



# LIVING THE WORD

*Exploring God's Story Together  
Narrative Lectionary, Year 4*



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## Leader's Guide

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## Sample Lesson

Lesson #4-1—September 12, 2021

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Living the Word: Exploring God's Story Together, Cross+Generational Education (Narrative Lectionary, Year 4)

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## Lesson #4-1

# GOD'S GOOD CREATION

Genesis 1:1-2:4a



**Key Verse:**

God saw everything that [God] had made, and indeed, it was very good.  
Genesis 1:31

**The Point:**

God declares that creation is good.

**Making Connections:**

God Provides Blessings

**Bible Nuts & Bolts:**

What Is the Bible?

**Spiritual Practice:**

Worship



# ACTIVITIES A LA CARTE

## ACTIVITIES

## SUPPLIES

### INTO THE STORY

#### CREATION COMPARISONS

Compare animals and plants.

10 MIN.

- † Groupings Guide
- † Materials for chosen cross+generational grouping
- † Activity Sheet #4-1.A
- † Card stock
- † Scissors

### BIBLE NUTS & BOLTS

#### BIBLE FACT OR BLUFF

Play a Bible fact bluffing game.

10 MIN.

- † Bible
- † Activity Sheet #4-1.B
- † Card stock
- † Scissors

### MAKING CONNECTIONS

#### BLESSINGS ALL AROUND

Create poetry about creation's blessings.

15 MIN.

- † Mural paper
- † Markers
- † Tape

### LEARNING THE STORY

#### GOD'S GOOD CREATION

Dramatic retelling of the creation story.

20 MIN.

- † Bibles

# ACTIVITIES A LA CARTE

## LIVING THE STORY

### CREATING WORSHIP

Brainstorm worship design.

15 MIN.

- † Activity Sheet #4-1.C
- † Poster paper or white board
- † Markers
- † Paper
- † Pencils
- † Tape

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

### STEWARDS OF THE EARTH

List ways to care for creation.

10 MIN.

- † Mural paper
- † Markers
- † Tape

### REMEMBER THE SABBATH

Share Sabbath practices.

10 MIN.

- † None

## SENDING THE STORY

5 MIN.

- † None



# LIVING THE WORD

*Exploring God's Story Together  
Narrative Lectionary, Year 4*

Cross+Generational Ministry has at its core the concept that faith is formed through meaningful relationships. When we connect with people of a different generation, we are able to learn from them and share our own experiences, no matter what age we are. We find our place in God's story best by exploring that story as community.

Effective cross+generational experiences are:

- Experiential*
- Interactive*
- Engaging*
- Story-centered*
- Home-based*
- Equalizing*

all of which promote an **encounter with God**. All of the activities included in this leader guide are intended to engage these principles, through intentional cross+generational interaction and active, creative activities that bring the Bible story to life in our lives.

We pass on the faith through every action, experience, or relationship that nurtures a transformative relationship of trust with God and shapes the way we see and interact with God's world. When we do this in meaningful, intergenerational relationships, our faith is enriched from the diversity of the experiences we share with each other. Our communities are strengthened, and we have confidence in our sense of belonging to God and with each other.

# BACKGROUND FOR LEADERS

## Making Connections

The story of humanity's relationship with the living God is a story of blessing upon blessing, and these blessings are never more clear than in the beginning, as the narrative unfolds. As we read the story of creation, we become aware that God has blessed us with not only resources and companions, but with the responsibility to care for each.

## Story Summary:

### *God's Good Creation*

As we begin our program year, we celebrate beginnings: the beginning of creation, the beginnings of life on earth, and the beginning of humanity's relationship with God. This, the first of two creation stories found in Genesis, sets forth a description of each "day" (metaphorical period of time), always ending with the litany-like response of "And God saw that it was good." God created earth, all of its vegetation and elements, and animals, and created and blessed humanity, and gave them the responsibility to care for the rest of creation. The word that is often translated as "have dominion over" can be more accurately understood as "having responsibility for" or even "serving." Our responsibility to care for creation is as servant leaders, rather than dominators. In the story of creation, on the seventh day, after creating all that is, God rested, and established the expectation that we, too, rest from our labors regularly.

## The Point

**God declares that creation is good.** Our fundamental understanding of God is based in our understanding of God's creating power. Not only did God create all that is, but God saw that it was "good," and then gave humanity the responsibility and privilege of caring for God's workmanship. We are blessed not just with the abundance of God's creation, but also simply because we were the ones created to care for it.

## Bible Nuts & Bolts:

### *What Is the Bible?*

The Bible is the living, colorful, dynamic Word of God. It is story of the relationship between God and humanity told by many different authors at many different times. Our activity today will highlight some of the unique characteristics of different books of the Bible, and point out the unifying features.

## Spiritual Practice: Worship

Worship is our natural response to God's blessings. When God provides, we rejoice and honor God with our song, prayer, and devotion. Worship comes in many different shapes and forms, and we will explore many different ways to worship the Creating God who blesses us throughout this unit.



# LESSON PLAN



## INTO THE STORY (10 MINUTES)

### CREATION COMPARISONS

Compare animals and plants.

*You will need:*

- † Groupings Guide
- † Materials for chosen cross+generational grouping
- † Activity Sheet #4-1.A
- † Card stock
- † Scissors

*Before class:*

1. Determine how you would like to group participants at their tables (in a cross+generational grouping), using the Groupings Guide.
2. Prepare the materials indicated in the Guide.
3. Print copies of Activity Sheet #4-1.A for each group on card stock.
4. Cut out individual cards and place on tables.

*During class:*

1. Welcome the class and instruct them to group themselves cross+generationally according to the method you have selected from the Groupings Guide.
2. **If someone is sitting alone, please introduce yourself, and invite them to join you. Young children who are not comfortable leaving their families should sit at a table with someone in their family.**
3. **As we begin our program year, together, we want to make sure that we all introduce ourselves to the people sitting at our tables. There may be some new people here who do not know anyone, or some others who might like a reminder of everyone's name. Make sure you introduce yourself with your first and last name.**



4. **Take the card from the middle of the table that you think best represents you, and use it in your introduction. For example, “Hi, my name is Sarah, and I am like a tree because I am tall.” You can be serious or a little silly, as long as your answer tells us something about you. When you are finished, place the card back in the middle, and invite someone else to speak.**
5. **Let’s begin by honoring our elders. The oldest person at each table may speak first. Any questions? Pause for questions. Begin!**
6. **After all have finished: Today we will read about beginnings. We will learn about the many animals and plants that God blessed the earth with at creation. We will consider how God blesses us through creation, and we will worship God in thanks!**

## BIBLE NUTS & BOLTS (10 MINUTES)

### BIBLE FACT OR BLUFF

Play a Bible fact bluffing game.

*You will need:*

- † Bible
- † Activity Sheet #4-1.B
- † Card stock
- † Scissors

*Before class:*

1. Print double-sided (duplex) copies of Activity Sheet #4-1.B for each group on card stock, such that the cards can be cut out with matching information on both sides.
2. Cut out individual cards and prepare them to hand out to each group.

*During class:*

1. Hand out stacks of cards, category up, to each table group. Encourage them to not turn them over until you instruct them to do so.
2. Hold up a Bible. **What is this?** [*A Bible.*] **How many books is this?** Pause. **Is that a strange question? This Bible is not just one book, but a collection of books. We are going to play a game to learn more about the Bible, including how many and what types of books are in it.**
3. Each one of you will select a card from the middle of the table. Choose a category that sounds interesting to you. Silently read the facts on the back of the card, and then come up with a statement that sums up those facts. The fun part of the game is that you can choose to tell a “fact or a bluff.” You can give a statement that accurately sums up what is on your card, or you can give a slightly false answer—a “bluff.” Your team needs to guess if you are telling them a fact or a bluff!
4. Find the **SAMPLE** card in your stack. Look at the facts on the back. If you said, “There are 8 different sets of books in the Bible that have at least two books sharing a name,” that would be a fact. If you said, “There are 60 books in the Bible,” that would be a bluff, since there are 66.

5. **Give everyone a turn to share their “fact or bluff.” Once the team has guessed, share the information on the back of the card. Please help prereaders and anyone else who would like a hand coming up with a statement.**
6. **After all have finished: As you can see, the Bible is a collection of many different types of books, telling many different parts of God’s story. But they have one thing in common—they all tell the story of God’s love and blessings on God’s people.**

## MAKING CONNECTIONS (15 MINUTES)

### BLESSINGS ALL AROUND

Create poetry about creation's blessings.

*You will need:*

- † Mural paper
- † Markers
- † Tape

*Before class:*

1. Place mural paper on walls around the room, one piece for each group.
2. Set a few markers on each table.

*During class:*

1. **As we get into reading our story today, and over the next few weeks, we will notice a recurring theme: Blessings. God has blessed us by providing an abundance of resources for us, and has also blessed us by giving us the responsibility to care for them. We will hear story after story of God's blessings.**
2. **Today, we will begin our focus on blessings by writing poetry together. Each group will write a poem together on a piece of mural paper. Each person should contribute a line about how an element of God's creation—animals, plants, mountain, or ocean, for example—blesses them. If you would like, you can relate your line to the card you chose in our introductory activity.**
3. **Feel free to help each other craft lines, if people want help, but do not try to organize the poem as a whole. It will come together from the thoughts of each person who contributes a line.**
4. When all have finished, have groups read their poems to each other.

# LEARNING THE STORY (20 MINUTES)

## GOD'S GOOD CREATION

Dramatic retelling of the creation story.

*You will need:*

- † Bibles

*Before class:*

1. Decide how to divide the story into sections. There are seven days to be pantomimed. If you anticipate more than seven groups, decide how to combine groups. If you think you will have less, decide how to combine readings.

*During class:*

1. Hand out Bibles to each group.
2. Assign a day (or more) to each group:
  - a. Day One: Genesis 1:1-5
  - b. Day Two: Genesis 1:6-8
  - c. Day Three: Genesis 1:9-13
  - d. Day Four: Genesis 1:14-19
  - e. Day Five: Genesis 1:20-23
  - f. Day Six: Genesis 1:24-31
  - g. Day Seven: Genesis 2:1-4
3. **Our story today paints a vivid picture about creation and the amazing acts that God did creating all that is. Each group will be assigned a day (or more) of creation to read or dramatize. Come up with a creative way to present your day to us. One person can read while others pantomime, or you could paraphrase the text and take turns speaking. Or, you could come up with another way to creatively tell your part of the story. Please be sure to give everyone a role in the dramatization.**
4. Give groups ten minutes to work, and then have them present in order.
5. After the story is told, discuss the following questions as a group:
  - a. **Why do you think creation is described as happening in the order that it is?**
  - b. **What does God think about each thing that is created?** *[It is good.]*
  - c. **What stands out to you in this reading?**
  - d. **What do you do to rest from your work?**

# LIVING THE STORY (15 MINUTES)

## CREATING WORSHIP

Brainstorm worship design.

*You will need:*

- † Activity Sheet #4-1.C
- † Poster paper or white board
- † Markers
- † Paper
- † Pencils
- † Tape

*Before class:*

1. Make copies of Activity Sheet #4-1.C for each group.
2. Tape a piece of poster paper on the wall (or use a white board, if available), with the words GATHERING, WORD, MEAL, SENDING equidistant down the side, as found on Activity Sheet #4-1.C.

*During class:*

1. **God created the earth, and created us to care for it. God also created us to be creative! We can be creative in our worship, coming up with different and interesting ways to worship.**
2. **Many Christian traditions have followed a “four-fold” pattern of worship for centuries. As you can see on this poster paper, the pattern includes elements of Gathering, Word, Meal, and Sending.**
  - a. **In the Gathering, God calls us in to worship, and we invite others to be part of the community. This part of the service can include** (write these under GATHERING on the poster paper): **songs, call to worship, confession, litany (a responsive reading or prayer), and greetings.**
  - b. **After the Gathering, we hear the Word, through** (write these under WORD on the poster paper): **readings, psalms, sermon, prayers, creed, songs, and passing the peace.**
  - c. **Then we experience the Meal** (write these under MEAL on the poster paper), **which includes the offertory, the communion liturgy, which includes all prayers, actions and songs, and the communion blessing.**

- d. **Finally, we receive the Sending**, (write these under **SENDING** on the poster paper): **a blessing, a closing song, and a way of making the transition from worship to service in the world.**
3. **Not every service has all of these elements, and some have more. This pattern reminds us that God calls us, teaches and feeds us, then sends us out to do the same.**
4. **Now you get to creatively imagine what worship would look like if you were to design it.**
  - a. **What would you include under each of these four big elements?**
  - b. **How would you be creative about it? Would you read Scripture, act it out, pantomime it?**
  - c. **What about the songs? Which types of songs would you use?**
5. **Brainstorm as a group what would be important for you to include in worship in general. Do not name specific songs or texts, but tell us how you would like to do them! Write your thoughts on the Activity Sheet on your table.**
6. **Consider sharing the groups' responses (with their permission) with the pastor and worship planning team.**

# ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

## STEWARDS OF THE EARTH (10 MINUTES)

List ways to care for creation.

*You will need:*

- † Mural paper
- † Markers
- † Tape

*During class:*

1. **God instructed the first humans that they were to take care of the earth. We have inherited that responsibility, and have a lot to do to care for the plants, animals, natural structures, and natural resources that God has given to our care. Let's brainstorm a list of ways that we can care for each of these.**
2. Lead a whole group discussion of how we, as individuals or groups, can care for the earth. Divide the conversation into the four topics listed above, and take notes on the poster paper.
3. After the brainstorming is finished:
  - **Is there any one thing on this list that you would like to begin doing?**
  - **What on the list would like our congregation to begin doing?**
  - **What can we do to get started?**



## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

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### REMEMBER THE SABBATH (10 MINUTES)

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Share Sabbath practices.

*You will need:*

† Nothing

*During class:*

1. **Our reading says that on the seventh day, God rested from the work of creation. God blessed the seventh day, and called it holy. The Ten Commandments remind us that God expects us to honor the Sabbath day, the day of rest. Some traditions have very strict rules about what people can and cannot do on the Sabbath, in order to honor God's commandment to keep it holy. Each individual and family should find their own way to honor the Sabbath. What does your family do? What do you not do that you would like to?**
2. Share how you honor the Sabbath. Confess if you do not honor it the way you should or you would like, and suggest a change that you would like to make. Model that for the group, and encourage them to share with each other. Decide, depending on the size of the group, if you would like to have the discussion as a whole group or in small groups.

## SENDING THE STORY (5 MINUTES)

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If your congregation is using the “Living the Word: Sharing God’s Story @ Home” insert, remember to hand them out at this point in the lesson.

**We have learned today about God’s amazing blessing of creation! Let’s review the days of creation. I will share a statement about each day, and you will respond with, “And God saw that it was good!”**

Leader: **On the first day, God created heaven and earth, light and dark, night and day,**

All: And God saw that it was good!

Leader: **On the second day, God created water and sky,**

All: And God saw that it was good!

Leader: **On the third day, God created earth and sea, plants and trees,**

All: And God saw that it was good!

Leader: **On the fourth day, God created sun, stars, and moon,**

All: And God saw that it was good!

Leader: **On the fifth day, God created swimming creatures and flying creatures,**

All: And God saw that it was good!

Leader: **On the sixth day, God created animals of the land, including humans, and gave humans all of creation to care for,**

All: And God saw that it was good!

Leader: **And, do not forget, on the seventh day, God rested and expects us all to rest!**

All: And God saw that it was good!

Encourage participants to hold hands with those in their group, or in a large circle if the entire group is small enough. Begin and end the prayer, but leave enough silence in the middle for people to participate.

## PRAYER

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Before ending class, make a point to come together to pray. Use the following or say your own prayer.

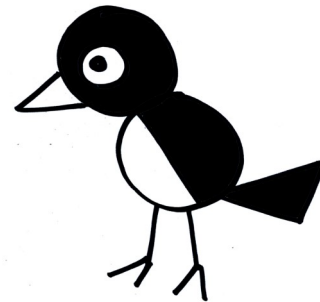
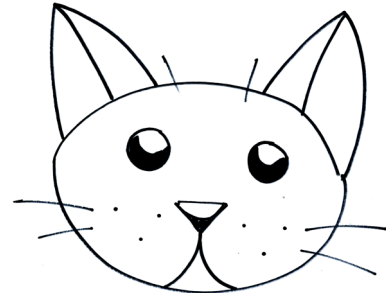
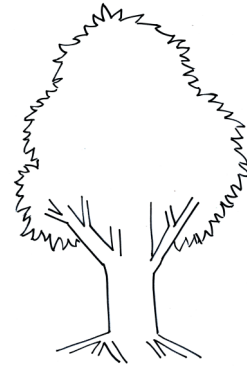
**Loving God,**

**Thank you for the amazing glory of your creation. Thank you for creating us to care for the earth and for each other. Thank you for the many ways in which you have blessed us. Hear now a word from each of us that states a part of creation that blesses us. Invite participants to add their blessings here. Thank you for these and for the ways we do not even recognize that you bless us. In Jesus' name. Amen.**



# CREATION COMPARISONS

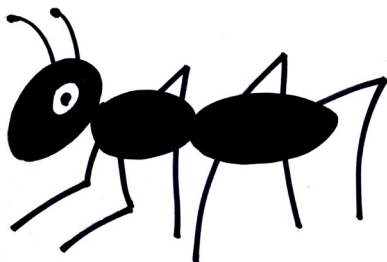
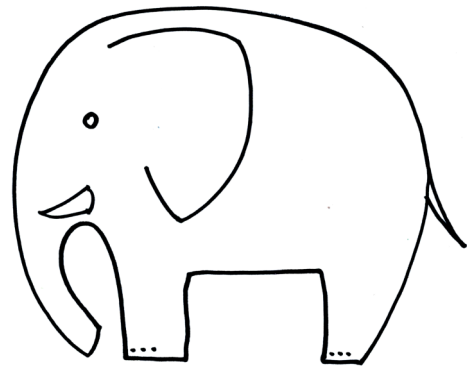
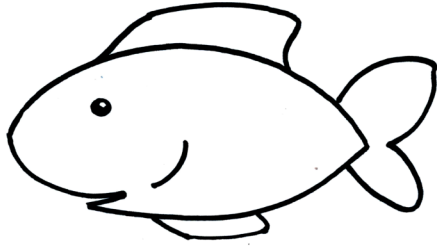
*Compare animals and plants.*





# CREATION COMPARISONS

*Compare animals and plants.*







# BIBLE FACT OR BLUFF?

*Play a Bible fact bluffing game.*

Side A

WOMEN IN THE BIBLE	SAMPLE
NEW TESTAMENT CATEGORIES	OLD TESTAMENT DIVISIONS
PROVERBS	GENEALOGY AND FAMILIES
PAUL'S WRITINGS	POETRY AND SONGS

# BIBLE FACT OR BLUFF?

*Play a Bible fact bluffing game.*

## Side B

<p>There are 39 books in the Old Testament, and 27 in the New Testament.</p> <p>There are 7 different sets of 1st and 2nd books, and 1 set of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd.</p>	<p>Two books, Ruth and Esther, are named after women.</p> <p>There are 4 women named in Jesus' genealogy (his list of ancestors).</p> <p>Women were the first people to discover Jesus' empty tomb.</p>
<p>There are 4 major divisions of Old Testament writing: Law/Torah, Histories, Wisdom/Poetry, and Prophets.</p> <p>The book of Psalms (Poetry) is the longest book in the Bible, with 150 chapters.</p> <p>Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon are Wisdom writings.</p>	<p>The New Testament has 3 general categories: Gospels, Letters of Paul, and General Letters; and 2 books that do not fit into those categories: Acts and Revelation.</p> <p>Acts was written by the writer of the Gospel of Luke.</p> <p>There are 13 letters written by Paul.</p>
<p>The Book of Proverbs contains wise sayings and poetic writing about wisdom.</p> <p>FROM Proverbs: "Better is a little with righteousness than a large income with injustice." (16:8)</p> <p>NOT from Proverbs: "A fool and his money are soon parted". (From an English poem, 1500's)</p>	<p>Isaac had twin sons: Jacob and Esau. Esau was born first, and was owed the family name and blessing, but Jacob stole it. Jacob was an ancestor of Jesus.</p> <p>Jacob had 12 sons and one daughter, Dinah, who does not get much mention in biblical stories.</p>
<p>Paul wrote letters to the church communities that he had planted and to leaders to teach and give them encouragement.</p> <p>Romans and 1 Corinthians are the longest, with 16 chapters, and Philemon is the shortest, with only one chapter.</p>	<p>The book of Psalms is entirely made up of poetry or songs, but there is poetry throughout the Bible.</p> <p>The book of Lamentations is a collection of poems of mourning.</p> <p>Mary's song in Luke 1 is one of the most well known songs in the Bible.</p>

# CREATING WORSHIP

*Brainstorm worship design.*

**GATHERING**

**WORD**

**MEAL**

**SENDING**