



+ CREATION PREPARE

Genesis 1

Creation: it's what makes God creative. Anyone who has ever been a baby has experienced creation. Anyone who has ever made a bench, an art project, a mess, an omelet, a pile of leaves to jump in, or anything else, has participated in creation. Humans were created in the image of God, which makes us creative too. When we create, we reflect God.

This lesson sets up the lesson theme of **creation** with Genesis 1, the first account of Creation. In this passage, God speaks creation into being and names it good. But what does God mean by "good"? **We tend to think things are good because of their merit—what they do or what role they play. Here, things are good because they come from God.** Including humans. Although we've experienced bad things in the world, maybe we can find hope in remembering that once upon a time, creation was made good. Goodness is within us—not because we're cool or smart or religious or popular or really skilled with an accordion. Goodness is within us because we were made by God.

John 1

It's no mistake John's Gospel begins by quoting Genesis 1. Using the exact same words as Genesis is a way for the author of John to make it clear he's talking about the same story—**creation**. He writes as an addendum to Genesis 1 to explain that Jesus has been around way before he was born. Jesus has been with God and has been God from the very beginning, and **through Jesus, God is creating something new.**

Psalms 104

The Old Testament was written in Hebrew, and sometimes translation gets tricky. In Psalm 104, the author's verb tense makes it difficult to tell if the Psalm is describing what God has done or is doing. Some scholars think the author uses this tense to mean both. This raises an important theological concept: **God isn't just the creator, but also the sustainer who continues to work so creation might flourish.**

Revelation 21

Revelation often draws people in because it's got dragons and sea monsters and the end of the world. But Revelation isn't really about those things. Most scholars believe Revelation was written to people whose lives were really, really awful. The letter gave them hope that their turmoil was not permanent—**the God of creation doesn't abandon God's work but continues to re-create and make all things new.**



Throughout this lesson, kids will see a plus sign. The word plus comes from a Latin word meaning "more." Plus also indicates something is positive or good. The plus in this lesson represents the goodness of creation and reminds us how God is creating more and more, even today.

WHAT THE HECK ARE PRE-TEENS THINKING?

- Preteens are in the middle of exponential neural growth, and the ways they are taught to think impacts how their brains work for the rest of their lives. Their brains are literally being created, expanded, and re-created.
- Preteens still hold onto many of the imaginative abilities characteristic of younger children, but with the booming brainpower of early adolescence. Encourage their wonder, excitement, and questions throughout this lesson. They're powerhouses of creativity!

Warm up

Supplies: cereal

1. Pair up. Give each pair some pieces of cereal (small, strong square cereals may work best—or offer a variety for kids to choose from).
2. Challenge the group to a field goal contest. One partner uses thumbs and forefingers to make a goalpost, while the other partner tries to flick a cereal piece through the goal. The person making the goalpost should open his or her mouth and try to catch the cereal in his or her mouth.
3. “Kick” the cereal through the goal posts and the team gets 3 points. (No cheating—the goalpost can’t move!) If the person making the goal post also catches the cereal in his or her mouth, the team gets an additional 3 points. Whenever a team scores, they shout, “And it’s GOOD!” like a sportscaster.
4. Alternate turns as kicker and goalpost. The first team to make it to 15 points wins.

Video

Supplies: Creation lesson video, whiteboard/chart paper, markers

1. As a group, come up with a creative definition of “creation.” Write the definition on a whiteboard or chart paper.
 - What does creation have to do with creativity?
2. Watch the video, “Creation.”
3. Revisit the group’s definition of creation. What would kids change after seeing the video? Then process it with the group.
 - In addition to what you saw in the video, what are some good things in creation?
 - Name one thing you created in the past week.
 - What other things do you see being created today?

LEADER TIP

If you have a group of guys or girls who are disruptive when they sit together, pair up girl-guy. After the game is over, ask pairs to stay where they are in the room.

VARIATION

Instead of cereal, use paper folded into a triangle or crumpled up. (But omit having kids catch the paper in their mouths!)

Ask kids about food allergies and offer an alternative if necessary.

LEADER TIP

Students may joke about things in creation that aren’t good (like mosquitoes?) or may raise serious questions about painful things like disease and death. While it’s important to hear and honor these points, you might want to tell the group the next lesson (Fall) dives into what happens when creation goes wrong. This week focuses on what was good from the start of God’s creation.

Genesis 1

Supplies: Bibles, pens or pencils, colored pencils or Bible highlighters

Your kids' Bibles are good, but they're even better when the pages are underlined, scribbled, annotated, drawn in, and otherwise marked with their creative stamp. To illustrate this and make a point about the scriptures, ask the students to break out a colored pencil or marker. In an early page of the Bible, encourage them to make a big plus sign across the page. This book is the word of God. It is definitely good!

1. Read Genesis 1:1–5 aloud.
2. Look at the Creation summary in the Bible sampler. Ask a volunteer or two to read the page to the group.
3. Follow the instructions to mark a plus sign in Genesis 1 whenever God says, "It is good."
 - Why do you think God says all these things are good?
 - What different thing does God say in verse 31? Why do you think God calls it "very good"?

John 1

Creation is talked about in the New Testament too! In fact, the New Testament refers to the Old Testament many times, reminding readers how the events of the New Testament build upon the Old. Turn to John 1 to see how the New Testament authors teach more about what happened "in the beginning."

1. Jump to John 1 and read verses 1–5.
2. In the space in the Bible, ask kids to draw or write about what's being created in this passage.
 - Why does John focus so much on light and darkness when Genesis talks about so many other things in creation?
 - How would you draw "the Word of God"?

Psalms 104

Creation is more than just something that happened a long time ago. In order to keep creation going, God keeps creating, which means that God creates more to keep creation going, which means...

1. Turn to Psalm 104 and read verses 14–23 and 30.
2. Circle something God created. Then draw an arrow to the thing(s) that benefit from the stuff God created. (Kids may end up with arrows all over the page. That's a good thing!)
 - What are some ways you see different parts of creation connect together and support each other?

MORE TIME?

Revelation 21

God isn't just creating the same old thing over and over again. Something new is on the horizon. Some of it seems to be altogether new, and at other times, it seems God is re-creating (maybe recycling or "upcycling"!) to make old things new.

1. Read Revelation 21:1–5.
2. Highlight verse 5 where God says, "Behold, I make all things new."
3. In the Bible margin, write three things you wish God would make new in your life.

Project

Supplies: Creation Learner Sheets, scissors, markers or colored pencils, tape, string, (optional office/craft supplies)

After talking a lot about creation and creating, it's time to be doers of the word! To inject energy into the room, consider tossing candy to kids as supplies are handed out. Encourage students to share/recycle supplies and ideas. Who knows...maybe they'll add the candy to their project!

As kids create their projects, use these questions to help them engage their minds and connect with one another.

- What kind of patterns can you construct with your cutouts?
- Do you plan what it will look like or just "let it happen" as you build? Why?
- One of the things God created was Sabbath and rest. Why do you think God made Sabbath? What's good about it?
- Art can make a statement about it's surroundings. Where should your work of art be displayed? In a house, in a car, on a person, connected to another person's project, on a wall, hanging from a ceiling? Why?
- Time to brag about your cool work! What's something cool about your project that you want others to notice?

Closing Ritual

Supplies: Blue marker

Set the projects aside and stand in a circle. Remind kids that they are not just good. They're very good. God created them that way.

1. Use a blue marker and make a plus sign on the left palm of the person to your right. Say, "(insert name), you are good."
2. Pass the marker to that person to draw a plus sign on the next person's hand and say he or she is good.
3. Continue around the circle. When the marker comes back to you, say to the group, "Remember that God made us, and together, we are very good. Amen."



1

On each plus symbol, draw something in the world that is good.



2

Cut out each plus, including the small slits on each arm.



3

Make a sculpture of your shapes by connecting the slits together.



4

Share your sculpture with the group.

LEADER TIP

Encourage creativity!

When a student does something particularly creative—adds lip gloss, tapes a plus sign on a friend, combines art with someone else, draws things that people think are bad but are actually good—point it out to the group as a way of encouraging others to be creative as well.