The First Day

Genesis 1:1-5

Level C

Ages 11-14

www.newchurch.org/youth-journey-program

Life Focus: The Word and the created world reflect the Lord, the Creator.

Lesson Focus: Everything in the natural world is connected to the world of the spirit by means of correspondences. The story of creation pictures the stages of a person’s preparation for heaven.

Reading: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day (Genesis 1:1-5).

Lesson 1

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1. Getting Started

Welcome
Warm-up Activity
A Light in the Darkness
Get students thinking about ways in which we use the words “light” and “darkness”. Read each phrase below aloud and ask the students to explain its meaning.
1. What does being “in the dark” about something mean?
2. When people speak of the “darkest days of WWII” do they mean there was no light?
3. Why can a blind person say, “I see!”?
Darkness is commonly used to mean ignorance or confusion; light to mean have clarity, to understand accurately, to know the truth.

2. Focus on the Word

Read
Genesis 1:1-5

Talk About It
In what ways is the Word different from other books? It was written by the Lord. It is the only source for learning about the Lord and the life of our spirits. It is written in parables. Stories have a hidden inner meaning. Correspondences are the key that unlocks the hidden meanings.

What are the two parts of the Word? The Old Testament, containing the law and the prophets, and the New Testament, which tells about God coming into the world as the Lord God Jesus Christ. Show the first page of each testament.

What is the first book of the Word? Genesis, which means “beginning”.

Genesis starts with “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” Our minds have a “heaven” and an “earth” as well. Brainstorm what “heaven” and “earth” in our minds could be. “Heaven” is the part of us that knows about the Lord and wants to do what is right. “Earth” is our understanding of natural things and how life looks to our five senses.

Genesis says the Lord created the world in seven days. Science tells us that the world developed over a much longer time. Many find this confusing. How does the Heavenly Doctrine bring these ideas together? The Bible is written in symbolic language. Stories in the Word are parables about our own lives. The days of creation correspond to the stages of a person’s spiritual development. Just as we grow from birth to old age one step at a time (baby, toddler, child, adolescent, adult), our spirits develop step-by-step too.

We are born into darkness—“without form and void”. We do not know anything. On the “first day” we begin to take in the world around us and our mind begins to form ideas. Light dawns.

To enter heaven we must be born again. This spiritual birth (or re-birth) takes place when a person is an adult. It starts when a person allows true ideas from the Word to shine into his or her mind and light up the way to heaven.

Just as natural light helps us see our way in the world, heavenly light from the Word leads us to heaven—where the Lord can make us truly happy.
3. Learn by Doing

Choose one or two activities

**Choice**

Living in the Dark

Sight makes it easy for us to do routine tasks. Let students find out how being “blind” can make even easy tasks difficult. Do a blindfolded activity and then discuss the parallels between natural and spiritual sight.

Large Group Blindfolded Activities

1. **Put Up a Tent**—Put up a tent up without blindfolds. Take it down and then put it up again with blindfolds on. Choose one person to see. He or she can give directions but may not touch the tent!

2. **Sheep and Shepherd Outdoor Activity**—Use a rope to mark out a “sheepfold” area on the ground. Blindfold students and then scatter them by spreading them out in a wide area. Sheep may not speak—they can only bleat. Choose a shepherd (who can see). He or she will direct the sheep into the fold by whistling and clapping only.

Small Group Blindfolded Activities

1. **Sculpt or Draw**—Invite students to write the names of animals on small pieces of paper. Fold the pieces and put them in a bowl. Each student picks out a folded slip and looks at it without disclosing the contents. Then each student draws or sculpts their animal while blindfolded. Others guess what has been drawn or sculpted.

2. **Shape Sort**—Blindfold students and ask them to sort materials of mixed shapes into piles of the same shape. Use blocks, beads or coins.

3. **Build a Tower**—Blindfold students. Give them wooden blocks and ask them to cooperate in building a tower.

Discussion

1. What difference did sight or blindness make to the activity?

2. What is spiritual “blindness”? How could spiritual blindness affect a person?

**Choice**

The Bible, Creation, and a Can of Peaches

Every natural thing is connected to something spiritual. This is true of the physical things in creation. It is also true of the people, places and things in the Word. The connection or relationship between natural and spiritual things is called correspondence.

Two things correspond because they have an equivalent use, but at different levels, the natural and the spiritual. For example, the natural sun, which is the source of all life on earth, corresponds to the Lord, who is the source of all spiritual life. Correspondence is a mutual relationship, working in both directions. It literally means “to respond together”, to co-respond.

Human beings are both natural and spiritual. We have physical bodies, and spiritual minds and souls. Correspondences help us understand what the

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Materials Needed

Look through activity directions. Choose an activity. Materials will vary depending on the choice you make.

Prepare in Advance

Preparation will vary depending on your activity choice.

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Video Online

View the song and actions online at www.bitly.com/CreationPeaches

OR

Download video to your computer or other device. See downloading directions on p. 6.

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The Bible, Creation, and a Can of Peaches continued

Stories in the Bible are teaching us about our own spiritual lives.

This video introduces the concept of correspondence which will be used throughout the rest of Creation: Reflection of God. Watch the video and explore the topic using the discussion questions provided below. Read through the questions and select the ones that will work best for your group.

1. What word is used to describe the relationship between natural and spiritual things? (correspond or correspondence)
2. We know that a loaf of bread is real because we experience it through our senses. We can see it, smell it, touch it, and taste it! How do we know that love is real? (We experience it in different ways, through feelings and thoughts, through interacting with other people.)
3. What are some other things that we can’t see or touch, but we know are real? (all emotions—anger, grief, etc.; ideas or thoughts)
4. What would happen if a baby didn’t have any food? What would happen if a baby didn’t have any love? Is one worse than the other? Are they equally bad? Why or Why not?
5. The video uses Jesus saying, “I am the bread of life” as an example of a place where there is a clear inner meaning. Can you think of other examples in the Word? Hint: think of quotations from the Word that start with “I” or “You”. (I am the bright and morning star. I am the light of the world. I am the Alpha and the Omega. You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church. I will make you fishers of men.)
6. The video compares a full can of peaches to the Word or Bible. To get inside a can to eat the peaches you need a can-opener. Do we have a “can-opener” for the Word? (The Heavenly Doctrine for the New Church tells us the correspondences for many things in the Word.)
7. Sometimes religion and science seem to disagree. How the earth began is one of the topics that people argue about. Scientific ideas about creation—the big bang theory, the age of the earth, the way different kinds of plants and animals developed—seem very different from the story of creation given in the Bible. How does the idea of natural and spiritual things corresponding affect how we understand the story of creation? How might the idea of correspondence make a difference in the disagreement between religion and science?

4. Wrap It Up

Closing
Stories in the Word are not only about the natural world, but also about the spiritual world. How are these two ideas connected? (Correspondences)
What is the story of creation about on a spiritual level? (A person’s journey to heaven)
Why is it important to let the light of heaven into your life?

Take the Message Home
Read this quotation aloud: “Come and let us walk in the light of the Lord?” (Isaiah 2:5). Ask the students to ask themselves, “Are there areas of darkness in my life?” If there are, ask the Lord to shine His light on them!

Give Take Home Cards (p. 12) to the students as they leave and suggest they put them up somewhere they will see them this week.
Take Home Cards
Color version available for download at www.newchurch.org/youth-journey-programs. Make a copy for each student.

Come and let us walk in the light of the Lord.