

## *Session 1 – God Creates the World*

Genesis 1:1-2:4a

### **Gathering and Opening Time**

#### ***Hearing God's Word...***

If you use the paraphrase below, consider these ideas to help it to come alive:

- mount pictures from magazines or calendars with images from the story and stick them on the wall, on a felt board or hang them on a clothesline as you tell the story, or you could hand them to people to hold up
- make a 'creation mix' as the story is told, adding some of the foods for the night's snack into a large bowl (mini oreo cookies – light and dark, mini marshmallows – clouds/sky, green jujubes – plants, orange m&ms – sun, yellow m&ms – stars, goldfish crackers – fish, animal crackers – animals) [idea modified from *For Leaders of Children and Youth Ministry* resource by Dorothy Henderson, Presbyterian Church in Canada, November 2001]

Other story sources:

"God Makes a World" from *The Family Story Bible*

"January 1 – In The Beginning" from *The One Year Children's Bible*

Introduction (regardless of version used) and story paraphrase:

Can you imagine a time when the earth was not here? Can you imagine before anything had ever happened? We know that God was there. Listen for God's Word in this story, the very first one in the Bible...

In the beginning, God made the heavens and the earth. The earth had no shape or form and it was covered in darkness. God's Spirit blew wind over the earth's waters. Then God said, "Let there be light!" and light appeared. God saw that the light was good and separated it from the dark. God called the light day and the dark night. This was the first day.

On the second day God made the sky to separate the earth and its waters from everything else around it.

On the third day God gathered the earth's waters into seas and made dry land appear. Then God created every kind of plant made out of all kinds of seeds. God saw that all of this was good.

On the fourth day God made the seasons and two great lights for the sky – the sun for the day and the moon and stars for the night. God saw that this was good.

On the fifth day God filled the waters with all kinds of sea creatures, big and small. God filled the skies with every kind of bird and saw that it was good. God told all of the creatures to have children so that there would always be enough of them on the earth.

On the sixth day God created every kind of animal to fill the land - wild animals and cattle and all kinds of creeping creatures. God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us, and let them be responsible for all of the fish and birds and animals."

So God created humankind in God's image, both males and females. God blessed them and told them to have many children, to fill the earth and be in charge of it, and to be responsible for all of the creatures. God told them to eat the fruit of the plants and trees and to share them with the animals. God saw everything that God had made and it was very good.

On the seventh day God was finished and rested. God made this day holy because God rested from all of the work of creation.

Reflection questions:

What might it mean to be made in God's image?

Why do you think God chose people to look after the earth?

Do you think that God is still happy about creating the world?

What might it mean to make the seventh day holy?

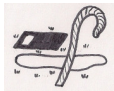
Do you think that we take all of creation for granted?



### Talking Circle

Discuss together any of the following topics and ideas from the story:

- a) How do we relate to God as Creator and artist? Is this a strong image for us, or do we tend to think of God as judge or healer or something else?
- b) Is there significance to the order in which things are created? Does it make sense? What questions does it raise for you?
- c) It is interesting that when God decides to make human beings, God says "Let us make human beings in *our* image". What could this mean? How do you respond to the idea that you are made in the image of God? Is it a comforting thought, nerve-wracking or something else?
- d) How do you balance the command to be fruitful and multiply with having dominion over and caring for the earth? Are these contradictions? How can we be wise stewards of the environment?
- e) What does the word Sabbath mean to you? Has our understanding of Sabbath changed over time? What are essential aspects of Sabbath? How do we go about making time holy?



### Still Waters

Read the following Psalms – 8, 19 and 148

How do these words relate to creation?

Write a poem, story or your thoughts in your journal or on the paper provided:

- a) What is your favourite thing which God created and why?
- b) How do you feel about issues of the environment and God's call to care for the world?
- c) When have you been able to honour the Sabbath? What does Sabbath mean to you?
- d) What seeds has God planted in your life?
- e) What are ways that you have been fruitful in your life? How have others around you been fruitful?



## Play Place

- a) With music or without, try moving like some of the different things God created – a tree or plant on a windy day, water God is rippling, shooting stars, crawling and slithering creatures, floating clouds, galloping horses, sea monsters, swarming insects and anything else you can think of.
- b) Imagine how God is feeling once creation is finished. Pretend you are God and share what your hopes, dreams and perhaps even fears, are.
- c) Come up with a short play or skit about ways that we do not honour God's creation and ways that we can honour God's creation.
- d) Choreograph a dance to music that fits the theme. Dancers could be parts of creation or it could just be a dance of thanksgiving and joy for all that God made.



## Creation Space

- a) Create a mural that is divided into seven sections, one for each day of creation. List what was created on each day and fill in each section with these things using crayons, markers, pastels or paints. This could also be a banner of felt or fabric. Decide if you want to add a title and what it might be.
- b) Make some kind of representation of the earth, whether it is a two dimensional picture or a three dimensional sculpture using play dough or other materials.
- c) Draw or paint your favourite thing that God has created.
- d) Draw something that shows what the earth or universe looked like before God created everything in it.
- e) Draw a picture of what Sabbath is like.



## Word Quest

- a) Fill in the handout carefully listing the order of creation. Keep these sheets on hand in the centre because you will need them for Session 2.
- b) Using a dictionary and other resources, come up with your own definition of Sabbath.
- c) Look through current newspapers and cut out articles that have to do with the environment. These could be mounted onto chart paper or bristol board.
- d) If you have internet access, look for websites about environmental organizations and issues, such as endangered species, water access and pollution. If someone in your congregation is involved with these concerns, ask them to bring some data with them to look at.
- e) Look in a current atlas at the variety of climates, topography and vegetation that there are around the world. Are there places that you would really like to visit, or places you would like to avoid?



## **Snack Shack**

You may already have some edible creation ready if the storyteller used this idea in sharing the story. Talk with the storyteller and make sure these things are available if needed for the opening.

Choose some or all of these items, and ask learners if they know what they represent:

- mini oreo cookies – light and darkness
- mini marshmallows – clouds
- green jujubes – plants
- orange m&ms – sun (you could also use mandarin oranges for a healthier choice)
- yellow m&ms – stars
- goldfish crackers – fish
- animal crackers – animals

Most of these items you can find at bulk food stores. Particularly if there are food restrictions and allergies in your group, you may want to keep these items separate from each other. People can mix them up on a napkin or plate if they wish, making their own 'creation mix'.