

THE THREAD

DISCOVERING THE THREAD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGH THE BIG-PICTURE STORY OF THE BIBLE

PART 1: BEGINNINGS

LESSON 2 || CREATION

SESSION SNAPSHOT

NARRATIVE PASSAGE: Genesis 1-Genesis 2:3

GOSPEL FOCUS: John 1:1-5

STUDENT TAKEAWAYS:

- Understand the unique place humans have in the overall story of God's creation.
- Understand Jesus' role in creation.
- Grasp the great value they have as people created by God.

OVERVIEW:

The grand narrative of Scripture starts with Creation. In the creation account, we see God as the ultimate Creator, crafting the beauty of the Universe out of nothing. Genesis 1 shows God creating the stars, the oceans, plants, animals, and human beings. And the Bible makes it very clear: humankind has a unique and treasured place in God's story. In this lesson, your students will encounter God as the Creator of all things, discover Jesus' role in creation, and grasp that God values them deeply.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO:

Each *Thread* lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These short videos are designed to help you grasp the lesson's main point as you prepare to teach.



BIBLE BACKGROUND

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide the basic context for the passages you'll be studying.

- **WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "CONTEXT"?** In every YM360 Bible study lesson, we encourage teachers to help students know *who* wrote a particular book, *when* it was written, and *why* it was written.
- **WHY TEACH CONTEXT?** Grasping the big-picture view of God's story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they're studying.

GENESIS

- *Author:* While there's no specific author named within the text, Moses is the accepted author for Genesis, with some editing and additions done after his death (such as the account of his death!).

- *Time frame:* It's difficult to establish with any certainty a date for the completion of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible). Most of the material originated from Moses himself, and depending on the date of the Exodus (which is also not known for sure), the date for the writing of Genesis is estimated to be sometime in the 1400s or 1200s BC.
- *Purpose:* Genesis details the earliest history of our world, including creation and Adam and Eve's fall. It also focuses on the emergence of Israel, not only as God's people but as the group that God would work through to bring redemption to the world.

JOHN

- *Author:* The Gospel of John was written by John the Apostle, son of Zebedee. A fisherman who left his trade to follow Jesus, John also penned the Book of Revelation and the three New Testament letters that bear his name.
- *Time frame:* The Gospel of John was probably written between 85 and 95 AD. John most likely wrote his gospel in Ephesus before he was exiled to Patmos.
- *Purpose:* John's stated purpose for writing this book can be found in John 20:30-31, the last two verses in his gospel: "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." John's goal seems to have been to clearly communicate a full theology of Jesus as the Son of God, the promised Messiah.

LESSON PLAN

The Lesson Plan contains four elements:

- **GETTING STARTED**– An introductory activity designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- **THE STORY**– A section featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- **THE THREAD**– A special emphasis where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing throughout the story of the Bible.
- **WRAPPING UP**– An application-focused segment helping teenagers ask the question, “How am I impacted by what I learned today”?

GETTING STARTED

- *Goal:* To get students thinking about the idea of undeserved or extreme kindness.
- *Set-Up:* You’re going to summarize a story of some awesome teenagers doing a really cool thing for their classmate.

YOU’LL NEED TO ACCESS THE STORY HERE:

- <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/sergio-peralta-robotic-hand-tennessee-hendersonville-high-school/>
- There is an accompanying video you can show instead of summarizing the article if you wish.

FIRST, explain to your students that you are going to share with them a story of an incredible act of kindness by a group of high schoolers. Then, summarize the story using the article from the link above or by playing the video.

THEN, ask for students’ responses. You may want to use questions similar to the following:

- What are your initial thoughts on this story?
- Is there anyone in your life for whom you might do something like this?
- How do you think these students got to this point? In other words, what kind of impact must the people in their lives have had on them for them to make this type of decision?

NEXT, lead students in a brief discussion about what it means to show someone kindness. Ask something like:

- What is the nicest thing someone has ever done for you?
- Can you describe how it made you feel?
- When we do something kind or loving for someone, especially if they don’t expect or deserve it, it makes a big impact on their lives. Why do you think that is?

FINALLY, explain to students that in this lesson, you’ll look at a particularly awesome example of love and kindness. Explain that this example is easy to miss because it comes in the middle of the account of God creating the Universe. But this act of kindness and love foreshadows the love and grace God would show people from creation until now. Transition to your time of Bible study by saying something like:

- We’re about to begin a series of looking at the big-picture story of the Bible. It starts with God creating all things. And in this account, we’ll see evidence of God’s great love for us, a love that we see coursing through the narrative of the Bible. Let’s get started.

TRANSITION TO THE STORY.

THE STORY

- *Goal:* To see humans' unique role in the overall story of God's creation.
- *Set-Up:* Students will need a Bible or a Bible app. You may find that a dry-erase board is helpful for jotting down some notes, but it's not essential.

FIRST, explain that in this lesson, you'll be looking at the creation account from Genesis chapter 1. If you'd like, use the Connecting The Dots section below to review or fill in the gaps between your last lesson and this one.

CONNECTING THE DOTS

As you teach The Thread, there will naturally be some gaps in the story. This is an optional way for you to fill in some of the gaps between the last lesson you taught and this one. Use it to review or connect the dots to the events surrounding the passage.

- The creation account is the beginning of God's story in the Bible.
- The cool thing is that creation wasn't the beginning of God! No one created God. He has always existed.
- While people have different theories about when the creation account actually happened, the most important thing is Who did the creating.

Inform students that you're going to be reading pretty much the entire story of God creating the Universe, our world, and everything in it. Explain that this account is long, but it reads like the beginning of a really cool story...because it is! Let students know that you'll work together to cover the passage, and as such, you will need some volunteers to help you read.

THEN, start by having students turn to Genesis 1. While they're finding it, provide some of the basic context for the book using the Bible Background. Then, read or have a student read verses 1-2. **Say something like:**

- **Look at the first four words of God's story: "In the beginning, God..." Before there was anything else, God "was." God has always been. God didn't begin with creation, but the story He wants us to know did. Let's keep going.**

Read or have a student read verses 3-13. When you're finished, work with students to come up with a list of what God created up to verse 13. Your list will look something like this:

- **DAY 1:** Light, day, night.
- **DAY 2:** An "expanse" that separated the "water under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse."
 - This expanse is referred to as "heaven" or "sky," depending on your translation.
- **DAY 3:** The earth and the seas, vegetation, plants, and fruit trees.

If you want, record your list on a dry-erase board.

Ask students if they pick up on what is being repeated after each day. (*Answer:* God looked at what He created, and it was good.) *Make sure they note this, as it will be important later on.*

NEXT, **continue reading from verses 14-23**, stopping after each day to note what God created on that respective day. Your answers will be as follows:

- **DAY 4:** Stars, sun, moon.
- **DAY 5:** Creatures in the ocean & birds.

Again, make sure students are picking up on the continued emphasis on God's pronouncement of His satisfaction with what He created. Make sure students catch the repetition of, "And God saw that it was good." Lead students in a brief discussion that will set your focus on God creating humankind. **Ask something like:**

- When you read about God creating the world out of nothing, what thoughts come to mind?
o *Answers will vary.*
- How does reading the story of God creating the world impact or affect the way you think about God? What does it reveal to you about His character or nature?
o *Answers will vary.*
- What is missing so far from the story up to this point? In other words, what has God not created yet?
o *Answer:* People. But explain that you're about to hone in on this very aspect of creation.

Read verses 24-25. Say something like:

- It's the sixth day, and God has just made the animals, insects, and everything that creeps on the ground. And once again, God says that what He has made was good. So far, there's been a pattern to what God has done. We're about to see God create humans. You're going to immediately notice that this pattern shifts. Pay attention to the meaningful differences in how this passage describes what God makes and His response to it.

THEN, read or have a student read verses 26-31. When you're finished, lead students in a brief discussion. Ask questions similar to the following:

- Right out of the gate in verse 26, we notice how the creation of people is described differently than the way the rest of creation has been described to this point. Can you pick out the difference? (HINT: It's re-stated in verse 27.)
o *Answer:* Only humans were created in God's image.
- What do you think it means that humans were created in God's image?
o *Answers will vary.* Allow students to voice their thoughts. Help them see that this means a variety of things. It speaks to humankind's task of being God's representatives on this earth. It also speaks to the fact that humans alone have some of God's characteristics, such as the ability to reason, love, form languages, and express ourselves creatively through music, art, and so on. Whatever the specific distinctions, it's safe to say that God made us unique among all His creation in this way. No other aspect of the universe is made in His image.
- What role did God give to humankind?
o *Answer:* To fill the earth with other people and to rule over the earth as representatives of God.
- There is another distinct difference between the account of God creating people and the account of God creating everything else. Do you see it? (HINT: It's in verse 31.)
o *Answer:* When God saw the work He had done in making humans, He didn't just think it was good. He said it was very good!
- What does this tell you about how God views us, His children?
o *Answers will vary.* But it speaks to our value and His love and affection toward us.

FINALLY, finish this section by reading Genesis 2:1-3. Explain to students that what they have just read is the beginning of God's story. Say something like:

- In a sense, what we've just read is the prologue, the foreword, the part at the beginning that sets up the rest of the narrative. We've set out to learn the big-picture story of the Bible but also to trace how we see the Gospel woven through this story. And we're going to do that for the first time today.

IF STUDENTS DON'T HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, TRANSITION INTO THE THREAD AND TAKE YOUR FIRST CRACK AT SEEING WHERE WE SEE THE CONNECTION OF THE GOSPEL TO THE BIG-PICTURE NARRATIVE OF SCRIPTURE.

THE THREAD

FIRST, instruct students to turn to John 1. If you choose, while they are finding the Gospel of John, provide them with some brief context for the book by referencing the Bible Background. When you've finished, read or have a student read John 1:1-5, then lead students in a discussion. **Ask:**

- **First things first: What is John talking about when he says, “the Word”?**
 - *Answer:* Explain to students that John was referring to Jesus. John referred to Jesus this way to show that Jesus was the fullest, most complete revelation of who God is. God's Word had always been a powerful concept to God's people, and John is now saying, “Here is the living, breathing Word of God. Jesus is God's message to the world in human flesh.”
- **What do you notice immediately about John 1 and Genesis 1?**
 - *Answer:* They both start, “In the beginning....”
- **The Bible often gives us clues as to what is important. What do you think John was doing with these first two verses?**
 - *Answer:* John wanted to connect Jesus with God in the minds of his audience. He wanted to show his readers that Jesus is God by saying that He was with God and was God at the very beginning, a.k.a. creation.

THEN, instruct your students to think for a moment about the creation account they have just read. Lead them to recall how they thought about God and His involvement in shaping the world and creating humans. Then, ask them to let it sink in that Jesus was there creating humankind in the beginning! **Say something like:**

- **Hopefully, the image of Jesus as your Savior dying on the cross for your sins and raising to life to break death's power over us is a familiar one. You may be used to thinking of Jesus in this way. But how often do you think of Jesus, God's Son, being there at creation? John says something in verse 3 that's even more powerful than Jesus just being present. John said that Jesus created all things! As God, Jesus was actively shaping the Universe, creating the world, and giving life to people.**

FINALLY, ask your students this final question:

- **Jesus created human beings. It was by His decision that we exist. And then, thousands and thousands of years later, He would come and die for us, taking away the penalty for our sins. How does this fact change the way you see the cross?**
 - *Answers will vary.* But help students see how this shows the incredible love Jesus has for us, and the great lengths Jesus would go to save us, His unique creation, from our sins.

IF YOUR STUDENTS DON'T HAVE ANY MORE QUESTIONS, TRANSITION INTO THE WRAPPING UP SECTION.

WRAPPING UP

- *Goal:* To see that no matter what the world tells them, they have great value as people created by God.
- *Set-Up:* You may find that a dry-erase board is helpful for jotting down some of your students' responses.

FIRST, explain that one of the many things we can take from this lesson is that we have tremendous value in God's eyes. **Say something like:**

- **We've learned today the special emphasis God Himself gave to the creation of people. God made us alone in His image and proclaimed us very good. Plus, we saw how Jesus would go to the cross to save the brokenness of the very people He created. As much as anything, this should tell you that you are precious in God's eyes. But if we're honest, we don't always feel that way, do we?**

THEN, ask students for examples of how the world sometimes makes teenagers feel “less than valuable.” If students struggle with coming up with examples, you may want to consider such influences as bullying, social media, and even marketing and advertising that can make teenagers feel inadequate about their talents or appearance.

NEXT, ask how teenagers themselves can sometimes contribute to their own devaluing. **Ask something like:**

- **What are examples of things that make us feel bad about ourselves? How do we sometimes contribute to our feelings of low self-worth?**

Allow students to answer, encouraging them to truly consider all the ways we can be made to have a low opinion of ourselves.

FINALLY, turn the corner on the conversation. Remind students that their worth is not determined by what the world thinks about them. **Say something like:**

- **You are valuable because God chose to make you. He didn't have to if He didn't want to. No one forced His hand. You're here on this earth because God wants you to be. Furthermore, you're made in His image! That's where your value comes from. And you are very good because Jesus died to make you good. You're holy in God's sight because Jesus took the filth of your sins upon Himself. Whenever we begin to doubt ourselves and our self-worth, remember that we are immensely valuable in God's eyes.**

ASK STUDENTS HOW THIS TRUTH CHANGES THE WAY THEY SEE THEMSELVES AND THEIR WORLD. ONCE STUDENTS HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO RESPOND, ASK IF ANYONE HAS ANY FURTHER THOUGHTS OR QUESTIONS. THEN, CLOSE YOUR BIBLE STUDY IN PRAYER.

- If you've purchased the corresponding devotional journal, remind students they'll be working through Week 1 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions and to give memorizing this week's verse their best shot.
- If you're utilizing the digital devotions included in the Thread curriculum, remind students how you'll be making them available, i.e., Instagram, Facebook, etc.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well that you want to share?
- Something that didn't work that you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns at feedback@youthministry360.com.