

Bible Project Heaven and Earth Final Project

Teaching Plan

Before I retired I was first a middle school teacher and then an education professor. I use the “Understanding By Design” model by Wiggins and McTighe to design my lessons and to teach students how to design their lesson. Old habits are hard to break so I am using that model for this lesson.

Context

I will design this for my Sunday School class. We are a group of 10 adult women - age range 40 -70. We have all been a part of our church for many years, watching our children grow up together.

Resources/Materials

- Genesis 1 Visual Commentary from Bible Project (<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/genesis-1>)
- Resources - to be given to participants at the end electronically - through and email.
- Diagram of Cosmos from Bible Project Blog - added at end of document
- Chart paper
- Creation in Other Places Chart - analog or digital
- Journals or note taking materials provided by the participants in whatever form they are used to using.

Essential Questions and Understandings

Essential Questions (To be posted somewhere in the room)	Essential Understandings (These will be what participants will develop on their own as they reflect on the lesson)
Why should we study the creation story?	The creation story is the key that unlocks the rest of the Bible. It is the beginning of the story of how God plans to redeem his world.
Why is the Biblical authors’s worldview, cosmology important to understanding the creation story?	Understanding the Biblical author’s cosmology deepens our understanding of what the text is saying about why God created the world and human’s place in it. It allows us to see connections to other passages that would not see otherwise.
What does the literary structure have to teach us about who God is and who humans are?	The creation story is a beautiful and intricate text whose purpose is not to explain how the world was created but why.
How does one’s experience with the creation story influence the way each person views the study of creation?	Our experiences trigger emotional responses to the creation story. For some the many controversies about what it means results in choosing to stay away from it, seeing it as unimportant to their understanding of God. For others the controversies can result in a challenge to their faith and understanding of God’s word.
What changes do we have to make in our thinking about the physical world to understand the creation story.	To truly understand what the authors wanted to teach us about God we have to be willing to see things from a different world view being careful not to impose our worldview on the authors.

Reflection (Assessment) to be used at the end of the session)

- Create a journal entry to capture the things that you want to remember and things that you want to study more.
- Now Read Revelation 21-22 out loud a couple of times - no pencil
 - Now read with a pencil - jot down any connections you see between these two passages

Methods

Opening

- My Experience: Example of my camera (my class members know this story and have seen my images) Talk about how, because of my camera, I see things that I would have missed. My camera has trained me to look for more than just a picture but a composition to share a specific message or feeling. This course and the ideas I want to share that I have learned have been like my camera allowing me to see things that I would never have noticed before.
- Your Experience: Do a QuickWrite Here (a QuickWrite is a teaching strategy where students are free to jot down ideas in any way they want, no worry about complete sentences and even images are acceptable - just that no one can talk during this time) Respond to this question: Tell me what you think when you hear that we are going to study Genesis 1.
 - Have any that want to share what they wrote. After that use these questions to begin a discussion:
 - What emotions come up in your response
 - Why should we study Genesis

Pair Read

Put participants in groups of 2 or 3.

Read Genesis 1 to 2:2 out loud a few times to each other - if possible read from different translations - no pencil or note take, just read

Now read again and jot down your replies to the prompts below - you can use whatever format you want, a chart, a picture, a diagram, a list.

- Things you haven't noticed before
- Repeated words and phrases - look for patterns in where they appear
- Questions that the passage raised

Have each pair share their what they created and share these with other teams - use a "Rotate" approach where each pair shares their ideas with the team next closest to them. Depending on the number of pairs you have repeat this so that pairs have share with other pairs.

Discussion of Pair Work:

What are some things that everyone notice?

What are some questions that you have?

Video:

Watch Bible Project Video Genesis 1, Visual Commentary

Discussion of Video

- What new ideas did you learn from this video?
- How does this video fit with the things we noticed in our reading and discussion?

Summing Up

Now let's take these ideas and use them to draw a diagram of the cosmology of the Biblical authors.

- Heaven - not a place to go when we die - Jesus is coming to bring heaven and earth together. Heaven is God's space, Earth is Humans's space, Waters is no one's space.
- Sly Dome Raqia - to hammer out, smooth Ezekiel 1:22-26
- Waters Above
- Waters Below
- Land - Earth - not a globe - Erets

Creation In Other Places Chart

One thing that I have learned is that the Genesis 1 is not the only place where we find ideas about the way the Biblical authors understood creation. Put the list of other scriptures up on board or chart. Give each one out to a different student. Have them read it and tell how it adds to our understanding by filling in this chart - either on a paper handout or an electronic visual such as Powerpoint or Word Processing Document.

When we look at all these ideas we can begin to get a picture of how the Biblical authors viewed the world - their cosmology.

Chart: (This is at the end of the document - This could be done analog or digital depending on setting of lesson..

Conclusions

So this is the journey that I have been on and the one that has changed what I see when I look into God's world.

Genesis 1 is the Key

Genesis 1 is the key that unlocks the rest of the Bible It takes time to learn to use the key and to make sure we don't impose our ideas on the key but see the key on its own terms. Jesus and the NT writers saw the world this way.

When we discern the meaning of texts in their ancient near east context, we find that they constitute a worldview statement about God and his relationship to the world, and about humans and their relation to God and the world. This basic worldview statement transcends its ancient cultural setting and commands the attention of God's people in all places and all times.

Why vs. How

The story of creation in Genesis 1 is not a story about the how of creation, the material particles of the world, but the why. In our modern world we want to know the materials of the process, but that is not what the story is telling us. This is why Genesis 1 has become

contentious not just recently but for centuries. Each culture and time reads it with their own understanding and experience of the universe and don't even recognize this. Cookbook tells you have to cook food not to grow food. We are doing the same thing when we try to use Genesis 1 to explain the materials and the timing of the universe.

Richness of Literary Design

Genesis is a true literary work of art which we miss because we don't see the Hebrew. It is full of symmetry and deep connections which in English sometimes just become meaningless repetitions.

Understanding is Making Connections

Understanding is about making connections. The deeper the understanding you have of a topic the more connections you make. This is why understanding Genesis 1 is important. The more connections you make the more you understand God's word.

Reflection - Assessment

Now it is your turn. Sometime in the next few days I encourage you to do this.

- Create a journal entry to capture the things that you want to remember and things that you want to study more.
- Now Read Revelation 21-22 out loud a couple of times - no pencil
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Resources for Digging Deeper

If you want to dig deeper into what we have studied today here are some resources for you. (These will be sent with links in an email)

- Study Guide for Genesis 1 Video: (https://d1bsmz3sdihplr.cloudfront.net/media/Study%20Notes/VC_Genesis-1_Study%20Notes_final.pdf)
- Temple Video: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/temple>
- Heaven and Earth Video: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/heaven-and-earth>
- Heaven and Earth Podcasts that go deeper into the video: <https://bibleproject.com/podcast/series/heaven-earth-series>
- Bible Project Blog Posts:
 - <https://bibleproject.com/blog/genesis-ancient-cosmic-geography>
 - <https://bibleproject.com/blog/creation-through-the-lens-of-ancient-cosmology>
- Book: The Biblical Cosmos - A Pilgrim's Guide to the Weird and Wonderful World of the Bible by Robin Parry (Amazon Link: https://www.amazon.com/Biblical-Cosmos-Pilgrims-Guide-Wonderful/dp/1625648103/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=robin+parry&qid=1609447141&sr=8-1)

The Creation In Other Places

Instructions:

After you read a passage enter something that it tells you about the Heavens, the Earth, or the Waters. (A passage may just tell you something about only 1 or all three. See the first one for an example.)

Passage	Heaven	Earth	Waters
Psalm 24:1-2		The land is built upon the waters.	
Psalm 14:2			
Psalm 29:3, 9-10			
Psalm 75:3			
Psalm 102:19			
Psalm 103:11			
Psalm 104:1-4			
Psalm 104:5-9			
Psalm 148:1-8			
Genesis 7:11			
Exodus 20:4			
Job 22:12-14			
Ezekiel 1:22-26			
Matthew 4:8			
Philippians 2: 9-10			

