



## 3

# Creation: Taking Care of God's World

## Scripture

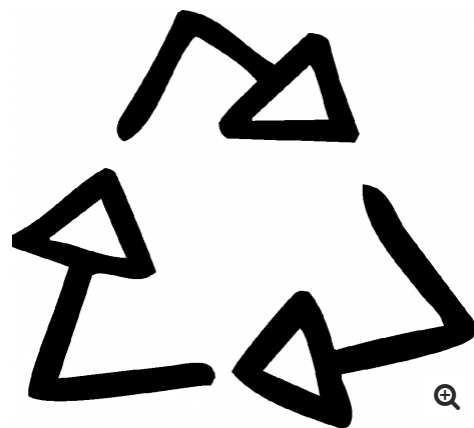
[Genesis 2:4-25](#)

## Focus

God created people special and gave them the world to care for.

## Faith Nurture Goals

- Thank and praise God for the remarkable way God created people.
- Describe the work God gave people to do.
- Commit to caring for God's world.



## Leader Reflection

### Preparing to Tell God's Story

The first question many people ask about Genesis 2 is how it fits with Genesis 1. It seems like a new creation story centered on humans. Many scholars across the theological spectrum believe that Genesis 2 is a different story, not a continuation of chapter 1, and that together both stories offer a complete understanding of the meaning of creation. This story continues on into chapter 3.

The chapter can be divided into four scenes. The first is of God forming the first human (\*adamah\* is the Hebrew word for human being) out of the ground. Like a potter making clay, the creator lovingly sculpts a human being out of the dirt, and then breathes into him the breath of life. (The Hebrew word for breath, \*ruach\*, is the same word for spirit.) This picture tells us two things. First, we are dust; that is, we are made of the same stuff as every other created thing. Second, God gave us spiritual life, to know and love him, very much like being made in God's image in chapter 1.

The second scene reveals a beautiful garden, with its abundant rivers, wildlife, and verdant plant life, into which God places the human creature he has created. In the middle of the garden are two special trees: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. There is a boundary in the garden---good, thriving human life has divinely-set boundaries. We will see what happens as a result in the next session.

In the third scene, God gives Adam an unusual task. God brings all the wild animals and birds to Adam to name them. This means that Adam was to notice the special characteristics of each animal and bird and

name them accordingly. By naming them, defining them, Adam exercises the "dominion" we discussed in chapter 1. He is "over" the animal kingdom and has responsibility for their care and thriving.

In the final scene we are surprised to find that something is missing in this paradise. Adam is lonely. What? God is not enough? The animals and creatures do not fully occupy him? The Genesis 1 creation story tells us that God created humankind as male and female. Humans were created to reproduce, but they were also created to be social creatures.

We assume that every other creature had sexual characteristics and the ability to reproduce. But Adam is lonely. This says some important things. One is that sex and the differentiation of genders are more than means of reproduction. We are not male and female merely so we can reproduce. We are meant for each other as companions.

God creates the women out of Adam's rib, Adam's own DNA, so to speak. She is called a "suitable helper." That doesn't mean woman is some kind of servant, but a partner, a friend, someone with whom to share his life. (God is also called a "helper" in the Bible.)

When God brings Eve to Adam, he cries out, "This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. . . ." The writer of Genesis adds a commentary: "For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh." Again, human companionship and human sexuality are one.

## 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

**Materials:** Simple prop such as a staff for Adam, optional

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

#### Re★formed

The naming of the animals has great significance for our understanding of human life. We are not here just to enjoy or exploit the world around us; we're here to understand it and care for it. In Hebrew culture, naming meant understanding the true nature of the one being named.

**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.*)

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

*Read "Creation: Taking Care of God's World" 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: Taking Care of God's World** Genesis 2:4-25

Open the Bible and show the group where chapter 2 begins. Read verse 4 aloud. Tell kids that today's part of God's great story goes back to creation. After the story of God creating the world is told in the very beginning of the Bible, it is told again, giving different details about how God created parts of the world.

Explain to your group that they will hear Adam tell the story. Even though you may not look like Adam, ask them to imagine the story is coming from Adam's lips. You may want to get into character by putting on a simple prop such as a staff before telling the story as Adam.

Hi kids! My name is Adam. You've probably heard of me before because I am one of the very first people God created. Today I want to tell you what it was like to be the first human being in the entire world.

The Lord God—the One who made me from the dust of the earth—put me in the most fantastic place in the world. It was called the Garden of Eden and it was truly a perfect place to live. When God created everything else in the world, God spoke the words and it came to be. But when God made me, God scooped up the dust of the ground, formed my body, and breathed the breath of life into me. Isn't that amazing?

**I wonder why God made people this way—by breathing God's own breath into them. Do you think it might have been a way of showing that God made people to be very, very special and different from the rest of creation?** *(Pause for responses.)*

Now I invite you to relax and imagine the Garden of Eden—this perfect place. Why don't you close your eyes, take a deep breath, and picture it in your mind. Everyone ready?

There were more plants and bushes and trees than I could count. They were filled with fresh, juicy fruits—apples, oranges, figs, dates, and berries of every kind and every color. Not a worm in anything! I could drink clear, clean water—icy cold—from the little brook nearby and from the lake a short walk away. Ahh! So refreshing!

Picture this—huge fields of brightly colored flowers. What a wonderful smell! Add to your picture the night sky. The stars were so bright it felt like I could reach up and touch them. The moon gave a glorious silver glow to everything.

And this too—picture the animals coming up to me, nuzzling against me or perching on my shoulder or dozing in the shade around me. Best of all—it was in this garden that God talked to me and I talked to God. The Garden of Eden was perfect. It was truly a paradise!

**Open your eyes and tell me about what you pictured in your mind.** *(Pause for responses.)*  
**Of everything you saw, what was your favorite?** *(Pause for responses.)*

One day God came to me and told me that I could eat from every tree in the whole garden— except one. God also told me that if I ate from that one tree, I would certainly die.

**It made me wonder—why would God let me eat from every tree—every single one—except for that one tree? What could be the reason?** *(Pause for responses.)*

You might be thinking that all I had to do all day was lie around and eat great food. Actually I had a lot to do. God came to me one day and told me that it was my job to take care of the garden—God’s perfect world. That kept me busy, and I enjoyed it. I loved working for God in this beautiful place.

Oh, I can’t forget to tell you this! One morning I woke up to some of the strangest noises imaginable. I heard grunts and snorts and squeals and oinks, quacks and roars and growls! I couldn’t imagine what brought all the animals right to the place where I slept.

God came to me and told me to name all the creatures. Well, that was a big job! I had to consider each animal carefully and think about the incredible things God had designed each of them to do. I’m still not sure how I did it, but I came up with some pretty interesting names—elephant, lion, sheep, gerbil, llama, emu, koala—and that was just the beginning of this huge job.

**If you had to do that job—name all of the creatures—how long do you think that would have taken you?** *(Pause for responses.)*

Living in God’s great garden was wonderful. I enjoyed it. But after naming all the creatures, I realized that there was not another one like me. I was the only person. God knew that too. God knew I was alone.

One night I went to sleep—a very, very deep sleep. And when I woke up, standing in front of me was another person—a woman. She was like me but different. You see, while I slept, God had made a brand-new person. Together we lived in the Garden of Eden—God’s paradise! Together we took care of God’s creation.

**What do you think it would be like to live in God’s paradise? What kind of sounds might you hear? Do you think Adam and Eve enjoyed taking care of God’s creation?** *(Pause for responses.)*

### Step **3** Pray

*Tell the group that God made people very special. Ask them to praise God with you for making people to care for the world, using Psalm 8:6-9 from the NIV version. Read it a phrase at a time, having the kids repeat each phrase after you.*

**You made human beings rule over everything your hands created.**

**You put everything under their control.**

**They rule over all flocks and herds**

**and over the wild animals.**

**They rule over the birds in the sky**

**and over the fish in the ocean.**

**They rule over everything that swims in the oceans.**

**Lord, our Lord,**

**how majestic is your name in the whole earth!**

Psalm 8:6-9 (NirV)

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 #8 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. God's Crew

**Materials:** large paper or plastic bags • hand sanitizer • work gloves, optional

*Before the session begins, ask your church if your group can have permission to clean up around the church grounds or the sanctuary. If you're leading this session online or at home, encourage your group to go on a nature walk, taking time to admire God's beautiful creation, and to clean up any trash they find along the way.*

*Recall that God gave people the job of caring for God's world (see Genesis 2:15). That means we are all part of God's crew and are responsible for keeping the world healthy and clean and cared for. Tell kids that today they will work together to clean up the place you have selected.*

*As you hand out supplies, commission each person using a line such as this: **[Name], I commission you to be one of God's crew members this morning. Welcome!***

*Give kids appropriate instructions, such as:*

- Stay and work together in the same area.
- Stay away from the road.
- Don't touch things that are sharp or dangerous.
- Come back to join me when I give the signal.

*When you return to your Dwell space, have kids wash their hands or use hand sanitizer. Talk about how it felt to help clean up part of God's world.*

### 2. Age-Specific Activities

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

- 2nd-3rd Grade: [Creation: Taking Care of God's World](#)