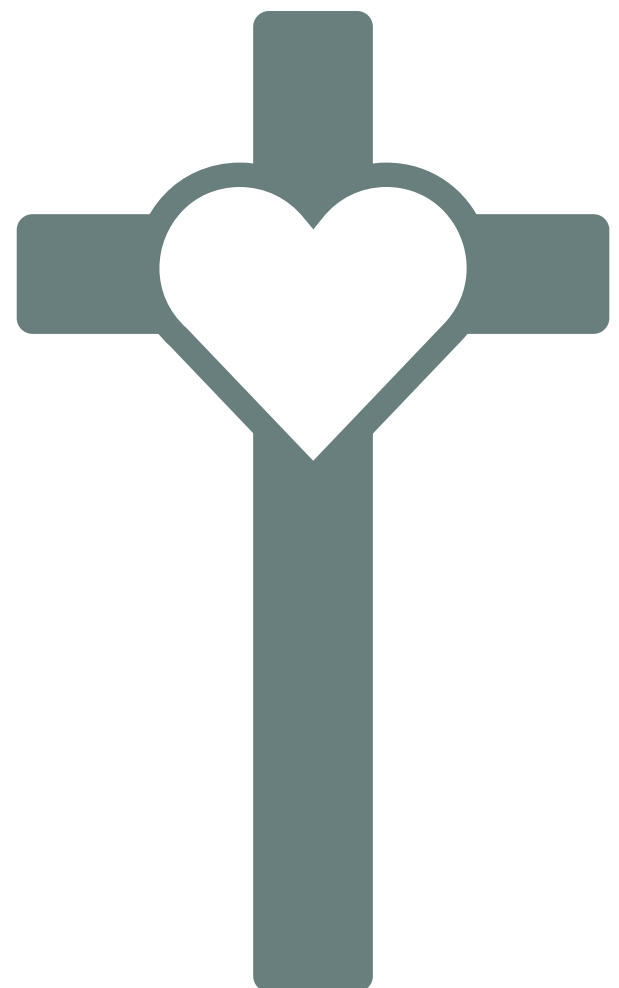


GRADE 7

TEACHER GUIDE





Enduring Faith®

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GRADE 7

Introduction

ENDURING FAITH® CURRICULUM

The Enduring Faith Curriculum family is a suite of resources that works from the following principles:

- **God's Word gives life.** The Word of God teaches about the Word made flesh—Jesus Christ—throughout its pages so that all people may know of a renewed life now and an eternal life forever with Him.
- **We are children of God.** All Enduring Faith resources point to who we are as people forgiven through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- **We are called to love.** These resources remind God's forgiven children that we are called to love God and others.
- **Our goal is to make disciples for life.** Enduring Faith looks at the Christian from a lifetime perspective to ensure that believers at every age and stage are growing and learning what it means to be a follower of Christ.
- **Faith is important in the home.** Enduring Faith strives to equip teachers of the faith with resources for connection with families at home. The hope is that Christian families will realize the importance of teaching the faith at home and feel supported to do so.

RELIGION CURRICULUM TRAITS

Following the legacy of Day School religion curriculum from Concordia Publishing House, the Enduring Faith Religion Curriculum has specific characteristics to keep in mind:

- **Teaching is strategic and aligned.** The scope and sequence for this Day School curriculum balances the need for biblical literacy and schoolwide alignment. There are 70 lessons arranged in 8 units, beginning with creation and concluding with John's Revelation. Every level works with the same section of the Bible for the same lesson. This enables schools to have schoolwide themes for weekly newsletters and chapels, monthly unit activities, and the like. At the same time, each level focuses on a variety of subthemes for each lesson so that students can learn the rich breadth of Bible content. For instance, under the umbrella theme "God Gives Israel Judges," a variety of judges will be studied, depending on the grade level.
- **Curriculum design is aligned and intentional.** Administrators and teachers alike can see at a glance how students will learn and grow throughout their years by reviewing the master documents of Memory Words and religion standards.

- **Religion standards are built into the design.** Educational professionals at the school, district, and synodical levels of Lutheran education worked together to create a list of religion standards for Lutheran education. This curriculum intentionally teaches to these standards and notes them accordingly.
- **Differentiation is key for learner support.** Not only do students have a variety of learning needs, but they also have a wide variety of prior knowledge and background in the Bible and matters of faith. Enduring Faith strives to support teachers in reaching students with a wide array of strategies to be sure all students feel welcome and supported in learning about God's love for them.
- **Teacher language is streamlined.** Professional teachers know how to interact with their students, but teaching the faith can be daunting. This curriculum uses bullet points and selective bold text to help teachers focus on key theological points so they can naturally and confidently teach about the Bible.
- **Flexibility is built in.** While many schools will take advantage of walking together in faith through an aligned scope and sequence, teachers have numerous options within the lesson materials, as will be illustrated in the Teacher Guide Overview on the next page.
- **Lessons provide a two-part focus.** Lessons are divided into two key sessions, allowing flexibility for the classroom teacher. Session 1 focuses on learning the biblical account. Session 2 applies the biblical learning to students' lives. Depending on the classroom schedule, teachers may condense or extend learning, but the two-part design ensures that students learn both biblical content and faith application.
- **Technology provides support.** Teachers, families, and students will find helpful tools with devotions, unit videos, Memory Words activities, checks for understanding, assessment helps, and more. Review the Enduring Faith digital resources to familiarize yourself with these helps.

WORKING TOGETHER

We are honored to partner with you in teaching the faith to the next generation! We pray that this curriculum enables you to more easily work together with your colleagues and families. We also invite you to reach out to us so that we may better work with you in teaching God's children about their Savior. Call 800-325-3040 any time.

Teacher Guide Overview

UNIT PAGES

There are 8 themed units. The two unit pages at the beginning of the unit include these helps:

- **Unit Theme and Focus:** An explanation of what the unit is about and ways the theme applies at specific grade levels.
- **Preassessments:** Suggestions for evaluating where students are in their learning to inform your teaching.
- **Project Ideas:** Classroom project ideas.
- **Into the World:** Information on how the Church ministers to people through various organizations and projects along with ideas for putting faith into action.
- **Look Ahead:** Things to check out before you teach.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Title and Text

The umbrella theme title and Bible text for all grades are in roman, followed by the grade-level title and Bible text in bold.

Background

This section lets you see the biblical foundation of each lesson.

Classroom Devotion

Every lesson includes a brief devotion, along with hymn and song suggestions from these resources:

Lutheran Service Book (LSB)
One and All Rejoice (OAR)

Lesson Overview

A long sidebar on the first page lists key information you will need for teaching:

Central Truth is shared by all grades.
Grade-Level Truth is specific to a grade.
Standards provides religion standards taught in the lesson.
Objectives guides teaching and informs assessment.
Materials lists items you need to teach each lesson; “The Basics” include standard classroom supplies and student materials. See page 8 for a complete list.

At the end of the unit, there are two more pages of helps:

- **Postassessments:** Suggestions for review and questions or activities for understanding what students have learned.
- **Christian Heritage:** Select topics that explore the history of the Christian Church from its early years to present day.
- **Additional Domains in Religion Standards:** Topics and activities relating to biblical literacy, Lutheran doctrine, worship life, works of love, and confessing the faith.
- **Faith Family Ideas:** Activities and resources for use in multigrade faith families in your school.
- **Unit Extenders:** Ideas for extending the unit theme.

LESSON 1

God Creates the World | **God Creates and Gives Life**
Genesis 1–2 | **Genesis 1–2**

BACKGROUND

In the beginning, there was only God—the eternal God who always has been and who always will be. Then God spoke, creating matter out of nothing.

Through the hovering of the Spirit over this formless deep, God was already present and active in the world. God spoke, and the power of His Word brought order and form to chaos. God continued to speak, making all things come into existence and creating a beautiful, perfect world.

When God created man, He did more than simply speak humanity into existence. God carefully formed Adam from the dirt. He formed Eve from Adam's side. God's creative act culminated in man and

woman. He created them to rule over and care for the world. He created them to be in relationship with Him. Encourage your students to think about the unique place in creation that God has given humans—that God has given them. God created humans in His image. We are created from the earth to help care for the earth. God took great care in creating our bodies; they are a blessing from Him. Help your students rejoice in the body God has given to them; the body that is uniquely theirs, a gift from their Creator. God doesn't accidentally put people in the wrong body. He intentionally creates every person to be His very own child.

CLASSROOM DEVOTION

Are you ready for some fascinating facts?

- It takes Pluto almost 250 years to orbit the sun.
- There are more trees on earth than there are stars in the Milky Way.
- The smallest snail cannot be seen without a microscope.

Some facts are sad:

- Billions of people struggle to find water every day.
- Two people die every second.

There are two facts that don't seem to go together, but both are true: The world is a beautiful place. The world is also broken. When God created the world, everything was perfect! The skies were perfect. The plants were perfect. The animals were perfect. Even the humans were perfect. Sadly, we know that Adam and Eve sinned, and all of creation suffered for it. We live in a fallen, broken world.

There is still beauty, but there is sadness too.

Our Savior, who was there at the beginning, died, rose, and will come again. When He returns, He will make a new heaven and earth. We will see a perfect creation again! Until then, we can tell others about Jesus so they can be ready for His return.

PRAY Father, You created us. Savior, You saved us. Spirit, You make us new. Guide us to tell others of all You have done to make all things new. Amen.

SING “For the Beauty of the Earth” (OAR 332); “When Morning Gilds the Skies” (LSB 807); or “God, Who Made the Earth and Heaven” (LSB 877).

CENTRAL TRUTH

Our triune God abundantly blesses us with our world and with all that we are and have, including our bodies and souls, families and friends, and forgiveness and salvation in Jesus.

GRADE-LEVEL TRUTH

God, our Creator, made the world and everything in it, including the crown of His creation, humankind.

STANDARDS

- LD1: Describe what God has revealed about Himself through Scripture and natural knowledge.
- LD2: Describe God's work of creation and preservation.
- RL8: Demonstrate an ability to use sound biblical practices to understand and apply passages of Scripture.

OBJECTIVES

- Retell the creation account from both a wide viewpoint and a more detailed viewpoint.
- Recognize that God created a perfect world, but Adam and Eve sinned and corrupted it.
- Express hope and confidence that we are forgiven in Jesus, who will come again to make a new heaven and new earth.

MATERIALS

Session 1

- The Basics (see Teacher Guide Introduction, p. 8)

Session 2

- The Basics

UNIT 1 | LESSON 1

Lesson Extenders

REACHING EVERY STUDENT

You may find in this seventh-grade curriculum an increased expectation for students to look up Bible verses as they explore the Bible narratives and answer questions in the Student Book. Some students may have difficulty flipping between chapters, books, and the Old Testament and New Testament. Some may not be familiar enough with the Bible to find Bible passages quickly and easily. If each student has an identical copy of the Bible, you could provide page numbers to help them find passages more easily. Other options include providing Bible tabs for students to mark books of the verses, or projecting the verses onto a screen for the whole class to read.

FAITH IN ACTION

Every human is sinful and struggles with failure, temptation, and trials. And every human is beloved by God. Jesus died to redeem each person. We are called to show love to each person, witnessing about the Good News of Jesus so that all may know His grace. Instill in your students the knowledge that all people are loved by God. All people are sinful and hurting and need a loving Savior. Ask students to create cards that voice these truths, quoting Scripture and writing notes of encouragement. Ask students to bring in wrapped, nonperishable treats. Assemble care packages with the notes and treats, and find a good way to distribute them in your community. Food pantries, homeless shelters, and prison ministries could put these packages to good use.

RELATE

Social Skills ■ In the first two chapters of Genesis, we get a picture of a “perfect world”—creation as God intended it and according to His perfect will.

As you begin this school year together, ask students what a “perfect classroom” would look like. How would people act? What would be the desired goal for how your community lives together as brothers and sisters in Christ? Use this picture as a focus for considering classroom rules. Focus on the perfect ideals more than problems to avoid.

Because we live in a fallen world, everyone in the classroom will fail. What steps will be necessary for reconciliation? Map out steps such as repentance and restoration to keep in mind when troubles arise. Remind students that we know God's will because He tells us in His Word, and He shows us in the descriptions of the Garden of Eden. We also see God's love in Jesus' death, resurrection, and promised return as the means to redeem us and bring us back into a relationship with Him.

WORKS OF LOVE

As mentioned in “Faith Concepts” on page 12, many Christian apologists (defenders of the faith) feel the pressure to prove creation in order to prove the Bible. Increasingly, Lutheran apologists begin with establishing Jesus as a real figure who can be believed. If we can believe Jesus, we can believe that He is God, as He said. If we can believe He is God, we can believe everything He has said about the Bible, creation, His Father, and everything else.

The Enduring Faith Curriculum also has an apologetics course that could serve as an elective or supplementary module throughout the year. If your students seem interested in defending the faith or even doubtful about the validity of God's Word, they may be interested in this resource.

Regardless, ensure a safe environment for asking questions so that students are open to asking questions in a Christian environment rather than elsewhere. Before this lesson even begins, set up a “Big Questions” box in your room so that you can collect the questions over time and have time to respond to them. If a student asks a tough question in class, you may even want to write it down and pop it into the box. This shows students that it's okay to ask questions and it's okay to take time to research a question carefully before answering.

CLASSROOM COMMUNITY

At this age, kids are grappling with questions about identity: Who are they? How are they different from others? How are they the same? Are they valued and loved? Set the tone early this year with a project called “All About Me.” Hand out interview questions asking about interests, background, talents, favorite trips, and the like. Each day, read one student's bio, adding affirming comments along the way (or even writing up a brief bio for them). At the end of each, affirm that this youth is created by God, loved by God, redeemed by God, and made worthy through the saving work of Jesus. You can post these bios on a bulletin board with the heading “Remember Whose You Are.”

You could also allow time for students to interview one another, helping them get to know others they might not know as well.

FAITH AT HOME

In an email to parents and guardians, share information with families on how to use the digital tools for this curriculum. The unit video will help set the tone for the next few weeks, and the family devotions will equip families with an easy way to take faith learning from school and extend it into the home. By starting now, this can become a habit for many families throughout the year!

Lesson Extenders

The last page of the lesson contains ideas for extending the lesson. These extenders give you options for customizing each lesson to best meet the needs of your schedule and the unique learning styles of the students in your classroom. Be sure to check out this page for activities to expand and enrich the concepts taught, suggestions for carrying the lesson theme into other curricular areas, or ways to connect the lesson to worship/liturgy, Lutheran doctrine, catechism, and the like.

Into the Lesson

This section, found in both sessions, captures your students’ interest by using an object lesson, discussion, demonstration, activity, puppet play, or the like, inviting them into the lesson. In Session 2, this section may also review the Bible account in preparation for applying it to students’ lives.

Student Book Reduction Pages

For easy reference, an inset of the Student Book page is included in each lesson. Session 1 has the Bible study portion of the lesson. Session 2 has an activity page that applies what was learned in the lesson, with answers filled in, if applicable.

UNIT 1 | LESSON 1 | SESSION 1

God Creates and Gives Life

INTO THE LESSON

Ask your students to think about their favorite land animals. Then ask for favorite birds, then sea creatures. Take votes on preferences: oceans or creeks, deserts or icebergs, and so on.

As kids might start to debate, encourage them to say what they love about their favorite animals or works of creation. If some begin to talk about the dangers of a certain animal or land formation (for example), challenge them to consider how things might have been before the fall. Sharks did not attack. Plants were not poisonous.

INTO THE WORD

Instead of focusing on what happened on each day of creation, this lesson takes a wide focus and gradually narrows in, similar to the way Genesis 1–2 is written. If you’d like, feel free to ask a volunteer to write the numbers 1 through 7 on the board and record what happens each day. But the Student Book will address the content a little differently than by going through creation day by day. Have students turn to page 5 in the Student Book.

Today, we’re going to read about creation a few times. Ready? Here’s the first account.

Read Genesis 1:1.

That’s it! First creation narrative done. God made everything. Some students might laugh or roll their eyes, but encourage them to consider the first question. As basic as this sentence seems, it tells a great deal! After a minute, ask students to share their thoughts. We learn that God was there in the beginning, that God created everything, that He is Lord of all.

Now let’s narrow our focus and see some more details.

Read Genesis 1:2–2:3. You may want to read it dramatically, let students take turns, or find a dramatic reading of the ESV translation online or through a platform of your choice.

Take a few minutes to consider the next questions. They may seem easy, but they’re very important.

These questions relate to the careful record keeping of God’s creation. He decided to spread out His work, and He decided to make sure that each day was specifically laid out as to what happened when. On the first few days, God made the heavens and the earth. On the next days, He filled it with creatures and life.

Read Genesis 2:4–25. If time is running short, focus on verses 18–25. Give students time to consider the last questions.

Even in a perfect world, Adam wasn’t enough. It was not good for him to be alone. Who did he need? God created both man and woman to live and work together in harmony.

CONTINUE WITH LESSON EXTENDERS

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UNIT 1 | LESSON 1 | SESSION 2

God Creates and Gives Life

INTO THE LESSON

On the board, write “In a perfect world.”

Have you heard this phrase before? The idea behind it is that our world isn’t perfect. It is fallen. But it used to be perfect! Can you imagine living in a perfect world today? What would be different?

Take ideas, and provide some examples. We wouldn’t have to go shopping because nothing would ever wear out. We wouldn’t need shoes because nothing would hurt our feet. Pest control companies would not be necessary. The list could go on forever.

One way we can figure out God’s will is to look at His creation before the fall. Genesis 1 and 2 give us a picture of how God wanted the world to work. It’s also a small glimpse at what the world will be like again. Jesus promised to come again and make a new heaven and a new earth. Everything will be perfect! Can you imagine what that will be like?

If time allows, have students write their thoughts in their Faith and Prayer Journals.

INTO OUR LIVES

Direct students to the “Perfection Scavenger Hunt” section on page 6 in the Student Book. Have students to work in small groups. Tell them to skim through the reading to discover what life was like before the fall.

- Humans were created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). This does not necessarily mean that they physically looked like God, but humans reflected who God is. This image was distorted in the fall.
- God made males and females and told them to have children (1:28). He gave them the gift of marriage, where “a man shall . . . hold fast to his wife” in faithfulness (2:24).
- All humans and animals are plants (1:29–30). Jesus ate meat when on earth, and God gave His people directions for meals and sacrifices at festivals. It is not a sin to eat meat, but meat was not eaten before the fall.
- God gave humans work—to tend the garden and care for all creation (1:28). Work is a blessing. Sin has made work difficult now. We don’t care for creation as we should.
- There were rules (2:17). Humans had the freedom to sin; they were not robots blindly following God without choice.

Point out how different things are today. God’s will is good: He loves us and wants what is best for us. We don’t always want what is good because we are sinful. But in Jesus, we are forgiven. We can turn to God’s Word to see His will for us.

Read through the last part of the page. The fallen world is not the end! In Jesus, we look forward to a new heaven and earth.

CONTINUE WITH LESSON EXTENDERS

13

UNIT 1 | LESSON 1

Perfection Scavenger Hunt

Skim back through Genesis 1–2. What was different before sin entered the world? Write down some of your findings in the magnifying glasses below.



A Perfect World . . . Restored

When Jesus gave John a vision of Jesus’ second coming, John wrote, “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more” (Revelation 21:1). Jesus promises to come back again and bring all believers to live with Him. He also promises to make all things new: a new heaven and a new earth. What does that look like? We don’t really know! But we know that there will be no sin, no tears, no pain, no sickness . . . How will you be different in the new creation? What do you look forward to seeing or doing?

CATECHISM CONNECTION

The Apostles’ Creed says a great deal in just a few paragraphs. For example, the First Article talks about creation, when everything was perfect. The Second Article shows how Jesus redeemed us, His creatures. The Third Article begins to point to the restoration of all things: “the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.” Take some time to look at the explanation of the Third Article. God started with perfection. We ruined it, but Jesus brought redemption. God will end with perfection again, with a new creation, which will never end.

FAITH IN ACTION

God gave us the responsibility to take care of His creation. How do we do this today? Ask students for examples of people taking care of the world. The world is fallen, and there is much to be done. Ask students to brainstorm ideas of how to care for creation. Examples could include raking the schoolyard, planting native wildflowers, recycling, and more. We witness to the Creator when caring for His creation.

14

Into the Word

This section, found in Session 1 of each lesson, provides the heart of the lesson, giving special attention to the Bible story or Bible study focus for the lesson.

For young children, this section provides ideas for teaching the Bible story in age-appropriate ways. For primary grades with young readers, guided-reading discussion points and ideas are provided to teach God’s Word. Older students are encouraged to read the biblical text with this section supporting and enriching their understanding.

Into Our Lives

This section, found in Session 2 of each lesson, provides teaching points to help students learn how the Bible lesson applies in their lives today. It encourages students to react to, respond to, and apply the concepts they have learned to their own lives as God’s children. Most important, it shows them how God has worked and continues to work in their lives.

Lesson Support

Below the Student Book page in each session, you will find additional ideas for teaching your lesson. The content varies from lesson to lesson. It includes teacher tips, active learning ideas, and a wide variety of other ideas to enhance student learning.

A Closer Look at the Basics

The Materials list in each lesson mentions “The Basics,” which includes classroom supplies such as the following:

- **For the classroom:** Bibles, catechisms, hymnals/song-books, music recordings, digital devices, blank paper, construction paper, note cards, adhesive notes, tape, glue, staplers.
- **For each student:** *Enduring Faith Student Book*, scissors, pencils, crayons or markers, colored pencils.

Overview of Student Materials

STUDENT BOOK

In the Student Book, the first page of each lesson, for use with Session 1, focuses on the Bible account. The reverse side, used with Session 2, includes an application activity and Memory Words from the Bible. There are extra pages in the back of the Student Book. Most grades have a Glossary so students can look up faith words they may not know. Preschool and Kindergarten levels offer Bible figures with simple suggestions.

STICKER PAD

Students in Preschool, Kindergarten, and Grade 1 receive a Sticker Pad to use in completing lesson activities. Some levels have additional “bonus” stickers in the back for added fun!

Additional Teacher Resources

BIBLES

You know what Bibles work well for your classroom and school. Here are two great options to consider:

- ***Faith Alive Bible:*** ESV Bible with facts, connections, introductions, charts, and more.
- ***The Lutheran Study Bible:*** ESV Bible with study notes that are distinctly Lutheran, maps, articles, and a concordance.

HYMNALS/SONGBOOKS

You know what hymnals and songbooks work well for your classroom. Here are two great options to consider:

- ***One and All Rejoice:*** Children’s hymnal with 200 favorite and new hymns and songs, liturgies, and prayers.
- ***Lutheran Service Book:*** Christ-centered hymns, psalms, liturgies, and prayers for church, school, and home.

CATECHISM FOR GRADE 7

The Enduring Faith Religion Curriculum intentionally connects to the Small Catechism:

- ***Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation, 2017:*** A clear summary of God’s Word on the Christian faith.

Digital Resources

The following digital resources are designed to support you, your students, and their families.

MEMORY WORDS

Each lesson has Memory Words from the Bible in the Student Book. Because committing the Scriptures to memory has value for Christians of all ages, the curriculum provides digital resources to assist with the learning process.

MUSIC

Many recordings of hymns and songs are available in the digital resources. Check for playlists to enhance singing.

ACTIVITIES

All lessons have online activities, and available resources will continue to grow. Check often for ways to reinforce learning in the classroom and at home.

UNIT VIDEOS

Each of the 8 units includes a video to help summarize the corresponding section of the Bible and its themes. You may choose to share a link to the video so families can stay connected.

Curriculum Supplements

Concordia Publishing House offers a number of curriculum resources to enrich student learning across subject areas.

LEARNING ABOUT SEX

Concordia Publishing House’s highly acclaimed Learning About Sex series has been helping families and schools explain God’s gift of sexuality for generations. The series includes resources for preschool through adults with versions for boys and girls.

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER CONNECTION

Christian teachers will find practical ideas and activities to help them assist students in understanding themselves and others. Students will acquire life skills that will be helpful in dealing with challenging situations throughout their lives.

UNIT 1

God Creates the World and Calls a Nation

UNIT THEME

The first words in the Book of Genesis lay the foundation for what lies ahead: “In the beginning, God . . .” God’s work of creation and redemption is set in motion with one simple phrase.

As this school year begins, you will be taking your students to the foundation of this great metanarrative. The account concerning God’s creation of the heavens and the earth in six natural days lays the foundation for all of Scripture.

This first unit covers a grand sweep of Old Testament history, beginning with the creation of the world and continuing through the life story of Joseph. Students will learn how sin first entered our world and see how God established His plan to rescue all humankind from their sins.

Within that sweep of history, students will meet patriarchs, including Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. But more than just learning their names, students will be led to understand the

important place the patriarchs had in the greater salvation story. No one had a greater role than any other; rather, each was used by God as part of the whole in order that God’s will might be fulfilled.

As you lead students through this unit, help them see the foundation established when God created the world and everything in it. Adam and Eve destroyed that perfect creation through their willful sin. That sin had consequences, which we see throughout the rest of this unit and in our own lives. At the same time, we see how God works through His people to carry out His plan for the coming Savior—for the people of the Old Testament and for us today.

UNIT LESSONS

1. God Creates and Gives Life
Genesis 1–2
2. Cain and Abel
Genesis 4
3. The Flood
Genesis 6–9
4. God’s Promises to Abram
Genesis 15; 17:1–18:15
5. Sarai, Hagar, and Ishmael
Genesis 16:1–16; 21:8–21
6. Isaac Blesses His Sons
Genesis 27
7. Jacob’s Family
Genesis 29:1–30:24
8. Joseph Is Sold by His Brothers
Genesis 37:12–36
9. Joseph’s Brothers Go to Egypt
Genesis 42–44

UNIT FOCUS FOR GRADE 7

In this first unit of the Grade 7 Enduring Faith Curriculum, you and your students will dig deeper into some of the foundational accounts given to us in the Book of Genesis: Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah, Abram and Sarai, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. God chose each of these people to play a part in God’s great plan of salvation. These people and families often showed great faith and trust in their Creator. They also had times of conflict, sin, and doubt. As your students observe the way God responded to His sinful people with mercy, forgiveness, and love, we pray they will be encouraged in their own faith life, growing deeper in their trust and knowledge of God. They will see the great love our God has for His children as they witness the unfolding of God’s plan to save His people through the Savior who would live, die, and rise for us.

- Seventh graders often think in the present (How can I apply this biblical information to my life right now?) and may begin to question ideas learned in childhood. They may show interest in discussing social issues such as divorce, suicide, and inequality. They need assurance that they are important to Christ and His Church, and they respond positively to adults who genuinely care for them, try to understand them, and accept them as valuable people.
- You will find your students at various degrees of depth and understanding in their spiritual life. Aim at meeting your students where they are; bring them to the Word of God, and trust in the power of the Holy Spirit to work the results.

Unit Prep

PREASSESSMENTS

Cut out strips of paper that contain the following descriptions:

- (2) The first parents ever to exist
- (2) Two brothers; one hates the other
- (8) Eight family members stuck on a boat
- (2) A husband and wife who want children but can't have any
- (2) Two brothers; one plays a trick on the other
- (3) Two sisters who are jealous of each other and the husband they share
- (12) A lot of brothers; one is Dad's favorite

Draw a slip of paper and read the description. Ask the class to name the people described. Give hints as needed. Then call to the front of the classroom the number of students listed in parentheses. Ask the students to assume the roles of the characters described and role-play a scene from their lives. Tell students that each family is written about in Genesis. They should act out a part of the family's biblical narrative if they know it.

If students are unfamiliar with the narratives, give them a "sneak peek" at what they will be learning about them as they study these narratives.

PROJECT IDEAS

At the beginning of the year, give each student a notebook to use as a Faith and Prayer Journal for religion class.

Hand out permanent markers and allow students time to make the journal their own by decorating the cover with designs, favorite Bible verses, drawings, and so forth.

Give each student a printout of Luther's Morning Prayer and the Lord's Prayer. They can cut these to size and glue them on the inside front and back covers of the journal.

Students can make notes, sketches, or diagrams in their journals to help them remember what they have learned each day, record definitions of words and terms that were discussed in the lesson, and write down any questions they may have.

Encourage students to write prayers and favorite Bible verses in their journals. Have them periodically look back to see how God has answered their prayers.

The Faith and Prayer Journals can also be used to check for understanding at the end of the lesson. Write a question on the board and ask your students to write their thoughts in their journals. Review journals weekly, with students' permission.

INTO THE WORLD

The Church celebrates and affirms life! Our God is the Creator of all things, the God of life. God created our universe in six days, saving the best for last—you and me, humankind. The accounts from Genesis in this unit are great examples of how our God creates, provides, preserves, and protects His people.

Life-affirming organizations work to equip people to be Gospel-motivated voices for life. Their mission is to help people understand that each human life is created and gifted by God. God loves all people—He loves humankind so much that He sent His Son to die for all human life. That makes every human life important, valuable, and meaningful.

Here are a few ways that your class and school can celebrate and affirm life:

- Dedicate a chapel service to celebrating life. Sing "Children of the Heavenly Father" (*LSB* 725; *OAR* 271) and "Father Welcomes" (*LSB* 605; *OAR* 255). Offerings can go to a local Christian pregnancy center
- Send a note home asking for socks or food to be given to a local shelter for the unhoused.
- Order or borrow a set of fetal models. Children can hold these lifelike models to help them better understand and value life in the womb.
- Have each grade create "Welcome" cards for immigrants or "Thinking of You" cards for the elderly.

LOOK AHEAD

- Works of Love, p. 14
Help students defend the faith.
- Worship Life, p. 18
Have students create and use Faith and Prayer Journals.
- Relate: Active Play, p. 22
Use a ball to guide students in a "popcorn prayer."
- Biblical Literacy, p. 26
Help students make a family tree of the patriarchs and Jesus.
- Relate: Social Skills, p. 30
Role-play practicing humility.
- Express, p. 34
Have students write short stories about trusting God.

LESSON 1

God Creates the World | God Creates and Gives Life

Genesis 1–2 | **Genesis 1–2**

BACKGROUND

In the beginning, there was only God—the eternal God who always has been and who always will be. Then God spoke, creating matter out of nothing.

Through the hovering of the Spirit over this formless deep, God was already present and active in the world. God spoke, and the power of His Word brought order and form to chaos. God continued to speak, making all things come into existence and creating a beautiful, perfect world.

When God created man, He did more than simply speak humanity into existence. God carefully formed Adam from the dirt. He formed Eve from Adam's side. God's creative act culminated in man and

woman. He created them to rule over and care for the world. He created them to be in relationship with Him.

Encourage your students to think about the unique place in creation that God has given humans—that God has given *them*. God created humans in His image. We are created from the earth to help care for the earth. God took great care in creating our bodies; they are a blessing from Him.

Help your students rejoice in the body God has given to them, the body that is uniquely theirs, a gift from their Creator. God doesn't accidentally put people in the wrong body. He intentionally creates every person to be His very own child.

CENTRAL TRUTH

Our triune God abundantly blesses us with our world and with all that we are and have, including our bodies and souls, families and friends, and forgiveness and salvation in Jesus.

GRADE-LEVEL TRUTH

God, our Creator, made the world and everything in it, including the crown of His creation, humankind.

STANDARDS

- LD1: Describe what God has revealed about Himself through Scripture and natural knowledge.
- LD2: Describe God's work of creation and preservation.
- BL8: Demonstrate an ability to use sound biblical practices to understand and apply passages of Scripture.

CLASSROOM DEVOTION

Are you ready for some fascinating facts?

- It takes Pluto almost 250 years to orbit the sun.
- There are more trees on earth than there are stars in the Milky Way.
- The smallest snail cannot be seen without a microscope.

Some facts are sad:

- Billions of people struggle to find water every day.
- Two people die every second.

There are two facts that don't seem to go together, but both are true: The world is a beautiful place. The world is also broken.

When God created the world, everything was perfect! The skies were perfect. The plants were perfect. The animals were perfect. Even the humans were perfect.

Sadly, we know that Adam and Eve sinned, and all of creation suffered for it. We live in a fallen, broken world.

There is still beauty, but there is sadness too.

Our Savior, who was there at the beginning, died, rose, and will come again. When He returns, He will make a new heaven and earth. We will see a perfect creation again! Until then, we can tell others about Jesus so they can be ready for His return.

PRAY Father, You created us. Savior, You saved us. Spirit, You make us new. Guide us to tell others of all You have done to make all things new. Amen.

SING "For the Beauty of the Earth" (OAR 332); "When Morning Gilds the Skies" (LSB 807); or "God, Who Made the Earth and Heaven" (LSB 877).

OBJECTIVES

- Retell the creation account from both a wide viewpoint and a more detailed viewpoint.
- Recognize that God created a perfect world, but Adam and Eve sinned and corrupted it.
- Express hope and confidence that we are forgiven in Jesus, who will come again to make a new heaven and new earth.

MATERIALS

Session 1

- The Basics (see Teacher Guide Introduction, p. 8)

Session 2

- The Basics

God Creates and Gives Life

INTO THE LESSON

Ask your students to think about their favorite land animals. Then ask for favorite birds, then sea creatures. Take votes on preferences: oceans or creeks, deserts or icebergs, and so on. As kids might start to debate, encourage them to say what they love about their favorite animals or works of creation. If some begin to talk about the dangers of a certain animal or land formation (for example), challenge them to consider how things might have been before the fall. Sharks did not attack. Plants were not poisonous.

INTO THE WORD

Instead of focusing on what happened on each day of creation, this lesson takes a wide focus and gradually narrows in, similar to the way Genesis 1–2 is written. If you’d like, feel free to ask a volunteer to write the numbers 1 through 7 on the board and record what happens each day. But the Student Book will address the content a little differently than by going through creation day by day. Have students turn to page 5 in the Student Book.

Today, we’re going to read about creation a few times. Ready? Here’s the first account.

Read **Genesis 1:1**.

That’s it! First creation narrative done. God made everything. Some students might laugh or roll their eyes, but encourage them to consider the first question. As basic as this sentence seems, it tells a great deal! After a minute, ask students to share their thoughts. We learn that God was there in the beginning, that God created everything, that He is Lord of all.

Now let’s narrow our focus and see some more details.

Read **Genesis 1:2–2:3**. You may want to read it dramatically, let students take turns, or find a dramatic reading of the ESV translation online or through a platform of your choice.

Take a few minutes to consider the next questions. They may seem easy, but they’re very important.

These questions relate to the careful record keeping of God’s creation. He decided to spread out His work, and He decided to make sure that each day was specifically laid out as to what happened when. On the first few days, God made the heavens and the earth. On the next days, He filled it with creatures and life.

Read **Genesis 2:4–25**. If time is running short, focus on verses 18–25. Give students time to consider the last questions.

Even in a perfect world, Adam wasn’t enough. It was not good for him to be alone. Who did he need? God created both man and woman to live and work together in harmony.

+ CONTINUE WITH LESSON EXTENDERS



GOD CREATES AND GIVES LIFE

Genesis 1–2
UNIT 1 | LESSON 1

In the Beginning . . . Three Times?

You may have read the creation account before. Today, we’re going to read it in three ways: a broad summary, a careful account, and some additional details.

THE BROAD SUMMARY

Read **Genesis 1:1**.
What did you learn from this account of creation? Why is it so important?
God was there in the beginning. God created everything. He is Lord of all.

A CAREFUL ACCOUNT

Read **Genesis 1:2–2:3**.
The Bible takes time to talk about Adam and Eve. There was evening. There was morning. Why does so much detail matter? What does it tell you about God?
God created in an orderly way, according to His plan. Nothing was haphazard or created by chance or accident.

ADDITIONAL DETAILS

Read **Genesis 2:4–25**.
The Bible takes time to talk about Adam and Eve. What does God say about Adam without Eve? What does the Bible say about them living in the Garden of Eden?
It was not good for Adam to be alone. Adam and Eve worked in the garden and took care of it. They were joined together as one (as in marriage).



COVENANT CONNECTION

In the beginning . . . God created. God who? The triune God! Christians believe that all three persons of the Trinity were always around. Genesis 1:2 talks about the Spirit. Where was Jesus? John 1:1 makes it clear: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Jesus, the Word made flesh, was present in the Word of God. “Let there be . . .” That Word of God, which created things as the Father spoke, was Jesus. It’s hard to understand, but it’s wonderful to realize that Jesus, the one who came to redeem the world and who promises to restore it, was there from the very beginning.

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TEACHER TIPS

Many of your students will have studied Genesis 1–2. Others who may have transferred in recently might not know it well at all. In both of these groups, some might doubt the importance or authenticity of the creation account. Keep all of this in mind as you teach this lesson. Pray that the Holy Spirit would work in your students’ hearts as they read God’s Word.

FAITH CONCEPTS

Can we believe the Bible? Why does it matter? If God did not create Adam and Eve, then there was no fall into sin. If there was no fall into sin, then we do not need a Savior. If we do not need a Savior, our faith is pointless. Genesis 1–3 matters! But can we believe it? Some try to prove creation to prove that the Bible is true. But increasingly, believers are first showing how Jesus is real and is God. If He’s God, we can trust what He says about the Bible. Jesus repeatedly showed that He is the promised Messiah, the Son that the Father promised to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3.

God Creates and Gives Life

INTO THE LESSON

On the board, write “In a perfect world.”

Have you heard this phrase before? The idea behind it is that our world isn’t perfect. It is fallen. But it used to be perfect! Can you imagine living in a perfect world today? What would be different?

Take ideas, and provide some examples. We wouldn’t have to go shopping because nothing would ever wear out. We wouldn’t need shoes because nothing would hurt our feet. Pest control companies would not be necessary. The list could go on forever.

One way we can figure out God’s will is to look at His creation before the fall. Genesis 1 and 2 give us a picture of how God wanted the world to work. It’s also a small glimpse at what the world will be like again. Jesus promised to come again and make a new heaven and a new earth. Everything will be perfect! Can you imagine what that will be like?

If time allows, have students write their thoughts in their Faith and Prayer Journals.

INTO OUR LIVES

Direct students to the “Perfection Scavenger Hunt” section on page 6 in the Student Book. Have students to work in small groups. Tell them to skim through the reading to discover what life was like before the fall.

- Humans were created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). This does not necessarily mean that they physically looked like God, but humans reflected who God is. This image was distorted in the fall.
- God made males and females and told them to have children (1:28). He gave them the gift of marriage, where “a man shall . . . hold fast to his wife” in faithfulness (2:24).
- All humans and animals ate plants (1:29–30). Jesus ate meat when on earth, and God gave His people directions for meals and sacrifices at festivals. It is not a sin to eat meat, but meat was not eaten before the fall.
- God gave humans work—to tend the garden and care for all creation (1:28). Work is a blessing. Sin has made work difficult now. We don’t care for creation as we should.
- There were rules (2:17). Humans had the freedom to sin; they were not robots blindly following God without choice.

Point out how different things are today. God’s will is good: He loves us and wants what is best for us. We don’t always want what is good because we are sinful. But in Jesus, we are forgiven. We can turn to God’s Word to see His will for us.

Read through the last part of the page. The fallen world is not the end! In Jesus, we look forward to a new heaven and earth.

+ CONTINUE WITH LESSON EXTENDERS

UNIT 1 | LESSON 1

Perfection Scavenger Hunt

Skim back through Genesis 1–2. What was different before sin entered the world? Write down some of your findings in the magnifying glasses below.



A Perfect World . . . Restored

When Jesus gave John a vision of Jesus’ second coming, John wrote, “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more” (Revelation 21:1).

Jesus promises to come back again and bring all believers to live with Him. He also promises to make all things new: a new heaven and a new earth. What does that look like? We don’t really know! But we know that there will be no sin, no tears, no pain, no sickness . . .

How will you be different in the new creation? What do you look forward to seeing or doing?



By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. *Hebrews 11:3*

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CATECHISM CONNECTION

The Apostles’ Creed says a great deal in just a few paragraphs. For example, the First Article talks about creation, when everything was perfect. The Second Article shows how Jesus redeemed us, His creatures. The Third Article begins to point to the restoration of all things: “the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.” Take some time to look at the explanation of the Third Article. God started with perfection. We ruined it, but Jesus brought redemption. God will end with perfection again, with a new creation, which will never end.

FAITH IN ACTION

God gave us the responsibility to take care of His creation. How do we do this today? Ask students for examples of people taking care of the world. The world is fallen, and there is much to be done. Ask students to brainstorm ideas of how to care for creation. Examples could include raking the schoolyard, planting native wildflowers, recycling, and more. We witness to the Creator when caring for His creation.

Lesson Extenders

REACHING EVERY STUDENT

You may find in this seventh-grade curriculum an increased expectation for students to look up Bible verses as they explore the Bible narratives and answer questions in the Student Book. Some students may have difficulty flipping between chapters, books, and the Old Testament and New Testament. Some may not be familiar enough with the Bible to find Bible passages quickly and easily. If each student has an identical copy of the Bible, you could provide page numbers to help them find passages more easily. Other options include providing Bible tabs for students to mark books of the Bible, teaching students how to use the index, printing out the verses, or projecting the verses onto a screen for the whole class to read.

FAITH IN ACTION

Every human is sinful and struggles with failure, temptation, and trials. And every human is beloved by God. Jesus died to redeem each person. We are called to show love to each person, witnessing about the Good News of Jesus so that all may know His grace. Instill in your students the knowledge that all people are loved by God. All people are sinful and hurting and need a loving Savior. Ask students to create cards that voice these truths, quoting Scripture and writing notes of encouragement. Ask students to bring in wrapped, nonperishable treats. Assemble care packages with the notes and treats, and find a good way to distribute them in your community. Food pantries, homeless shelters, and prison ministries could put these packages to good use.

RELATE

Social Skills ■ In the first two chapters of Genesis, we get a picture of a “perfect world”—creation as God intended it and according to His perfect will.

As you begin this school year together, ask students what a “perfect classroom” would look like. How would people act? What would be the desired goal for how your community lives together as brothers and sisters in Christ? Use this picture as a focus for considering classroom rules. Focus on the perfect ideals more than problems to avoid.

Because we live in a fallen world, everyone in the classroom will fail. What steps will be necessary for reconciliation? Map out steps such as repentance and restoration to keep in mind when troubles arise. Remind students that we know God’s will because He tells us in His Word, and He shows us in the descriptions of the Garden of Eden. We also see God’s love in Jesus’ death, resurrection, and promised return as the means to redeem us and bring us back into a relationship with Him.

WORKS OF LOVE

As mentioned in “Faith Concepts” on page 12, many Christian apologists (defenders of the faith) feel the pressure to prove creation in order to prove the Bible. Increasingly, Lutheran apologists begin with establishing Jesus as a real figure who can be believed. If we can believe Jesus, we can believe that He is God, as He said. If we can believe He is God, we can believe everything He has said about the Bible, creation, His Father, and everything else.

The Enduring Faith Curriculum also has an apologetics course that could serve as an elective or supplementary module throughout the year. If your students seem interested in defending the faith or even doubtful about the validity of God’s Word, they may be interested in this resource.

Regardless, ensure a safe environment for asking questions so that students are open to asking questions in a Christian environment rather than elsewhere. Before this lesson even begins, set up a “Big Questions” box in your room so that you can collect the questions over time and have time to respond to them. If a student asks a tough question in class, you may even want to write it down and pop it into the box. This shows students that it’s okay to ask questions and it’s okay to take time to research a question carefully before answering.

CLASSROOM COMMUNITY

At this age, kids are grappling with questions about identity: Who are they? How are they different from others? How are they the same? Are they valued and loved? Set the tone early this year with a project called “All About Me.” Hand out interview questions asking about interests, background, talents, favorite trips, and the like. Each day, read one student’s bio, adding affirming comments along the way (or even writing up a brief bio for them). At the end of each, affirm that this youth is created by God, loved by God, redeemed by God, and made worthy through the saving work of Jesus. You can post these bios on a bulletin board with the heading “Remember Whose You Are.”

You could also allow time for students to interview one another, helping them get to know others they might not know as well.

FAITH AT HOME

In an email to parents and guardians, share information with families on how to use the digital tools for this curriculum. The unit video will help set the tone for the next few weeks, and the family devotions will equip families with an easy way to take faith learning from school and extend it into the home. By starting now, this can become a habit for many families throughout the year!