

CROSS + GEN WORSHIP

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LIVING THE WORD

Narrative Lectionary



Exploring God's Story Together

CROSS + GEN WORSHIP

Worship Guide

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Lesson #2-1

GOD CREATES HUMANS

Genesis 2:4b-25



Key Verse:

Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.”
Genesis 2:18

The Point:

We are created to be partners in God’s work.

Making Connections:

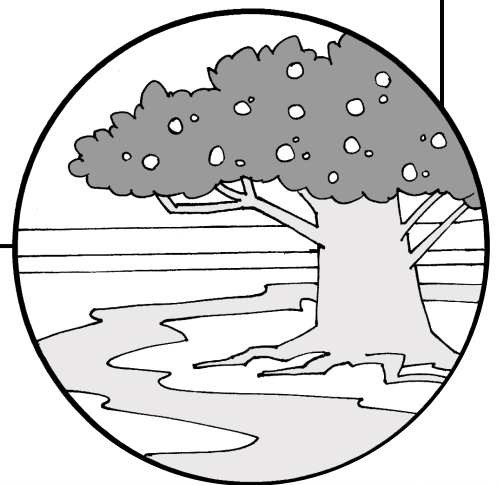
God Creates Family

Bible Nuts & Bolts:

What Is the Bible? (Old Testament)

Spiritual Practice:

Prayer



WORSHIP @ A GLANCE

WORSHIP ELEMENT

SUPPLIES

GATHERING

WELCOMING TIME: KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOR

10 MIN. † None

ANNUAL SONG: WE AND GOD ARE ONE BIG FAMILY

5 MIN. † Bulletin insert (found at end of guide)

OPENING PRAYER

5 MIN. † None

CONFESSION

5 MIN. † None

UNIT SONG: DOWN FROM HEAVEN

5 MIN. † Bulletin insert (found at end of guide)

WORD

**MAKING CONNECTIONS:
BIBLE STORY LINE-UP**

Arrange Bible characters in order.

10 MIN. † Bibles
† Index cards
† Pen or marker
† Optional: mural paper

**LEARNING THE STORY:
THE CREATION**

God created all things to be in relationship.

15 MIN. † Bibles
† Paper
† Markers or crayons
† Optional: mural paper and markers

**LIVING THE STORY:
CREATION LITANY**

Create a group prayer.

10 MIN. † Paper
† Pens or pencils

WORSHIP @ A GLANCE

MEAL

OFFERING

10 MIN. † Strips of paper
† Pens or pencils

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

10 MIN. † Cross or Bible
† Plant
† Stuffed animal
† Globe

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

2 MIN. † None

SENDING

CLOSING PRAYER

2 MIN. † None

BLESSING

2 MIN. † None

AT HOME

1 MIN. † Sharing God's Story @ Home



LIVING THE WORD

*Exploring God's Story Together
Narrative Lectionary, Year 2*

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 narrative of this season's readings reveals a God who is focused on relationship. Today's lesson presents a God who desires humans to be in relationship with God, with one another, and with creation. In the coming weeks, we will learn rich stories that present the promises, struggles, and joys of being in relationship, and allow us to experience the complexity of interaction, both human and divine.

Story Summary:

God Creates Humans

Today begins the Narrative Lectionary year. We will start at the very beginning—or at least at the very beginning, part two. The story of creation is first told in Genesis 1:1–2:4a. The narrative told in Genesis 2:4b-25 gives a different perspective on creation, told in light of the creation of humanity. This version is all about the creation of relationship. God gave the first human the task of caring for (being in relationship with) the garden, and then set out to create a partner for him. We read of the creation of all manner of animals, none of which was the best partner for the human. Finally, God created for the man a human partner, one of the same flesh, to spend life with him. God presented the man with his limits, and laid out the expectation that he should never eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Even humans living in paradise had limitations, which reminds us that God places expectations on our lives, and expects our obedience.

The Point

We are created to be partners in God's work.

This text presents a beautiful description of the garden that God planted and over which God

gave responsibility to humankind. The first tasks in creation, it seems, were to create harmony between land, water, plant, animal, and humans. Our inward focus may be what breaks the harmony, but God's capacity for love and drive to be in relationship with us allows that harmony to be reestablished time and time again. The first human was given responsibility to name and care for the garden and the animals. As descendants of this first person, we are given responsibility to carry on with God's plan for global relationship.

Bible Nuts & Bolts:

What Is the Bible? (Old Testament)

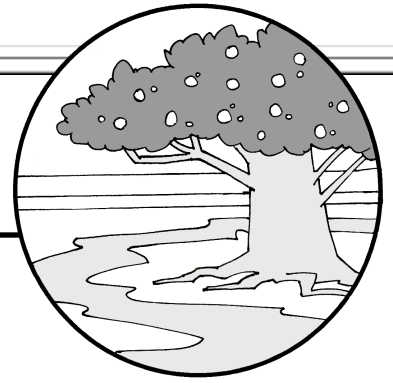
The Bible is a well-known book that has been read and interpreted throughout history. The biblical narrative contains many different stories that have different characters and plot lines. Though these stories may be different, they all have one theme in common—these stories tell us about God and about our lives as humans. The Bible is a collection of stories that tell us more about the relationship humanity has with God, and about the relationships that we have with each other. Two versions of the creation story begin this great narrative.

Spiritual Practice: Prayer

All that exists is God's creation, but it is our responsibility to care for creation. Does this make you feel powerful? Does it make you anxious? When we think about the amazing scope of God's creation, we respond in awe and wonder. This response can take many creative forms, but each response is a prayer praising and thanking God for the gift of creation.



WORSHIP PLAN



GATHERING

Cross+Generational Worship will look different in each different setting. Some congregations may worship in stationary seating, such as pews. Others may have a more flexible space. These suggestions are offered with these diverse settings in mind. The times indicated are just estimates, and you can take more or less time as you see fit. Feel free to adapt each element to fit your setting, remembering that the more you can engage the principles of Cross+Generational Ministry, the more vibrant and effective your worship can be.

WELCOMING TIME: KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOR (10 MINUTES)

You will need:

- † Nothing

During worship:

- 1. Greet the people around you. Introduce yourself to anyone you do not know. Discuss the following questions with the people around you, but try to include someone you did not come with to worship. Remember to listen to everyone and give everyone a chance to tell their story.**
 - Who lives in your home?
 - Who do you see almost every day?
 - Who do you look forward to seeing every day?
 - Are there any animals you look forward to seeing every day?
 - Are there any natural sights you pass by daily?
- 2. Our story today is about creation. God created the earth, the land, sea, plants, animals, and humans. And God created us to be in relationship with each other. We will read about God's creation today, and talk about what that means for how we act with each other and with the earth.**

ANNUAL SONG (5 MINUTES)

Sing the annual theme song “We and God Are One Big Family.” Music formatted for bulletin inserts is found at the end of this worship guide.

OPENING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Invite children to come forward to help with this prayer. Line them up in the front of your worship space so that you can walk easily along the line with a microphone.

I want each of you to think of one of your favorite animals. When I say our opening prayer, I am going to give you a chance to make the sound of and act like your animal. Does everyone have an animal in mind? It is okay if there are repeats.

Let’s pray: God, we thank you today for creation. We thank you for this amazing planet, for the earth and sky, the waters and trees. We thank you for all of the gifts that you have given us on this earth. We thank you especially for animals, such as... *(walk down the line of children and allow them to make their animal noise into a microphone)*. God, you charge us to care for all of creation. Help us to be good caretakers of all that you have entrusted to us. Amen.

CONFESSION (5 MINUTES)

Leader: Lord God, creator of the universe, you made earth and all its creatures. You made the stars, sun, moon, rivers, and trees. You made the animals, and gave them into our care. Sometimes we fall short of your expectations of us and our care of your creation. For this we confess. *(Silence.)* Hear the confessions we offer you aloud or in our silence. For our neglect of your creation... *(invite worshippers to add petitions of personal or communal sin).*

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: For our unwillingness to protect those weaker than us...

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: For the times that we wander alone and leave your community...

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: For the times that we disobey...

All: Lord, have mercy. *(Silence.)*

Leader: Hear the good news: by the power of Christ, your sins are forgiven and you are free to live in love, serve with compassion, and worship in community.

All: Amen.

UNIT SONG (5 MINUTES)

Sing the unit theme song “Down from Heaven Came.” Music formatted for bulletin inserts is found at the end of this worship guide.

WORD

MAKING CONNECTIONS: BIBLE STORY LINE-UP (10 MINUTES)

Arrange Bible characters in order.

You will need:

- † Bibles
- † Index cards
- † Pen or marker
- † Optional: mural paper

Before worship:

1. Make one set of index cards for each small group or section with each of the following names: Abraham, Ruth, Jacob, David, Elijah, and Moses.
2. If you are worshipping in a setting with pews, create one large set using mural paper and lead the activity as a large group. Shuffle the “cards” up front and solicit responses from the whole group.

During worship:

1. **This fall we will read stories of people who lived out God’s calling for their lives through the relationships they had with God and with other people. What stories do you know about any of the people on the cards on your table (or up front)? Share these with your small group (or the people around you). Please give everyone an opportunity to participate.**
2. Read the names out loud and encourage large group discussion. Ask for responses from members of each generation present.
3. **The stories of God’s people are found throughout the Bible. Each of these people are main characters in a story we will explore in the next several weeks. Using your Bibles to help you, place the cards in the order that their stories appear in the Bible.** *[Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Ruth, David, Elijah.]*
4. Review the order of the stories and ask for a few people to share whose stories they are most interested to learn.

LEARNING THE STORY: THE CREATION (15 MINUTES)

God created all things to be in relationship.

You will need:

- † Bibles
- † Paper
- † Markers or crayons
- † Optional: mural paper and markers

Before worship:

1. If you choose to do a mural instead of individual drawings, post mural paper in various locations around the worship area.
2. This can be done in family groups, small groups, or in a more formal worship setting. Either have groups read or have the lesson read to them.

During worship:

1. Invite small groups to read the lesson together or to listen while it is read.
2. Regardless of how the lesson is read the first time, read it aloud to the entire congregation a second time, and have worshippers sketch what they imagine the scene described in verses 8-14 to have looked like. Have them share their drawings with those around them.
3. Discussion questions:
 - **What trees and plants would have been in this garden? If we were all there, what jobs would we each have had in tending to the garden?**
 - **How would tending the garden be easier and more fruitful if done with other people? What would be more difficult?**
 - **God gave the garden to the human, but set a strict limit. What was that limit?** [*The human was not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.*]
 - **Why do you think God set this limit?**
 - **Why did God create the animals and, eventually, the woman?** [*Because it is not good for the man to be alone, God set about to create for him a partner.*]
 - **Why does God prefer us to be in relationship and community? Is this easy or difficult for you?**
 - **What kinds of relationships do we have with animals? With rivers and plants?**

LIVING THE STORY: CREATION LITANY (10 MINUTES)

Create a group prayer.

You will need:

- † Paper
- † Pens or pencils

During worship:

1. **God created the earth and planted a garden for the first humans to tend. God created livestock, birds, and wild animals. For God’s creative power and loving attention to our needs, we offer praise. Let’s create a litany of praise to show our gratitude and joy for God’s creation. A litany is a series of prayers that each are met with a repeated response.**
2. Assign each group or section of the congregation a category on which to base their petition: plants, rivers, livestock, birds, wild animals, human companionship, rules and limitations.
3. If you are worshipping in a setting with pews, designate a category for each section and ask worshippers to simply call out words or short phrases as the leader offers the petitions. For example, the leader can say, “For the (rivers, animals, etc.) of the world...” The section that is assigned that particular category calls out their words and phrases, and then the leader finishes the petition with “...we give you praise.” The entire congregation can respond with “Praise to the God of creation!”
4. If you are in a flexible setting or are around tables, have small groups create the entire petition. Each group should compose in whatever way they would like: prose, poetry, lists, or even sung verse. Remind them to solicit (but not demand) a response from each group member. When the groups have had some time, the leader can point to each group in turn to share their petitions.

MEAL

OFFERING (10 MINUTES)

The offering is a great time to engage all ages. Giving is a discipline that is both important and easy to teach. Preparing and placing an offering in the plate is participatory, kinesthetic, and visual. You can order special envelopes for young worshippers or have them decorate plain envelopes according to the day's theme.

You will need:

- † Strips of paper
- † Pens or pencils

Designate a portion of your offering, or take a special offering, for a care of creation organization, or have participants offer slips of paper in which they make a specific promise to care for creation or build relationships with those around them. Pre-readers may be invited to draw an image of their promise. This element may be expanded, with quiet music playing in the background, while worshippers take time to write or draw their offerings.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE: (10 MINUTES)

Invite volunteers to come forward to hold props to cue the prayer petitions. After each petition, allow participants to offer their prayers silently or out loud:

Lord God, today we pray for your creation. We pray for:

Our church. Volunteer holds up a cross or Bible.

Our families. Two volunteers hug or hold hands.

The earth. Hold up a plant.

Animals. Hold up a stuffed animal.

Our world, for care of creation and peace among people. Hold up a globe.

Upon all these things, we ask your blessing, God. Amen.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER (2 MINUTES)

Blessed are you, Lord God, creator of the universe; of earth, stars, sky, and waters; of trees and plants and animals. You created humanity and entrusted us with the care of the earth. In the fullness of time, you sent your Son to redeem a fallen world, to bring us back into balance, and to restore relationships and make us whole. We remember the community that gathered on the night in which he was betrayed...

COMMUNION (OPTIONAL)

One way to reinforce the connections amongst the community, and our responsibility to each other, is by having the congregation serve communion to each other. This can be done while the congregation is at their seats. It is helpful to have a communion assistant to hold the wine while people offer the bread, and to help the bread and wine move smoothly from one row, section, or table to another.

SENDING

CLOSING PRAYER (2 MINUTES)

Encourage participants to hold hands with those next to them, connecting the entire congregation. Begin and end the prayer, but leave enough silence in the middle for people to participate. You can remind worshippers that even if two people pray at once or someone cannot be heard, God hears all our prayers.

Loving God, thank you for the amazing glory of your creation. Today we especially thank you for... *(invite participants to add their prayers)*. **Thank you for land, water, plants, animals, and for each other. Help us to each recognize the value of our relationships, and to see your work in the world. In your name we pray. Amen.**



BLESSING (2 MINUTES)

Invite worshippers to turn to the people on either side of them, make the sign of the cross on their hand or forehead with permission, and repeat the following: **God created you for community.**

AT HOME (1 MINUTE)

If your congregation is using the “Sharing God’s Story @ Home” insert, remember to hand them out before they leave worship.

This week:

- ✝ Think about one action you can do to build up a relationship with someone you encounter in your daily life.
- ✝ Create your own Litany of Praise thanking God for the wonders you encounter during the week.
- ✝ Read through Genesis 1 and 2 with your family or with a prayer partner, and think about how you can care for God’s creation.



Living the Word
Narrative Lectionary, Year 2

Annual Song
2023-2024



Living the Word
Narrative Lectionary, Year 2

Unit 1: God Creates Family
Unit 2: Responding to God's Love

We and God Are One Big Family

J. L. Salt(er)

You and me, as you will see, are all part of God's fam - i - ly. We
 join our hands and live so joy - ful - ly!
 God made us to live in peace. That's how the world was meant to be. Lord,
 let us live in love for all to see!

Down from Heaven Came

J. L. Salt(er)

Down from heav - en came the voice of God,
 Help us be your peo - ple filled with joy.
 "Let there be a world of peo - ple who
 Hear our prayers, O Lord, and make us new.
 know that they're my child - ren: ev - ry - one!" Lord,
 Thank you for the bless - ings and the love that
 please know that we love you, too!
 came down from the moun - tain top.