

## Aim of lesson

To appreciate something of the greatness of the Creator.

## Bible background

Genesis 1; Psalm 104; Job 38-41

## Outline of lesson

### Introduction

You may like to introduce the lesson in this way. Ask the class about things they have made; models, paintings, clay pots, puppets, etc. If people saw the finished product, what would they learn about the one who made it? That they were good at painting perhaps, or neat and precise, or clever with their hands? You may like to take in a painting or similar object to make the point. Ask what they think you would learn about them if you saw their school books! Whether they are clever, whether they are neat or messy, whether they are good at languages, or like doodling in the margins? Move on to the idea that you can learn something of the Creator of heaven and earth from looking at his creation.

Ask the class to turn to Genesis 1 and look at the things that God has created. Get the class to use the workbooks to record in the first column what God created or ordained on that day and in the second column some comments or notes about the thing created. Use all the questions in the centre column to draw out points about the wonder of each part of creation. For the last column encourage the class to think about the characteristics or abilities of God which strike them as being particularly demonstrated in the creation being considered. The space in the workbook is too small to record many ideas; it is intended to promote discussion and summarise conclusions.

You may find the following notes useful to start ideas moving, but encourage the class to give their own ideas, even if they sound rather immature or are given in terms we would not normally use of God, for example, that God is clever or a genius or intelligent. Please note that many of the following ideas will be too complicated for a lot of classes, especially the younger ones or those untroubled by the theories of evolution. They are included for teachers whose classes are interested in scientific concepts and may be battling with conflicting ideas about the origin of life given at school.

If you decide to use most of the notes on this lesson, you will probably need more than one week.

### In the beginning

The skill of our Designer is seen even in his choice of the size of our Earth. It is big enough to have sufficient gravity to hold the air and water on its surface. On the other hand, a larger planet would have a stronger pull of gravity making it difficult for us to get about, and making it likely that unpleasant, lightweight gases (such as hydrogen, methane and ammonia) would be held in our atmosphere. The water on the surface of the Earth was also created before day 1. Water has a number of strange properties that make it act oddly but with very helpful results so far as life on Earth is concerned. One of these is the fact that, contrary to the almost universal rule that things contract as they cool, just before the formation of ice, water begins to expand. If God had not made this exception, rivers, ponds and even the sea would freeze from the bottom up. Fish would be cut off from their food supply and eventually stranded. As it is, the ice forms on the top and allows life to continue safely underneath. An exception to the rule that shows the hand of a careful designer; it shows the creator to have forethought and intelligence beyond our conception.

It is on this watery surface of the Earth that God's power begins to act in verse 2. The following verses record the formation of the world of infinitely varied life and beauty that we can still see around us.

### Day 1 – Light

By comparing any man-made light, however bright, with the light that God has given us in the sun which is 92 million miles away we see a forceful demonstration of the power of the Creator. Light is not only vital for life but is designated to reveal colour and form, designed by a Creator who values beauty. The light which this planet receives is just right. Some suns (stars) give out deadly quantities of ultraviolet light or nuclear radiation. Our sun gives us just the right sort of light and warmth – a gift from a careful, caring Creator.

### Day 2 – Clouds

The whole irrigation system of the world, delightfully described in Ecclesiastes 1:7, involves a permanent supply of fresh water being taken from the sea by evaporation and returned to it in the form of rain which forms rivers. This is basic to all life upon earth and is a wonder that we easily take for granted. The volume of the sea and the effect of the cloud cover are invaluable in preventing the world from becoming unbearably hot.

### Day 3 – Dry land, plants, seeds

Forethought is seen in the perfect balance which God formed when he created plant life. The plants use up carbon dioxide from the air and produce oxygen. The animals, fish, birds and man use up the oxygen and produce carbon dioxide. So God created two systems which were not only brilliant in themselves, but work together so well that they do not need refilling with fuel every so often like a motor car. This sort of perfect balance and interdependence does not come about by chance. Another point worth noting is that all the plants God created had their own built-in reproductive systems. For those in your class who may be troubled by the theories of evolution this may be a helpful line of thought to pursue. The idea of the first plant life coming into existence and having the capacity to reproduce itself at the same time, is beyond the bounds of probability. However, if it did not have this capacity to reproduce, it would die out before it had developed the ability to do so.

### Day 4 – Sun, moon and stars

On this day the sun, moon and stars are made part of the firmament of heaven. It is possible that they were created beforehand since the light from even the nearest star takes several years to get here. This day may record their new role in being visible to the Earth and therefore forming part of the Earth's heaven, and in being ordained for the measurement of time on Earth; days, years, seasons, etc. God in this act created time for us whilst he inhabits eternity. (Isaiah 57:15.). Contemplating the vastness of what we know of the universe makes us realise how beyond our grasp such distances are. If one inch represents on a map the distance between the Earth and the sun (92 million miles) then the map would

have to be four miles long just to include the nearest star, and to include the centre of our galaxy the map would have to be 250,000 miles long! And the universe contains thousands of billions of galaxies!

Within that vastness there is a precision that we can use to set our clocks by. Encourage the class to appreciate something of God's eternal nature in creating time, the vastness of his understanding and the precise accuracy of his acts.

### **Day 5 – The first living creatures: fish and birds**

Even the 'simplest' form of life is really very complicated. No scientist has been able to produce such living things even with the controlled environment of a laboratory. Chance could not do it either.

If God's creation of birds had been like man's first attempts at flight then the bird population would have died out before it was off the ground. But it was perfect from the beginning. The beautiful and delicate apparatus for flight which is different, but equally marvellous in birds, insects and bats, is useless unless completely formed. This is no product of slow evolution. The birds can either fly and survive or they can't.

The wonder of migration seen in birds, fish and whales is still a mystery. The design of an egg and the peculiar long shape of the eggs of birds that nest on narrow ledges, are designed so that they roll in a small circle and do not fall off. All this shows forethought in design to a degree which is beyond our understanding. We have a Creator who does not make mistakes.

### **Day 6 – Animals and man**

The design of each animal of creation is a wonder in itself. Some snakes have poisonous bites which, if they had developed slowly, would have killed them off before they had perfected the technique. The nurture of animals is evidence of a very caring Creator. Father penguins stand for months on the ice with eggs on their feet, thus giving them enough warmth to develop and hatch. Eagle parents are 'programmed' to fly under their young while they are learning and bear them up when they might fall. One Australian bird builds a special pit ten or twelve feet across and then fills it with compost. As it rots this provides warmth for the incubating eggs. He checks the temperature each day with his beak, adding another blanket of sand or making holes to lower the temperature to keep it at the steady 92 degrees needed for incubation.

The eye and the ear are each a miracle of design which would have been no use only half developed. The ear is designed with a special muscle which actually tightens the eardrum to reflect sound when it gets very loud. This protects the delicate inner mechanism from being damaged by loud noise. Forethought and planning again! The eye is designed to recognise colour, light, texture, movement and all the beauty that God has created. Colour and pattern in animal and bird life has been designed for our enjoyment by a Creator who values beauty. A sunset or the colours of autumn can never be argued to have been developed as a useful step in an evolutionary process. Man's incredible brain, his use of language, his value of poetry, his appreciation of right and wrong and his sense of humour are all gifts from a Creator who has in mind a greater purpose for man than mere existence. They make no sense as chance products of evolution.

### **Day 7 – God rested**

Though God does not create on this day, the fact that he rests tells us something about him. God anticipated our need for rest. He did not create just for the pleasure of the act of creation and then go away and create something else. He had a purpose in mind for what he created. That which he has created he values and cares for.

## **Digging deeper**

### **Genesis and the New Testament**

The relevance of this exercise is to show that New Testament characters, including Jesus, believed the creation story and used it to develop deeper lessons.

### **Relevance to our lives**

Ask the class how this understanding of all of nature as a revelation of the One who created it, might change their attitude to the things they see around. Ask them to choose something specific that they see in the following week and think about what it shows them of God. Remember to allow a few minutes at the beginning of next week's lesson to say what they noticed. If you could all go for a country walk during the week, it would be a very good opportunity to develop this theme.

## **Prayer**

Dear Lord, creator of heaven and earth, thank you for the wonder and beauty of your creation. Help us to see, in it all, your greatness and glory.

## **Other suggestions for activities**

- The thoughts which the class produce in the workbook could be the basis for writing their own psalm. If in discussion about the qualities of God that are seen in his creation, one thought keeps recurring, for example, that God's creation is wonderful or that his understanding is infinite, this could form a repeated phrase throughout as in Psalm 136. The first part of each verse could be a statement about one of the wonderful things God has created.
- The class could take a walk around a nearby park discussing all that is seen from the point of view of what it reveals about the Creator.