

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIAL

One Page Lessons Book 2

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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(Acknowledge your team here.)

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CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIAL

One Page Lessons

BOOK TWO

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JESUS GREW

THE BIBLE: Luke 2:39-52

THEME: Jesus lived as God's obedient son. His life of love, compassion and healing shows what children of God are called to be and do.

PREPARING THE LESSON

1. MAIN IDEA: As Jesus grew, he learned more about God and about what God wanted him to do. We are God's children and we grow and learn just as Jesus did.

2. MEMORY VERSE: "The child Jesus grew. He became strong and wise, and God blessed him."— Luke 2:40 CEV

3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:

- a. Temple - a building dedicated to the worship of God. Today Christians call this the church.
- b. Synagogue school - a place for studying the Scriptures. Today Christians call this Sunday Classroom or a Bible School.

4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:

The Bible verses today contain the only reference to the time between Jesus' infancy and the beginning of his ministry, but based on history and tradition (and the fact that Mary and Joseph were devout Jews,) we can assume several things about his childhood. Since Joseph was a carpenter, Jesus probably practiced the same trade. As with any craft, each craftsman learned his trade from his father, grandfather, or another male relative. One of the chief duties of a father was to see that his son learned a useful trade.

In Hebrew tradition, religion was very important in every area of life. Jesus probably attended the synagogue school in Nazareth. We know this because Jesus knew the Scriptures well. In the synagogue school he would have memorized portions of the Old Testament. Three times a year he would have gone to Jerusalem with his family for religious celebrations. Perhaps by now Jesus was already aware of his special relationship with God. When he saw the opportunity to learn more from the priests and rabbis at the Temple, Jesus decided to stay there. Later he would expand on these teachings to share God's love with the world.

5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS:

Children at this age enjoy learning about the childhood of persons from other cultures and from other times. Children in every culture and land are much the same. They grow, they learn to do new things, and they take on new responsibilities. They can appreciate that Jesus as a child had the same experience that they have.

6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:

Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9. What do these verses say about your role as a teacher in the life of the children? Teaching is an awesome responsibility. We need God's wisdom and help in our teaching.

JESUS, THE SON OF GOD

THE BIBLE: Luke 3:15-16, 21-23a

THEME: Jesus lived as God's obedient son. His life of love, compassion and healing shows what children of God are called to be and do.

PREPARING THE LESSON

1. MAIN IDEA: Jesus' baptism was a sign that Jesus is God's son. Baptism is a sign we are part of God's people and the church.

2. MEMORY VERSE: "A voice from heaven said, 'You are my own dear Son, and I am pleased with you.'"—Luke 3:22b CEV

3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:

- a. Messiah- the promised one.
- b. Repent- regret and to be sorry for the wrong that you have done.
- c. Grace- unearned love and forgiveness.
- d. Baptism- washing or cleansing. Christian baptism symbolizes identification with Christ in His death to sin and resurrection to a new life. John's baptism was connected with repentance and John baptized so that the people would be spiritually prepared to recognize and receive the Messiah.

4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:

John, the son of Elizabeth and Zechariah and a cousin to Jesus, had become a charismatic preacher. John called the people to repent in preparation for the coming kingdom of God. John would baptize them in the Jordan River. This symbolic cleansing by water helped the people understand that God had washed away their old, sinful life. Baptism prepared the people for the coming of the kingdom of God, which John believed to be approaching. Many people in Jesus' day thought that John was the Messiah promised in the scriptures. John, however, was the one sent to prepare the way.

The Romans ruled Palestine during this time. They tolerated John and his work as long as it did not create conflict. John's increasing popularity among the people made the Roman government nervous.

Early Christians often had difficulty with Jesus coming to John to be baptized. Why did he seek baptism? Perhaps Jesus had heard of John's ministry through baptism and sought baptism as a sign of doing what was right. Perhaps Jesus wanted to identify with the people and their needs. Maybe Jesus recognized that the time was right to begin his task on earth. Jesus' short but dynamic ministry began with his baptism. How he lived before this we do not know.

5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS:

Children at this age are beginning to identify themselves with groups of friends or organizations. Their need to belong becomes stronger as they get older. It is reassuring for children to know that they belong to God's family, a place where everyone is welcome.

Baptism is a sacrament of the Methodist Church. In the Methodist Church there is to be only one baptism of infants, youth or adults.

6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:

Read Luke 3:1-14. John's ministry of baptism was a ministry of repentance and life changing action. As a Christian, what does God call you to do to live out your baptism?

Read Matthew 3:1-17. At the time of his baptism, Jesus received the Holy Spirit which empowered him to begin his ministry. How does the Holy Spirit work in your life? What does it empower you to do?

GOOD NEWS FOR EVERYONE

THE BIBLE: Luke 4:14-21

THEME: Jesus lived as God's obedient son. His life of love, compassion and healing shows what children of God are called to be and do.

PREPARING THE LESSON

1. MAIN IDEA: God sent Jesus into the world to bring hope and encouragement to all people. We can discover ways to bring hope and encouragement to other people.

2. MEMORY VERSE: "The Lord's Spirit has come to me, because he has chosen me to tell the good news to the poor. The Lord has sent me to announce freedom for prisoners, to give sight to the blind, to free everyone who suffers."—Luke 4:18 CEV

3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:

- a. Good news- that Jesus came to this world, died and was resurrected so that we can experience salvation and have a new life.
- b. Spirit- can mean breath or wind.
- c. Holy Spirit- the third Person of the Triune Godhead. The Holy Spirit influences, gives power to and dwells in the believer.

4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:

All four Gospels have Jesus beginning his ministry in Galilee. After struggling with temptation in the wilderness and returning with the power of God's spirit, Jesus was ready to face the most difficult challenge—delivering his controversial message to the people who knew him best.

Jesus was more than a religious teacher. He was the fulfillment of the hopes of the Jews for a messiah or savior. But some Jewish people saw his ministry as a rejection of his Jewish heritage and they rejected his claim that he was the Messiah. Signs of this rejection began at the synagogue in Nazareth where Jesus (a native son) had come to pray and worship God. The passages that Jesus read in the synagogue were from Isaiah's prophecy of the coming Spirit of God. The Gentiles who heard this message longed for the time when someone would bring good news for the poor, freedom for the captives, healing for the blind and freedom to all who were oppressed. These people, struggling under the oppressive power of the Roman government, heard these words with great hope. When Jesus referred to the miracles of Elijah and Elisha, he implied that it was God's will that his offer of salvation go to the Gentiles as well. Jesus came to bring salvation and healing, not just to the Jews but to all persons who would accept him. The Jews, however, were expecting a Messiah in their image who would offer these things to them only. Consequently, many Jews were disappointed. The Nazareth scene deliberately presents the reader with an announcement of events to come. That announcement was that Jesus would be rejected and crucified by his own people.

5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS:

Following Jesus' example is not always easy to do. Children have a strong sense of right and wrong. They can easily identify when rules favor one group over another. One of the most frequently used phrases in play is, "That's not fair."

6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:

Read Luke 4:14-15. As a teacher, do you feel yourself empowered by the Holy Spirit? Do you feel affirmed in your teaching ministry?

Read Luke 4:16-21. As you teach children, what does this Scripture call you to do? What kinds of good news can you bring to your children?

FISHING FOR PEOPLE

THE BIBLE: Luke 5:1-11

THEME: Jesus lived as God's obedient son. His life of love, compassion and healing shows what children of God are called to be and do.

PREPARING THE LESSON

1. MAIN IDEA: Jesus called disciples to help in his work. Jesus still calls us to be his disciples. He calls us to follow his teaching and to help with God's work.

2. MEMORY VERSE: "...Jesus told Simon, 'Don't be afraid! From now on you will bring in people instead of fish.'"—Luke 5:10b CEV

3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:

- a. Disciple - a learner or pupil of some teacher. It implies that the pupil accepts in mind and life the views of the teacher. In this lesson, the disciple adheres specifically to the teachings of Jesus.
- b. Fishers of men and women - to show and teach people about God's love in such a way that they want to follow Jesus.

4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:

The story of Jesus calling the fishermen is in both the Gospels of Mark and the Gospel of Luke. Although all Jewish boys went to the synagogue to learn, some who were more gifted went on to become scholars. After years of study, it was common for a boy to associate himself with a teacher whose entire life was dedicated to meditation and teaching. He would become a "disciple" of this teacher. It was common for a Jewish teacher to call talented students to him. The disciples Jesus picked, on the other hand, were quite unique. They were the same social class as Jesus. They were poor compared to the upper classes of society.

In the small group, consisting of teacher and students, there was an emphasis on doing deeds of service where the teacher set the example. Before and after these works, the teacher would discuss which commandments from the Scriptures they were following. Jesus certainly did this with his followers. He called upon these disciples to retain all he told them and to pass along those teachings to others.

5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS:

Children may have difficulty understanding 'becoming fishers of men' because they think literally. Help them to see that Jesus chose these men to help him in preaching and teaching, and to show God's love.

Children do not always connect the way they treat people with 'following Jesus'. They tend to categorize their relationships into home, church, playing yard, market. Help them realize we are to follow Jesus' teachings in all places and not just in church. As we read Bible stories, we can see the example that Jesus set.

6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:

Read Luke 5:1-11. Do you ever feel that God is asking you to do impossible things? Are there some children in your group who are very difficult to teach? Do you feel that you do not know how to reach them? How does this story of the calling of the disciples speak to those feelings?

THE FRIENDS ON THE ROOF

THE BIBLE: Luke 5:17-26, Psalm 96:3

THEME: Jesus lived as God's obedient son. His life of love, compassion and healing shows what children of God are called to be and do.

PREPARING THE LESSON

1. MAIN IDEA: Jesus cared about sick people and healed many of them. We can love and care for persons who are sick and hurt.

2. MEMORY VERSE: "When Jesus saw how much faith they had, he said to the crippled man, 'My friend, your sins are forgiven.'"—Luke 5:20 CEV

3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:

a. Faith - trust in God and belief that God can and will do what was promised. Faith is one of the most important topics in the Bible because God is invisible. Pleasing God requires that we act only on what God has said.

b. Forgiveness - conditioned on being sorry for an offense. Forgiveness is the giving up of resentment and claims of repayment for the said offense. Forgiveness restores both parties to a right relationship.

4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:

In Bible times, there were doctors with a wide range of medical knowledge. There were, however, many illnesses beyond the scope of the doctors of that period. Persons who could not be helped by the doctors traveled long distances to seek a cure from a holy man whose reputation was that he could perform miracles. Jesus' reputation for "miracle cures" was well known by many. But Jesus was more than just a "faith healer". He offered something more. Jesus offered forgiveness from sin. By healing the man, Jesus proved he had divine authority. Sin and illness were connected in the eyes of first century Jews.

5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS:

The friends of the paralyzed man were friends in more than word. They were friends in deed. Children at this age are just beginning to understand what it means to be a friend.

Most children have experienced being ill at some time or other. They may question why some people are healed and others remain ill or die. This is beyond our understanding. However, Jesus set an example of love and compassion for persons who needed his help. We can follow his example.

6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:

Read Luke 5:17-26. What does this story say about the friendship of the men who brought the paralytic to Jesus? Are there friends in your life who are important? Are you a friend to the children you teach?

Read Hebrews 11:1. The friends of the paralytic had great faith. Do you ever feel that your faith is tested? Have you ever been disappointed that something you "hoped for" did not occur? Do you reassure the children that God is always with them?

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

THE BIBLE: Luke 6:27-36

THEME: Jesus lived as God's obedient son. His life of love, compassion and healing shows what children of God are called to be and do.

PREPARING THE LESSON

1. MAIN IDEA: Jesus taught people to love everyone, including those who are hard to love. Jesus expects us to follow his example.

2. MEMORY VERSE: "Treat others as you want to be treated."—Luke 6:31 CEV

3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:

a. Disciple- a person who follows another or a student of a teacher. Jesus had many disciples but the most famous were THE TWELVE whom he called to be with him.

b. Sin- to pardon, release or free from obligation. This word is one of the most important in the Bible because all people everywhere need God's forgiveness. Most of the Bible's stories and messages tell of God's desire to forgive people. Jesus came and died to make forgiveness possible.

4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:

The passage from which this lesson for today is taken from is commonly called the Sermon on the Mount. In it we find a collection of sayings of Jesus which we call "The Beatitudes". According to the writer of Matthew, these were part of a "sermon" or conversation that Jesus had with his disciples as they gathered around him on a hill. Jesus apparently had a large group of disciples (more than twelve), and other people might have been present.

Many scholars believe that the teachings in this section are a collection of Jesus' teachings and sayings. It is not one sermon delivered at a specific time to a specific group of people. These sayings and stories sum up what life would be like in God's kingdom if everyone lived by the standards that Jesus set. One of the most famous of Jesus' teachings is the memory verse for this lesson.

5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS:

Jesus set a challenging example for us to follow. Jesus treated even his enemies with love and concern. Children often find it difficult to forgive those who have hurt them. Forgiveness is indeed difficult when one is hurting, either physically or emotionally. A child who sees forgiveness modeled in adults is more likely to learn how to forgive.

6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:

Read Luke 6:27-31. Who are your enemies? Are they far away in another country or here at home? Can we truly offer love to those people? How can we let God heal us? How can we begin to forgive those who have hurt us so terribly? Ask God for help.

JESUS CALLED LEVI

THE BIBLE: Luke 5:27-32

THEME: Jesus lived as God's obedient son. His life of love, compassion and healing shows what children of God are called to be and do.

PREPARING FOR THE LESSON

1. MAIN IDEA: Jesus called unlikely people to be his disciples. We can be followers of Jesus even though we may not always do what is right.

2. MEMORY VERSE: "Jesus said to him, 'Come with me.'"—Luke 5:27b CEV

3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:

- a. Disciple - a student of a teacher and a learner. Jesus had many disciples. The most were THE TWELVE whom he called to be with him.
- b. Sinner - a person who breaks God's commandments. A person who does what God says not to do.

4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:

The Romans ruled most of the known world at the time Jesus lived. While the Jewish people resented this intrusion into their lives, they were nonetheless allowed basic freedoms, provided they stayed out of trouble and paid their taxes. The Romans levied taxes on every aspect of life. There were taxes on the land and a poll on every male child over fourteen years old and every female over twenty. There were tolls people had to pay to go from one place to another. There were dues and market fees. There were taxes on everything.

The villagers distrusted, often hated and feared the local tax collector. They often labeled him as a thief and a sinner. Levi was just a local official. He was generally disliked and more than a little dishonest. The Bible also refers to Levi as "Matthew".

5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS:

Children are rarely perfect. Adult and peer reactions play a significant role in the formation of a child's self-concept. Positive reactions are interpreted as "I am good" and negative reactions are interpreted as "I am not good". Jesus set an example of acceptance. The people he called to be his followers were far from perfect, yet they made important contributions to the spreading of the Gospel. We can follow Jesus' example as we relate to each child.

Children love stories with a twist at the end. Who would have thought that Jesus would entrust his most important messages to a man who was a dishonest and disliked tax collector? Jesus saw the possibility behind this unlikely disciple. We need to recognize the possibilities in the children we teach as well.

6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:

Read Mark 2:13-17. This is another story of a person who is willing to give up everything in order to follow Jesus. Levi had more to give up than the fishermen. What does this say about Levi's commitment to discipleship? What do you give up in order to teach these lessons?

THE LITTLE MAN IN THE TREE

THE BIBLE: Luke 19:1-10

THEME: Jesus lived as God's obedient son. His life of love, compassion and healing shows what children of God are called to be and do.

PREPARING THE LESSON

1. MAIN IDEA: Jesus offered Zacchaeus, a dishonest tax collector, God's love and acceptance, and Zacchaeus' life was forever changed. God's love and acceptance can make a difference in our lives as well.

2. MEMORY VERSE: "The Son of Man came to look for and to save people who are lost."—Luke 19:10 CEV

3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:

- a. Saved - to save from spiritual death, to be forgiven from all sin.
- b. Lost - those who have not accepted God's gift of forgiveness.

4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:

Jericho is the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world. Recent archaeological digs have uncovered at least three different sites that were occupied over the centuries, beginning perhaps eleven thousand years ago. The last great city was actually inhabited three hundred years before Moses.

In Jesus' time, Jericho was a city of great wealth and great poverty. It was a home for both merchants and beggars. If the merchants and traders who worked there were wealthy, so were the tax collectors. Because it was a simple thing to do, most tax collectors were dishonest. Zacchaeus was dishonest. He cheated his countrymen which made him doubly despised. Yet he came to see Jesus who treated him as a person of worth. This acceptance changed his life.

5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS:

Children learn about God's unconditional love and acceptance through the love and acceptance shown by the adults around them. Children respond positively to adults who treat them with respect and as persons of infinite value. Are there children in your group who look up to you? If so, you have great power to be a positive influence in that child's life.

6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:

Read Luke 19:1-10. Zacchaeus could not hide from God's inclusive love, even in a tree. Do you find yourself "hiding" from God and not standing forward because you feel yourself unworthy? What does this story say about God's love and acceptance?

IN THE BEGINNING

THE BIBLE: Genesis 1:1-5, Psalm 33:6-9

THEME: The Bible gives us a record of God as creator and sustainer of the universe and of people who are created in the image of God.

PREPARING THE LESSON

1. MAIN IDEA: God is the beginning of all creation. We praise God for creation and that we can enjoy the wonders of the world.

2. MEMORY VERSE: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”—Genesis 1:1 CEV

3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:

- a. Creation - the activity of God in bringing the world into existence, creating order out of chaos.
- b. Heavens - the space that is over the earth like a dome.
- c. Earth - the land as distinguished from water and air.

4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:

The first five books of the Old Testament are called the Pentateuch or Torah, which means “teaching” in Hebrew. The book of Genesis is the first book in the Torah. The word “genesis” means beginning or origin. It is the foundational book that begins the unfolding of God’s story and action in the world. Through study of the creation narrative, we begin to see how the early believers experienced their world and the understanding of how that world came into being.

5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS:

The children you have in your group will probably not have an understanding of how the earth on which they stand, the sky which they see above, or the great waters they have seen or heard about came into being. Their experience has been that it is just part of their life. Younger children are not capable of knowing what history is or understanding that things have not always been as they are. As they grow older, they can begin to relate to something that happened a long time ago. You must understand that the knowledge about the past that they develop will depend largely on what you tell them.

6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:

This week, begin each day with a period of quiet time in re-reading the scripture selection from Genesis. Then spend a period of quiet time in reflection about the scripture verses. What is your understanding of the beginning of creation? How do you see God revealed through creation? What questions do you have that are unanswered? And above all, how can you interpret these selections, and the whole concept of creation to those persons who are your students?

Spend some time each day in prayer. Name the students you will be teaching and pray for each of their needs. Ask God to give you insight and direction for your planning as you work with children.

GOD CREATED THE EARTH, SEA AND ANIMALS

THE BIBLE: Genesis 1:9-13, Psalm 136:3-9

THEME: The Bible gives us a record of God as creator and sustainer of the universe and of people who are created in the image of God.

PREPARING THE LESSON

1. MAIN IDEA: God created earth, water, and plants in order to prepare for a world where animals and people could live. We praise God for creation and for the beauty of the world and all that is in it.

2. MEMORY VERSE: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”—Genesis 1:1 CEV

3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:

- a. Soil - the upper layer of earth that can be cultivated.
- b. Sea - great body of salty water, separate from earth and sky.
- c. Water - liquid that comes from the clouds as rain and forms the lakes and rivers of the earth.

4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:

As we move further into the writings of the book of Genesis, we find additional information about the creation story as understood and passed verbally through generations long before being written down. There are two accounts of the creation story in Genesis. The first story is found in the first chapter and the first three verses of the second chapter. Our first lessons in this unit are using this first account as a basis for our learning.

5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR CHILDREN:

Remember that the children you teach will come to you with a limited understanding of God and how the land in which they live came into being. It is not necessary for them to understand the concept of actual creation. They are capable of feeling wonder about the parts of the creation that they know and see. It is important to help them begin to have a sense of wonder, to help them express praise and appreciation for God and all of the creation that they see around them.

6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:

This week, as you move about in your world, take notice of the following:

Day 1: read all of the scripture passages for this lesson.

Day 2: notice the ground that you are walking on. What is it like? What color is it? What meaning does it have for you?

Day 3: do you live by a body of water, a pond, or a lake? If so, what is it like? What does it feel like? What do you know lives in it? If not, what do you understand about the water God called seas?

Day 4: what about the growing plants around you? What are they like? Are they healthy, in need of nourishment, or blooming with flowers? How many varieties do you see?

Day 5: notice the animals that you see as you move around. Are they domesticated to live with people, such as dogs and cats? Are there birds flying, chirping, singing, or perched somewhere? What do they make you think about?

Day 6: re-read the scriptures for this week. Now that you have observed a part of God's creation, how does the meaning of the passage change for you?

GOD CREATED THE LIGHTS IN THE SKY

THE BIBLE: Genesis 1:14-17, Psalm 33:6, Psalm 19:1

THEME: The Bible gives us a record of God as creator and sustainer of the universe and of people who are created in the image of God.

PREPARING THE LESSON

1. MAIN IDEA: God continued to create the world. God created the lights of the sky to include the stars, the sun and the moon. We are to thank God for day and night and the wonder of light in the world.

2. MEMORY VERSE: “God said, ‘I command the lights to appear in the sky and to separate day from night...’—Genesis 1:14a CEV

3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:

- a. Sun - the star that is the central body of the solar system around which the planets revolve that gives heat and light to the world.
- b. Moon - the body that revolves around the earth and brings light to the darkness.
- c. Stars - heavenly bodies that appear as light in the night sky.
- d. Heavens - the space that is over the earth like a dome.

4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:

The story of God’s creation of the world continues in the book of Genesis. These stories were passed on verbally throughout generations long before they were written down. They reflect the understanding of the people at that time. In this lesson, we are particularly concerned with the verses that help us to know about the creation of the sun, moon and stars that are visible still today just as they were in Biblical times.

5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS:

The children will be able to relate well to the objects of this lesson. They have all experienced seeing the sun, the moon and the stars. They will respond with wonder at the fact that there was a time, as we understand it, when there were no lights in the sky. They may ask questions about how God could have placed these lights in the sky. It is enough to tell them that we believe God created the world and that our scriptures tell us the story of how it happened and why. Remember to listen to their questions and give them only the information they are asking for. Sometimes we tend to give longer and more technical answers than are needed.

6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:

As you prepare for teaching this lesson, remember to pay attention to the creation around you. Study the scripture story of creation as a whole so that you are prepared to know what comes next. Keep a journal of the movement of the sun in and out of the clouds this week. Note how many days are full sun and how the heat of the sun feels. Note how different the warmth on your arms is when the sun is behind a cloud and or when there is rain. Keep a journal of the movement of the moon. Note whether the moon is full or at what phase the moon is in the lunar cycle. Reflect on the stars and notice how the night sky changes due to the presence of clouds.

Write your thoughts about the wonder of God’s creation. If you draw, draw a picture that you might share with your group. If you write poetry, write a poem that you might share. If you create things with your hands, prepare something to show your group. Whatever you do, do it with prayer and thanksgiving.

Pray for each child in your group, and for your ability to respond and lead as God directs.

GOD CREATED THE FISH, BIRDS AND ANIMALS

THE BIBLE: Genesis 1:20-25, Psalm 104:24

THEME: The Bible gives us a record of God as creator and sustainer of the universe and of people who are created in the image of God.

PREPARING THE LESSON

1. MAIN IDEA: God created many different kinds of animals, many living creatures. The Bible story helps us to identify some of those animals. We praise God for creation and enjoy and care for animals.

2. MEMORY VERSE: “O Lord, by your wisdom you made so many things; the whole earth is covered with your living creatures.”—Psalm 104:24 CEV

3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:

- a. Fish and sea animals - those things that live within the waters that are sometimes used for food.
- b. Birds and flying creatures - warm bodied animals covered with feathers, usually having a beak.
- c. Wild animals - animals that are not tamed, living in a state of nature.
- d. Domestic animals - animals that are tamed, used to living with people.

4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:

The Bible story of creation gives us the record of living beings that God placed on the earth. God intended that the earth be inhabited by living beings. Perhaps because God had created the waters and sky, God sensed a need to have creatures that could enjoy that creation. Each of the animals is well suited to the place where it lives. The verses for today tell us that God created all of the living creatures and then put a method into place for each of those creatures to multiply, or procreate, in order to have descendants for as long as the creation was in place.

The second story of creation is found in Genesis 1:4b-24. In that story, God has created humans and gives the first human the opportunity to name the animals. The man gives names to every creature that God has created.

5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS:

Most of the children will have some knowledge of animals and living creatures. They may own or know others who own domesticated animals such as cats and dogs. They will also be aware of a number of animals that roam the street and are not cared for. Children love animals of all kinds. They are naturally compassionate people and they care about what is happening to animals. However, some will be frightened by animals because they have never been around an animal or have been frightened by one. It is important to recognize their love and their fears. You may help them deal with their feelings in a realistic manner as you lead them in thinking about how animals are a very special part of God’s creation.

6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:

As you prepare this lesson, examine your feelings about the animals God has created. During this week, notice animals that you see running free in your community. Is there any provision for caring for them? What kinds of sea animals are available for food in your community? Continue to keep a journal in which you write your thoughts and observations this week. Note in it anything that you see and/or hear related to living creatures.

Study the scripture passages for this lesson. Pray daily for each child in your group. Are there children you know in the community who are not practicing a faith or going to lessons? Pray for them and consider how you might invite them to be a part of your group.

GOD CREATED PEOPLE

THE BIBLE: Genesis 1:27-28, Psalm 67:6-7

THEME: The Bible gives us a record of God as creator and sustainer of the universe and of people who are created in the image of God.

PREPARING THE LESSON

1. MAIN IDEA: God created people in the image of God, to be like God and to have a special place in God's world. Because we are like God, we can love and we can choose what is right.

2. MEMORY VERSE: "So God created humans to be like himself; he made men and women."—
Genesis 1:27 CEV

3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:

- a. Human beings - people that live on the face of the earth.
- b. Image - a physical likeness or representation of something or someone.
- c. Gifts - those abilities and talents that God has give to us.

4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:

The two stories of creation found in the Bible both tell us that God created man and woman, or humankind. We will be looking only at the first story. This story does not give great detail about how humans were created, only that God wanted to create someone who would have dominion (control) over the other things that had been created. Therefore, God created human beings to be like God—to show the attributes and characteristics of God. The scripture tells us that God created us to be a likeness of God and that creation was blessed because God saw that it was good.

Those who know the Bible and study its words and origin tell us that this story was to show that people were created with intelligence, as creative beings who could also create things, and who would have the capacity to love animals, plants, other human beings and all of God's creation.

5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS:

All children are a gift from God. However, sometimes they are treated without respect, are not allowed to express their thoughts, or are not listened to when they do express them. This is not as God intended. It is important for you to know that the children you teach come from a variety of backgrounds and family situations. They will need to be nourished, given love and helped to understand that they are a very special creation of God. Even those children who have a very good home life and are loved and respected among their family need to know that the church is a place where they are special and loved.

Children do not automatically have the ability to feel good about themselves without support and nurture by those who care for them. They are very sensitive to what others say about them and think about them. If they constantly hear negative words and things that make them feel unimportant, they will soon believe that they are not important. They may have a hard time understanding that God loves them. The contrary is also true. Children who have been given love and respect will feel that they are important and they will have an easier time understanding that God loves them.

6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:

Each day find a quiet time to reflect on the creation of humankind in God's image. Reflect on the ways in which you are made in the likeness of God. How are you like God? How are you different than God? List five ways in which you are made in the image of God. Write the names of the children in your class and by each name write something special about each one. Pray and give thanks each day for the gifts of each of these children.

GOD CARES FOR ALL CREATION

THE BIBLE: Psalm 65:9-13, Psalm 104:1, 5, 24, 33

THEME: The Bible gives us a record of God as creator and sustainer of the universe and of people who are created in the image of God.

PREPARING THE LESSON

1. MAIN IDEA: God continues to be present and to care about all of creation. We thank and praise God for God's continuing care.

2. MEMORY VERSE: "You take care of the earth and send rain to help the soil grow all kinds of crops."—Psalm 65:9a CEV

3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:

- a. Thankful - feeling or expressing gratitude or appreciation.
- b. Depend - to place trust in or rely on.

4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:

The Bible is the story of God's care and provision for the world. The stories give us many examples of God intervening into history to show care and to lead the people on the right path. The greatest story that gives us the most knowledge about how very much God loves creation is that of Jesus being born, living and dying. The resurrection story is the basis for our belief in the goodness of God.

There are many Psalms that tell of the majesty of God and the care that God gives to the creation. The selected verses in this lesson help give us the picture of how God cares specifically for that which has been created.

5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS:

The children whom you are teaching will not automatically understand the concepts you are teaching. It is only in their experiences that they can begin to relate to the creation of the world and to God's care of it. Therefore, it is in very concrete ways that we help children understand the presence of God and God's care. We choose activities, scripture readings, stories and pictures that help children visualize what they already know and can imagine. They do not understand historical concepts and they do not understand concepts that they cannot see or experience. Note the kinds of questions and answers they have as you proceed through this lesson.

6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:

This week, divide your scripture reading so that you read not only the verses listed in the lesson plans but also read the entire Psalm 104. You will find there a richness concerning God's active creation in the world. You may even want to highlight some of the verses to use in your class. Perhaps you may even want to prepare some of them to place on the wall. Look for those things that children will relate to and understand.

Each day this week, name some of the children in your group that need your special prayers and understanding. Pray for them by name, a different group of children each day. Also ask God daily for the ability to know what God would have you say to the children as they are in your care. Remember that you are representing God as you work with them, helping them to understand a love that is so great that it will provide for the needs of all creation.

GOD PROVIDES FOR GROWTH AND CHANGE

THE BIBLE: Psalm 67:6-7, Ecclesiastes 3:1, Psalm 104:19-23

THEME: The Bible gives us a record of God as creator and sustainer of the universe and of people who are created in the image of God.

PREPARING THE LESSON

1. MAIN IDEA: God made the world a good place to live in by providing growth and change. We enjoy the order and change of creation and praise God for it.

2. MEMORY VERSE: “Everything on earth has its own time and its own season.”—Ecclesiastes 3:1
CEV

3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:

- a. Change - to make something different than if it was left alone.
- b. Dependability - can count on something, trust in something constant.

4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:

The Bible passages to be used in this lesson are in reference to the constancy of creation. Seasons of growing, seasons of harvesting come and go. Night and day come and go. Life is always changing, yet in the midst of those changes, God provides. The writer of Ecclesiastes indicates that the words are those of a Teacher, and begins with philosophical reflections about life and the constancy of it.

5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS:

It is always necessary to remember that children have had little experience with the regularity of the earth and the sense of passing seasons and times of change beyond their immediate concerns. As we work with them to understand that God has placed an order for all of creation, it will be necessary for us to talk with them about change in the midst of constancy. Children are very curious and willing to learn about many things. They will approach a subject with many questions and even bring some misunderstandings from out of their limited experiences with others. It will be important to hear their questions, to respond to them in a positive way while not reinforcing information that may not be correct.

In this lesson, it would be a good idea to use a picture of the growth cycle of a person or animal.

Remember that the children will not really have a concept of how they are going to grow although they will have the concept of being a small baby at first. It is hard for them to see you as having been born a baby—they have not experienced adulthood yet.

6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:

This week, begin a time each day in prayer asking God for guidance in teaching the children in your group. Name those children that you feel need special prayer and ask God to touch them in a special way.

Read and study Chapter 3 of Ecclesiastes. Read through the chapter beginning with verse 1 and ending with verse 15. Think about what the writer is saying. Each day select a different verse or two to think about. What are your experiences with what the scriptures are saying? Can you relate? Are their specific things that speak to you? As you reflect on how those verses relate to your experience, consider how you would explain each of these to the children in your class. This will help you think through your own beliefs and prepare to teach the children more effectively.

WE USE GOD'S GIFTS

THE BIBLE: Psalm 8:3-9, Psalm 115:16

THEME: The Bible gives us a record of God as creator and sustainer of the universe and of people who are created in the image of God.

PREPARING THE LESSON

1. MAIN IDEA: God created people to take care of all of creation, not just themselves and other people like them. We can do our part to help take care of God's world.

2. MEMORY VERSE: "You let us rule everything your hands have made."—Psalm 8:6a CEV

3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:

- a. Resources - those things God has created to care for living things.
- b. Caretaker - one who takes care of something.
- c. Responsible - held accountable for something.
- d. Accountable - subject to report or explain something.

4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:

In various places throughout the Bible, there are words that challenge people to care for each other and the rest of God's creation. Our scripture passages for today remind us that people are to be caretakers of the earth. The whole of Psalm 8 speaks of the wonder that God created human beings and really cares for them. It helps us see once again that human beings have been given dominion over all the works of God's hands. This can be referenced back to Genesis and our stories of creation.

Psalm 115:16 is another reminder that God has given the care of the earth over to the human beings that have been created. We can also find selections in Proverbs 27 and Exodus 23 that speak to using the land wisely that God has given to us.

The Biblical writers are telling the story of the creation of the earth as they understood it. Within those stories always rests the responsibility for the maintenance and care of that which is created is paramount, whether dealing with the care of others or the earth and its resources.

5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS:

Many children may have been helped at home to learn about caring for things. If they have younger siblings, they may have learned to help with them. If they have a pet of any kind, they may have learned to feed, water and walk that pet, if needed. They may be learning to help with household chores and cooking, or in other ways as a part of their family life. Understanding that we are to care for God's creation would not be something difficult for them. They can draw from their own experiences and those of their family and friends to find many examples of caring. They may not, however, had experience in caring for the earth in a broader sense. They will most likely not have a concept that God's intent and purpose was that people, or human beings, would literally take care of the earth and its resources. This lesson will help them see that.

6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:

Read and repeat the first sentence of the Psalm 8. Use this sentence as you begin your time of quiet reflection and prayer each day. Read verses 1-5. Reflect on what these verses are saying to you. Read verses 5-8. What is the Psalmist saying here? What does it mean for you to have dominion over all of God's works? Reflect on the other parts of the Psalm. The writer is reflecting on the majesty of God and the dignity of human beings that God created. How has reading and studying this Psalm helped you know about God's plan for creation?

GOD'S CREATION IS GOOD

THE BIBLE: Genesis 1:31a; Psalm 104:24-34; Psalm 67:7; Psalm 9:1-2

THEME: The Bible gives us a record of God as creator and sustainer of the universe and of people who are created in the image of God.

PREPARING THE LESSON

1. MAIN IDEA: God's creation is good. We rejoice and praise God for the wonderful world that has been created.

2. MEMORY VERSE: "I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart and tell about the wonders you have worked."—Psalm 9:1 CEV

3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:

- a. Good- something that satisfies us in some way.
- b. Provision- providing or supplying something such as food.
- c. Thankful- feeling or expressing gratitude.

4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:

Again we use the Psalms to express so much about our responsiveness to God's gifts. The Psalms are actually songs that were sung in praise of God, or in some way addressing God concerning the joys and sorrows of the people. Sometimes they reflect pain and suffering, sometimes they question things that are happening, and sometimes they are simply praising God. It is the latter that we use today as we consider all of God's gifts and how we are to respond to them.

5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS:

It is not always easy for children to express themselves, especially when they are feeling a sense of wonder and have no adequate words. Hopefully, they have experienced some wonder at the gifts of creation as they have participated in these lessons. It will be important that you recognize their hesitation to express themselves and provide words and understandings for them.

6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:

These lessons have provided you many opportunities to reflect on the gifts of God beginning with the creation story and moving into many other scriptural selections that identify those gifts and give praise for them. Each day this week, spend some time in reflection about what YOU have learned. Begin with a time of prayer. Repeat the phrase "I give thanks to God with my whole heart" several times as you begin to center your thoughts. Bring to God prayers of concern and joy. When you have finished, sit quietly and feel the presence of God with you. Listen intently to the rhythm of your breathing and the thoughts of your mind which may be that still small voice of God speaking to you. Write down your thoughts about the creation story, the responsibility of human beings to care for that creation, and the goodness of God. When you have finished, say a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the opportunity to learn, to teach, and to form faith in children.