

THEME 5

The Beginning

Throughout history, people have responded to God in a variety of ways. Adam and Eve and Cain chose to listen to a different voice, and faced the consequences of their decisions. Noah chose to obey God, in spite of unbelievable conditions, and was saved from destruction.

This theme includes Unit 9: Trouble in God's World and Unit 10: Hey, Noah! Are You Listening?.

Grade 1—Unit 9

Trouble in God's World

This unit begins the study of Old Testament in first grade. Students will review the creation story and talk about Adam and Eve's disobedience. Cain also disobeyed God. Students will learn that there are consequences for our actions. However, we have a loving God who forgives us and works toward good. Children will have opportunity to think about ways to make right choices.

LESSONS

1. Creation
2. Adam and Eve Make Trouble in God's World
3. Cain Makes Trouble in God's World

Unit 9: Trouble in God's World

Unit Information

SUMMARY

This unit gives a brief overview of the creation story. The actions of Adam and Eve and their consequences will be discussed, making application to actions and consequences in daily life. This is an important unit, because it is the first of several units that tell stories of families from the Old Testament.

KEY BIBLE TEXTS

Genesis 1:1*

Genesis 3*

Genesis 4:2-16*

Psalm 103:8 (main memory verse)

Proverbs 3:3 (memory verse)

**texts used in lessons*

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

Adam and Eve Disobey God

Genesis is comprised of stories about beginnings. We hear about the beginning of the earth, the beginning of human communities on earth, and the beginning of a people who chose to live by faith. The first 11 chapters of Genesis are often considered a prologue to the stories of Abraham. Within this introductory section, we find stories of people who made choices, beginning with Adam and Eve's choice to listen to the voice of the serpent.

Eve and Adam's disobedience can be viewed in different ways. Was their act of disobedience the sin? Was their sin the desire to be as gods, separate from their Creator? Or was it reaching after forbidden knowledge and disturbing God's order of the universe? Perhaps the best way to discuss this story with students is to note that choices have consequences. We can't know why Adam and Eve made their choices. But we do know that they had to live with the consequences for their choices. Part of the consequences involved the loss of Eden, the garden of perfection.

After the fall, God did not cut off Adam and Eve from his presence. God continued to help them. God provided them the know-how needed to cope in the world outside the garden. Just as parents don't stop loving their children when they get in trouble, so God continued to love Adam and Eve.

Even though there is sadness in the story, there are signs of hope as well. In *Becoming God's Community*, John Driver writes:

In the fall, sin leads to death. But more than the mere loss of physical immortality, sin led to the loss of life in communion with God and his creation. Although death permeates human existence, a promise is given that life will continue (Genesis 3:20) and hope emerges for the future salvation of humanity. (p. 10)

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- God created the world.
- God created people.
- God said that creation is good.
- The creation story is found in the Old Testament.
- Adam and Eve disobeyed God.
- Because they disobeyed God, they had to leave the garden.
- God still loved Adam and Eve.
- Cain was angry with his brother Abel.

WORSHIP

1. Lead the students in a time of thanksgiving to God for creating the world and all the things in it. Sit in a circle and have each student name a part of creation for which s/he is thankful. After each child mentions something, say together as a class, "Thank you, God, for making the world and all the things in it."

2. Like Adam and Eve, we sometimes make wrong choices. The choices have consequences. Allow time for students to write about or draw a situation in which they made a wrong choice. Collect these in a box (do not look at them) and say a prayer, telling God that we are sorry for these wrong choices. Ask God to help us make better choices in the future.

BULLETIN BOARD IDEAS

Time is spent in Lesson 1 acting out the days of creation in small groups. Extend this to a bulletin board design, where each group may add something from their creation day to a mural that is then posted.

MEMORY PASSAGES

This unit offers the following verses for students to memorize. You may copy and clip the following verses for students to take home.

The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.
Psalm 103:8

Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck,
write them on the tablet of your heart.
Proverbs 3:3

MEMORY VERSE CONNECTIONS

Make this memory verse connection during Lesson 2, step 6:

Read Psalm 103:8, “The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.” Even though we sometimes do wrong things, God continues to love us.

ASSESSING TEACHING / LEARNING

Observing students and their interactions is one of the best ways to discover if students are practicing the lessons. Look to see if they cooperate with each other, if they use caring words, and if they practice peacemaking skills.

A quiz is also included, at the end of the unit.

Trouble in God's World

LESSON 1: CREATION

Objective

Students will understand that God is the one who created the world and the things in the world.

Key Concepts

- God created the world.
- God created people.
- God said that creation is good.
- The creation story is found in the Old Testament.

Text: Genesis 1

Estimated Lesson Time: 30 minutes

Materials

- Picture book of the creation story (*And It Was Good* by Harold Horst Nofziger; *Genesis* by Ed Young; *God Created* by Mark Francisco Bozzute-Jones; are recommended)
- For Extend the Lesson, option one: 1 wide-mouth jar for each student, plastic wrap and rubber band for each jar, pebbles, potting soil, charcoal, small plants (philodendrons are easy to grow), decorative items (marbles, shells, or “gems”)
- For Extend the Lesson, option two: “Days of Creation” activity sheet (p. 238), scissors, glue, 1 sheet construction paper for each child, crayons or markers

Teacher Preparation

- If using Extend the Lesson, option one, gather materials and cover a work area with newspapers or a plastic cloth.
- If using Extend the Lesson, option two, make a copy of the activity sheet for each child.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

God's creation. Ask the children to stand beside something that God made. This might work best outside, though students will better use their creativity if inside the classroom. Have some of the students name the item they have chosen. Tell the class that you are going to read a story about God creating the world. They should listen to see if they can identify which day God made their item.

LESSON STEPS

1. Read a creation-story picture book. Use one of the recommended books, or another that is available to you. List on the board the seven days of creation and what God made on each day. (Day 1, light; day 2, sky and water; day 3, sea and earth; day 4, sun, moon, stars; day 5, fish and birds; day 6, animals, people; day 7, God rested.)

2. Listing God’s creation. Ask the students on which day the item they stood beside was created. Make a list of things God created that the students can see around the classroom. Which day did God make ___?

3. Act out the creation story. Ask students to stand up. Read the picture book again, this time asking the children to imagine that they are the object being created. How does “light” move? How would “air” move? Pause for each day, to allow the students time to develop a movement for each thing as it is created.

Option: You might want to break the class into six small groups, allowing each group to act out one day of creation. Have the groups dramatize their portions as you read the relevant text.

4. God said, “It is good.” After the dramatization, remind the children that God said creation was good. Point to objects around the room that God created. After naming each one, add, “And God said, ‘It is good.’” Be sure to include each child, or the class collectively. The students might catch on to the phrase and want to chant it along with you.

5. The Old and New Testaments. Point out the Old Testament and New Testament sections of the Bible. Explain that the creation story and the stories in the upcoming lessons are from the Old Testament. Ask the students if they can think of any stories from the New Testament (*birth, life, and death of Jesus*). Explain that Jesus’ birth, life, and death are what separate the two Testaments.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30 minutes.)

• **Make a terrarium**, with each student creating their own “world.” Give each child a jar, and have them add items to the jar in this order:

1. 1-inch layer of pebbles
2. Small amount of charcoal
3. 1-2 inches of topsoil
4. Plants
5. Decorative items (marbles, shells, or “gems”)

Students may arrange their plants and other decorative items in any way they choose. Add just enough water to moisten the topsoil. Put on the jar lid and place in direct sunlight. *(For more information on making and maintaining a terrarium, see page 237.)*

• **“Days of Creation” activity sheet** (p. 238). Have children cut out the squares and glue them in the correct order of creation. Then they may color the pictures.

Making and Maintaining a Terrarium

Containers

Use any type of clear glass or plastic container: fish bowl, fish tank, glass jar, jug, or bottle. The container must be clear, as tinted or cloudy glass reduces light and interferes with plant growth.

Containers can be closed or open. Plants in closed containers must be tolerant of high humidity. Containers without covers will require more frequent watering to maintain humidity. An open container with plants that do not require high humidity works well, with less frequent watering. An open terrarium is drier and less subject to diseases.



Plants

Many plants are suitable for growing in terrariums. Low-growing, dense plants are best. Large plants can be used and kept small by pruning. Choose plants for variations in size, texture, and color, as well as their adaptability.

Determine the location for the terrarium. Note the light conditions and temperature of this area. Select plants that suit the location and have similar requirements. Do not combine a plant that prefers low light with one that needs high light. At least one of the plants will perform poorly because its basic needs are not being met.

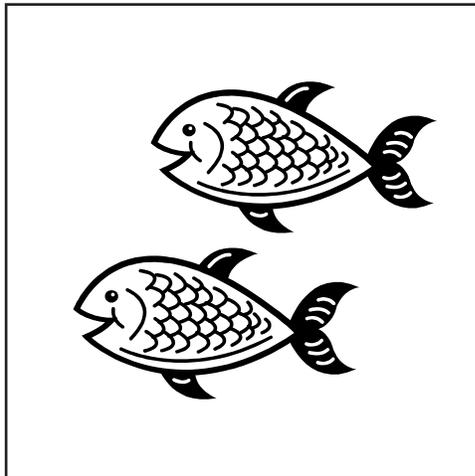
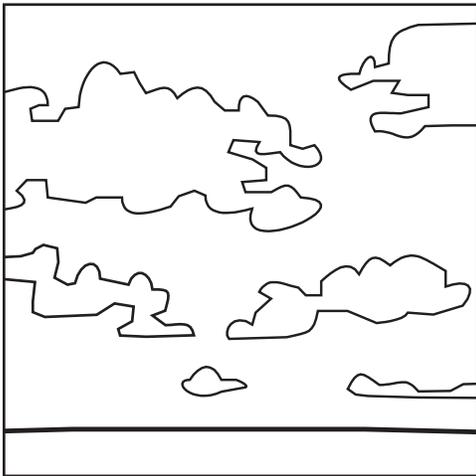
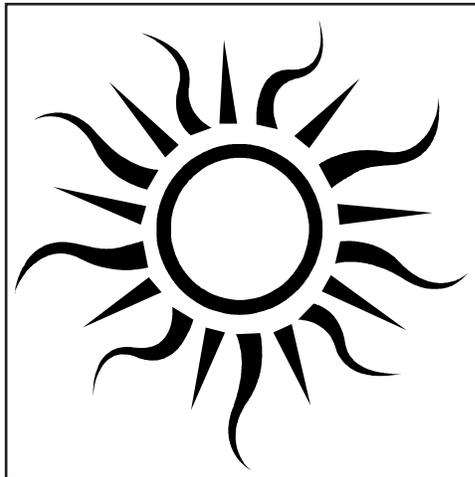
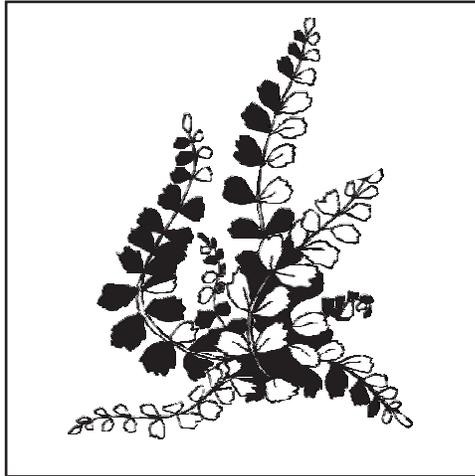
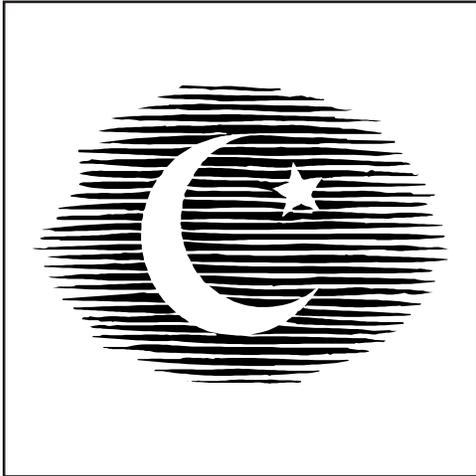
Most plants require light near a window or supplemental artificial light. The terrarium should be located within several feet of a bright window, but not in direct sun.

Soil

Soil must be high in organic matter, clean, and well-drained. Most potting soils sold at nurseries and garden centers have been sterilized. Since plants are not meant to grow rapidly, adding fertilizer is not necessary.

Days of Creation

Cut out the squares and glue them to a sheet of construction paper in the correct order of the days of creation. Color the pictures.



Trouble in God's World

LESSON 2: ADAM AND EVE MAKE TROUBLE IN GOD'S WORLD

Objective

Students will recognize that there are consequences when people disobey God.

Key Concepts

- Adam and Eve disobeyed God.
- Because they disobeyed God, they had to leave the garden.
- God still loved Adam and Eve.

Text: Genesis 3

Estimated Lesson Time: 30 minutes

Materials

- Children's Bible or Bible storybook, with a retelling of Genesis 3
- For Extend the Lesson, option one: magazines with pictures of God's creation, paper, glue, crayons, markers

Teacher Preparation

- If using Extend the Lesson, option two, make arrangements for a storyteller to come.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Review the creation story. Ask the students if they remember what God created on the sixth day (*people*). Do they remember God's response to creation (*"It is good"*)?

LESSON STEPS

1. People are to obey God. Explain that when God made the world and said everything in it was good, God had expectations for those who lived in the world. One expectation was for people to obey God. Sometimes people do not obey God and then there are consequences, or things that happen, because of the poor choices that people made.

2. Tell the Bible story. As you read or tell the story, ask the students to listen for what God expected from Adam and Eve.

Read Genesis 3 from a children's Bible or Bible storybook, or tell it in your own words. You may need to pause and explain some of the concepts as you go along. Or, you may want to wonder with the children at the end of the story. For example, the chapter begins with a talking snake. You might say, "I wonder if snakes really talk," or "I wonder what the snake really was."

3. Discuss the story. Ask the children if Adam and Eve obeyed God (*no*). What happened as a consequence (*they had to leave the garden*)?

Ask what might have happened if Adam and Eve had obeyed God and not eaten the fruit. Let the children's imaginations wander, but be sure to add that we will never know that answer exactly, because Adam and Eve did eat from the tree.

Even though Adam and Eve disobeyed God, God still loved them and wanted to take care of them. They could no longer stay in the beautiful garden, but God provided another place for them to live. In their new place, Adam and Eve needed to work hard and take care of the world around them.

4. What happens when we disobey? This lesson might lead into a discussion about times when you or the students have disobeyed a parent or a teacher. What happened? Were there consequences? In what ways did these people show that they continued to love the person who disobeyed?

5. Read the poem, "What A Lovely Garden," by Elaine Ward.

What a lovely garden,
What a lovely sight!
Birds and animals
And flowers that give delight.

What a lovely garden,
What a tempting tree,
All those fruits to nibble,
All these sights to see.

Adam was so happy,
When God gave him Eve.
"But don't eat this fruit,"
God said, "or you must leave."

Leave this lovely garden?
"Never," Eve replied.
"Never?" asked the serpent,
Sunning by her side.
"Never taste its goodness!
Never know its worth!
Never have all knowledge!
Never rule the earth."
Just a tiny taste to see if it were true!

When they both had eaten,
Suddenly they knew,
They had disobeyed God
And they'd better hide.
"I know where you're hiding.
I know why," God cried.

(continued)

Such a lovely garden,
Such a lovely sight.
Birds and animals and flowers
That give delight.
Such a lovely garden,
Such a lovely tree.
All those fruits to nibble;
All these sights to see.

Now there is no garden
In our lonely land,
Yet the Lord still loves us,
As He's always planned!
Yes, the Lord still loves us,
Loves us as He's planned.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30 minutes.)

- **Make collages** of things that would have been lovely to see in the Garden of Eden. Cut out pictures from magazines and glue them to paper, and/or draw things that would be included in such a place.
- **Invite a storyteller** to share in your class a time when s/he did something wrong and there were consequences. How could the situation have worked out differently?

Trouble in God's World

LESSON 3: CAIN MAKES TROUBLE IN GOD'S WORLD

Objective

Students will recognize that sometimes sad things happen when people are angry.

Key Concepts

- Cain and Abel were brothers who brought a gift to God.
- God accepted Abel's gift, but not Cain's gift.
- Cain became angry and killed Abel.

Text: Genesis 4:2-16

Estimated Lesson Time: 30 minutes

Materials

- Bible
- For Extend the Lesson: paper, pencils

Teacher Preparation

- Practice telling the Bible story from Genesis 4:2-16 in your own words, or using the paraphrase from lesson step 2.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Review the story of Adam and Eve disobeying God. What was the consequence for their disobedience? (*They had to leave the garden.*) Add that because Adam and Eve disobeyed God, sin entered the world.

Sometimes we are tempted to sin, and sometimes we *do* sin by making wrong choices. What are some wrong choices we can make? Are there consequences when we make these wrong choices?

LESSON STEPS

1. Controlling anger. Ask the students if they have ever been really angry. How did they react? Tell the children that today's Bible story is about someone who made a wrong choice when he got angry.

2. Tell the Bible story. Opening your Bible to Genesis 4:2-16, tell the story in your own words, or use the following:

Adam and Eve had two sons. The older one was named Cain and the younger one was named Abel. The boys grew up. Cain became a farmer, and Abel became a shepherd. During harvest time, the two men brought gifts to God; Cain brought some of his grain, while Abel brought some of the best lambs from his flock. The Lord was pleased with Abel's gift, but did not accept Cain's gift. This made Cain very angry.

The Lord asked Cain why he was so angry. God told Cain that if he responded in the right way, he could make a good gift to the Lord. But Cain did not respond in the right way. He made a wrong choice.

Cain suggested to Abel that they go out in the fields. When they got to the fields, Cain killed Abel.

Afterwards, God spoke to Cain again, saying, “Where is your brother, Abel?” Cain said he didn’t know! He asked the Lord, “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

But God knew all along that Cain had killed Abel. God said that the land where Abel had been killed would never again grow crops. God told Cain that he must leave the land. From now on, Cain would wander from place to place.

Cain cried out to the Lord. “I can’t handle this punishment! I can’t leave this land! Anyone who sees me will try to kill me!”

But the Lord told Cain that no one would be allowed to kill him. And Cain went away from the land.

3. Discuss the story. What was the wrong choice that Cain made? (*Cain made three wrong choices: 1. Bringing a gift that was not acceptable to the Lord; 2. Not following the Lord’s suggestion and re-doing his gift; and 3. Killing Abel.*) What was the consequence of Cain killing his brother? (*Cain had to leave his land.*) Is this consequence like any other consequence we have talked about before? (*Adam and Eve leaving the Garden of Eden*)

4. Talk about Cain’s offering. Students might wonder why God did not like Cain’s offering. This is a hard question, because the text does not give us an answer. One theory is that Cain did not put much effort into the offering, and God wants us to use our best efforts when we give an offering. A second theory is that Cain did not give his best, and God wants us to give our very best. A third theory is that Cain did not have a good attitude when he gave his offering, and God wants us to have a good attitude when we make an offering. You might make the following statements for the children to ponder: “I wonder why God did not like Cain’s offering” and “I wonder what Cain could have done differently.”

5. Do a role play. Cain made a wrong choice because of his anger. Invite the students to suggest better ways to respond to anger. Write the list of suggestions on the board. (This would be a good time to review conflict resolution skills from Unit 1, Lessons 9 and 10.) Pair students, or divide into small groups, to role play a few of the suggestions listed on the board.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30 minutes.)

• **Rewrite the story.** Have the students draw or rewrite the story as if Cain had accepted God’s offer to make another, more acceptable offering. How would the story have turned out differently? Would there be a happier ending?

• **Write a class litany.** Remind students that even though we sometimes get angry, God continues to love us. Work with the memory verse from Psalm 103:8: “The Lord is compassionate and gracious; slow to anger, abounding in love.” Stress that even though we sometimes make wrong decisions, God still loves us. Celebrate God’s love and forgiveness by writing a class litany. For example:

When I am not happy
God still loves me.
Even when I get grumpy
God still loves me.
Sometimes though I get mad
God still loves me.

Unit 9 Quiz

Name _____

YES or NO:

- _____ 1. God made the world in four days.
- _____ 2. After making the world, God said that it was good.
- _____ 3. The first people God made were Mary and Joseph.
- _____ 4. The first people disobeyed God by eating from the wrong tree.
- _____ 5. As a consequence, they had to leave the Garden of Eden.
- _____ 6. Cain and Abel were brothers.
- _____ 7. Cain got angry and killed Abel.
- _____ 8. As a consequence, Cain had to build a temple.

Answers to Unit 9 Quiz:

1. NO
2. YES
3. NO
4. YES
5. YES
6. YES
7. YES
8. NO