

1: Creation Today

WELCOME

Please try this! Even if you don't often use the Welcome material. Each draw something you like about creation & share what you've drawn with the group. *(It doesn't matter how good/bad you are at drawing, any more than how good you are at reading or discussing things – just have a go & a laugh!)*

WORSHIP

Using your drawings above, go round the room saying in turn 'Thank you God for... [say something someone else has drawn]' & all join in with 'Amen'.

You could also put in the middle of the room some flowers or fruit as a reminder of creation.

WORD

Christians & others have lots of views about creation – sometimes quite strongly held. Please don't assume one view is held by everyone and be gracious in listening to one another & sharing honestly.

Read Genesis 1:1-2:3

Discuss your initial reactions to the passage:

1. Does anything in the passage jump out at you? Why?
2. Does anything connect with something you've been doing, reading or thinking about?
3. Is there anything you haven't noticed before?

Now use **some** of the questions below *(and set a time limit to leave yourselves time to pray!)*



This account was eventually written down by Israelite exiles in Babylon 3000 years ago to point them to God in a culture where many other gods were worshipped. One commentator, Walter Brueggemann, says *'the poem does not narrate "how it happened"... it is concerned with God's intent not his technique.'*

1. How helpful do you find this view?
2. If someone asked you, *'What do you believe about creation? How do you think it happened?'* How would you respond?
3. How important do you feel creation is to your faith? Why?

In Romans 1:20: Paul writes that: *'Since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.'*

4. How many different things can you think of that we can learn about God by looking at different parts of creation?
5. How would you explain the Good News about God, starting from creation?
6. If God made everything, how should that affect the way we care for the world? What difference should it make to our daily lives?

WHAT NEXT?

4. Talk about practical steps that you could take as individuals or as a group to care for creation more.
5. Pick one of the Far Out partner organisations that we support as a church that operates elsewhere in the world & pray for them together.
6. Don't forget to share personal things to pray for - 'thank yous' as well as 'pleases' and for people in the room, not just those elsewhere.

2: What's Wrong with the World?

WELCOME

Spend time relaxing & sharing together. You could try this...

Each share: What are the temptations you find hardest to resist?

You could put out a (tempting) plate of cakes or sweets in the middle of the room & leave them there until the end of the meeting!

WORSHIP

Use music, silence, prayer, meditation, reflection, songs, hymns, etc. or be creative with drawing, writing, symbols, poetry etc to help people to draw near to God. You could try this...

Have a time of quiet. In the silence, each think back through the day. Quietly say sorry to God for any things you've done wrong. Then read out 1 John 1:5-9 and finish by thanking God for his forgiveness.

WORD

Read Genesis 3:1-13

Discuss your initial reactions to the passage:

7. Does anything in the passage jump out at you? Why?
8. Does anything connect with something you've been doing, reading or thinking about?
9. Is there anything you haven't noticed before?

Now use **some** of the questions below (*and set a time limit to leave yourselves time to pray!*)

7. Have a vote on these questions...
 1. Do you like this story? 'Yes', 'No' or 'Partly'.
 2. Who do you blame? The snake, the man, the woman or God



3. If you were there, would you have eaten the apple? Yes or No

Split into 3 groups. In each group talk about one of the following questions. Then share your thoughts with the whole group.

8. In what ways do you find this story helpful for understanding...
 1. 1: ...temptation?
 2. 2: ...the presence and effect of sin in the world?
 3. 3: ...the impact of sin on our relationships with God and others?
 9. What are the differences between temptation and sin? Use examples.
 10. Describe situations in which we would be right to feel guilty and others when we could feel guilty, but shouldn't.
 11. The man and woman both gave in to temptation. How can we get better at resisting temptation? What practical steps can we take?
 1. How can we help one another resist temptation?
 12. The man and woman wanted knowledge, above trusting God. In what ways today can a desire for more knowledge replace trusting God?
- What do you think are the biggest temptations living in the UK today? What temptations are seen as socially acceptable?

WHAT NEXT?

10. In 3s/4s: Share any difficult situations that you face in the coming weeks where you might be tempted to do the wrong thing. Pray for one another.

3: Not Guilty?

WELCOME

Spend time relaxing & sharing together. You could try this...

Share: Who are you tempted to be jealous of, and why?

WORSHIP

Use music, silence, prayer, meditation, reflection, songs, hymns, etc. or be creative with drawing, writing, symbols, poetry etc to help people to draw near to God. You could try this...

Each take time in quiet to think of things that you've done wrong. Then take a piece of paper or stick to represent that. Say sorry to God and burn it on a fire or BBQ to represent the fact that he forgives you and wants you to not do it again.

WORD

Read Genesis 4:1-16 You could do this by different people reading different parts: Narrator, Eve, God, Cain

Discuss your initial reactions to the passage:

11. Does anything in the passage jump out at you? Why?
12. Does anything connect with something you've been doing, reading or thinking about?
13. Is there anything you haven't noticed before?

Now use **some** of the questions below (*and set a time limit to leave yourselves time to pray!*)

13. What do you like or not like about this whole story?
14. In verse 3-5: The text doesn't tell us why God was unhappy with Cain's offering, but we do see that the brothers' offerings were



important to God. Why is what we give or keep back from God important to him?

15. God asks Cain 'Why are you angry?' How do you think Cain would answer if he was being honest?
 16. Have you ever been angry with God about something you think is unfair?
 17. Just because Cain sees things as unfair is no justification for his behaviour. Give examples of when people justify doing wrong because they feel unfairly treated. What are the effects?
 18. In what ways can sin control us? In what ways can we 'master' it (v6)?
 19. 'Am I my brother's keeper?' (v9) If God had answered Cain's question, what do you think he would have said?
- Today, we often view independence and individuality as more important than our responsibility for one another. How much do you agree/disagree?
 - In 2s/3s, try and work out your own idea for a modern day version of this story. Then share it with the whole group.

WHAT NEXT?

- List all the different ministries, jobs and organisations in the church that you can think of (however 'small'). Go round each saying a short thank you to God for each one
 14. Pray for people you know that seem to be angry with God or with other people.
 15. Pray for one another.

Extra Stuff!

If you'd like to spend more time on Genesis as a group or as individuals, you could try this...

Watch a film (short or long) on the Noah story (eg Evan Almighty). Then read the story in the Bible (Genesis 6-9) and talk about what you thought was good or bad about the film.