

‘Inspired to Follow: Art and the Bible Story’

Session 1: Creation

Genesis 1:1-5, Genesis 1:24-28, Genesis 1:31-2:1

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.

Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

And God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.’ And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.’

So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.’

God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude.

Task is small groups:

1. A ‘round robin’, one at a time, responding to the question:

“What do I find interesting, new or challenging about what’s been presented, and/or the text that we’ve read, in terms of understanding the Christian faith?”

(Do not respond to one another, but simply listen, as each person shares.)

2. After the round robin, anyone in the group can then respond to the question:

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Session 2: Fall

Genesis 2:15-18, Genesis 2:21-23 & 25, & Genesis 3:4-13

¹⁵ The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the Lord God commanded the man, ‘You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.’

¹⁸ Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.’ ... ²¹ So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²² And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ... ²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed. ...

⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not die; ⁵ for God knows that when you eat of [the tree] your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’ ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

⁸ They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, ‘Where are you?’ ¹⁰ He said, ‘I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.’

¹¹ [The Lord God] said, ‘Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?’ ¹² The man said, ‘The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.’ ¹³ Then the Lord God said to the woman, ‘What is this that you have done?’ The woman said, ‘The serpent tricked me, and I ate.’

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Session 3: Abraham and Isaac

Genesis 22:1-14 (Cast: narrator / God / Abraham / Isaac / angel)

After these things God tested Abraham. God said to him, **‘Abraham!’**

And Abraham said, **‘Here I am.’**

² God said, **‘Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt-offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you.’**

³ So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt-offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. ⁴ On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away.

⁵ Then Abraham said to his young men, **‘Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you.’**

⁶ Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together.

⁷ Isaac said to his father Abraham, **‘Father!’** And Abraham said, **‘Here I am, my son.’** Isaac said, **‘The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?’** ⁸ Abraham said, **‘God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son.’**

So the two of them walked on together. ⁹ When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son.

¹¹ But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, and said, **‘Abraham, Abraham!’** And Abraham said, **‘Here I am.’** ¹² The angel said, **‘Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.’**

¹³ And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt-offering instead of his son.

¹⁴ So Abraham called that place **‘The Lord will provide’**; as it is said to this day, **‘On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided.’**

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Session 4: Moses and the Law

Exodus 32:11-20

¹¹ But Moses implored the Lord his God, and said, ‘O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? ¹² Why should the Egyptians say, “*It was with evil intent that he brought them out to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth*”?

Turn from your fierce wrath; change your mind and do not bring disaster on your people. ¹³ Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, how you swore to them by your own self, saying to them, “*I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it for ever.*”

¹⁴ And the Lord changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people. ¹⁵ Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain, carrying the two tablets of the covenant in his hands, tablets that were written on both sides, written on the front and on the back. ¹⁶ The tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved upon the tablets.

¹⁷ When Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, ‘There is a noise of war in the camp.**’ ¹⁸ But he said, ‘**It is not the sound made by victors, or the sound made by losers; it is the sound of revellers that I hear.**’**

¹⁹ As soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses’ anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets from his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain. ²⁰ He took the calf that they had made, burned it with fire, ground it to powder, scattered it on the water, and made the Israelites drink it.

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Session 5: The Exile / The Psalms

Psalm 137

¹ By the rivers of Babylon – there we sat down
and there we wept when we remembered Zion.

² On the willows there we hung up our harps.

³ For there our captors asked us for songs,
and our tormentors asked for mirth,
saying, ‘Sing us one of the songs of Zion!’

⁴ How could we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land?

⁵ If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither!

⁶ Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you,
if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy.

⁷ Remember, O Lord, against the Edomites the day of Jerusalem’s fall,
how they said, ‘Tear it down! Tear it down! Down to its foundations!’

⁸ O daughter Babylon, you devastator!

Happy shall they be who pay you back what you have done to us!

⁹ Happy shall they be who take your little ones and dash them against the rock!

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Session 6: The Prophets

1 Kings 19:1-18

¹ Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. ² Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, **‘So may the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life like the life of one of them by this time tomorrow.’** ³ Then he was afraid; he got up and fled for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belongs to Judah; he left his servant there.

⁴ But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die: **‘It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors.’** ⁵ Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep.

Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, **‘Get up and eat.’** ⁶ He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. He ate and drank, and lay down again. ⁷ The angel of the Lord came a second time, touched him, and said, **‘Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you.’** ⁸ He got up, and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food for forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God. ⁹ At that place he came to a cave, and spent the night there.

Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, **‘What are you doing here, Elijah?’** ¹⁰ He answered, **‘I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.’**

¹¹ To this the answer came, **‘Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.’** Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; ¹² and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence.

¹³ When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, **‘What are you doing here, Elijah?’** ¹⁴ He answered, **‘I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.’**

¹⁵ Then the Lord said to him, **‘Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram. ¹⁶ Also you shall anoint Jehu ... as king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha ... as prophet in your place. ¹⁷ Whoever escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall kill; and whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall kill. ¹⁸ Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.’**

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Session 7: The Annunciation

Luke 1:26-38

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, **‘Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.’**

²⁹ But Mary was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

³⁰ The angel said to her, **‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. ³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.’**

³⁴ Mary said to the angel, **‘How can this be, since I am a virgin?’**

³⁵ The angel said to her, **‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶ And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God.’**

³⁸ Then Mary said, **‘Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.’** Then the angel departed from her.

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