3 God - Creator

Main idea

God created the world and everything in it.

Questions answered

by this program

- How do we know there is a God?
- Who is God?
- Who made God?
- What is God like?
- What does God do?
- How and why did God create?

Bible Base

Gen 1;
Psalm 24:1-2;
Psalm 33:6-9;
Jeremiah 32:17

For the leader

The Bible begins with God (Genesis 1:1). No one created God; he has always existed. If any other being or power had created God then *they* would be God. The Bible tells us that God created all things. He spoke and they came into being. The existence of ourselves and the world around us is a good reason for some to believe in a creator but many children are happy to believe that the world just happened. It's better to let the Bible speak for itself than to try and argue the point.

Although we cannot see God and certainly will never fully understand him, we can discover some things about him from what he has made. The immensity of our universe and the infinite detail of the microscopic world speak of God's greatness, intelligence, creativity and power. We know that God is also personal, just as we are who are created in God's image.

God planned to create the world and pronounced the finished creation 'very good' (Gen. 1:31).

The Bible reminds us that this is God's world, not ours and we need to live in it responsibly. Everything in it belongs to God, including us. God deserves our love and gratitude and worship for all he has given us. Ultimately all of creation from the beginning of time until the end is under God's control.

Open the pack

CREATION KIM'S GAME

Why? To affirm that all things around us were created by God.

Needed: *Up to twenty objects on a tray, covered with a cloth. Include some natural objects like stones, flowers and shells.*

Either give each player a pencil or paper or have a blackboard or overhead projector available. Gather everyone around the tray. Remove the cloth for thirty seconds and then replace it. Let everyone either write down individually, or tell you to write down, everything on the tray that God has made. When all the natural objects are named, recall some of the others and see who can track them back through the manufacturing process to what God made. For example, a book is made from paper, which comes from trees.

WHO MADE IT?

Why? To get the group questioning about where the world came from.

Needed: *A selection of articles that have labels on them indicating where they were made, for example a stuffed toy, shirt, watch and plate.*

Select some children to try and discover where each was made.

Comment: Sometimes it's easy to find out where something was made. My big question is 'Who made the world?'

Accept the children's answers encouraging honest statement of their beliefs and why they believe that way, even if they are not biblical. You should also state your belief and say why in one sentence.

Dig in

WHAT IT SAYS

Why? To let the kids read the creation account for themselves.

Form small groups each with a CEV Bible. Allow 5 minutes for groups to read Genesis 1 and agree on what they think is the most interesting thing in it. Share findings.

LET'S START AT THE BEGINNING

Why? To hear the creation account and think about it.

Needed: *A bell or horn*

Start reading at Genesis 1:1 and explain that whenever they hear something about the creation of the world they have to run to the centre and use the bell or horn. The first to sound it has to say what they heard about creation.

Chew on it

QUESTION BOX

Why? To evoke wonder at God's creation.

Comment that there are things you don't understand about the creation, such as 'How do spiders know how to make a web?' and 'How do migrating birds find their way?' Have a leader write down questions as the children think of them. Issue a challenge to discover the answer to any of these questions before next session.

TWO WORLDS

Why? To get beyond the question of whether or not God created and think about what it might mean if he did.

Needed: *Enlarged copy of Appendix 2* The people of Ig and Og, *cut in half*

Display Appendix 2. Explain that they are two imaginary worlds. The people on Og are sure their world came about from dust particles flying through space and everything in their world including themselves has no reason for existing. The people on Ig are sure God made them and their world and that God is still interested in them.

Pose the questions: *Which world would you like to belong to and why?*

How does that relate to us?

Close the pack

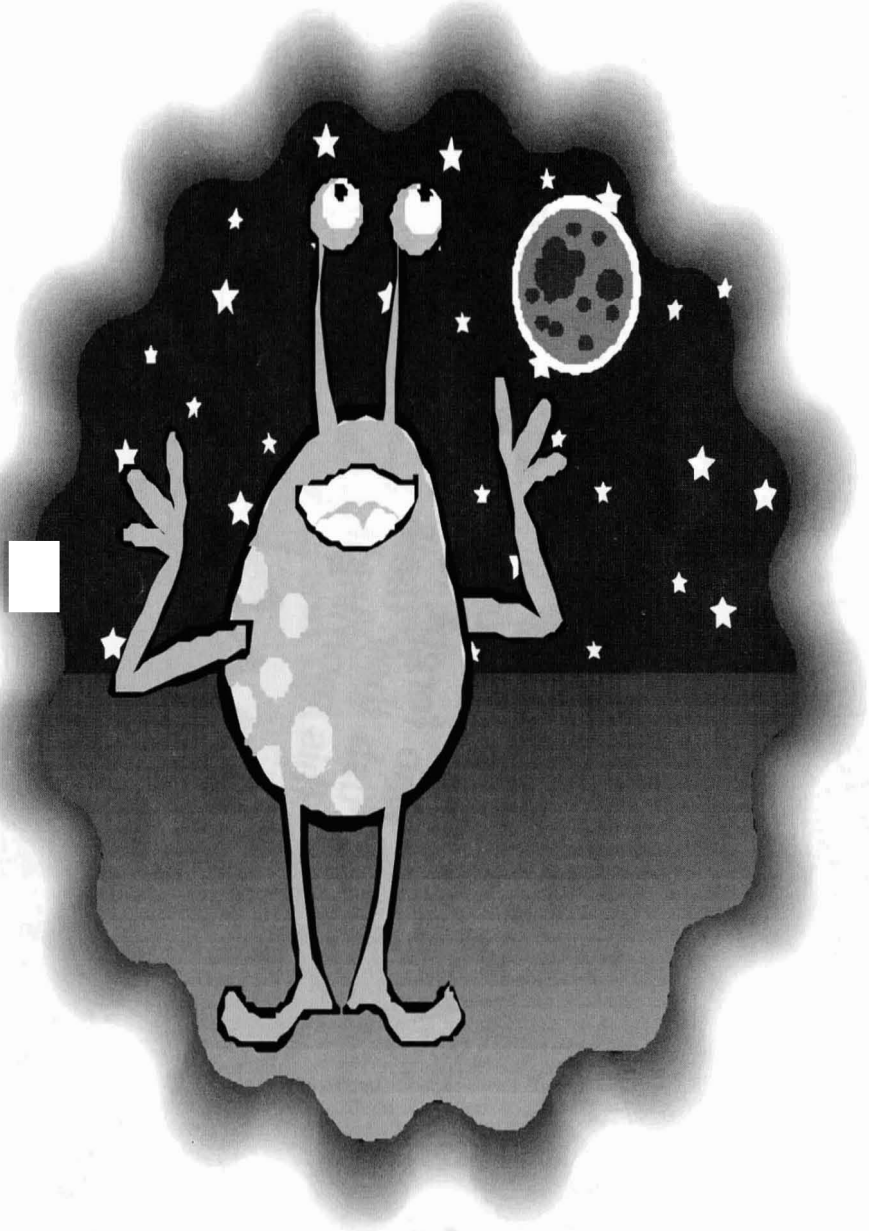
The Bible says that God created this world and everything in it, including us.

ACTIVE PRAYER

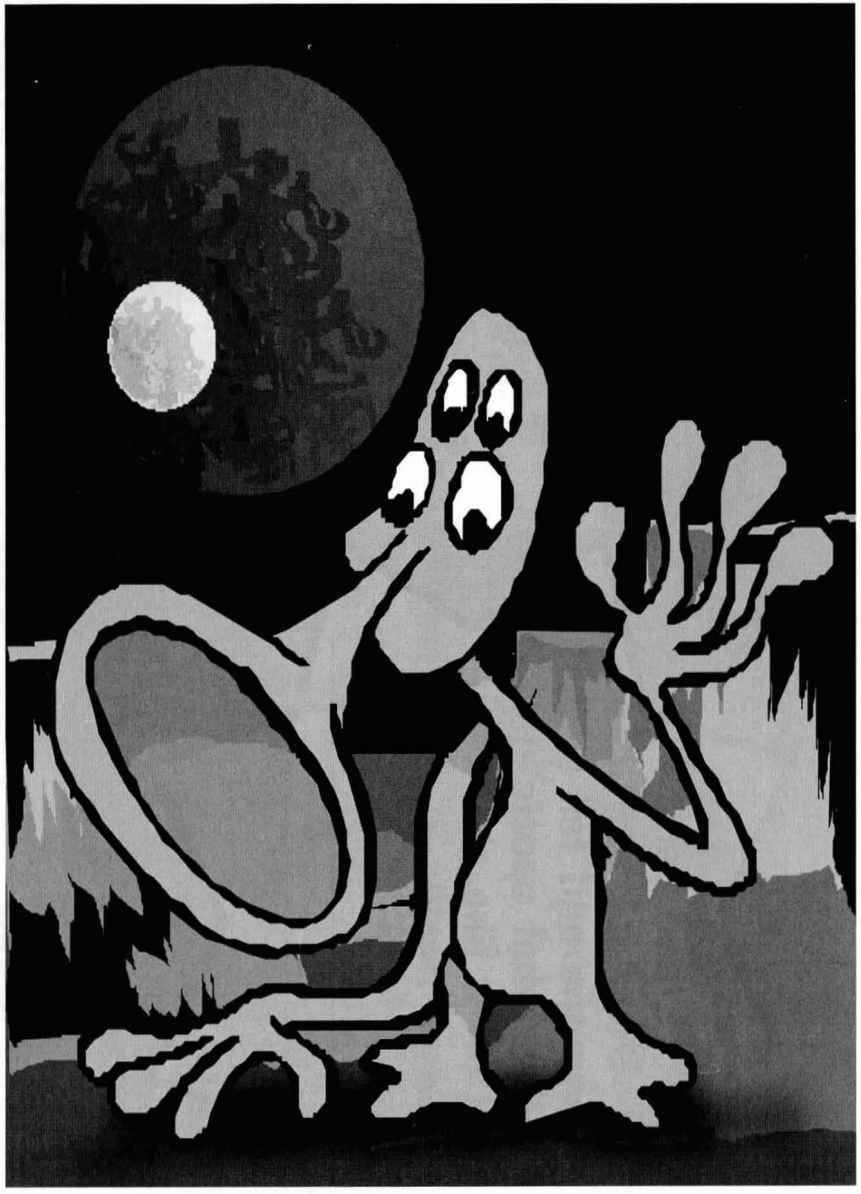
Have everyone think of one created thing to thank God for. Form a line or a circle. Start out with everyone saying together 'Thanks God for .. ..' then go along the line or around the circle Mexican wave style as people add their wo After the last person all say 'Amen' together.

Appendix 2 for Session 3

The inhabitants of Og



The inhabitants of Ig



4 God - Rule Maker

Main idea

God gave the Ten Commandments so his people would know how they should live as his people.

Questions answered

by this program

- How do I know what is right and what is wrong?
- Do we have to obey the 10 commandments to get to heaven ?
- Why did God give us rules to live by?

Bible Base

Exodus 19, 20:1-20; Matt 5-7; John 14:15, 23-24; John 15:7-17

For the leader

When God miraculously saved the Israelites by freeing them from slavery in Egypt they knew that they were God's people. Three months after their 'salvation' when God gave them the Ten Commandments and other laws, they knew what God expected of them as his people. Obedience didn't make them God's people. They were already his. Keeping the law was their right response to a God who was committed to them. Keeping the Commandments doesn't save us but doing what God wants marks us out as his people.

The first four commandments cover the basics of the divine- human relationship and the last six commandments cover the basics of the human- human relationships.

. . . . . .

Open the pack

BUS BITS GAME

Why? The parts of a vehicle do what they are designed for and that makes the bus do what it is designed for. God's people keep God's rules to be the people of God.

Divide into groups of 4 to 10. (Two or three teams is best.) Give each member of the team the name of a part of a bus such as steering wheel, window or accelerator. The team leader is the driver. Each team has the same names and numbers of parts and a driver. The teams are seated in rows behind their leaders and level with their corresponding parts from the other teams. Try to match children of equal ability. The leader tells a story about a bus and as each part is mentioned the team members with that name have to run up to the front and right down to the back around chairs and back to their place. The winner scores a point for their team. When the leader mentions the word 'bus' the whole team has to stay in order and run around the chairs and back to their places. For safety, set out the rules clearly before you start.

DISCUSSION

Pose the questions:

How can people know which school you go to?

How can people know someone is in the police force?

How can people tell if you like (a certain pop group)?

How can people tell who are people who believe in God?

Explain that God wanted his people to be different from the other nations so he gave them rules to live by. When they kept these people would know that they were God's people.

Dig in

VIDEO CLIP

Why? To familiarize the group with the Ten Commandments and the account of how they were given.

Show a video clip from *Prince of Egypt* where Moses goes up Mt Sinai and is given the Ten Commandments.

THE 10 COMMANDMENTS

Display 10 numbered sheets with these references around the room.

1.Exodus 20:2	2.Exodus 20:3	3.Exodus 20:4	4.Exodus 20:7
5.Exodus 20:8	6.Exodus 20:12	7.Exodus 20:13	8.Exodus 20:14
9.Exodus 20:15	10.Exodus 20:16		

Distribute Bibles and let pairs of children choose a sheet, find and read the verse and write it on the reverse side of the sheet.

Chew on it

RULES FOR US

Needed: 10 blown up balloons each with one of these summary statements written on a piece of paper inside. Bibles with Exodus 20:1-20 marked.

Pose the question: *What do the 10 Commandments mean for us today?*

Select children, one at a time, to burst a balloon to find the short summary inside, then with the help of the group find the matching commandment.

Summary Statements:

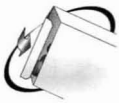
1. God is always number one
2. God is the greatest
3. God's name is special
4. God invented holidays
5. Parents rule. OK!
6. Take care of each other.
7. Let's be faithful
8. Give and don't take
9. Truth is best
10. Enjoy what you've got.

HOW TO LIVE

Needed: *10 balloons containing summary statements as above.*

Break the balloons together. (You may need the help of a pin.) Collect the summary statements and attach them to a board. Read them with the explanation that this is how God asked his people to live to show that he was important to them.

Pose the question: *How can we show people that God is important to us?*



Close the pack

People who are serious about following God's w[illegible]l live the way he wants. When they do, people will know they are different.

5 God - the very

Main idea

God is like a loving father to all who turn from their own way and come back to him.

Questions answered

by this program

- How is God like our Father?
- If God is our Father why do bad things still happen to us?
- How can I belong to God's family?

Bible Base

Luke 15:11-32

For the leader

The image of God as our father is wonderfully meaningful to some Christians expressing love, comfort, provision and safety. For others, the father image has negative connotations evoking memories of neglect, disappointment or abuse.

But God is portrayed in the Bible as the Father of his people and most children have some idea of what the very best father might be like. We need to help children to discover that their Father God loves them unconditionally and that they can trust and love him. We can help them to find out the ways that God shows his love to them and help them see that their Father God is the greatest Dad- better even than their idea of a perfect Dad. We must also be sensitive to the fact that many children are part of single parent families (usually living with their mother) or blended/stepfamilies and some children are victims of their father's abuse. These factors affect a child's perception of what a 'father' is

God is the Father of everyone only in so far as he is our creator. Everyone is not born naturally into God's family but we become God's children as we put our faith in Jesus and he adopts us into his family. (John 1:12)

Open the pack

CHOCOLATE DAD

Why? To have fun and introduce the theme of fathers.

Needed: *knife, fork, block of chocolate on a plate, die, hat coat and tie.*

Seat the group in a circle with everything in the centre. Take turns to throw the die. When someone throws a six they move to the centre, put on the hat, coat and tie and once 'dressed' begin eating the chocolate with the knife and fork (one piece at a time). The die continues around the circle until someone else throws a six, then that person takes over.

FATHER ACROSTIC

Write FATHER vertically down the board. Ask the group for words or phrases beginning with each letter to describe the characteristics of a father.

- Faithful, forgiving, fun, feeds me
- Awesome, affectionate, away a lot
- Teaches me things, too hard
- Helps, hears,
- Encourages, exciting
- Remembers birthdays, reliable

Comment: 'I don't know about your dad, but I do know that some kids have good dads, some haven't got a dad because he's died or left and some even have two dads. But I think we all have some idea of what the best dad would be like. God is like the very best dad you can imagine.'

Explain that the Bible says a[illegible]out God being like a father.

best Father

Dig in

THE LOVING FATHER

Using your best storytelling manner, read the story from Luke 15:11-24 in the CEV or have some older children read it to the group.

Chew on it

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Needed: *Two sheet of paper, one with the heading 'FATHER' on one side and 'GOD' on the reverse and the other with 'SON' on one side and 'ME' on the reverse. Copies of Appendix 3,* How to turn to God

Display the two sheets labelled 'FATHER' and 'SON'. Ask the children to suggest words that describe the father and the son in the story. List them.

Turn over both sheets.

Comment: People sometimes go away from God like the son left his father.

APPENDIX 3

Form groups of 3-5 and give each a copy of Appendix 3 to find out how a person can come back to God.

APPENDIX 3

Use an enlarged copy of Appendix 3 and explain that some of the children in the picture have gone away from God. They've not bothered about him. They've done what they like. When they realise their mistake and are sorry and want to be friends with God again, they can pray a Thank you-Sorry-Please prayer like the one on the sheet.

Close the pack

WHAT ABOUT US?

Pose the question:
How can we come back to God and be part of his family when we know we've gone away from him?

Encourage the children to tell you based on what they discovered from the sheet.

If you did the father acrostic circle the words that apply to God.

PRAYER

Invite someone to read this prayer for the group

Thank you God for being the very best father there is.
Please help us to be children that you're pr .

How to TURN to God

Appendix 3 for Session 5

If you want to turn *away* from sin and *towards* God, you need to pray a 'thank you - sorry-please' prayer.

It goes like this ...

Thank you

Say thanks to God for loving you and for making a way for you to be forgiven and come back to God. Thank Jesus for showing us the way to live and for dying for us.

Sorry

Tell God you are sorry for the sin in your life. Ask God to forgive you.

Please

Ask God to live in your life and give you a new start. Ask for God's help to keep turning away from sin.

6 God - Freedom

Main idea

God doesn't make us do what he wants. He lets us choose, but there are consequences.

Questions answered

by this program

- If God cares about us how come bad things still happen to us?
- Why do some people have lots of money and some don't have much?
- What about famines and droughts?

Bible Base

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-13; 22-24

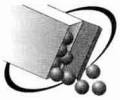
For the leader

This world has been messed up by people choosing not to live God's way.

However God still loves us and has promised to be always with us, giving strength and courage to face life with its struggles. God's plan for our lives is good and those things that are hard and painful, God can use ultimately for our good (Romans 8:28). As well, God has also provided the means for us to enter into an eternal life with him, overflowing with blessings and free from the limitations of this life. It's our choice whether or not we accept it.

Christians are not exempt from the consequences of evil and death in this world, but from an eternal perspective, we are safe with God in heaven forever.

Don't try to do too much. For a 20-30 minute program choose just one activity from each section.



Open the box

WHO'S THE LEADER?

Why? To get the idea of a hidden 'someone' being behind what happens in the world but it only becomes obvious who it is as everyone follows him.

One child is chosen to leave the room while the rest sit in a circle. A 'leader' is then chosen who begins doing an action such as clapping, clicking fingers or scratching knees and everyone else copies. The absent child returns and tries to guess who is the 'leader'. The 'leader' needs to keep changing the action every 15 seconds until he/she is discovered. The 'leader' then leaves the room and a new 'leader' is chosen.

PUPPETS

Needed: A simple marionette puppet. You can make one from a rag doll, string and two rulers.

Explain that God made people but he doesn't make us do what he says. (Not like they followed the leader in the game or like a puppeteer controls a puppet.) If you have a string puppet, make it do some tricks and then cut the strings to show that God doesn't control what we do. When God created the first people, Adam and Eve, he gave them the freedom to choose.

Dig in

WHAT HAPPENED TO GOD'S PERFECT WORLD?

Why? To learn about when the first people chose to disobey God.

Needed: *A chart with these questions and references:*

1. What was God's rule? What choice did the man have? Genesis 2:15-17
2. What did the man and woman decide? Genesis 3:1-8
3. What were the consequences? Genesis 3:13-24

Display the chart then dist Bibles and help the children to look up and read the passages to discover the answers.

Giver

THUMBS UP, THUMBS DOWN

Why? To actively listen to the Bible account of Adam and Eve choosing to disobey God.

Comment: We all make choices and those choices have consequences. The first people had to choose whether or not to do what God said. The Bible tells what happened.

Ask the children to listen as you read and when they hear something bad (like 'you will die before the day is over') do 'thumbs down'. When they hear something good (like 'God said we could eat fruit from any tree in the garden') do 'thumbs up'.

Read Genesis 2:15-17 then Genesis 3:1-13.

As a break from reading, ask if anyone knows what happened next. Be enthusiastic about being able to check what they might have heard against the original Bible story. Encourage the thumbs up, thumbs down again as you read Genesis 3:14-24.

Chew on it

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Why? To understand that our choices contribute to the imperfect world.

Comment: Even though the first people made a poor choice, God keeps on giving us the freedom to make choices today. We don't have to live God's way, but we do have to live with the consequences of what we do.

Show pictures of war, homelessness, poverty, etc.

> ***Pose the question:***
> *How does that story from the Bible help us to understand why these things happen today?* (People's selfishness or greed causes problems for others.)

DISCUSSION

Why? To help process the story and what it means.

Make a group 'snake' by making a line and having everyone put their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them. 'Hiss' around for a bit and then sit down. Retell the story by asking questions like: What was God's rule? What did the snake say about the rule? Who did the people obey, God or the snake? What did God say was going to happen because they didn't obey him? Why couldn't the people be close to God after that.

> ***Pose the question:***
> *What happens when we don't keep God's rules?*
> (It leads to us and other people being unhappy. It stops us being close to God.)

Close the pack

God doesn't make us do what he says, but when we choose not to follow God's commandments we have to live with the consequences.