

God Created Us

Objective: When asked, the students will be able to state that God created them in His image and loves them and that God made them to live forever with Him on earth and in heaven.

For the Catechist

Made in God's Image. Human attributes such as freedom and rational thought have been offered as explanations to "being made in God's image." For the young student, however, freedom and rationality are more abstract than love. The Eastern theologians, focusing on the Trinity, describe God as a community of love. Being made in God's image then means human beings are creatures with the capacity to love. "The distinguishing mark of the Christian faith remains love for one another (cf Jn 15:17; 1 Jn 4:7-13) in the image of the Trinity" (LLI 6). Love is an attribute of God with which the child can identify and is the one presented this year.

Created to live forever with God. Although the students have not yet questioned why they exist, they probably have heard of heaven and hell and experienced the death of a grandparent or other person. Knowing that the person is probably in heaven with God forever can put to rest the question of "where did they go?" At the same time, this simple explanation of why we exist (to live forever with God) may stay with the students and, along with the knowledge that "God loves me," form a secure foundation for any tragedies they may encounter—even as youngsters. Heaven can be explained as "living with God forever" and hell as "living without God forever." Our experience of heaven begins on earth—as the wonderful Eastern Christian concept of theosis (living united to God) attests. Thus, our life with God is an on-going adventure on earth and in heaven.

The students may not have connected the Feast of Pascha with life eternal for those who have died. The icon of the Resurrection (The Harrowing of Hades) is a teaching tool to help explain the idea of living with God forever in heaven. (A detailed narrative of the Resurrection icon can be found in this manual in Lesson 27.) Tell

Lesson Plan Overview

Opening: Doxology and Trisagion

Introduction: Discussion on God as Creator. **Need:** something you have made

Read Text Aloud: Ask questions noted on following pages as text is being read

Activity Tracks:

Choose a basic, group, or craft activity to reinforce the lesson (detailed on the pages that follow).

- *Basic 1:* “God Created Us To Live Forever” Icon
- *Basic 2:* God’s Created Us To Live Forever
- *Group:* Basket Toss Review
- *Craft:* “God Created Us To Live Forever” Icon

Closing: Trisagion and Doxology

Come Bless the Lord Icon:

Packet I: Descent into Hades

Packet II:

Teaching Pics

Pascha (F10)

the students that this is the icon for Pascha. Here is a way to explain the Good News:

We see Jesus raising Adam and Eve from their graves to live forever with Him. After we die, Jesus will raise us to live forever with Him. Those who have lived with God here on earth will be with God forever after they die. Do you know anyone who has died? [Allow responses and sharing.]

When we die, we hope to be together with God and all our family in heaven.

This lesson may provide a treasured moment for you, as catechist, to explain the Good News of Jesus Christ

Background Reading

(Direct quotations from the sources noted.)

Image and Likeness

"In its second story of creation, Genesis distinguishes between humanity and all of God's other works. We share the same origin and destiny of all created matter, but at the same time we are radically different. We exist in the 'image and likeness' of God (Gn 1:26)" (LLI 24).

"Many Fathers of the Church used 'image' and 'likeness' to help describe our relationship with God. For them, 'image' designated that indestructible similarity to God that is at the heart of our nature. These Fathers saw this image in many aspects of the human person, including our freedom, our rationality, our dominion over the world, and our immortality. Some Eastern Christians in particular have looked to our creation as a community ('male and female He created them') as reflecting the Trinitarian essence of God. Still others have seen the entire human person as like God: body, emotions and intellect" (LLI 25).

Our Union with God

"For the Fathers, the word 'likeness' designated our union with God, by the power of the Holy Spirit. They saw this harmony with God illustrated in Genesis by the description of Adam and Eve enjoying fellowship with God in the garden. In their view image and likeness are complementary. Made in God's image, we are free; and as free, we affirm our likeness in union with God. However, Adam sinned and chose not to be 'like God.' He lost the likeness in us and marred the image. The image of God in us remains always as the basis for restoring friendship with God and for destined union with Him.

"Christ repaired the damage of Adam's sin, 'For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of that one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for many' (Rom 5:15 RSV). Christ, the perfect 'image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creatures' (Col 1:15), restores the divine likeness to humanity when He became 'like his brethren in every respect... yet without sin' (Heb 2:17; 4:15 RSV)" (LLI 25).

Humanity is Fulfilled

"In the new creation ushered in by Christ, the divine image in humanity is fulfilled. While Christ is the perfect image of God, the Christian is the image of Christ. Our nature in the image of God is affirmed and we are now able to recover the divine likeness. It is now possible to return to the original harmony of life as it was before the fall. We can act from our true human nature after the image and likeness of God. We can choose to give ourselves back to God by the grace of the Spirit. Our journey of life can become, as St Irenaeus said, a steady 'progress towards a future full of promise.' We can be truly human again because we can soar towards union with God" (LLI 25-26).

The Lesson Plan

Opening

Let's come to the icon corner and get ready to pray. [You may need to remind children to quietly stand before icon with palms open and facing upwards. Go to the icon corner and have children follow your lead.] We've learned the Trisagion prayer—the "Holy God" prayer. When we pray this prayer, we make the sign of the cross and we bow each time we say "Holy God." Do you remember? [You may need to demonstrate.] Let's pray the Doxology ("Glory be . . . ") and then the Trisagion. First, let's quietly look at the icon. [Remain quiet for 10-15 seconds.] Try to pray with me now.

Introduction

We have been learning about our wonderful God. Who can tell me what we have learned? (God is holy; God is Trinity, God created the world.) This week we'll continue learning about God.

I brought something with me to help teach today's lesson about God. [Show item you have made.] This is something very special to me. Can you guess why it is special? I made it. I created it. "Created" means to make. I love it because I created it. Do you like to make things? What do you like to make? [If you asked children to bring in things they have made, ask them to share at this time. Ask children to explain their creations. Compliment children on their creations.]

This (item) is special to me because I created it. Did you ever wonder who created YOU? [Allow a few responses.] God created you. God created me. Who can name someone God created? [After each correct response say "God created ____"] God is a very special creator. Look at this (item you brought). Is it alive? No. Is anything you have created alive? No. God is able to create LIFE. Our God is the Creator of LIFE. God has given life to you and me.

He created my life and yours. He has a special reason why He created you and me. Let's read and find out why.

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God Created Us

God created the world. God created us.
Why did God create us?
God created us to live with Him now and forever.



God created each of us in His image.
The Trinity share love.

Reading of Text

As the children read aloud, help them interact with the text using the comments or questions below which are keyed to the text phrases (in bold type). See "Reading of Text" in Lesson 1 for use of the Vocabulary Visual Aid.

God created the world. God created us.

Who created you? (God)

God created each of us in His image.

In whose image are we created? (God's)

This means we know how to love one another.

Flowers and trees can't love. Human beings made in God's image can LOVE. The Trinity is a community of love.

Let's look at the picture. The people are looking at an icon. Can you tell which icon it is? We studied it last week. [Allow responses.] (Trinity icon) They are looking at the Trinity icon. They are members of a parish—they are a community of love like the Trinity.



God sent Jesus to show us how to live.

Jesus is God's Son.

Jesus died on a cross and was buried.

When He was buried, He did not stay in the grave.

Jesus rose from the dead to live forever in heaven.

God sent Jesus to show us how to live.

Why did God send Jesus? (To show us how to live)

When He was buried, He did not stay in the grave.

Did Jesus stay in the grave when He was buried? (No)

The icon shows Jesus raising up Adam and Eve to live forever in heaven.

Where is Jesus? Where is Adam? Where is Eve? Jesus is bringing them out of the darkness of death. Let's look at the bottom of the icon. What do you see in the darkness? [Point to items.] Here is a lock and a key that remind us of being a prisoner. Death tried to take Jesus prisoner, but he broke through death. He conquered death. The darkness, keys and locks, and nails are bad things that remind us of death. Jesus is on top of the darkness and these things that are bad or evil. Jesus has conquered or won the victory over evil and death.

God created us to live forever with Him on earth and in heaven.

"Why did God make us?" (To live forever with Him on earth and in heaven) This is very important. Let's try to memorize the answer to the question. Say it with me: "To live forever with Him on earth and in heaven."

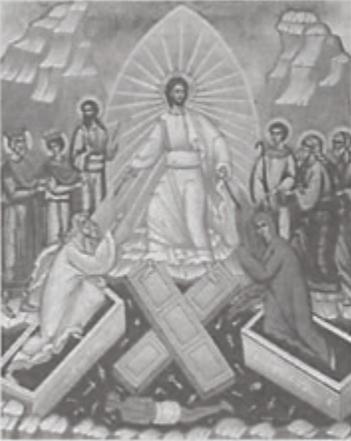
Let's review: What does "create" mean? (Make) Who created you? (God) In whose image are you created? (God's) Why did God create us? (To live forever with Him on earth and in heaven)

Activity Tracks

Basic 1: "God Created Us to Live Forever" Icon [This worksheet is in the student text.]

Today we learned that God created us to live forever with Him on earth and in heaven. Here is the icon that teaches us that. Who remembers the name of this icon? It is the icon of the Resurrection. Let's follow the instructions for the worksheet.

Here is an icon of the Resurrection. The icon shows Jesus raising up Adam and Eve to live forever in heaven.

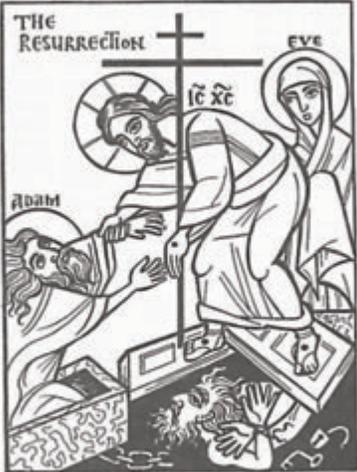


When we die, Jesus wants us to be with Him in heaven, too. God created us to live forever with Him on earth and in heaven.

God created us. We belong to God.

God Created Us to Live Forever

Color the icon of the Resurrection. Color the clothing of Jesus white. Circle the words that complete the sentences.



1. Jesus rose from the dead. ran rose

2. Jesus is raising Adam and Eve. John Adam

3. God loves us. God is love. tall love

Basic 2: God Created Us to Live Forever

Materials: "God Created Us to Live Forever" worksheet

Today we learned the most important lesson of our faith. It is in the title of this worksheet. [Hold up worksheet.] Can someone read it for us? God created us to live forever with Him on earth and in heaven. These are great sentences from our lesson, but the last word is missing for each. Can you find it and fill it in?

Group: Basket Toss Review

Materials: Basket or plate, wadded piece of paper, "Lesson 5 Review" worksheet

Today's lesson was very important. We learned about the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. What observance celebrates this? [Pascha] It is the most important day of every year. Let's play a game to help us remember everything we learned today. On these papers I have written questions about today's lesson. We'll have teams and try to answer them. A team member picks a folded slip of paper, and I'll read the question on it. If your team answers correctly, you can earn a point. Then a person from your team will get a chance to make another point by tossing this paper in the basket. Let's try it.

Craft: "God Created Us To Live Forever" Icon

Materials: "Resurrection Icon" worksheet, scissors, markers, construction paper, hole punch, yarn

Today we learned that God created us to live forever with Him on earth and in heaven. [Hold up icon from lesson.] The icon of the Resurrection reminds us that Jesus Christ will take us to heaven also when we die. We will live forever with God in heaven. Let's make a frame for the Resurrection Icon. On the top it says "God Created Us to Live Forever," so you can remember our lesson. [Have students color the icon. Paste it onto a piece of construction paper, punch two holes at the top and place yarn so that icon can hang.]

God Created Us to Live Forever

A. These sentences would be wonderful if they were finished. Can you find the last word of each in the box below?

1. God created the w o r l d.
2. God created u s.
3. God created each of us in His i m a g e.
4. We are to love one a n o t h e r.
5. God sent Jesus to show us how to l i v e.
6. We belong to G o d.
7. God created us to live f o r e v e r.

forever God world another
live us image



Closing

Let's come to the icon corner for our closing prayer time. We'll pray the Trisagion, just as we did at the beginning of class, and then the Doxology. Do you remember the words? "Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit..." Let's get ready to pray. As we stand quietly, look at the icon and think about why God made you—to live forever with Him. [With hands in the prayer position, stand quietly for 15-20 seconds.] Let us pray now.

God bless you; have a good week!



grave



resurrection

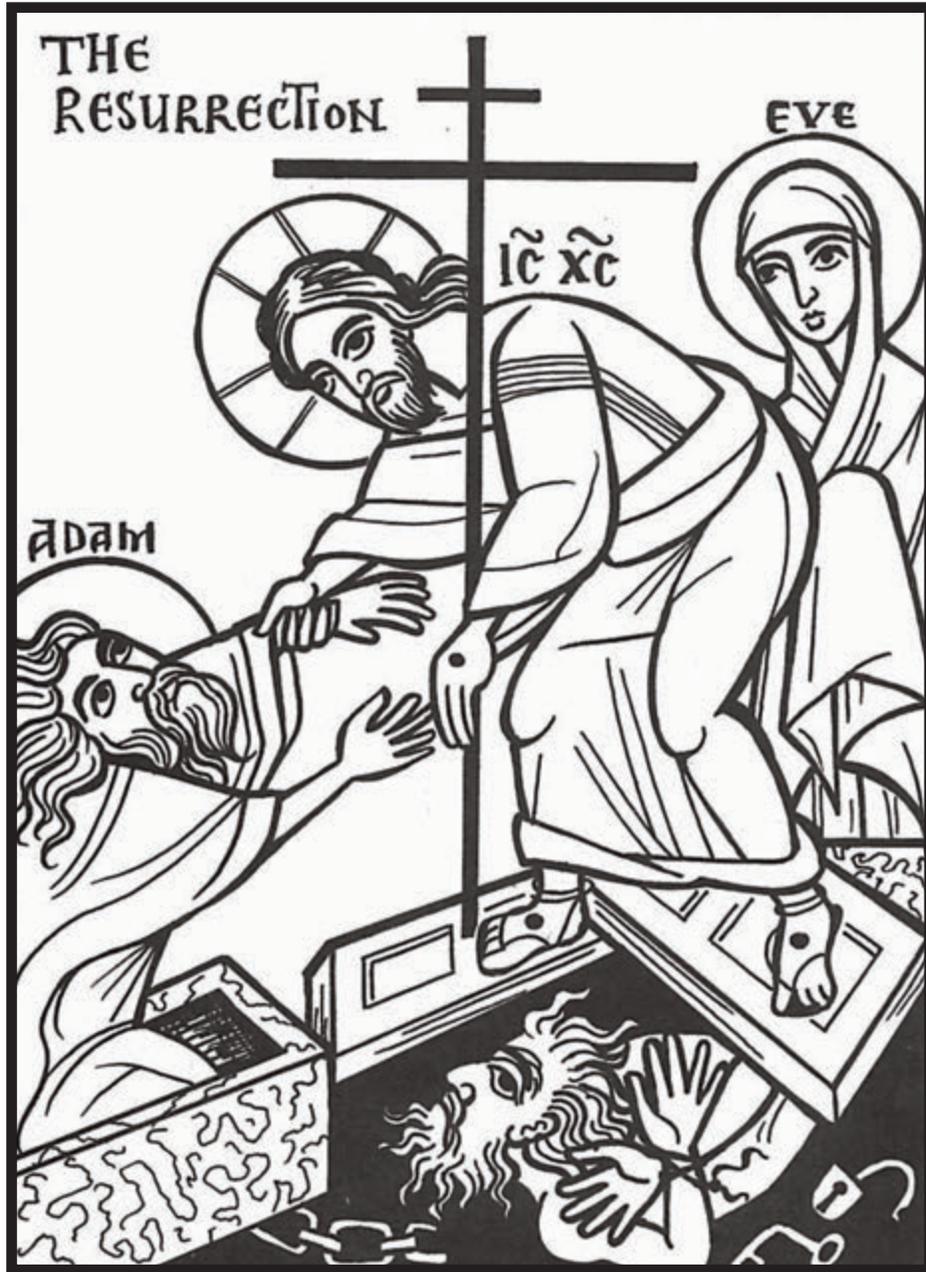
God Created Us to Live Forever

A. These sentences would be wonderful if they were finished. Can you find the last word of each in the box.

1. God created the _____.
2. God created _____.
3. God created each of us in His _____.
4. We are to love one _____.
5. God sent Jesus to show us how to _____.
6. We belong to _____.
7. God created us to live _____.

forever God world another
live us image

<p>What is the name for God that says He is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit? (Trinity)</p>	<p>Who created you? (God)</p>
<p>In whose image are you created? (God’s)</p>	<p>Why did God make us? (To live forever with Him on earth and in heaven.)</p>
<p>What does “resurrection” mean? (To rise from the dead)</p>	<p>The icon of the Resurrection has darkness at the bottom. Name two objects that are in the darkness. (locks, keys, nails)</p>
<p>What does the darkness on the Resurrection icon remind us of? (Death)</p>	<p>What did Jesus conquer when He rose from the dead? (Evil and death)</p>
<p>Who is Jesus raising with Him in the icon of the Resurrection ? (Adam and Eve)</p>	<p>Finish this sentence: God loves _____. (Us)</p>
<p>Finish this sentence: Jesus is God’s _____. (Son)</p>	<p>Finish this sentence: We are to love one _____. (Another)</p>



God Created Us to Live Forever