

General Church Education



Family Lesson: Genesis 1
**The Story
of CREATION**

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Family Lesson 1-A

The Story of Creation
Genesis 1

Family Talk:
THE CREATION
Rev. Harold Cranch

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.
(Genesis 1:1-5)

These words are the very first part of the Word of the Lord, which is often called the Bible. They tell how the Lord began His creation. You know, it is very hard to think about a time before the creation, before the world was made, even before there was a sun, a moon or a sky; for then, only the Lord was, and there was nothing which we can usually see or feel or hear when we go out of doors.

It's hard to think of that time. We can only describe it by what was not then made. There was no sky then, and no sun, nor moon, nor stars. There was no water and no land. Of course, there could be no fishes or birds or animals. And no trees or grass, or any of the things that we see and feel and know about in this beautiful world.

So in the Word we read that the earth was without form. It was not yet made, and it was empty, and darkness was upon the face of the sea, and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the water. The Lord thought of the creation He would make, about how He would prepare a world and then put people upon it, so that by their light here in the world they might prepare for heaven; so that they could dwell with Him in happiness forever.

And the first thing that God did was to say:

“Let there be light, and there was light. Then God saw that light, that it was good. And God called the light day, and the darkness He called night, and the evening and the morning were the first day.”

And then the Lord made the sky, and called together the waters under the sky; and from the waters He caused the dry land to appear, and on the land He made the grass to grow and the trees to take form and bear fruit.

After the world was formed and the trees and grass were growing, the Lord said, **“Let the sun shine in the sky during the day, and let the moon shine at night.”** And He made the stars also. Then on the fifth day, He made fish to swim in the sea and birds to fly in the air. And on the sixth day He made animals to live on the land.

God saw that all His creation was good, and the world was ready, and people alone were to be created to finish His work of creation. So the Lord God made man and woman, and told them that all of the creation was made for them, that all things were to serve them, to bring them happiness and to teach them the ways of heaven.

And then God saw His creation, that it was very good, and He rested on the seventh day and hallowed it. And we, too, stop to rest on one day of the week - Sunday -and we think of the Lord our Creator who made all of the beautiful things of the world for the sake of men. And by thinking of Him and thinking of the things He has made for us we can worship Him and prepare for eternal happiness in heaven.

Now you may think that because these things happened long, long ago, they do not matter very much to us; but that is not right, for the Lord does the same things for every baby born into the world. He did the same things for you and for me. For when a baby is born in the world, he can't see, or hear, or taste or touch — he has to learn to do all of these things. And who do you think teaches a baby these things? The Lord teaches the baby. Of course, He does not make a separate world for each baby, but He does make it so that the baby discovers the world, and sees the light, and feels, and tastes and hears the things of this world.

So, for every baby the world is new, just as if it had been created for him alone, and the first thing that a baby can do is see the light. If we hold a little light before a baby's eyes when he is about a month old, the baby will look at the light; and if we move it just a little bit, then the baby's eyes will follow it. Just as if the Lord had said, “**Let there be light.**” And for the baby there is light. The baby can see light. Then, as he gets a little older, he can see the sky and the earth. He can see his mother and his father, and his sisters and brothers, and he can touch the things around him, and he can hear the songs of those near him, and the lullabies that his mother sings to him. And as he grows up, he learns to use and enjoy all the things that the Lord has made — all the many, many things the Lord has given to all men in this world.

We know that the Lord has made all of the food which we prepare and eat. And He has given all the things of nature for the use of people. We should think about these things and be thankful to the Lord who made them and gave them to us. Think about these things the next time you sit down to eat and prepare to say the blessing, so that you can really mean it when you say, “O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy is forever.”

Note to Parents:

If you have a copy of *First Songs For Little Children*, you might enjoy teaching younger children the song “The Lord Made Them All” on page 25.

The Story of Creation

Genesis 1

LEVEL 1 – RESPONSIVE RECITATION

Materials Needed

The Word

Dear Parents,

Little children love repetition—it is how they learn. They also love to learn to recite the Lord’s Word. For this lesson, help them to say this very simple recitation:

“And God saw that it was good; And the evening and the morning were the first (second, third....) day.”

Then you and your child can do a little presentation following the script on the next page. You read each line that begins “on the first (second, third...) day God made... then pause to let your child (with your help if necessary), say the recitation after the description of each day.

Perhaps, if an older child has done a creation wheel, you can coordinate your reading, the recitation, and showing the wheel into a “play” for the rest of the family or some friends.

(Parent reads): On the first day God made light and darkness.

(Child says): “And God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the first day.”

(Parent reads): On the second day God made water and clouds.

(Child says): “And God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the second day.”

(Parent reads): On the third day God made the oceans and dry land. He made grass and trees.

(Child says): “And God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day.”

(Parent reads): On the fourth day God made the sun and moon and stars.

(Child says): “And God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.”

(Parent reads): On the fifth day God made fish and birds.

(Child says): “And God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.”

(Parent reads): On the sixth day God made animals and people.

(Child says): “And God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.”

(Parent reads): On the seventh day God was finished, and God rested.



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Genesis 1
LEVEL 2 – CREATION WHEEL

MATERIALS NEEDED

1 round-head (brad) fastener
Crayons
Glue or paste
Scissors



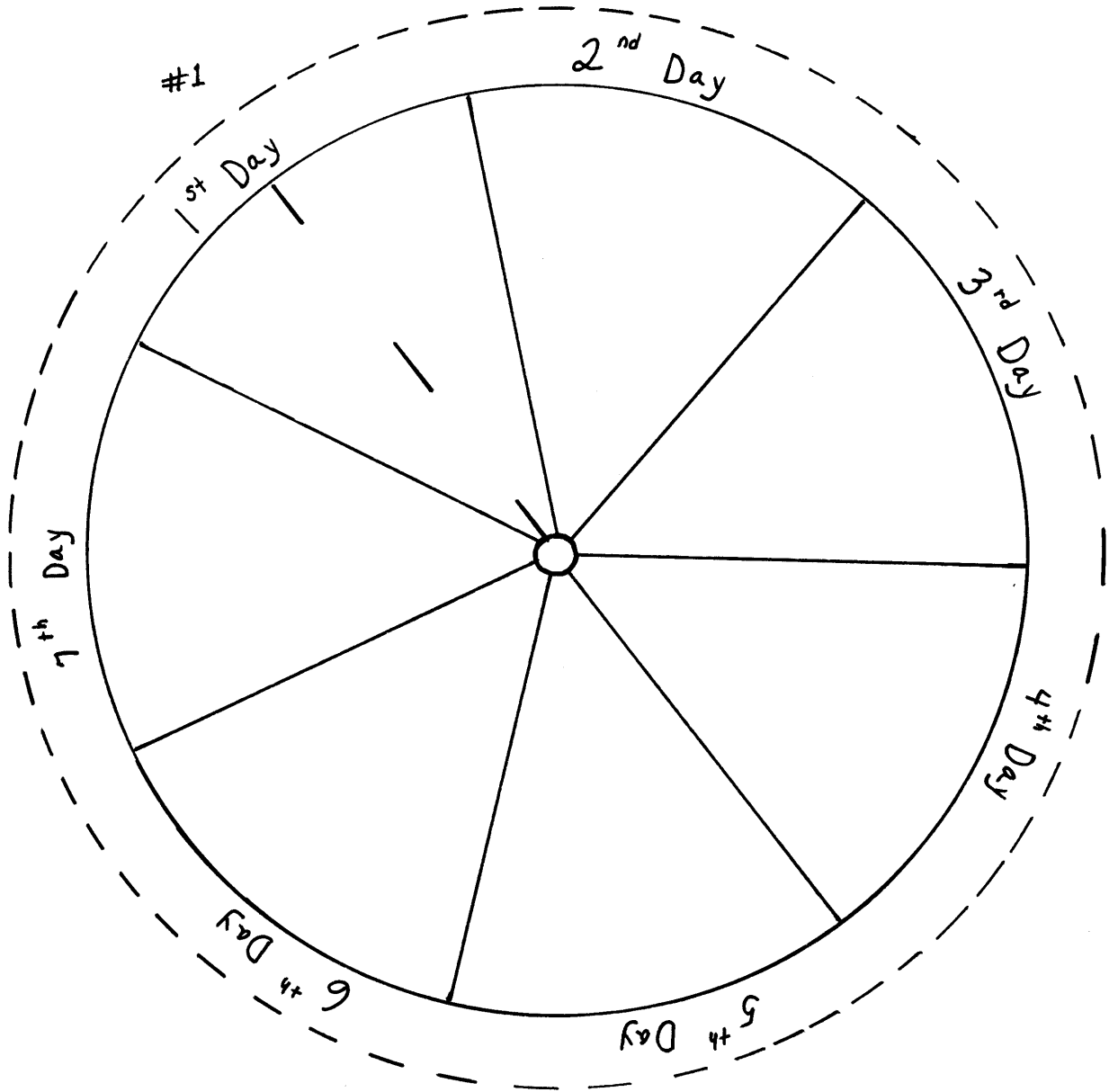
CREATION WHEEL

INSTRUCTIONS

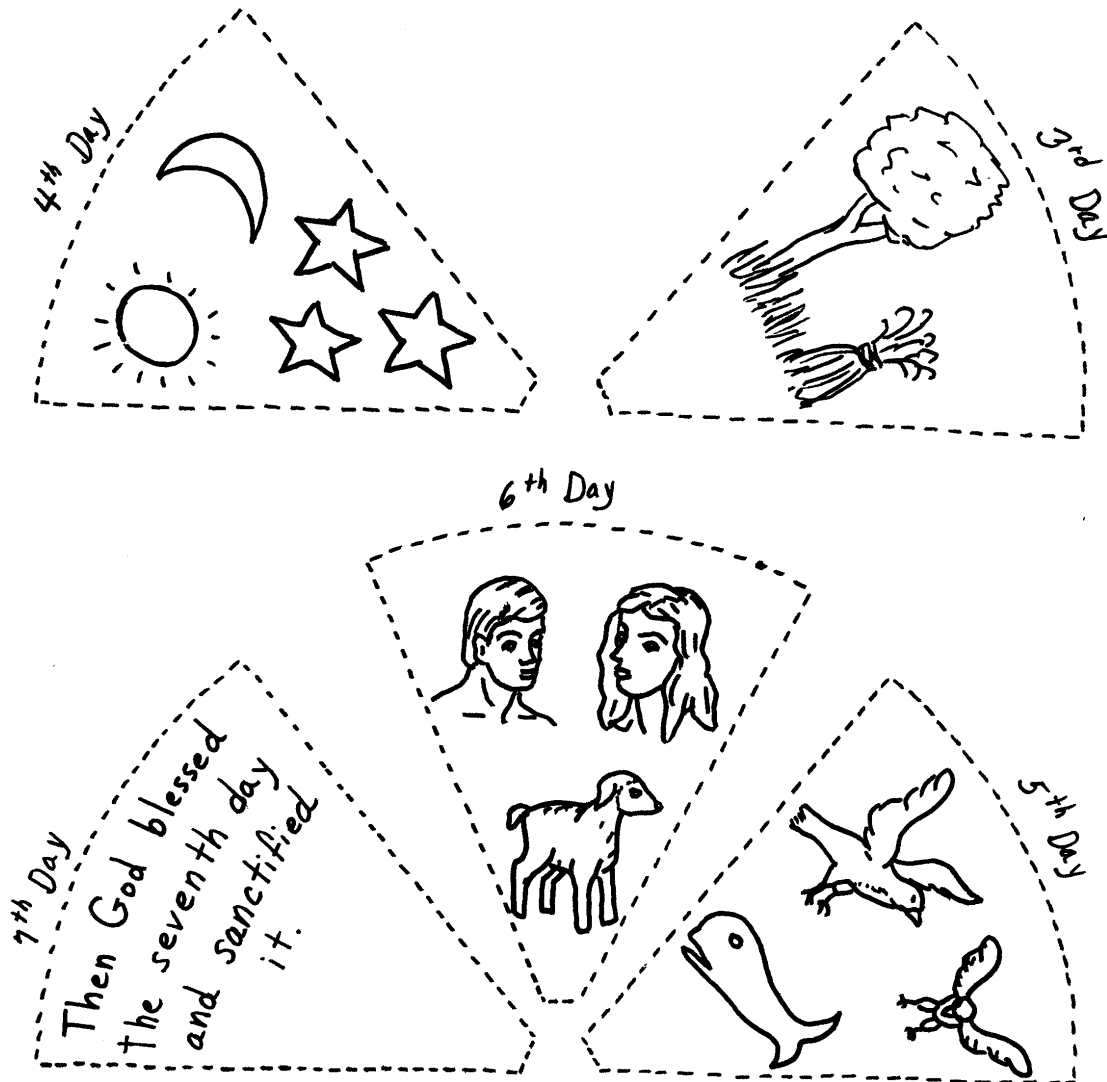
1. **First Day:**
On the 1st Day segment of wheel #1 (page 2), color one half black, and the other half yellow.
2. **Second Day:**
On the 2nd Day segment of wheel #1, draw and color a sky and sea.
3. **Third – Seventh Day:**
Color the segments on page 3.
Cut out the segments.
Glue the segments onto wheel #1 in the appropriate places.
4. Cut out wheel #1, and wheel #2 (page 4), on the dotted lines only.
5. Place wheel #2 on top of wheel #1 and fasten with round-head fastener.
Bend tab on wheel #2 so that it can be grasped for turning.
Child can then turn the top wheel to see each day of creation.

PROJECT

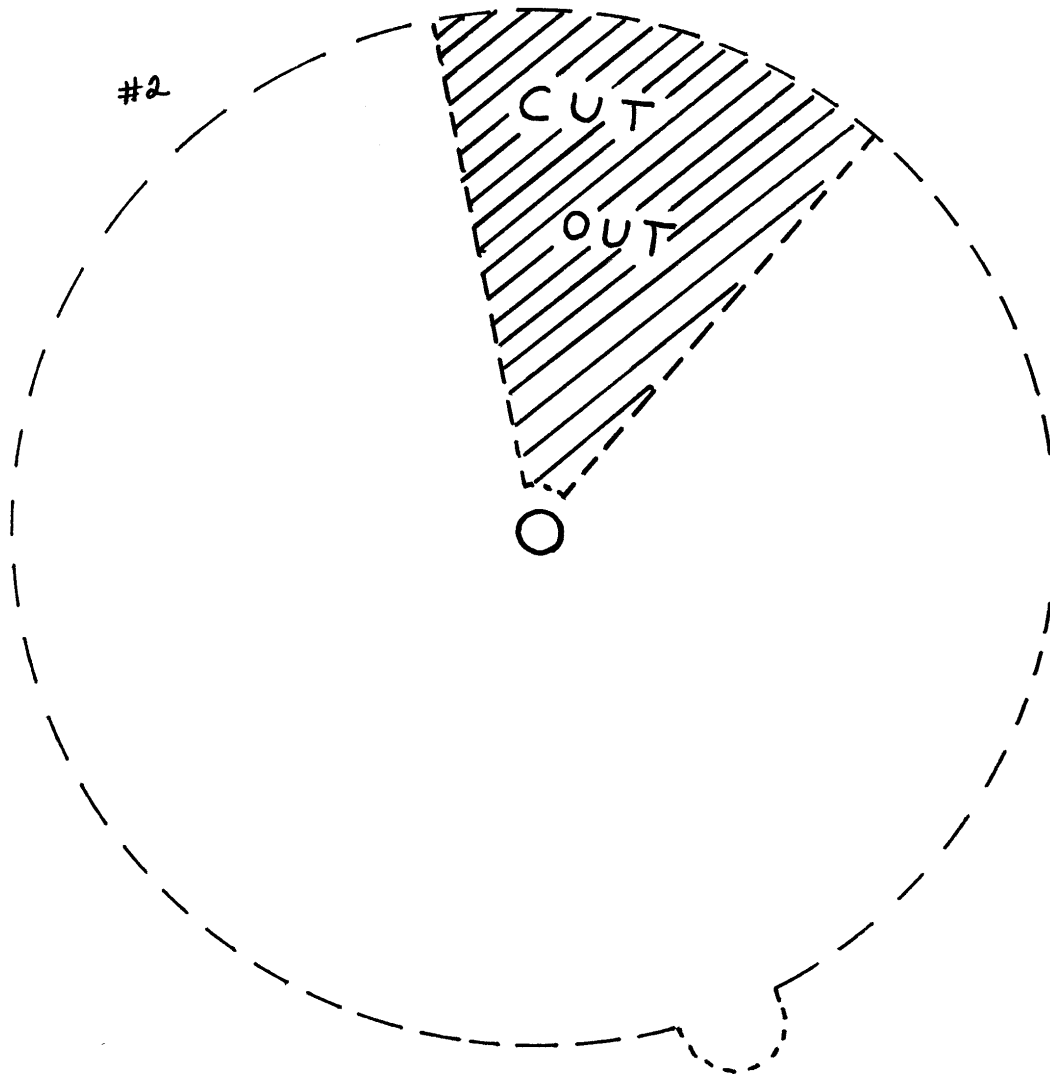
CREATION WHEEL #1



SEGMENTS for THIRD to SEVENTH DAYS



CREATION WHEEL #2



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LEVEL 3 – THE DAYS OF CREATION 3D MODEL

MATERIALS NEEDED

Glue

Scissors

Crayons or markers

THE DAYS OF CREATION

This project is a model of the seven days of creation. The first six days are pictured on small triangles that fold into a five-sided shape, one for each of the six days of creation. The seventh day of rest is pictured on larger triangles that fold into a four-sided shape. The small shapes are glued onto the large shape for the complete model.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Color the pictures. (It is easier to color before you cut and glue.)
2. Before cutting out pieces, score along folds with scissor blades or pencil point. This will help you fold them correctly.
3. Cut out pieces around the edges. Also cut between triangles on heavy lines as shown.
4. Fold along lines. Lines marked "fold out" are folded so that the printed side is on the outside.

(If you fold a piece the wrong way, it doesn't matter. Just fold it the other way when you see how it should go.)

5. When you are ready to assemble the project, glue the triangles for each separate piece first. Then glue the tabs on Days 1-3 underneath the left and middle tabs for Day 7, and the tabs for Days 4-6 to the right and middle tabs for Day 2. Glue the extra triangle for Day 4 underneath Day 3.
6. If you haven't added a lot of heavy stuff, it should stand upright. If not, prop it up with something, or sew a loop of thread through the top center and hang it up.

If you're confused, ask someone to help you.

This project takes time and patience.

Have fun with it, and finish it when you have a chance.

If you want to create your own pictures:



You can use the blank sides to draw your own pictures:

You could even glue things on, such as construction paper, magazine paper, felt, foil and cotton for clouds.

You can use dried plants or gravel. Or you can add these things to the printed pictures.

If you plan to use the blank side to create your own pictures:

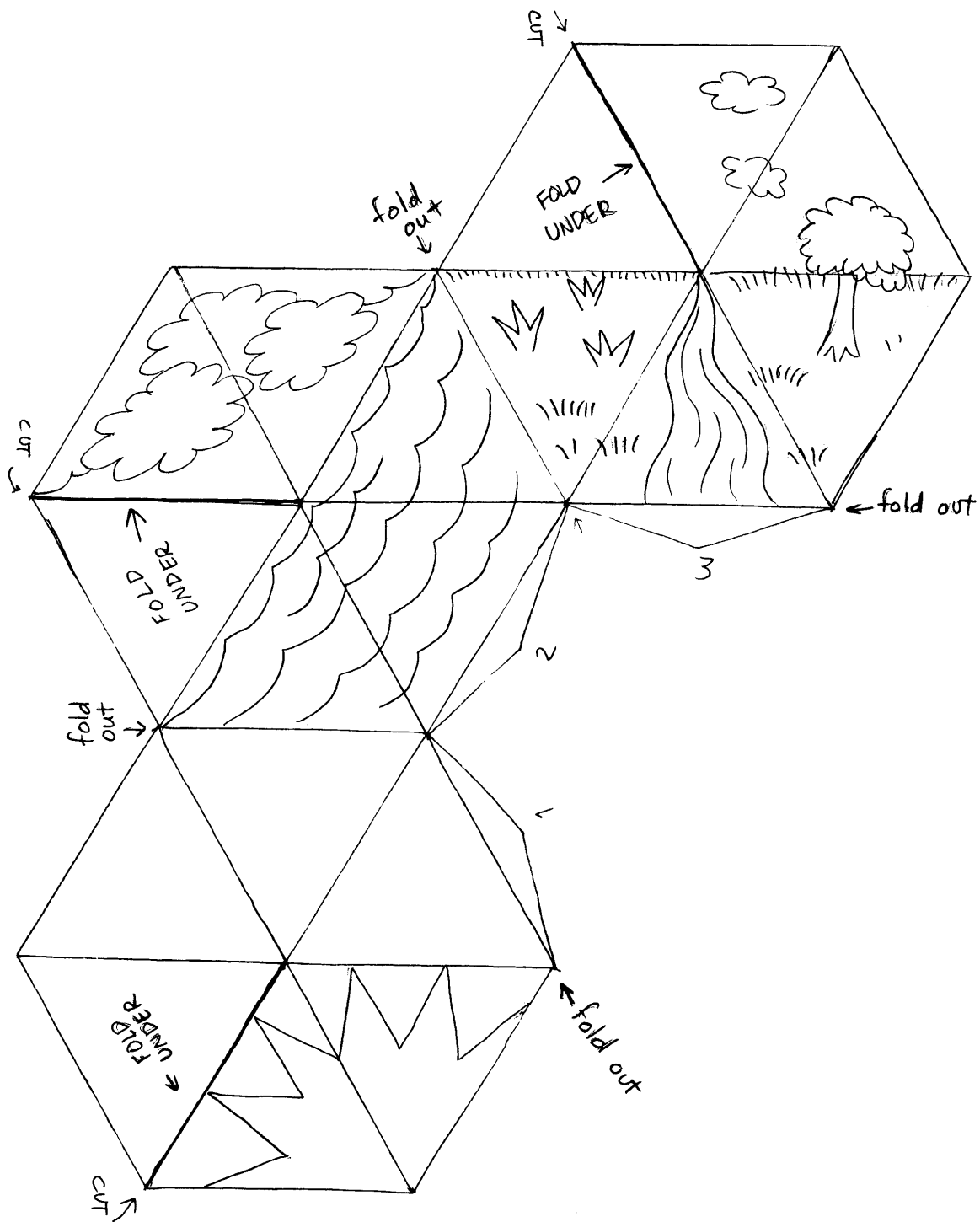
◆ make all folds the opposite way. For example, in Step 4 fold printed sides together.

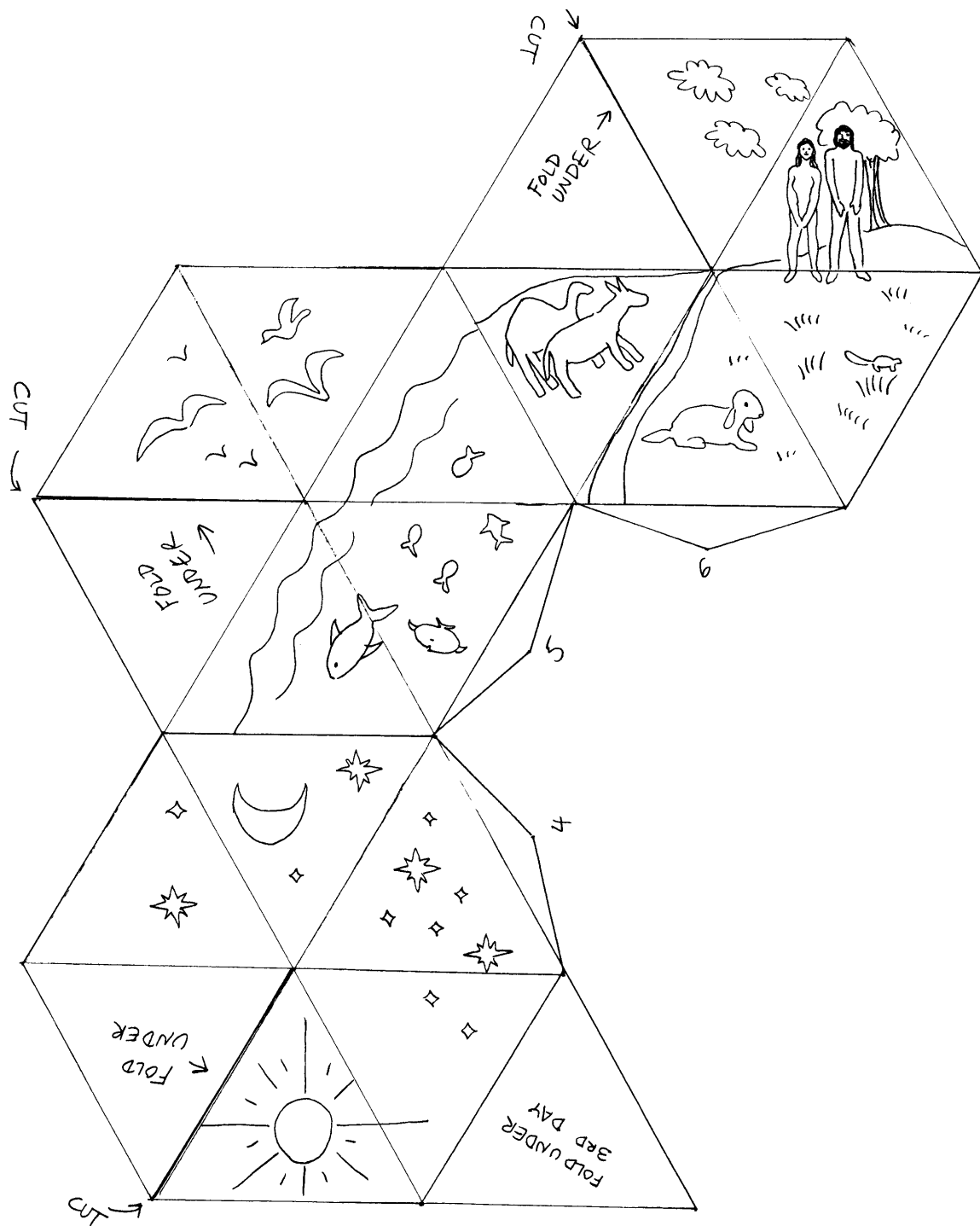
◆ use the piece with day 6 printed on it for day 1, day 5 for day 2, and so on.

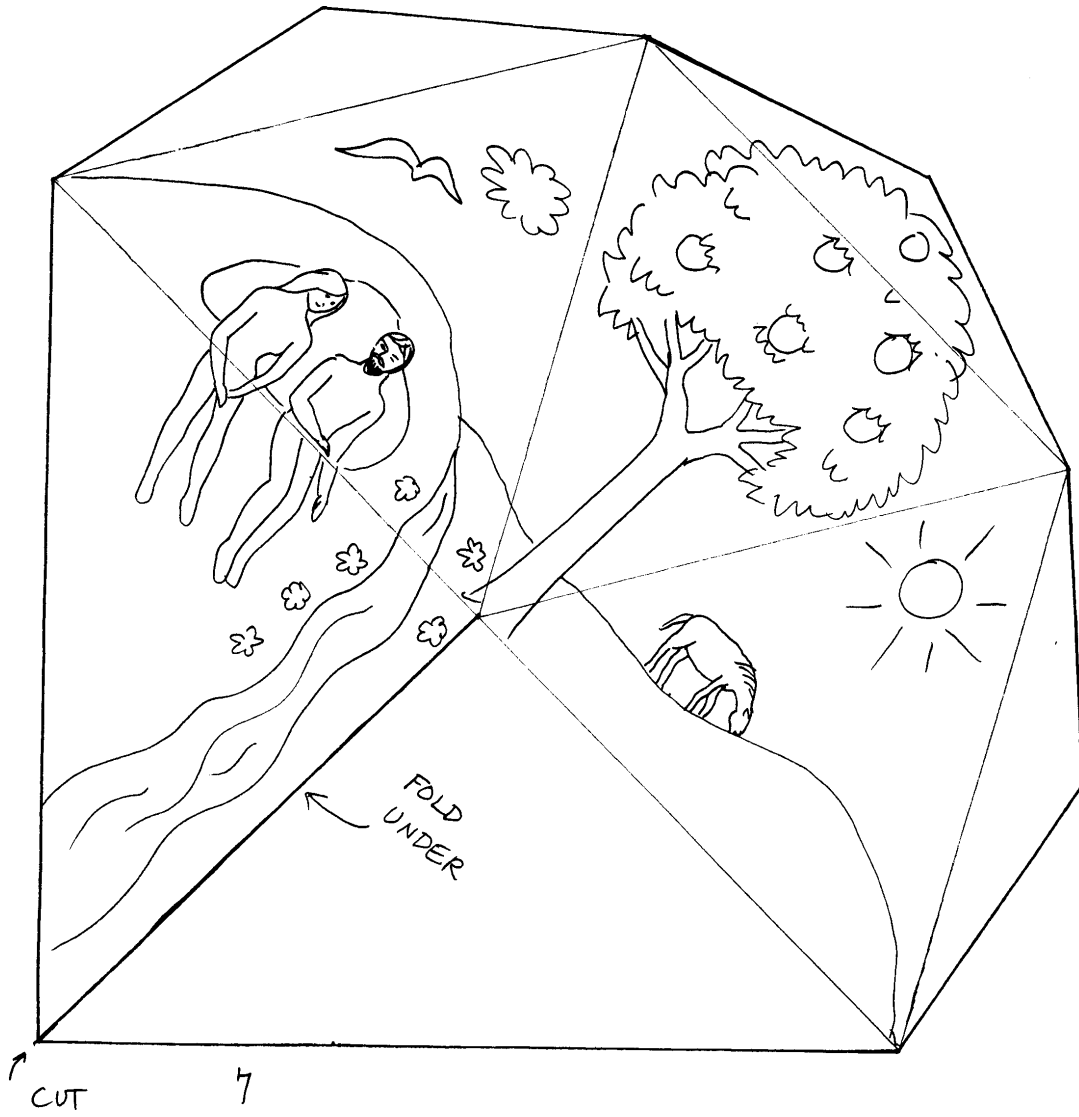
Remember to leave one triangle blank next to the cut in each scene, as shown by triangles marked "fold under" on the printed side, so you can slide the blank triangle under its neighbor to create a shallow cup shape with five triangles showing for each scene.

While designing or coloring each scene, it may be helpful to paperclip it into place so you can see how it will look, and then spread it out flat again to do your drawing and gluing.

PROJECT







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LEVEL 4 - CREATION AND REGENERATION



The Creation Story, which begins the Word, not only teaches us that the Lord created everything, but it is also a message to us from the Lord telling us how He will re-create each of us into angels.

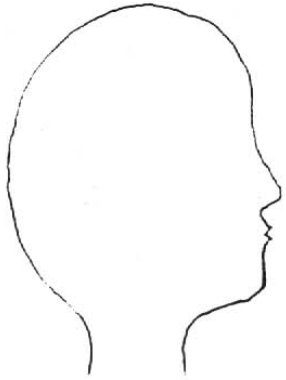
Our re-creation or “regeneration” does not happen in exactly seven days, just as the creation of the world did not happen in seven of the kind of days we know. Each day means a step. There are seven steps we take in our minds as we are regenerated.

Below are seven sentences, each expressing what we might think on one “day” of our regeneration. On page 2 you will see seven outlines of heads. These heads represent our minds. Above each head is a statement of that day of creation. Draw a picture of that day in each head. Then write, underneath the picture, one of the sentences below that goes with that day.

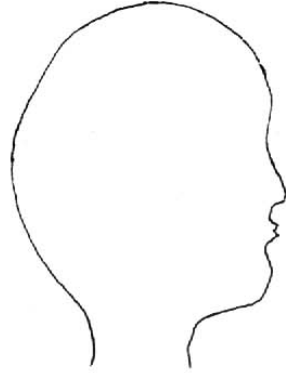
Sentences

1. I see that there is a right and wrong way to live.
2. I see there is God's way above and selfish ways below. I am in between.
3. I see that from seeds from God, useful things can grow.
4. I see that the Lord God, Jesus Christ, is a God of Love who cares for me!
5. Because the Lord loves me, I can learn from the natural world and the spiritual world. The ideas swim and soar without being bound to my ground.
6. Because the Lord loves me, I can learn to produce good loves of all kinds; and because I love others, I become an image of God.
7. The Lord has created a world of peace within me, where I can tend the garden of my life in happiness.

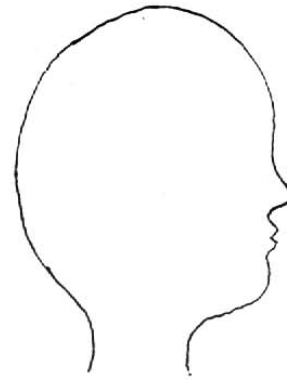
Let there be light.



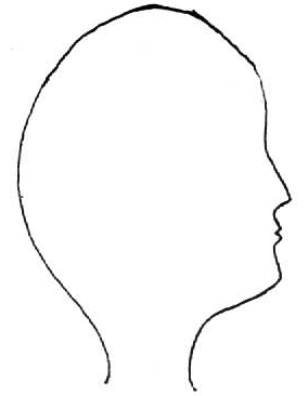
Let there be a firmament
to divide the waters.



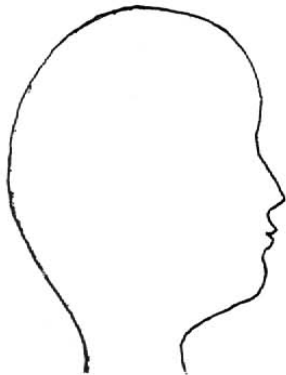
Let the dry land appear...
Let grass and trees grow.



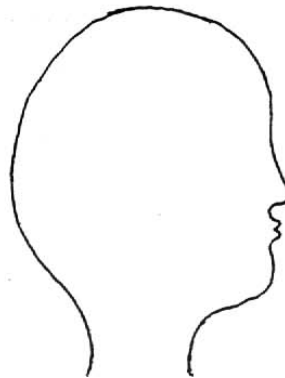
Let there be lights to
Rule the day and night.



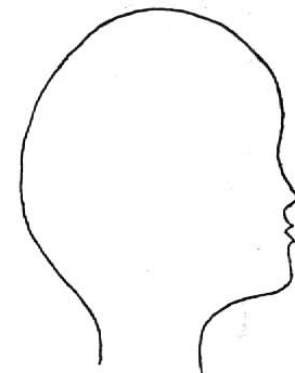
Let there be birds and fish.



God created animals and men.



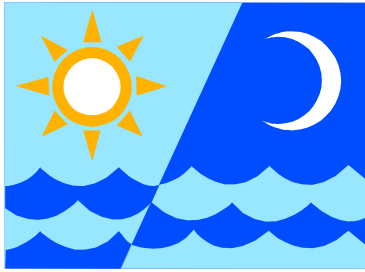
God rested on the seventh day
And blessed it.



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LEVEL 5 – SHARING THE MEANING OF CREATION



Our subject is the story of creation.

We begin by calling attention to an advertisement directly related to that story.

In recent years there have been a variety of efforts to make known to others through advertising what the New Church has to offer. The particular example here is a radio advertisement that was broadcast over the classical music station WFLN in the Philadelphia area including parts of New Jersey and Delaware.

Imagine you are listening to this ad. It goes like this:

“Hello there! Have you ever wondered whether there might be another way of understanding the creation story in Genesis, chapter 1?

I'm Douglas Taylor of the Bryn Athyn Cathedral, and I've written a sermon on the *parable* of creation. That's right - the *parable* of creation. Of course, it's literally true that “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” But Genesis does not give us the details of *how* He created. It's talking about a different kind of creation. After all, there is light on the *first* day, but no sun until the *fourth* day! There are plants on the *third* day— before the sun existed!

But if it's not about *physical* creation, what kind of creation is it?”

That's explained in Mr. Taylor's sermon which is enclosed.

This message was heard twice a day for almost a week.

The plan was to send the enclosed sermon to those who wrote in, and also to offer them the opportunity to receive a sermon every month.

How well do you think that radio advertisement did? See if you can guess:

1. How many people do you think wrote for a copy of the sermon because of the radio advertisement?
2. How many would you guess, having received the sermon, then wrote in to request that a sermon be sent every month?
3. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate this as an evangelization venture?

(Answers to 1 and 2 are on the next page)

Results of Rev. Taylor's Ad:

180 people who heard the advertisement wrote for the sermon.

Out of these, 18 later wrote to ask for a sermon to be mailed every month.

(More than 600 individuals now receive monthly sermons.)

Project:

1. First read the enclosed sermon by Mr. Taylor to get some facts for your ad.
2. Then try composing an advertisement on this subject yourself. Mr. Taylor's sermon was for the radio. Yours should be for a newspaper. Imagine either a readership of people your own age in a school publication, or readers of a newspaper.
2. You are probably aware of how lively a subject "creation" has been in science classes and in some education controversies. Such interest could warrant some newspaper advertising to make the teaching of the Writings more widely known.
3. What sort of a heading do you think would catch people's eyes and interest?

We would love to see the advertisement you compose!

Mail it to us at the Office of Education

P.O. Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

Sermon
THE PARABLE OF CREATION

Rev. Douglas M. Taylor

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...” (Genesis 11)

If we were to consider the teaching contained in the literal meaning of the text, the subject would have to be “God the Creator of the Universe.” But creation is not complete until the Lord has created a clean heart in a man, until a person is born anew of the Lord, and loves the Lord above all else, and his neighbor as himself. When anyone is in this state of mind, then at last the Divine love is satisfied and in its fullness; for this is the goal to which it looks, the goal to which all its operations are directed—the salvation of mankind from selfishness, and the formation of a heaven made up of people who have lived as men, women or children on earth. Also, it is from the very essence of the Divine love itself that the Lord desires to be conjoined with mankind and to make man eternally happy.

How this goal is achieved, and the several states or stages through which a person must pass in the process of his regeneration, is contained within the story of the seven days of creation. For there is within this account of creation a deeper meaning, having to do with spiritual things exclusively, a sense in which there is no reference to time, or place, or particular persons, but to general states of mind. It was this spiritual creation that the Psalmist was referring to when he prayed to the Lord, saying: “Create in me a clean heart, O God: and renew a firm spirit within me.” (Psalm 51:10)

There are, then, two subjects contained within the opening verse of the Divine Word: the subject of *natural* creation, or the creation of the universe, the cosmos, and also the subject of the creation of man's *spiritual life*, the birth of a new quality of mind, the creation of a “micro-cosmos” or little world, for the human mind is truly a “little world.” With regard to natural creation, the important essential is that we acknowledge that everything in the world that is in order was made by God the Creator. He is the source, the Creator of all things good. And we would recall again that He created the “heavens” and then the “earth.” By the heavens are meant literally the whole spiritual world -- the spiritual man, the three spiritual atmospheres, and the lands of the spiritual world, all being of a spiritual substance. The earth, in the literal sense, is the natural world—its sun, its three atmospheres, and its lands, seas, and so on; all from natural or material substance.

In creation of a clean heart, the essential acknowledgement that the man of the Church has to make (if he is to be regenerated) is that “in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” He has to acknowledge the truth of this beginning principle not only in its literal or natural meaning but also in its spiritual meaning. He has to become glad to admit that the Lord, and the Lord alone, is the Creator of his mind, the spiritual or internal mind (which is understood by “the heavens”) and the natural or external mind -- (“the earth”). The man of the Church has to admit, as a primary and basic principle, that the Lord is the Creator of every good affection or desire and every true and rational thought that he has ever had. This acknowledgment is the beginning and the end of wisdom -- the all-in-all of the Word -- the dominant idea that runs throughout it. And since, in the spiritual sense, the seven days of creation are a summary of all the teaching in the Word, this same acknowledgment dominates every stage mentioned in it.

Our Natural State

In the beginning, before regeneration, a man's natural mind—the earth (the conscious part of his mind), is a great void, and empty. As far as *spiritual* things are concerned, his mind is in thick darkness. “And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.” (Verse 2) The “faces of the deep” are the lusts of the unregenerate man, and also the false and twisted ideas that protect and justify these deep-seated cravings. Before regeneration we are a veritable deep, an abyss, in which there is no spiritual light at all. Yet we are not completely cut off from Divine and heavenly influences, for the Spirit of God is always, unceasingly moving or brooding upon “the faces of the waters.” The “Spirit of God,” the Divine or Holy Spirit, is the Lord's influence, His Divine mercy going forth to reach and affect us. The “Spirit of God” is constantly striving to stir up and activate the things that the Lord has already stored and treasured up deep within us -- the little pieces of knowledge about what is true and good that as a child we learned from the Word of God. These things we know, and the tender affections associated with them are deeply hidden, and come forth only to the extent that external, superficial, worldly things are pushed aside out of their central position in the mind. These things known about good and truth, called heavenly “remains” of goodness and truth or the “faithful remnant,” are what is meant by “faces of the waters.” These are what the Lord in His merciful providence would stir up and move.

The Dawn of the First Day

It is from these remains of good and truth (which the Lord has stored up in us) that the first ray of spiritual light is seen. The first light of truth begins to dawn in the mind when the perception comes that there must be something higher and better than one's own impulses and whims and fancies, that the good and the true are something higher than self. This is the first flash of real light that dawns on the mind; and it is God's *will* that this take place, because He said, “Let there be light: and there *was* light.” (Verse 2) Then we begin to love this light, to see that it is good, and we thus have a general perception that there is, *must* be, a God, and that this light, this daylight of the soul, comes from God. “And God saw the light, that it was good, and God distinguished between the light and the darkness. And God called the light day, and the darkness He called night.” (Verses 4 & 5) This is the first day, the first general state, in the new creation of man. It goes from the shade of evening and looks forward to the morning—the dawn of a new day, or a new, more advanced, state.

The Second Day

The new state takes the form of an increasing ability to distinguish what is of the “day” from what is of the “night,” or good from evil. There is for the first time the recognition that there is such a thing as the spiritual mind or the internal mind, and that what is good and true enter the outer or conscious mind, from that internal mind. It is seen, in a general way, that good and truth come into the mind from the Lord by means of the internal mind, that the things of light are the things of the internal mind. In other words, we begin to realize that there is a higher region of our mind than the conscious part we have hitherto concentrated upon exclusively. Before we saw the light, we had known nothing about there being a spiritual mind; this had meant nothing to us. But now we begin to recognize, in this second state, that the thoughts that come into our conscious mind are from two distinct sources. Some come from the natural mind itself, but others come from the spiritual mind, which is in the light of heaven. Or, as this stage is described in the Word, “God made the expanse, and divided the waters which were under the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse...And God called the expanse heaven.” (Verses 7 & 8)

The Third Day

When it is known that there is both an inner mind and an outer mind, and that goods and truths come from the inner mind and flow into the outer or conscious mind, then another advance can be made. The things of light, the true things and good things of the internal mind are more frequently thought about and dwelt upon the conscious mind. We recollect them more often and bring them forward to our conscious attention. They are now part of our habitual thinking. This is meant by the “waters under the expanse” being “gathered together into one place.” And then it is that the dry land, or the earth is uncovered -- on the third day.

What a perfect picture this uncovering of the dry land is of what takes place as we learn to examine ourselves in the light of truth! The quality of the natural mind, the earth, is made manifest. It is of the earth, earthy. Its selfish quality is laid bare. But it is only then that the natural mind is ready to be productive. It is only after it has been exposed and broken up that it can receive and nourish the seed of truth. Before anything fruitful can be produced, before anything really good can germinate, there has to be this exposure of the dry land, of the arid earth of our natural mind and inclinations. Then—after this self-examination and exposure of one’s evils—the works of repentance can be brought forth. This is what is meant by the tender grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruitful tree that come forth.

This third day or state is one of repentance. It is one in which we begin to shun evils as sins against the Lord, and to force ourselves to obey the teachings of His Word. And this dutiful, conscientious obedience does bear fruit -- but, spiritually speaking, these are comparatively lowly creations. The good works done at this stage are comparatively inanimate; they are only the *vegetable* kingdom in the scale of spiritual creations.

The reason is that as yet we cannot really believe, deep down in our heart, that all good motives, all good desires and intentions are from the Lord, that they have no other source. Doctrinally, we do believe this. We would not dream of contradicting that as a matter of doctrine. Yet it lies in our mind as something that has been intruded from outside. It is not yet a part of us. We do not acknowledge it from the heart, because it has not penetrated as deeply as that. It has not really impressed us deeply at all, and for that reason we do not acknowledge in particular, each time we shun an evil as a sin, or put away a falsity as a form of evil, or feel a disinterested compassion for someone in distress, we do not acknowledge that the Lord is the Father and Creator of these heavenly affections. We do not really believe it. We are moved still, for the most part, by natural motives—a fear of hell or the hope of heavenly reward. Our own nature is in everything we do. We do not yet act from the Lord. We are in but the third stage of regeneration, when the EARTH brings forth its vegetation. It is the earth—the natural man—that performs these works of repentance.

The Fourth Day

No further progress can be made until we really acknowledge the Lord. This state of what seems like compulsory and undelightful obedience to the Word must continue until, with further insight and enlightenment, we really see and acknowledge that the Lord is the source and the cause of everything good and true. As this light begins to shine, a new ruling love makes its appearance in our mind.

This is represented by the two great lights in the heavens—the light of love and the light of faith. The light of faith is only a reflection of the light of love, just as the light of the moon is but a reflection of the sun's light. When there is something of love—some delight and enjoyment in doing the Lord's will -- there is also something of faith, for real faith is not only a knowledge and acknowledgment of all things that the doctrine of faith teaches, but especially

(we are taught) it is “an obedience to all things that the doctrine of faith teaches.” The light that is shed in the mind, even the conscious mind, when we follow the way of the Lord, this light is the turning point in our regeneration. Prior to this point, we had actually attributed the good that we did to our own powers and prowess, and even took a certain amount of pride in it.

But now the two lights of the heavenly mind—love and faith—shed their light upon the earth of our conscious mind, and we are more and more willing to admit that of ourselves we can do nothing, and that we need the Lord's Divine aid. We acknowledge the Lord, acknowledge that all power against evil and falsity, all power against our *own* evil and falsity, and all love of good are from the Lord in His omnipotence and His lovingkindness. When this warm sunlight of the soul begins to shine upon the earth, then for the first time we begin to be *spiritually* alive. This explains why the creation of the sun and moon is so long delayed. That is the fourth day of creation, and it is then possible for living, spiritual states of mind to make their appearance. These are the creeping, moving things that the waters brought forth on the fifth day.

The Fifth Day

In this fifth day in the creation of a clean heart, we really begin the habit of thinking *from* the true things we are meant to believe. We no longer just think *about* them. They are now our standard of judgment. They are now continually in our thought in the sense of being the principles by which we order and govern and evaluate everything that comes into our minds. And let us note well the repeated teaching that the Lord is in these true things of faith. He it is who causes us to recall them and think from them. They are the Lord's creation, in general and in each particular instance. They are meant by the fishes and fowls of the air that now come forth. “And God saw that it was good,” because here we see the first of animate, living, spiritual states of mind.

The Sixth Day

In the sixth state, our chief delight is actually doing the works of charity. Our primary, ruling love, is love going out towards the neighbor—or charity. Our great delight is in fostering and enhancing what is good in an individual, in a group of individuals, in the country as a whole, in the human race, in the Church. This development of good affections or goodwill is what is represented by the “living soul” created in the sixth day, the *animals* of the earth after their kind. The final *dominion* of this spiritual love of the neighbor is meant by the creation of man -- the image and likeness of God's love and wisdom.

These are the six days of the Lord's labor in the new creation or re-generation of the human mind. During the creation of all these states of mind one after the other, it was the Lord who was bringing them about, although with the man's co-operation as-if-of-himself. But there is yet another state—the seventh day, or the Sabbath of the Lord, His day of rest.

The Seventh Day

This state is the one in which the mind is ruled, not merely by love towards the neighbor, but by love going up to the Lord. It is the noblest and most exalted love to which we human beings can aspire and attain. For, after all, to love the neighbor is only the second of the two Great Commandments, while to love the Lord is the first. This love to the Lord is called celestial love, while charity is spiritual love. While we are still in spiritual love and especially while we are acquiring it from the Lord by a life of obedience to His Word, the Lord has to fight for us in our temptation battles. But when our ruling love has become love to the Lord, the fight is over, and the holy day of rest from temptations is at hand. We are then associated, although we know it not, with the celestial angels of the inmost heaven, whose influence is such that the gates of hell cannot even approach it, much less prevail against it. On the seventh day of creation we are in a state of peace and protection; the Lord has no need to work and labor for us in temptation, for temptations have ceased. It is the holy Sabbath of the Lord. *Amen.*

Lessons: Genesis 1:2,3 Revelation 22 *Arcana Coelestia* 8891:2,5