

God saw how good it was. (Genesis 1:12c)

God Creates the Earth – Genesis 1:1-19

Prepare to Lead

Activities At-a-Glance

GATHER TOGETHER

Days of Creation (Sequencing)

God's World (Journaling)

Creation Crossword (Puzzle)

Nature Audit (Activity)

EXPERIENCE WONDER

Create the Earth (Art)

Guess the Creation (Game)

Peaceful Place (Response Activities)

WONDER MORE

Sun and Moon Switch (Movement)

Glow Paint (Art)

Water Sounds Journaling (Reflection)

Creation Mural (Art)

Supplies At-a-Glance

crayons

butcher paper

colored pencils

timer

markers

nature items

scissors

magnifying glasses

pencils

canvas

clipboards

squirt bottles

small globe

tablespoons

recycled materials

corn starch

tape

neon paint

string

black light
flashlight

tape

dry-erase board
and markers

water sounds
music player

Suggested Books

Let There Be Light by Archbishop
Desmond Tutu

Above My Head, Beneath My Feet
by K. D. Plum

Tips for the Leader

- Welcome to *Celebrate Wonder*! Whether you are new to this program, or you have been using it for some time, there is much to explore as you embark on a faith journey with children. In this section, you will find tips for particular sessions, and the *Celebrate Wonder* line as a whole.
- This page also provides you with a session outline of activities and a supply list. Activities

that are consistent in each session, such as Gather Together, Share a Story, Wonder with Me, Examine the Bible Verse, and Go in Peace are not included. Each activity in the outline requires supplies that are not included in your *Celebrate Wonder Kit*.

- As you plan to lead, be sure to prepare any items you are using from the Class Pack.

Prepare to Wonder

Faith Word: CREATIVITY

Our Bible story today comes from the first chapter of the first book of the Bible, the Book of Genesis. Genesis contains two accounts of Creation: one in the first chapter and one in the second chapter. Today's telling is found in the first account and begins with God creating light and dark. God made both the light and the darkness, and each are necessary parts of God's creation.

Light and darkness serve as markers for time. In Genesis 1, the Creation account is divided into days. The repeated phrase, "There was evening and there was morning," divides the story into seven days. The world is created from a formless void and a great darkness. God created the light to complement the dark. In doing so, each day when the light appears, the world is created anew. Each day the light pushes away darkness and gives way to a new creation. God gives each a place in space and time and calls it good. Each day God created, God proclaimed the creation good.

According to the New International Bible commentary, "Good does not mean perfect." Rather, creation is an ongoing process, and God remains involved in the process. God wants us to stay in relationship with God, to be co-creators, and to care for all of God's wonder-filled creation together. We too can bring light into the world. Through our creativity we are an expression of light. God's light lives within each one of us and reminds us that together we can participate in God's creation. Children are also incredibly creative and bring so much light into the world. We let their light shine when we encourage their creativity and see it as very good. Children can easily enter into a partnership with God. Listen deeply to their ideas for ways to care for and keep God's creation beautiful.

Spiritual Practice for Adults

Everyone has the ability to be creative, but as adults we can sometimes forget to embrace our creativity. Over the course of the next few weeks, start a new creative project. Paint, draw, write, build, or do something else that inspires your creativity. As you work, remember God sees all creation as good.

Gather Together

Use the following as optional activities for when children are arriving. You may also choose to use these activities elsewhere in the lesson.

Days of Creation – Preschool

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons, scissors, cardstock (optional), envelopes (optional)

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Days of Creation" (Reproducible 1A) for each preschooler.

- Give each preschooler a copy of "Days of Creation."

SAY: God created the earth in seven days.

ASK: What are some of the things that God created?

- Have the children color and cut out the cards.
- Help children put the cards in order. Save the cards in an envelope for each child for future use.

God's World – Younger Elementary

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils, crayons or markers

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "God's World" (Reproducible 1B) for each child.

- Give each child a copy of "God's World."

SAY: God created so many things. We can create too!

ASK: What would you create? What do you want the world to look like?

- Encourage children to draw their own creations on the page.
- Invite willing volunteers to share.

Creation Crossword – Older Elementary

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils, colored pencils or markers

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Creation Crossword" (Reproducible 1C) for each child.

- Give each child a copy of "Creation Crossword."

ASK: What did God create?

- Encourage children to fill in the words to the crossword puzzle and color the page.

Nature Audit– All Ages

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils, clipboards, crayons or markers

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Nature Audit" (Reproducible 1D) for each child.

- Give each child a copy of "Nature Audit" and a clipboard.

SAY: The story of God creating the earth is important to our faith. Let's see if we can find evidence of this story in our church.

- Divide the children into pairs or groups. Partner older children with younger children.
- Visit your church's worship space or other important areas. Have children observe what they see and record their findings.

ASK: What were you surprised to see? What do you think was missing? How does nature help us worship God?

Come Together

Supplies: Class Pack, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, Wonder Box, green cloth, battery-operated candle, a small globe

Prepare Ahead: Set up a Wonder Table (see p. 3) with a green cloth, battery-operated candle, and a Wonder Box (see p. 3). Display the Unit 1 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 10 & 15) and Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p.22) to use later in the session. Place the globe inside the Wonder Box.

- Invite the kids to join you in a circle.

SAY: This month we will hear stories about creation.

ASK: Have you ever created something?

- We recommend reading stories from the Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook. Allow an elementary-age child to read the story, "God Creates the Earth" (pp. 12–13) from the storybook or read Genesis 1:1-19 from a CEB Bible.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for creating the earth and everything in it. Amen.

Wonder Time

Share a Story

Supplies: Celebrate Wonder DVD, TV, DVD player

- Invite the children to join you and to sit in a circle on the floor.
- Watch the Session 1 video (Celebrate Wonder DVD).

WONDER: What part of creation is your favorite? Why?

Interactive Bible Story

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy today's Take-Home Pages (Reproducibles 1F–1G).*

- Invite several readers to take turns reading and/or acting out the story, one section at a time.

WONDER: What have you seen in nature that reminds you of God's creativity?

Wonder with Me

Supplies: *Class Pack, Wonder Box, scissors*

Prepare Ahead: *Lay out the Unit 1 Wonder Story Mat (Class Pack—pp. 11 & 14).*

Locate and cut out the Unit 1 story figures (Class Pack—p.6) if you haven't already.

Display the Unit 1 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 22).

SAY: Today's Faith Word is *creativity*.

- Show the Unit 1 Faith Word Poster and invite the children to wonder about the image.

SAY: The definition of *creativity* is the process of imagining and making something, just like God imagined and created the world.

ASK: What did God create?

- Have a child place the sun on the Wonder Story Mat.

WONDER together:

- ☐ What does creativity mean to you?
 - ☐ How do you show creativity?
 - ☐ Are you creative? How?
 - ☐ Is God creative?
 - ☐ What do you think is inside our Wonder Box today?
- Open the Wonder Box to reveal the globe.

SAY: This globe represents our earth, which God created.

WONDER: What other things did God create?

Experience Wonder

Create the Earth – All Ages

Supplies: materials that can be recycled such as water bottles, plastic containers, recycled paper and so forth; tape, glue, string

SAY: Look at all these materials we have. These items may look like a lot of trash.

ASK: Did you know that almost anything can be used to create something beautiful?

- Divide the children into pairs or small groups.
- Invite the children to use the materials to make an item that resembles the Earth.
- Let willing volunteers share their creations.

ASK: How did it feel to create something?

Guess the Creation – All Ages

Supplies: dry-erase board and dry-erase markers or large chart paper and markers, paper, basket, timer

Prepare Ahead: Write words from the creation story on small pieces of paper: God rested, light, dark, water, animals, people, plants, and so forth. Fold up the pieces of paper and place them in a basket.

ASK: What is your favorite thing that God created?

- Divide the children into teams. Each team will have a turn to nominate someone to be their artist.
- One team at a time, the artist will draw a word and go to the dry-erase board or paper and have 45 seconds to draw the word that they chose.
- The artists' team will try to guess the word. For each correct guess, the team gets a point. If the team cannot guess the drawing in the time, they get no point.
- Repeat, alternating teams, as long as time allows for as many words as you have.

Examine the Bible Verse – Early and Older Elementary

Supplies: CEB Bibles

SAY: Our Unit 1 Bible verse is Genesis 1:12c. Let's find it in our Bibles.

ASK: Is Genesis in the Old or New Testament? (*Old*). Where is the Book of Genesis located in the Old Testament? (*first book*) In what chapter of Genesis is our verse located? (1) What is the verse number? (12)

- Gather the kids around the Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 12 & 13). Read the verse together.

SAY: Our Bible verse is one of the very first verses in the Bible.

ASK: Where are other verses you like located? Why is important to read different verses in our Bibles?

Peaceful Place – Preschool and Early Elementary

Supplies: copies of the Unit 1 Faith Word (Reproducible Kids' Book, 1F), Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, Let There Be Light by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Above My Head, Beneath My Feet by K. D. Plum, quiet toys and soft items, various items from nature (leaves, small rocks, sticks, acorns, and so forth), magnifying glasses, paper, pencils, crayons, markers

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy the Unit 1 Faith Word Coloring Page (Reproducible 1F) for each child.

- Assist the children, as needed, as they interact with the items and books provided.
- Encourage children to color the Faith Word Coloring Page or draw a favorite part of today's Bible story.
- Encourage children to observe the items from nature. They may also choose to draw what they observe or make notes about the items.

Tip: All of the supplies/activities suggested for the Peaceful Place are optional.

Wonder More

The following activities are supplemental to the session. Depending on your time, you may choose to skip these activities and go to the "Go in Peace" section.

Preschool – Sun and Moon Switch

- Have the children stand in a circle.
- Assign each child to be a sun or a moon.

SAY: When I say, "God made the sun," all the suns run into the middle of the circle. When I say, "God made the moon," all the moons run into the middle of the circle, and the suns run out. When I say, "Sun up and moon down," everyone form a circle again.

- Repeat the game as many times as desired or as time allows.

WONDER: What do you like to do when it is light? What do you like to do when it is dark?

Early Elementary – Glow Paint

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, one large canvas, squirt bottles (one per color), Tablespoons, corn starch, warm water, neon paints, a black light flashlight*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Glow Paint" (Reproducible 1E). Add the corn starch to the squirt bottles before class.*

SAY: In the Bible story, God created both light and dark. Let's create art that looks different in the light and in the dark.

- Help the children follow the directions to create the paint.
- After making the paint, gather the children around one large, blank canvas. Allow each child, one at a time, to make designs on the canvas using the paint.

WONDER: What do you think the colors on our canvas will look like in daylight?

- After the paint dries, use a black light to look at the children's painting.

ASK: What changed when we used the black light to look at our painting?

Older Elementary – Water Sounds Journaling

Supplies: *audio recording of water sounds, music player, pens or pencils, paper*

- Give each child paper and a pen or pencil.

SAY: In our Bible story today, God separated the sky from the water. God also made day and night and earth and plants, but water was probably the only thing that made much sound at this point in God's creation. Listen to the sounds of water as you think about the Bible story.

- Play the water sounds.
- Invite the children to journal or draw their thoughts.
- When you're done listening, allow children to share their thoughts.

WONDER: How did these sounds make you feel? How do you imagine God's creation sounded at the beginning, before people and animals? In what ways do you think the world sounds different today than it did then?

Intergenerational Activity – Creation Mural

Supplies: *large pieces of butcher paper, markers, tape, various art supplies*

- Divide the participants into groups of three or four. Give each group a large piece of paper, markers, and other art supplies if using.

SAY: We can find so much beauty in God's creation. God created something beautiful, and we can create something beautiful too!

- Give the groups time to create a mural that represents the creation story.
- Invite groups to share their creations.

Go in Peace

Spiritual Practice – Exploring Creation Through Beauty

Supplies: glow-in-the-dark stars

- Gather the children in a circle.

SAY: God created both the light and the darkness. Both are good and important for all of creation. We can find God’s beautiful creation during the day and at night.

WONDER: What beautiful things do you see during the day?

- Give each child a glow-in-the-dark star.

SAY: This is a beautiful star. But it does something extra special when we turn off the lights. Sometimes, it can be scary when it is dark. But, God is still there. God is present in both the light and the darkness. *(Turn off the lights.)*

WONDER: What beautiful things do you see at night?

SAY: You see, God gives us light even in the darkness. We have the moon and the stars and God is there too! *(Turn on the lights.)*

PRAY: God our Creator, thank you for darkness and light, and thank you for making a beautiful world that we can see all around us. Amen.

Tip: Set out the glow-in-the-dark stars in a bright spot prior to the session to absorb light.

Family Spiritual Practice

Supplies: Reproducible Kids’ Book; Leader Guide—p. 128

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy “Family Celebration Letter” (p. 128) for each child.

SAY: Let’s look at the Take-Home Pages for today (Reproducibles 1F–1G). Ask your family to participate in the Family Spiritual Practice. Encourage your family to help you with the pages.

- Send a copy of the Take-Home Pages and the Family Celebration Letter home with each child.