



Creation

MEETING AIM

To discover that God made the world and everything in it.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Genesis 1:1-2:4

BACKGROUND

As many people are now meeting in person, this service is designed to be used with a congregation in a church. However, with some adaptation, you could use it on Zoom or similar.

The very start of the Bible tells the story of God creating the world. The majestic beauty of the poetry of these verses shows God's love and care for the universe and places humans at the pinnacle of creation. This session won't focus on the mechanics, rather the grandeur and beauty of creation and God's power in creating it.

WELCOME

5 MINS

As people join your service, welcome them and ask them about their week. Try to have a mix of ages and backgrounds on your welcome team.

OPENING ACTIVITIES

5 MINS

OPTION ONE: Chatting together

As people arrive (or at the start of the service) encourage them to chat with people they don't know about their favourite parts of the natural world. Have they been anywhere where the scenery took their breath away?

OPTION TWO: Psalm praise

You will need: Bibles

Before the service, divide Psalm 148 into chunks and ask volunteers to be ready to read out a chunk at the start of your service.

When everyone is seated, your volunteers should stand where they are and read out their section of Psalm 148 in turn. You might wish to create some kind of response after each section – a simple phrase such as: "Praise the Lord" or a loud cheer might be suitable! For a longer activity, use other creation psalms, such as 8 or 139.

BIBLE STORY

10 MINS

You will need: paper and art materials; various props; Bibles; PowerPoint presentation (optional)

Split the congregation into seven groups. Make sure there is a mix of ages in each group. Ask each group to think about one of the first six days of creation (split day six into two, with one group looking at land animals and one at humans).

Encourage them to read about their day in their Bible and create something visual to represent that day. They could make a piece of art together, come up with a role play or create a tableau using whatever props you have provided. It might be an idea to place a couple of people in each group who can lead the rest in what they might do, if ideas aren't forthcoming.

Once the groups are ready, read Genesis 1:1-2:4 (or invite or prime a volunteer to do so), stopping at each day to allow the relevant group to come to the front and display their visual representation. You could also show the PowerPoint presentation during the Bible reading if you have the facilities to do so.

On day seven, encourage everyone to mime 'resting'. Invite some volunteers to the front to tell the rest of the congregation what they do to rest and relax (for example, play sport, do puzzles, play video games or read). Ask them how these things help them unwind, and wonder together about how God 'rested'.

SMALL GROUPS

10 MINS

You will need: copies of the questions below; Bibles

Encourage people to discuss these questions in smaller groups – households (linking single people together via messaging apps) or mixed groups as restrictions allow. Give each group a copy of these questions and a set of creation pictures from the PowerPoint:

- Which day of creation do you like the best? (Use the pictures to decide.)
- What does this story of creation tell us about God?
- What does the creation story tell us about people and what God thinks of them?
- What difference would it make to you if you knew you were made by God?

Give the groups time to chat about these questions, referring to the Bible passage in they need to.

REVIEW

5 MINS

You will need: roving mic (if needed)

Get some feedback on questions two and three from 'Small groups', using a microphone if needed. You could have a vote to find out the most popular day of creation!

Acknowledge that Genesis doesn't set out to describe the mechanics of how God made the world, but this story tells us of God's power, love and creativity – it helps us understand the why of creation.

RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

10 MINS

Set these three activities up in different parts of your meeting space or in different breakout rooms.

OPTION ONE: Painting

You will need: paint; paintbrushes; large sheets of paper; cover-up and clean-up equipment

Set out lots of paint and sheets of paper and encourage people to create a piece of artwork that reflects something of what they have discovered about Jesus today. What is God saying through the story? What difference could it make to their lives?

OPTION TWO: Discussion

You will need: volunteers to facilitate discussion; paper and pens

Gather people together in small groups, each one with a facilitator, and challenge them to think about the impact that what they have discovered today will have. Would it be to care for God's creation more intentionally? To love people in the way God loves them? To create a day of rest in their lives?.

OPTION THREE: Reflection

You will need: images of creation (try websites such as Pexels or Unsplash); access to the outdoors (optional)

Play 'If ye love me' and ask everyone to listen to the lyrics. As they do, encourage everyone to reflect on what they have discovered today. They might wish to pray about the Spirit in their lives.

CLOSING

5 MINS

Bring everyone back together and ask if anyone would like to share anything from the response time. Thank everyone for taking part and say an appropriate blessing to close the service.

ALEX TAYLOR

is resources editor for *Premier Youth and Children's Work*.

Charis and the corrupted creation

'WORLD CREATION COMPETITION' screamed the poster headline. Charis and her friend Maggie were walking down the corridor, heading for double English when they saw the ad.

"What the...what's this all about?" asked Maggie, squinting at the poster. She turned to look at Chloe, but she was already fumbling in her pocket, trying to find her phone. Finally, she wrestled it free of her coat and took a picture of the ad.

"You know," said Charis. "It's all about creating a fictional world that you can tell stories in. Something like Narnia or the Old Kingdom."

"The what?"

"The Old Kingdom; it's that fantasy series I love."

"Oh, that." Maggie seemed to lose interest as soon as Charis mentioned her favourite books. She turned and saw Kwame barrelling along towards them.

"Hey, Kwame," she shouted. "What are you up to this weekend? I think I've lost Charis to some boring writing thing."

Maggie and Kwame headed towards English, but Charis was lost in the beginnings of the world she was going to create. She could see the red earth beneath her feet, with the dome of the yellow sky towering above her. A green sea lapped on a pink shore, lined with purple trees.

"Oi! Jane Austen!" Maggie's shout from the doorway of the classroom broke Charis' train of thought. "Mr Lloyd wants to know if you're going to be joining us!"

It wasn't until Sunday evening that Charis felt she had perfected her fantasy world. She put down her laptop and went off to get a cup of tea. She was just boiling the kettle when her phone flashed a notification. It was Maggie.

"U in? Comin for cuppa."

She took another cup out of the cupboard and put a teabag in it. The doorbell rang.

"Did you send that message from the doorstep?" said Charis as she opened the door to Maggie.

"Of course," she said, pushing past her friend and going into the kitchen. "Got any biscuits?"

They made their tea and took it upstairs to Charis' room. Maggie picked up the laptop.

"Is this your fantasy world?" she asked, scanning through Charis' finely tuned creation. Suddenly her face clouded over. "Oh no," said Maggie. "You don't want that."

She started stabbing away at the keyboard.

"What are you doing?" Charis shouted and tried to grab the laptop.

"Just improving it," replied Maggie. She made a few more changes with one hand while fending Charis off with the other. Finally, she made a theatrical click on the mousepad.

"There!" Maggie said. "Sent!"

"What? What did you do to my creation?"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Chat about the story, what the young people liked and didn't like. You could use some of these questions in your discussion:

- Who are you most like in your attitude to stories – Charis or Maggie? Why?
- If you're like Charis, what is your favourite fantasy world?
- How do you view the different things you create? (These could be stories, artwork, songs, poems...) Are they perfect? Or do you feel they could always do with more work?
- Has anyone else ever spoiled what you created? How did it feel to see something you had worked so hard on ruined?

This story is based on Genesis 1-3. Read this story together (or find a summary) and compare the two stories. How are they similar? How are they different?

ALEX TAYLOR

is resources editor for *Premier Youth and Children's Work*.

Creation

In the story of creation in Genesis 1, God repeatedly sees that what he has created is "good". In the current climate, children and young people are so aware of the importance of preserving God's creation for the future. With this in mind, these craft ideas are focused on helping the planet through upcycling those items we might otherwise throw away.

RECYCLED BOTTLE BIRD FEEDER



You will need: a water or soft drinks bottle and lid (cleaned and dried); string; bird seed; scissors; pencils; chopsticks or wooden spoons; masking tape; funnel; spoon

Use scissors to cut two holes a quarter of the way up the bottle (it's easier if an adult does this part). The holes should be on opposite sides of the bottle and wide enough for a pencil or wooden spoon to fit through so that a 'perch' can be created for the birds. Now cut away two rectangles from the bottle, at about halfway up (see photo). Put masking tape around the rim of the holes to guard against rough edges. Use a funnel to pour bird seed into the top of the bottle until it reaches the 'windows' you have made. Tie string around the neck of the bottle to make a hanger and put the top onto the bottle. Hang the bird feeder outside and wait for the birds to arrive!

SEED PLANTER CARD



You will need: seed paper; coloured card; pens; glue dots; scissors

Fold a piece of coloured card in half to make the base. Take some seed paper and cut it into a shape that will fit onto the front of the card base, with not too much room to spare. Inside the card, or on the seed paper itself,

write a message encouraging someone to write their hopes onto the seed paper and plant it in the ground. Put a glue dot on the back of the seed paper and stick it to the front of the card. Give the card to someone you care about. As the seeds begin to grow, pray that their hopes will also grow.

Seed paper is recycled paper that has seeds embedded into it. You should be able to buy it online.

UPCYCLED STORAGE TIN



You will need: tin can with one end open (cleaned and dried); paint pens; washi tape; glue; paper; scissors; paint; paint-brushes; masking tape

Before you start, check that any rough edges around the rim of the can have been filed away. You might also like to cover the edges with masking tape. Decorate the tin with paint pens, washi tape, paper, ribbons or anything that will add some colour or design. If you want to paint the tin with acrylic paint before putting anything else on it, be aware that it will take quite a while for the paint to dry! When your design is dry and finished, use the tin to store small items in your room. It makes an especially useful pen and pencil tin for a desk.

JUNK-MAIL BUTTERFLY



You will need: junk mail; scissors; pipe cleaner

Cut out two paper squares from the junk mail. You will need one larger than the other (eg 15cm square and 10cm square).

Place the larger square on the table diagonally and, starting at the top point of the square, begin to make a concertina, ending with the bottom point of the square. Do the same with the smaller square. Fold each concertina in half. Place the concertinas on the table with the largest on top as a 'V' pointing upwards, and the smallest on the bottom as a 'V' pointing downwards. Use a pipe cleaner to hold the two concertinas together in the middle. Tie a knot and trim the pipe cleaner ends so that it looks like a butterfly antenna.

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Teamwork

Teamwork makes the dream work. (Yes, I love a cliché.) Try some of these games to foster an atmosphere of teamwork, communication and problem-solving in your group.

SHAPE UP



You will need: ropes (one per group, each one long enough for each group member to hold on to with two hands); blindfolds (one per person)

Split the young people into teams of about five or six (or work together if you have a smaller group).

Ask each group to pick a representative who will be the only one who can ask questions allowed during the game. They can have three questions per round. Line up each team in a straight line, blindfold every player and lay a rope out by their feet.

On your signal everyone picks up the rope at their feet. Their hands must remain on the rope; they may not let go of the rope for more than two seconds.

Tell the group to form a shape (such as a square or triangle). Through their representative, players may ask you three questions during the round. You can repeat the question so that everyone can hear and then give the answer.

When the group feels they have completed the task, they should drop the rope at their feet and take a step back. Then ask all the players to remove their blindfolds and see if they have succeeded in making the shape. Award points for the team closest to the shape.

For more complex game, place the rope about 3m from the group. When you say go, they have to find the rope first, before making the shape.



AIR GUITAR PLUS

You will need: music streaming service and the means to play it
Split the group into smaller teams. Ask them to pick a track that is available on your streaming service, and to create an air 'band'. They should work together to decide who will mime playing the different instruments and how as a band they can best 'perform' their track. Provide some time for the groups to plan and rehearse.

Once everyone is ready, get the groups to perform. If you're being competitive, you could ask some volunteers to judge the winner. Or go full Eurovision and get the bands to give their douze points to their favourite performance: work out a scale of points according to the number of bands you have. For example, if you have six bands, ask the groups to give six, seven, eight, ten and finally twelve points (without voting for themselves).

TOXIC HAZARD



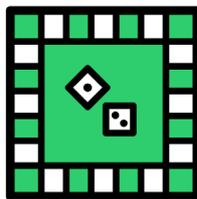
You will need: two buckets (one bigger, one smaller); four ropes at least 3.5m in length; small balls (such as ping-pong, tennis or ball-pit balls); masking tape or chalk

Mark out a circle 3m in diameter with the chalk or masking tape at one end of your playing space. Fill the smaller bucket with the balls and place it into the centre of the circle. Place the large bucket on the other side of the room.

Tell the group that the balls in the bucket are radioactive waste that needs transporting from the circle down to the larger 'radioactive-proof' bucket at the end of the room. They can't enter the circle (it is radioactive!), so they have to pick up the bucket using just the ropes, take it to the large bucket and tip the radioactive waste into it.

If anyone enters the toxic zone, they have to put one arm behind their back. If they drop the bucket and spill all the balls, they have all been exposed to the radiation and have to start the game again.

COLLABORATIVE BOARD GAMES

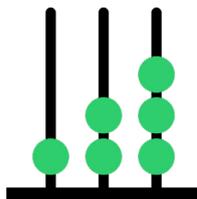


You will need: collaborative board games, such as Pandemic, Forbidden Island or Kim-Joy's Magic Bakery

Show the group the collaborative board games and challenge the players to work together to beat the game.

After they have played, see if they won or lost. What were the problems they had to solve in working together? Is there anything that they would do differently if they played the game again?

NUMBER CHALLENGE



Stand the players in a circle. Challenge them to count from one to 25, with different people saying a number in turn. Players are not allowed to say more than one number at a time. If two people say a number at the same time, then the group has to go back to one again.

Make this more complex by asking the players to close their eyes or by increasing the target number (eg counting to 30 or 50).

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No Time to Die (12A)

Watch the whole film together or concentrate on the clip: 00:12:24 to 00:23:47.

SYNOPSIS

James Bond has left active service and is enjoying a tranquil life in Jamaica with his partner, Madeleine Swann. His peace is short-lived when he suspects Madeleine of betraying his trust, and when his old friend Felix Leiter from the CIA turns up asking for help, Bond is drawn back into the world of espionage once more. The mission to rescue a kidnapped scientist turns out to be far more treacherous than expected, leading Bond onto the trail of a mysterious villain armed with dangerous new technology, and an opportunity to work for MI6 once more.

Marking the end of Daniel Craig's tenure as the super-spy, it's a thrilling exploration of the character of Bond. Like many of the Craig films, it asks questions about the relevancy of James Bond in the modern era.

DISCUSS

Begin by discussing the character of James Bond and the large back catalogue of films in the series. Ask the group these questions as a way to open up discussion and debate:

- What James Bond films have they seen already? What is their opinion of them?
- Is James Bond an outdated character in our modern world? Why? Why not?
- Why do they think that James Bond is such a long-lasting and appealing character to so many?

The clip focuses on Bond and Swann enjoying retirement and a life away from the bad guys intent on destroying the world. When Bond takes a morning to visit the grave of Vesper Lynd (a link back to Craig's first Bond outing, *Casino Royale*), he is ambushed by Spectre, an organisation that he believed to be destroyed. After engaging in an exciting pursuit and escape from his would-be captors, Bond frantically tries to save Swann. But after receiving a phone call from his nemesis, Blofeld, Bond's trust in Swann is shaken (and maybe even stirred) and so Bond

makes the decision to place Swann on a train to safety and end their relationship.

After showing the clip, break into smaller discussion groups or discuss together the following questions:

- Was Bond right to send Swann away? Why do you think he made that decision?
- "We all have our secrets, we just haven't got to yours yet" is a quote from Bond in the clip. Do you agree with his sentiment?
- Why is Bond so distrusting of others? Is this a virtue or a vice for someone in his line of work?
- Would it ever be possible for someone like James Bond to simply retire and have a happy ending?

Note: Although this is a 12A, this clip does involve a fair amount of action and Bond-style fisticuffs.

Espionage and secret agent roles are not plentiful in the Bible; however, Joshua 2 does give a little insight into some secret spy action, and includes Rahab saving the day. Read the chapter and then chat about these questions together:

- Rahab lies in this account; was she wrong to do so? If not, does this mean that lying can sometimes be justified?
- God appears to be in favour of the action of Rahab and Joshua. Does this mean that God could also agree with the actions of secret agents in our world today?
- Why might a story like this be in the Bible?
- Rahab is prepared to trust the spies (and vice versa). When is the last time you decided to really trust someone? How did that make you feel?

No Time to Die has recently been added to streaming services and is available to rent or buy.

TOM WADE

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Sunshine

Liam Payne (taken from the soundtrack to *Ron's Gone Wrong*)
Session suitable for under-tens

INTRODUCTION

This song is taken from the movie, *Ron's Gone Wrong*. This song speaks of a character who brings joy and light into a situation. Themes such as uniqueness and identity are also drawn out in this song and through this session.

As you begin this session, you could ask if anyone has seen the film yet and ask them what they thought of it. Explain that we are looking at one song from the film, but not the storyline of the film itself, so they can still enjoy it later if they haven't seen it yet.

LISTEN AND DISCUSS

Play the track, if possible, using the official music video, or alternatively providing copies of the lyrics for children to follow.

Invite the children to share what strikes them most about this song; what do these lyrics mean to them? Which lyrics could speak about our relationship with God? Which could speak about our relationship with others? Which challenge us about the way we should live?

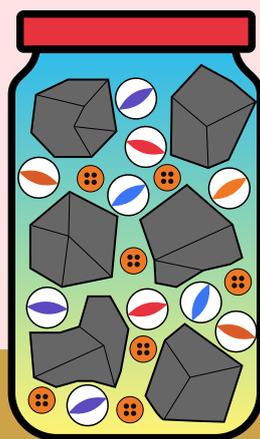
Turn in the Bible to Romans 12 and read it together, providing Bibles or copies of the text for children to follow and perhaps to annotate. How does this text relate to the words of the song? What stands out most to the children? What challenges them the most?

Talk about how we, as followers of Jesus are called to "not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (v2). Take some time to talk about what this looks like in our daily lives. It is one thing to talk about it, but if we don't put it into action, it is meaningless. Talk through some practical examples of what it looks like to live out Romans 12.

Replay the track, or official video, as you draw to a close, and ask the children again how this song may remind us of the words of Romans 12. What else have we discovered from the reading that we need to hold onto? Pray for the children, that they would have confidence to stand in who they are called to be, and shine like sunshine in the lives of others.

BECKY MAY

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How full is the vase?

January is, of course, a time for planning and getting your house in order for the coming year – and thus also helping your mentee do the same. I tend to book in triathlons first because it's what I enjoy and look forward to! However, these events fall by the wayside if one of my kids has to go to hospital or if the car breaks down and I need to pay for repairs...To be fair, there is a lot that's more important.

Everything has its place and at the start of every year, it is important to recognise that. What do we prioritise in 2022 and what do we need to cut out?

Try this exercise with your mentee. You'll need some rocks, some marbles, a load of buttons, some sand and a jug of water. Have a dry run yourself to ensure you have the right quantity of objects. Allow God to speak to you personally through it.

Take the large vase. After each of these steps, ask your mentee: "Is it full?" The answer, of course, is yes.

1. Give them the large rocks and ask them to fill the vase.
2. Now give them the marbles to add and give it a shake to allow them to find their way down the vase and fill up the spaces.
3. Now give them the buttons and again shake it so they fill down the vase with as many as possible.
4. Now ask them to add the sand.
5. Pass them the jug of water until it fills to the top.

Give them a chance to process this and discuss what it might all mean. What do the objects represent? All answers are correct, but the following is a good metaphor to use to discuss their planning for the coming year:

The largest objects represent the very critical things that you simply can't do without – identity, purpose, relationships, family, faith...

The marbles are things that are super-important but sometimes change in life and (if necessary) you could live without, at least for a while – job, house, friends, sport, music...

(Note that some young people may not have 'normal' families; sometimes friends are more like family and therefore your mentee might put them in the 'rocks' section.)

The buttons are things you love to do but can sometimes become a distraction – phones and social media, gaming, movies and box sets, hobbies, chatting and messaging...

Sand might represent things you do that are not terribly healthy or positive – negative thinking, worry, anger, pornography, jealousy and envy. It could be 'sin'. These things find their way into our lives, our habits, our weekly schedule, our headspace and consume our time and our energy.

The water could illustrate that no matter how full our lives are – and even if we feel like we are riddled with sin and negative habits – God's love and his presence can find a way in and still fill us up with purity and surround us with grace and energy and motivation, no matter what else is already in there.

Ask your mentee what would happen if they put everything in the vase in a different order. Would the rocks fit? We need to take charge of what we prioritise. However, even if it was full completely of sand...there would still be room for water to cover and fill it.

Discuss what kind of things of lesser importance can take up valuable 'space' at the cost of more important things. How are they going to filter and order the demands on them this year so they can manage everything they want and need to fit in? What action points are required?

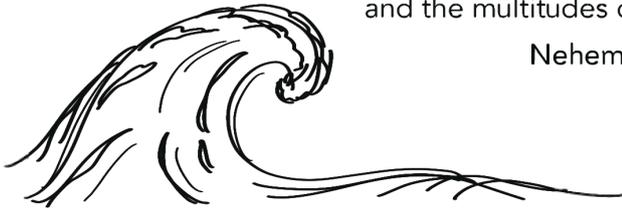
Ask them to write a list of the real things in their life this year in the categories of rocks, marbles and buttons. If they wish to discuss with you things that are 'sand', invite them to do so.

Pray together to invite the 'water' of the presence Holy Spirit to invade every space in their life.



“You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.”

Nehemiah 9:6 NIV



Isn't creation amazing? There are so many things all around us to be grateful for. Have a go at drawing the things below, and say a prayer of thanks for each one as you draw.

a tree	Your favourite animal	the sunshine	Your favourite fruit

Can you think of a time when you spent a lot of effort making something special? Maybe it was a birthday cake for a friend, a school project where you had to build something, a drawing or a painting. Write down something you made here:

Now imagine that someone was looking after the special thing you made, but unfortunately they didn't take very good care of it. Maybe they dropped it, lost it or even broke it – how would that make you feel? Write down your thoughts here:

We are called to look after God's amazing creation, but sometimes we are not very good at doing that. Colour in the pictures at the top of the page, and as you do, spend some time praying that God would help you to look after all he has made.