

Creation and the Gift of Life

Cornerstone 1131 Sunday School • Lesson 1

From Creation to Restoration

A 50-minute teaching guide for adults or older teenagers. The full KJV readings follow the teaching notes. A separate student worksheet with the same readings accompanies this guide.

The central truth

Life is a gift from God. He created human beings in His image, gives us life, and calls us to care for what He has made. Our response begins with gratitude and takes shape in the way we treat others.

What students should learn

- Identify what Genesis says about human dignity and dependence upon God.
- Explain how creation connects human life with relationship, work, and care.
- Choose one practical way to honor another person as someone made in God's image.

Readings and preparation

Core readings: Genesis 1:26–31; 2:7–9, 15–18. Read Genesis 2:19–25 during preparation for the wider context of human companionship. Supporting passage: Psalm 139:13–16. Scripture quotations in this lesson use the King James Version.

Companion reading: A Living Soul, especially “Formed from Dust, Awakened by Breath.” Have the included Scripture readings, pens, and copies of the student handout ready. An ordinary seed or plant is an optional opening illustration.

Class plan

Welcome and prayer — 5 minutes

Opening question — 5 minutes

Scripture and teaching — 20 minutes

Discussion — 10 minutes

Personal response and service — 7 minutes

Closing prayer — 3 minutes

Opening the class

Pray: “Father, God bless the reading of the Word. Help us receive the life You have given with gratitude. Teach us to see one another with care and to understand our responsibility before You. In Jesus' name, amen.”

Ask: “What is something you depend on every day that you could never provide entirely by yourself?” Allow a few responses. Connect air, food, relationships, and care to our dependence on gifts we receive. If using a plant, ask what it needs to live; keep the illustration brief.

Teaching the creation account

Allow about 10 minutes for the two movements on this page. Invite students to read the passages aloud before you explain them. The suggested wording can be read as written or adapted to your own voice.

1 God made human life with dignity

Read Genesis 1:26–31. Ask students to notice who acts, what God says about humanity, and how He describes the completed creation.

Suggested teaching: “The story begins with God. Before we achieve anything, possess anything, or receive recognition from anyone, our lives already have meaning because we are His creation. Genesis says that God made humanity in His own image, male and female. Both share that dignity. No person’s worth depends on wealth, strength, education, appearance, or usefulness.”

“God also gives humanity responsibility within creation. Bearing His image calls us to represent His care in the world He made. The authority described here belongs within a creation God calls very good. It should lead us to responsible care.”

Ask: “How would remembering that a difficult neighbor also bears God’s image change the way we speak to that person?”

Listen for: dignity belongs to others as well as ourselves; respect is not earned by agreeing with us; our treatment of others matters to God.

2 We receive the life we live

Read Genesis 2:7 slowly. Invite students to identify the sequence: God forms the man, breathes the breath of life, and the man becomes a living soul.

“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” — Genesis 2:7, KJV

Suggested teaching: “The dust reminds us that we belong within the created world and depend upon it. The breath of life directs our gratitude to God. We did not create ourselves. Before we could understand life, we were already receiving it.”

“The verse describes the man becoming a living soul—a living being. It invites us to consider the whole person who lives, feels, works, and relates to God and others. Our bodies belong within God’s good creation and deserve care.”

Connect with A Living Soul

Read this sentence from the essay: “The dust reminds us of our humility.” Then ask: “How can dependence on God produce gratitude rather than shame?”

Teacher note: Genesis 2:7 establishes dependence on God for life. It does not by itself settle every question about the soul or consciousness. Keep this introductory lesson focused on the text’s account of God giving life; later lessons will explore death and resurrection.

Life with purpose and relationship

Allow about 10 minutes for the two movements on this page. Move from what God gives to how people are invited to live in response.

3 God gives us something to care for

Read Genesis 2:8–9, 15–17. Ask: “What does God provide, what task does He give, and what boundary does He establish?”

Suggested teaching: “God places the man in a garden with provision and meaningful work. The task is to dress it and keep it—to cultivate and care for what has been entrusted to him. Work appears here before the account of human disobedience. Care and responsibility belong to the goodness of created life.”

“God also gives a command. Life with Him includes trust and obedience. Receiving a gift does not mean we become its independent owners without accountability. We answer to the One who has entrusted it to us.”

Ask: “What has been entrusted to us that needs faithful care?” Encourage concrete answers: a relationship, a home, shared land, an ability, or time we can offer. Include people whose health or circumstances limit what they can do; receiving care does not reduce their worth.

4 We were made for relationship

Read Genesis 2:18. Briefly summarize verses 19–25: the account moves toward the woman’s creation and the union of husband and wife.

Suggested teaching: “Within the goodness of creation, God identifies something that is not good: the man being alone. In this passage He provides a companion, and the account describes marriage. It also gives us reason to take human companionship seriously. We depend on one another, and we have responsibilities toward those who are isolated.”

“People who are unmarried, widowed, separated, or living alone bear God’s image fully. Our class can be a place where each person is welcomed and cared for.”

Known before we could explain ourselves

If time permits, read Psalm 139:13–16. Explain that this is a prayer celebrating God’s intimate knowledge and care. Connect it with the essay’s reflection: our lives matter before we can speak about them or remember them.

Read from A Living Soul: “To be a living soul is more than to possess intelligence. It is to receive life as a whole person.” Ask students to name one implication for the way we treat a baby, a person with memory loss, or someone who needs daily assistance.

Bridge to the course ahead

Say: “We begin here so that we understand what is at stake in the story that follows. Creation gives us life, relationship, and responsibility before God. Next week we will read Genesis 3 and ask how distrust and disobedience fracture those relationships. In the weeks ahead, we will follow the promise of restoration through Christ.”

Discussion and response

Discuss together for 10 minutes

Choose two or three questions. Ask students to point to the passage before sharing personal examples. Suggested responses are guidance for the teacher.

1. What gives a person dignity in Genesis 1:26–27?

Suggested response: God creates humanity in His image. Dignity is shared by male and female and is received from God rather than earned through achievement.

2. What does the dust and breath language in Genesis 2:7 teach us?

Suggested response: We are creatures who depend upon God for life. Our physical lives matter, and dependence invites humility and gratitude.

3. What do the garden, the task, and the command reveal about life with God?

Suggested response: God provides, entrusts meaningful care, and calls for obedient trust. His gifts carry responsibility.

4. How should this lesson affect the way we treat someone who can no longer care for themselves?

Suggested response: That person retains full dignity. Compassion, patient attention, and practical support honor the life God has given.

Respond through service for 7 minutes

Give students a quiet moment to complete the handout. Invite each person to choose one realistic act of care this week: call someone who is isolated, offer a meal, help with an ordinary task, or give patient attention to someone who is often overlooked. Respect the person's preferences and ask before offering help.

Invite volunteers to share their intended action without naming private circumstances. At the next class, offer a brief opportunity to reflect on what they learned. Participation and personal sharing are voluntary.

Check understanding

Ask students to complete this sentence aloud or on the handout: "Because God gives life and makes people in His image, I will..." Listen for a connection between the reading and a specific response, rather than only a general statement about being kind.

Closing prayer for 3 minutes

"Father, thank You for the life we have received from You. Teach us humility without losing sight of the dignity You have given us. Open our eyes to the people who need care. Help us use our bodies, our time, and our words in faithful service. Prepare us to understand the restoration You bring through Jesus Christ. Amen."

Preparation for next week

Read Genesis 3:1–24. Ask: What changes in the relationships between humanity and God, between people, and with the ground? Where do you see God continuing to act toward them?

Sources: Genesis 1–2; Psalm 139:13–16; A Living Soul by Lenwood León Jack, Cornerstone 1131, especially "Formed from Dust, Awakened by Breath."

Scripture readings

Lesson 1 • Creation and the Gift of Life

King James Version. These complete passages are included for class study, supporting reading, and preparation for the next lesson. No separate Bible or internet connection is needed to read them in this document.

Words to know: Meat means food; dress the garden means tend it; keep it means care for or guard it. Thou and thee mean you; unto means to.

Class readings

Genesis 1:26–31 • KJV

26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Genesis 2:7–25 • KJV

7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

8 And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

9 And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

10 And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.

11 The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold;

12 And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone.

13 And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.

14 And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.

15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

18 And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

19 And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Supporting reading

Psalms 139:13–16 • KJV

13 For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

14 I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

15 My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

Before the next lesson

Genesis 3:1–24 • KJV

1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

11 And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

13 And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

14 And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

20 And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.

21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

23 Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

Scripture text: King James Version, reproduced from the KJV collection at bible-api.com. Verse numbering and translation were checked against the source data. Teaching notes and word explanations are separate from the Bible text.