





## 2

## Creation: Owls and Octopuses, Panthers and People

### Scripture

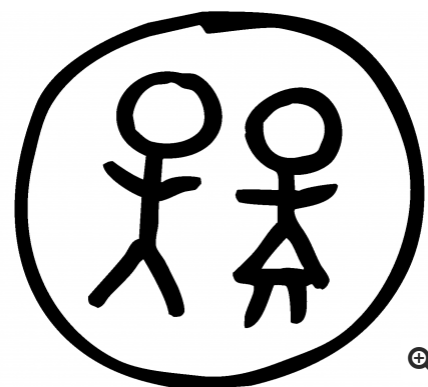
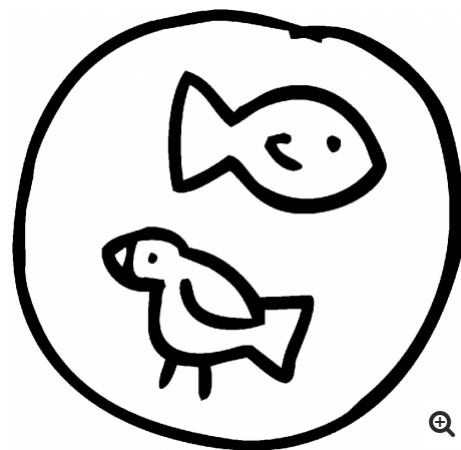
[Genesis 1:20-2:3](#)

### Focus

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (days 5-7).

### Faith Nurture Goals

- Describe how God created each part of the world on days 5-6.
- Praise God as creator of the world and everything in it.
- Wonder at the beauty and variety of God's creation.
- Name a part of God's creation for which they will thank God.



## Leader Reflection

### Preparing to Tell God's Story

Make sure to first read the general background material on Genesis 1 in the previous session. It's very clear that this story of creation moves toward a culmination, the creation of human beings, male and female. It's also interesting to note that with the creation of the animals God issues a blessing for the first time (v. 22). Virtually the same blessing is repeated at the creation of human beings (v. 28), and land animals are included in the blessing on human beings. This could be a basis for encouraging the children to respect and deal gently with all their fellow living creatures as well as to care for them.

With the creation of human beings something brand-new is added to this great creation poem. Humanity is created in God's image. What does this mean?

- Humans have a direct relationship with God: they can listen to God, respond to God, worship and love God.
- Human beings are created in community, male and female, which also images the being of God, who is a triune community of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- Most important, God gives humans dominion. The sovereign Creator and Lord of all calls humans to be lords over the creation God has made.

That humans are told to rule over the rest of creation (older translations put it as having "dominion") has been misunderstood and abused by some Christians as a license to do whatever we want with creation. In that spirit, people have heedlessly ruined and polluted the land, mistreated the animals, and, in our day, brought God's creation to a crisis.

We are called to rule creation on behalf of the loving, caring, Creator. As many have pointed out, it's not a license to exploit as much as a call to be stewards. A call to care for creation rather than merely using it for our own ends. That is certainly at the heart of our task as imagebearers of God.

As this great hymn of creation comes to a close, the refrain that we have heard all the way through, "and God saw that it was good," changes to a great chorus, "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good." We often talk about original sin, but even before sin there was original goodness. Vestiges of that goodness remain in our lives and in our world, and will one day be fully restored in the new creation.

"On the seventh day God rested from all the work of creating that he had done" (2:3). It's not that God was exhausted from all the labor the week. It's a sign that it is finished, the good creation is complete. There is nothing more to do except continue to uphold it and preserve it. In a sense the seventh day is the day when God takes pleasure in all he has made. The Sabbath rest is also a sign for us that we can rest from our labors and enjoy the love and blessing of our Creator and Redeemer.

## Steps

### Step 1 Breathe

*Use this time to focus your attention on God.*

**Do this with me: calm your head, heart, and hands as you slowly breathe in . . . and out.** (*Demonstrate a few deep "in and out breaths" with eyes closed.*)

### Step 2 Tell and Wonder

**Files:** [Story Symbols \(full unit\): Year 2 Unit 1](#)

**Let's enter God's story together. Here's the story symbol for the part of God's story that we'll be spending time in today. I wonder what clues it gives us about the story we're about to hear?** (*Show the story symbol. Accept any answers without giving away whether or not the kids have guessed correctly.*)

#### Re★formed

"Made in God's image to live in loving communion with our Maker, we are appointed earthkeepers and caretakers to tend the earth, enjoy it, and love our neighbors. God uses our skills for the unfolding and well-being of his world so that creation and all who live in it may flourish." —[Our World Belongs to God](#), #10

**Listen closely as we read the story together to see which story our symbol represents.**

*Read "Creation: Owls and Octopuses, Panthers and People" aloud, pausing throughout to allow children to answer the wondering questions. NOTE: It's always a good idea to read through the story beforehand so you'll be able to tell it well.*

*You can also read the story from a children's Bible or a simplified translation of Scripture like the New International Reader's Version (NIRV). Remember to pause throughout to allow time to wonder.*

## **Story: Creation: Owls and Octopuses, Panthers and People** Genesis 1:20-2:3

*Review together what God created on days 1-4. You can use a pizza picture from last week, or just see if your group can remember some of what was created. If you haven't done session 1 of this unit, you'll want to read Genesis 1:1-19, stopping throughout to list what God made on each day.*

*Open the Bible to Genesis 1. Show it to the kids, telling them that today you will continue God's great creation story.*

*The story follows:*

God created skies and seas and plants and trees, all of it by the simple act of speaking. What an amazing God! Let's see how God brings animals into being. (*Read Genesis 1:20.*)

As God spoke those words—creatures of all sizes and shapes and colors filled the lakes and oceans and streams and rivers.

**How many water creatures do you think we can name? Let's go around the circle again and again until we can't think of one new creature to name.** (*Pause for responses.*)

At the same time that water creatures appeared, birds filled the skies—and even some on the land. **How many birds do you think we can name? Let's go around the circle again and again, each one naming a bird that hasn't been named before.** (*Pause for responses.*)

Wow! What a lot of activity! **If you were watching what God was doing, what words would you use to describe these creatures you had never seen or even imagined before?** (*Pause for responses.*)

God saw all the fish playing. God heard them splashing. And God watched the birds soaring high. As God watched all the commotion and activity, God saw that it was good and blessed all the creatures swimming in the waters and flying through the air. That ended the fifth day of God's great creation!

Then God spoke again: "Let there be all kinds of creatures to walk on the land." And sure enough, animals of every size and shape and color crawled and slithered and romped and ran. Some climbed trees and looked around. God made enormous elephants and tiny caterpillars, bold bears and meek mice, barking dogs and meowing kittens, smart foxes and playful monkeys, clomping rhinoceroses and slithering snakes.

**I wonder how many different textures of skin we can describe. Think about kittens, elephants, gerbils, lizards, and all the animals. How is their skin different?** (*Pause for responses.*)

God looked at all the animals and saw that they were good.



Then God said, “I’m going to make *people*, people in my image and likeness. They will be like me in many ways. And I’m going to tell my people to rule over my world—to rule in a loving, caring way. They will care for the birds and the fish and all the creatures in my world.”

And so God made a man and a woman. They were more wonderful than anything else God had made. They could thank and praise God for making such a wonderful world. They could enjoy all the animals and know that God had made each one. They could look at each other and know that God had made them for each other. They could talk to God and to each other.

God blessed the man and woman and gave them food. God wanted the man and woman to enjoy all the plants—to eat the fruit and vegetables—to enjoy creation. God wanted the animals to enjoy this fresh, fine food too.

**If you were wandering through the garden filled with so many delicious choices, what would you choose for your first breakfast?** *(Pause for responses.)*

God looked around at every part of the creation. Wow, it was very good! That ended the sixth day.

God’s beautiful, amazing world was finished at last. And so on the seventh day God rested from the work of creating the world. Now God could watch and enjoy all the wonderful things and creatures in creation.

**What’s your favorite way to rest after a big day or when you’ve finished something?** *(Pause for responses.)*

### Step **3** Pray

*Close with prayer. Ask kids to repeat each phrase after you. After the last phrase, go around the circle, each one thanking God for one part of creation.*

**Dear God, you are an amazing God.**

**Your world is filled with color.**

**Your world is filled with creatures.**

**Your world is filled with the wonderful sounds of nature.**

**Thank you for your world.**

**Thank you for . . .** *(each one in turn repeats this phrase and fills in the line)*

**Amen.**

See [5 Ways to Pray with Kids](#) for other ways to pray.

### Step **4** Respond

*Select and do one or more of the response activities from God’s Big Story card #5 or check out [5 Ways to Retell a Bible Story with Kids](#) for some fun ways to retell this story. Include older kids in the retelling by having them read the story aloud while the younger children act it out.*

*\*God’s Big Story cards can be ordered from [FaithAliveResources.org](http://FaithAliveResources.org).*

## Easy Extras

### 1. Pizza Pictures

**Materials:** large paper circle or the pizza pictures from last session, one per child

**Files:** [Printable : Pizza Picture Shapes](#)

*If you saved your pizza pictures from the last session, you can use the back of those for this activity. If not, you'll need a large paper circle for each child. You can use the pizza picture printable page as a template, or cut out your own large paper circles.*

*Place some markers, crayons, or colored pencils on the craft table. Give each child a paper circle. Have the kids draw a vertical line down the center of the circle. Place a small 5 on the left side and a 6 on the right.*

*Briefly retell what God did on each day (refer to the story if you need help remembering). After each, pause so the kids can draw a picture of that day. As they work, ask the following questions to spark their creativity:*

- **What do you think it was like for Adam and Eve to be the only people in the whole world? What would you like about that? What would you dislike about that?**
- **If you could ask God one question about creation, what would it be?**
- **Of all creation, what do you think would have been the most fun to create?**
- **Can you name an animal whose name starts with the first letter of your name?**

*When kids are finished, have them share their pictures with each other.*

### 2. 5 Ways to Practice Sabbath with kids

**Materials:** printed copies of [5 Ways to Practice Sabbath](#), one per child • note to parents (optional)

*This session provides a great opportunity to talk about sabbath with your group. On the seventh day God rested from the work of creation, modeling for us the importance of regularly pausing from our work to rest and be refreshed. Spend a few minutes talking about sabbath and asking your group how they like to rest from a busy day or week.*

*Share your favorite sabbath practices, including any ways you like to start or end your sabbath. Encourage the kids to share their sabbath experiences as well. Be accepting of any answers, remembering that some families will take their sabbath on a different day, or may experience rest in different ways than setting aside one particular day to pause work each week, and some families may not be familiar with the concept of sabbath rest.*

*As you close your conversation, give each child a copy of [5 Ways to Practice Sabbath with Kids](#), encouraging them to share it with their parents, telling them that today they learned about God resting after creating the world. You could also attach a short note to the front of this resource, such as:*

Hello, parents!

#### Tip

If you're meeting virtually, email a copy of this resource to parents, perhaps including the note below as the text of the email.

---

Today in our *Dwell* group we learned about God creating animals and people, and heard how on the seventh day God rested from the hard work of creating the world. We talked about sabbath and rest, and shared our favorite ways to rest.

I invite you to use the attached resource to continue this conversation about rest, reflecting as a family on how you might joyfully celebrate the gift of sabbath.

### **3. Age-Specific Activities**

Click below to access the full age-specific *Dwell* session for this story:

- Preschool: [God Made People](#)
  - Kindergarten-1st Grade: [Fish, Birds, and Animals](#)
  - Kindergarten-1st Grade: [People](#)
  - 2nd-3rd Grade: [Creation: Owls and Octopuses, Panthers and People](#)
-