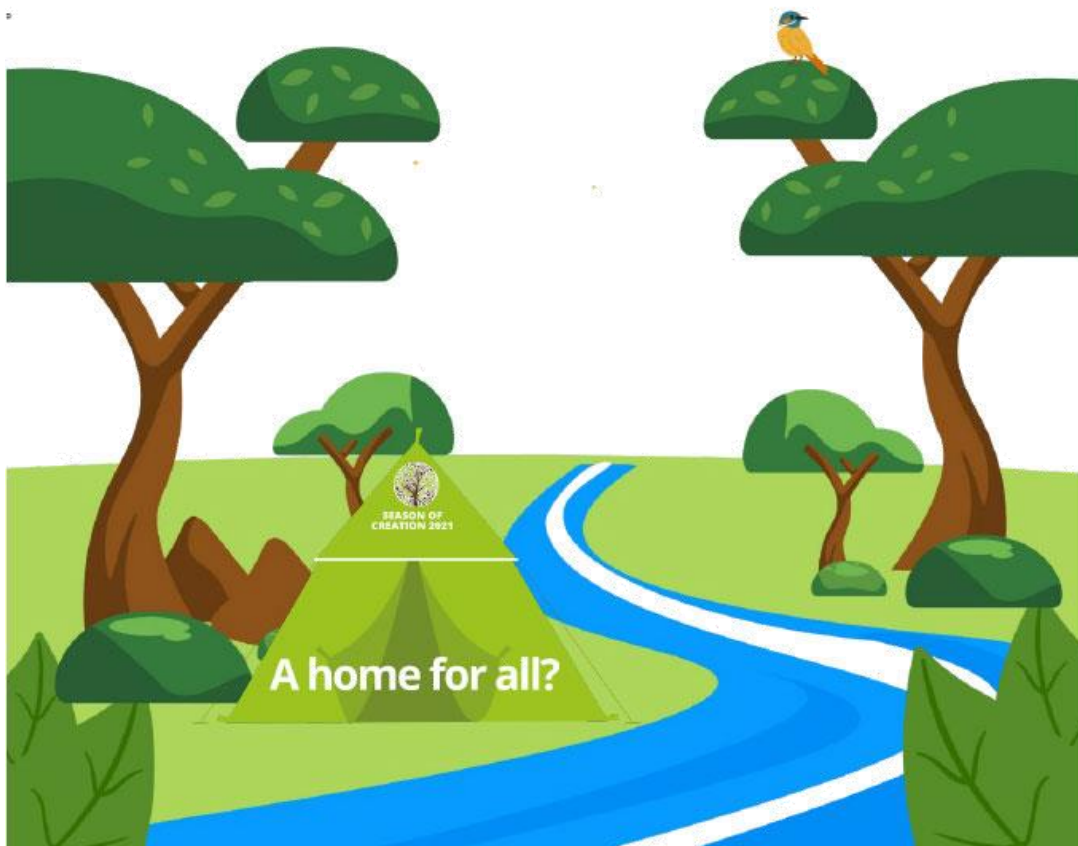




SEASON OF
CREATION

2021 Season of Creation Celebration Guide **A Home for All?**

Renewing the *Oikos* of God



Season of Creation 2021

Theme: A Home for All - Renewing the 'Oikos' of God

The 2021 Season of Creation theme is A Home for All - Renewing the *Oikos* of God. This theme is in alignment with a global call to recognise that “the Earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it.” *Oikos* is the Greek word for home/household and by rooting our theme in the concept of *oikos*, we celebrate the interconnectedness of life and the integral web of relationships that sustain the holistic wellbeing of our Mother Earth. An opportunity for our ecumenical Pasifika community to stand united in solidarity to amplify our voices and take action as warriors custodians of the *vanua* (land) to care for our common home in an integral ecological sustainable manner. This means every creature belongs to the Earth community and the entire community belongs to the Creator and we are called custodians to care for our common home in an integral ecological sustainable manner.

In Genesis God set a dome over the Earth. The word “dome” is where we get words such as ‘domicile’ and ‘domestic’ — in other words, God puts us all is — all people, all life — under the same domed roof — we are all in the house, the *oikos* of God. God gave humans the ministry to take care and cultivate this *oikos* of God. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and others have called the *oikos* of God “the Beloved Community,” a community in which all of life are equally members, though each has a different role.

The *oikos* is a home for all but it is now in danger because of greed, exploitation, disrespect, disconnection and systematic degradation. The whole creation is still crying out. Since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution the geography where we recognize God’s creative power has continued to shrink. Today only scraps of the human consciousness recognize God acting to restore and heal the Earth. We have forgotten that we live in the household of God, the *oikos*, the Beloved Community. Our fundamental interconnectedness has been at best forgotten, at worst deliberately denied.

It is our hope and prayer that we can become again this beloved community of intentional discipleship. We hope to move beyond the programmatic and didactic aspects of life to the prophetic and spiritual life to the action and way of life, which is shaped by Jesus.

May we be the champions to renew life, the servant leaders of all life in the Beloved Community, the *oikos* of God.

In God’s Grace,



SEASON OF CREATION – CHILDREN’S BIBLE STUDY

Written by PCC Child Protection’s Desk Team

CONCEPT

This Bible study is divided into two sections and has the flexibility for teachers and facilitators to adapt it to different age groups within their ministries.

The first age group is ages 5 – 7 years old and they will study the creation story of Genesis One and relate it back to their own surroundings where they will reflect on how to take care of God’s creation in their community.

The second age group is from ages 8 – 18 years old and here they will listen to the Climate Change Lament song before going into some discussion questions. Following this, they will listen to a reading of Luke 12:42-44 which has been summarized into accessible language before a short Bible study looks into humanity’s divine call to be good stewards of God’s creation.



LEARNING OUTCOME

- Children understand that all of God’s creation is good and there is a need to care for the environment that surrounds them
- Children are able to relate the Bible studies to their own Pacific context
- Children are able to discover their role or call to care for God’s creation

MATERIALS:

- Access to a laptop and screen where the video and PowerPoint presentation can be shown
- Paper, pencils, coloured pencils, crayons

Young Children's Bible Study

Audience: 5 – 7 years old



- Facilitator or teacher to sing with the children a hymn about God's creation in their language or they can use the video "All Things Bright and Beautiful" - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKmFwgazFOQ>
- Genesis One – Creation Story (PowerPoint Slide)



Reflective questions/Activities: Depending on the number of children, these can be done in one large group or smaller groups of children with adult facilitators. Please provide paper and markers to write down the children's answers. Another option is to hand out paper and pencils/crayons and children can draw their answers. Facilitators can use all the activities below in their program or they can select the ones best suited for them.

1. What did God say each day about his creation?
 - Answer: God saw that everything he created was good
 - God said that all of creation is good and humans were given the responsibility to take care of God's creation
2. God created the grass and plants and trees of all kinds, can you name some trees or plants in your country, town, or village? How are these trees and plants used by your people or families? E.g. children might know some plants which are used for medicine when they are sick or injured, others may know of fruits and vegetables that grow on trees and plants near their homes
 - If local plants and trees provide good things then how can children help to look after them so they continue to provide good things for the children and their families?
3. God created the sea, rivers, and land, what kinds of animals live in these environments in your country, town, or village? (children to name land and sea animals)



- Is there a children's song/lullaby/nursery rhyme about an animal/s that is important to the local culture, history, or tradition of the people? Facilitators can lead the song/lullaby/nursery rhyme and create some action chorus moves for the children to follow



4. God created people in God's own image and told them to be fruitful and to reign over and look after the rest of creation. Children are created in God's image, how can children help look after God's creation?

- Examples – making sure to put their rubbish in the bin, picking up rubbish along the seashore and putting it away properly with the help of parents or guardians, caring for their gardens by keeping it clean, planting trees or mangroves.



5. Children to draw a picture of themselves looking after God's creation - they can take the drawing home and show their parents

- Facilitators to encourage parents and guardians to spend some time sitting with child/children and listen to them explain what they learned from the Bible study as well as share their drawings.

6. Compare & Contrast Activity:

- Divide your sheet in half
- On one half of the page draw a 'healthy environment' and on the other of the page draw an 'unhealthy environment'
- Children explain the meanings of their drawings. This could give an insight of what children view as a healthy and unhealthy environment.



7. Additional Activity: Create an action chorus to the video "All Things Bright and Beautiful"

8. A few children selected to show their drawings to the group

9. Closing prayer – A prayer about God's creation to be said by a child

Children to Adolescent's Bible Study

Audience: The study for the two age groups is similar but the activities at the end will be slightly different:

- 8 – 12 years old
- 13 – 18 years old
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Introduction

- Opening Prayer by facilitator or church leader
- Follow below instructions and then play video of the Climate Change Lament (Archbishop Peter Loy Chong) -

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2147432585559938>

- **Facilitator or teacher to explain the word “lament”**
 - i. Does anyone know what the word “lament” means? – children to have a guess of the meaning
 - ii. Definition of “lament” – to feel or express sadness, sorrow, or mourning. How are these words of sadness or mourning translated to the local language? Write them down on paper. Did you know that in the Old Testament there is a book titled “The Book of Lamentations” which has three poems of Israel’s sadness, sorrow, or mourning about their suffering?
 - iii. Listen to the Climate Change Lament song which was written by a Pacific Church leader telling the world of how our island homes need to be saved from actions that destroy God’s creation such as logging, deep-sea mining, overfishing, and CO2 emissions/fossil fuel
 - iv. Watch the video and then answer the following reflection questions



Reflective Question for the children: These questions can be answered as a group discussion

- i. In the song, why is Mother Earth crying or lamenting?
- ii. What kinds of damage are being done to the environment?
- iii. How can children and youth help to “save our Pacific island homes”?
- iv. Why is it important to listen to the voices of children when it comes to the effects of climate change and destruction of the environment?
- v. Write the children’s answers down and send them to the PCC stewardship desk



francesn@pcc.org.fj

Bible Study: Luke 12:42-44

“One day Jesus told a story to his disciples saying, ‘There once was a rich man who had lots of people working for him. One day he had to travel somewhere faraway and so he left one of his workers to take care of everyone else by giving them their food and payment (money) while he was away. A worker who is good will listen to his boss and feed all the workers and pay them fairly and when the boss returns he will be happy and will entrust the good worker with bigger responsibilities. But if the worker was bad and didn’t look after the people or feed them or pay them their money, then when the owner returns he will be very angry and punish the worker because he did not do the right thing.’”

Taking care of God’s creation:

In Genesis 1 God creates the world and on the sixth day creates humans in God’s own image. Humans were then commanded to be fruitful and reign over the rest of creation in verses 27-28. Like the story in Luke 12 where the rich man’s worker was given authority to take care of the other workers, humanity too has been given the responsibility to take care of God’s creation.

The earth is our common home that we share with one another as well as the animals of the land, sea, and sky. In the Greek language, the word for “home” or those who live together in a “house” is “Oikos.”

From the word “Oikos” (home) comes the word “Oikonomos” which translates to the English word of “steward” or “stewardship,” meaning someone who looks after the household/family. If we look at the creation story of Genesis 1 as God commanding humanity to have



“stewardship” over the rest of creation, then it means that rather than greedily use and destroy God’s creation, we are called to take care of it like the good worker in Luke 12 who looks after the household while the Master is away.

There is a lot of work being done right now by many Pacific church leaders, scientists, environmental advocates, and young people who are fighting for the survival of our island homes and people. They do this because we as God’s children have a responsibility to not only care for creation but to also make sure that future generations of Pacific Island children have a future by making sure that our land and seas are protected from human greed and destruction.

God loves children and in Psalm 139:13-14 we find how close God is to the growing child in the womb,

“For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”

Therefore, if God knows and cares about every child being created in their first home, which is their mother’s womb, then surely God cares about the home in which the baby will grow up once he or she is delivered.

The home for the future generation of Pacific Island children is being threatened by human activity such as mining the land and sea-bed for precious natural resources or throwing pollution into the sea, climate change, rising sea levels, and increasingly powerful cyclones.



Why is this happening? A lot of it has to do with the greed for power and money. Many businesses from bigger countries come to our island nations and mine precious things from the land and sea. These kinds of activities harm the environment and pollute our homes as well as the homes of our marine animals like fish and turtles. Sometimes, people have to move away from the lands because rich organizations force them out as they mine for precious rocks, minerals and metals in the ground. For example, this happened in Kiribati when the people of Ocean Island were forced to leave their home because England mined all of the phosphate from their island.

Jesus warned in Luke 12:15, “Be on your guard against all kinds of greed, for life does not have meaning in the abundance of possessions”

Human greed is a sin and causes the destruction of God’s creation while destroying the home of future generations of children. Like the good worker who obediently takes care of his Master’s home and workers while the Master is away, the Church also has a responsibility to protect God’s creation (Genesis 1:28-29) so that the earth can be fruitful for Pacific children of tomorrow.



Activity for children ages 8 – 12 years old

- Group Discussions with the following questions: How are the words “steward” and “stewardship” translated into your language? In your own church community and families, how do you look after God’s creation? Do you take care of the sea and land by keeping it clean from pollution? Do you treat the animals with respect as God’s creation? What good practices did your ancestors have to care for the land and sea so as to make sure it was handed safely from one generation to another? (Write down the answers from the children and email them along with the child’s name and age to francesn@pcc.org.fj)



- Design a poster from your Church with a message about taking care of God's creation and not destroying it. Show in your drawing design some of the practices you or your ancestors practiced to look after God's creation e.g. respectful fishing practices that do not use destructive methods, environmentally friendly packaging that are biodegradable like banana leaves or hand-woven baskets made from coconut leaves



Activity for children ages 13 – 18 years old

- Further reflective questions: These can be held as discussions by the facilitator with the adolescents and youth
 - i. What activities or practices do you know of in your community that are harmful or destructive to God's creation?
 - ii. What activities or practices do you know of in your community that protect and conserve God's creation for future generations?
 - iii. How can the voice of children and youth make a difference in the care for God's creation?



Write a letter to your church leader with one idea of how children and young people can help promote good stewardship or management of God's creation in the church


• **Organize a clean-up programme for Sunday School or Youth group**

- i. Materials: garbage bags and gloves
- ii. Small groups focus on collecting different
 - Group One: collect plastic items e.g. plastic bottles, chip wrappers, baby diapers
 - Group Two: collect glass items e.g. glass bottles
 - Group Three: collect metal items e.g. batteries, anything made out of metals
 - Group Four: collect material items e.g. clothes
 - Group Five: any other types of rubbish



Children are able to present their drawings and letters to the larger group. PCC encourages pictures of the children's work to be shared with PCC by emailing them to francesn@pcc.org.fj

Sharing the children's thoughts, ideas, and creativity can help the secretariat find platforms for the children's voices to be heard at regional and international levels where the emphasis of protecting God's creation and our Pacific homes is highlighted through our young people.

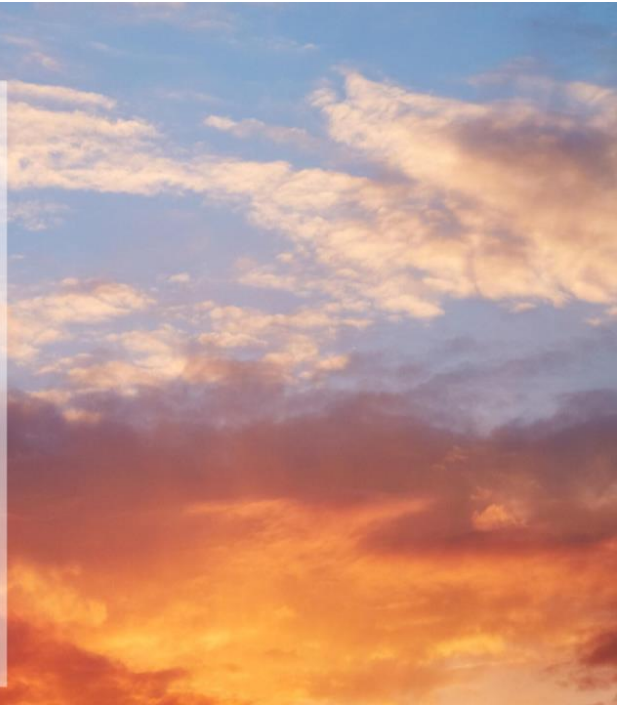


Day 1

- In the beginning God created the heavens and earth.
- The earth was unformed and there was darkness everywhere. The Spirit of God floated above the waters of the deep
- God said, "Let there be light" and there was light
- God saw that the light was GOOD. He separated the light from the dark.
- God called the light 'day'. He called the dark 'night'. Evening passed and then it was morning
- This was the first day

Day 2

- Then God said , “A wide space will appear between the waters. So the waters will separate into two places.”
- So God made a wide space. He separated the water under the space from the water that was above it
- And what God said happened
- God called the wide space ‘sky’
- Evening passed and then it was morning.
- That was the second day



Day 3

- God said, ‘The water that is under the sky will come together in one place, Then the dry ground will appear.’ And what God said happened
- God called the dry ground ‘land’. He called the water that had come together ‘sea’. God looked at what he had made. He saw that it was good.



Day 3 Continued...

- Then God said, 'Let the land produce vegetation: There will be plants with their seeds, the trees with their fruits. Each kind of plant and tree will have its own seeds and fruits. And what God said happened
- All kinds of plants and trees began to grow in the ground. The plants made seeds. The trees made fruits with seeds in them. Each plant made its own kind of seeds.
- God looked at what he made. He saw that it was good.
- Evening passed and then it was morning.
- That was the third day

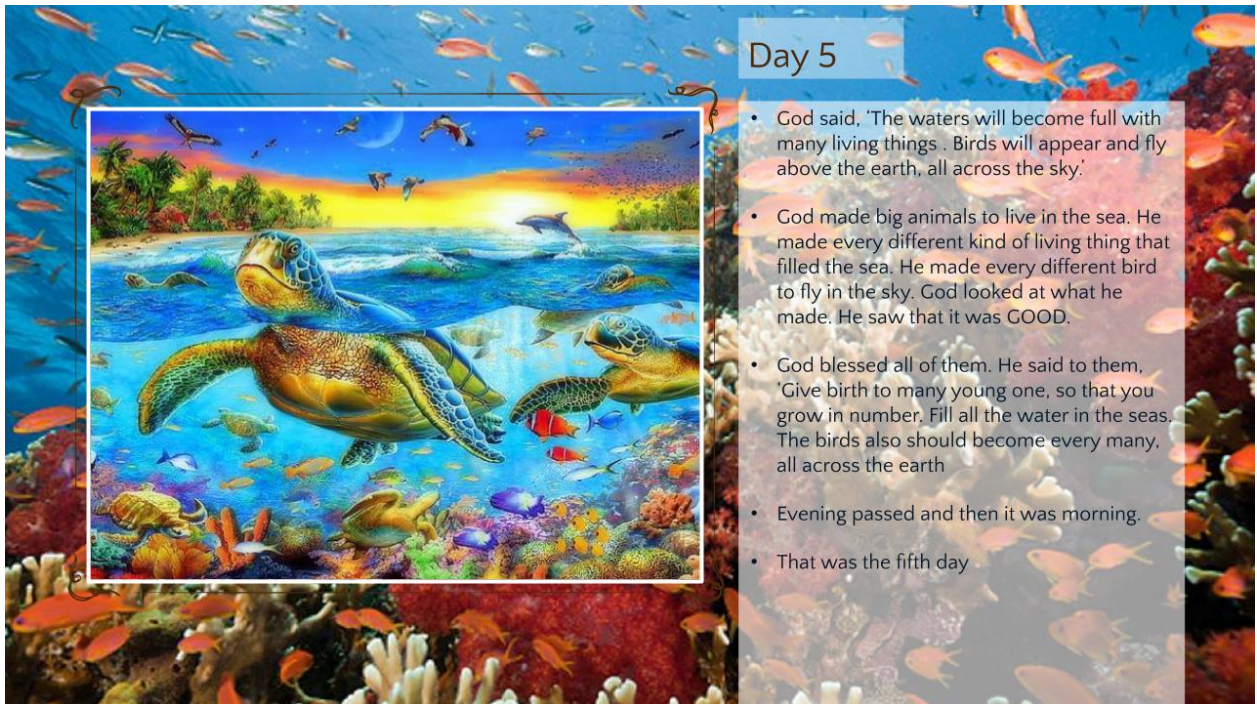


Day 4

- God said, "There will be lights across the sky. They will separate the day from the night. They will show the seasons, days and years".
- "The lights in the sky will give light to the earth.". And what God said happened.
- God made two great lights. The brighter light (Sun) ruled over the day. The lesser light (Moon) ruled over the night.

Day 4 Continued...

- God said, "There will be lights across the sky." Then God made the stars
- God put all these lights in the sky to shine their light on the earth.
- They were to rule over the day and night. They were to separate the time of light from the time of dark.
- God looked at what he had made. He saw that it was GOOD.
- Evening passed and it was morning, that was the fourth day.



Day 5

- God said, 'The waters will become full with many living things. Birds will appear and fly above the earth, all across the sky.'
- God made big animals to live in the sea. He made every different kind of living thing that filled the sea. He made every different bird to fly in the sky. God looked at what he made. He saw that it was GOOD.
- God blessed all of them. He said to them, 'Give birth to many young one, so that you grow in number. Fill all the water in the seas. The birds also should become every many, all across the earth'
- Evening passed and then it was morning.
- That was the fifth day



Day 6

- God said, 'Different kinds of animals will now appear on the land. There will be livestock and wild animals. There will also be other small animals that move along the ground. There will be many kinds of animals and each kind will be different.' And what God said happened.
- God made the different kinds of wild animals and the different kinds of livestock. He made all the different kinds of animals that move along the ground.
- God looked at what he had made. He saw that it was GOOD.



Day 6

- Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they rule over fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground"
- So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

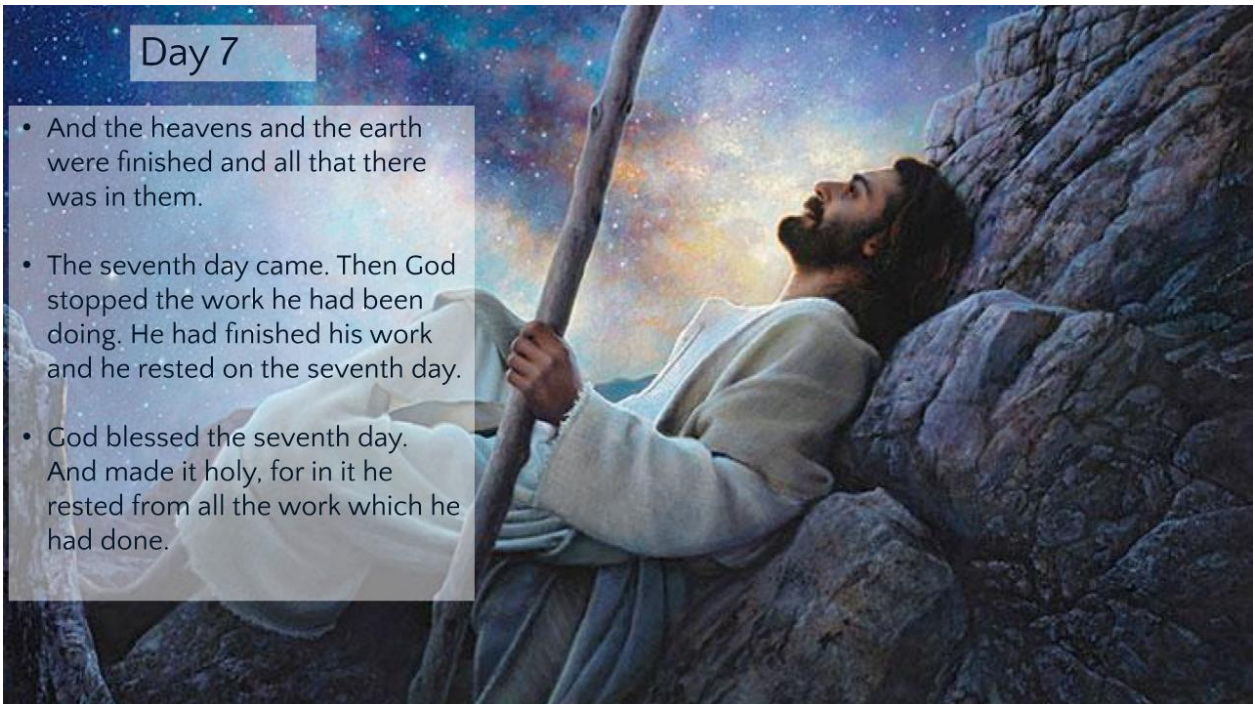
Day 6



- God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creatures that moves on the ground."
- Then God said, I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground –everything that has breath of life in it–I give every green plant for food." And it was so
- God saw all that he had made, and it was VERY GOOD. And there was evening, and there was morning. That was the sixth day.

Day 7

- And the heavens and the earth were finished and all that there was in them.
- The seventh day came. Then God stopped the work he had been doing. He had finished his work and he rested on the seventh day.
- God blessed the seventh day. And made it holy, for in it he rested from all the work which he had done.





PowerPoint for the Second Bible Study for the older children

Please click on the image twice as it will take you to the PowerPoint presentation.

May we continue to walk, hold hands, advice and encourage one another.

God bless.