

Prepare

What's behind all this?

The “first person” of the Trinitarian God is known primarily as Creator. Indeed, the entire biblical narrative begins with two accounts God’s creation of the cosmos and of humankind—both of which served to set the monotheism of the Israelites apart from the polytheistic creation stories of their neighbors. No matter how one reads the creation accounts in Genesis—be it more literally or more figuratively—the message is clear: God and God alone is the author of everything that exists. When God rests on the seventh day, according to the first narrative, it suggests that a particular mode of God’s creative activity has ceased.

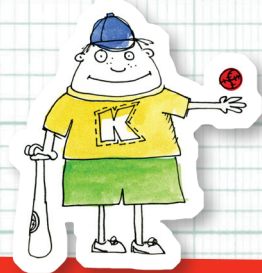
However, the second narrative suggests that when Adam and Eve are banished from the Garden of Eden, a new mode of creative activity begins; Adam is to work to cultivate crops, and Eve will bring forth new life from her body. In each case the creative act is made possible by God, but human beings are now called upon to cooperate with God in God’s creativity. This being the case, the Christian witness testifies to a God who relies upon human participation in the creation of new things, be they works of art, medical advances, the birth of a child, or even the emerging kingdom of God’s grace in Christ.

Where are kids at?

- Youth are moving from concrete to abstract thinking. They probably picture God in human terms and may struggle reconciling the creation story with evolution and other scientific topics. Instead of arguing for one understanding of creation, focus on exploration, wonder, and questions so that kids reach their own conclusions.
- Kids may suppress their personal beliefs so they don’t contradict their peers. Create an environment of openness where youth can share their thoughts and beliefs without judgment or criticism.



Genesis 2:1-3



Where's this going?

Kids have an opportunity to consider God’s presence in creation and re-creation and discover what it might mean for them to be co-creators.

Consider this . . .

“Understood as *imago Dei*, human beings are...God’s proxy in the community of creation. They represent his glory and his will. They intercede for God before the community of creation. In this sense they are God’s representatives on earth.”

Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation*, p. 190.

encounter

15 minutes

Video

1. Set up

Post the signs around the room. Pose the question: Does God still create stuff today? Give kids a minute to think about their answer. Ask them to stand by the sign they agree with most (Yes, No, or I Don't Know). Invite volunteers to share why they chose their answer.

2. Watch

"Does God still create stuff today?" DVD 1, Chapter 9

3. Unpack

- Which ideas from the video hadn't you thought of before?
- What do you disagree with? What do you agree with? Why?
- What is still confusing?
- So, what do you think? Does God still create stuff today?

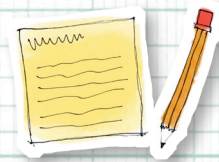
What about the Bible?

Break into 5 groups. Assign 1 of the following passages to each group: Genesis 1:1–2:3 (Creation), Exodus 16:1–18 (Manna and Quail in the Wilderness), 1 Kings 6 (Solomon's Temple), Matthew 14:13–20 (Jesus Feeds 5,000), John 11:32–44 (Jesus Raises Lazarus to Life). Ask kids to skim or read their passage from a Bible or story Bible and recreate the story for the group. (Act it out, pantomime, recite a poem, sing a song, perform a skit, read aloud, or any other creative way to share the story with the group.) Capture thoughtful responses to the conversation questions on a dry-erase board.

Questions for conversation while you work:

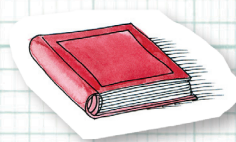
- Name 3 ways the Bible tells us about how God was involved in creation at the very beginning.
- What are a few ways the Bible tells us about how God continued to be involved in creation and re-creation, even after "the beginning"?
- Name 3 ways people are involved in God's ongoing creation today.
- So what? Why would this make any difference for your life today?

Make sure you've got the obvious stuff for this session—re:form video (DVD or download), Anti-Workbooks, Bibles, pens or pencils, paper, tape, etc.



Get this stuff . . .

Sheets of paper with "Yes," "No," or "I Don't Know" written on them. Dry-erase board and marker. Kids' story Bibles (optional).



Im-a-go Dei

[ee-MAH-go Day]

Latin, *the image of God*. Genesis 1:26-27 reveals that God intends for human beings to be a reflection of divine creativity and care.

Tear here for easy use!

engage

25-30 minutes

Choose 1+ Anti-Workbook (AW) activities to explore the session question. The first 2 are for individual use, while the last 2 involve the whole group.



1. Dripping with Creativity AW p. 46

Place water, bowls, food coloring, markers, and towels on a table.

Following the instructions on page 46, have everyone drip water on their Anti-Workbooks and create designs from the water drops.

Questions for conversation while you work:

- How do you define creation? How do you define creative?
- Do you think of yourself as a creative person?
- Tell about the most creative person you know.
What makes them creative, in your eyes?
- What did you create in your Anti-Workbook?
- What's the weirdest creation you've ever seen, either God-made or human-made?
- What makes a creation valuable?
- What's the best thing you've ever created? Why is it your favorite?

Where's this going?

Kids play around with their own creativity.

Get this stuff ...

Water. Bowls. Food coloring (5 colors). Markers. Towels or paper towels.



2. Creation Walk & Talk About AW p. 47

Go for a walk—outside or inside—to find things God made both long ago and very recently, as indicated on page 47.

Questions for conversation while you work:

- What's the newest creation you found? The oldest?
- What's the oldest thing God ever created?
- What do you think about this phrase: "God is still creating today."
- How do you know if something is God-created versus human-created?
- When does something go from being created by God to created by human beings? Paper, for example, made from trees? Or iron made from taconite? Or a shirt made from cotton?
- What's some human-created stuff that's good? Have people ever created stuff that messes with God's creation?

Where's this going?

Kids search for created things, old and new, to consider how God may be at work creating today.



3. The Joy of Re-creating AW p. 48

In groups, build something new using “found” objects lying around outside (or inside, if the weather is bad). If you have a digital camera or camera phone, snap photos of the new creations. Share them on the re:form online gallery.

Questions for conversation while you work:

- What do you wish God had created?
- If you could create anything, what would it be?
- What’s the difference between making something and creating something?
- What’s the best part of creation? What’s your least favorite?

Where’s this going?

Kids experience the difference between creation and re-creation, making something new out of something else.



4. Teach Your Church! AW p. 49

Mark a section of sidewalk or parking lot where kids will create chalk retellings of the Creation Story. Using pictures and numbers, use colorful sidewalk chalk to depict Genesis 1. Try to illustrate it somewhere people will see it when they go to worship. Get everyone working together—including you!

Questions for conversation while you work:

- Why do you think the creation story is in the Bible?
- What does the creation story show us about God?
- If God created human beings last, does that mean things like snails and mosquitoes and elephants and parakeets are more important, since God made them first?
- What’s the easiest thing for you to believe about the creation story? The most difficult?
- If a day is like a thousand years for God, and 1,000 years is like a day, did God really create everything in 7 solar days? Does it really matter how long it took?

Where’s this going?

Kids create a retelling of the creation story to share with their church.

Get this stuff...

Sidewalk chalk.

respond

15-20 minutes

Gather to share the different points of view kids have discovered and developed during the session.

Regroup

Share a brief story about the first time you made something you were proud of. Did it work? Do you still have it? What did you learn about yourself through that experience? Or, tell a story about the biggest creative failure of your life; a pot roast gone horribly wrong, or a knitting project that unraveled. What did that teach you about creating? What did that teach you about creation?

Share

Go around the group and ask each person to share what they've done (if they're comfortable) and explain how they did it and why. Affirm all thoughtful explanations and attempts at the work. Point out two or three things about each kid's work that you like best. Invite others to offer thoughtful observations.

Questions for conversation:

- What are three things you learned about God as the Creator today?
- When Christians say the Apostles' Creed in worship, they say, "We believe in God the Father, Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth." What do you think of when you hear or say that?
- If God is responsible for all creation and creative activity, what do you think God's objective might be? What is God trying to do with all that creating?
- What are some ways you participate with God in creation every day?

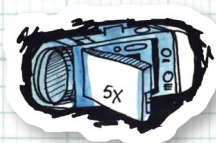
Send

Give kids a piece of Play-Doh or Silly Putty and have them create whatever they want. Gather in a circle with the creations and invite kids to say a one-line prayer for creation. Ask kids to place their creations on a tray or table as they exit.



Get this stuff . . .

Play-Doh or Silly Putty.



Capture it . . .

Use a digital camera, camcorder, scanner, web cam, or audio recorder to capture group conversations and individual pieces of work. Upload them to your online galleries, or ask kids to do so.

Tear here for easy use!