

# A Good Shepherd Sacred Story

## **Creation**

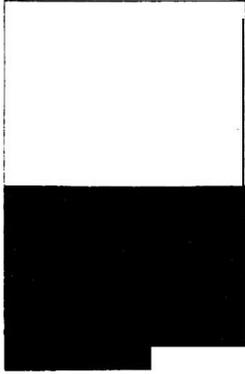
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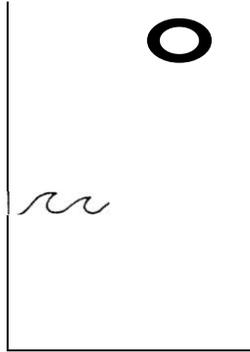
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## **CREATION .... MATERIALS**

- medium rectangular wicker basket to hold:
  - black felt rectangular underlay
  - set of creation cards



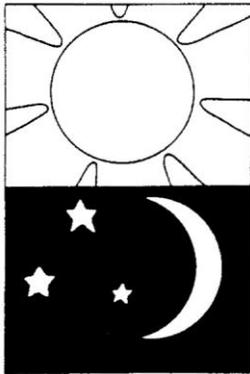
Day 1



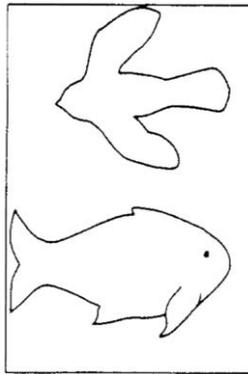
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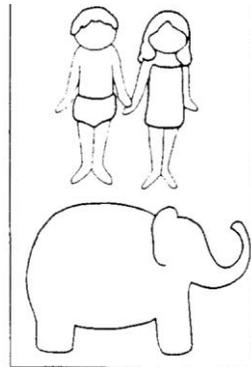
Day 3



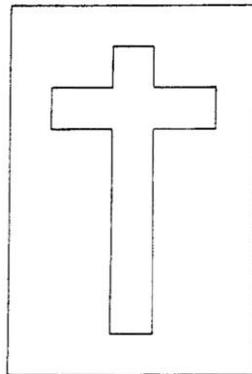
Day 4



Day 5



Day 6



Day 7

## CREATION .... GENESIS 1 and 2

### ACTIONS

After speaking, stand up and walk to the story shelf. Remove the story basket and carry it back to the circle, using two hands.

After speaking, Sit In silence for 10-15 seconds as you gently stroke the black felt underlay.

Unfold the underlay. Trace a smile on the underlay with your finger.

Lay the first creation card a few inches from the left edge of the underlay.

Touch the first card and nod slowly, as you emphasize the word "good".

Lay the second creation card to the right of the first card.

Touch the second card and nod slowly, again emphasizing the word "good".

Lay the third creation card to the right of the second card. Spread your arms wide for the oak and reach down as though picking flowers.

Touch the third card and nod slowly as you emphasize the word "good".

### WORDS

Watch carefully where I go to get this story so you will always know where to find it if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

All of the words to this story are inside of me. Will you please make silence with me while I find all of those words?

In the beginning there was only darkness -- and perhaps the joy of God.

And God decided to make a world. So from a dark nothing God began.

On the first day, God said, "Let there be light. " And there was light. God named the light, day; and the darkness, night.

And God saw the day and night and said it was good.

On the second day God separated the waters above the earth, the clouds and rain and the waters under the earth, the seas and oceans, rivers and streams.

And God saw the waters and said they, too, were good.

On the third day God made all the green and growing things; trees and flowers, from the giant oak to the Christmas tree. There were bright red tulips and delicate pink roses.

And God saw all the green and growing things and said, "This is good."

Lay the fourth creation card to the right of the third card. Make a circle above your head for the sun. As you speak of stars pretend to reach into yourself and throw the "stars" into the sky.

Touch the fourth card, look upward and nod as you emphasize the word "good".

Lay the fifth creation card to the right of the fourth card. Hook your thumbs together to make a "bird" and then place your palms together and make them "swim" as you describe the fish.

Touch the fifth card, and nod as you emphasize the word "good".

Lay the sixth creation card to the right of the fifth card. As you speak of the animals, use' your hands to pretend to stroke the rabbit, stretch the long neck of the giraffe and swing the trunk of the elephant.

Nod slowly.

Touch the sixth card, touching both the man and woman figures and smile. Pause a moment before you say, "This is very good." Emphasize the word "very".

Lay the seventh creation card to the right of the sixth card. Touch the cross reverently, as though in blessing.

On the fourth day God made the lights in the heavens. God set the sun in place for day and the moon for night. And God flung the stars into their place.

And God saw the lights and said, "This is good."

On the fifth day God made birds to fly in the air and fish to swim in the water. There were brilliant bluebirds, and tiny hummingbirds. There were huge sailfish and tiny guppies.

When God saw all the birds and the fish, God said, "This is good. "

On the sixth day God filled the world with all kinds of animals. There were soft, furry rabbits, tall giraffes and strong elephants. There were dogs and cats.

Then God made the greatest animal. God made people. When God made men and women, God decided to put them in charge of the whole world, all that had been created.

And when God saw all the animals, especially the men and women, God smiled. Then God said, "This is very good."

On the seventh day, God rested from all of the work God had done. God made this day a special day and blessed it and made it holy.

## WONDERING QUESTIONS:

I wonder how it felt to be only in darkness?

I wonder if the fish were surprised to find themselves in the water?

I wonder how the whole world looked when it was new?

Place each creation card in the basket, beginning with the last card you put out and working backward to the first.

Beginning at either side, fold the underlay to the other side. Repeat the side to side fold twice before placing it on top of the cards in the basket.

After speaking, pick the basket up with two hands and carry it back to its shelf. Return to the circle.

Go around the circle allowing each child to choose their work.

Watch carefully as I put these materials away. Then you will know how to handle them if this is your chosen work today or another day.

This black piece is very long. But if I fold it with this edge to this edge, and then do it again and again, it will fit in the basket.

Watch where I return this story. If you choose to make this your work today or another day, you will know where to find it.

It's time to choose our work for today. Will you make your own creation cards? Maybe you will draw or paint. Let's begin.

## **CREATION ... TEACHER HELPS**

The primary emphasis of this lesson is that the world God created was good. God was pleased with the result of God's handiwork. We tell the creation story with order so the children will sense that God brings order to our lives, our family and even the world and beyond.

The creation story is a combination of Genesis 1 and 2, but leans heavily to the Genesis 1 account. This is the later of the two accounts, believed to be from the "P" or priestly tradition. It is dated around 550 BCE. This text would come from the time the Israelites were in exile in Babylon. It is a liturgical account. One can almost imagine the priest reading this story as a part of worship. Perhaps even the "It is good" phrase was a response of the people. Certainly that phrase, repeated each time God creates another newness, would stick in the minds of the children.

Notice that in the Genesis 1 account the world is called into being. It is not through any action of God planting a garden, but rather by God speaking words and a world responding to the creator's voice. Genesis 2, on the other hand, shows God planting a garden and shaping man out of clay and then putting man into the garden. In Genesis 2 is also the account of man made first and then woman made to be a helper for the man whom God thought should not be alone. In Genesis 1 man and woman are made at the same time. It is within the United Methodist tradition of inclusiveness that we teach the first understanding of this creation event.

The purpose of the creation accounts is two-fold. First, the creation story reminds us who is creator and who is creature. We are the ones who were created. What then is our purpose? Our purpose is to praise God and to stay in relationship to the creator God. Second, this story was for the people of God and is for us a constant reminder to set apart a piece of our week to recreate. As one third grader said to me, "I know why God took a day off. That was important stuff God did and he just wanted to enjoy it." If we can help the children understand that God wants us to enjoy the world God made, we will have made a small step. As we help them understand that our reasons for worship have been made part of the story in the Bible that was chosen to be put in the first words, we will have made an even larger step.

The wondering questions move from most imaginary to most concrete. The first question about darkness may prompt several answers. There will be children who think dark would be scary and those who think it would be neat. And there will probably be a child who will be reminded of a blind person. Don't be surprised if a child wonders if God liked the darkness. A safe answer would be "yes" since it was part of God's creation.

The question about the fish is a joy question. It is to prompt smiles and more wonder. The children may wonder if the fish knew how to swim right away or if they had to learn. Widened eyes and a look of surprise can encourage the happy mystery of this question.

The final question about how the world looked is really one to raise the consciousness of all. What has happened to the world since it was new? What have we done to help or hinder creation from remaining beautiful? This question is to keep alive a certain sense of awe in knowing that we can never know, in this lifetime, how it must have been when that garden sprang "fresh from the word." (from the hymn "Morning Has Broken" in The United Methodist Hymnal; Book of United Methodist Worship, Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989. p. 145) After the "wondering questions" or during the "circle of light" would be an appropriate time to sing this song to celebrate creation.

#### SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN:

What is the most beautiful thought you have ever had? Have you imagined a picture, a setting of world peace, a place where no one is ever hurt? Share with the rest of the class the most beautiful thought you've ever created and realize that you have just a piece of God's mind in you when you do that.

Our story tells us that the last day God rested and that God blessed that day. Why do you think we come to church and Sunday School on a day of rest?

In the Bible, Genesis 1 :27 says that we humans were created in the image of God, male and female. What does that say about what God must be like? Try to imagine personality, not bodies!