

WHO DOES GOD SAY I AM?

God says people are created in
His image.

 KEY PASSAGE

Genesis 1:1-31

 KEY VERSE

Genesis 1:26-27

SPARK THE CONVERSATION

Preteens live in a rapidly changing world. What is popular today is outdated tomorrow. With all the changes taking place, it can be difficult for preteens to grasp who they are and why it matters. In this session preteens will study the God of creation, uncovering His design and purpose through Genesis 1. They will learn that God created them in His image and for His glory.

Before you begin this study, pray that God would use you as you lead preteens. Ask Him to reveal truth through your study of His Word that leads to greater understanding of who God created preteens to be and how they can honor Him with their lives.

IGNITE **PDG**

As preteens arrive, lead them to complete “Emoji Match” in their Preteen Discipleship Guides (PDG, 6).

Open: When you think about a large group of people, what do you notice first? Do you focus on differences or similarities? Why do you think that is?

Say: I’m going to call out a statement. Let’s see how quickly you can group up based on the statement. For example, if I say, “Group up by guys and girls,” all the girls will move to one side of the room, and all the guys will move to the other side of the room.

Call out statements such as hair color, right-handed/left-handed, eye color, age, braces/no braces, and so forth.

Ask: How did you know how to group up? (*Answers may vary but should relate to looking at one another and evaluating what is true about yourself and the people around you.*)

Explain: You discovered how to group up by observing one another. You evaluated those traits based on what you know to be true about yourself and the other people around you. We all have characteristics that are unique to each of us, but we also have one very important characteristic in common. Can anyone guess what that characteristic might be? We are all made in the image of God.

SHARPEN & STRENGTHEN PDG

YOU WILL NEED

- Bibles (1 per preteen)
- Preteen Discipleship Guides (1 per preteen)
- Item 4: Genesis 1:1-25 (optional)

TEACHING TIP Pause to define words such as creation and image of God.

Direct preteens to Sharpen & Strengthen in the Preteen Discipleship Guide (PDG, 7). Explain that preteens will follow along in their guides as you lead the session.

Say: A popular Bible teacher once said, “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.”¹ In other words, what we think about God shapes our identity.

Ask: What comes to your mind when you think about God? How do you think your friends would answer what they think about God? Take a few minutes to respond in your discipleship guides.

Continue: Through this study we are going to consider who God is and who He made us to be. We want to think about what or who defines our identity and why it matters. Let’s open our Bibles to Genesis 1 to learn more about God through studying how He created everything.

Creation: the perfect world that God created; God created the entire universe out of nothing for His glory (See Genesis 1:1, Colossians 1:16.)

🔒 WHAT DOES CREATION SAY ABOUT GOD?

Open your Bible to Genesis 1:1-25. Invite several preteens to read aloud verses 1-25 in their Bibles or Preteen Discipleship Guides.

TEACHING TIP Consider reading the following sections: Genesis 1:1-5, 1:6-8, 1:9-13, 1:14-19, and 1:20-25. Print Item 4: Genesis 1:1-25 for any preteen without a Preteen Discipleship Guide.

Encourage preteens to follow along and circle each mention of God in their discipleship guides.

Ask: How many times did you circle "God" in these verses? What does this tell you about the primary subject of creation? (Allow preteens to respond.)

Continue: The first four words of the Bible say, "In the beginning God." In the beginning of creation, when nothing else existed, God was there. No one created God because He is the Creator. As Creator, God is the authority and determines what is true about His creation.

Ask: If God determines what is true about His creation, what does that mean about your identity? (Allow preteens to write their answers.)

State: God is the Author of all creation, and He has authority to determine its identity. God created you and He determines your identity.

Continue: Let's look at Genesis 1:1-25 again. Did you notice any phrases in this passage that are repeated? Review Genesis 1:1-25 in your discipleship guides and underline any repeated phrases.

Say: Genesis 1 is not just a historical account of creation; it is written in the original Hebrew language as a song or poem.² The words are written with rhythm and order and purpose. Phrases like "then God said," "evening came and then morning," and "it was good" are all repeated rhythms in the song of creation. This tells us that God is creative and purposeful in how He creates, and that He enjoys His creation.

State: The culture around us often believes that the world was created through chance or a collision of forces, but the Bible tells us our Creator made the world with order and rhythm and purpose.

Ask: If God made His creation with order and purpose, what do you think is true about how He made you? (Allow time for preteens to answer in their discipleship guides.)

🔒 WHAT IS TRUE ABOUT WHO GOD CREATED ME TO BE?

Read aloud Genesis 1:26-27.

Ask: According to these verses, how did God create people? (In His

image) What do you think it means for God to create people in His image?

Explain: **God says people are created in His image.** He made us to reflect Him. Being made in God's image means you have some characteristics that are like God or patterned after Him. You have the ability to think, to reason, and make decisions. You can be creative and learn right from wrong. These are just a few examples of how you are set apart from the rest of creation (animals, plants, and so forth).

Image of God: all people are created like God in some ways to represent and reflect God in the world (Genesis 1:27)

Continue: God does not have a physical body like we do, but He made people with the ability to think, to feel emotions and to make choices. In this way, we are made in His image. Because God is the Creator, He has the authority to determine our identity and purpose. Even though we are all very different in how we look, how we think, and the things we like, we were all made to reflect Him to other people around us.

🔒 HOW DOES THIS TRUTH CHANGE HOW I LIVE?

Say: Knowing you were created in the image of God should impact everything you do—every decision, every reaction, how you respond to your parents, siblings, and teachers. This truth even changes how you respond to your enemies.

Continue: God created you to reflect Him to the world—His love, His goodness, and His holiness, but something went wrong. The first man and the first woman disobeyed God. When they disobeyed, sin and brokenness entered the world. Every person has a broken relationship with God. This means that we are all broken image bearers of who God created us to be. Look back at Genesis 1:1. What are the first three words of this verse? (In the beginning.) Do you know which other book of the Bible begins with these three words?

Read John 1:1-2,14 aloud. Guide preteens to fill in the blanks to these verses in their discipleship guides.

Explain: Genesis 1 points us forward to John 1. The "Word" in John 1 is Jesus. The Word (Jesus) was with God the Father and God the Spirit at the beginning of creation, when people perfectly reflected God's

image. But sin distorted that image. On our own, we cannot be who God created us to be because we are broken in our sin. These verses explain that Jesus became human to die on the cross for the punishment for our sin and make a way for us to be restored. He took on our identity of sinner, and gives us His identity of righteousness.

Continue: God says people are created in His image. God loves you and made you in His image. Your value comes from God, your Creator. The culture around you may say your value is found in what you do, where you come from, or how well-known you are, but the Bible tells us our true value comes from God alone. We know that all people are valued by God because **God says people are created in His image.** This means we should reflect God's image to those around us by the way we think about and treat people, regardless of where they come from, what they look like, or what they can do. God leads us to respond to people around us in love, not based on what they can do for us or what they think about us, but because they are made in His image.

MAKE THE CONNECTION

Conclude: Everything the Bible says about God and His creation is true. God rules over His creation and has authority to determine its purpose and identity. He created all people—including you—for His glory, in His image, and by His design. God made you with a plan and purpose in mind. You are not a mistake. You are a special part of God's big plan!

KEY VERSE

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth." So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female. [Genesis 1:26-27](#)

YOU WILL NEED

- 2 colored sets of index cards
- Markers

PREPARE

- Write a word or phrase of Genesis 1:26-27 on each index card. Make 2 complete sets in different colors.
- Shuffle each stack of cards and place in two piles at one end of the playing area.

Guide preteens to form two teams. Call attention to the index cards. Assign each team a card color.

Say: One person from your team will race to the cards and locate the first word or phrase of Genesis 1:26-27 (Then) and bring the card back to your team. The second person will race to the cards, locate the next word or phrase (God), and bring it back. Continue taking turns until your team has the words of the verse in order.

Play the game as time allows. For an additional challenge, lead preteens to retrieve the cards using different motions (hopping on one foot, without using hands, walking backwards, and so forth).

Invite preteens to say the verse without looking at the cards. Call attention to the key verse cards located in the Preteen Discipleship Guide. Demonstrate how to remove the cards. Suggest preteens tape the Genesis 1:27 card to a bathroom mirror and say the verse every time they look in the mirror. Encourage preteens to remember they are made in God's image to reflect Him to the world.

FIRE IT UP!

LAST ONE STANDING

Explain that the purpose of the game is to be the last one standing. You will say, "I am created in the image of God and I ..." (call out description). If the description describes a preteen, he should sit down.

Call out descriptions such as: I am an only child / I have brown hair / I am in the fifth grade / and so forth. Continue calling out statements until only one preteen remains standing. Play again as time allows.

Ask preteens to recall some of the statements that show how they are different. Ask the following questions:

- What would the world be like if God created each of us exactly the same?
- God created each of us different, but He created us with one thing in common. What is that one thing? (We were created in the image of God.)

HOW ARE WE DIFFERENT? **PDG**

YOU WILL NEED

- Preteen Discipleship Guides (1 per preteen)
- Colored pencils

Direct preteens to open their discipleship guides to “How Are We Different?” (PDG, 9).

Guide preteens to read the statements in their discipleship guides and locate someone in the group who fits one of the descriptions. Preteens will ask that person to write her name in the box that describes her. If you lead a small group, encourage preteens to write names of people they know in the boxes provided next to the descriptions.

Lead preteens to find someone to sign each space and color the squares of their chart different colors. Remark that God made each person different and unique. At the same time, He made all of us in His image.

Remind preteens that God loves everyone and wants us to have a relationship with Him. He created us in His image and by His unique design. We were created with different likes and dislikes, hobbies, and physical differences. However, He created us with one important characteristic in common. **(God says people are created in His image.)**

Guide preteens to the daily discipleship pages. Explain how to use the pages during the week. Preview the week’s daily pages and encourage preteens to complete each day’s Bible reading and journaling. Point out the Family Guide pages for preteens to use at home. Print any pages for preteens without a discipleship guide (Item 3).

BREAK IT DOWN

Finish: You were created in God’s image and for His glory. Your identity—who you are—is defined by who God says you are. He created you to know Him and love Him. When you trust in Jesus, God changes your identity from broken by sin to a restored child of God. As a follower of Jesus you can honor God as your Creator through your actions and attitudes. Every time you see your reflection this week, remind yourself you were created in the image of God. That is where your identity begins!