

THEME 1

Ancestral Faith Families

In the well-ordered garden home, humans disobeyed their Creator. Their disobedience brought chaos, alienation, and death. At this juncture, God's redemption began. The specific stories of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, the Flood, and the Tower of Babel are used to demonstrate God's redemptive presence in the history of humankind.

The family stories of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah/Rachel, and Joseph lead into the larger story of salvation history. These stories speak of promise and covenant relationship with one God, the Creator of the universe, who invites all wills to be submissive to the divine will.

Grade 5—Unit 1

God Creates

The lessons in Unit 1 give the foundation for the year’s study of salvation history. These two lessons include creating two student tools for organizing and personalizing information taught throughout the year, the Travel Log and Time Line. Also included are creating murals of “order” and “chaos,” which will serve as visual references throughout the year.

LESSONS

1. Travel Log and Timeline
2. Order Out of Chaos

Unit 1: God Creates

Unit Information

SUMMARY

Students will use a travel log and timeline to see how God worked in the lives of biblical people. They will use color, texture, and words to connect with the idea of chaos and order.

KEY BIBLE TEXTS

Genesis 1-6

Genesis 11

Psalm 139:1-12

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

The Genesis story begins with a formless, empty darkness into which the activity of God comes as breath (*wind*) and light. This activity of God unfolds in a sequence of six ordered stages, each beginning with a creative word of God, and concluding with the refrain “and there was evening and there was morning, day 1,” etc. The seventh day is a day of rest.

- **Day 1:** creation of light; separation of light from darkness
- **Day 2:** creation of sky; separation of waters above the sky and waters below
- **Day 3:** creation of earth; separation of earth from waters below; creation of vegetation; separation of different kinds of plants (*each after its kind*)
- **Day 4:** creation of sun, moon, and stars to separate day and night, and to order seasons
- **Day 5:** creation of non-land animals; separation of kinds of animals; command to be fruitful and multiply
- **Day 6:** creation of land animals; separation of kinds of animals; creation of human beings; command to be fruitful and multiply; humans given dominion over the earth
- **Day 7:** God rests and blesses seventh day

In every aspect of creation, specific mention is made of a division between parts of creation. Boundaries are set between light and darkness, between different kinds of water, and between sea and land. Vegetation and animals multiply after their own kind. There is clearly a distinction between humans and the rest of the world. This aspect of divisions and boundaries shows an orderliness that is important.

The earth is described as “formless and void.” The starting point for God’s work is disorder, or chaos. Without God and God’s active presence in the world there is only disorder and chaos. That provides a background for the creative activity of God. God creates order by a spoken word. God establishes a safe place for human existence. God is the Creator and Sustainer of the world, totally independent of human activity and without the need of other gods. This is God’s world, and God’s alone! This story describes human existence as anchored in the nature and activity of God.

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- Biblical faith does not concern itself with rituals and techniques to gain salvation. Instead, it offers hope in the face of human evil because God seeks out humankind. God has saved people from destruction.
- Through study of stories of God’s people and God’s faithfulness and providence to them, we come to understand God’s work in our world and lives today.
- The story in Genesis 1-2 is one of God creating order and life out of what was dark and desolate. The stories of Adam and Eve and those who follow demonstrate this same concept.
- Disobedience in the Garden of Eden brought fear, alienation, and suffering, yet God still sought and called out God’s people.
- Cain saw his sacrifice to God as a competition with his brother, Abel. When God favored Abel’s sacrifice, Cain acted out of jealousy and anger and killed Abel. Jealousy and sin saddens God, yet God still responds with compassion and grace.
- God was displeased with humankind’s great wickedness and used Noah to protect and restore God’s creation. The story of the flood and promise demonstrates God’s effort to seek out and restore the people.
- Political structures in the Middle East were supported by religious practices. In building the ziggurats, people were seeking to reach a god to serve their political ends, rather than a god to obey.

WORSHIP

Theme hymn for year: Listen, God is calling (*Sing the Journey*, #42)

Other theme hymns:

I sing the mighty power of God (*Hymnal: A Worship Book*, #46)
All things bright and beautiful (HWB #156)

Other hymn ideas:

This is the day (HWB #58)
Sing praise to God who reigns (HWB #59)
Of the Father’s love begotten (HWB #104)

The Creation Enacted (*focus: creation story*)

1. Open by singing “All things bright and beautiful.”
2. Read and act out “The Creation,” a poem by James Weldon Johnson:
 - To begin, assign roles for God, Darkness, Light, Moon and Stars, World, Mountains, Water (*can be divided into 7 seas, rain, and lakes/river*), Lightning, Thunder, Grass, Flowers, Trees, Rainbow, Fish, Land Animals, Birds, Human. *If there are not enough children for all of these roles, you can double them. You may want to bring in props (large pieces of fabric, objects such as a branch or twig, a flower, etc.).*
 - Read through the poem once for children to experiment and gather ideas. Read it a second time, slowly, for them to try those ideas. Read it a third and final time, this time performing it. Encourage children to “dance” the poem—twirling or dipping, using arm movements, etc.
3. To end worship time, sing the hymn, “I sing the mighty power of God.”

ASSESSING TEACHING / LEARNING

Assessment is important throughout the unit, and teachers should use tools both to formally and informally assess student learning. Use the results of these assessments to modify lessons to further increase student understanding and mastery. Teachers should formally assess students using their own point system and grading scale on the various worksheets and activities in the lessons. In this unit, you may wish to evaluate how well students work together on the order and chaos posters.

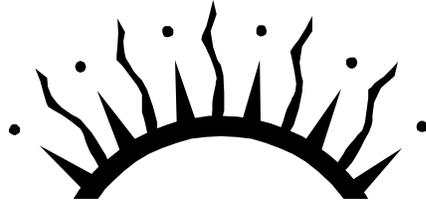
HOME EXTENSION IDEA

(To be shared with parents)

As a family, begin a timeline of the Bible, to be continued throughout the year. Read the Bible passages describing each story that is highlighted in your child's Bible class, and then draw the stories. Find a wall in your home for this timeline, and as the biblical story progresses, continue to draw it and put it in order on the wall. At the end of the year, you will have a great visual way to tell the story of salvation history.

MEMORY PASSAGES

This unit offers the main memory verse passage of Psalm 139:1-4. This passage is provided in large format on page 48, to be used as a poster or overhead.



O Lord, you have searched me,
and you know me.
You know when I sit and when
I rise; you perceive my
thoughts from afar.
You discern my going out
and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.
Before a word is on my tongue
you know it completely,
O Lord.

Psalm 139:1-4

God Creates

LESSON 1: TRAVEL LOG AND TIMELINE

Objective

Students will understand the overall concept of the fifth grade Bible curriculum, and will develop organizational tools to personalize their learning throughout the year-long study.

Key Concepts

- Biblical faith does not concern itself with rituals and techniques to gain salvation. Instead, it offers hope in the face of human evil because God seeks out humankind. God has saved people from destruction.
- Through study of stories of God’s people and God’s faithfulness and providence to them, we come to understand God’s work in our world and lives today.
- Two tools are essential in this study: 1) a travel log, and 2) a timeline.

Text: Genesis 1:26-27

Estimated Lesson Time: 40 minutes

Materials

- Spiral notebook for each student (*may ask ahead of time for them to provide*)
- Permanent markers
- Items for decorating travel logs—magazines, yarn, construction paper, cloth, etc.
- Glue
- Scissors
- 11" x 17" sheet of construction paper for each student
- Student Bibles

Teacher Preparation

- Page through the year’s lessons to see how the two items created today will be used throughout the year.
- Gather materials.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Read Genesis 1:26-27 together and discuss the following concepts:

- God created each of us in God’s own image. We are each unique and wonderfully made. Because God created us and loves us, God is present in our everyday experiences. We can understand God’s faithfulness and promises by studying stories from the Bible.
- This year, we will go back and look at many of the people and stories you have already learned about in your kindergarten through 4th grade studies. Now we will look at each story more carefully and in a different way, to find evidence of God’s continued presence.
- As we look at each story, we will remember that biblical faith does not depend on certain religious ceremonies that we perform in order to be saved. Instead, biblical

faith gives us hope even when humans do evil things. God searches for God’s own-people and saves them from destruction. We will study the religious ceremonies, beliefs, and events recorded in the Old Testament to help us recognize how God sought out and led God’s people.

LESSON STEPS

1. Introduce the travel log. Explain that this Bible curriculum is called “Journeys with God” Add, “Consider this year a personal journey for yourself as you study the journeys God’s people took. As we study each story, you will write in a “travel log,” or journal, as if you are the character in that story. This will help you understand how these people might have experienced God.

“Sometimes you will journal in your own voice and think about how God is speaking to you. Occasionally, you’ll have the opportunity to share your writing with other students, but it is always optional. Think of your travel log as a personal and private place to experience God—through your own eyes and the eyes of biblical characters.

2. Decorate and personalize travel logs. Give the students time to decorate and personalize the covers of their travel logs, providing materials such as magazine cut-outs, stencils, scripture, yarn, cloth, stickers, etc. Be sure students’ names are written in permanent marker and clearly visible.

3. Introduce the timeline. Explain that as the students write in their travel logs about the Bible characters, they will also make note of them on the timeline. They will also note each event or ceremony covered. At the end of the year, they will be able to look back and see a visual strand of salvation history. *(This is a way to view each character/event in one spot—whereas the travel log is a more expanded and personalized version.)*

Hand out 11 x 17 sheets of construction paper. Ask students to turn them horizontally and label as follows:

Character/Event:
God’s Work:
Character/Event:
God’s Work:
Character/Event:
God’s Work:

The line the students draw will need to extend the full length of the paper. Make sure they write in small letters, to have room for many entries. There will be approximately 25 entries if you need to cover all the lessons. *(Remember that if students are quite knowledgeable about some of the stories, you can simply do a brief review and move on to other areas. Always remember to bring in the lessons on covenant and salvation history.)*

If all entries are needed, students may need to draw a second or even a third line the length of the paper. They will add a short vertical line each time an entry is made, to show the spot on the timeline that the event takes place. You may want them to include the year as well. Approximate years are noted on the Table

of Contents page at the beginning of the teacher notebook. *(Throughout the year, lessons will refer teachers and students to their timelines.)*

Fold the paper in half and put glue on the back side of the second half. Paste the timeline into the inside cover of the students' travel logs.

4. Explain journaling. If you don't regularly have students journal in your classroom, explain that thoughts should be free-flowing and not pre-planned as in other writing experiences. Say, "Ideas should flow from your mind through your pencil."

You may want to assign a set number of sentences or paragraphs for each writing, or you might leave that up to the student. Consider playing a music CD each time students write in their travel logs. Keep distractions to a minimum. Remind students to always print the prompt at the top of the page before they begin writing. *(This will help as you review them later!)* Some teachers like to journal at the same time that their students are writing. Modeling a passion and interest in journaling will help students buy into the process.

5. Write in travel logs. Ask students to re-read Genesis 3:26-27 on their own and then write their first journal entry. *Prompt:* What does it mean to you to be created in God's image?

EXTEND THE LESSON

(This activity will extend the lesson to longer than 40 minutes.)

- **Interviews on God's image.** Have students interview parents, siblings, or teachers and ask for their responses to the question, "What does it mean to you to be created in God's image?" Spend a few minutes at the beginning of the next lesson to share responses they received from others.

God Creates

LESSON 2: ORDER OUT OF CHAOS

Objective

Students will experience the story of creation and the concept that God created order out of chaos.

Key Concepts

- The story in Genesis 1-2 is one of God creating order and life out of what was dark and desolate. The stories of Adam and Eve and those who follow demonstrate this same concept.
- Students' own experiences of order out of chaos and their knowledge of it will give insight as they study the salvation history.

Texts: Genesis 1 and 2

Estimated Lesson Time: 40 minutes

Materials

- 2 sheets of chart paper or butcher paper
- Collage materials: magazines, newspapers, cloth, crayons, wallpaper books, cotton balls, sequins, stickers, markers, paint, etc.
- For Extend the Lesson: *The Creation* by James Weldon Johnson (pp. 54-55)

Teacher Preparation

- Read Genesis 1-2.
- If using Extend the Lesson, contact a high school student (*or middle school student*) for the Extend the Lesson activity.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

From void to creation. Close blinds and turn all lights out in the room. Ask students to close their eyes and picture the room in their mind—without desks, supplies, posters, utensils, or even people. Ask them to imagine that empty room without sound, smell, texture, feelings, or even time. Give them several minutes of silence to try to imagine this.

Tell students to open their eyes and lead them into sound and light by gradually adding elements: open blinds, turn on lights, turn on music, invite several students to move around, etc.

Introduce the idea that the world didn't exist and the universe was a great dark space before God took the chaos and emptiness, and turned it to order and light. This idea is impossible for us to truly comprehend.

LESSON STEPS

1. Chaos and order. Explain that in your classroom studies this year, you will examine stories of God seeking out God's people—stories of taking hopeless situations and creating order by adding light and promise. Say, "We want to have an

image of what chaos and order might look and feel like, so today we will create a collage of each one.”

2. Create collages. Assign half the class to make a collage of “chaos” and the other half to make one of “order.” Encourage them to use materials that demonstrate their ideas. Some might cut out stories or pictures that represent gloominess and lack of order, or ones that represent order and light. Others might use paints or markers to make illustrations of these ideas. Remind students that they are not illustrating “sin” and “repentance.” They should just try to demonstrate—through color, texture, and words—the feelings of “chaos” and “order.”

3. Invite students to share their collages when they are complete.

4. Hang the collages side by side in a prominent place in the classroom. They will serve as a reference visual throughout the year.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(This activity will extend the lesson to longer than 40 minutes.)

- **Dramatic reading.** Invite a high school student to visit the class and perform a dramatic reader’s interpretation of *The Creation* by James Weldon Johnson (pp. 54-55). This is Genesis 1-2 retold in a dramatic way that paints the picture of the creation in the listener’s mind. Or ask the middle school teachers *(if you are at a K-8 school)* if anyone has taught from the Images of God middle school unit. Students in seventh or eighth grade may have already done the choral reading of the poem in class and be willing to do it for the fifth grade students. Listening to this poem will make the concept of transformation from “chaos and gloominess” to “light and order” come to life. If a high school or middle school student is unavailable, consider reading the piece as a class.

The Creation

by James Weldon Johnson (1871-1938)

AND God stepped out on space,
And He looked around and said,
 *"I'm lonely—
 I'll make me a world."*

And far as the eye of God could see
 Darkness covered everything,
 Blacker than a hundred midnights
 Down in a cypress swamp.

 Then God smiled,
 And the light broke,
And the darkness rolled up on one side,
And the light stood shining on the other,
 And God said, *"That's good!"*

Then God reached out and took the light in His hands,
 And God rolled the light around in His hands
 Until He made the sun;
And He set that sun a-blazing in the heavens.
And the light that was left from making the sun
 God gathered it up in a shining ball
 And flung it against the darkness,
Spangling the night with the moon and stars.
 Then down between
 The darkness and the light
 He hurled the world;
And God said, *"That's good!"*

 Then God himself stepped down—
 And the sun was on His right hand,
 And the moon was on His left;
The stars were clustered about His head,
 And the earth was under His feet.
And God walked, and where He trod
His footsteps hollowed the valleys out
 And bulged the mountains up.

 Then He stopped and looked and saw
 That the earth was hot and barren.
So God stepped over to the edge of the world
 And He spat out the seven seas;
He batted His eyes, and the lightnings flashed;
He clapped His hands, and the thunders rolled;
 And the waters above the earth came down,
 The cooling waters came down.

Then the green grass sprouted,
And the little red flowers blossomed,
The pine tree pointed his finger to the sky,
And the oak spread out his arms,
The lakes cuddled down in the hollows of the ground,
And the rivers ran down to the sea;
And God smiled again,
And the rainbow appeared,
And curled itself around His shoulder.

Then God raised His arm and He waved His hand
Over the sea and over the land,
And He said, "Bring forth! Bring forth!"
And quicker than God could drop His hand.

Fishes and fowls
And beasts and birds
Swam the rivers and the seas,
Roamed the forests and the woods,
And split the air with their wings.
And God said, "*That's good!*"

Then God walked around,
And God looked around
On all that He had made.
He looked at His sun,
And He looked at His moon,
And He looked at His little stars;
He looked on His world
With all its living things,
And God said, "*I'm lonely still.*"

Then God sat down
On the side of a hill where He could think;
By a deep, wide river He sat down;
With His head in His hands,
God thought and thought,
Till He thought, "*I'll make me a man!*"

Up from the bed of the river
God scooped the clay;
And by the bank of the river
He kneeled Him down;
And there the great God Almighty
Who lit the sun and fixed it in the sky,
Who flung the stars to the most far corner of the night,
Who rounded the earth in the middle of His hand;
This Great God,
Like a mammy bending over her baby,
Kneeled down in the dust
Toiling over a lump of clay
Till He shaped it in His own image;

Then into it He blew the breath of life,
And man became a living soul.
Amen. Amen.