mass of the earth, the vastness of space and the great power necessary to give to it shape, beauty and purpose.

You might start by talking to the group very quietly, creating the right atmosphere by the use of the voice. Ask the children to close their eyes and cover them with their hands. Prompt them to imagine that all is darkness and emptiness and that there is no light, no colour, no blue sky, no grass, no people, nothing living. Next ask the children to cover their ears, while still keeping their eyes closed, in order to try and appreciate that, at the same time, there was no sound. Let the children talk about the impression this creates. Go on to discuss what it is like on a really dark and misty night, trying to identify an ill-defined object such as a large building, which appears as a vague outline which cannot be distinguished from the darkness around it. This is as near as the children can get in imagination to the state described in Genesis 1:1, before the mighty power and energy of the Lord God formed the earth out of a shapeless mass.

Give the children a brief outline of each day's events in terms they can understand. You might prepare some simple illustrations to help the class recall the sequence. It is important to note that the first thing God did on day one was to cause the rotating earth to be lit by the light of his glory, three days before the sun was created. You should use the words "And God saw that it was good" at this point, and after describing each day's events.

In the account of creation, the element of water is very significant. Its arrangement occupied the second day. Explain that God arranged that water not only covered parts of the earth but was also present in the sky (cloud mass). Any children who have been on a sea voyage will be able to imagine the scene.

Emphasize the immense change that came about on the third day, with the emergence of the land and the creation of all plant life. At this point, involve the class in a description of a wide variety of shapes and colours of flowers and trees, and draw particular attention to the concept of the reproduction of plants by seeds "each according to its kind". Quote examples from the children's own experiences.

In describing the events of day four, convey in some measure the part played by the sun and moon in controlling our times, seasons and tides. Mention also the importance of light and warmth, without which nothing can grow. The earth was now, therefore, prepared to accommodate living creatures, God having provided air, water, light, warmth and food.

In recalling the creation of the birds, insects and all marine life on day five, impress upon the children the astounding variety of their size, form and colour, with the aid of pictures. Encourage the children to express their appreciation of this beauty by giving examples from their own experience.

Extend the discussion to the creation of the animals on the sixth day and ask the children to name different kinds, i.e., small, large, graceful, clumsy, plain and patterned, etc. Reiterate the important fact that all creatures were provided with the means of reproducing themselves "according to their kinds", so that creation became a continuing process. Remind the children of the contrast between the procreation void and the transformed scene on the sixth day. The earth was now bright, beautiful, alive and full of sound, scent, texture and colour. God surveyed the results of his creative work and "saw that it was good".

The children will recall, if questioned, that the picture was not yet complete; the formation of man was to mark the climax of the creation. Give a clear but sensitive account of the means by which God made Adam, and brought him to life. Point out the unique characteristics of this being, whom God blessed with the five senses that enabled him to appreciate the beauty around him. He was also given the power of intelligence and reason, by which he could recognize the hand of God in all he saw, and respond by praising him. To man was given authority over all other living things. God saw how "very good" was all that he had made.

Although the sixth day is the climax, the seventh is very significant. God rested from his work and decreed the seventh day to be a "holy day", so setting a wise example which men would later be instructed to follow.

Relevance to the children's lives

When you look at the wonderful things that God has made, do they make you ask what God is like? What does creation tell us of the character of God? What kind of God do you think made our world? (Great, powerful, wise, life-giving, good, active, caring). Since we are created by God, what should we feel towards him?

Worksheets

The code reads 'On the seventh day God rested.'

Prayer

We thank you and praise you, Lord God, for making the world so beautiful, and for making us so that we can enjoy it. Amen.

Memory verse

“And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good” (Genesis 1:31).