



SESSION 1 with Introduction: The Beginning

Creation

Session 1: Creation

Key takeaways for Pre-Disciples:

- God created everything good. Not out of any need in himself but out of the overflow of his love.
- In love, God made human beings in his image, to be like him and to have a good and right relationship with him as they work and fill the earth as his representatives.

Part 1

identity

worship

mission

- Introductions – everyone introduces themselves to the group, perhaps ask them to share a bit about themselves,
- Share with group the purpose of the sessions:
 - Discovering who God is, who we are, and what God has done, through the overarching story of the Bible.
- Talk about the expectations of the group session, including:
 - Confidentiality of any personal issues discussed in the group
 - Encouragement to tell the stories to others every week

Part 2 (story)

identity

community

mission

Creation (Genesis 1 and 2)

You can watch and listen to all the Pre Disciple stories here: <https://christ-central.org.uk/pre-disciple/>

In the beginning, there was God.

And God created everything. Everything you can see and everything you can't see. God created it all.

And this is how it happened.

God spoke: and light burst through the darkness. God spoke: and the sky was formed and God separated the sky from waters, and the waters from the dry land. God spoke again: and all sorts of plants and trees began to grow upon the land. God spoke again; and the Sun, the moon and all the stars filled the skies that he had made. God spoke once more; and the



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*waters were filled with every fish and sea creature and the skies were filled with every kind of bird. God spoke: and the land was filled with every type of animal came to be, from the smallest ant to the largest elephant. And **God saw everything that he had made and he said it was good.** But then **God did something very different.** God said '**I am going to make Human Beings, and I'm going to pattern them after myself.**'*

*So God took some of the earth from the ground, and from it he formed a man. And God breathed his very spirit into the Man, and the Man became a living person. And God took the Man and placed him in the Garden that he had planted. And **God put him in charge of all his creation to work the land, and to take care of all that he had created.** Now in the Garden there were two trees different from the rest. One of the trees was the tree of life which would give eternal life. The other was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. **God told the man he could eat from all the trees in the garden but not to eat this tree, because if he did he would surely die.***

*Now God looked at everything he had made and saw that it was wonderful and good except for one thing...it wasn't good that the man was alone. So God caused a deep sleep to fall on the Man, and God took a rib from the man and from it he formed Woman. God brought the woman to the Man and when the Man saw her he said 'wow...she is beautiful! She is someone who is made just like me.' **And the Man and the Woman lived in The Garden in the presence of God; God would walk with them in the Garden, and they were both naked, yet without any shame.** And God loved the Man and the Woman and blessed them saying 'be prosperous, have children, go and fill the earth.' **After this,** God looked over all that he had created and said this is **very good.** **Then God took that day and set it apart as a special day, a day of rest dedicated to himself.***

And that's the story from God's word.

Re-tell the story as group: allow everyone to share a section of the story. If there is more than 6 people consider breaking up into pairs to retell the story.

See the notes on retelling the story.

Questions for discussion

1. What do you like about this story/What stood out to you?
2. What bothered you about this story?
3. What does this story show you about God?
4. What does this story show you about people?

Part 3 (practice / takeaways)

identity

worship

mission

Ask the remaining questions:

5. If this story is true, what does this story mean for your life? How will you live your life differently having learned this story?
6. How will you remember this story? (tell it!)
7. Who are you able to tell this story to?

Encourage everyone in the group to think of people in their life whom they could retell the story to; mention that at the next session we will recap the story and ask who remembered to tell the story. Again it is helpful to emphasise the reason for going and telling the story ourselves is that it is the best way for us to remember the story.

Prayer

As a pre-disciple group prayer is important to demonstrate how we approach God and have a friendship with Him. Bear in mind, especially at the beginning, most people will not be used to praying and may feel uncomfortable if they feel expected to, so be sensitive to those in your group. It might be helpful for just you as the leader, or one other person to pray at the beginning, but use your own discernment.

Other useful media resources

- 1.) A video on the Bible as Story https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_CGP-12AE0
- 2.) A video about how humans are made in God's image
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YbipxLDtY8c>



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Notes for leaders

- **Expected Outcomes of the Pre-Disciple Storying Group:**
- To get to know who God is through the grand story of the Bible and what it would mean for us to follow this God.
- The expected outcome of the series is for every person in the group to gain an understanding of :
 - 1.) The overarching story of the bible,
 - 2.) The Nature of Who God is supremely revealed in Jesus as the Promised King of God's people
 - 3.) What is the gospel/good news of Jesus?
 - 4.) What does it mean to respond to God and this Good News of Jesus and become a part of His Story?

Structure of the Group: Three Thirds

As you may have already spotted, the structure of the Discovery Group is intentionally split into 3 sections. These sections significantly contribute to the desired outcome of the group, and are almost as important as the content itself.

Part 1: Looking back (time together/ catching up)

At the beginning of each Discovery Group session – it is important to spend time chatting, eating/drinking tea, asking about each other's week and how everyone got on sharing the story. This isn't an optional extra, but is a crucial component to building relationships and modelling love and care for one another – as people share about their weeks be listening for any way you could pray for specific situations.

This is also a good moment to feedback on how people found telling the story, this will set the expectation that each story follows on the last, and highlight the importance of retelling the story during the week.

Part 2: Looking in to Scripture: (reviewing the story/ telling the story/ learning the story/ discussing the story)

This time begins with reviewing last week's session. Ask someone else to retell the story, then, move into the new story. You may want to tell the story a couple of times and then lead the group in internalizing/retelling the story (skip down to the section on internalizing the story for ideas).

After you will want to ask the first four questions: Each question is a "category," so below are several examples for each question. You may ask the question in whatever way works best for your audience. You may vary the wording of the questions from time to time. Do not accept "surface-level" answers. Expect people to be transparent, and be sure that everyone feels like the environment is safe enough to do so. Do not be afraid to ask follow-up "why" or "how" questions after someone answers. Try as best as you can to avoid simply answering a question directly, it is really important to allow people to discover the answers for themselves through the stories (hence discovery group). If asked a direct question you



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may want ask them what they think and then point them back to the stories they've learnt. E.G 'what do you think? Is there anything in the stories we've learnt that might tell us?'

These questions can be used for any story or Bible passage. 1. What did you like about this story/Bible passage? What struck you about this story/Bible passage? What was your favourite part about this story/Bible passage? 2. What bothered you about this story/Bible passage? Is there anything you didn't understand in this story/Bible passage? 3. What does this story/Bible passage show you about God/Jesus? 4. What does this story/Bible passage show you about people?

Part 3: Looking forward

The last three questions flow into this time.

1. If this story is true, How does would it change your life this week? What does this story show you about yourself? How would you live differently? How does this story apply to your life?
2. How will you remember this story? (The answer is always the same—share it! However, ask it every time.)
3. Who do you think you can tell this story to during the week? – encourage people t think of specific people and explain that this is a key way of remembering the story. This also has the added benefit of normalising the process of sharing what we have heard, which is foundational for sharing faith in the future.

A Note on Storying

In our discipleship materials, we have chosen to craft the stories of scripture into an oral format to be learnt, internalised and re-told. This process is done carefully and seeks to faithfully represent the heart, meaning and narrative of the biblical text in spoken form. We have done this for the following reasons;

- 1.) The spoken story format requires those in the group to internalise the scripture to some degree. We believe that scripture tells God's unified story that leads to the person of Jesus. God invites us to encounter and respond to him through the hearing, believing and living out in accordance with the truth of his story and the good news that it tells. The process of learning and retelling the story requires and allows the scripture to 'live within us' , to shape and guide us, to convict and challenge, to comfort and encourage us. Storying is not the only way this can happen of course, but we have found it to be a especially helpful and intuitive way of forming our worldview to that of Jesus Christ through the internalising the story that reveals him.



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- 2.) Once this story is learnt and internalised, those in the group have it to share with others. This can be especially engaging when sharing with people with who don't know Jesus, and even more so in age of authenticity. By sharing a story that is 'living within you', you are imparting to someone something that has changed and/or encouraged you, and therefore it comes with more weight and significance.

A Note on Translation

As part of the story-crafting process we have made interpretative decisions on the translations of certain terms. For example rather using the term 'sins' (*Khata*) – we have opted for the term disobedience to reflect the idea of the Hebrew term which means to literally miss the mark or to step out of place. However the term 'sin' *Khata* – also can carry with it a sense of power and personification. E.G In Genesis 4 God speaks to Cain that sin is like a crouching animal ready to pounce on him. Sin carries both the sense of our thoughts, words, desires, and actions that are contrary to God's will and also as a force that enslaves humanity to its will. The other word that has been chosen to translate this sense is the term 'evil' (*Ra*), which carries with it the sense of wickedness and badness that deceives, corrupts, enslaves and seeks to destroy God's good creation.

Throughout the set of 10 stories we have made similar interpretative decisions which we believe faithfully represent the meaning and context of the story, whilst at the same time being accessible for an uninitiated audience. We have used these words throughout the stories to emphasise the continuity of the set as a whole.

List of Commentaries and Resources

D.A Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (1990)

Joel B. Green *The Gospel of Luke*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (1997)

R.R. Reno, *Genesis*, SCM Theological Commentary on the Bible, (2010)

Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15: Word Biblical Commentary* (1987)

Tim Mackie @ thebibleproject.com

The Lexham Bible Dictionary, ed John Barry et al.

Bible translations used in crafting

- New Living Translation
- English Standard Version
- Hebrew and Greek Concordance of the New American Standard Bible



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A note on truth and hospitality:

In a pre-disciple Storying Group, you will have many differing views on the truth of the stories. The Question 'if this story is true,' allows people who may not believe, to try on the story as truth, giving the space to see if it makes sense of the world around them. The point of the stories is not to prove the existence of God, or to prove the 'historical truth' of Christianity. Rather, the Pre-Disciple group is an environment of discovery, where through hearing and understanding the Big Story of the Bible, everyone in the group regardless of their worldview can i) **explore and come to know the character and the nature of the God revealed in Jesus Christ;** ii) **articulate The Good News of Jesus** and iii) **know what it might mean for each person to respond to Jesus by turning away from the old life of sin, believing and trusting in Him, and by choosing to follow Him in their life.**

To help form this environment you may want to think how you can offer a real sense of hospitality and welcome in the group. Perhaps have a meal together; coffee and desserts; meet in a location that is comfortable.

We expectantly hope and pray that by walking through these stories from God's word; God will speak through them to the people gathered in your group.

How to lead a group in internalizing and retelling the story

These are a few creative ways that people can delve into the Story. Use discernment as to what would best help your group and what they'd be comfortable with.

1. Retell the story: as a group, each person tells as much as they can remember and passes on to someone else. Or.... split up the group in pairs, get each pair to tell the story to each other
2. Scenes: Ask the group to think of the story in scenes like a movie, ask each person what is scene 1, 2 etc. Try and see if you can get people to visualise each scene, the geography, the movements, which characters are doing what etc. This will help internalise the story.
3. Feeling the emotions of the story a. Retell the story in sections, or re-read the story in sections b. For each section, talk about the feelings of each character in that section...
4. Being a character in the story: ask each person which character they are in the story, as well as helping to remember the story, this will also help your group engage personally with the story from God's word.
5. Art a. Draw a picture of the key theme or key feeling in the story/passage.
6. Music a. Listen to a song related to the key theme of the passage and draw your feelings about it/or about God. (Art and Music are especially helpful mediums for people who may struggle with oral learning, and appreciate creative outlets)
7. Act out the story: Get everyone to act out the story as a group



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What if someone wants to become a follower of Jesus....What do I do???

God's Word is powerful, and we know that he is drawing people to himself and as his people, filled with His Spirit; we are expectant that God will use these groups and these stories to seek out the lost and reveal His love to people in your group. (It is good spend time praying for God to speak to people before everyone arrives.)

It is a huge privilege to be able to help lead someone to respond to Jesus in repentance and faith, though it can also be quite daunting if you have never been in that position before (and even if you have).

If a group member wants to know Jesus in their life, we have a story to tell them right then and there; a 10 minute story that is a summary of all the stories in this series, which every group leader will be taught. This story walks through the key elements of The Big story:

- i) God created everything Good and made humans in his image to have relationship with him
- ii) Humans turned away from God and broke their relationship with Him, and with each other and with the world;
- iii) God remains committed to humanity and chooses a people and promises to send a servant King to Heal and restore that broken relationship;
- iv) This King is God's very own Son, God in the Flesh, and his name is Jesus, he lived the perfect life of obedience and love and dies in the place of every human being for our sin and disobedience, in order to heal and restore our relationship with God his Father;
- v) But Jesus didn't remain dead, rather God raised him back to life conquering death and evil, and restoring humanity back to everlasting life in relationship with God
- vi) And now Jesus has sent out his disciples to tell everyone this good news and invite everyone to turn away from their old life of sin and to trust in Jesus and to follow him.
- vii) When this happens we can know our relationship with God is restored, we can know the love of God in our hearts, and God's Spirit comes to live inside of us to help us to walk and to follow Jesus as we wait for the day when he will return and there will be no more suffering or pain and we will live in the presence of God forever.

After walking through this story, ask the person:

- i) Why they want to follow Jesus?
- ii) From the stories we've told together how do we respond to God if we want a restored relationship with him as our God? (repentance and faith: it is helpful for the person wanting to respond to be able to articulate these basic elements through the stories they've learnt)
- iii) Would you like to do that now?



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If the person is happy to you can pray with them right then and there to turn away from their old life of sin, receive God's love and forgiveness in Jesus, and choose to follow him. After which it is helpful to stress that continuing to grow in knowing this relationship by a) continuing to come on to the storying group and then, b) encouraging them to come to the New Disciple Group afterwards.

Discussion topics on the Creation Story:

Here are some questions and topics that may or may not come up. It is not essential to discuss these questions, nor do we suggest reading this to your group. But we wanted to provide resources available for you to think through as the group leader if these questions are raised.

- **What does it mean to be “patterned after God”?**
 - o The Hebrew word for image (selem) is used in the Old Testament in several different contexts, sometimes referring to a representation or model of something (1 Samuel 6:5, 11), an unsubstantial reality such as a dream (Ps. 73:20), or most commonly as an idolatrous image (Num. 33:52, 2 Kings 11:18). In neighbouring ethnic groups the king or a high-ranking official was considered to be “in the image of God,” but a lowly worker wasn't. This phrase in Genesis may be a way of saying that all mankind is in fact royal, true children of God. This idea of “sonship” is further suggested in Genesis 5, when the comment that God created people in His image is immediately followed by Adam's genealogy. It's clear from this passage and others (c.f. 1 Cor. 11:7, James 3:9) that the “image” continues even after the disobedience in Genesis 3. In any case, we should not focus on solely one aspect of a human being (e.g. the physical, relational, etc) when we speak of image. A human being is a unity, and it's no one part of him/her that is made in “God's image.” What we do know is that image refers to some sort of resemblance, probably in some form both physical and spiritual. Our story's interpretation of image of God should not say more than the text states, so it should also remain ambiguous. TEV translates this: “They will be like us and resemble us.”

Why wasn't God enough for Adam and Eve? Why did they want more?

- This jumps to the next story, but most people know the next story. You may respond by saying that we'll explore it more next time when we learn that story. The next story's discussion may centre on why Eve chose to eat the fruit, and you'll find that when you tell the 2nd story, some of those questions are answered.



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- **Were Adam and Eve initially perfect?**

- o It depends on your definition of “perfect.” If “perfect” means without fault, that’s possible. If “perfect” means without the capability of having a fault, then no. What we know about Adam and Eve is that they were “excellent in every way.” We know that they had the capability of doing evil. We know that death had not entered into the world yet, so presumably neither had sickness.

- **Why did God put the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the middle of the garden?**

- o There is no easy answer for this question, and some of the traditional responses may not satisfy. The traditional response to this is that God provided us with free will – the ability to choose to obey Him or not, because He wanted a mutual relationship with us rather than one of slave/master. This mutual relationship required human beings to trust God out of love for him.

- o This story emphasizes God’s original good relationship with people, and that relationship should continue to be stressed.

- o Hopefully, this story begins to show God’s love for His creation and especially for people. Even when we don’t have all the answers, we do know that the Creator God loves us and made us especially for a relationship with Him.

- **How exactly did creation happen? (e.g. Did the water flow up to make the sky?)**

- o The “simple” answer to this is that we don’t know! We do know that much of biblical creation’s chronology coincides with science’s chronology of the beginnings of life on earth. Remember that the first chapter of Genesis was poetic in Hebrew; this can be seen in the rhythm and the symmetry of the text (there was evening and morning, the first day etc.), and was not meant to be a fully scientific description of creation. The second chapter was meant to emphasize the relationship between God and people. What this textual structure does tell us is that God wanted to emphasize relationship with people more than the scientific details.



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Feedback from Group Leader

In our vision for discipleship, we have identified 4 key ingredients to healthy and growing disciples. As you are leading your group, for each session, make some notes under each heading for how the group is faring in each of these areas .

identity

worship

community

mission