

GENESIS: A VIEW FROM THE BEGINNING

Week 1:
Reflecting the Creator
(Creation)

This includes:

1. Leader Preparation
2. Lesson Guide

1. LEADER PREPARATION

LESSON OVERVIEW

Genesis is a book of beginnings. One of the most important stories for us is the story of God creating humanity. God created humanity to be different from all the rest of creation. Only man and woman were created in God's image. While all of creation is beautiful and valuable, humanity is unique. This may seem like a simple fact, but for students in the midst of the identity struggle that defines adolescence—and sometimes early adulthood—this fact can be life-changing! The goal of this lesson is to help your students see that they have tremendous value simply because God chose to create them. God modeled each of them after himself and chose to include them in his creation. Helping your students understand this unlocks the secret to their seeing themselves as valuable and wonderful.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. WHAT: Only people were created in the image of God, making us unique among all of God's creation.
2. WHY: Helping teenagers understand the truth of God's creation unlocks the secret to their seeing themselves as valuable and wonderful.
3. HOW: Students will be challenged to see themselves through God's eyes, as valuable and vital parts of God's world and God's plan.

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE

Genesis 1:26-31

SECONDARY SCRIPTURES

Psalms 100:3 and 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

TEACHING PREP

The short overview below is designed to help you prepare for your lesson. While you may not want to convey this information word-for-word with your teenagers, you'll definitely want to refer to it as you lead.



**LEADER
TIP**



Read Genesis 1:26-31.

This is the moment in the creation narrative where God creates human beings. God has already created day and night, separated the land from the oceans, and populated the world with plants and animals. But the world was not complete. God had one more jewel to place on the crown of this creative work.

This passage teaches a few important truths. First we learn that we are made in God's image. You've probably noticed the phrase "let us make man in our image." Why the plural? Isn't there just one God? While scholars have held differing opinions over the centuries, many Christian scholars see the usage of "us" and "our" as a reference to the Trinity. We know the other persons of the Trinity were present with God the Father in Creation (see Genesis 1:2, Job 33:4, and Psalm 104:30 regarding the Holy Spirit; see Colossians 1:16 regarding Jesus).

The most significant truth of this passage, especially as it pertains to this lesson, is that we have great value because we were made in God's image. How are we like God? What does it mean that we are created in God's image? Do we look like God? Well, considering that God doesn't have a body like us, it can't be that we look like God. When Scripture says we are made in God's image, it pertains mostly to the potential we have to represent God, his character, and his glory in this world. In this way, we are truly unique in creation in a way that animals and plants are not.

Verse 31 is particularly important as you teach this lesson to teenagers. God saw humanity made in his image, and he said it was good. All of Scripture attests to the fact that God sees our deep, inherent value. If God did not, he would not have gone to such great lengths to save us from the penalty of our sins. Jesus' incarnation, life, death, and resurrection are profound evidence of God's great love for us. All of God's children have deep, God-infused value.

THE BEFORE & AFTER [OPTIONAL]

Text Message Questions

We've provided a couple of different text message questions to send out to your students prior to your meeting. Feel free to use one or both of the questions below. As with the rest of the curriculum, edit these questions to fit the needs of your ministry.

- Ever felt like you don't matter much to the world? If so, you don't want to miss small group tonight.

- You are extremely valuable. Don't believe me? Come to small group tonight and find out why.
- Ready to talk about your purpose in life? Don't miss small group tonight.

Parent Email

We've provided you with an email below that you can send to your parents following the lesson. Our hope is to encourage parents to continue the conversation at home. Feel free to edit and customize the email to fit your ministry needs.

Dear parents,

We just started an awesome six-lesson study on the book of Genesis called A View From the Beginning. Over the next few weeks, our students will get a great overview of some of the key stories from Genesis. We started with a lesson about how God made us in his image, and the incredible value each person has as a result. Our goal was to help our teenagers see themselves through God's eyes, as valuable and necessary parts of the world he made.

As you go throughout this week, consider using these questions to generate some discussion with your teenager about how God views both his or her value and the inherent value of others:

- *How might seeing ourselves as created in God's image change the way we look at life?*
- *How do you think the reality that everyone is created in God's image should change the way we treat people?*
- *How have we done as a family with this? Where have we forgotten this at times?*

As we go through this study, please let me know how I can help you and your teenager process through what we're learning. And don't hesitate to let me know any specific prayer requests you might have.



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2. LESSON GUIDE

GETTING THINGS STARTED [OPTIONAL]

Before your group meets, download and print, or otherwise display, a few images of items students would mostly agree were “valuable.” Consider printing pictures of items such as an iPad, an electric guitar, a nice car, expensive jewelry, and so on. Additionally, bring an item of your own that has sentimental value but might not otherwise be considered valuable—maybe a hand-me-down from a deceased parent or grandparent. Maybe it’s simply a gift from a spouse. Or maybe it is some object that reminds you of an experience, a trip, or an event that was particularly memorable.

Welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, and then jump into the discussion below:

Display the images you’ve printed off. Ask your students what all of these things have in common. Allow them to guess until they answer something along the lines of the items’ relative value or worth.

ASK:

- *What makes each of these valuable? Who determines the value of these objects?*
- *Why are some objects more valuable if there are only a limited number of them?*
- *What role does personal preference play in determining how valuable something is?*

At this point, display your valuable item. Ask students if they think this is valuable. Regardless of how they answer, explain that to you, this item is extremely valuable. Explain why the object has value to you.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *There are times in each of our lives when the world may look at us and not see anything that valuable. Sometimes we look at other people and compare—or we judge. Honestly, there may be times when we look at ourselves and feel the same way. But just like the object I just showed you that has value because of the meaning it has to me, you have tremendous value because of what you mean to God. Today we’re going to look at exactly what this means.*





If you came up with an opening activity, movie clip, or game that worked well with your group, and you'd like to share it with other youth workers, please email us at ideas@simplyyouthministry.com.

TEACHING GUIDE



The goal of the Teaching Points is to help students capture the essence of each lesson with more discussion and less lecture-style teaching. The main points we have chosen here are (1) People have inherent value because we were made in God's image, (2) Being made in God's image means having the power to impact the world, and (3) Your life has great value and great purpose because God's plan for this world involves you.



Remember: All throughout these lessons, it's up to you to choose (1) how many questions you use, and (2) the wording of the main points—keep ours, or change the wording to make it clearer for your audience.

Read Genesis 1:26-31 together as a group. Consider allowing one or more of the teenagers to read the text. You may choose to allow students to respond to the passage, using the overview from your Teaching Prep to guide any discussion.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Let's explore what it means to be created in the image of God and how this dramatically impacts the way we see ourselves and our place in God's plan.*

1. People have inherent value because we were made in God's image

ASK:

- *The word inherent means that an inborn quality or attribute exists permanently in someone or something. So what do we mean when we say someone has inherent value?*
- *If God has created us with inherent value because we were made in his image, how does our culture attempt to alter the value we put on our ourselves—and on others?*
- *How does this concept change the way you view other people? yourself?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *We live in a world that sizes people up using its own standards of worth. Are you beautiful according to the world's standards? Then you're valuable. Are you talented? Then you're valuable. Do you have something the world*



needs? You get the idea: You're valuable. But what if you don't meet the world's flawed standards for attractiveness? What if you aren't talented in an area our culture values? Too often you are told you aren't valuable and don't have much worth. This could not be further from the truth. You are valuable simply because you were made in the image of God. God's standard of worth is the exact opposite of the world's standard.

2. Being made in God's image means having the power to impact the world

ASK:

- *Being made in God's image doesn't mean looking like God. It means you have the capability to reflect God's character, ways, and glory to the world. How does this put you in a position to have great influence on the world around you?*
- *What are some practical examples of how you can reflect who God is in the world you live in each day?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Think about a solar panel. Solar panels provide power for a lot of things: cars, businesses, homes, and so on. On their own, solar panels have no ability to power anything. They must draw their power from a power source—in this case, the sun. Solar panels absorb the sunlight and then make their own impact. You are the same way. Because you are made in God's image, you have the power to make an impact on the world because of God's power in you. You can literally be a representative of God's character and God's ways in your school and in your community.*

3. Your life has great value and great purpose because God's plan for this world involves you

ASK:

- *God chose to create you as a wonderfully unique being. What does that say about your importance?*
- *If God's desire is to redeem all people from their sins—and it is—then what do you think this says about your life's purpose?*
- *How does your ability to reflect God's character shape the way you show others what it means to have a relationship with Christ?*



SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *God is creator of all things. God created you for a purpose. Ephesians 2:10 gives us a glimpse of the purpose behind God's decision to include us in his creation: For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. We were included in God's creation to use our lives to make an impact for God—to do "good things," as Paul put it in that verse. Your life has the potential to make a tremendous impact for the kingdom of God, all because God created you in his image and included you in his awesome plan.*

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION [OPTIONAL]

ASK:

- *Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. What does this passage say about the ownership of our lives?*
- *Read Psalm 100:3. Based on this verse, why is it a good idea to seek God's will when it comes to our plans, our futures, and the things we want to do with our lives?*
- *Do you think most teenage Christ-followers truly seek God's purposes for their future plans? Explain your answer.*
- *Give some practical examples of what it would look like for someone to really use their life to make a meaningful difference in the world around them for the sake of Christ.*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 6 teach us that our lives are not even ours; we were bought with a price, purchased by someone else. Who purchased us? Jesus. And what price did he pay? He gave his life so we could live. When we think about our lives and our purpose and our value, we must remember that Christ loved us enough to lay down his life—and he did it so we would live a vibrant life of faith, directing others to God and his life-giving love.*

ASK:

- *When you see yourself and your self-worth in a negative way, when you look in the mirror and feel worthless or no good or think you don't measure up, what are you really saying to God about his creation? What are you saying to Christ about the life he purchased?*



APPLICATION

You may choose to do the following application points in a variety of combinations. Choose one or more to work through as a group. Or do one as a group and send one to your students midweek through Facebook® or text message.

Challenge students to begin seeing themselves as God sees them. **ASK:**

- *What have you learned today that might lead you to begin to see yourself as more valuable and more important to God and his plan?*
- *What are some examples of how this knowledge might begin to change the way you go about each day?*
- *How might this change the way you see your future?*

Ask students to think about their future plans. Instruct them to come up with a one-sentence description of what career path they think they might choose and how this choice can make a difference in the world. **ASK:**

- *We know that God chose to create you to be a part of his plan to make his name and ways known in the world. How will you begin to see your future plans in light of this?*
- *How can you use your future to make a dynamic impact in the world in Christ's name?*

Remind students that being made in God's image means having the potential to reflect parts of God's character to the world. Make a list of some of God's attributes (such as grace, mercy, love, forgiveness, patience, as so on). Then ask students to come up with examples of how they might exhibit some of these attributes in their own lives. Challenge them to focus on a specific attribute in the coming week.

SUMMARY

End your small group lesson here. Provide your teenagers with a quick summary or take-home challenge based on (1) the content of this lesson, (2) the dialogue that took place during the lesson, (3) your understanding of the issues and struggles your teenagers are facing, and (4) the big picture of your youth ministry and what your leadership team wants accomplished with the teaching and discussion time.



LEADER
TIP





**LEADER
TIP**

FOR KEEPS [MEMORY VERSE]

Encourage and/or challenge your teenagers to memorize the verse below.

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago (Ephesians 2:10).

