

**God Creates a World
and a People**

Old Testament 1

DIRECTOR HANDBOOK



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Welcome to Cross Explorations

Cross Explorations is the Sunday School with the biblical integrity you've come to expect from Concordia Publishing House. The Bible accounts in Cross Explorations follow the same sequence as Concordia's traditional Sunday School curriculum, Growing in Christ.

Cross Explorations combines the best of large-group/small-group instruction and site rotation. Leaders will love the easy-to-use leader guides as well as the options available for each lesson. Above all, Cross Explorations puts Christ at the center of each and every lesson.

Exploring Cross Explorations

Cross Explorations at a Glance

Engage

Cross Explorations starts with Engage. During Engage, all students take part in an opening activity together, singing and preparing for the rest of their exploration.

Explore

The Explore site divides kids by two age levels. Level 1 includes kids in grades 1–3, while Level 2 covers kids in grades 4–6. During Explore, students dig into the day's Bible story, guided by the Explore Teacher Leaflets and their Explore Student Leaflets. We recommend having eight to ten kids in a group with one leader. So, depending on the number of kids you have, you may have multiple Level 1 and Level 2 groups.

Express

During Express, kids apply the Bible learning from the Explore session to their lives as they create, experiment, sing, serve, and more. Options depend on the time you have available and the talents of your volunteers. The Express leader materials provide numerous options for each week:

- **Express Craft Booklet**—thirteen pull-apart cards provide creative projects for each lesson, complete with supply lists, directions, talking points, and pictures of the completed craft.
- **Express Music CD**—includes recorded music, music activities for each lesson, and PowerPoint slides with linked music. Reinforce the lesson with new songs, old favorites, and familiar hymns.
- **Express Skit CD**—brief skits allow students to review each Bible lesson. Ideas for costumes and visual props are included.
- **Express Activities & More CD**—includes creative snack ideas and group activities for each week. Additional activity ideas, including service projects, are suggested for some weeks. Activities include the following:
 - Group activities
 - Science demonstrations
 - Service projects

Leaders have the option to access materials by week, by topic, or by type of activity.

The amount of time available determines if students will rotate through one, two, or more Express options each week. If time is limited, vary Express activities from week to week so students get a chance to experience different types of learning.

The Cross Explorations Schedule

Cross Explorations offers flexibility for a variety of settings. Here is a suggested schedule for a traditional 60-minute Sunday morning setting:

- All students at Engage for 15 minutes.
- Students break into Explore Levels 1 and 2 for 20 minutes.
- Students move through two or more Express rotations for 25 minutes.

If you are using Cross Explorations in a Midweek setting, your schedule probably offers more time. In this setting, the Engage and Explore times remain the same, but extra time may be used to include additional small-group Express options.

Flexibility

The flexible Cross Explorations materials allow you to customize the program to fit your specific needs. Here's how one congregation customized Cross Explorations to meet the specific needs in their Sunday School. They have a lot of students in grades 1–3, with smaller numbers in each of the older grades. Their solution:

- Everyone in grades 1–6 starts together in Engage.
- With a smaller number of students in grades 4–6, they move as one group into Explore. Following Explore, the older students split into two groups and rotate through two Express stations.
- Meanwhile, the younger students in grades 1–3 stay in single-grade groups and rotate through three stations. Explore becomes one of the three rotations, and leaders choose the other two stations from the Express materials.

Cross Explorations in a Self-Contained Classroom

Some congregations, by preference or due to limited space or number of students, use Cross Explorations in self-contained classrooms. The flexible Cross Explorations resources easily allow for use in this setting. If needed, divide students into two groups, lower grades (1–3) and upper grades (4–6), and plan on a leader for each group. If most of your students are younger, you could use just the Level 1 materials; likewise, use the Level 2 materials if most of your students are older.

Introduce the lesson to all students, using the Engage Teacher Leaflets and optional PowerPoint slide shows. (Or provide an Engage CD to each teacher to use in the classroom.)

Then, divide students into two or more groups for the Explore Bible study. Have them meet with their leader in their classroom or an assigned area of a larger space to dig into the Bible account and work through the student leaflets.

Following Explore, have students continue with Express activities in their classroom or rotate through Express activities with other classes. They can stay in the Explore groups, combine with other groups, or form new groups. Select the Express options that work best for your setting. These options can vary from week to week to keep students excited and engaged in what might happen next week.

Assembling Small Groups

Small groups form the core of Cross Explorations. Groups may be assigned by traditional grade levels or by combining students from the three grades comprising each of the two levels for Explore. For instance, you could have two or more groups of students from grades 1–3. Likewise, you could have groups with a mix of students from grades 4–6. Ideally, groups will have eight to ten students in them. If you have more than ten students at either level, plan on two Explore sites for that level. Depending on the age range of your students and their level of maturity, you also might include students in third grade in your Level 2 groups.

What about Other Sunday School Levels?

Preschool

We recommend letting preschoolers learn in their own settings and groups. The Growing in Christ Early Childhood Teacher Guide has age-appropriate material for preschoolers that follows the same lesson sequence as Cross Explorations.

Keeping preschoolers separate from your elementary program is beneficial for several reasons. Sunday School is often a preschooler's first group experience. A young child needs a safe environment with predictable routines and the same caring teacher each week to feel secure. Parents and children may feel anxious, timid, or afraid in the midst of the larger Sunday School setting. If you can, give preschoolers separate learning spaces so that they can do age-appropriate activities in an environment suitable to their needs. Preschoolers can get lost among older kids, but in their own space, they can relax, play, and feel more secure. This kind of atmosphere maximizes their ability to learn and remember.

Middle School and High School

Since Cross Explorations is a complementary program to Growing in Christ, you can use Growing in Christ for middle-school and high-school levels. The two programs share a common Bible story, so the whole family is studying the same story each week.

Adults

The Cross Explorations Explore Adult Bible Study Guide provides weekly lessons for adult learners. Parents and other adults join children for the large-group Engage session, then continue learning in their own Explore group for thirty minutes. Families continue learning at home through the Explore More Cards. These talking points help families take the lesson home each week and engage kids and parents in talking about the faith.

Leading Cross Explorations

Staffing for Cross Explorations lets volunteers work from their strengths. Each Cross Explorations leader works in a role designed to let him or her be most effective. It is beneficial when groups of children have two adults present with them at all times.

Large-Group Leader

The large-group leader begins each week's Cross Explorations adventure during the Engage session. This leader needs the energy and confidence to work with a large group of children. The Engage leader should also have the ability to get kids excited about learning. Since this large-group leader sets the tone for the day, choose this leader—or leadership team—carefully. Because of the variety of ages involved, it is important to select a large-group leader who communicates well with students.

Site Leaders

Your Cross Explorations site leaders do what they do best—crafts, music, science, teaching the lesson, and more. Volunteers who feel comfortable teaching students would be ideal leaders for the Explore Level 1 and Level 2 sites. For the most effective learning environment, Explore leaders should be consistent from week to week. If teaching volunteers like to work in teams, enlist three teachers for each Explore team and encourage at least two of them to be present each week. Volunteers with a love for crafts, music, or other ways to apply the lesson truths would be excellent leaders for the Express sites you choose. Since Express sites may vary each week, volunteers may take turns serving.

Rotation Small-Group Leaders

Cross Explorations small-group leaders serve a very important role. You will need one small-group leader for every eight to ten kids. The small-group leaders may not have to teach; rather, they lead their small group of students from one site to another. Groups may be assigned by age or grade level, or they may be multi-graded. Strive for groups no larger than ten students. Encourage students to select a name for their group in order to develop a sense of group identity. Small-group leaders

- are leaders and encouragers, not bosses;
- develop friendships with every child in their group;

- help and encourage kids to participate, cooperate, and try new things;
- ask questions and lead kids to discover Bible answers;
- keep kids focused on tasks and challenges;
- participate in activities;
- get to know their group members well; and
- are patient and do not yell or express anger.

Older adults and older youth often make ideal small-group leaders. In some situations, you may want to have your small-group leaders actually be the teachers for the Explore or Express sites. For the balance of the time at Cross Explorations, these teachers simply lead their small group. The choice is yours!

Cross Explorations Resources

The Cross Explorations leader materials provide all of the resources your volunteers need to effectively share God’s Word with children.

■ Engage

- **Leader Leaflet** includes opening activities and music suggestions.
- **Engage Music CD** provides selected music for use in Cross Explorations.

■ Explore

- **Level 1 Teacher Leaflets** include resources for teaching the Bible story to children in grades 1–3.
- **Level 1 Student Leaflets** include full-color Bible art and activities for children in grades 1–3.
- **Level 2 Teacher Leaflets** include resources for teaching the Bible story to children in grades 4–6.
- **Level 2 Student Leaflets** include full-color Bible art, activities, and discussion questions for children in grades 4–6.
- **Explore More Cards** provide family-centered questions and activities to extend the lesson to the home each week.
- **Explore Adult Bible Study Guide** allows parents and other adults to explore the same lesson that kids do each week.

■ Express

- **Express Craft Booklet** uses visuals to guide students as they express the lesson creatively. (Craft activity patterns, when required, are found on the Express Activities & More CD.)
- **Express Music CD** allows kids to express the lesson through song.
- **Express Skit CD** lets students express the lesson through drama and role play.
- **Express Activities & More CD** has ideas and activities that vary from week to week. These include science demonstrations, games, snacks, service projects, and more. Each one provides students with unique ways to express their learning. (This CD may also contain craft patterns.)

■ Director CD

- **Director Handbook** contains planning materials for the Sunday School Leader.
- **Preparing the Lesson** leaflets are included for each week. Provide all your volunteer leaders with copies of these devotions as they prepare for each week's lesson.
- **Planning Pages** are designed to help teachers and leaders plan the lessons each week. The planning pages outline the activities available for each section of the lesson.
- **Bulletin Notes** are designed to help connect your congregation and Sunday School by providing a brief lesson highlight and suggested questions for parents and others to discuss with students.
- **Pronunciation Guide** helps teachers and students correctly pronounce more difficult names of people and places in the Bible.
- **Arch Book List** helps teachers reinforce the Bible account by providing another method of sharing the story with students.

The Perfect Setting: Environment Matters

Stress, mess, and chaos hinder learning. Open a door to effective learning by providing a relaxed, comfortable environment.

- Make sure your facility is clean and safe. Eliminate unneeded furniture and supplies.
- Use child-size furniture so kids feel comfortable.
- Decorate to capture curiosity. Nearly 75 percent of people are visual learners who learn best with visual prompts. Thematic decorating helps them understand and remember well.
- Use words and pictures on signs for sites, restrooms, and offices.

Where to Meet

Deciding where to meet for Cross Explorations will depend on the space available in your building.

Engage requires a space large enough for all students to be seated and equipped so the leader can be heard clearly. If you plan to use the recording on the Engage CD, you will need a CD player. If you plan to use the PowerPoint presentation on the Engage CD, you will need a computer and a projector. The church sanctuary, a fellowship hall, or even a gymnasium can work for this session.

Explore requires separate spaces for the two levels. Classrooms equipped with chairs or desks or a section of a larger room that can be screened off will both work for this session. Preschool students, youth, and adults should have their own meeting locations apart from the Explore session.

Express sessions offer the greatest flexibility as far as meeting locations. You could offer multiple Express sites in one large space, provided you can screen off areas to prevent distractions. Rolling dividers, movable walls, or even

fabric panels help block the view from one area to another. In other situations, separate classrooms might offer the best setting for the Express sessions.

Decorating Ideas

Help students experience Cross Explorations by setting the scene for learning. Your decorations may be as simple as Concordia's realistic Bible Story Poster Sets. These sets contain pictures of each Bible story. Use posters to decorate Explore learning areas so teachers can refer to the appropriate picture for that week's lesson. You can view the posters in each set by searching "Bible Story Posters" at www.cph.org/sundayschool.

If you have a dedicated area for Sunday School, consider more extensive decorating to help set the stage for learning. Furnish Explore and Express areas with Bible-times decorations. Piles of brightly striped pillows can double as seating for storytelling time. Use baskets and ceramic vessels to hold craft supplies and student materials for each Express location. You might even set up a Bible-times marketplace to keep students engaged in the learning process.

Finding Christ in the Old Testament

by Charles Lehmann

When I was growing up, I hated Sunday School. I will never forget what I said to my mother the day I told her I didn't want to go anymore. I said, "All they ever do in there is talk about Jesus!" I thought that was the most damning condemnation I could possibly give. What I know now is that my complaint really only indicated that I had good and faithful Sunday School teachers.

As one of those teachers, you know it's not easy. You are asked to teach your students every week about what Christ has done for them on the cross. At the same time, you are teaching a particular Bible story; when the story is from the Old Testament, it's not always easy to find Jesus.

He's There

Jesus says it Himself. "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about Me" (John 5:39). Jesus' words are very relevant to the task of teaching the Scriptures to children. Our Lord says this to Pharisees who had vast portions of the Old Testament memorized and thought themselves great Bible scholars. Jesus tells them that because they do not read the Old Testament with Him at the center, they do not understand it at all.

One helpful way to find Jesus in an Old Testament story is to think about who Jesus is in the New Testament. He is the Savior. He is the one who gives His life for all humanity. He is the way God reveals Himself to us. Jesus is the one who forgives sins, gives life, heals, and shows mercy. He is the one who sheds His blood for sinners. Whenever God's people are being saved, Jesus is doing it. Whenever someone gives their life for another, Jesus is in the background. Whenever forgiveness and mercy are front and center, Jesus is there too.

Just as Jesus is in every text of Scripture, so are we. In each text of Scripture, we find sinners under satanic attack. They are being accused of their sins and are responding to it in one of three ways. Sinners who trust their Savior respond to Satan's accusation with repentance. Those who do not believe respond either with pride (thinking that they have no sin to repent) or despair (thinking there is no way they can possibly be forgiven). The way God's Word addresses the sinner in the midst of their struggle will often reveal the place where Christ, our Savior from sin, is also present.

Finding Christ

Now that we've covered the broad brushstrokes, let's get down to specifics. How might you find Christ in the passages coming up in this quarter of Cross Explorations? The upcoming lessons actually give us a wonderful opportunity to look at several ways Christ reveals Himself in the pages of the Old Testament. These are not the only ways you can find where Christ is. The more you practice looking for Christ in the pages of Scripture, the easier it will be for you to recognize Him.

When you see God in the Old Testament, you're seeing Jesus. Paul teaches us that Jesus is the icon (the visible image) of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15).

In the Old Testament, this means that if you are seeing God, you are seeing Jesus. This means Jesus is the one whose glory fills the tabernacle. He is the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. He is the one enthroned between the cherubim on the ark of the covenant. He is the one whose gracious presence abides with His people. This Old Testament imagery is taken up and applied to Jesus in the account of His conception (Luke 1:35) and in the introductory verses in John's Gospel (John 1:14). There are many other examples of this theme in the Old Testament. Jesus is the one who walks in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day (Genesis 3). Jesus is the one who appears in the burning bush (Exodus 3). Jesus is the one who shows His back to the elders of Israel (Exodus 24).

Many particular people and objects in the Old Testament point us directly to Christ. We also have a number of persons or objects that point forward to Christ in very direct ways. In addition to those we've already mentioned, we also have the bronze serpent. Jesus alludes to the serpent in John 3:14 as He points directly to the cross. We have Samson, who gives his life in the temple of Dagon in order to save Israel. We have Boaz, whose marriage to Ruth points forward to the fact that on the cross, Christ wins salvation for all people, including the Gentiles. Finally, in David, we have the king of whose throne Jesus is the heir.

Many people in the Old Testament are ancestors of Jesus. Ruth and David are both ancestors of Jesus. Even the prostitute Rahab is in our Lord's genealogy (Matthew 1:5). When we are looking at the lives of those in the Lord's ancestry, we are seeing people whose very existence is a fulfillment of God's promise to Eve that through her seed, the head of the serpent would be crushed (Genesis 3:15).

Jesus fights against His people's enemies. When Jericho falls, it is God who destroys the walls. When Gideon's army defeats the Midianites, God makes it clear that the victory belongs to Him. When Samson destroys Dagon's temple, he does so with strength that comes directly from God. When David kills Goliath, he does so saying it is God who will grant him the victory. In every case, these stories point forward to Jesus' death on the cross. In these Old Testament stories, Jesus saves His people by defeating their enemies. On the cross, Jesus defeats sin, death, and the power of the devil by shedding His blood in our place.

As a Sunday School teacher, you have been granted a wonderful opportunity to teach children that everything in the Bible is about Jesus. It is my prayer that the tools we've introduced here will make this task a joyful exploration of God's Word. Maybe your kids will go home one Sunday to their parents and announce with pride that all they ever do in *your* class is talk about Jesus.

The Word of Truth

by Adam Francisco

The accounts of Scripture that come from Jesus' years of earthly ministry are filled with extraordinary events. These are the lessons that fill several quarters of the Cross Explorations curriculum produced by Concordia Publishing House. Prophecies, angelic visitations, supernatural births, miraculous healings, and much more stand front and center. Christians take the veracity of these and the rest of what's recorded in the Gospels for granted. We trust that the apostles did not concoct "cleverly devised myths" (2 Peter 1:16) and that their companions, such as Luke (1:3), really did follow "all things closely" in composing his "orderly account" of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven.

Why?

Why do we trust the Gospels? Christians don't normally ask this question. It seems alien to faith and perhaps even a bit irreverent. Yet, this is just the sort of question Christians can expect to encounter in conversations that take place outside the environment of the Church. Popular opinion largely regards the Gospel accounts as legendary tales about, or mythological interpretations of, a possibly historical figure. And you can bet that our youth are exposed to this and other similar opinions. In fact, a recent book entitled *Already Gone* (Master Books, 2009) found that, on account of the various challenges to Christianity, many believers are losing their faith. The Church, claim the authors, has generally failed to equip youth for thinking about and defending their faith in the face of adversity. Their proposed solution is a renewed focus on Christian apologetics. Apologetics is generally defined as the defense of the Gospel in the face of opposition. Nowhere in the Scriptures are Christians instructed to run or hide from adversity. In fact, Jesus tells us we should expect it. "If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, . . . the world hates you" (John 15:19). Even so, Peter encourages us to

“have no fear . . . but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:14–15).

Opposition

A quick survey of the landscape reveals that Christianity faces a tremendous amount of opposition. Popular proponents of atheism, such as Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens, assert that Christianity’s core teachings are leftover myths from bygone eras. Islam claims that the Qur’an’s view of Jesus is the one that squares with history and that the Gospels are corrupted accounts of the life of the Muslim prophet Jesus. Popular academic personalities publish books meant for mass consumption with titles such as *Misquoting Jesus* and *Forged: Writing in the Name of God*. And the list goes on.

The point is that today is the day to recover the apologetic task, and it begins with the youth. Why? Because it’s tough stuff, and as Luther put it: “this is something no one can do unless he is practiced in this arena and has defended himself against [critics] from his youth” (AE 38:243). So where does one begin? Since Jesus Christ is at the heart of God’s Word, it is logical to start with the four Gospels and their account of Jesus’ life. Yet one returns to that basic apologetic question we asked at the beginning: why should one trust?

The answer is actually pretty simple. Matthew and John were eyewitnesses; Mark and Luke were companions of the apostles. Their testimony has the authority of firsthand accounts. There is no evidence that contradicts what they wrote. Therefore, these men prove to be good sources for the historical accuracy of Jesus. There are other reasons to regard the Gospels as reliable documents. For example, the details they present actually correspond to the historical and archaeological record. The biographical narratives they provide, though written from four different vantage points, are internally consistent. And the text overall has the ring of truth. It does not read like embellished or fabricated history.

Yet, there are, have been, and always will be those who don’t believe their testimony. They claim that, while the Gospels may be the product of eyewitnesses, their testimony—particularly the persistent supernatural activity recorded in them—make them suspect. This sort of objection is at root a world-view issue. Someone who believes that miracles don’t happen will obviously have trouble believing historical reports about miracles. Such an assumption, however, begs the questions: Who can say that miracles don’t happen? What man or woman is in the position to discern just what can and cannot happen in the world? The problem here is not with the historical record but the arrogance and stubborn will of the human mind.

Christian Truth

What happens, though, when the accounts of Jesus are examined as accurate records? We observe Jesus performing miraculous feats and making remarkable claims to the divine authority to forgive sins. Why? So that those who saw Him as well as later generations might know by His deeds that He held divine authority (see Mark 2:10). He was (and is) the “Christ, the Son of

God" (John 20:31). Accordingly, what He speaks is most certainly true. This includes His word to the apostles when He promised to send the Holy Spirit to help them recall everything He taught and to guide them in all truth (John 14:25–26; 16:13). Two of these apostles (Matthew and John) went on to record their experience with Jesus. All the apostles served as the sources from which Mark and Luke composed their accounts. To be sure, these are historical documents. According to God's promise, however, they also bear the imprimatur of and were inspired by the Third Person of the Trinity. "For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21).

If there is a trustworthy source from which a worldview can be derived, surely it would be the Holy Scriptures. As you study and teach accounts this quarter, remember that—as foreign to the experience of the twenty-first-century mind as they may be—they are not just stories we tell to strengthen our own Christian worldview. They are accounts of events that actually happened. Men wrote them down shortly after Jesus ascended into heaven, and the Holy Spirit guided the entire process. They stand above any philosophical speculation, man-made religion, or academic opinion. They are God's Word of truth.

Lesson Scope and Sequence: God Creates a World and a People

These lessons focus on Old Testament accounts from creation through the early patriarchs.

Lesson	Title	Text
1	God Creates the World	Genesis 1:1–2:3
2	God Creates Adam and Eve	Genesis 1:26–2:25
3	Sin Enters the World	Genesis 3
4	Cain and Abel	Genesis 4:1–16
5	Noah and the Flood	Genesis 6:1–9:17
6	God’s Covenant with Abram	Genesis 12:1–9; 15:1–6; 17
7	Abraham’s Visitors from Heaven	Genesis 18:1–15; 21:1–7
8	Abraham and Isaac	Genesis 21:1–7; 22:1–19
9	Isaac and Rebekah	Genesis 24
10	Jacob and Esau	Genesis 25:19–34; 27:1–40
11	Jacob’s Dream	Genesis 27:41–28:22
12	Jacob’s Family	Genesis 29:1–30:24
13	Esau Forgives Jacob	Genesis 31:3; 32–33

Weekly Podcasts

For teachers using the Cross Explorations Sunday School material, there is a wonderful weekly podcast resource available at www.cph.org/sundayschool. Click on “Seeds of Faith Podcast” in the Sunday School tools. This weekly interview unpacks the richness of the Bible text. Teachers will gain practical, relevant, biblical information to inform their teaching of the lesson.

Preparing the Lesson

God Creates the World

Genesis 1:1–2:3

Date of Use

Key Point

God made the world in six days by the power of His Word. All creation is God's blessing to us.

Law/Gospel

God requires that I believe that He is the only true God, the Creator and Sustainer of the world. **God gives me faith to believe that He created the earth and heavens, and He continues to provide me with all that I need to sustain this body and life, including forgiveness for my sins, through His Son, Jesus Christ.**

Context

Genesis is a family history about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (called Israel), chosen by God. The creation account and other material in Genesis 1–11 serves as foundation for the family history that follows in Genesis 12–50.

Moses is the authority behind the first five books of the Bible, called the Torah (Law). Some material was revealed directly to Moses; other material was known to generations before Moses and, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, was set down by him or immediate successors.

The Genesis accounts of creation, the preflood world, the flood, and the immediate resettlement after the flood have parallels in ancient writings that predate Moses, particularly in Mesopotamia.

Commentary

The Spirit of God hovering over the waters of the formless void shows that the Spirit brings order out of chaos. This image recurs in the Baptism of Christ (Mark 1:10), where it reminds us that in Christ we are a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17), with the Spirit bringing order out of our chaos. The Hebrew word translated "Spirit" in Genesis 1:2 also means "wind" or "breath."

Words are formed from breath. As God proceeds to speak creation into being, the Genesis account establishes a unity between God the speaker, the Word by which He

created the world, and the Spirit. This Word became flesh in Christ Jesus, as proclaimed in John 1:1–14. The words of Psalm 104:30 also portray the Spirit as an agent of creation. God's Word does what it says ("Let there be . . . and there was"). What God declares is true; God's Word is truth (John 17:17).

God begins His creation by creating light on the first day. God is the real source of light. Each day, God adds dramatically to the world that He calls "good"—heaven; earth and seas; plants; sun, moon, and stars; creatures that swim and fly; creatures that walk and crawl on the ground; and finally, man, both male and female. Some mistakenly worship the sun or other elements of creation that merely do what God assigns to them. However, they were not made to be worshiped but to be used.

The creation of people on the sixth day serves as the climax of creation. God creates both male and female in His image. Our image is not physical likeness but spiritual likeness, or righteousness. Note that man's rule over all other creatures and marriage/procreation are part of the sinless creation, which God declares "very good." God gives plants as food; death for humans and animals is not part of this perfect creation. Everything is intended to work for good.

Because God rested on the seventh day (our Saturday), the Sabbath ("rest") day was set apart ("made holy"). The ceremonial laws regarding the Sabbath have their fulfillment in Christ, who, having finished His work on Good Friday (John 19:30), rested in the tomb on the Sabbath. Christians from the earliest times met on Sundays to celebrate His resurrection. The commandment concerning the Sabbath no longer pertains to a particular day of the week but rather to setting aside time so that God might re-create us through His Word. Creation's patterns give us a sense of how things "ought to be."

To hear an in-depth discussion of this Bible account, visit cph.org/podcast and listen to our Seeds of Faith podcast each week.

God Creates a World and a People

Old Testament 1

Arch® Book Connections

Children love the rhyming patterns found in Concordia Publishing House's beloved Arch Book series. Arch Books also offer lots of options for expanding and enriching your Cross Explorations lessons:

Read the Arch Book as a sort of "readers theater." Have students take turns reading stanzas, pages, or even the whole book. This would make a great Opening activity or lesson review.

Make a "book trailer"—sort of like a movie trailer—of the Arch Book with a narration that "plugs" the book. For example: He was small—his adversary, a giant! He had only five smooth stones, while his enemy had a spear as long as a weaver's beam. Thrill to the challenge! "Ha, ha, ha! Come out and fight, pip-squeak!" Tremble with fear! "King Saul, what shall we do?!" Read it for yourself and find out who comes out victorious! Available now at your Sunday School library! The story of David and . . . (bum, bum, baaa!) Goliath!

Do a dramatic presentation of an Arch Book, and share it with another class. If the upper grade students do one story as a drama or trailer, make sure the lower grades see the final results. Let the younger children perform for the upper grades as well.

Have students create their own rhyming book with illustrations. Take digital pictures of the illustrations, and make them into a PowerPoint slide "book." These could be performed in a chapel service or the Opening in Sunday School.

If your church provides "worship bags" to help keep young children focused during the worship service, consider inserting the Arch Books for the quarter in those bags. With each new quarter, change out the Arch Books to include the applicable stories.

The Arch Books that correspond to the lessons for this quarter:

Lesson 1: *Where Did the World Come From?* #592239

Lesson 2: *The Story of Creation* #591560

Lesson 3: *Falling Into Sin* #592287

From Adam to Easter #592265

Lesson 4: *Cain and Abel* #592283

Lesson 5: *Noah's 2-by-2 Adventure* #591511

A Man Named Noah #592206

Lesson 6: *Abraham, Sarah & Isaac* #592244

Lesson 7: *Abraham, Sarah & Isaac* #592244

Lesson 8: *Abraham's Big Test* #591502

Lesson 11: *Jacob's Dream* #591538

God Creates a World and a People

Old Testament 1

Weekly Bulletin Notes

Help parents and others stay connected to your Sunday School with these weekly bulletin summaries of the Bible lesson for the week. An electronic version for placement in your church bulletin is also available online: www.cph.org/sundayschool.

Lesson 1

We begin this quarter with God's account of the beginning of all things in "God Creates the World." During the week, point out to your children some of the wonderful things in our world God made and praise Him for these creations. Consider asking, *"How did God create the world? What is your favorite part of God's creation?"*

Lesson 2

Today in Sunday School, our students will hear how "God Creates Adam and Eve," including providing them with perfect physical attributes and a lush garden in which to live. God created the world's many natural resources so it would be a wonderful place for His most treasured creation, human beings, to live. Parents might ask, *"How were Adam and Eve different from the rest of God's creation?"*

Lesson 3

Today our children will study the Scripture's account, "Sin Enters the World," as the devil tempted Adam and Eve to sin. With the fall into sin came God's punishment of death . . . but also His promise of a Savior. You might discuss, *"How does sin affect us as a family? How does God's promise of a Savior give us comfort?"*

Lesson 4

Do your kids get jealous? Today in Sunday School, our children will study the story of "Cain and Abel," which tells about the first case of murder caused by jealousy. Consider discussing, *"How does jealousy affect relationships in a family? Why is it important to forgive one another in our family?"*

Lesson 5

As our children study the Bible account "Noah and the Flood" in Sunday School today, they will consider God's messages that He gave through the flood and the rainbow. God promises to provide a Savior to overcome sin and take its punishment for us. Parents could ask, *"How do God's promises give you comfort?"*

Lesson 6

In Sunday School today, our children will study "God's Covenant with Abram." As He did for Abram, God keeps His promises, as He did in giving His own Son, Jesus, to be our Savior. Consider discussing, *"What important promises do we make as a family? How can we remind ourselves of the promises God keeps for us?"*

Lesson 7

This week in Sunday School, students will study, "Abraham's Visitors from Heaven." While Abraham received his visitors graciously, they brought more grace to him than he and Sarah could imagine. As a family, discuss, *"How does God bring us more grace than we can imagine or expect?"*

Lesson 8

In Sunday School this week, students will study the account of "Abraham and Isaac." By God's grace, Abraham didn't have to make his sacrifice, but God did. He sacrificed His own Son so that we could have salvation. Discuss, *"How do the sacrifices we make compare with the sacrifice God made to save us from sin's punishment?"*

Lesson 9

Lesson 1: God Creates the World

Text: Genesis 1:1–2:3

Date Used: _____

Key Point: God made the world in six days by the power of His Word. All creation is God’s blessing to us.

Law/Gospel: God requires that I believe that He is the only true God, the Creator and Sustainer of the world. **God gives me faith to believe that He created the earth and heavens, and He continues to provide me with all that I need to sustain this body and life, including forgiveness of my sins through His Son, Jesus Christ.**

To bring:

Engage

Approximate time: _____

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Suggested Songs: “Builder of Everything,” Track 1; “Wonderfully Yours,” Track 2; “God, Who Built This Wondrous Planet,” Track 4.

Bible Challenge Question: God created all of the planets in our solar system. What are their names? **Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune (Pluto is now considered a dwarf planet)**

Notes: _____

To bring:

Explore

Approximate time: _____

Level 1 (Grades 1–3)

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes: _____

Level 2 (Grades 4–6)

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes: _____

Adult Bible Study

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes: _____

To bring:

Express Options (Choose 2 or more!)

Approximate
times:

Slot 1:

Slot 2:

Slot 3*:

Slot 4*:

Slot 5*:

Slot 6*:

- ☐ **Music:** Builder of Everything, Track 3
Thy Strong Word, Track 20
God's Creation, Track 8

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

- ☐ **Skit:** God Creates the World

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

- ☐ **Craft:** God's Good Creation Yo-Yo

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

- ☐ **Food Activity:** Where Did That Come From?

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

- ☐ **Group Activity:** Worlds of Creativity

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

- ☐ **Service Project:** Caring for the World God Made

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

*If applicable

Old Testament 1

God Creates a World and a People

Lesson	Title	Date of Use
1	God Creates the World	_____
2	God Creates Adam and Eve	_____
3	Sin Enters the World	_____
4	Cain and Abel	_____
5	Noah and the Flood	_____
6	God's Covenant with Abram	_____
7	Abraham's Visitors from Heaven	_____
8	Abraham and Isaac	_____
9	Isaac and Rebekah	_____
10	Jacob and Esau	_____
11	Jacob's Dream	_____
12	Jacob's Family	_____
13	Esau Forgives Jacob	_____