



## FACILITATOR'S GUIDE—YOUTH

*Year 1—The God of Life: A Story of God's Redeeming Shalom*

*Module 1—The God Who Gives Life: Stories of Life and Death and Life from Death*

*Lesson 1—Genesis 1:1-2:4*

### ENCOUNTER 1—Community Discussion

Read Genesis 1-2:4 together out loud as a group. Encourage each person to journal through the passage using these questions. After allowing sufficient time for reflection, invite the group to share their thoughts.

*How is this God's story?  
How is this others' story?*

*How is this my story?  
How is this the world's story?*

### ENCOUNTER 2—Community Discussion

(Read the commentary included with this lesson. The questions are designed for your group to enter into a meaningful dialog about the Word. The bulleted teaching points are taken from the reflection and correspond to the questions.)

**GOD'S STORY**—Genesis 1-2:4 sets the stage for the rest of God's story as one of giving and sharing life with all of creation in the fullness of *shalom*.

*What does Genesis 1—2:4 tell us about God? What does it say to you about why he created the heavens and earth and all living things?*

*How does creation show us what God is like?*

- In creating, God shares his life with creation and sets the agenda for the entire story of God.
- God's story is about life, where life is to be maintained and allowed to flourish over and against anything that might be set against it. Through the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) there is a vision of what life with God looks like, and it can be summarized by the word *shalom*.
- God's *shalom* is the sharing of God's life with all of creation in fellowship and rest.
- God's intention in creation is not simply the generation of a world, but for that world to find its fulfillment in living relationship to its Creator. Fulfillment is life and fellowship with God in *shalom*—a harmonious and whole relationship that goes on and on. This is day seven of creation.

**OUR STORY**—We are invited to practice Sabbath as a way of life.

*Why did God rest on the seventh day?*

*We call this "resting" Sabbath. Why should we follow God's example of resting?*

*Do you see any evidence in the Scripture that keeping the Sabbath is important to our relationship with God and others? Where?*

- Sabbath-keeping means being intentionally restful and to be more attentive to God at work in us and around us.
- Sabbath, therefore, leads us to see God's created world through relationships, which is where the life of *shalom* God intends to be experienced. Sabbath gives us space to simply be present to God, ourselves, others, and the world.
- Sabbath reminds us of the goodness of the created world as we pause to recognize our place within it. Keeping Sabbath reminds us of our need for rest. Feeling the limits of our own bodies and lives, we may begin to yearn for our ultimate rest in *shalom* with God.
- Practicing Sabbath is a missional practice. We are bearing witness to the God who creates to share God's life of *shalom* with us and the world by actually practicing *shalom* now.

**OTHERS' STORY**—Humanity is given a special role in creation, being made in the image of God.

*How do we, as humans, bear God's image?*

*What is our responsibility to what God has created?*

- In our relationships with one another and all of creation, humans stand unique as those responsible for bearing the image of the life-giving God. Humanity has the special role in creation of maintaining and watching over creation for the sake of life, for *shalom*.
- Humans are commanded to be fruitful and multiply. In other words, humanity is given the task of bringing forth more life. Women and men are to reflect God's decision for life by participating in the creation of life through procreation.
- God also desires that each of us develop godly relationships with others that allow for other forms of fruitful and growing life through *shalom*.
- Humanity exhibits responsibility when we care for creation the way God cares for creation. God's rule over the world is a loving, life-giving dominion, which we have already noted invites us to share in fellowship, to live in *shalom* with God.
- Humans are called to have dominion over earth in such a way that fosters life and wholeness, where peace and harmony reign.

**THE WORLD'S STORY**—The world gets pulled into this story as the theatre for God's life-giving activity.

*How do we see God's goodness in creation?*

*What part does creation play in our life with God?*

- God is not a distant God, who creates and leaves creation on its own.
- We come to know the God who is the bedrock of this story through God's action in the world.
- God, even after the brokenness of sin begins to mar the world, offers life from within the world. God in Jesus Christ, the moment when God establishes *shalom* once and for all, moves into the world to retrieve it as the place of God's creative action and love.
- This story of creation establishes the goodness of God's world, so that God will do what is necessary to maintain and sustain life that is the world's goodness even in the face of that which is opposed to it—death.
- While the world is not God, the world is the good and beautiful creation of God, and this story reminds us of this.

## PRAYER

(Lead your group in corporate prayer.)

Heavenly Father—we gather together—your people—one people—your family—bound together—with the woven chord—that binds all of creation together—fashioned from your love.

We thank you for creation—for creating the heavens and the earth—for creating all living things—for your presence. When we see your creation, let us be mindful of your work in the world and in our lives. Give us strength and guidance that we may we find our rest in you alone.

## WEEKLY PRACTICE

(Read the weekly practice out loud, and challenge your group to practice *missio* beyond today.)

### **Sabbath:**

This week, intentionally set aside time for Sabbath. Turn off your cell phone, iPod, or computer and simply rest. Breathe easy and rest as a way of pointing toward the time when all of creation finds its rest in fellowship with God. As part of your Sabbath, consider taking a walk outside where you can immerse yourself in God's creation, looking for signs of life. Spend some time as part of your Sabbath journaling your thankfulness to God for the life of creation.

## BECOMING MY STORY

(Encourage the group to spend time this week in God's Word, allowing it to penetrate their heart and life.)

• *Psalms 8, 19, and 24*

• *John 1:1-14*

• *Romans 8:18-30*

• *Revelation 21:9-22:5*

Spend time this week reading and journaling through the above Scriptures. Reflect on how the passage is God's story, my story, others' story, and the world's story. In the context of Genesis 1, consider the following questions:

*How are these Scripture passages related to the message in Genesis 1?*

*How do these Scriptures tell us about the story of God being continued from Genesis 1?*

*What is God saying to you through these passages?*

Consider other passages that you might know related to Genesis 1 and read them this week, journaling as you go.