



## Aim of lesson

To see how the book of Genesis fits into history, to summarise what's in it and to notice how many of the great themes of scripture start here.

## Bible background

Genesis

## Preparation required

Prepare cards for the students to sort into chronological order. You can either use the pictures in the students' books, which have the advantage that the students have to recognise the stories, or write the incidents on cards if the class feel too old for pictures.

## Outline of Lesson

### Time periods

Discuss the pie chart found in the students' books. Bring out the idea that Genesis covers an enormous proportion of the time from creation to today. Talk about the fact that the Bible isn't a step by step historical account: there are periods of time with very little detail given, and other times (e.g. Christ's ministry) with intricate detail. The pie chart takes Genesis 1 at face value. For the purposes of this lesson it is probably as well just to point this out and not go into detail about how long creation might have taken. On the timeline in the students' books, highlight the period of history covered by the book of Genesis. When you have talked about the events in Genesis in more detail, you could mark them on the class timeline.

### Events

Use the picture/word cards to establish prior knowledge and as a revision aid. Ask the students to give a brief outline of the story and put them in chronological order either on a timeline or on a line with the chapters of Genesis marked on it. Or you could decide not to use cards at all but just ask the students what happened and write the incidents onto your time or chapter line. Use what they say to give a brief summary of Genesis. The 12 picture cards depict

Abram leaving Ur	The ram caught in the thicket	Adam and Eve
Sodom and Gomorrah	Jacob and his sons	Jacob's dream
Cain and Abel's offerings	Joseph and his coat	Creation
The tower of Babel	The flood	Jacob obtains Esau's birthright

## Beginnings

Talk about how Genesis is a book of beginnings – the word 'Genesis' means 'birth' or 'beginning'. Ask the students what beginnings they can think of – the beginning of the earth and life on it, sin and death, the new beginning with Noah's family, the origin of languages at Babel and races in chapter 10 and the beginning of Israel with Jacob.

A more mature group might like to consider the beginnings of some key Bible principles as shown below. Many of these will be covered later, so there is no need to go into detail.

Adam and Eve's coats of skin	Forgiveness through the shedding of blood.
Cain and Abel	Good versus evil
Noah	Baptism
Tower of Babel	God is greater than man and in control
Abraham, Sodom and Gomorrah	Protection for those who trust God; destruction of the wicked
The offering of Isaac	God providing salvation through Jesus
The choice of Rebekah	God's hand in every aspect of the lives of those who trust him
Jacob and the deception of Isaac	God using events to shape the characters of his chosen people

Jacob's ladder	Communication between God and man
Joseph in the pit	Types of Christ
Joseph escaping Potiphar's life	Holding fast to God's principles, whatever the circumstances
The butler's and baker's dreams	The bread and wine

## Relevance to our lives

Through the things that happen in this first book of the Bible we can see that God's purposes and plans have been there since the beginning of time and this sets the tone for the rest of these lessons. God is unchanging.

## Extension activities

- Use some or all of the following passages to see how Jesus believed and trusted Genesis: Matthew 19:4,5,6; Matthew 23:25; Luke 17:26-27; Matthew 8:11; Luke 17:28-32.
- The class could hunt through Genesis 7 and 8, make a chart of the time periods of the flood and work out how long Noah was in the ark.

Genesis	When	What
7:4,10	Month 2 Day 10	entered the ark
7:11-12	Month 2 day 17	rain began
7:24, 8:4	Month 7, day 17	ark rested on Mt Ararat
8:5-6	Month 10 day 1	tops of mountains visible
8:7-9	Month 11 day 10	raven sent out then dove
8:10-11	Month 11 Day 17	dove sent out; returns with olive leaf
8:12	Month 11 Day 24	dove sent out; doesn't return
8:13	Month 1 :Day 1	covering of ark removed
8:14-19	Month 2 Day 27	earth dry; all left ark

- Talk about the genealogy chart in the students' books. If your class is interested in dates or maths they could fill it in for themselves using Genesis 5 and 11. A completed one is below. Those who are not so interested could just fill in the names of people they have heard of and perhaps use coloured lines from someone's birth to their death to bring out the following interesting points:
  - Adam and Methuselah were alive at the same time.
  - Noah's birth and Adam's death are separated by less than 150 years.
  - Isaac could have met Noah's son Shem.
  - There was always a 'faithful' man around on the earth.
  - After the flood, men's lives were much shorter.
  - We can see that the history contained in Genesis could have been passed on by only 6 people - Adam, Methuselah, Noah, Shem, Isaac, Joseph. No real potential for the 'Chinese whispers' effect! There would have been people around who had experienced the events first hand. We can trust what was written.
  - However much detail you decide to go into it is worth talking about chapters 5 and 11 to show how we know the time periods in a time of history that was so long ago.

	Birth	Death (age at death)
0	Adam	
100	130 Seth	
200	235 Enos/Enosh	
300	325 Cainan/Kenan 395 Mahalaleel	
400	460 Jared	
500		
600	622 Enoch 687 Methuselah	
700		
800	874 Lamech	

	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Death (age at death)</b>
900		930 Adam (930) (987 Enoch - God took him) 1042 Seth (912)
1000	1056 Noah	
1100		1140 Enos/Enosh (905)
1200		1235 Cainan (910)
1300		1290 Mahalaleel (895)
1400		1422 Jared (962)
1500	1556 Shem	
1600	1658 Arphaxad 1693 Salah/Shelah	1651 Lamech (777) 1656 Methuselah (679)
1700	1723 Eber 1757 Peleg 1787 Reu	
1800	1819 Serug 1849 Nahor 1878 Terah	
1900		1986 Peleg (239) 1987 Nahor (148)
2000	2008 Abram (see note below) 2094 Ishmael (Genesis 16:16)	2006 Noah (950)
2100	2108 Isaac (21:5) 2168 Jacob and Esau (25:26) 2258 Joseph?	2183 Abraham (175) (Genesis 25:7) 2156 Shem (600)
2200		2288 Isaac (180)
2300		2315 Jacob (147) 2368 Joseph (110)

If you get as far as Abram you will have to help the young people over a little hurdle. Genesis 11:26 seems to imply that Abram was born when Terah was 70. However, Acts 7:4 says that Abram left Haran after the death of his father Terah, who was 205 when he died (Genesis 11:32). Since Abram was 75 at that point (12:4), Terah must have been at least 130 when Abram was born, which would mean that Abram was not the eldest son. Perhaps Haran was the eldest, which would explain why Abram adopted Lot; and maybe Nahor was the second born, which would fit with Abram's son Isaac marrying Nahor's granddaughter Rebekah. There is another explanation - some ancient texts say that Terah was 145 when he died, but it's likely that someone changed the numbers to make Abram seem the eldest, so we've stuck with what our Bibles say.