READY TO USE ALL-AGE SERVICE

# What a wonderful world

MEETING AIM

To discover that God created a wonderful world, and then see that he will complete the good works he started in us.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Genesis 1:1-2:4

BACKGROUND

This service is designed to be used with a congregation in a church building. However, with some adaptation, you should be able to use it on Zoom or other video conferencing software.

For those who have been in church for some time, the creation story from Genesis 1 will be very familiar. Yet, those with no church background might find it strange, when compared to the science of creation. Help both of these groups see beyond the words to the creative intentions of God. By exploring the passage, we can discover fundamental things about God, ourselves and the relationship we can have with him.

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## WELCOME – 5 mins

As people join your service, welcome them and ask them about their week. Try to have a mix of ages and backgrounds on your welcome team.

## OPENING ACTIVITIES – 10 mins

**OPTION ONE: Creation sound and vision**

**You will need: pictures of creation on a PowerPoint presentation; appropriate music and the means to play it**

Before the session, create a PowerPoint presentation of some incredible images of the natural world. It’s easy to find copyright-free pictures by searching the internet – desktop wallpapers often work really well. Set up your presentation to transition from slide to slide on a timer and loop it. Either add music to the presentation itself or play something as it shows. Something instrumental would work well or ‘Praise to the Lord, the Almighty’ from the *Passion: Hymns Ancient & Modern* album. You can either have the music and slides rolling as people arrive or roll them for people to engage with after the welcome. Pray, thanking God for the amazing world he’s created.

**OPTION TWO: Creation art**

**You will need**: art materials; paper; Bibles

As people arrive, have art materials set up for them to draw their favourite part of the creation story. Have Bibles available too, opened at Genesis chapter 1. Have someone collating all the pictures onto your display board – if you can get them put up chronologically, so much the better! The size of space you have to put the pictures up will inform the size of paper to give to each person! As you open the service, draw attention to your wall of creation and thank God for all he’s made.

## BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** Bibles or printouts of Genesis 1:1-2:4 or the passage displayed on screen (or all three); pieces of air-drying clay in freezer bags or small food storage boxes

Make sure everyone can see a Bible, a copy of the passage or the passage displayed on screen. Ask everyone to gather into smaller groups (ensure the all the groups have a mixture of ages) and come up with an action to signify what happened on each day of creation. They can be as creative as they’d like! If you feel it would be simpler, you could put up a slide with the bullet points of what was created on which day.

After five minutes or so, ask someone to read through the whole passage. As they do, encourage everyone to do their actions as for each day. Draw attention to the fact that God looks at what he’s made and declares it to be good.

Now give everyone (or each group) a piece of air-drying clay. Ask everyone to make a person. After five minutes, say that you’re all going to breathe life into your people. Encourage everyone to try! Why isn’t it working? Because only God can give life! Explain that Genesis 2 describes God creating a man out of the earth and then breathing life into him. Read out Genesis 2:7. And, back in Genesis 1, when he looked at human beings, he didn’t just say it was good, he said it was *very* good! We look at the splendour of creation and are amazed but God sees us as the pinnacle or high point of his creation, with a special part to play. We are designed to look after all that has been created and to have a special friendship with God as we do that.

## SMALL GROUPS – 10 mins

**You will need:** copies of the questions below; Bibles

Encourage people to discuss these questions in smaller groups. Give each group a copy of these questions:

* What do you find most incredible about creation?
* What’s the most amazing natural phenomenon that you have seen?
* Are you challenged to think about your own role in looking after the world?
* What do you think about the fact that the thing God was most pleased about in creation was people (that includes you)?
* How can we enjoy all that God has made – including ourselves?
* On the seventh day, God rested, not because he was tired but because he was satisfied with his work. What does that tell us about rest?

Give the groups time to chat about these questions, referring to the Bible passage if they need to.

## REVIEW – 5 mins

**You will need:** roving mic (if needed)

Get some feedback on the questions from ‘Small groups’, using a microphone to hear people’s contributions if your meeting space is large.

## RESPONSE ACTIVITIES – 10 mins

Set these three activities up in different parts of your meeting space or in different breakout rooms.

**OPTION ONE: Action figures**

**You will need:** clay figures from ‘Bible story’; the sentences below printed on paper

Use the clay figures that have been made to talk about all the things that God designed people to do and be. Together come up with a pose for the figures to show one of those different actions. They may find it helpful to look at the rest of Genesis 2 to see what God’s instructions were. Ask the groups to bring their figures to the front and explain the pose they have chosen, and why. Comment about the vast range of things we were made to do.

**OPTION TWO: Breath prayer**

Introduce the group to the ancient idea of breath prayer. As you breathe in, you think about a name of God, as you breathe out, you consider what that means for your relationship with him. A good prayer for this service would be: Creator God (on the in breath), thank you for making me *me* (on the out breath). Spend a few minutes in the quiet as people breathe in and out on this prayer. You can guide them through it the first few times and then leave some silence for them to continue. Encourage people to use this prayer practice during the week.

**OPTION THREE: Discussion**

**You will need:** volunteers to facilitate discussion; paper and pens

Gather people together in small groups, each one with a facilitator, and challenge them to think about the impact that what they have discovered today will have.

## CLOSING – 5 mins

Bring everyone back together and ask if anyone would like to share anything from the response time. Thank everyone for taking part and say an appropriate blessing to close the service.

**JENNY CHEUNG**

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