



Overview

Adult Bible Study to Accompany Club VBS: Jungle Jaunt®

What? Adult Club VBS: Jungle Jaunt is a five-session Bible study for adults that is translation neutral and is available only online as a free download. Participants will explore timeless truths about God. As they uncover new understandings of God, they will find help for traveling through the adventures of life and will encounter opportunities to move closer to spiritual maturity.

When? While children are participating in Club VBS: Jungle Jaunt, adults will study the same Bible truths. Or use the Adult Jungle Jaunt Bible Study material anytime you need a five-session adult Bible study.

How? Use the Bible study material for teacher preparation and for Bible teaching. Print copies of "Discussion Points" for all participants and use them to enhance discussion of the Bible content and application of the truths. The "Case Study" for each session can be used for further the discussion of life applications.

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These materials were originally created as "Amazon Outfitters: On Expedition with the One True God" (LifeWay's Vacation Bible School 2002) by writers Darryl Wood, Marie Clark, and Pattie Kline. The materials have been rewritten to accompany Club VBS: Jungle Jaunt (Club VBS 2013).

Day 1: One Amazing Creator

Bible Passage: Genesis 1:1–2:3

Central Bible Truth: The one true God is the Creator who made the world and all that exists.

Teaching Aim: To lead adults to praise God as Creator and to describe how they can show their awareness that God created all that exists

One man had invented a lot of gadgets, but most of them never made it to production. When asked about his failures, the man said: “All you need is one ‘big’ idea that makes it. That’s what I’m trying to find—one ‘big’ idea.” The creation account affirms God as Creator of the universe and everything in it. When He envisioned and made the world, God implemented a “big” idea that works. The Creator deserves our praise for His handiwork.

Praising God Who Created *(Genesis 1:1-2)*

The first verses of the Bible leave no doubt that the subject of the creation account is God. He guided the timing, order, and content of the created world from inception. To a great extent, the emphasis of the creation account of Genesis is that God did the creating. For this reason God deserves our praise.

When did God create the world? It happened in the beginning. As an eternal being, God has always been God and will always be God. At no time has He failed to exist. The universe, however, had a starting point. The creation event was that starting point. We live now in a physical world that came into being at a particular point in time as a result of the creative energy of God.

This lesson passage uses the Hebrew word for God over 30 times. That shows His direct involvement in the creation event. He exists as a distinct and unique being who is above all things. He has no competitors. No wonder God is the focus of this passage. God guided creation completely.

By what means did God cause the world to come into being? He “created” it. No Old Testament writer used this Hebrew word of something made by humans. Only God created. The idea suggests God’s spontaneous, supernatural activity. This study passage includes the word six times (1:1; 1:21; 1:27 three times; 2:3).

God’s work to create the world followed no haphazard form. His plan involved a process that unfolded in orderly fashion. Step-by-step, God brought the world into being. Consequently, the universe in all its aspects fits like a completed jigsaw puzzle revealing the beautiful result of God’s labor.

As if in summary, the passage states that God created the heavens and the earth. For the Hebrews, heavens stood for the realm of God. Earth represented the physical world—the place where humans dwell. Thus the visible and invisible aspects of our complex universe came about as a result of the power of the Almighty.

The earth is described as being without form and empty. In the Lord’s hands, however, nothing became something, like clay in the hands of a skilled potter. Darkness prevailed over the earth. The dark represents everything God is not. It symbolizes evil and hopelessness. The darkness veiled the surface of the deep water. Even to an experienced sailor, deep waters signal a feared foe, but not to God. He worked without fear. Nothing challenged God’s abilities as the One who crafted creation.

Then comes a bright word that contrasts with those of the earth’s description. The Spirit of God hovered over the surface of the deep, fearful waters. Hovering recalls the picture of a bird fluttering protectively over a nest. The Hebrew word for Spirit means “wind, breath.” The presence of the Holy Spirit points to a creative force that breathes life where none existed previously. The creation event shows God at work in a personal way in the universe.

God deserves our praise as Creator of the universe. Only He could accomplish the immense task of making something out of nothing.

Praising God for Creation *(Genesis 1:3-31)*

We honor God as we praise Him for what He created. He started with nothing and produced a perfectly ordered universe. These verses tell about what God created in each of the six days. The first three days parallel the last three. In days one, two, and three, God prepared the universe. In days four, five, and six, He consummated it.

Initiating Creation *(Genesis 1:3-13)*

On each of the days of creation, something came into being when God spoke it into existence. The creative power of God's word brought about the world. This word was His instrument of creation to initiate His sovereign purpose (Ps. 33:9). This same concept is restated and explained in the New Testament in John 1:1-14. The Word made flesh (Jesus) exerted the creative powers of God.

On the first day God created light (1:3-5). Light often symbolizes life, salvation, and God's presence. God displaced the darkness with His eternal light. God's character is to dispel darkness. With the creation of light, God enabled the world to reflect His character. How does this light relate to the creation of the sun in day four? The light came into being on day one, but the order or form it took came later. This is consistent with God's plan to build the universe step-by-step in an orderly fashion.

At each step along the way, God affirmed what He created to be good. This affirmation occurs on other days of creation as well. Thus what God created fit the purpose for which He intended it. God made no mistakes. He proceeded to separate light from darkness. God did not destroy darkness, but He did exert authority over it.

The concept of separation appears throughout the creation account. The fact that God separated does not mean that God pulled things apart in creating the world. Rather, He set each aspect of creation in its proper place to provide a sense of order.

Since God created the world and owned it, He reserved the right to name what was in it. This right He executed by calling the light "day" and the darkness "night." (Eventually God delegated the naming tasks to humans.) As light and darkness alternated (evening turned to morning), an order began to appear in the universe. This was the first day. Note how God began a sequence of time. Since God exists eternally, He made time not for His own needs but for His world.

On the second day God created an expanse to separate the waters (1:6-8). This expanse was an atmosphere to partition the water on earth from the water in the air (clouds). Thus God provided a necessary environment to support living things. This expanse above the earth God named "sky."

On the third day God did two acts of creation (1:9-13). He separated the land from the sea and created plant life. The seas began to take shape and dry ground appeared. The topographical features of the earth emerged. God named the dry ground "land," and He called the waters "seas." Two types of vegetation also began to grow—seed-bearing plants that reproduce with external seed and fruit-bearing plants that reproduce internally with seed coming from within the fruit.

The vegetation (and later animal life) existed according to its various kinds. This also indicates the order and development of God's world. Various plants came to life, but they existed within the context of distinct groupings of like plants.

Filling Creation *(Genesis 1:14-25)*

Day four expanded on the creation of light on day one. On the fourth day God created lights in the sky—a greater light, the sun, and a lesser light, the moon (1:14-19). He even made the stars in the sky. These lights served three specific purposes. First, they separated day from night. Darkness remained on the earth but with limitations. Second, the lights helped mark days, seasons, and years. Earth time (the calendar) involves the orderly movement of the sun that produces seasonal patterns to support various forms of life. Third, the lights illuminated the earth. Light enabled God’s creatures to see and thus accomplish God’s purpose for His created order.

On the fifth day God created fish and fowl to populate the seas and the air (1:20-23). The sea began to teem or swarm with fish and larger creatures. Even the sea animals that humans generally fear were created by God. He populated the air with birds. Again God made various kinds. Each kind was unique and different from the others and existed according to its kind. As with the plants, reproduction of animals became an important part of the creation process.

On the sixth day God again did two acts of creation—He made land animals and humans. The living creatures can be divided into three groups (1:24-25). First, He created livestock, meaning domestic animals such as cattle. Second, He made creatures that move along the ground, indicating animals such as lizards, snakes, mice, and other short- legged creatures. Third, He created wild animals which denotes animals that defy domestication such as lions, bears, and tigers. Animal life started to roam the earth.

Completing Creation *(Genesis 1:26-31)*

God added the crown of His work—human beings—as the final act of creation on the sixth day. He created humans in His own image. How do we have the image of God?

Certainly this refers not to physical characteristics but to our spiritual character. Certain qualities make humans different from all else in creation. To be created in God's image means that humans can relate to God personally. We have a unique ability to reason. We also have a moral conscience and the ability to choose. We enjoy a special kinship with God as humans. This results from our being made in His image.

God created humans as male and female. Sexuality establishes a separate but complementary relationship among humans. God blessed this concept and at the same time blessed humans to give them fulfillment. God created humans, and through reproduction the miracle of His creative work continues.

Along with this gift of kinship came a responsibility to rule over the created order. Sometimes humans get the wrong idea about ruling over the world. The world is not here for us to use for our own benefit without regard for its care and protection. As a good king accepts responsibility for the well-being of his kingdom and does not seek to exploit his power, humans are to act responsibly to promote the well-being of God's creation.

Part of ruling over the earth involves filling the earth and subduing it. Subdue means "to conquer, control." God created the earth as a wonderful livable place. With work it becomes even more livable. Humans make it that as they harness natural resources, overcome natural barriers such as mountains and rivers, and develop the earth to the potential God intends. We are to be obedient stewards of God to fill and subdue the earth.

God made the provision of food for humans to eat. He thought of everything needed to bring about a fulfilling life for us. Note the availability of plants and fruit trees. They meet the need for food. Human beings fit into the larger purpose of God at creation. In being fulfilled ourselves, we are to do nothing that prevents other aspects of God's creation from fulfilling their purposes. What about meat? No authority to kill and eat meat was given until after the flood. Even the animals were to eat green plants, not meat.

At the end of the sixth day God again surveyed His creation. The other days God had judged His work as good. But this day He deemed it to be "very good." God created a perfect world. He delighted in His universe. God's plan came together as He envisioned. We can lift praise to God for what He created.

Praising God on the Day of Rest *(Genesis 2:1-3)*

God had concluded His creative activity. These verses in Genesis 2 follow the description of the barrage of God's energetic work, but they convey a sense of calm and satisfaction. Then the earth could move into its next phase. God planned the universe in an orderly way. He intended it would function according to that plan. The seventh day actually became the day that opened out into the rest of history.

At the end of the sixth day of creation God had completed His work. This Hebrew word for work is also used for human skilled labor. God had crafted the earth in a professional fashion. But then He stopped and rested. The implication is that humans also should stop work and rest on the seventh day. Certainly this does not mean God ceased all activity forever. God was not tired and in need of a break. He had completed this specific job He set out to do.

The seventh day was a special day unlike any other. Note two actions by God related to it. God blessed this day and made it holy. For the first time God made something holy. God stepped back and simply enjoyed His wonderful creation. God intended His creation to be fulfilled. But the universe He created fulfilled Him too. God used the day to enjoy the vast array of His beautiful world. This account helped God's people incorporate the seventh day into their covenant life as a day of rest.

Setting aside one day a week should bring an enjoyment that focuses on God's blessing of our lives. We can use the day to reflect on God's gift of creation and how it affects us. We remember that we belong to God and can trust in His care. Humans need rest from their labor. We also need a regular designated time to worship God. This enables us to show our awareness that God acted on our behalf in creation.

Day 1: Discussion Points

1. Who created the world, and what evidence is there to support this fact?
2. What is significant about the Hebrew word for create used in the Old Testament?
3. Why was the order of creation important?
4. On the first three days of creation, God prepared the universe. What specific preparations did God make on each of the three days?
5. On days four, five, and six, God filled the universe He had created. What did God create on each of the days, and what was the importance of the order?
6. What does it mean for humans to be created in God's image?
7. In what ways did God intend for humans to rule over the earth?
8. How do we humans sometimes misinterpret the responsibility of ruling over the earth? In what specific ways can we be obedient in carrying out this responsibility as God intended?
9. What two things did God do to make the seventh day a special day?
10. As we rest on the seventh day, on what things should we focus?
11. In what ways/circumstances are you most aware of God's amazing and beautiful creation? How can you show your awareness of God's creation?
12. Do you frequently thank and praise God for His creation? If so, when are you most likely to praise Him? Pray and ask God to help you become even more aware of His creation and to praise Him often for it.

Day 1: Case Study

The Best Things in Life Are Free

Our modern culture places a strong emphasis on materialistic values. It seems that “more” is never enough. Sometimes an encounter with nature helps put things and money in perspective. In God’s design, the best things in life don’t have a dollar price tag.

Bob and Lisa delight in watching their first child, Elizabeth, grow and develop. On a summer day at five months of age, Elizabeth responded to the antics of the two family dogs with an audible laugh and an engaging smile. That evening the baby was tired but fought off sleep. Bob and Lisa’s attempts to soothe her seemed useless. While Bob walked her, he casually stepped outside to catch the last rays of the late sunset. Almost immediately, Elizabeth stopped fussing. Bob felt her relax against his shoulder. By the time he had circled the yard and gone back inside the house, the baby was sleeping peacefully. Bob thought, How can such a young baby know the difference between being outdoors and being inside a house? What is there about being outside that can change even an infant?

Yolanda is a secretary for an insurance company. At 43 she is thankful to have an interesting job that allows her to help others. When clients experience a loss through an accident, fire or theft, Yolanda’s voice is usually the first one they hear when calling to file a claim. However, she often feels stressed, whether from multiple deadlines or from being surrounded by waiting clients who are worried or upset. During her lunch hour, Yolanda changes into walking shoes and meets Jessica, a secretary in the next office. Each workday they enjoy the benefits of walking around several blocks of the downtown area—physical exercise, time to visit, and an opportunity to soak up the sunshine or to be invigorated by the wind. Even while walking on concrete and surrounded by office buildings, Yolanda is aware of God’s gifts of nature.

Jason moved to his ninth floor apartment five months ago. City life seemed strange after growing up in a small town where he enjoyed raising vegetables in the summer and hunting in the fall. Six months after his 11-year marriage ended in divorce, the paper mill where he worked closed down, putting over 300 people out of work. Jobs were scarce in the small town where Jason lived, so he moved to a nearby city to work as a security guard at a department store. Feeling isolated and cut off from his roots, Jason was excited to read a notice on a bulletin board at work. Through a pilot program, garden plots were available to residents in the midtown area. Jason contacted the program director and was able to obtain a plot. Now he can hardly wait to get to his garden after work. When his hands sift the dirt, he feels as if he is connecting again with the basic needs of his life. He marveled as he watched the first pair of leaflets emerge on a bean sprout. He enjoys eating the fresh, homegrown vegetables and having a smaller bill at the grocery store. One Saturday afternoon as Jason worked in his garden, he was reminded of a Bible story he heard as a child about God’s creating plants to provide food for people and animals. He was startled by the thought because he had not thought of God in a long time. As the plants produced an abundance of vegetables, Jacob followed God’s leading and shared produce from his garden with a children’s home and a homeless shelter.

Tom and Annette, both 83 and retired, were active until the past five years. Now, because of physical limitations, they are virtually home bound in their house at the edge of town. They always enjoyed working in their yard and being outside, but now both extreme cold and extreme heat keep them inside. One of their great joys is to look out of their den windows and watch the birds at the bird feeder or the deer walk across the pasture behind their house. Just being able to see God’s creatures makes them feel more connected to the rest of the world. As they pray before each meal, they include thanks to God not only for their food but also for the beauty of the day.

How did God’s creation impact each of these people? How did they show their awareness of God’s creation? How did they praise God for His creation? What would your story include?