

Review: *From your experience at the opening Cornerstone meeting, share something that helped build your faith.*

NOTE: The title of this book in English, "Genesis," comes from the Jewish Scriptures and is the opening word, *Bereshit*, "in the beginning." *New American Bible Revised Edition (NABRE)*

NOTE: Genesis begins with two accounts of creation. The first (1:1-2:4) is grand in scope and majestic in tone; it stresses the Lordship of God over all things and describes his actions as an almighty voice that brings the world into being. The second (2:5-25) is narrower in focus and more intimate in description. Including both accounts makes for a balanced depiction of God's transcendence and immanence in relation to the world. *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible Genesis*

DAY ONE

Read Genesis 1:1-5

1. The first account of creation begins with a statement that affirmed the fundamental belief in one and only one God as Creator and not multiple pagan gods historically worshiped by ancient cultures. Complete the phrases below from verses 1-2 that describe the world prior to the time God gave it shape and form. (Good memory verse)

In the beginning

the heavens and the earth

and darkness

NOTE: The first creation account affirms a cosmic event at the beginning of history. It offers neither a literal nor a scientific description of how the world was made; rather, it asserts theological truths about God and creation in a symbolic way (CCC 337). One of the main teachings of Genesis is that the entire universe owes its existence to God as Creator and Lord. *Ignatius Study Bible*

2. What creative power do you think was at work as "a wind from God swept over the face of the waters" (end of verse 2)?

3a. On the first day of creation, out of darkness, the first thing God made was light. This act of creation began when, "...God said, 'Let there be light.'" (verse 3) The words, "God said" are repeated frequently in this chapter. What does this emphasis on the creative power of God's word mean to you?

b. Read [John 1:1-5](#) and record one verse that reminds you of the creation of light in Genesis.

4. How did God view his creation of light and what did he then do according to verse 4?

5a. In verse 5 we read that, "God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night." The organization of time, with its recurring cycles of daylight and darkness is his gift on the first day. Why do you think that is an important step in the creation process?

b. Reflecting on the custom of ancient Israel of a day beginning at sunset that still continues today, what are we told occurred at the end of verse 5?

6. CONNECTION: On the first day of creation, God called light into existence by separating darkness and ordering the light and darkness into day and night. Light was the first thing that God saw was good. Jesus has the power to bring light where there is only darkness. How have you seen what the light of faith or love can do in the life of another to overcome the darkness?

[Job 12:22](#) tells us that God "brings deep darkness to light." Begin your prayer today asking him to reveal his light in the life of someone you know.

DAY TWO

Read Genesis 1:6-10

7. We begin today on the second day of creation. Complete the following phrases that show what happened on this day according to the Word of God (verses 6-7).

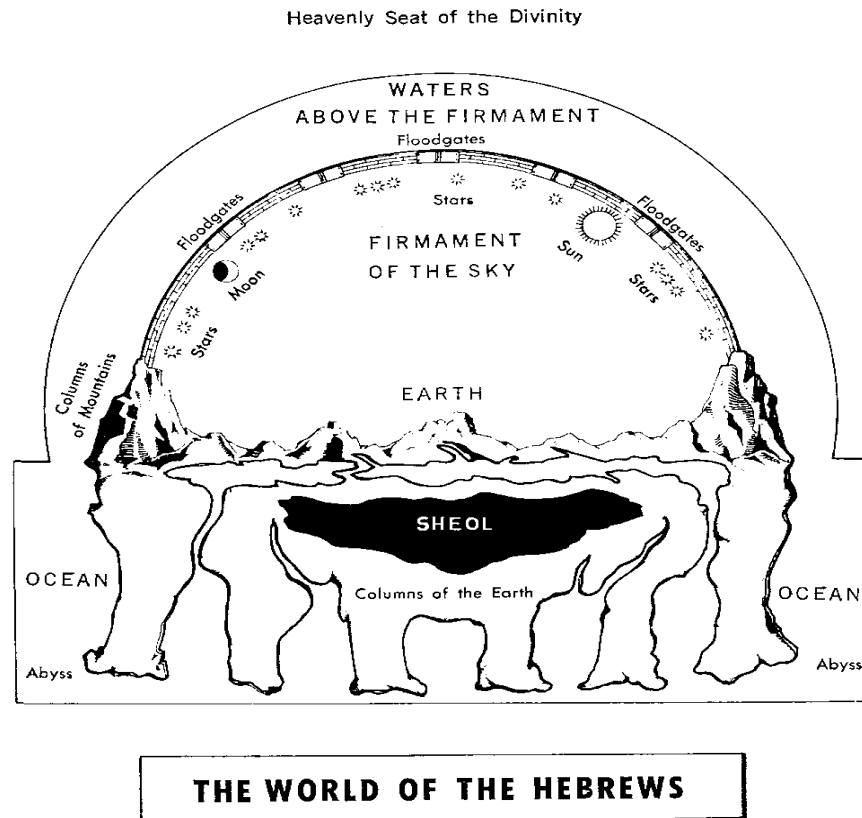
Let there be

and let it separate

So God made the dome

from the waters that

NOTE: The ancient Israelites imagined the dome or firmament as a hammered bowl placed over the world like a roof or dome, holding up waters above the earth and separating them from the seas below. To the unaided senses, the sky looks like an enormous vault, and its blueness may have suggested the idea of an ocean suspended overhead. Modern readers must recognize that the author's world view is one of his cultural assumptions, not one of his inspired assumptions. The Church, following the wisdom of St. Augustine, maintains that the Bible does not contain any properly scientific teaching about the nature of the physical universe. *Ignatius Study Bible*



8. We might find the above picture confusing, but it represents how the ancient people understood their universe. Scientific discovery constantly changes what is known about the physical world. Give an example from your life of how a modern discovery challenged or affirmed your belief in God.

9. The final sentence of verse 7, "And it was so," will be repeated throughout this chapter. What do these words mean to you and why do you think they deserve emphasis?

10. According to the beginning of verse 8, God called the dome, Sky. The sky is another of God's gifts to his people. Select one of the following passages and record what was written about the sky.

Psalm 85:11

Ecclesiasticus 43:1(Sirach)

Isaiah 40:22

11a. In verse 8 we read that "there was evening and there was morning, the second day." In verse 9 the third day of creation began. As God spoke, the waters under the sky were gathered together into one place. What was the result?

NOTE: One of the first acts of creation is to harness the waters by assigning them to specific places in the cosmos. This attention to water highlights its necessity for life and the need to protect and preserve it in the arid ancient climate. *New Collegeville Bible Commentary, Cook*

b. In verse 10 God again named his creations. He called the dry land, Earth, and the waters that were gathered together, Seas. "And God saw that it was good." This declaration is another repeated phrase in the creation story. Why do you think repetition is used so much in this chapter?

12. CONNECTION: On the second day, God separated the waters of the earth by creating a dome that he called the Sky. Filled with beautiful clouds, soaring birds, changing colors in a seemingly infinite expanse, it is no wonder that we look to the sky as the location of the heavens. Recall a time when the splendor of the sky filled you with a special grace and you experienced closeness with God and nature. Share this experience with your group.

In your prayer time today, spend some time meditating on the beauty of the sky above and be reminded that it is a wondrous creation of God. Let those thoughts lead you into prayer.

DAY THREE
Read Genesis 1:11-15

13. We continue today with the third day of creation. In verses 11-12, God bestowed on the earth vegetation and directed the earth to yield plants, seeds, trees and fruit of every kind. "And it was so." Why was this an important step in the creation process?

14. In verse 13 we are told that, "there was evening and there was morning, the third day." What do you find interesting about the repetition of this phrase that counts the days of creation throughout this chapter?

15. Though God created "light" on the first day, it was not until the fourth day that he said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky." Why did he do this according to verse 14?

16a. One reason God may have created the "lights in the sky" is to help mark the seasons and celebrations of annual festivals. Choose one of the following verses and summarize what you find that relates to this verse.

Exodus 23:14-15

Leviticus 23:4-6

b. What holidays do we celebrate today that are scheduled on a seasonal date and not on a calendar date?

17. What additional reason is given for these lights in verse 15 that are followed by the repeating phrase, "And it was so?"

18. CONNECTION: Twice in today's lesson God looked at his creation and expressed his approval. He saw that the Earth, Seas and all vegetation covering the land were good. How does God's approval of his creation challenge us to examine our responsibility for the world around us? Record some specific ideas and insights to share with your group.

Pope Francis has written, "Each community can take from the bounty of the earth whatever it needs for subsistence, but it also has the duty to protect the earth and ensure its fruitfulness for coming generations." (*Laudato Si*) Begin your prayer today asking the Holy Spirit to show you how to better protect and care for the earth.

DAY FOUR

Read Genesis 1:16-23

19a. Today we continue to study creation on the fourth day. According to verse 16, God made two great lights as well as the stars. For what were the great lights created?

NOTE: Israel was forbidden to worship these luminaries which were deified as gods in the Near Eastern world. This may explain why the sun and moon are not mentioned by name in the creation account for the Hebrew terms resemble the names of the Semitic sun and moon gods. *Ignatius Study Bible*

b. Select one of the following and, using your own words, describe the beauty and power of God's creation.

Sun

Moon

Stars

20. From verses 17-19, summarize God's work of creation on the fourth day.

21. On the fifth day, we see once again that the Creator was a God of harmony and order. It was not until he created a perfect environment, which could sustain life, that he began to fill it with living creatures. Record what God said below from verse 20.

Let the waters bring forth

and let birds fly above the earth

22. God then created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, swims and flies and saw that it was good (verse 21). References to a sea monster myth are found in several Old Testament passages. Look up one of the following verses and record what you find about these mythical creatures referred to as the serpent or Leviathan.

Job 26:13

Psalm 74:13-14

Isaiah 27:1

23. Before the fifth day drew to a close (verse 23), God performed an additional creative act and blessed what he created saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." (verse 22) Why do you think this was the first time God blessed his creation?

24. CONNECTION: Today we read that God's creation received a blessing to be "fruitful and multiply." This is the first of many blessings we will read about in Holy Scripture and they are an important part of our faith tradition. The Catechism teaches that "every baptized person is called to be a 'blessing' and to bless." (CCC 1669) Blessings may take many forms including prayers, scripture, songs or rituals. Do you have a special blessing that you perform or that took place with loved ones and is significant for you? If so, share it with your group.

Write a blessing prayer today for a special need or loved one in your life.

DAY FIVE

Read Genesis 1:24-26

25. As this lesson begins, the sixth day of creation has dawned. According to verse 24, God commanded the earth to bring forth living creatures. Complete the phrases below from verse 25 that show how this came into being.

God made the wild animals of the earth

and everything that creeps

26. God saw that his creation of every living creature was good (end of verse 25), but he was not yet done. As the sixth day continued, he began a new creation. Record the words that describe how it was to be made (beginning of verse 26). (Good memory verse)

NOTE: The words of plurality in verse 26 may derive from customs in the ancient Near East, and sometimes in the Bible, in which God was imagined as presiding over an assembly of heavenly beings who deliberated about matters on earth (1Kings 22:19; Isaiah 6:8). *NABRE*

27. What does it mean to you that humankind was made in the "image" and "likeness" of God? Refer to the Commentary, pages 9-10, for some ideas.

28. Since humankind was created in the image and likeness of God, you might expect that humanity would have some characteristics of God. Choose one of God's traits and briefly comment how it could be manifested in a man or a woman.

29. According to the end of verse 26, God gave humankind dominion over the creatures he created. Record a definition for the word *dominion* and give a brief example of how it applies today to our role as humans living on the earth.

NOTE: The first chapter of Genesis describes a six-day process during which the Creator's word, "Let there be..." brings different elements of the universe into being. The first three days witness the creation of the environment, and the second three days parallel the first, with the creation of creatures to live in the different spaces in the environment. We can chart this parallel as follows:

| Days 1-3 | Days 4-6 |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| Light, Day and Night | Greater Light, Lesser Light, Stars |
| Water and Sky | Fish and Birds |
| Land and Sea, Plants | Earth Creatures, Animal and Humans |

Collegeville

30. CONNECTION: "And God saw that it was good." Repeatedly, as God looked upon his creation, he saw goodness in all his works. Under the authority of his Word, all things came into being in this world in perfect harmony from the very beginning of time. Focus upon the goodness you see in your life and around you each day. Try also to look for goodness in the difficulties and challenges you face in your life and in the world. Share with your group an example of how the goodness that surrounds you has led you to gratitude and a deeper spirituality.

In Romans 8:28 St. Paul reminds us, "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God." Let thoughts of the goodness in your life lead you into prayer.

DAY SIX

Read Genesis 1:27-31

31. In today's lesson that completes the sixth day of creation, we learn more about the creation of humankind: "...in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." (verse 27) What is significant to you about the simultaneous creation of male and female?

NOTE: When most Christians reflect upon the Creation accounts in Genesis, they tend to mix them together and most would say that Adam was created first then Eve from his rib. This would be correct if you were asking about the *second* Creation account; however, that is not the case with the first account in which the Divine Author makes it clear that, "male and female, he created them." *The Book of Genesis Commentary, Lawrence DiPaolo, Jr., Ph.D.*

32. According to the beginning of verse 28, the first thing God did after creating humankind was to bless them. Complete the phrases below that list the commands God gave the male and female in his blessing.

Be fruitful and multiply

have dominion

over the birds of the air

33. The command to “be fruitful and multiply” may not apply to all people in the physical sense. Give an example of how to respect God’s directive in an alternative and creative way.

34. On the sixth day, after the creation of living creatures and humankind, God was not yet finished. According to verses 29-30, he provided everything they needed to survive on the earth by giving them every green plant for food. What do you notice about the world that God created (see [Isaiah 11:6-9](#))?

35. At the end of the sixth day, the Creator saw everything that he had made and pronounced his creation "very good." (verse 31) Why do you think he added the word *very* this time and what do we learn about God in these words?

36. CONNECTION: We have been assured repeatedly in the first chapter of Genesis of the goodness and order of God’s creation and our role in it. This calls us to be mindful in our interactions with others and aware that we are in the presence of someone created in the image of God who is filled with his goodness. Can you think of an example of how this perspective might change how you relate to others? Does it affect how you live your life? Share some thoughts with your group

Read and record [Psalm 104:24](#). Spend your prayer time praising God for the goodness of his creation.

Read pages 1-4 (Introduction) and pages 5-11 (Lesson 1) in *The Book of Genesis Commentary* by Lawrence DiPaolo, Jr., Ph.D. The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study acknowledges that scripture quotations in this study are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible: Copyright © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

©Copyright 2021. The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study

thecornerstonescripturestudy.org