

ENDURING  
**FAITH**<sup>™</sup>

Sunday School • Midweek  
Bible Curriculum

# ADULT STUDY GUIDE

*Unit 1: God Creates a World and a Kingdom*



## ADULT STUDY GUIDE

This is the adult component of the Enduring Faith Bible Curriculum. This piece follows the **same scope and sequence** as the other levels: **Early Childhood, Elementary, and Youth**. This alignment presents some amazing opportunities.

- First of all, it helps all ages speak a **common theological language**.
- Second, it helps God’s people build an understanding of the **lifelong nature of learning God’s Word**—that we don’t just learn the narratives once or twice before moving on to other matters.
- Third, and critical to this curriculum, it helps **equip households** to teach the faith at home.

If parents and other adults spend time meditating and discussing the narratives of the Bible while the younger generations in the congregation study the same narratives, then there will be greater opportunity throughout the week to **reflect together** upon what the narrative says and what it means. In other words, studying the narratives of the Bible as adults is a blessing in and of itself, but it also helps **equip parents and faith leaders** to be more confident and feel empowered to extend those conversations into the household.

## FEATURES OF THIS STUDY

This study guide is meant to provide some guidelines and springboards for discussion in your Bible study groups.

- The **first page** of each lesson provides the central focus statements, not only for the Adult level, but also for the other levels. Use this as a way to orient yourself to the **main themes and goals** of the lessons across all levels. You’ll also find helpful **tips for preparation**.
- The **middle two pages** begin with an introductory “**Launch**” section, which provides prompts for beginning the study and an open-ended reflection question to kick off group discussion. The following “**Learn & Live**” section breaks down the text into three to five narrative sections. Each one of these sections has some additional commentary, a reflection question, and some helps to better understand possible answers to the reflection question. The “**Leave**” section provides prompts for a final reflection question and some other considerations to close the lesson. The **sidebars** include leader tips and bonus activities to help you think through options for extending the lesson.
- The **final page** of each lesson is the student piece. Copy one lesson handout per learner, and distribute this at the beginning of class.

## TIPS FOR USE

This study guide is designed primarily to help give you, the leader, some thoughts and prompts to help guide and assist facilitation of the class. Below are some tips for how to use it.

- This is meant to be a Bible study, so each learner will need access to a Bible. Encourage your learners to bring their own to class.
- Don’t neglect the lesson handout. The primary reason for this page is to create some space for each learner to reflect and engage the questions on his or her own. Often, any given group will have one or two vocal learners and others who may not speak up. Consider using techniques to help engage all learners in the process, such as having each learner write down his or her reflection privately before sharing, having each learner share with a partner before opening up discussion, or changing the seating arrangements to create small groups.
- Use the opening reflection question as a time to build community. Adult learners, generally speaking, desire to share their experience with one another, and this lesson starter provides an opportunity for this.
- For each narrative section, ask volunteers to read the text aloud while the rest follow along. Don’t force anyone; adults, like children and youth, may be self-conscious about their reading or public speaking ability.
- Download the Enduring Faith Page from the online digital resource center and hand out copies to your learners. Near the end of the lesson, talk through the prompts, which help the learners extend the lessons in their households throughout the week. Encourage learners to take this page home along with the lesson handout to be used throughout the week.

# A MIGHTY WONDER

Creation  
Genesis 1:1–2:3  
Beginning  
of time

## BIBLE TRUTH

God created the heavens and the earth.

## LEARNER GOAL

I can share what God designed me for as His human creature.

## BIBLE VERSE

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.  
Genesis 1:1

## LAW & GOSPEL

We forget or even refuse to believe that God is our Creator and the giver of all good things. **God gives us faith to believe that He created the heavens and the earth and that He continues to provide us with all good things, especially life and salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ.**

## SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

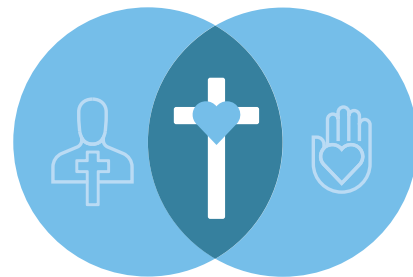
“In the beginning, God created . . .” (1:1). The One who exists outside ordinary time designates the beginning of His created order. In six days—through His spoken Word alone—the heavenly Father creates a universe so vast and complex it defies our limited human understanding. Humankind, the crown of His creation, made in His own image, comes to be through the intimate work of His hands and with His own breath.

## LESSON PREP

**BASIC** Read the narrative and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible (TLSB)*.

**MORE TIME** Read through “Challenges for Readers” in the introduction to Genesis (*TLSB*, p. 9).

**IN DEPTH** Read through the First Article (Part 1) and study questions in *Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation* (2017).



## CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

### IDENTITY: WHO AM I?

God has made me His human creature: created, loved, and chosen by Him to be His own.

### CALLING: WHY AM I HERE?

I can love God and my neighbor. I do this by worshiping and praising God and taking care of His creation.

## GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE

*See how this lesson builds on learning for each age.*

### ADULT

I can share what God designed me for as His human creature.

### YOUTH

I can identify examples of God’s work in creation.

### ELEMENTARY

I understand that God made the universe and everything in it, including me.

### YOUNG CHILDREN

I know God created everything.



### LEADER NOTE

For the opening question, either have the whole group brainstorm together or have the learners break into small groups and share with the whole group when they're done. The point is to get the learners thinking about different worldviews and different reasons people give for why they're here.



### BONUS ACTIVITY

Highlight how all three persons of the Trinity are present at creation (see John 1:1–3 for more on this), with the Father speaking the Word (the Son) and the Spirit hovering over the waters.



### BONUS ACTIVITY

Lead a quick study from the Central Thought section of the First Article (Part 1) in *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (2017). Use the questions and discussion prompts to talk about our views of creation.

# LAUNCH

## WELCOME

Welcome the group, and open in prayer. It may be a good time to take prayer requests; pray for those requests either now or at the conclusion.

## REVIEW

Review the Bible Truth, Learner Goal, and Bible Verse. Then, begin with the opening reflection question on the lesson handout.

## OPENING REFLECTION

Why are we here? Brainstorm different answers people give to this question. How are responses similar and different?

# LEARN & LIVE

## GENESIS 1:1–2

### BIBLE COMMENTARY

Trusting that God's Word is true, and that the creation event actually happened as described in Genesis 1, we can appreciate the poetic form of this writing. The Hebrew word for "created" describes how God created through His own activity and that what He did was extraordinary and unique. On the first day, God makes many of the raw materials of creation; on the rest of the days, He fashions and assembles all of creation like a builder forms a house.

### REFLECTION QUESTION

What's one word or phrase that strikes you about how the Bible opens? Why does it interest you?

### REFLECTION HELPS

The opening emphasizes how everything in God's plan of salvation begins with God's presence and His creation of all things. Then, God begins to bring order to His shapeless creation (the formlessness of water, for example).

## GENESIS 1:3–8

### BIBLE COMMENTARY

Though it may seem a little strange to us that God would create light before creating the sun, what God is doing here is something different. He's creating boundaries and mechanisms by which we now measure time (light and darkness) and space (expanses between things). God's plan of creation involves order, not pure chaos, as in many other creation accounts. God planned it all to be good from the beginning. Though creation fell, God promises to redeem—and one day finally restore—His creation in Christ.

### REFLECTION QUESTION

Imagine yourself watching the first two days of creation unfold. From this perspective, what is God doing here, and what does this tell us about His plan for His creation?

### REFLECTION HELPS

First, God creates light; then, He divides a space for His creation to inhabit. A big point may be that God intentionally designed boundaries for His creation, both physically and spiritually, for our good. Your learners may also benefit from thinking about how the order God designed here shows His great love and care for His creation and, ultimately, how He wants to restore His creation one day in Christ.

# GENESIS 1:9–25

## BIBLE COMMENTARY

For each day, God creates more order in His creation. The effects stack up, preparing the creation for God’s crowning creation: humans. Consider asking your learners, as they dig into the text, how each of these days of creation helps set up the next, creating an orderly sequence that sets up the arrival of humanity.

## REFLECTION QUESTION

For each day, days 3 through 6, describe what God creates. Then, identify clues from the text that describe the purpose behind each of God’s creations.

## REFLECTION HELPS

On Day 3, God created dry land and vegetation, giving definition to the earth. On Day 4, God created lights in the heavens, providing day, night, and years. On Day 5, God created sea and air creatures. On Day 6, God created land creatures.

# GENESIS 1:26–31

## BIBLE COMMENTARY

God gives humans a purpose: to be productive stewards of creation, multiplying over it and caring for it. Humankind was made in God’s image and with a divine purpose as God’s creatures and a special part of His creation. Because of sin, mankind lost the image of God. In Christ, God is restoring that image in His forgiven people.

## REFLECTION QUESTION

Look through the text again and try to identify the different purposes for which God created humanity. Then, consider how we as humans have succeeded and failed at fulfilling these purposes as God’s creatures.

## REFLECTION HELPS

God commanded humans to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth; to subdue and have dominion over it. We brought sin into the world, and we fail at these things. With God’s help, we’ve succeeded when we carry out these vocations in God’s will.

# GENESIS 2:1–3

## BIBLE COMMENTARY

Sometimes people criticize the creation account, saying it’s just “adapted” from other ancient Near East religious accounts. The seventh day, however, is unique among other ancient religions’ creation stories. It is special to our faith. God built into His creation a time to rest and worship Him.

## REFLECTION QUESTION

God didn’t need to rest, yet He chose to. Adding this thought to everything that’s come before, what does this tell us about God’s plan for us as His human creatures?

## REFLECTION HELPS

God desires that His human creatures follow His lead and spend time in rest. During this rest, we are to reflect on God’s person and work and to praise Him.

# LEAVE

## FINAL REFLECTION

Name one new insight you have about what God has created you for. How does this impact how you view your daily responsibilities?

## TAKE HOME

Equip your learners with ideas for taking the lesson into their households by giving them access to the Enduring Faith Page.

## CLOSE WITH PRAYER

If you haven’t yet, take prayer requests, or encourage a volunteer from the class to pray before you leave.



## BONUS ACTIVITY

Read through Genesis 2 in its entirety. Then, compare details between chapters 1 and 2 that help tell the full narrative.



## CHRIST CONNECTION

God made humankind in His image, and thus a special part of His creation. Mankind lost the image of God because of sin. Through the saving work of Christ Jesus, God’s forgiven people are being restored to that image.



## LEADER NOTE

God designed His human creatures to care for creation. Though we sin and receive forgiveness in Christ, God still has a purpose for us as caretakers of His creation and servants for our neighbor.

# A MIGHTY WONDER

## BIBLE TRUTH

God created the heavens and the earth.

## LEARNER GOAL

I can share what God designed me for as His human creature.

## BIBLE VERSE

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1

ADULT  
Unit 1  
LESSON HANDOUT  
Lesson 1

Creation  
Genesis 1:1–2:3

## REFLECTIONS

**OPENING REFLECTION** Why are we here? Brainstorm different answers people give to this question. How are responses similar and different?

**GENESIS 1:1–2** What's one word or phrase that strikes you about how the Bible opens? Why does it interest you?

**GENESIS 1:3–8** Imagine yourself watching the first two days of creation unfold. From this perspective, what is God doing here, and what does this tell us about His plan for His creation?

**GENESIS 1:9–25** For each day, days 3 through 6, describe what God creates. Then, identify clues from the text that describe the purpose behind each of God's creations.

**GENESIS 1:26–31** Look through the text again and try to identify the different purposes for which God created humanity. Then, consider how we as humans have succeeded and failed at fulfilling these purposes as God's creatures.

**GENESIS 2:1–3** God didn't need to rest, yet He chose to. Adding this thought to everything that's come before, what does this tell us about God's plan for us as His human creatures?

**FINAL REFLECTION** Name one new insight you have about what God has created you for. How does this impact how you view your daily responsibilities?

## NOTES

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### THING(S) CREATED

### PURPOSE FOR THOSE THINGS

#### DAY 3

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#### DAY 4

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#### DAY 5

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#### DAY 6

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.....

# THE FALL AND A PROMISE

Fall into Sin  
Genesis 3  
Sometime after  
creation

## BIBLE TRUTH

God promises to help sinners.

## LEARNER GOAL

I can summarize the story of mankind's fall into sin and God's initial plan to restore creation.

## BIBLE VERSE

The Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world.  
1 John 4:14

## LAW & GOSPEL

We are self-centered and blame others; for these and many other sins, we deserve temporal and eternal death. **God sent His Son, Jesus, to crush sin, death, and the devil, and through Him, God forgives our sins and gives us eternal life.**

## SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

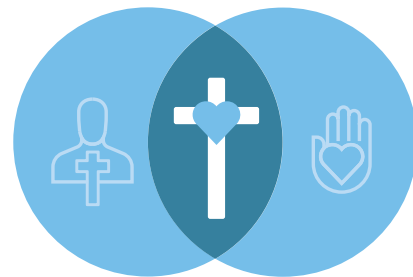
The slithery serpent causes Eve to doubt God's Word with one simple question, "Did God actually say . . .?" (v. 1). Seeking to gain wisdom, Eve—and Adam with her—rebel against their Creator. Suddenly aware of their condition before God, they vainly attempt to hide their sinful exposure. With sin comes punishment that is just; yet our heavenly Father does not leave humankind without hope. Instead, He promises One who will come to rescue them from the jaws of death and Satan.

## LESSON PREP

**BASIC** Read the narrative and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible (TLSB)*.

**MORE TIME** Read "Feasting and Fellowship with God in Eden" and "The History of Humanity" (*TLSB*, p. 19).

**IN DEPTH** Read through the Third Petition of the Lord's Prayer in the Small Catechism, connecting it to the fall and the first Gospel promise.



## CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

### IDENTITY: WHO AM I?

God has redeemed me, a sinful human, through the Promised One, Jesus Christ.

### CALLING: WHY AM I HERE?

I can forgive others their sins against me because in Christ, God has forgiven me.

## GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE

*See how this lesson builds on learning for each age.*

### ADULT

I can summarize the story of mankind's fall into sin and God's initial plan to restore creation.

### YOUTH

I can explain that humans are God's special creation, born into sin and in need of a Savior.

### ELEMENTARY

I understand that I am a child of God but also a sinner in need of a Savior.

### YOUNG CHILDREN

I know God sent Jesus to save me from sin.



### LEADER NOTE

For the opening question, it will be important to be sensitive to your group's context, given that some may have experienced trauma. It may be best to do this in small groups so that people who don't want to share can just listen. The point is that God is our one true help at all times.



### BONUS ACTIVITY

Look up the article "How Does the Old Testament Look Forward to Jesus?" on pages 6–7 of *Concordia's Complete Bible Handbook*. Draw out the diagram for the learners to see, and have them look up relevant Scripture passages that trace the promise in Genesis 3 to Jesus and beyond.

# LAUNCH

## WELCOME

Welcome the group, and open in prayer. It may be a good time to take prayer requests; pray for those requests either now or at the conclusion.

## REVIEW

Review the Bible Truth, Learner Goal, and Bible Verse. Then, begin with the opening reflection question on the lesson handout.

## OPENING REFLECTION

In your experience, where do people go for help when they're in trouble? Rank your top five places from most to least helpful. Tell why you chose that order.

# LEARN & LIVE

## GENESIS 3:1–7

### BIBLE COMMENTARY

God had created all things good, but Satan enters (either in or as a serpent) and tempts Eve, along with Adam, to distrust and disobey God. Satan tempts Adam and Eve by saying that what was good was evil and vice versa. When Adam and Eve eat the fruit and disobey God, their eyes are opened to their sin, their relationship with God is permanently broken, and they run away in despair. Since then, all mankind is born in the same state of brokenness. Satan still tempts us to doubt God's Word and faithfulness.

### REFLECTION QUESTION

How did Satan go about tempting Eve? Trace the different steps and arguments. Then, consider in what ways this temptation is similar to and different from the temptations we face.

### REFLECTION HELPS

Satan first questions God's Word and intent, tempting Eve to doubt God's goodness. Satan then tempts Eve to believe that God doesn't want the best for her and that His Law is actually holding humanity back. Our temptations are similar. Satan tempts us to doubt God's intentions toward us, to believe that His commands are not to help us but to hold us back.

## GENESIS 3:8–13

### BIBLE COMMENTARY

God approaches Adam and Eve, knowing full well their sin. God first calls to Adam, the one whom He set as primary steward of creation, to bear witness to what happened. In shame, Adam defensively passes the blame to Eve (noting that God made Eve and may have been to blame), and Eve passes the blame onto the serpent. It's a mess. What was once a loving and open relationship between God and humankind is now fractured; already, man and woman are blaming each other. Yet, despite Adam and Eve's sin, God still comes to them. He is holy and just but also shows great love.

### REFLECTION QUESTION

List in order the actions and words Adam and Eve took to try to hide or justify their sins. How is this similar to the way we humans today often respond to our guilt?

### REFLECTION HELPS

Adam and Eve run from God, hide from God, try to cover their shame, pass blame, and break their relationship with God and each other in response to guilt. We run from God by not listening to His Word; we hide from God by not calling upon Him in prayer and praise; we try to cover our shame by passing blame to God and others; and we hurt our relationships in the process.

## GENESIS 3:14–15

### BIBLE COMMENTARY

After God curses Satan, He indicates that the rest of human history will be a struggle between God’s chosen people and Satan’s followers, and will conclude in a final showdown, when an Offspring of Eve will crush Satan. This is the first Gospel promise of the cross, where Jesus, the Second Adam, crushes Satan’s power. The rest of the narrative of Scripture traces, and waits for, the fulfillment of this Gospel promise (see Galatians 4:4).

### REFLECTION QUESTION

God curses Satan here for the great evil he helped bring into creation. In this curse, God also includes the first great Gospel promise. Look over verse 15, and try to connect how this promise not only summarizes the rest of the narrative of Scripture but, more important, points us to Jesus’ saving work.

### REFLECTION HELPS

The promise is that there will be strife between God’s chosen people and Satan. In the midst of the struggle, though, it’s always God who is faithful to His promise to crush Satan’s power. In the narrative of Scripture, God generally uses the lowly and weak to defeat the strong (e.g., Moses, David, Daniel). Nowhere is this seen more clearly than in the cross, where God did His greatest saving work in forgiving humanity.

## GENESIS 3:16–24

### BIBLE COMMENTARY

God does not abandon His human creatures at their sin but informs them that they will suffer and struggle for survival as stewards of His creation. Childbearing will be painful, relationships strained, and work toilsome. All sinful lives will end in death. Yet God will be faithful to His promise as humanity awaits its fulfillment. Next, Adam and Eve are separated from God because of their sin, a consequence of being separated from the tree of life. In the new creation, not only will we be restored fully to God but we will be restored to the tree of life as well.

### REFLECTION QUESTION

How does the rest of this curse, to the woman and to the man, describe our struggle for survival in this sinful world? How does God work through the Church to take care of us today as we go about living our vocations in this fallen creation?

### REFLECTION HELPS

Work is hard, and we’re surrounded by danger in the fallen creation. Through the Church, God continually provides His people with forgiveness, life, and salvation as, together, we gather around and receive the gifts of His Word.

## LEAVE

### FINAL REFLECTION

What does it mean to you that God has a plan to redeem you from sin, death, and Satan? How should this change even the most insignificant tasks in your day?

### TAKE HOME

Equip your learners with ideas for taking the lesson into their households by giving them access to the Enduring Faith Page.

### CLOSE WITH PRAYER

If you haven’t yet, take prayer requests, or encourage a volunteer from the class to pray before you leave.



### BONUS ACTIVITY

Do a quick study from the Central Thought section of the Second Article (Part 2) in *Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation* (2017). Use the questions and discussion prompts to connect the story of the fall to the fulfillment of that promise in Christ.



### CHRIST CONNECTION

God promised to send a Savior to crush Satan’s power over us. Jesus is the promised Offspring of Eve who fulfilled this promise and defeated Satan by His work on the cross.



### LEADER NOTE

Answers will vary but could include observations like these: God gives my life value and purpose. I know I’m loved, and God has given me a new identity in Christ. All these have an impact on our perspectives and actions in daily life.

