

# 1 God Creates

## The First Article

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

What does this mean? I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them. He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life. He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil. All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him. This is most certainly true.

## Who Am I?

• Complete the following chart to begin your Journey in Faith.

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
Hair Color: \_\_\_\_\_  
School: \_\_\_\_\_  
Favorite Food: \_\_\_\_\_  
Favorite Music: \_\_\_\_\_  
Favorite Movie: \_\_\_\_\_

**The LORD God** took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, He took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib He had taken out of the man, and He brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

**Genesis 2:15-24**

# You're in Charge!

1. **How do you** feel when you are in charge?

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2. **It's a big** responsibility when you're in charge of someone or something. What rules do you make when you are in charge at home?

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3. **God placed Adam** in charge of the Garden of Eden. What were Adam's responsibilities?

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4. **Adam had certain** rules to live by when God left him in charge of the garden. What command did God give to Adam?

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5. **Why is it** hard to follow rules, even when they are good for us?

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"Alissa, we'll be back in about an hour and a half. While we're gone don't go out front, stay off the Internet, and please don't let your little brother zone out on video games. If you need us, call us on our cell phone. Remember, you're in charge."

**God made** people different from everything else He made. God created Adam in His own image. After the Lord God formed Adam from the dust of the ground, God breathed into him the breath of life. This is how God began all human life. He breathed life into Adam, and man became a living being.

God made our first parents in His own likeness. He made them to know God. He made them holy, which means "set aside for God's purposes," so that they could talk to God and worship Him. Human beings had a likeness to God. The animals did not.

God talked to Adam and Eve about their life with Him. These people spoke together about their work in the garden. They lived in happy relationship with one another. Adam and Eve knew exactly what God wanted them to do. Because they lived with His likeness, they could do His will. They understood God's will and obeyed Him perfectly and cheerfully. They worshiped God with all their heart. They loved each other as God loved them. They basked in the goodness of their existence and in their closeness to God.



# Fellowship with God



**God wanted people** to live in close communion, or relationship, with Him because He had a special purpose for their lives. God made human beings in His image to represent Him on earth. God made men and women so that they could show each other, and all of God's creation, what God is like. God is love.

The Holy Spirit has taught us that sin spoiled God's plan. It ruined His image in us. But in Jesus, God came to make us over into His image once again. Even though the devil and the temptations of this world have a powerful tug on us, the Holy Spirit gives us knowledge of God's love and forgiveness. He turns our hearts to God and develops in us the desire to obey Him. God has promised to restore us to His full image. He does this each day by the working of the Holy Spirit through His Word. His image in us will be fully restored when He takes us to heaven by His grace.

- **Keisha and Shanna** are sitting in the park, talking about Keisha's older sister. "She is going to get an abortion," Keisha says. "It's her life. Having an abortion is like having your appendix out, only it's simpler."

- **Nathan and Kyle** often go to the video store together on Thursday afternoons. The new sales associate doesn't seem to mind what videos they rent. Although they frequently browse the adult section, Nathan and Kyle have never rented a movie from this section. "Pssst," Nathan whispers, "let's get this one." Kyle looks at the cover. He recognizes the title. He knows that the film is violent, sexually explicit, and degrading to women. "Should we?" Nathan asks.

- **During a field trip** to a beautiful state park, some friends from your class begin to break branches off trees and pull up flowers. "It's only sticks and weeds," James says. "Nobody cares."



## With My Family

- **Create a family tree** that identifies the names and birth dates of your relatives going back three generations. Ask your parents to tell you the stories they know, particularly about your grandparents and great-grandparents. Talk about how your family members' experiences have helped to make you who you are today.
- **Plant a creation garden** with your family. Select a special plant for each person in your immediate family. Volunteer to weed, fertilize, and water the garden. Watch the plants grow and bloom. Talk with your family and catechism teachers about the "watering, weeding, and fertilizing" necessary to help you grow and bloom to be the person God planned for you to become in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. The plants in your garden that bloom and grow are reminders that we, nurtured by God's Word and Christian people who teach God's Word, grow and bloom in faith and good works by the Spirit's power.

## With My Mentor

- **Ask your mentor** to recall times when he/she was taught the theory of evolution. How does this theory differ from Scripture's account of the creation of the world? How did he/she handle these differences? Develop together an answer so that you can confidently share your belief in God's creation event.
- **With your mentor** read the creation story in Genesis 1. Identify how many times the Scripture records the phrase "And God said." Discuss together the incredible creation power present in God's Word.

# Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

"I praise You because I am fearfully  
and wonderfully made;  
Your works are wonderful,  
I know that full well."  
Psalm 139:14

- **Write a prayer to your Savior God, thanking and praising Him for making you uniquely you.**

**Sign:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



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## Jesus Teaches in Parables

### The Fifth Petition

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive  
those who trespass against us.

What does this mean? We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look at our sins, or deny our prayer because of them. We are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them, but we ask that He would give them all to us by grace, for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment. So we too will sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us.

### Favorite Stories

#### "Tell me a story."

A story is simply an account of something happening. A mystery is a story. History is a story too. When you watch a sci-fi film, you are watching a story. When you tell your best friend what happened on your trip, you're telling a story. Everyone loves stories. A good story can teach us things about life, about human nature, and about God.

- **Why do people tell stories? What are your favorite stories? Write the names or titles and a brief summary of the stories.**

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**Jesus continued:** "There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

"Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

"When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.' So he got up and went to his father.

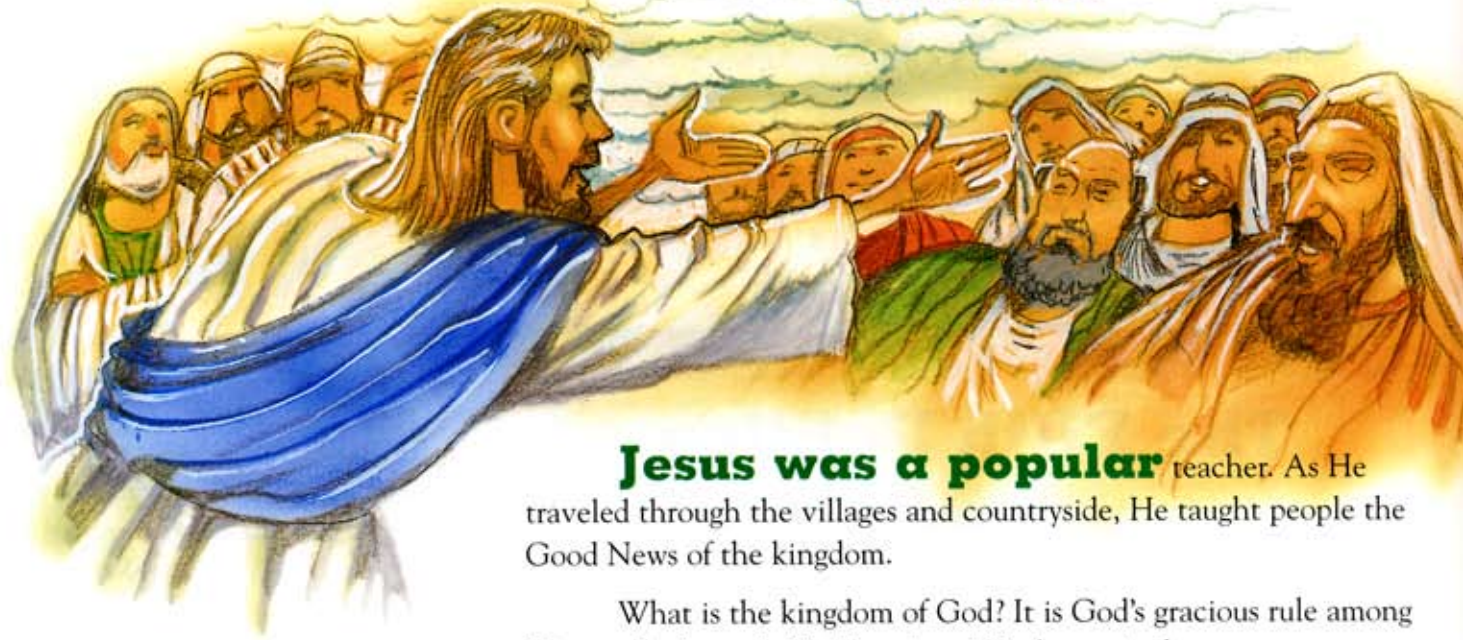
"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

"The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

"But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate."

**Luke 15:11-24**

# Parables



- **Read the rest of the story of the lost son. Who reminds you most of yourself—the younger son or older son? Why?**

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- **In what ways does the father remind you of God?**

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**Jesus was a popular** teacher. As He traveled through the villages and countryside, He taught people the Good News of the kingdom.

What is the kingdom of God? It is God's gracious rule among His people through His Son, Jesus! God promised to come to save sinful human beings and to give people hope and joy. In Jesus, He fulfilled this promise.

What is the Good News? Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise. He lived with, talked with, and ate with sinful human beings. He shared God's Word of hope and joy with people and continues to do so in Holy Scripture. He is the Savior of the world who brings God's gracious rule.

Jesus often proclaimed the truth about God's kingdom in parables—brief stories. He used parables to illustrate what it means to trust and to live under God in His kingdom. Parables help us to understand ourselves. They also help us understand the God who made us and saved us through Jesus' perfect life, suffering, death, and resurrection.

From Jesus' parables in Luke 15, describe what we learn about "The People Problem" and "The Gospel Gala."

## The People Problem

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## The Gospel Gala

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# *Our Father Welcomes*

**In the media** on almost any day you'll find variations on the "lost son" or "lost daughter" theme. Such stories will have headlines similar to these:

- **Teen's Parents Throw Him Out of the House**
- **Girl Gets Pregnant to Punish Parents**
- **Teen Boys Arrested for Physically Abusing Mother and Father**
- **"Fights with My Parents Forced Me to Join a Gang"**

To an outsider, your fights with your parents may seem mild by comparison. To you (and to your parents), family fights cause stress and pain. Left unresolved, anger leads to hate, and hurt feelings lead to resentment, suspicion, and mistrust.

Think of an unresolved argument you had with your parents. Who was responsible? If you answer honestly, you probably have to admit that you shared in the responsibility. You probably also shared in that miserable guilty feeling that hung on in the silence after the storm.

What would it take to resolve the argument and restore the relationship God intended for your family? You may be surprised to discover it will take only five words, but they're the hardest words in the English language to say. Although you would like to hear your parents say these words, the only person you can make say them is you, yourself. Try them on your parents and see what happens.

"I was wrong. I'm sorry."

The lost son in the story Jesus told said those words. As a result, his father killed the fattened calf and hosted a party. His father forgave him. The loving relationship between them was restored.

Jesus told the story to show us that our heavenly Father forgives us and welcomes us home when we confess our sins to Him and tell Him we are sorry. Parents, especially those who share with us our faith in God's love and forgiveness through Jesus, forgive our sins and welcome us home the same way.

# Forgiving Living



## With My Family

- **With members** of your family, identify things that would make people want to run away from home. Then make a list of ways family members can help by talking about problems and issues in ways that reflect God's love for us.
- **Prepare a family** feast to celebrate God's love in Jesus. Allow each family member to select a favorite dish. Before your meal, thank God for His blessings on your lives and His forgiveness in Jesus.

## With My Mentor

- **Retell the story** of the lost son in today's language; tell the story as if it happened in your neighborhood. Where do the father and his sons live? To where does the son run? How does the father welcome back his son? If possible, write your story and share it with others.
- **Tell about a time** you felt lost. Ask your mentor to do the same. Then share together about the blessings of your Baptism into Christ. Read the baptismal rite in your hymnal. What parts assure you that you are never alone?

## The Fifth Petition

We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look at our sins, or deny our prayer because of them. We are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them, but we ask that He would give them all to us by grace, for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment. So we too will sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us.

## The Lost Son

- **Write a prayer, thanking God for your forgiveness and life in Christ.**

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**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_