

Unit 1: God Blesses Us

Lesson: 4.1 God's Good Creation

Scripture: Genesis 1:1-2:4a

9/3 & 9/7

Unit Verse: "May the LORD bless you and protect you. May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you. May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace." Numbers 6:24-26

The Point & Call Back:
GOD>Blesses US!

Welcome back! We are excited to share with you Year 4 of Living The Word (NL).

The stories of Year 4 tell of God's invitation into relationship given to all people, and the ways in which God provides gifts of grace at every turn. While Abraham seemed too old to father a nation, Moses too quiet to lead a people, and David too young to take over Israel, we see through the OT that God repeatedly calls the unexpected to step out in faith. As the people answer God's call, God never fails to equip them for the journey. Throughout Scripture, gifts of grace are given to those answering God's call, especially at some of the most trying moments. From gifts of manna in the wilderness to the promise of new life for the struggling Israelites, God's call to discipleship is never without God's blessing and provision each step of the way. As God chooses to dwell among us in Jesus Christ, God's commitment to relationship is distinctly clear. Jesus' invitations to abundant life reveal a relentless love that desires that all people know and serve God. His teachings reveal a kingdom that opposes traditional expectations of power and importance, always calling the least expected into God's mission of redemption. As the hope of the resurrection spreads, God's grace abounds in everyday moments and throughout the significant challenges of the early church. These early churches learn to rejoice, even in trials, always trusting in God's provision. Each of us are invited into a life of discipleship by our loving Creator. God's continued presence and abounding grace allows us to answer God's call, and through those blessings, to live in hope as we serve Jesus through our neighbor. (S&T)

STORY SUMMARY: God's Good Creation

It is in the first verse of Genesis where we meet the main character of the Bible: God. But all ancient peoples had one or more gods, so how do we know which god we are talking about? Genesis introduces God as the Creator of all things. This is the God we are talking about. This creation is good. From ancient times to now, some religious people have thought that the physical world is somehow bad or second-rate. The story of creation in Genesis, however, repeats over and over that what God created was called good. And if God called the world of energy and matter good, then it is good! Not only does the story of creation emphasize that all of creation is good, but it also emphasizes that all humans- without exception- are created in God's image. The "image of God" has much depth in meaning, but this lesson focuses on the fact that this makes each student special and beloved of God, and that we have the responsibility to treat all other image-bearers of God with love and respect.

THE POINT: *God declares that creation is good.*

From the earliest days, God has blessed and cared for God's people. God created this beautiful world and all that it contains to provide for God's people. The relationship between humankind and creation is reciprocal. In God's loving wisdom, God provided all that we need in this complex, mysterious creation.

Hope Youth Volunteers,

As I am typing this, I am reflecting on all of you youth volunteers who have taken the call to share the love of Jesus with the youth of Hope! Thank you for your obedience, drive and passion for loving and serving the Lord and His kids. And thank you for being a bridge builder! You make a difference in the lives of our youth, and we are praying that this year relationships are formed between God and his children as well as you yourself.

Blessings,
The Hope Youth Team