

Session 1:

Beginnings: Creation

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covers the
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Beginnings: Creation

This session covers the time before time began: how God created a good and perfect world, how in this good and perfect world there was peace, and how humans are given the task of looking after God's good creation.

Session outline

1. Open today's kit bag and find:

- a cross
- a Bible (marked ready for Genesis chapter 1) or a Children's Bible marked with the Creation Story
- the Big Justice Story Sack playmat
- images for this session from the postcard pack
- today's prop: the gift-wrapped bits of 'Jigsaw Earth' (prepare this in advance).

To prepare this prop: please find image 1 from the postcard pack, cut out the jigsaw shapes on the reverse, and individually gift-wrap each bit of the jigsaw.

4. Get out the props and pass them round. Start a conversation around the objects. Open with a question for the children to think about:

- I wonder if you have ever received a gift unexpectedly?
- I wonder, what's the best gift you have ever received?
- What is the best gift you have ever given someone?
- Can you name different types of gift we can receive, such as physical objects and the gifts of time, care, friendship?



Introduce the concept of the world as a gift using the 'Jigsaw Earth' prop from the kitbag. Pass the jigsaw gifts around the circle and invite individual children to open one gift. As each one is unwrapped they can be fitted together to form the whole picture. Talk about the picture you have made and the beauty of the world at creation.

2. Lay out the playmat and place the cross in the space and have everyone sit around. Point out where the images of the Earth and the Garden of Eden are on the illustrated playmat and explain: 'this is where we are in the big Bible story'.

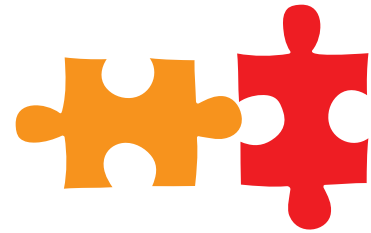
Today our story is found at the very beginning, in fact it starts before there was a beginning, before time and space existed. We find the story in the book of Genesis, which is the Hebrew word for 'Beginning'. The Beginning starts with a gift, a wonderful present.

3. Bible verse: Creation story/Genesis chapter 1: invite the children to join in with the words 'and God saw it was good,' every time the words occur.

Key verse: 'and God saw that it was good'

(Genesis 1:12)





At the beginning of time the world was filled with peace: peace between God and humankind; peace between all people; peace between people and the environment. God gave this beautiful, peaceful world as a gift and asked humans to look after it and treasure it. I wonder, do you think the world has stayed as a beautiful gift to treasure? Why/why not?

The Bible tells us that as time went on, people stopped looking after the world and each other as God had asked them to. They stopped living as if God and his friendship mattered. And so the peace in the world – between people, within nature itself and with God – was shattered. The gift became spoilt.

However, as Christians we believe we can still treasure the gift of God's good creation and, with God's help, we can love the world again. We can find ways to look after the world and one another. I wonder, can you think of ways in which we can look after our beautiful world? You might want to discuss:

- ways in which we can help to bring peace to the world
- how we can show appreciation of the world as a gift of beauty and creativity
- how we can overcome the challenges of climate change together.

Christian Aid story

Many Christians try to live their lives in a way which shows appreciation for God's gift, and in ways that make the world a happier and fairer place for all people.



Christian Aid is a charity which seeks to bring God's justice and peace to the world – to completely get rid of poverty and injustice. In our lives today, climate change is one of the biggest challenges we face and is something that has a bad impact on God's good creation.

Climate change causes our weather to become more extreme or unpredictable. The Earth's atmosphere acts a bit like a blanket around the world, keeping our planet nice and warm. But extra greenhouse gases, partially caused by people burning fossil fuels, have caused the Earth's atmosphere to trap more of the sun's heat. As the Earth gets warmer, the weather is changing and becoming less predictable. This makes life harder for people, especially in poor countries, where droughts, floods and storms can cause devastation.

Christian Aid works to help those affected by the impacts of climate change and to help Christians speak out boldly to try and stop the actions which cause climate change. Make sure the children understand what is meant by climate change and then explore photos 2-7 from the postcard pack, showing how Christian Aid works to overcome and speak out about this challenge.

Postcard 5 shows Morsheda and her family, who live on a river island in Bangladesh, which is particularly prone to flooding.



When her daughter Sokhina was a tiny baby, she fell into the water in their flooded home. Luckily, her mother heard the splash and pulled her out; then she popped Sokhina into a cooking pot which she used as a tiny boat to float her across the river to safety.

Christian Aid has helped to raise the family's house out of the reach of floodwater so that this does not happen again. The charity is also working hard to encourage world leaders to invest in clean energy and stop making climate change worse.



Activity suggestions:

- Make a clay gift for a friend or carer.
- Sing the song *Oh, oh, oh, how good is the Lord* and ask the children to make suggestions for verses that could be added.
- Listen to and learn *Music Maker* by Fischy Music. Learn the words to accompany the song.
- Use the song *Indescribable* as a focus for prayer and reflection. Create a music/ image presentation to share with the wider congregation, possibly using pieces of art created by the children.



Close: read Micah 6:8:

'What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?'

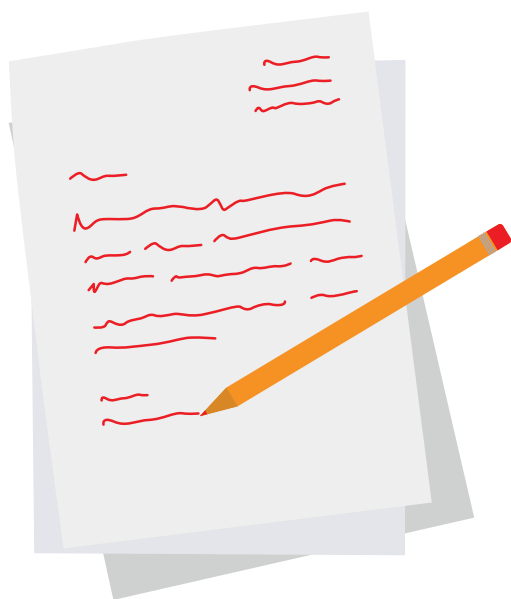
This week, we are going to help each other to work together to make our world fairer.

We are going to help each other, and the people we meet, to be kinder to each other.

And we are going to do this because we don't just want to talk about it today, and then forget about it tomorrow: we are going to take the thoughts we've had and the ideas we've heard and turn them into energy for our hands and feet.

Action this week:

- Campaign action: ask the children to write to the church leaders to ask how, as a church, they seek to be eco-friendly. (You can find out about the campaign to switch churches to renewable energy here: www.bigchurchswitch.org.uk)



Let's join hands and pray:

(you may use this or another suitable commissioning prayer)

Heavenly God, help us live in the way you want us to.

Thank you for your love and kindness, and for giving us time to learn and think together. Teach us to be your hands and feet in the world we live in.

Send us where we are needed and help us to look upon others as you do: with eyes full of love.

Amen.

- Can you help your family recycle during the week or use less electricity by turning off the lights when they're not needed?

