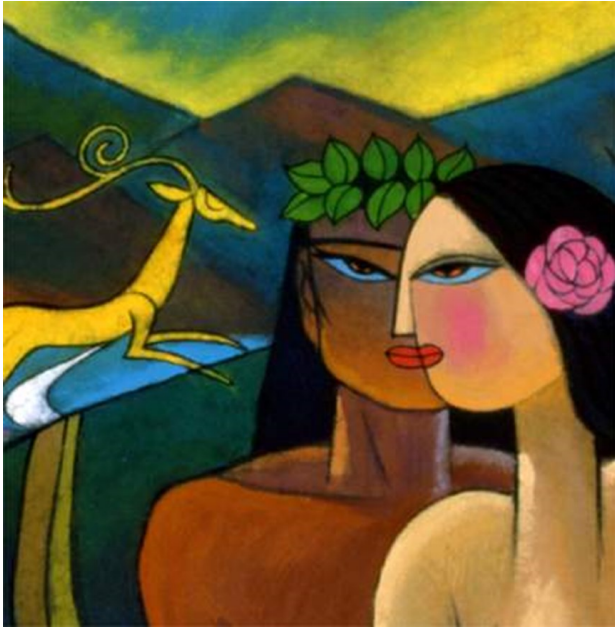


Creation and Fall



“O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet.”

– PSALM 8:1a, 3-6

FOCUS THIS WEEK

God is the Creator. Everything we have, are, and will one day be is a trust from God. All of created life belongs to God. Rebellion against God’s good and gracious plan for my life and this creation brings shame, blame, and pain to me and the world. So what? Everything we have comes from a good and gracious God, and human sin brought misery, isolation, pain, and death into the picture. Ask the question, “How will this affect my life? My actions? How will it affect the way I treat God? The way I treat myself?” Consider this essential question: “I have sinned, and God is good. God gave me everything, even forgiveness in Jesus Christ. So what now?”



SHARE highs and lows to set the stage for a more open and meaningful discussion.



READ and highlight the theme verse, Psalm 8:1a, 3-5, then connect it to one or more of the following texts:

- Genesis 1
- Genesis 3:1-19
- Psalm 19:1-2



TALK about how the Bible reading might relate to today’s highs and lows. Supplement your discussion with some of the following.

A. IMAGES IN WORDS AND ART

Take a look at the theme art. What do you see in the art? Ask youth where they are in the art. How might the art apply to the theme verse?

B. ROLE PLAY

1. A friend says, “You can’t be a scientist and still believe in God.” Respond.
2. A friend has been caught shoplifting for the third time and wants to run away from their troubles and from home. What do you say to your friend?

C. QUESTIONS TO PONDER

1. **What are the first orders God gives to people in the Bible? What is our role in creation, according to Genesis 1 and 2? Affirm all thoughtful answers. We are to care for creation.**
2. **What are five things going on in the world today that you see as against God's will? What can you do about them? Affirm all thoughtful answers.**
3. **Can one be a Christian and still believe in The Big Bang or Darwinian Evolution? These are good and big questions. Affirm all thoughtful responses. The Big Bang theory suggests that the universe suddenly exploded, creating all matter. If this is "how" God did it when God said, "Let there be light," then great! God is still the ultimate source of all that is, seen and unseen. Stephen Hawking, perhaps the most brilliant contemporary physicist, says, "My theories can tell you how it happened. I can't tell you why." Also, is time to us the same as time to God? Evolution simply means change. Things do change. Pure Darwinian Evolution suggests that all life evolved from a single strand of amino acids that happened to come together in a primordial pool. Some would say a Christian can't believe this. Others would argue that it fits in with what we see between day five and day six of creation. Affirm the students for their thoughtful answers, but leave the discussion open.**
4. **Why do you think God allows evil to exist? If you were God, what would you do about it? Accept and affirm all thoughtful answers, then share your own beliefs. God could program us to do everything right and, thus, stop all the terrible problems of sin in the world. Ask students if they ever had a favorite doll or toy as a child—one they wished could come alive? Hug and kiss a toy all you want, but it can never love you back. Maybe God didn't want a toy. Maybe God wanted a being who could love back. For that possibility to exist, a choice also had to exist. Having the choice to love means the choice to hate. God gave us freedom to love, and with it came the freedom to reject God.**

D. QUOTATIONS

People see God every day, they just don't recognize God.
– Pearl Bailey

Humans are the only kind of varmints that set their own trap, bait it, and step in it. – John Steinbeck

I don't pretend to understand the universe—it's a great deal bigger than I am... People ought to be modester.
– Thomas Carlyle

We are never deceived. We deceive ourselves.
– Goethe

F. WRAP UP Summarize the event with your group, assigning someone to share what you learned at closing.

- One new thing we learned today
- One thing we already knew that is worth repeating
- One thing we would like to know more about
- The highest highs and lowest lows which our group will bring to the closing prayer



PRAY

for one another. Praise and thank God for your highs. Ask the Holy Spirit to be with you in your lows. Include your friend's highs and lows in your prayers. Invite youth to think of something going on in the world that calls for prayer.



BLESS

one another by name. Trace a cross on each hand or forehead. Look them in the eyes and give them a smile. Ask for their blessing as well!