

TWO-SIDED • by Rod Miller

KEY VERSES:

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. Genesis 1:26.

Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." Genesis 2:18.

FAITH STORY:

Genesis 1-2

FAITH FOCUS:

This passage contains two accounts of creation. In the first story the all-powerful God speaks and things come into being. The culmination of this story is the day of Sabbath rest. The second story has God working with his hands and breath to form creation with the culmination being the relationship between man and woman.

SESSION GOAL:

To make the students aware of both the all-powerful, ruler, majestic, thundering creator as well as the close, relational God.

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

- 1 The students will list the order of creation in both accounts.
- 2 The students will symbolize God's relationship with creation.
- 3 The students will identify how both aspects of God are worshiped and experienced in the church.
- 4 The students will identify which side of God they relate to in their life.
- 5 The students will identify how relating to the other aspect of God would change their relationship with God.

MATERIALS NEEDED AND ADVANCE PREPARATION:

- 1 The video **Batman Forever** and equipment to show a clip of it, OR one of those "double pictures" like the one of the old woman/beautiful girl.
- 2 Copies of worksheet for each student
- 3 Bibles for each student
- 4 Paper (at least 8 1/2 x 11 large)
- 5 Pens, pencils, crayons, markers
- 6 Clay or Plah Doh, pipe cleaners

SESSION OUTLINE

FOCUS: (5 minutes)

If using the video **Batman Forever**, show the clip from 54:08 to 57:30. This is when Two-faced returns to his home. Ask students what contrasts Riddler sees. (dark/bright, good/evil, heavy metal/house and garden, disgusting/conservative, gloomy/chipper, summer/winter.)

If you use the picture, hold it up and ask students to decide what they see first, then split into two groups by what they see. As each student sees both aspects of the picture, they may come back to the center of the group.

CONNECT: (5 minutes)

Lead the students in a discussion about the tension they feel when people see things differently from them or when there seems to be opposing sides in the same person or object.

Possible questions:

Ask: *When have you seen something very differently from someone else? When has it happened with your parents? Friends? The church? How do you feel about conflict? Do you avoid it, jump into it, ease your way through it? Can you think of examples of a person or situation that seems to have opposing sides.*

Here's one to throw out: *A person who says they believe in capital punishment but are against abortion, or a person who is for abortion but against killing in war.*

After your discussion, say: *Now let's look at a story in the Bible that is written in two different ways.*

EXPLORE THE BIBLE: (20 minutes)

- 1 Divide the students into groups of three or four and pass out the worksheets. Assign half the groups Gen: 1-2:4, and the other half Gen: 2: 5-25. (To insure that all students participate, assign different jobs such as reader and recorder, or make sure they take turns answering the questions.)
- 2 When a group has completed their worksheet, have each student create a picture or symbol representing the relationship between God and creation, using the materials provided.
- 3 When everyone is done, pair up groups from different passages to share their findings with each other. Following the discussion, have each student share their picture or design with the whole group.

APPLY: (10 minutes)

Lead a discussion on how students see the two aspects of God being related to in the church. Ask: What are different things we do in a worship service that relate to the different aspects of God? (Discuss singing, preaching, praise, thanksgiving, prayer, offering, and other aspects of church life. If you are using this following the worship service talk about how God was portrayed in the service.) Which kind of God do you relate to the best: the close/relational God or the distant/all-powerful God?

Encourage students to think about how they can relate to the other aspect of God and describe it in writing, a picture, or symbol using the supplied materials. Challenge them to take their work home and put it somewhere that it will remind them to worship God in a new way at least once a day for the next week.

RESPOND: (5 minutes)

Ask each student to share his or her symbol with a partner, then pray together and commit themselves to pray for each other for the next week.

INSIGHTS FROM SCRIPTURE:

Our scripture passage is two different stories of creation. Each of the stories develops a different understanding of God's relationship with creation and people.

Why are there two stories of creation? Not because there are two Gods, or that creation took place in two different ways; but because the God we serve is multifaceted and one story cannot do justice to God's act of creation. And though this lesson focused on the differences in the two stories, there is one undeniable similarity: in both stories God is in charge. In neither story do things just happen, but God's plan is being made known. God creates a man, and a woman, for a purpose, and it is good. For that reason the ancient Israelites kept two stories of creation in the Bible because they both told the story of a God with a plan that was good.

It is important to understand that all stories were first passed on orally and only later written down. As the stories were written they became compiled in different strands for different purposes. "Most scholars date the first connected written account of biblical history—from the creation of Adam (humanity) in Genesis 2 to Israel's conquest of Palestine.... this document... is characterized by its relatively consistent use of the personal name Yahweh for the Hebrew God." (Harris 3) Another source is the P or priestly source. The priestly source concerned itself with Israelites' religious traditions and laws. Genesis 1 is a part of this strain. (Harris 71) The beauty of this is we are blessed with a great God, complex, wonderful, and impossible to describe in just one story.

When we think of creation we think of the beginning of something, a one-time event. The Israelites shared this view, but also viewed creation as the ongoing work of God to form a people. They would see the whole Bible as a story of creation. From God calling Abraham and giving him a son, to the exodus and deliverance at the sea, through David and the prophets, to Jesus and his death and resurrection, through the early church and Paul, to the reformation, until today in your church, in you, God is still working to create a people for himself (Buttrick 725-27). God is still active in you and your students to form God's people. And as the Israelites believed, this is the more important story of creation that is still taking place today.

WORKS CITED:

Buttrick, George Arthur, ed. **The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Vol 1**. Nashville: Abingdon, 1962

Harris, Stephen L. **Understanding the Bible**, 4th edition, Mayfield Publishing Co: Mountain View, CA. 1980

TWO-SIDED • Worksheet

List the order of creation.

List descriptive words or characteristics of God.

How was creation done? What action was taken?

New insights or discoveries (little known facts or things that stand out to you or you feel are important).