** BIBLE 101**

Unit 1: Created by God

*The Story of Creation*

**A Note to the Teacher:** The story of Creation is one of the most well-known, most iconic, and most controversial pieces of Scripture. Even within the Book of Genesis we read two distinct accounts of how the world and all that fills it came to be. This lesson teaches students that God *did* create the world, but not in the seven days we are read about. Combining this ancient story with modern science does not detract from the amazing, creative power of God. Instead, allowing students to understand the billions of years and countless adaptations and changes that were necessary to create the world shows how incredibly vast and unfathomable God truly in.

In this lesson, students will create timelines of the “7 days” of Creation. They will label each day as detailed in Genesis 1 and then will use the classroom iPad to research how many years each “day” encompassed.

**Gathering**

As students enter the space, gather them in a seated circle. Pass out the 7 pictures (one representing each day of the creation story) and explain that for the first part of the morning’s lesson, we are going to create a human timeline of how the Earth came to be. **Ask “Who can tell me how the Earth, and all of the things in it, came to be? Where did the world come from?”** Give time for students to answer. **Say, “As Christians, we believe that we are all part of God’s creation. In the very beginning, there was nothing. From nothing, God created everything - planets and stars, light and dark, sea and land, plants and animals, and YOU and ME! The Bible tells us a story of how God did that work. Where do you think we would find that story in the Bible?”** Give students a chance to answer.

**Say, “The very first chapter of the very first book of the Bible is the story of Creation. Let’s turn to it – Genesis 1.”** For grades 2-5, have students turn to the Genesis 1 in their Bibles. For prek-grade 1, open the teacher’s Bible to Genesis 1. You may choose to read directly from the Bible or from the Bible Storybook.

**Say, “Many of us have heard that God created the world in seven days. So this morning, we are going to create a timeline of how God did it! I gave some of you pictures of different elements of the story. When we read about what you have a picture of, come up and stand next to me.”**

Read, or invite volunteers to read, the story of creation in Genesis 1:1-2:3. As you read, students should line up with their pictures representing the seven days: light/dark, sky, water/land with plants, sun/moon, birds/fish, mammals/humans, sleep. When you have finished reading, spend some time reviewing the living timeline that you have created. **Say, “So let’s take a look at our timeline. The passage of Scripture that we just read is long. Our timeline in a quick way that we can see what the story of Creation tells us God did on each day.”**

Explain that students will have the chance to make their own timelines of the Creation story to take home. These will be an easy way for them to remember how God created the world, and the story that begins the Bible in Genesis 1:1.

**Creation Timelines**

**Ask, “So Genesis 1 tells us that God created everything there is in seven days. Actually, in only six days, because on the seventh day God rested. Is that much time? Do you think that the world really came to be, out of nothing in to what we have today, in six days?”** Give students time to answer. Some students will say yes, others will be skeptical. Prompt conversation with questions such as:

 -What about the dinosaurs?

 -What about the ice age?

 -Have humans always looked like we do today?

 -Do you think scientists would agree that creation only took seven days?

**Say, “The Bible that we have today was written almost two thousand years ago. The stories of the Old Testament, which includes Genesis, are almost 5,000 years old. Even before written language people were telling these stories around campfires. Long, long before modern science, people told these stories about God. Imagine being a person 5,000 years ago. You look around at the world, and you wonder where it all came from. How did the first tree grow? Where did the sun and the moon get their light? You believe in God, and since God is the most powerful being there ever was or will be, it must have been God who created all of these things. Without science to tell you that the earth is just one of many planets, or that there were once dinosaurs, or that the earth was once frozen solid, you come up with a timeline for God creating the world. Ok, so God made day and night, and then God made sky and then land and sea, and then maybe plants and animals, and then people. Six days!”**

**Say, “In 2019, we know a few things that the people of 5,000 years ago didn’t know, don’t we. We have uncovered dinosaur bones, and have been able to use carbon dating to know that they are BILLIONS of years old. We have found skeletons of our ancestors, and know that the early humans were very different than we are today. We even have a pretty strong theory about a large explosion – the Big Bang – that got the whole Creation story started. That doesn’t mean that God didn’t create the heavens and the earth. Even scientists don’t have a better explanation for where the matter came from to create the Big Bang. But it does mean that Creation was *not* a seven day event.”**

Explain that the timelines students create this morning are going to include both the seven days of creation that Genesis 1 describes, and some of the scientific eras that we now understand took place between those days.

Show students the long sheets of paper. **Say, “You are each going to receive a piece of paper. Down the middle, we are going to draw a straight line – our timeline. Then, we will add the seven days of creation, just like we did when we made our living timeline. That will be our timeline of Genesis 1. Once that is done, we will do some research to help us get a better idea of just how long those “days” really were.”**

Students may choose to move to whatever work space they are comfortable in. Station markers/pencils/crayons around the room so that they are easily accessible. Help students draw a center line and begin adding days 1-7 and corresponding descriptions/photos.

Follow the directions for the appropriate age group.

**PreK-Grade 1:**

Help students to draw a timeline with 7 events. Write in each day, with what Genesis 1 describes being created on that day. Allow students to draw pictures to represent each day of creation.

When everyone is finished, spend time talking about what happened between each of those days. Fill in events such as big bang (before day 1), ice age (between days 2 and 3), and the dinosaurs (between days 5 and 6).

Talk about how, while Genesis tells of creation happening in 7 days, it has actually taken 5 BILLION years from the Big Bang to today. Genesis tells us that God created the animals and humans in a single day, but scientists know that there were animals on earth for 2.7 billion years before there were humans!

**Say, “God’s creation is FAR too big to have been created in seven days. God created our amazing world, and everything in it, to work together. Over time, the planet grew plants and animals were able to live and finally people. Now, you and I can live here with food to eat and places to live. All part of God’s creation!”**

**Grades 2-5:**

Have students draw a line down the center of their paper. Add 7 events, and fill in the seven days of creation as described in Genesis 1.

Have students work in small groups with the iPad to research when scientists believe various elements of Creation actually occurred:

 -Big Bang

 -Ice age

 -First plant

 -First animal

 -Dinosaurs

 -First human

Add these elements to the timelines. How long do you think each “day” really was?

**Say, “God’s creation is FAR too big to have been created in seven days. God created our amazing world, and everything in it, to work together. Over time, the planet grew plants and animals were able to live and finally people. Now, you and I can live here with food to eat and places to live. All part of God’s creation!”**

**Closing/Cleanup**

When everyone is finished, work as a group to clean up the classroom. Return to a seated circle and share the timelines that students have created.

If extra time allows, students can make a second timeline of their own lives. Begin with their birth date and add major life events leading up to today.