

1. GOD CREATES MAN



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

Bible Reference

Genesis 1:26-31; 2:4-25

Memory Verse

Psalm 8:6

You made man ruler over the works of your hands, you put everything under his feet.

Bible Background

Where was Eden, the beautiful garden in God's creation where he placed Adam and Eve, located? The mention of the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, in Genesis 2:14, which today flow through Iraq, convinces us that Eden was once an historical place on the earth; most probably in the Middle East.

Who is this God who created the heavens and the earth, and in the end created man? He is the everlasting God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) who existed before creation. John 1:1-4 and Colossians 1:15-16 state that Jesus Christ was with God the Father from the beginning, involved in planning and creating the universe, as was God's Spirit, Genesis 1:1-2. Thus God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, worked together in the creation of the heavens and the earth.

This God created man in his image, enabling him to love and communicate, as he was a God of love who communicated. He loved man and made him His delight. His God-given task was to subdue the earth and be ruler over God's creation, Genesis 1:28; 2:15. God remained creator, and man remained the created one, lifted to high dignity under God's leadership.

It is therefore fitting for us to praise God our creator, to love and obey him, and teach our children also to praise, love and obey him and live responsibly in God's creation.

UNDERSTANDING THE AIM



Through this lesson the children will:

- understand that they were created by God in his image to rule on earth under God's guidance
- feel joy about the challenge God presents to them
- get involved in doing some good work in God's creation.

Materials Required

1. Pictures I.1,1-4 Children taking care of God's creation
2. A sheet of paper 30 x 80 cm
3. Blackboard
4. Drawing paper, 10 x 15 cm, for each child
5. Colored pencils and glue
6. Some Bibles for the children who have none



Practical Preparation

1. Cut out the pictures.
2. Fasten the paper on the wall before the children enter the classroom.
3. Draw the pictures of creation on the blackboard but leave out Adam and Eve.
4. Add a vase of flowers as decoration.
5. Be ready with a new booklet for children's names and addresses.

GUIDING THE CHILDREN THROUGH THE LESSON

Creating Interest

Welcoming the Children

Each child, especially newcomers to the class, and children moving up from the Primary group, should be warmly greeted by the teacher so that he/she feels noticed. Give time for the children to introduce themselves and become acquainted with the classroom, their classmates and with you, their teacher.

Worshiping God as Creator

After the opening song and prayer, suggest several songs about the creation of the universe, such as, "Oh Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder".

All children who have Bibles come to the front and stand in two groups. Then they read from Psalm 104. The first group reads verses 24 and 25, the second group reads verses 31 and 32. Then they read verses 33 and 34 together.

After that the children give thanks to the Lord for his beautiful creation.

Building a Bridge to the Bible Story

Today is our first lesson in Sunday school in the new year. Our world has become a year older. As you also grow older, maybe you are thinking deeper and asking new questions. Have you ever asked in your heart, "Why am I here in this world? Where did I come from?"

As we begin this new year, we will remember the time when something really new began. Going back to the beginning of everything will help us to answer questions such as the one I just mentioned.

Telling The Bible Story

God Creates the Heavens and the Earth

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

What was that new beginning? Where there had been nothing, God spoke and something came into being:

(The teacher points to the picture as he speaks.)

- The ocean, the earth and the sky, with sun, moon and stars,
- mountains and valleys,
- grass, flowers, trees and plants,
- fish, sea animals and all the different kinds of birds,
- then the land animals.

All these had been in God’s mind first, because God was there long before the creation of our universe. He has always been and always will be. This mighty, infinite God was there in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They were all involved in the planning and creation of a huge universe and our planet earth, our home. In his power God spoke, and then everything came into being, just as he had planned it.

God Creates Man

After God had created the heavens and the earth, separated the ocean from the land, created different kinds of plants, fish, birds and other animals, God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness.”

God wanted to have a creature who could love and communicate like him, to whom he could entrust the care of this earth which he had created. This creature, man, would rule over the fish in the sea, the birds of the air and all other created things.

God Father, Son and Holy Spirit created man from the dust of the earth. Then God breathed breath into his nostrils. Thus man became a living creature.

That first man who was made by God’s hands, was truly wonderful. God named him Adam. (Add the picture of Adam to the blackboard drawings.)

Adam stood in the light of the sun, surrounded by everything that had been newly created by God. There were many things he did not yet understand, but he could feel the love of God who gave him life.

Adam Longs for a Partner

The time came when God showed Adam what his task on earth would be. God brought all the creatures that he had made to Adam and asked Adam to name them. The name Adam gave to each animal, fish or bird would be its name from then on. Adam looked at the multitude of creatures. There were innumerable kinds. He marveled at each fish, and at each animal, big and small. How great was God whose power and wisdom created them.

Adam realized that the creatures were in pairs. There was a male and female tiger, a cock and a hen. Birds, were also in pairs. Males and females sought each other with sweet songs. But Adam himself didn't have a partner. Adam also realized that he was different from other creatures. Each animal made a sound, but he had a language to express his thoughts. He longed for a friend who could speak like himself; and to whom he could speak.

God Creates a Help Mate for Adam

The Lord knew what Adam needed. He said, "It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Then God made Adam sleep deeply, took one of his ribs and closed up the place with flesh again, so there was no wound. From the rib, God made another person, this time a woman.

When Adam awoke he was surprised! Who was that person in front of him? It was a creature like himself, who could speak, could think and could greet him. But it was different from him. "This is the one, bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh," Adam called out in joy and surprise. "She will be called woman, for she was taken from man." But the woman needed a personal name too, like he had. Adam, who had named all the animals, now gave a name to the woman who had just been created by God as his help-mate. He named her Eve, which means "The mother of all the living." (Add the picture of Eve.)

God put Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden which was situated between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. Everything that they needed was provided.

Adam and Eve are Given Tasks and Rules

Adam took Eve all around the garden of Eden. Eve smelt the fragrance of the many colored orchids, roses and jasmine. She was amazed to see a thrush with its shiny feathers, touched by the sun. It was perched on a tree and looked down on Eve without fear. Adam and Eve were very happy. They felt strong and well. As they walked along Adam told Eve how God had given him the task to work in the garden and take care of it.

After a while Adam and Eve reached the center of the garden. There Eve looked at two beautiful tall trees, laden with fruit, and their leaves moving in the wind. "These are two special trees," Adam told Eve. "God named them the 'Tree of Life', and the 'Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil'. We are not allowed to eat the fruit of the 'Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil'. God gave this strict rule and said, 'On the day you eat the fruit of this tree you will certainly die.'" Eve did not understand what death meant, but she shuddered. Quickly they walked away from the two trees.

God Blesses Adam and Eve

The day had turned to evening. At that time the Lord God came to walk and talk with Adam and Eve in the garden. God answered all their questions. He also gave them instructions on how they were to work in the garden. Because it was God's garden, he knew best how to take care of it. God blessed Adam and Eve saying, "Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Then God added, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground - everything that has the breath of life in it - I give every green plant for food." Afterwards Adam and Eve were alone again. They looked up at the sky. The moon and stars shone brightly in the firmament which the Lord had made. "How good God is," Eve said to Adam. "How glorious and powerful! And how small we are on this earth!"

However Adam and Eve were not afraid. They knew that God was guiding them and watching over them. So they worked and rested in peace amidst the beautiful creation God had made and given to them to rule.

Application and Response

Learning a New Song

Memory Verse

Teacher and children together read Psalm 8:3-9. The teacher then lets the children look for the question the psalm writer asks in verse 4. (What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you visit him?)

- Why did the writer ask the question?
- Did he think man was great or small?
- What do you think; is man great or small? (Give time to think and answer, then conclude:)

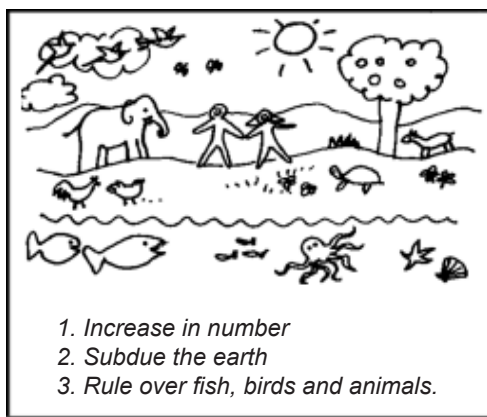
Compared to all of creation man looks small. There are the moon and stars, so much bigger than he is; there are wild animals so much stronger than he is. But none of the other creatures were made in the image of God. Therefore God made man to rule over all he had made. Verse 6 is memorized silently. Then the children are given opportunity to say the verse together, before repeating it one by one.

Discussion: How does Man Rule on Earth?

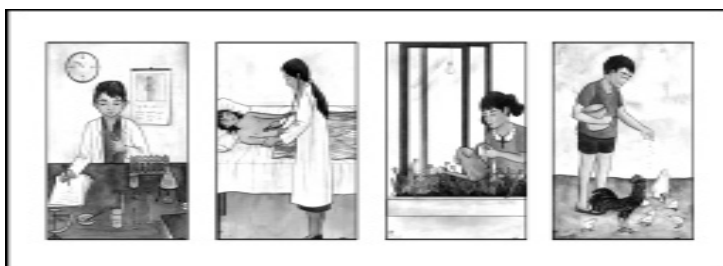
The children turn to Genesis 1:28 and read again God's command to Adam and Eve. The teacher writes the three items on the blackboard. (See sketch.)

Were these commands only given to Adam and Eve or to us also? Let's look at the three items on the blackboard!

- *Increase in numbers*. Every day babies are born.
- *Subdue the earth*, which also means "rule on earth". We build houses and factories, plant fields and keep flowers, do research, fight sickness, build space ships, etc. (Paste Pictures 1 and 2.)



- *Rule over fish, birds and animals.* We let animals work for us (water buffaloes, oxen, horses...). We keep cows to have milk, chickens to have eggs, sheep to have wool, build fish ponds to have meat, plant gardens and fields to have food, etc. (Add pictures 3 and 4.)



Activity: Drawing or Writing What the Children Could Do

After the discussion, the paper and pencils are distributed. The children can reflect on what they could do to fulfill God’s commands. What could they do to “Subdue the earth or rule on earth”?

The pictures give them ideas.

If necessary the teacher could also remind them of other activities like tree planting, cleaning their yards or gardens, etc. The children are given five minutes to illustrate or write their thoughts, and then share them with the others.

Finally each child could think about one thing that he/she could do in the coming week, in accordance with the commands of the Lord to mankind, to us!

AFTER THE CHILDREN HAVE GONE HOME

Teacher’s Evaluation

Did you achieve your aim for this lesson?

Do your children believe that God has created them?

Was there a time when they worshiped God reverently?

Did they understand their part in the command to subdue and rule the earth?

Could they think of something they could do this coming week?

Are you satisfied as teacher?

Pray for your children who have just gone home. Worship God the creator of mankind! If there was something that did not go well today, write it down and improve it.

Looking Ahead

Do you as teacher long to develop good teaching habits for the coming year? Then today begin to read the lesson, which you will teach next week. Look for pictures or other visual aids long before they are needed. If you wait until Saturday, it will certainly be too late to prepare whatever is required.

By reflecting on next week’s lesson for seven days, and reading the Bible text once a day, it will surely become a blessing to you, because God seldom speaks when we are in a hurry. Repeat this good habit of studying the next lesson right after having taught the previous lesson, and you will discover a new joy in preparation and teaching.