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In the Beginning, God

Scripture: Genesis 1:1-25

Theme: God is the Creator of all things

4th-6th Grade (Ages 9-11)

Free curriculum for small and rural churches

Lesson Overview

Genesis 1 reveals God as the sovereign Creator who spoke the universe into existence. This chapter shows God's power, intentionality, and goodness in creation. Students will explore what it means that God created everything out of nothing, made humans in His image, and declared His creation 'very good.'

Bible Story

The Bible opens with one of the most profound statements in all of literature: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' This verse establishes the foundation of everything we believe. Before anything existed , before time, matter, or energy , God was. He is eternal, self-existent, and the source of all things.

The creation account in Genesis 1 reveals a God of order and purpose. Over six days, God systematically brought the universe into existence. Day one: light. Day two: sky. Day three: land and vegetation. Day four: sun, moon, and stars. Day five: sea creatures and birds. Day six: land animals and human beings. Each day builds on the previous one, showing God's careful planning.

A key phrase repeats throughout the chapter: 'And God said...' Ten times in Genesis 1, God speaks, and His word brings something into existence. This reveals the incredible power of God's word. Hebrews 11:3 tells us, 'By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.' God created ex nihilo , out of nothing.

The climax of creation comes on day six when God says, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness.' The word 'image' (Hebrew: tselem) means humans reflect something of who God is , our ability to think, create, love, make moral choices, and relate to God. No other part of creation is described this way. Human beings have unique dignity and worth because we bear God's image.

God gave humans a special job: to rule over creation as His representatives. This wasn't about domination , it was about stewardship. God entrusted the care of His creation to us. We are meant to reflect God's character in how we treat the world and everything in it.

After six days of creative work, God rested on the seventh day. God wasn't tired , He rested to set a pattern for us and to enjoy what He had made. Genesis 2:3 says God blessed the seventh day and made it holy. Rest is part of God's good design.

The chapter ends with God's evaluation of everything He had made: 'God saw all that He had made, and it was very good.' Not just good , VERY good. There was no sin, no brokenness, no death. Everything was exactly as God intended. This is the world God wanted us to live in.

Key Verse

Genesis 1:1

Genesis 1:1 is the foundation of the biblical worldview. It tells us that God, not chance, not nature, not any other god, is the Creator of everything. The word 'created' (Hebrew: bara) is only used with God as its subject in the Bible. Only God can create something from nothing. This verse sets the stage for the entire Bible's story: God creates, humanity rebels, and God redeems.

Activities

Activity 1: Creation Order Challenge

Students work in small groups to put the days of creation in order and discuss why God may have chosen this specific sequence.

Supplies needed:

- *Index cards with creation events written on them*
- *Large poster paper*
- *Markers*
- *Bibles*

1. Give each group a set of index cards with creation events (one per day).
2. Have them arrange the cards in the correct order using Genesis 1.
3. Then discuss: Why do you think God created things in this order? What had to come before what? (Example: light before sun, land before plants, plants before animals)
4. Groups share their reasoning. Emphasize God's intentional design.
5. Connect to the key verse: God didn't just create , He created with purpose and order.

Activity 2: Image of God Interview

Students explore what it means to be made in God's image by interviewing each other about uniquely human abilities.

Supplies needed:

- *Interview worksheets*
- *Pencils*
- *Bibles*

1. Pair students up and have them interview each other using questions like: What can you do that animals can't? What makes humans special? Can you create things? Can you love? Can you make choices?
2. Bring the group together and list the unique qualities they discovered.
3. Read Genesis 1:26-27 and discuss: Being made in God's image means we reflect God's character. We can create because He is creative. We can love because He is love. We can make choices because He is personal.
4. Discuss: How should being made in God's image change how we treat other people?

Discussion Questions

- Why do you think the Bible starts with creation? What would be different if it started somewhere else?
- What does it mean that God created 'out of nothing'? How is that different from how we make things?
- Why do you think God created humans last, after everything else was ready?
- What does it mean to be made in 'God's image'? How should that affect how we see ourselves and others?
- God said creation was 'very good.' What do you think was different about the world before sin entered?
- Some people believe the universe happened by chance. What does Genesis 1 teach us about that idea?

Prayer Focus

Thank God for His power and creativity in making the universe. Thank Him for making us in His image with purpose and dignity. Ask Him to help us be good stewards of His creation. Pray for people groups who have never heard the creation story, that missionaries would reach them with the truth of Genesis 1.

>> Missions Spotlight

The Bushmen of the Kalahari Desert in southern Africa have an ancient oral tradition about a Creator God. For thousands of years, they have passed down stories about the one who made the world. Now missionaries are sharing the full story of Genesis with these tribes, and many Bushmen are coming to faith in the God their ancestors once knew, the God who sent Jesus!

-> To the Cross

Genesis 1 shows us the God who created everything good. But Genesis 3 will show us how sin ruined that goodness. The good news is that the Creator didn't abandon His creation. John 1:3 tells us, 'Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made.' Jesus was there at creation. And Colossians 1:16 says all things were created 'for Him.' Creation exists for Jesus. When sin broke the world, the Creator Himself came to fix it. The God who spoke light into darkness sent His Son to shine in our hearts.