

The God Story

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Written by Jacob Armstrong

God Story Week 1: Introduction

Key Verse

“When God began to create the heavens and the earth—the earth was without shape or form, it was dark over the deep sea, and God’s wind swept over the waters.” Genesis 1:1-2

Summary

G.K. Chesterton said, “I had always felt life first as a story: and if there is a story there is a story-teller.”¹ The Bible tells us the story of God’s people. The story, though, is not confined to the book that begins with Genesis and ends with Revelation. The God Story continues and we are a part of it. Naturally to understand a story, you must start in the beginning. The Introduction to a story tells us important information about the main characters, setting, and plot that are essential to understanding what comes after it. We begin our study of the God Story “In the beginning” in the book of Genesis. We will learn much about the author and our role in the story. Perhaps the most important thing we learn is that *God speaks to God’s people because God desires relationship with them* (Thread #1).

Session Goals

- **Help group members begin to think of their lives as story. If there is a story, there must be a storyteller;**
- **Think more deeply about what it means to have a role in the story of God’s people;**
- **Consider how God continues to speak to God’s people and how we are to respond.**

Discussion Starter

Tell your “story” in one minute or less. If class size or time does not allow, use this alternate discussion starter to encourage a couple of participants to share the Introduction to their stories: Does anyone have an interesting story from the beginning of their lives that has shaped or had a significant impact on the rest of their lives?

¹ G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (Scott’s Valley, CA: IAP, 2009), 39.

Read & Discuss

Genesis 1:1-4

Early theologians focused on God's ability to create *ex nihilo* or "out of nothing." Creating from nothing is something that only God can do. Why do you think it is important to understand that God can create "out of nothing"? What does that mean for your life? Are there situations in your life or in the lives of those you are connected to where this knowledge would hold power?

Genesis 1:27

God creates in God's own image. What do you think this means? What does it mean to share God's image? God pronounced us "very good." How does this compare with how we usually think and talk about ourselves? How does it compare with what we usually say about other people? Why is the understanding that we are made in God's image an essential part of the Introduction to the God Story?

John 1:1-5

John began his account of the God Story with a remembrance of God's powerful creating Word. Our Thread #1 in the God Story is that *God speaks to God's creation because God desires relationship with people*. What echoes of this statement do you hear in John? How does Jesus bring this thread to fulfillment?

How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?

Psalm 13:1 (NRSV)

Clearly David was having some trouble seeing where he fit into God's story, if he fit at all.

We have a God who can handle our questions. We don't always get immediate clarity, but there is power in the questioning. Is there anything you would like to ask God today?

Closing Prayer

O God, thank you for writing me into your story. I find purpose in knowing that I am a part of the greatest story of all. Even if I am faced with uncertainty today help me to see how I am connected to you. I believe you are a God who still speaks, help me to hear your voice today. In Jesus' name. Amen.