

U N I T O N E

The Beginnings of God's Plan

Lesson 1

Before the World—God

LESSON
1



BUILDING ON LAST WEEK'S BIBLE TRUTH: If you promote students in the fall, your students had two different lessons last week. Your third graders were led to think about worship. The fourth graders learned about serving the Lord. Today they'll think about who they worship and serve.

Overview

Scripture

Answering questions about God—*selected Scriptures*

Bible Truth

God is eternal, invisible, limitless, and yet known through His revelation.

Life Response Aim

To thank God for who He is.

Memory Verse

"Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

1 Timothy 1:17, KJV

"Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen." *1 Timothy 1:17, NIV*

FOCUS

Sharing Ideas about God

DISCOVER

Learning about God

RESPOND

Praising God for His Qualities

Materials

☐ Bible, pencils

Focus

☐ Crayons, paper

Discover

☐ *Bible Promises*, page 3

☐ Sheet 1, *Teaching Resources*

☐ OPTIONAL: Bible dictionary or other resources

Respond


☐ Sheet 3, *Teaching Resources*

☐ *Bible Promises*, page 4

Preparing Your Heart to Teach

- What is the first thing you remember learning about God?
- For many children, with and without religious training, God's existence is an accepted fact. They intuitively know He is "there." Our privilege as Christian teachers is helping them know that He is "here," that He loves them and wants them to love Him and receive His Son as their personal Saviour.
- As you prepare for this week, identify the significance in your own faith of the four attributes of God studied in this lesson. Then look for a way to share a personal insight about one of those attributes with your students.

Sharing Ideas about God


 Give each student a sheet of paper, and have a supply of crayons available. Ask each student to use the crayons to create a picture that shows a characteristic of God—His love, truth, kindness, mercy, for example.

• **When you think of God, what image and color come to mind?**

Clarify that you don't expect them to make a picture of God—it can't be done! Encourage them to express on the paper their sense of what God is like.

When your students finish, let each hold up and explain his or her picture. As they explain, write on the board what they say their pictures express about God's characteristics.

This activity will give you good insight into your students' concepts of God as you begin this unit. It will also arouse their interest in learning more about what God is like.

 To further stimulate their interest, raise the questions you'll be dealing with in the Bible study, and let your students give their answers.

- **Who created God?**
- **Has anyone ever seen God?**
- **Where is God?**
- **How can we know God?**

TRANSITION 'Let's find the answers to these questions in God's Word.

ENRICHMENT IDEAS

RESEARCH PROJECT

Before class, decorate a shoebox and cut a slit in the cover. Have students write down puzzling questions about God on pieces of paper and put the papers in the box. Later, post the questions on a board or on a wall above a shelf of reference books. Encourage students to look up answers during this unit.

SCIENCE LAB

Set up a simple lab with a magnifying glass, ruler, or microscope, for observation of natural materials such as leaves, seed pods, etc.; or show a segment of a Moody Science Film video.


- **What can we learn about God from the things He has made?**

HOME LINK

Encourage your Middlers' parents to research the school's science curriculum to discover what it is teaching about Creation. Identify for parents any books or Scriptures that will help them equip their children for this debate.



Learning about God

 As you raise each question give one or more students key Bible verses to look up and read, so your students can discover Bible answers for themselves.

This lesson contains some difficult concepts—but they are also important ones. So take time as you prepare this lesson and check each verse, considering ahead of time how to explain it. Write the questions identified in the subheads on the board to help your Middlers reinforce what they hear with what they see.

It's possible that some students may raise questions not specifically dealt with in this lesson. Plan to have several resource books in your classroom, such as Bible dictionaries. Try to have books written for this age group, or rewrite what you learn from adult-level resources so students can understand.

WHO CREATED GOD?

BIBLE LOOKUP: PSALM 90:2

• **What does this verse tell us about when God began?** Let students respond.

People of all ages wonder how God came into being. But God did not have a beginning—He always was. God existed before the world was created.

Ask students to read or recite the first words of the Bible.

"In the beginning God . . ." tells us that before there was ever an earth, or the solar system, or the universe, God was there. When the universe came into being, it was God who made it, so God had to be there before the universe was created.

BIBLE LOOKUP: PSALM 14:1

Some people say there is no God. How does this verse describe a person who says God doesn't exist? (The Bible calls that person a "fool.")

In the Hebrew language, the word fool doesn't describe a person who can't think. A fool is a person who doesn't want to believe in God, someone who chooses to rebel against God.

There's lots of evidence that God exists. If you found a watch lying on the ground, you'd never think that it just made itself. You'd be very sure that some intelligent person made it. The universe is like that watch, and so is our world. Everything works together like the finest watch anyone can create. The universe runs so

perfectly and predictably, it's more accurate than any watch or clock a person could make. This truth makes us aware that the universe couldn't have made itself. Your logical mind tells you that Someone must have made it—unless you absolutely refuse to believe in God.

HAS GOD EVER APPEARED TO ANYONE?

BIBLE LOOKUP: EXODUS 24:9-10

• **What special privilege did Moses and the others have?**

God showed Himself to Moses and the elders. They "saw" God as Spirit, and they clearly saw the rocks upon which God stood—these rocks looked like huge, brilliant sapphires. Moses wanted to see more; he begged to see the Lord in all His glory.

BIBLE LOOKUP: EXODUS 33:20

Moses asked God, "Show me Your glory." He wanted to see God as He really is. How did God answer Moses? (You can't see My face; no one can see God and live.)

God is just too splendid for human beings to be able to view Him. God told Moses that he would see God's goodness, kindness, and mercy in what God did.

But God was willing for Moses to see some of His glory. God told Moses to hide in a crack in the rock, and God sheltered him until God passed by. Then the Lord took His hand away and let Moses see His glory after He had passed by (vv. 21-23).

Looking at God's glory would be like looking at a solar eclipse. If we look directly at the sun during an eclipse, it will blind us. If we look at a dimmed reflection, we can get a glimpse of what's happening. So Moses saw a sort of dimmed reflection of God's glory, but not the full glory of God.

Then, thousands of years later, God came to earth and lived among people. With His glory hidden in a human body, He was known as Jesus Christ. In appearance, Jesus seemed to be an ordinary man; but Jesus actually hid His glory because people would be afraid to come near Him if His glory were showing.

Jesus also told His disciples that, in knowing Him, they knew what God is like and they would know God Himself (John 14:9-11).

WHERE IS GOD?

BIBLE LOOKUP: ISAIAH 57:15

According to this verse, where does God live? God lives both in a high, holy place (heaven) and with people who have a contrite and humble spirit.

Most people think of God as being in a particular place. Usually they talk of God as being “up” in heaven, or “out there” in space. If we look up at the stars at night we realize that the universe is enormous and very wonderful. But God is so great that even the universe can’t hold Him.

When the Bible says God dwells in a high, holy place it does mean that God is outside and beyond this universe. But God is Spirit, and He’s not located in just one spot. So God is also near each of us, as well as beyond this universe (see Jer. 23:23-24). Further, He lives in every believer (1 Cor. 6:19).

CAN WE KNOW GOD?

BIBLE LOOKUP: PSALM 19:1

• How do the heavens help us know God exists? Let students respond.

God communicates to everyone through the perfect universe He has created. As with the watch we talked about before, anyone who looks around at the amazing world we live in and thinks about the wonder of it at all knows that God exists.

We can’t know everything about God from nature—but we do know that God exists.



Bible Promises, page 3

BIBLE LOOKUP: JOHN 14:21, 31; 20:30-31

Jesus said that people who saw Him knew what the Father was like, because Jesus and the Father are One.

• What do these verses tell us about Jesus? (Jesus loves the Father and He will make His love known to us if we keep His commandments. Jesus did even more than was written about Him and what was written is so we can believe in Jesus as our Saviour.) **So we can know God today, if we trust Jesus and study the Bible to find out about Him.**



Have students complete the activities on page 3 of the student guide.



Use Sheet 1, Teaching Resources,

to make a bulletin board that summarizes what the students learn about beginnings. Add a summary statement to the board each week.



Sheet 1, Teaching Resources

ENRICHMENT IDEAS

ALPHABET RELAY ACTION GAME

Print each letter of the alphabet on separate cards; make two alphabets, one for each team—52 cards in all. Place the cards on a table and line up the teams several feet away. The first member of each team will run to the table, grab a card and show it, and each give a word that describes God beginning with the letter. You, the teacher, will have to say, “right” or “wrong.” The students who give words that are correct will keep the cards; the other students will put the card back on the table and run back to the starting line. You may want to prepare a list of words by which you can check the answers (answers will vary). When all students have participated, the team with the most cards is the winner.


MEMORY VERSE PARAPHRASE

Let children work in teams to paraphrase the memory verse, 1 Timothy 1:17, in words they would use to express this truth to a friend.

QUESTION/ANSWER STICK-UP


Help students summarize what they have learned about God through the Bible verse lookups by using Sheet 2, Teaching Resources. Discuss the questions and have a student print the answers on the blank stars.

Praising God for His Qualities


 To help your students consider why it's important that God is who He is, complete page 4 of the student guide. You might have students discuss the open-ended sentences, then have each write what he or she thinks is the best answer.



Bible Promises, page 4

 To help your students remember reasons to praise God for who He is, cut bookmarks from Sheet 3, *Teaching Resources*, for each student. Discuss them as time permits. Or let students read them, then tell which characteristic is most meaningful or helpful to them right now.

Provide laminating materials so students can cover their bookmarks for use in their Bibles, textbooks, or library books.

 Give students an opportunity to praise God in prayer. Have each one select a characteristic that is particularly meaningful to them now and express their appreciation in a sentence praise prayer.

AT HOME THIS WEEK

Point out the daily Bible readings in *Counselor*, and encourage your boys and girls to think about what God is like, and why this is important to them.

In the story, "God Moved the Elephant," a missionary family is trapped in the middle of an elephant herd as the family returns from an outing in the mountains. Your Middlers will enjoy discovering how God takes care of the family in this situation.

ENRICHMENT IDEAS

ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Have students role-play some situations in which they may have an opportunity to express their knowledge of God's characteristics, especially to people who don't know Him.

Ask volunteers to take each of the roles below; give them their opening lines on individual index cards. Ask others to volunteer their responses to the comments made by the first group, based on the key characteristics studied today.

The initial quotation below can be used to begin the dialogues. Let the students decide how to keep the discussion going.

- "If God created everything, then who created God?"
- "How can you believe in a God no one has ever seen?"
- "My religion says God is in everything—people, animals, trees, the water—so when we worship and care for those things, we are worshipping God."
- "God seems pretty far off and mysterious to me. How can anyone claim to know Him?"

Ask if any of your students have been challenged with other unbelieving statements, and how they responded.

WORSHIP IDEAS

MUSIC:

Begin teaching the hymn on page 30 of the student guide, "All Things in Heaven and Earth." Let this be your unit theme song for worship. Save verse 4 for Lesson 6.

SCRIPTURE:

Read Psalm 95:1-7a aloud to your students as they follow along in their own Bibles. Then assign a verse to each individual; if you have more than seven students, let some work in pairs. Instruct them to read their assigned verse silently to prepare for reading it aloud to the class (pairs should practice together quietly). Tell them to prepare to read it as if they are reading in front of the church service. Then have them sit in a circle and when their turn comes to read, stand and read their verse to the whole group. Tell them that in coming weeks they will do more with their verses.