

LESSON 6: CREATION (COVENANT WITH THE FIRST PARENTS)

Instruction for Faith Educators

For Basic Level / Age 7	:	Cover points 1 to 5
For Intermediate Level / Age 10	:	Cover points 1 to 6
For Advanced Level / Age 13	:	Cover points 1 to 9

Revision from previous lesson:

In the previous lesson, we learned that God began creation with the invisible world, and there was a rebellion among the angels because many of them objected to God's creation plan. These angels subsequently fell and became devils or demons. In this lesson, we learn about the visible world.

Current lesson:

1. After God created the invisible world, He created the visible world that we commonly know as the universe.
2. Read Genesis 1:1-2:3 and explain the passage to the students. Scripture tells us that God took "six days" to create the physical world.
3. The greatest of His creation was the human being. The first human beings that God created were Adam and Eve. Adam means "man" in Hebrew. Eve is thus named because she is the "mother of all the living" (the Hebrew word for Eve is *Hawah*, which is similar to the word for "living"). Since mankind is God's most superior work of art created in His own image and likeness, God allows Adam to name the other living creatures.
4. God made us to know Him, to love Him, to serve Him, and to be happy with Him forever. We were created for the glory of God (CCC 293). The response to Question 2 of the YOUCAT says, "Out of the 'surplus' of His love He created us. He wanted to share His endless joy with us, who are creatures of his love."

CCC 1: "God, infinitely perfect and blessed in Himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make Him share in His own blessed life. For this reason, at every time and in every place, God draws close to man. He calls man to seek Him, to know Him, to love Him with all his strength."

5. When God created the first parents, he made a covenant with them. He blessed Adam and Eve and told them that they would be masters of the whole earth and get their food from the plants (Genesis 1:26-30). Then God asked Adam to be obedient and not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:15-17). It was a covenant of lordship.

A covenant is an exchange of promises between people, or between God and His people, that binds one party to the other. The covenant is the basis of God's loving design from all eternity. Despite having no need of humanity, God freely desires to bind Himself to

humanity through the intimacy of a marriage bond. A covenant brings a union that is “nuptial” in nature. A covenant creates a family.

6. If we read further in the accounts of creation in Genesis, we will find two seemingly different accounts of creation. One is 1:1 to 2:3, and the other is 2:4 to 3:24. The first account tells us that man and woman were created last on the sixth day and God rested on the seventh day. The second account tells us that God created man first, then plants and animals, and finally the woman. This goes to show that the writer of this account did not mean to report the event of creation in sequence. Rather, he was attempting to communicate two faith-related points about God’s act of creation.

The first account is meant to communicate to the reader that God is all-powerful and that He creates everything in its proper order and according to His will.

If you read the second account, you will realise that the story of creation soon leads to an account of human failure and fallenness. The second account is crafted by the writer to demonstrate how God does not abandon His creation even after mankind breaks our covenant with God.

7. There are scientists who believe that the world is billions of years old, while there are people who believe that the world is only thousands of years old. No matter how old the world is, the Catholic Church believes that the universe is of finite age, meaning that it has not existed from all eternity. But the Church has never defined with certainty whether the world was created only a few thousand years ago or whether it was created billions of years ago.
8. Some geneticists have questioned whether God literally created one man and one woman (a theory called “monogenism”) instead of a whole first generation of humanity (a theory called “polygenism”). Many have denied the possibility of a single pair of human parents from whom all human beings descend.

The Catholic Church holds that there was literally a pair of human parents from whom all other human beings are birthed (Pius XII, *Humani Generis*, 1950). There is no human being on the face of this earth who are not descendents of Adam and Eve. Sacred Scripture shows us that the whole human race had one origin. The fact that human beings have different physical features, shapes, and colours today stems from changes that have taken place over time because of climates, habits, and other causes of nature.

Adam and Eve had many other sons and daughters (Genesis 5:4). At that time, it was not wrong for siblings to marry one another (i.e. incest). Marriage between siblings at that time did not pose the danger of inheriting bad genes, and it would take many generations before bad genetic mutations would be accumulated. This is why we see in the Bible that incest was only prohibited beginning from the time of Moses (Leviticus 18:6). Prior to that we see many examples of men marrying their relatives: Abraham married Sarah, his half-sister (Genesis 20:12; cf. Genesis 17:15-16; 22:17); Abraham’s son, Isaac, married Rebekah, his second cousin (Genesis 22:20-23; 24:4,15); Jacob, Abraham’s grandson, married his first cousins, Rachel and Leah (Genesis 24:29; 29:15-30); and Moses’ father, Amram, married Jachebed, his father’s sister.

9. There are also scientists who believe that human beings were not initially created in the final form that we exist in today, and that we are a result of centuries of evolution from a different state. Is this belief acceptable?

The first important thing to note is that God is the One who has created everything that exists, and He has created out of nothing (*ex nihilo*).

The second important thing to note is that, even if human beings are a result of development from a different life form over the course of time, this development would have taken place under the impetus and guidance of God the Creator. (Even so, there is no scientific evidence yet that human beings are indeed a result of evolution from a different life form.)

The third important point is, even if man's body developed from previous other biological forms under God's guidance, the human soul is a special creation of God and has never evolved or developed from another form. The human body that we inherit from our first parents may have evolved, but the human soul is created directly by God and is not inherited from our first parents.



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