

CURRICULUM DAY BY DAY

The Ponder Point: God Is Creator

Remember Verse: I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14a).

Bible Lesson: Creation: Adam and Eve (Genesis 1—3).

Today Is: The Big God Story—Come as you are!

ACTIVITY	TIME	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
Prayer and Preparation Time	60 minutes	Site Leader
Registration/Check-in	20 minutes	Registration Leader
Anticipate	20 minutes	Anticipate/Create Leader
Connect//Games	15 minutes	Game Leader
Connect//Small Groups	10 minutes	All Leaders
Announcements	5 minutes	Storyteller
Celebrate//Large Group	20 minutes	Storyteller (and optional Worship Leader)
Respond//Small Groups	15 minutes	All Leaders
Create	20 minutes	Anticipate/Create Leader
Bible Learning Games	15 minutes	Game Leader
Snack Break	10 minutes	All Leaders
Game Time	20 minutes	Game Leader
Bless and Dismiss	10 minutes	Storyteller
Team Debrief	30 minutes	Site Leader

SUPPLY LIST

Registration/Check-in

- Child Registration Forms
- Daily Sign-in Sheets
- Nametags

Anticipate

- Markers
- 3 poster boards
- Sticky notes

Connect//Games

- Small candies
- Bowl

Connect//Small Groups

- Rubber chickens (or balls, stuffed animals, etc.), 1 per small group

Celebrate//Large Group

- Poster board
- Markers
- Bibles
- Storytelling videos (optional)
- Music (optional)

Respond//Small Groups

- The Big God Story Flip Books
- Pens and pencils

Create

- Canvas drawstring backpacks
- Markers

Bible Learning Games

- Poster board
- Markers

Snack Break

- Cheese crackers
- Juice boxes

Game Time

- 2 six-foot ropes (or string, ribbon, etc.)
- 4 cones or cups, rocks, tape, etc.

Bless and Dismiss

- Daily take-home papers

INSPIRE

Lord of all creation
Of water, earth, and sky
The heavens are Your tabernacle
Glory to the Lord on high.

God of wonders, beyond our galaxy
You are holy, holy.
The universe declares Your majesty
You are holy, holy.

("God of Wonders," written by Steve Hindalong and Marc Byrd)

"Cristi! Cristi!" I could hear my name being called from some distant location. I was in my happy place in the backyard. As I lay in the grass, all that seemed to matter were the white clouds in the blue sky, the breeze, and the tops of the eucalyptus trees dancing above me. Here, I could dream. Here, I could listen to the trees, their leaves making a whistling sound each time the wind blew through their branches as if they were talking to one another. One moment I was blissfully unaware of the pressures of being four years old, and the next I was being called inside to take a bath.

This has been a regular rhythm of my life. I am most happy, recharged, peace-filled, and alive when I'm surrounded by nature. The sound and feel of rushing water, wild winds, and a terrific rainstorm spark something within my soul! It's in these moments that I fall easily into conversation with my Creator. I can see Him in His creation. I can feel His presence, and it's easiest for me to hear Him when I'm surrounded by the things His hands made.

God has revealed Himself through His creation, but this is just the beginning of the story between God and mankind. He didn't leave us with the revelation of Himself through His creation, but has given us so much more by revealing Himself in His Word, His incarnation, and His Spirit—all so we may know Him personally and become a part of His big story. God is the Creator.



Cristi Thomas
GO BIG! Team

EQUIP

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters” (Genesis 1:1–2). In Hebrew, the word for “hover” is the word *raw-khaf*. This word describes God hovering over what He will create like a mother eagle hovers over her eaglets. Just imagine God in the beginning, staring down at His creation with the fierce love of a parent. This deep love is the genesis of the relationship between God and His creation.

Genesis chapter one is an account of creation from the beginning of the universe to the creation of mankind in God’s image. It describes God as Elohim—which can be understood as “powerful”—the one who created the universe out of nothing through His infinite power. The second chapter describes God as Yahweh (I AM WHO I AM), focusing on the detail of Adam and Eve’s beginnings. It was Yahweh who breathed into Adam’s nostrils and formed him from the dust.

“And God saw that it was good” (Genesis 1). Augustine noted that we should understand that this sentence does not signify joy over an unexpected good, but an approval of the work. Through each phase of His creation process, God would create and then look upon His work with approval. After He created mankind in His image, He blessed them: male and female. “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground’” (Genesis 1:28). He formed the world and everything in it. He then blessed Adam and Eve and commissioned them to replicate life and nurture it, maintaining order among the inhabitants of the earth.

SUPPORT

Read Genesis 1—2:14 without pausing at any phrase or verse. After you’ve read it through once, read it again. This time note any phrase, verse, or section that stands out to you. Once you’ve finished, revisit the verses you noted in your second reading. As you read, pause over each section or verse and ask God to speak—in His deep and indescribable voice—to your heart the things He wants you to ponder about who He is. Ask Him if He has anything to say to you about your part in this love story between God and His creation. Allow yourself the time and quiet to linger in this space with the Lord.

Only to sit and think of God,
Oh what a joy it is!
To think the thought, to breathe the Name
Earth has no higher bliss.

Frederick W. Faber, quoted in *The Knowledge of the Holy*

May your life be transformed and infused with the depth and power of His Holy Spirit. And may your interaction with the children be filled with the passion that comes from knowing that you have been given a unique part to play in this story that began with creation.

DAY 1

Anticipate is an energizing time for parents and kids to start engaging with the material that will be presented in the lesson. It is intentionally designed to spark curiosity and cultivate a sense of awe and wonder about God. Encourage parents to stay and participate in this time if they are dropping off their children.

ANTICIPATE: OUR PLACE IN THE BIG GOD STORY

20 minutes

Materials

- markers
- 3 poster boards
- sticky notes

Make a timeline as a visual representation of The Big God Story and our place in it. When kids, parents, and leaders see their name on the timeline, they may have a greater realization of how their lives are connected to the story that God has been weaving throughout history.

Tape poster boards along the length of a wall—or a sidewalk if you are outdoors and don't have walls—and draw a line through the middle. Plot events by drawing tick marks or by attaching sticky notes to the wall. Begin the timeline with "Creation" and end it with "Our Future with Jesus." (The timeline will not be to scale.) Reserve space on the timeline for kids and parents to plot their names and birthdays.

- Plot major Bible people on the timeline in order of where they appear in The Big God Story.
- Examples in order: Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon, Esther, John the Baptist, Jesus, Peter, apostle Paul.
- Plot interesting or wacky events or inventions by searching online.
Suggestions: The first flushing toilet—1775; the telephone—1874; bubble gum—1906; Kool-Aid—1927; Nintendo Wii—2006.

CONNECT//GAMES: GETTING TO KNOW YOU

15 minutes

Materials

- small candies
- bowls

Instructions

A great way to have your kids get to know each other is for them to share facts and details about who they are. This game is a creative and tasty way for kids to get to know each other.

- Pour a large bag of small candies into a bowl.
- Have the kids sit or stand in a giant circle.
- Have a leader pour a little bit of candy into each kid's hand (different amounts for each kid).
- Before the kids start eating the candy, have them count how many pieces they got.
- For every piece of candy in their hand, have them share a fact about who they are. For instance, if a kid has five candies, then he must think of five silly or fun facts to tell about himself—like he loves soccer, hates chocolate, has three dogs, etc.
- Go around the circle and have each kid share. Include the leaders as well. This is a fun way for the kids to get to know their leaders for the week!

The Connect games are designed for kids to have fun and connect with the other kids and leaders at VBS. Use this time to be silly and help new kids feel comfortable by inviting them into The Big God Story.

The Small Group Time is designed for kids to laugh, play, and form new relationships in a small group environment. Each day, they will engage in traditions and answer fun questions within their small group. All leaders, even if they are functioning in other roles, can lead small groups. Each leader should have a group of five to seven children. Sites may consider dividing the small groups by age when possible. Consider grouping ages 4 to 6, 7 to 9, and 10 to 12. However, at smaller sites or sites where ages are not so evenly divided, it can actually be a fun environment to have kids of varying ages learning and playing together.

CONNECT: SMALL GROUPS

10 minutes

Materials

- rubber chicken

As you are getting started today, take about 10 minutes to connect with the kids in your small group. Find a place to sit in a circle. This time will be important for kids to get to know you as well as you getting to know them.

- Show the kids the rubber chicken. Explain that each morning, your small group will get a chance to pass around this toy and get to know each other a little better. If you'd like, your group can decide on a name for your rubber chicken!
- There will be a Connect Question each day for you to ask the kids. Pass the rubber chicken around the group as each person answers the question.
- Connect Question: What's the coolest and weirdest animal you've ever heard of or seen?
- After everyone answers the Connect Question, you can also ask them to share highs and lows. Explain that "highs" are things they are excited about in their life right now; "lows" are the hard things they are experiencing. This is a great way for you to learn ways to pray for your kids.

(Take every opportunity to pray with your kids. If a kid shares a "low" that needs prayer, take a moment to stop and pray as a group.)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

5 minutes

- Talk about the Missions Project. The Registration Leader is the point person for all things related to this project. The Registration Leader can relay any announcements to the Storyteller to announce or the Registration Leader can do the announcement on her own.
- **During the week, we will have a chance to show our funny and crazy side by dressing up. Tomorrow (Tuesday) will be Backwards Dress-up Day!** When the kids come, they will get a chance to show off how they dressed up in a backwards way. Maybe you can do a mini fashion show to highlight the participants. You can give out little prizes to those who dress up.
- Tell kids about the Family Remember & Celebrate Event on Friday. Encourage the kids to invite their families.

This is a time for kids to hear about the Missions Project for the week and also hear about daily traditions and instructions on dress-up days. Kids can also be reminded about the Family Remember & Celebrate Event at the end of the week.

Storytelling and Worship Time is where kids get to be a part of the community of God's family. They will connect with God and others as they experience The Big God Story. If sites have the accommodations, they can make use of the storytelling videos during this time; however, having a live Storyteller is preferable. If a site has a Worship Leader, this would be the time where he would lead the children in worship through music. Deciding whether a site will have a time of singing is not merely a matter of having or not having a leader to function in that role. Whether or not the particular children at that site would be ready to participate in singing should also be taken into consideration. For unchurched kids, singing and dancing in a big group is probably something they are not used to. If a site is going to have a time of worship, it might be best, at least at the beginning of the week, to keep the songs light and fun.

CELEBRATE: LARGE GROUP

10 minutes

Scripture: Genesis 1—3

The Ponder Point: God Is Creator

Materials

- Bible
- poster board
- markers

Teaching Visuals

During the teaching, there will be moments to stop and allow the kids to interact with the teaching by drawing a picture to help them remember that part of the story. You can even have adult volunteers come up. Try to guide the kids to think of key things that they should remember. As the kids come up to help draw, encourage them to do a quick sketch and then return to their seat. The goal would be that by the end of the week, you'd look back on this storyboard of The Big God Story and be able to tell it again using only the pictures drawn. Take one piece of poster board and draw lines to divide it into six boxes. (You will not fill all six boxes every day.) Each day you will use a new piece of poster board, so that by the end, you should have a storyboard of the entire week, drawn by the kids!

Storytelling

It may be hard to imagine, but close your eyes and picture the earth. Imagine that you are out in space and looking down at our planet. You see the clouds and the blue oceans that cover most of the earth. It's breathtaking, and you look at it in amazement. But let's just stop and think about something else. What was here before all of this existed?

There was nothing.

No earth. No stars. No sun.

It was dark and silent.

But God was there.

This is where the epic story begins—The Big God Story (hold up the Bible). **The Bible is God's Word, so we know that everything in it is true and is spoken from God. The Bible tells us all about who God is and His story, and how we are a part of it even today. Like any good story, we must always start at the beginning** (flip to Genesis).

READ GENESIS 1:1–2.

In the very beginning before the earth existed, there was nothing. Then in an instant God said, "Let there be light," and (snap fingers) there was light. But God didn't stop there. He began creating things out of nothing. He created the air, the waters, and the land. He created the plants that covered the land. He thought of colorful flowers and tall trees. He spoke the word, and they all existed. Can you believe it? All He had to do was say a word and the waters were filled with fish and other sea life. He created the sky, the stars, the moon, and the sun. He filled the sky with birds. He spoke the word and created animals of every shape and size to live on the land. And God saw that all of this was good.

BOX 1

(Box #1 Creation: Pause and ask a kid volunteer to come up and draw a picture in the first box that will help the group remember this part of the story. Encourage the rest of the group to give input on what should be drawn.)

But there was one more thing to create. Does anyone know what that last thing was?

READ GENESIS 2:7.

Man. God created man in His own image. This means that man was unique from all the rest of creation. God named the man Adam. God then created a partner for Adam, and her name was Eve. When God created man and woman, He looked over all creation and saw that it was not just good, it was very good! Both Adam and Eve lived in the garden that God had planted for them. This garden was beautiful and perfect. Raise your hand if you've ever seen a beautiful garden. What are some things that you may see in a garden?

BOX 2

(Box #2 Adam and Eve in the garden: Pause and ask a kid volunteer to come up and draw a picture in the second box that will help the group remember this part of the story. Encourage the rest of the group to give input on what should be drawn.)

The garden Adam and Eve lived in had everything they needed. God even made Adam in charge of naming all of the animals. What a fun job! What are some animals that could have been there for Adam to name?

It must have been so fun for Adam and Eve to live in that garden! Every day, they would walk and talk with God in the garden. Can you imagine that? But in the garden there was one tree that was different from all the rest. God told them that if they ate from this one tree, they would die—meaning they would no longer live forever with Him in the beautiful garden.

That doesn't sound too hard to do, right? Just don't eat from that one tree! However, one day a snake approached Eve. The snake convinced Eve that it would be okay for her to eat the fruit from the tree. He lied and convinced her not to listen to what God had said. Sadly, Eve listened to the snake instead of God. She ate some of the fruit from the tree, and she shared it with Adam.

Choosing to disobey God brought something new into the garden. Can anyone guess what it was? It was sin. Sin is when you think, say, or do something that displeases God. Instantly, Adam and Eve knew that they had made the wrong choice. They were ashamed of what they had done. They didn't want God to know that they had disobeyed Him.

Because of their sin and disobedience, Adam and Eve had to leave the beautiful garden where they walked and talked with God. God loved Adam and Eve—He created them! But they made a choice to disobey Him, so they had to leave the garden. They must have been so sad as they walked away.

BOX 3

(Box #3 Sin: Pause and ask a kid volunteer to come up and draw a picture in the third box that will help the group remember this part of the story. This one can be tricky. If the children are having problems knowing what to draw, suggest a broken heart or a piece of fruit.)

But God had a plan to restore the broken relationship between Him and mankind. He promised that one day He would send a Savior to restore our relationship so we wouldn't be separated from God forever; He had a plan!

So mankind began to wait for God to fulfill His promise to send a Savior.

BOX 4

(Box #4 Promise of a Savior: Pause and ask a kid volunteer to come up and draw a picture in the fourth box that will help the group remember this part of the story. A good visual for this part of the story is a heart.)

But in the meantime, Adam and Eve had children. And their children had children. Ten generations passed and, sadly, more and more people chose to disobey God. God was very saddened by this. Eventually, the world became so full of sin that there was only one man and his family who still obeyed God. His name was Noah. God was pleased with Noah, and He asked Noah to begin building a huge boat called an ark. God told Noah that He was going to send a flood that would cover the face of the earth in order to put an end to the sin.

So Noah began building the ark, faithfully following God's instructions. Can you imagine what the people in Noah's town were thinking? They probably thought he had gone absolutely crazy! Imagine if your dad started building a gigantic boat in your front yard. Wouldn't your neighbors be confused? When he was finished, he gathered two of each kind of animal—male and female—and brought them onto the ark. He brought seven of some special kinds of animals.

For almost an entire year, the earth was covered with water. Once it dried up, Noah, his family, and all of the creatures left the ark and stepped onto dry ground once again. God promised Noah that He would never again destroy the world in another flood. God put a rainbow in the sky as a reminder of the promise He made to Noah to never flood the earth again.

BOX 5

(Box #5 Noah: Pause and ask a kid volunteer to come up and draw a picture in the fifth box that will help the group remember this part of the story.)

Whenever we see a rainbow, we can remember too! We can remember that God loves us. We can remember that He created us and wants to be with us—even though we sin and make poor choices. God did not forget His promise to send a Savior. By saving Noah and his family, God was making a way for the Savior He had promised to send. God had a plan! So much more happened after those floodwaters dried out, but we will have to wait until tomorrow to find out what came next in The Big God Story!

Respond is a time for children to engage in relationship, reflect on the lesson, and consider how God might want to transform their lives. During Respond, help kids to have spiritual conversations, reflect on God in their life, and explore what it means to have a personal relationship with Jesus.

RESPOND: SMALL GROUPS

15 minutes

Younger Small Group

- What is your favorite part of creation?
- What do you think it was like to live in the garden?
- How do you think God felt when Adam and Eve chose to disobey Him?
- How does it make you feel to know that God loves you and created you?

Older Small Group

- What do you think is one of the most beautiful or unique things God created?
- What do you think it was like to walk with God in the garden?
- How do you think God felt when Adam and Eve disobeyed Him and ate from the tree?
- Why do you think Adam and Eve disobeyed God?
- When was a time you felt sorry for doing something wrong, like Adam and Eve did in the garden?
- What did God promise to do to fix the broken relationship between Himself and His creation?
- How do you think Noah felt when God sent a flood to cover the earth?
- Why did God spare Noah and his family from the flood?
- How did God keep His promise to His people?

THE BIG GOD STORY FLIP BOOK

Materials

- The Big God Story Flip Books
- pens and pencils

After discussing the above questions, pass out the Flip Books to each kid. This is a chance for your group to discuss and review the Ponder Point and Remember Verse for the day. Have the kids write the Ponder Point for today at the top of the page. (For younger kids, you may consider writing it out and having them copy it off of your paper.) Then have the kids take some time to write or draw their answer to the question in their booklet.

The Ponder Point: God Is Creator

Flip Book Day 1: Today we heard about how God created the whole world. God called His creation good, and after He made mankind, He called his creation very good! Adam and Eve chose to disobey God when they sinned in the garden, but we learned that God made a promise to save us from sin.

In your book, draw a picture of yourself in the box. Draw the outfit that you are wearing today and make it look just like you. Each time you look at the picture, remember that God created you. God made you special and unique, and He loves you very much!

If you have time, you can ask the kids if they'd like to share what they drew in their books. Once everyone is done, collect the booklets and keep them for tomorrow.

DAY 1

This is a time designed for kids to work individually or together to create a physical expression or remembrance of what they have learned during their time together.

CREATE: BACKPACKS

20 minutes

Materials

- canvas drawstring backpacks
- markers

Today we heard how God created everything—even us! He knew us and loved us before we were even born. He knows how many hairs are on our heads, making us each unique and special. As we saw in the story, God is a creative God. He made all kinds of cool stuff! Today, we get a chance to be creative too.

- Help the kids think of things they can draw or write on the bag to help them remember that God created everything.
- Each kid should have a canvas bag and a few markers.
- Have the kids write their names on them.
- Encourage the kids to bring their backpacks each day, so that they can be used to carry their Creates and supplies home.

BIBLE LEARNING GAMES: STAND UP, SIT DOWN

Materials

15 minutes

- Remember Verse written on poster board

Remember Verse: I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14a).

Each day, we will get a chance to learn and memorize small portions of God's Word. With all the activities of each day, sometimes we forget the things that God tells us in His Word. So when we memorize these verses, it helps us store away the truths that God wants us to remember in our hearts and minds. Today we heard how God, in all His power and creativity, made everything! God took great care and love when He made each one of us. This verse will help us remember that God created each one of us.

Practice

- Point to the poster board with the verse on it.
- Explain key words in the verse and say it together a few times.
- As a group, decide a motion or action for each word. (For example: For "I," point to yourself.)
- Recite the verse with actions a few times.
- Once the group has said the verse several times, split the kids into two teams.

Play

- Team 1 will stand and say the first word while doing the action.
- Team 2 will stand and say the next word while doing the action.
- Each team goes back and forth standing and saying the next word while doing the action.
- Recite the verse with the actions several times, trying to go faster and louder each time.
- Add a twist: Team 1 stands and says the first word. Team 2 stands and says the first word, then adds the second word. Team 1 will stand and say the first two words, then add the third word, and so on.

These games are a fun and interactive time to learn the Remember Verse for each day.

SNACK BREAK

10 minutes

Snack Break is a time to find some shade and take a break. Spend some time eating together and building relationships with one another. Spontaneous conversations can be some of the best conversations all week. Depending on the budget, snacks can be handled in different ways. You might consider providing a small snack on the first day, and then asking parents to send their children with their own personal snacks the following days. This ensures that children with special dietary needs or restrictions are getting an appropriate snack, and it can also keep costs down. Another option to consider is asking parents to bring a grouping of something. For example, one parent might bring two dozen juice boxes and another parent might provide a big box of cheese crackers. If the church will not be providing a daily snack, make use of one of these options instead of feeling pressured to front the cost and provide the snacks yourself.

GAME TIME: JUMP THE RIVER

20 minutes

Game Time is designed to close out the day by playing together. It allows the kids to have fun in addition to building greater relationships with the kids and families in their community. If parents begin to arrive around this time, invite them to join in your closing Game Time.

Materials

- 2 six-foot ropes (or string, ribbon, etc.)
- 4 cones (or cups, rocks, tape, etc.)

Instructions

- Place the two ropes parallel to each other, a few inches apart, in the middle of an assigned area on the surface of your choice (grass, sand, concrete).
- Place two cones on either side of the ropes, approximately 20 to 30 feet out, to mark where the kids line up to start their run.
- Line the kids up at the cones at each end.
- Have one volunteer at the “river” monitoring each jump and one volunteer at the starting line, giving the green light for each child to begin.
- Each child will run, one at a time, “jump the river,” and then line up on the other side to wait for everyone else to finish their turn.
- Once every child has made an attempt, widen the “river” by one to two inches and start over.
- If you land in the river, you’re out!
- Keep widening the river until only one child remains; whoever makes it completely across without landing in the river wins!

BLESS AND DISMISS

10 minutes

This is a time to pray over the kids before they leave. A blessing can be a portion of Scripture, a prayer of commission, or a word of encouragement. This will close the group's time together each day and will serve as the dismissal for the children. During dismissal remember to:

- Have parents sign their children out.
- Hand out the daily take-home papers.
- Build relationships and get to know the parents.
- Remind everyone to come dressed for the next day's theme.
- Remind kids to bring their money for the Missions Project.
- Remind everyone about the Family Remember & Celebrate Event at the end of the week.

As kids are blessed, tell them that they have the opportunity to also be a blessing to others. Encourage them to freely share with others the joy and love they have received from God. Encourage the kids to hold their hands in front of them, palms up. This posture is meant to symbolize a willingness of heart to respond to God's Holy Spirit to receive what God has for them. Invite them to remain in this posture as you bless them.

○ Read this Scripture and blessing over them:

PSALM 139:13-14

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

May you always know your Creator and realize that He loved you even before you were born. Out of all of creation—the trees, the ocean, the animals, even something as beautiful as a sunset—you are His favorite creation!

DAILY TEAM DEBRIEF

30 minutes

Team Debrief is a time for the site's team to come together to talk about the day. Site leaders should allow time for storytelling, affirmation, prayer, celebration, and planning for the next day. It's important for Site Leaders to be intentional with this time to build community within the team and to thank God for what He is doing at the site.