

Gen. 1:1–2:4a

Ps. 8

2 Cor. 13:11–13

Matt. 28:16–20

Trinity Sunday

**Goal for
the Session**

Children will marvel at the wonders of God’s creation.

■ PREPARING FOR THE SESSION

Focus on Genesis 1:1–2:4a

WHAT is important to know?

—From “Exegetical Perspective” by Richard Boyce

There is a multiplicity to God’s revelation in the world, which even (or especially) this opening prelude makes clear. The God of Scripture is just too big and mysterious and communal to allow a single subject (*’elohim*) to drive a series of verbs (create, said, see) that thereby describe this deity as *simply* a single actor over against the creation this particular God brings about. The spirit or wind of this God is also an actor; the spirit “sweeps, hovers, and broods” over the stuff of this world in a way that hints at relationship—both inside and outside the Godhead this passage portrays.

WHERE is God in these words?

—From “Theological Perspective” by Melinda Quivik

This text offers the theological question of the value of creation. Out of nothing, something was made (*creatio ex nihilo*). Why is this important? The Creator’s first pronouncement is that the creation is good. The goodness here is not an aesthetic or ethical proclamation about the nature of light; rather, goodness concerns the use to which it can be put for God’s intention. We do not learn what that purpose is in these verses, but God is pleased. The light is “good.” God names it.

SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

—From “Pastoral Perspective” by Carole A. Crumley

One significantly different understanding of the Trinity comes from Meister Eckhart, a fourteenth-century German mystic. He wrote that God the Father laughed, and the Son was born. Then the two of them laughed, and the Spirit was born. When all three laughed, the human being was born. For Eckhart, the mystery of the Trinity was surrounded by peals of golden laughter at the heart of the universe. What does your experience tell you about the Trinity? How would you describe the indescribable, incomprehensible mystery of the Trinity? Trust your spiritual heart to know the way. It is the only compass you need.

NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

—From “Homiletical Perspective” by Dave Bland

What confirms God’s special love for humans is that they are the only ones made in God’s image (1:26–27). This is one of the reasons God insists on Israel not making images of the God they worship. God’s image is already placed within humans; no other kind of representation is necessary. As God’s image bearers, male and female are given a responsibility: to have dominion over the created order (v. 28). Humans are given dominion, not domination; they are caregivers, not exploiters (cf. Ps. 72:8–14). We do unto creation as God has done unto us; we express love and care toward the world. Being image bearers of God is also at the heart of how we see other humans, which results in treating them with dignity, regardless of race, age, gender, social or economic status.

FOCUS SCRIPTURE

Genesis 1:1–2:4a

Focus on Your Teaching

Children are naturally curious about nature and all that makes up God's creation. Their individual interests may focus on different parts of that creation (dinosaurs, the tiniest bugs, clouds, water), but those interests come together in this session. That curiosity is another avenue to encourage their growth in faith and all things spiritual. Rather than examine the theological concept of the Trinity, children will enjoy the work of God the creator. Expand this session by giving families copies of Resource Sheet 2, which provides suggestions for more direct exploration of this awesome world.

Creator God, the work of your word to place us in this beautiful work is more than my mind can conceive. Thank you for the beauty and power of this place. Amen.

YOU WILL NEED

- ☐ small table or sturdy box
- ☐ white cloth
- ☐ candle, matches
- ☐ Bible
- ☐ offering basket
- ☐ *Singing the Feast*, bit.ly/SingingTheFeast
- ☐ Color Pack 1
- ☐ card stock
- ☐ Resource Sheet 1
- ☐ paper
- ☐ markers
- ☐ construction paper (six colors)
- ☐ copies of Resource Sheet 2

For Responding

- ☐ option 1: index cards, pencils, newsprint, marker
- ☐ option 2: Color Pack 2, newsprint, marker
- ☐ option 3: paper, markers or pencils
- ☐ option 4: Color Pack 31; *Singing the Feast*, bit.ly/SingingTheFeast

LEADING THE SESSION

GATHERING

Before the session, place Color Pack 1 where children gather for the Bible story. Place a marker at Genesis in the worship table Bible. Print large numbers (1 to 7) on individual sheets of card stock or stiff paper. For option 1 in Responding, cut 1" squares from the middle of index cards. An inch square punch makes this easy. Make copies of Resource Sheet 2 or email it to families.

As children arrive, invite them to prepare the worship table with the white cloth, candle, offering basket, and Bible. Play "Every Time I Feel the Spirit" (*Singing the Feast*) when everything is ready, as a signal to gather around the worship table. Light the candle. Receive the offering.

Explain that during this prayer, the group is to clap twice as they say "Amen" when you raise your arms. Practice two or three times. Pray:

Leader: *God's Spirit is with us.*

All: *Amen!*

Leader: *Loving God, we come here to learn together about you and to study the ways of Jesus.*

All: *Amen!*

Extinguish the candle.

Point out the white cloth, noting that this is a special Sunday, Trinity Sunday. On this day, the church remembers that we know about God in three ways: God the Creator and Loving Parent, God the Holy Spirit, and God the Son or Jesus. Explain that today's Bible story is about God the Creator.

In a group of children from ages 5 to 12, some children may question whether the story of creation is true. Without going into detail, explain that this story is not based on science, but rather on what people then understood about God. If a child has more questions, talk together later.

EXPLORING

Ask a child to retrieve the Bible from the worship table and open it to the marker. Point out that today's Bible story is from the beginning of the Bible, the book of Genesis, chapter 1. As you tell the story, using Resource Sheet 1 (So Good!), give the number of each day to a child to hold facing the group. After the story, help the children name what God created on each day and write it on each number sign. Ask:

- ✪ How does this story make you feel? (*Answers may range from tiny to excited to questioning whether the story is true.*)
- ✪ What do you think the people who told this story thousands of years ago wanted the listeners to know about God?
- ✪ Why do you think we still read that story today?

Provide time for children to wonder about these questions, modeling that faith grows when we wonder about and question what we hear and read. Then invite children to select a day of creation from the story that they would like to illustrate. Encourage them to include all six days, even if just one child illustrates a particular day. As they finish, mount the illustrations on construction paper, using a different color for each day. Display them in the learning area or a shared space where other church members can enjoy the artwork.

Recall that God told human beings to care for the earth. Ask:

- ✪ How do you care for the earth, created by God?

RESPONDING

If possible, offer at least two options so the children have a choice. One might be more challenging to interest older children who can work on their own.

1. **One Square Inch** Children will focus intensely on a small plot of God's creation to see how much happens in it. While children often see tiny things, they will focus on just one square inch of ground to see how awesome God's creation is in a tiny format. Take the children outdoors to a plot of land where they will not be in danger of traffic. Give each one an index card with one square inch cut from the middle. Explain that the children are to place their cards on the ground and look carefully to see what is living and growing in that square inch. Tell them that you will call time after two minutes. When time is up, distribute pencils and have them list or draw on their cards what they observed. Return to the learning area and list what they saw on newsprint. Together create a prayer of thanks to God for the parts of creation the children observed.

**EASY
PREP**

2. **An Amazing Universe** Children will wonder about our solar system and how it contributes to the awesomeness of God's creation. Display Color Pack 2. Some children will immediately recognize this image of the solar system. Encourage them to tell the group what they know about it. Explain that the writers of the book of Genesis didn't have high-power telescopes or other ways of studying the solar system that are available today. Ask:
 - ✪ How does knowing about the universe of which Earth is a part make God's creation feel even more wonderful?

To encourage their imaginations, ask them to complete this sentence: God is more (awesome, wonderful) than . . . Write their answers on newsprint. Use them as the basis for a litany about God. The response line for the group can be: We praise you, God of all creation.

Consider asking your worship leaders to use this litany of praise in a future congregational worship service.

3. **Creation Art Game** The children will recall the many pieces of God's creation through this game. If the group is fewer than six people, play as one group. If more than six, form at least two groups to reduce time between turns. Provide paper and markers or pencils. Ask each child to think of something in creation. Invite a volunteer to begin to draw what she or he has chosen for the others to guess. When the drawing is correctly identified, exchange high fives all around, saying, "God is an awesome creator!" Continue until everyone has at least one turn.

**Praise God from Whom
All Blessings Flow**

Praise God, from whom all
blessings flow;
praise God, all creatures
here below;
praise God above, ye
heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy
Ghost. Amen.

4. **Doxology** Children will sing their praises to God for God's marvelous creation. If children are in worship, they may be familiar with the Doxology or "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow" (Color Pack 31, [Singing the Feast](#)). Play it for them or read aloud the words. Ask:

✠ Who is to praise God, according to this song? (Note "all creatures" in line 2 and "heavenly host" in line 3.)

Invite children to imagine the sun and moon praising God, or the eagle and the elephant praising God. Ask them to describe or show how various parts of creation might praise God. Finally, read the last line and explain that the "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" is called the Trinity and on this Sunday the church focuses on the Trinity. Sing the song together.

CLOSING

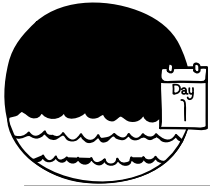
Invite children to gather at the worship table as "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow" ([Singing the Feast](#)) is playing. Light the candle. Ask children to take deep breaths as they think about the wonders of God's creation. Have children repeat the phrases in the prayer after you:

*Creator God, / may our eyes be open / to see all your creation. / We praise
you. / You are wonderful. / Amen.*

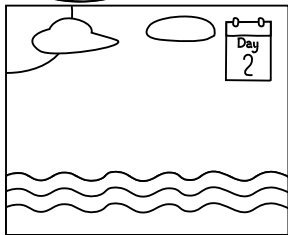
Extinguish the candle. Distribute copies of Resource Sheet 2 or email it to families this week.

So Good!**based on Genesis 1:1-2:4a**

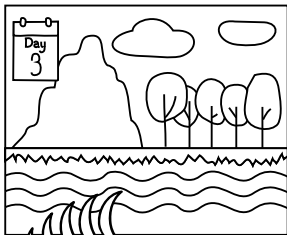
Before God spoke, there was nothing. Just darkness and waters. Then God spoke.



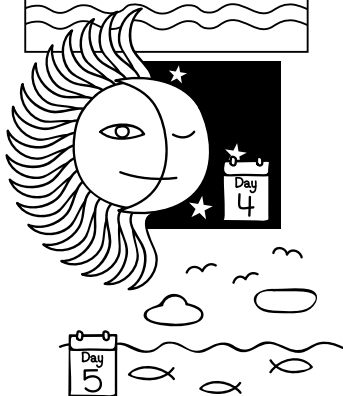
When God spoke, "Light, come!" light appeared in the darkness. God named the light *day* and the darkness *night*. Day one.



God spoke again, "Sky, come!" and the sky appeared above the waters. Now there was day and night, waters and sky above the waters. Day two.

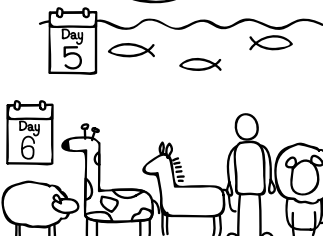


God spoke again, "Waters separate and dry land, come!" God's breath swirled around the waters and they came together so land appeared. God named this dry land *earth* and the bodies of water *sea*. On the dry land, plants of all kinds and size grew. Day and night, waters and sky, earth and sea. Day three.

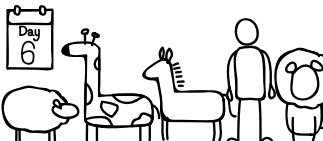


God was not finished and God spoke again, "Lights in the sky!" The lights in the sky God called the *moon*, *sun*, and *stars*. Now seasons of the year began on God's earth. Day and night, waters and sky, earth and sea, all kinds of plants, moon, sun and stars. Day four.

God's imagination was soaring now. God looked at the swirling seas and the enormous sky and spoke, "Creatures, fill the sky and the seas!" Immediately, birds of all kinds filled the sky, and fish and all swimming creatures swam in the seas. What a sight! Day five.



God looked at the earth and the delicious fruit hanging on the trees. God spoke, "Animals, come!" And every animal you have ever seen and more appeared on the earth. Running deer, crawling caterpillars, jumping rabbits, every animal! So much moving around.



But God was not finished. On this same day, God created human beings. You and me. To the human beings, God gave the fruit of the trees and the plants for food. God told them to care for this earth. To the animals, God gave the grasses of the field to eat. Now on day six, God was finished speaking this creation into being.



On day seven, God rested. God made day seven a holy day, a day of rest for human beings, too. This is the Bible story of how God created the world.

Enjoy God's Wonderful Creation

Today the children heard the creation story from Genesis 1:1–2:4a. The wonders of God's creation spurred us to praise God. To continue this sense of awe for our planet and the entire solar system, do one or more of these activities with your child this week or in the future.

- ☐ On a clear night, take a blanket outside in your yard or a nearby park. Lie on it and look at the stars. Talk together about the awe this inspires in you. Give thanks to God.
- ☐ Watch a nature program on television together. Talk about the interconnectedness of life on our planet and how your family can contribute to it.
- ☐ Find a short video on YouTube that promotes care of the environment. Recall that God told human beings to be stewards of the earth, to care for it. How does your family care for the earth? What more can you do?
- ☐ Sing the Doxology together at mealtime. Uncertain about doing this alone? Find it on YouTube. Select a simple version. The words the children sang in church school were:

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
praise God, all creatures here below;
praise God above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

- ☐ Ask your child for ways she or he would like to learn about God's wonders in creation.

