

LESSON 1: IN THE BEGINNING, GOD CREATED RELATIONSHIPS

This includes:

1. LEADER PREPARATION
2. LESSON GUIDE

1. LEADER PREPARATION**LESSON OVERVIEW**

The Creation story—our story—begins in relationship with God. Every exchange we have with God occurs through relationship with him and other people he created. God made Adam and Eve to share a relationship with him and each other, but in Genesis 2, God finds them naked, ashamed, and hiding from him. God has blessed us with friends and family too, and those relationships can happen with God or hidden from him. This lesson will help teenagers discover God’s desire to be in a loving relationship with us and to give our relationships with others hope and purpose. Through the gift of friends and family, we can grow closer to God and one another.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. WHAT: Relationship with God is our source of life, and we share that life with friends and family.
2. WHY: Teenagers discover that when our brokenness separates us from God, he calls us to a restored relationship, extending his grace and mercy to us
3. HOW: Students can experience God’s love in a new way by asking him to be at the center of all of their relationships.

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE

Genesis 2:4-25

SECONDARY SCRIPTURE

Genesis 3:1-11

TEACHING PREP

LEADER
TIP

Use this short overview to prepare for your lesson. While you may not want to convey this information word-for-word with your group, you’ll want to absorb it as you prepare to lead.

Read Genesis 2:4-25.

In Genesis 2, God creates man and enters into relationship with him. God breathes into Adam’s nostrils, making him a living person. When Adam takes his first breath and opens his eyes, God is there—a reminder that Adam’s first relationship was with God. In the same way, God wants to breathe life into us and maintain a life-giving relationship with us.

In Genesis 2:18, God says, “It is not good for the man to be alone.” God’s solution was to make Adam the perfect helper, someone like him. Now Adam not only has a life-giving relationship with God, but he can share his life with Eve, as well. Adam’s grateful reaction to this gift: “At last!” And so the first human relationship begins. Adam and Eve are a family, and God is their Creator, Father, and Provider.

Similarly, God blesses each of us with helpers. Although our friends and family aren’t perfect and aren’t meant to replace God, they are gifts from God who are meant to experience God with us. But without God at the center of our relationships, we’re stripped of purpose and hidden from God.

God loves and cares for each of us. To fully experience his life-giving love, we must trust him and allow him to remain at the center of all of our relationships.

THE BEFORE & AFTER [OPTIONAL]

TEXTS OR TWEETS

Send one or both of these messages to your students prior to your meeting. As with the rest of the curriculum, edit these questions to fit the needs of your ministry.

- Who in your life do you consider to be a gift from God? Don’t miss tonight’s conversation!
- Why did God create us for relationship with him and each other? Get ready for some great discussions about our life together.

PARENT EMAIL

Send this email to parents following the lesson to encourage them to continue the conversation at home. Feel free to edit and customize the email to fit your ministry needs.

Dear parents,

We’ve begun a new series focusing on the theme “Friends and Family.” For the next three weeks, students will study different passages of Scripture to discover the powerful, life-giving exchange that happens in relationship with God and with people he’s given to us to share life with.

In this first lesson, we looked at Genesis 2:4-25 and Genesis 3:1-11, where God is in relationship with Adam and Eve. Through his perfect love, God gave the first couple everything they needed. Even when they disobeyed his command not to eat the fruit of one tree, God pursued them and brought them out of hiding. God desires to engage in authentic relationship with us, as well, and he wants to be at the center of our relationships with others. God’s perfect love provides all we need, and together we can trust him.

This week, I encourage you to spend a few minutes talking with your teenager about our lesson.

Consider building your conversation around these questions:

- What might it have been like to live in a garden that God created for you, with everything you needed to enjoy life with God?
- How can trust and honesty build relationships? How can a lack of trust and honesty destroy relationships?

- When have you relied on a person so much that you began placing your trust in him or her instead of in God? How did you begin trusting in God again?

Thanks for all your prayers for our students and our ministry. Have a great week!

LESSON 1: IN THE BEGINNING, GOD CREATED RELATIONSHIPS**2. LESSON GUIDE****GETTING THINGS STARTED [OPTIONAL]****LEADER
TIP**

For the opening activity, you'll need one balloon for each student.

Welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, and then lead students in this opening activity.

Give students each a balloon. Explain that they're going to discover how much "life" they can give with just one breath.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *When I count to three, take a deep breath and blow up your balloon as much as you can with that one breath. Don't tie the balloon. Instead, pinch it with your fingers so you can see how much air you were able to breathe into it. When I tell you to, release the balloon and let it fly. The more air the balloon has in it, the farther it will fly.*

ASK:

- *When you released your balloon, why did it go flying?*
- *By breathing into the balloon, you filled it with life. How does being in relationship with God fill us with life?*
- *When you let go of the balloon, it was emptied of life. How does being out of relationship with God leave you feeling empty? How can you be filled again?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *This activity demonstrated one of the first things God did in his relationship with man: He breathed life into Adam and made him a living person. When Adam opened his eyes and took his first breath, God was there, ready to interact with him. At times, our relationship with God might seem lifeless or inactive. But God is ready to breathe life into us again and wants us to feel alive through him. Because of that, God offers us life-giving relationships with him and with people he's placed in our lives.*

TEACHING POINTS**LEADER
TIP**

Use the Teaching Points to help students capture the essence of each lesson with more discussion and less lecture-style teaching. Remember: All throughout these lessons, it's up to you to choose (1) how many questions you use and (2) the wording of the main points—keep ours, or change the wording to make it clearer for your audience.

Read Genesis 2:4-25 together as a group. Consider dividing verses among your students so several people have a chance to read.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Let's spend a few minutes reading this account of God's first interaction with humans—the very first relationships.*

1. OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IS A LIFE SOURCE

ASK:

- *What are some indications that a person has received life from God?*
- *What replacements or substitutes for God do we sometimes rely on as our source of life?*
- *In this passage, God breathes life into Adam. In what ways has God breathed life into you?*
- *What are some ways you can respond to the life God has given you?*
- *Describe a time when you've felt as if your relationship with God was flat or deflated. How was it restored or renewed?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *At times we may feel as if our relationship with God has no life left in it. But if we've been spiritually deflated, we can experience God again in a fresh way. God is ready to breathe new life into us through his abundant and overwhelming love. We can experience him as our ongoing source of life, both physically and spiritually.*

2. GOD GIVES US THE GIFT OF RELATIONSHIPS

ASK:

- *Read Genesis 3:1-11. How does the serpent cause harm to Adam and Eve's relationship with God and with each other?*
- *What might Adam and Eve have done differently to better protect the gift of their relationship?*
- *When Adam and Eve realize they've been exposed, their nakedness causes them shame and they hide from God. How does shame make us want to hide from God?*
- *How does placing our complete trust in God impact our relationships with friends and family?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *God, the giver of life, longs to be in relationship with us and to be at the forefront of our relationships with other people. Satan, described in Genesis as a serpent, wants to tear apart our relationships with God and other people. But when our relationships are broken, God desires to restore and redeem them. We can ask God to reorient us to him.*

3. GOD RESTORES BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Within the Bible's first three chapters, humans experience broken relationships with God and with each other. Although Adam and Eve hide and cover their nakedness out of shame, God calls out to them. In our brokenness and shame, God also calls out and invites us to be reconciled to him and to one another. He covers our sin and shame with his redeeming love and gives us new life.*

ASK:

- *How does God's grace restore us to life-giving relationship with him? How does it inspire us to reconcile broken relationships with our friends and family?*
- *What's your understanding of why God created us to be in relationship with him? What would you say is the purpose of God putting us in relationships with other people?*

EXTRA DISCUSSION [OPTIONAL]

Ask students to form groups of two or three for these questions.



ASK:

- *Look at Genesis 2:18. Why wasn't it good for Adam to be alone?*
- *Why is the gift of community so invaluable?*
- *Why is it important to remember that Adam's first relationship was with God?*

Bring everyone back together, and ask for volunteers to share answers to the previous questions, as time permits.

LIVING IT OUT

ASK:

- *Because relationships are a two-way street, what are some ways you can express your love for God?*
- *How can your relationships with friends and family become an expression of God's love?*
- *What can help you stay reconciled to God? How can your relationship with God remain the source of your life?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *If you're feeling hidden from God, as Adam and Eve were in Genesis 3, listen to God's voice, which calls you out of hiding. His love will cover any shame or fear you're feeling. Remember that God always offers you life-giving forgiveness and restoration.*

SUMMARY

Provide a quick summary or take-home challenge based on (1) this lesson's content, (2) the dialogue that took place today, (3) your understanding of the issues and struggles your teenagers are facing, and (4) the big picture of your youth ministry and what your leadership team wants accomplished with the teaching and discussion time.

FOR KEEPS [MEMORY VERSE]

Encourage and/or challenge your teenagers to memorize the Scripture below.

"Then the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person" (Genesis 2:7).