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God Our Creator and Father

Lesson # 2 of 27

Scripture Memory Verse

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was a formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.” Genesis 1:1

Lesson Goal & Objectives

Goal

The students will reach an understanding that God is the Creator of everything that exists, and that everything that God creates is essentially good. (That is, in its original creation by God – as He created it – everything is good in its own nature – in its natural existence.) This also means that it makes sense to call God the “Father” of all things.

Objectives

Students will express in art or written word the idea that God has created all things to be essentially good.

Introduction: Background for the Teacher

“Where do we come from? Why are we here? Does my life fit into a bigger picture?” are all questions that students at this age are beginning to ask. We begin our study by approaching God as the Source and Origin of all life and of our lives. We are part of God’s Creation, and that Creation is essentially good.

“Essential” means: “in essence,” that is, in the very deepest nature of something. Atoms are the “essence” of matter. An essence is irreducible; that is, you cannot go down any further into the most basic nature of something than its essence. Therefore, the “essen-tial” nature of all creation is its most basic existence. The questions, “Where did the universe come from? And “Why do we exist?” are essential type questions. The answers to these questions are found in God, Who is the infinite and eternal Origin of everything.

We start the lesson with a concrete example of the idea that everything that exists comes from somewhere – everything has an origin. This understanding leads us to ask, “What or Who is the ultimate or primary Origin of everything that exists? Where does all existence begin?” These questions have been used by theologians and philosophers to demonstrate the reality of God’s existence. The lesson pursues these questions in a simplified form so that the students, at their age, can begin to think about God as the One Who created everything. The beauty and order that we find in Creation shows us that the universe is not the result of mere random chance, but rather is the intentional result of the action of an intelligent Being. This intelligent Being also loves His creation and cares for us as a good father who loves and cares for His children. It is appropriate to call God, “Father” because He not only brought us into existence, but He also cares for us and wants to have a loving relationship with us. He never turns away from us, but always seeks to bring us to know Himself.

It is also important to include the idea that God’s Creation is good. That is, God did not create evil, but rather, “saw that everything was good.” (Genesis 1). Our free choice to bring evil into the world is a topic in itself and will be dealt with in a later class. Try not to get involved in these other questions in this first class. If students ask about

them, let them know that you are not ignoring their concerns, but that you really will deal with them at a later time.

Materials Needed for the Lesson

- Make use of pictures, “power point” images or video clips of beautiful natural scenes.
- CD player
- (Song) *Beautiful One* by Jeremy Camp (or **other** similar songs you have available)
- some easy art materials – paper, crayons, markers or colored pencils
- Paper
- Book of Common Prayer (BCP)
- Bibles

Opening Prayer (5 min.)

Psalm 148 (BCP page 805) (Students take turns reading verses)

Encourage students to give thanks to God for their own favorite items of beauty in Creation.

Review of Previous Lesson (5min.)

- Briefly review the main point of the last lesson (the meaning of Confirmation).
- Ask the students to give a definition of the word, “sacrament.”
- Ask if they had a chance to read the confirmation service in the BCP.
- Choose a few students to answer **briefly** the questions asked at the end of the last lesson.

Introductory Activity (5-10 min.)

*(These ideas are intended to ensure a lively and exciting atmosphere to begin the lesson. It is fine for each parish to approach this differently, using your own materials or games if you wish.. Choose **ONE** activity that suits your group best. It is best not to eliminate doing any activity at all.)*

Seed Activity - Use some easy to obtain plant/vegetable item (flower; ear of corn; squash; potted plant). Put it on the table in front of the students and ask the question, “Where did this come from?” After letting the students throw out ideas (even the silly ones), guide the discussion toward the problem of: “The plant came from a seed, but the seed came from a plant – where did they all come from in the first place?” Similarly, use an egg (hard boiled), and ask: “Which came first, this or the chicken? What is the ultimate origin of all chickens and eggs.”

OR

Nature Walk – *If* weather and time permit, begin the class with a short nature walk, or a brief trip into the garden. Ask the same kind of questions as in the first option above: “Where did this come from?”

Conclude by asking: “What about us – we are born into our families too, but where did the very first human beings come from? *(For the teacher only: You may have to deal with ideas about evolution. Don’t panic. Even if we concede that evolution is the process by which creation has developed in the natural world, we still need to ask the questions, “How and why did all this happen in the first place?” God invented this process, originated it,*

started it and continues to guide it with His intelligence.)

OR

Domino Activity – Line up some dominoes, and give the first one a puch. The dominoes could not fall down on their own until someone pushed them. Pushing the first domino make all of the fall. Ask the question: “Who caused the first action that got all of Creation started in the first place?”

Lesson (20-25 min.)

Read Genesis Chapter 1 (feel free to shorten verses or skip around a little, but make sure you read the lines: “And God saw that it was good” in each case.

- 1) *Something* cannot suddenly come out of *nothing*. In order for all things to come into being, *Someone* had to cause them to begin to exist. Without intelligence and the ability to decide to do something, nothing can happen. Even scientists tell us that all matter has a beginning – there was a moment in time when things came into being. Before that moment, there was nothing. How did this happen? Someone with the intelligence and will to make this happen caused everything to come into being. ***Give the students some time to discuss this.***

- 2) We can see that there is beauty and order in Creation. Planets don’t bump into each other. We can see that flowers, pine branches, and ferns have patterns in their petals, branches and leaves. We can feel happiness and awe when we look at the mountains and rivers as God created them. This beauty and order shows us that God made these things to be essentially good. These kinds of things can’t just happen purely by accident. Beauty and order indicate that someone intelligent designed them. ***Give the students some time to discuss this.***

- 3) Science can tell us a lot about *what* exists, and *how* things work. And yet, human beings also ask the question: *Why? Why* does the universe exist at all? *Why* do we exist? *Is there any value* in Creation? These questions lead us to the conclusion that there is a Creator Who has put the desire to understand things into our human existence. ***Give the students some time to discuss this.***

- 4) Because God not only created us, but gives us everything good and cares for us, we can call God, “Father.” While earthly fathers may sometimes let their children down, God is a good father who always wants what is best for us. ***Give the students some time to discuss this.***

Reflection (10-15 min.)

Listen to Music

Song – *Beautiful One* by Jeremy Camp (*or another song about creation or the beauty of things – whatever you have available that is appropriate and makes this point*)

Response to the Listening

Give the students writing and/or art materials to express their sense of creation.

Instructions: Create a picture showing some part of the beauty of creation that is important to you; and/or, write 2 or 3 sentences expressing why we can say that God created these things.

Take-home Activity (5 min.)

*(It is recommended that you make use of this take-home activity to re-enforce the learning experience. You **may** eliminate this exercise if **necessary**. You may also substitute another activity if you find that to be more helpful. You should briefly review this lesson and review the take-home activity at the beginning of the next learning session).*

Each student may choose ONE of the following:

Re-read Genesis chapter 1. In one paragraph, **briefly** summarize the main point that this passage of Scripture is trying to convey to us.

OR

Create a **short** Genesis “Rap” and present it to the class. (One or two students could present this at the beginning of the next class.)

Closing Prayer (5 min.)

Canticle 12 BCP page 88

OR

Prayer for the Beauty of the Earth BCP page 840
Allow the students time to offer their own prayers also.

Scripture References

Genesis chapter 1

Optional for extra enrichment:

Job chapter 38

Isaiah 45: 5 – 7

Additional Resources

Where to find *Beautiful One* by Jeremy Camp:

Online: iTunes, Napster, Rhapsody,

or you can buy the CD from a music store. The album is titled “Carried Me” by The Worship Project.

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