

45-Minute Small Group Bible Study

CREATION

The Christian Faith, pages 10-12

Purpose: To confess God as the Creator of heaven and earth, to see creation as the unified work of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to receive the material world and human embodiment as good gifts, and to understand the creaturely dependence and purpose that flow from being made by God.

Main Truth: The eternal Triune God freely created all things from nothing by his almighty Word and Spirit. His creation is distinct from him yet entirely dependent on him, and he made the physical world good. Human beings, created in God's image as embodied creatures, are the crown of creation, called to live in harmony with God, one another, and the world for his glory.

1. Opening Prayer - 2 minutes

Creator of heaven and earth, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, all that exists depends on you. Open our eyes through your Word to see creation as your good gift and ourselves as your creatures. Give us humility, wonder, gratitude, and faith as we study what you have made and why you made it. Amen.

2. Opening Discussion - 3 minutes

Begin with one or two questions:

1. When you hear "creation," do you first think about origins, nature, human beings, science, or something else?
2. Why does it matter for Christian faith that the material world is created good rather than treated as spiritually inferior?
3. What changes when we think of ourselves first as creatures who receive life rather than as autonomous individuals?

3. Read the Doctrinal Statement - 2 minutes

Have one person read the doctrinal statement for "Creation" on page 10. Listen for how it describes the Creator, the means of creation, human beings, the goodness of the physical world, and the purpose of creation.

4. The Triune God Creates by His Word and Spirit - 5 minutes

Read: Genesis 1:1-3

The Bible opens with God creating heaven and earth, the Spirit hovering over the waters, and God speaking light into being.

Discuss:

1. What is already present in the first three verses of Scripture - God, his Spirit, and his speaking Word?
2. What does creation by divine speech tell us about God's power and freedom?

Read: Psalm 33:6, 9

The heavens are made by the LORD's word and by the breath - or Spirit - of his mouth: "He said, 'Let it be,' and it was."

Discuss:

1. How does the psalm reinforce the effortless authority of God's creative command?
2. Why is it important that creation is not the result of God struggling against an equal rival?

Read: John 1:1-4

John identifies the eternal Word as God and says that everything was made through him and that life is in him.

Discuss:

1. How does John deepen the Genesis account by identifying the divine Word personally?
2. What does this passage tell us about the Son's involvement in creation?

Read: Hebrews 11:3

Faith knows that the universe was created by God's word, so that what is seen did not come from visible things.

Discuss:

1. How does this passage support the confession that God created from nothing?
2. Why is creation ultimately a matter received by faith from God's testimony?

Key Insight: Christian creation teaching is Trinitarian: the Father creates through his Word in the life-giving Spirit. The universe is not divine, accidental, or self-originating. It exists because the living God freely wills and speaks it into being.

5. God Made the World Good in Six Days - 4 minutes

Read: Genesis 1:31; Exodus 20:11

Genesis calls everything God made "very good," and the Sabbath command points back to the LORD making heaven, earth, sea, and all that is in them in six days.

Discuss:

1. What does "very good" say about matter, bodies, work, food, sexuality, and ordinary creaturely life?
2. Why does the doctrinal statement treat the six days of Genesis 1 as real acts of God's creation rather than simply a symbol detached from the text?

Read: Genesis 2:1-2

The creation account reaches completion, and God rests on the seventh day.

Discuss:

1. What does completion and rest add to the picture of creation as ordered rather than chaotic?
2. How might Sabbath rest teach creatures that life is received, not endlessly manufactured by us?

6. The Creator Is Eternal and Greater Than Creation - 4 minutes

Read: Isaiah 40:28; Psalm 90:2

The Creator is the eternal God, God “from eternity to eternity,” before mountains, earth, or world existed.

Discuss:

1. What is the difference between saying God is very old and saying God is eternal?
2. Why can God not be treated as one being within the universe, even the greatest one?

Read: 2 Chronicles 2:6

Even the highest heaven cannot contain God.

Discuss:

1. How does this protect Christian faith from identifying God with nature or confining him to a sacred place?
2. How can God transcend creation and still be truly present to it?

7. Human Beings Are God’s Image-Bearing, Embodied Creatures - 4 minutes

Read: Genesis 1:27

God creates humanity in his image, male and female.

Discuss:

1. What dignity is given to every human being by being created in God’s image?
2. Why is the image of God not limited to intelligence, social status, ability, or usefulness?

Read: Genesis 2:7

The LORD forms the man from dust and breathes into him the breath of life, and the man becomes a living being.

Discuss:

1. What does this say about our unity as physical and spiritual creatures?
2. How does the phrase “inspired bodies” help resist both contempt for the body and reduction of humans to mere biology?

8. All Creatures Depend on God for Life - 4 minutes

Read: Acts 17:24-25, 28

Paul says that the God who made the world is Lord of heaven and earth, needs nothing from us, gives everyone life and breath, and is the one “in whom we live and move and have our being.”

Discuss:

1. What does God give, and what does God need from us?
2. How does this overturn the idea that worship is primarily about supplying something God lacks?
3. What kind of humility follows from recognizing that even our next breath is received?

9. Faith and Science Ask Different Kinds of Questions - 4 minutes

The doctrinal statement says that science can describe the created world but cannot explain how God created it. Scripture identifies the Creator and the meaning of creation; scientific investigation studies patterns, processes, and structures within the world God has made.

Read: Hebrews 11:3; Acts 17:24-25

Together these passages confess God as the source of the universe and of life itself.

Discuss:

1. What questions can empirical science investigate well, and what questions of ultimate origin and purpose lie beyond its method?
2. Why should Christians avoid both hostility to honest scientific study and the claim that science can replace the Creator?

Key Insight: The book rejects both atheistic explanations that exclude God in principle and religious views that identify God with the universe. Creation is real, ordered, and open to investigation precisely because it is the work of a wise Creator.

10. Creation Exists for God’s Goodness and Glory - 4 minutes

Read: Psalm 19:1

The heavens tell the glory of God and the sky proclaims the work of his hands.

Discuss:

1. What can the beauty, order, and vastness of creation rightly move us to confess?
2. How can wonder at creation become worship of the Creator rather than worship of nature?

Read: Genesis 2:1-2

The finished creation points toward ordered harmony and rest.

Discuss:

1. The doctrinal statement says humanity was made for harmony with God, one another, and creation. Where do you see traces of that intended harmony even in a fallen world?

2. How does the goodness of creation shape Christian hope for God's final restoration rather than escape from creaturely existence?

11. Bringing It Together - 2 minutes

Creation is the free work of the eternal Triune God. He creates by his Word and Spirit, makes the material world good, gives human beings unique dignity as his image-bearers, and sustains every creature in dependence on himself. We are not self-made or self-sustaining. We exist to receive God's goodness, reflect his glory, and live faithfully within the world he made.

12. Application Questions - 5 minutes

Choose two or three:

1. Which part of the creation teaching most challenges modern assumptions about human autonomy?
2. How could receiving your body as a good creaturely gift change the way you think about health, limits, aging, or sexuality?
3. Where do you most naturally experience wonder at God's creation?
4. How can Christian confession of creation encourage rather than discourage careful study of the natural world?
5. What is one area of life where you need to remember, "In him we live and move and have our being"?

13. Closing Prayer - 2 minutes

Almighty Creator, you spoke and the world came to be. We praise you for the goodness, beauty, and order of all you have made. Forgive us for worshiping the creature, despising your gifts, or pretending that we belong to ourselves. Teach us to receive our bodies, our neighbors, and the earth as gifts entrusted to us. Keep us in wonder before your glory and in humble dependence on your gracious hand; through Jesus Christ, the Word through whom all things were made. Amen.