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God Makes the World

Genesis 1:1–2:3 · Bud · Ages 9–12

Genesis opens before anything existed. There was no space, no time, no matter. There was only God. Then God began to create, and he did it simply by speaking. He didn't need tools or materials. He made everything from nothing, freely and out of love.

At first the world is described as dark, watery and empty. Over the next days, God brings order and fills it with life.

Look at the pattern. On days one to three, God makes spaces: light and dark, then sky and sea, then dry land with its plants. On days four to six, God fills those spaces: sun, moon and stars for the day and night; fish and birds for the sea and sky; animals and people for the land. Nothing happens by accident. Each thing exists because God wants it to.

People come last, like the high point of the whole story. God makes human beings, male and female, to resemble him in a way nothing else does. The Church calls this being made in God's image. It means we can think, choose freely, love, and know God as a friend. Man and woman share that dignity equally. God also gives them a job: to care for the earth and its creatures, the way a good gardener tends a garden that belongs to someone else.

When God finishes, he looks over everything and is deeply pleased. Creation is not a mistake or a mess. It is a gift.

Then comes the seventh day. God stops, rests and blesses that day. God doesn't get tired. His rest shows that creation is complete, and it invites people to stop and enjoy God and his gifts. Later, God made the Sabbath a sign of his covenant, his lasting promise-bond with Israel (Ex 31:16–17).

Christians keep Sunday, the day Jesus rose, as the new day of rest and worship.

Here's how this story points to Jesus. The Gospel of John deliberately opens the way Genesis does. It tells us that God's Word was there before creation and that everything was made through him. Then it reveals who that Word is: God's Son, who became a man, Jesus (Jn 1:1–3, 14). The one who made the stars was later born in Bethlehem.

Talk about it

1. What pattern do you notice between days one to three and days four to six?
2. What does it mean that people are made in God's image, and how should that change the way we treat others?
3. Genesis and the Gospel of John both begin before the world existed. What does John add about how the world was made?

Key verse: Gen 1:27. Look it up in your Bible.