

SESSION 1

IN THE BEGINNING

SESSION AIMS

To introduce the concept of the Bible as one big story, written by many human authors but inspired by God.

To explore what the Bible says about God creating the world and humans, and to begin considering the implications of this for our lives today.

BIBLE REFERENCE

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John

GAME: CONSEQUENCES

This game is best played in groups of five or six people, with a leader talking everyone through the steps from the front.

Each player starts with a piece of paper. For step one, ask them to write a boy's name at the top of their paper and then to fold the paper to hide what they have written before passing it to the next player.

Continue in this way with the steps below, getting them to fold over their paper and pass it on after each step. The words in brackets should be replaced by the chosen word or phrase:

met (girl's name)

in/at/on (where they met)

He said (what he said)

She said (what she said)

He (what he did)

She (what she did)

The consequence was (what happened)

When the players have completed all eight steps, get them to unfold the piece of paper they are holding and to read out the resulting story, either in their small groups or as a whole group, depending on your numbers and time.

You could make the point that in the game you had stories with many authors, and the stories that were produced were sometimes funny, but didn't make much sense.

WATCH THE EPISODE ►

GROUP WORK

Give each person a small piece of plasticine or play dough, and give them a couple of minutes to create something that represents an aspect of themselves. It could be something they like, a skill they have or something relating to their personality. Let each person take a turn to show their model to the rest of the group and let the others guess what they have made and how it relates to them.

Discuss: The Bible starts by stating that God created everything. Do you think it matters whether we believe that? What difference does it make to believe that God created the world and that he created us?

Try to draw out the point that if God created everything, he is the one who understands how it all works. Believing that he created the world, and created us, should make us want to pay attention to what he says about how to live. It should encourage us to get to know him so that we can discover more about who he is and who he has made us to be.

What do you think it means to be made in God's image? In what ways are we like God? In what ways are we different from God?

If you create an image of someone by drawing them or painting them, for example, it is not exactly the same as them, but it reflects something of them. Being made in God's image means that we are created to be like God in some way.

Some ways we are like God: we are made for relationship and community, we can create, we have the ability to reason and to choose. Christians are called to become more like God in character as we get to know him more – being more loving, patient, kind etc.

Some ways we are different from God: he is all-knowing, all-powerful, eternal etc. He is ultimately in charge.

What do you think about the fact that our relationship with God is central to his creation of the world – that he loves us and that he made us to know him and to love him? What do you think this means for how we live our lives?

There isn't a right answer to the first question – this is just to get people thinking and talking about the fact that we are central to his creation. The second question may lead to discussions around the fact that true meaning in life comes from God and following his purposes for us; life separate from him doesn't make sense.

Read Psalm 139:13–16. The Bible teaches that God made the earth and the universe, but he also created each individual. What difference would it make to think about ourselves, and others, in this way?

You could ask the young people to share their answers, or you could leave them to reflect on this by themselves.

PRAY TO CLOSE