

Tennessee Right to Life
SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE CURRICULUM
Grade 1 - Week 1
GOD CREATED

PERSPECTIVE FOR THE TEACHER

We have a wonderful opportunity to lay a foundation in the lives of our students, by teaching the basic truths of Scripture concerning the sanctity of life. God as Creator is the foundation for developing a respect for life, and is the framework for valuing life at every stage.

The pro-choice movement would have us believe that the unborn child is simply a “mass of cells.” However, at conception we are created in God’s image, and are unique from all His creation. God created man with a soul, which includes emotions, a mind, and a will. This separates us from the animal kingdom and gives us the ability to know, love, and serve Him. Though first graders are young, it is important to teach them that all people are created in the image of God regardless of their age, abilities, or what they look like. His Son has died for all of us; thus each is valuable to Him and to us.

In this lesson, students will compare the acorn and the single celled human being. Though the acorn is small, it grows into a very big tree. They too are small but are growing into adults like their parents. They don’t look like adults, nor does the acorn look like an oak tree! Both the acorn and the single cell have everything inside them to grow into maturity. Everything is there in the beginning. By comparing a picture of a single cell (first stage on the *Continuum*) to an adult, these First Grade students will see that they do not look alike. You will emphasize that this single celled human being will grow into the adult, just like the acorn will grow into the oak tree. This single cell is the special person God created and will grow up according to God’s special plan for them. (Jeremiah 29:11)

This lesson is intended to be fun and straightforward! We want to teach our children the foundational truths that God loves them and everyone around them. His creativity is intriguing and profound. It is present in the heart of God to care for His creation. Please feel free to use your own creativity and words to teach this lesson!

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 139:13-15

Memory verse: *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”* Genesis 1:1

LESSON GOALS:

- To establish that God is the Creator of all life
- To introduce the various stages of life before birth
- To emphasize that each of us was a single cell at the beginning of our lives, and that we have grown and continue to grow through all the stages of life
- To affirm that we are precious to God even before we were born
- To demonstrate that although we look different at the different stages of life, we are always the same unique individual

THIS LESSON SHOULD HELP THE STUDENT:

- See the greatness of God through His creation and His personal love for each one of us.
 - Begin to understand they are the same person before birth, now, and as they continue to grow.
 - Value each classmate as unique and important to God.
-

VISUALS/SPECIAL PREPARATION:

- *Continuum of Life* Banner
 - Acorn/Oak Tree poster, (acorns if available)
 - Growth of Oak Tree/Growth of a Person Coloring Sheet
 - A resource book on leaves or flowers (optional)
 - Camera and film for class photo (please provide)
 - Picture Frame Master for class photo that students will sign (found in notebook sleeve at the back of this lesson)
-

TAKE HOME MATERIALS:

- *In the Beginning* worksheet
-

TEACHING THE LESSON**A. Introduction****1. Opening Prayer**

Pray for the class asking for wisdom and understanding as the class learns about God's creation and the subject of life. Thank God for the life He has given each of us.

2. Review

God Made Everything! (*Read Genesis 1:1*) "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." This is our memory verse, so let's say it together. (*Have the students repeat the verse after you several times.*) Now, when God created the Heavens and the Earth, He didn't stop there. The Bible tells us that He created all things: the birds, the plants, the fish, the stars. Then, on the sixth day, He created people on the earth. When He was done, the Bible tells us that God saw that everything was good. Now why do you think God created all these good and beautiful things? (*Allow students time to share what they think, and then summarize.*) God is so loving that He wanted to share every beautiful thing with us. He knew how much we would love all these things, and He didn't just make one kind of tree, or rock or flower, or bug. He made each rock, flower, bird, and fish different and special in its own way. (*If you have a resource book of leaves or flowers, you could spend a few minutes allowing the students an opportunity to see all the varieties God has given to us.*) Isn't it wonderful to have so many beautiful things to enjoy? Each leaf or flower is different; some are different colors, some have different smells, but each one has been made by God, and when we look at all God has created we learn more about Him.

B. Class Discussion

1. The Acorn

God teaches us many important things through His creation. *(Hold up the poster of the oak tree and acorn found in your notebook at the end of the lesson.)* Here is a picture of something in nature that can teach us an important lesson. What do you see? Yes this is a big oak tree and a tiny acorn.

What is an acorn? *(Allow children to answer; be prepared to help them if they do not yet know about acorns and oak trees.)* It is a seed. *(If you have brought some acorns, this would be a good time to let the children examine them.)*

What does the acorn become? Yes, an oak tree!

How big does an oak tree get? Yes, very big!

Everyone stand up next to your seat. Now, squat down as small as you can get. Pretend that you are a little acorn and slowly begin to grow taller and bigger, but not too fast! Begin to stretch out your arms as branches! Wiggle your leaves in the wind!! *(Take your time with this.)*

Now, look at the other “oak trees” (your classmates).

Okay, drop your arms. In some ways, you are like an acorn growing up into an oak tree.

Who can tell me how you as a child are like an acorn? *(Allow children to answer.)* Yes, you are very small, young.

Do you look like an adult? Does an acorn look like an oak tree? You are growing up to be an adult, but you don’t look like an adult yet!

Just because the acorn doesn’t look like an oak tree, it does not mean that it will not be an oak tree someday. You don’t look like an adult, but will you be one someday?

Please get back into your acorn shape. Now we are going to remember how you grew before you were born. Close your eyes. You were inside your mother’s body (tummy)! It was dark, and you were very tiny. You were all curled up; you started to grow. Begin to stretch out your arms and legs, but not too fast. You were getting bigger and bigger. Then it was time to be born. Open your eyes, and stand up tall. The day you were born was a very important day; we call it your “birthday,” but you were growing a long time before you were born, and you have continued to grow. You are growing every day, and you are changing everyday. When you look at pictures of yourself when you were a baby, you can see how much you’ve changed. You don’t even look the same anymore. Can you tell me some of the ways you have changed since you were a baby? *(Let them share briefly.)* Wow! You’ve changed a lot in just a few years! Are you still the same person you were when you were small? *(Let them answer, affirm that they indeed are the same person, and then have the students follow you to look at the Continuum.)*

2. *Continuum of Life*

I have a picture to show you of a baby before she was born. *(Point to the single cell on the Continuum.)* This is a picture of the smallest baby size - that's what you looked like in the very beginning. You have many cells now, but on that first day, you were only one cell. Then you grew and got bigger. *(Point to the next frame on the Continuum.)* You are called a child today, but when you were this size you were called an "embryo." You just kept growing and growing. *(Point to the 12 week fetus picture on the Continuum of Life banner.)* See how big you were. You were called a "fetus" when you got to this size. Fetus means "little one," and you certainly can see how little you were, but you had everything you needed to become the strong first grader you are today.

Let's all go back to our seats now, and read from the Bible what God says about us before we were born. *(Read Psalm 139:13-15.)* Does anyone know what it means to "knit?" *(Let them share what they know, and then summarize.)* In this Scripture God is telling us that He brought everything together to make each one of us. He made every part of us, and He knew each one of us right from the beginning. Isn't that wonderful to know? God knew us before we were born. It is God who "knit us together" so carefully when we were so tiny. He loved us and took care of us when we were each just one little cell, and then when we were an embryo, and then a fetus. He cares for us during all the stages of our lives.

Remember the acorn? Once the acorn becomes a young sapling (a small tree), it is ready to grow into a big oak tree! When God created you, you were a tiny, single cell. From your life as this tiny cell, you began to grow into an embryo, then a fetus and now a child. You are still growing and one day will become an adult. From the moment that God created you as that single cell, you only needed time and food to grow.

Even though each one of us grew in this exact same way, and each of us was loved by God at every stage, we are each very different from one another, aren't we? Just as God created many different flowers, and birds and fish, He has also created many different kinds of people. Some are tall, some short; some have curly hair, some straight, some are strong; some are weak, some can learn things easily; some don't like school. There are so many amazing differences, but each and every one is important to God. In the same way, our class is made up of many different people, but each and every one is important.

C. Class Activity

1. Class Photo and Frame

To help us always remember that, we are going to take a class picture, and next week we will use this picture when we talk more about how we were each created by God. *(After taking the class photo, bring out the pens and Picture Frame Master you will find in your notebook.)* Now, such a wonderful picture deserves a very special frame, and I have a very special frame right here. I would like each one of you to print your name on the frame, so that we have our names all around the picture frame. Then I will make copies of this frame and next week I will bring one back for each one of you, so you will each have a beautiful picture of our class in a beautiful frame. *(On the Picture Frame Master for the class photo, have each child sign his/her name. Before next week, make copies of this Master Sheet for each child.)*

2. Coloring Page

(As the students are finishing writing their names, give each of them a coloring page.) To help you remember how things grow, I have a page for you to color that shows the acorn becoming a small oak sapling and then a bigger and bigger tree. *(Hold up the page to show the drawings.)* It also shows how a tiny baby grows from a single cell through all the stages into an adult.

(Pass out the Growth of Oak Tree/Growth of a Person Coloring Page. Go over the name of each stage in a person's life.) Let's spend the rest of our class time coloring this page that shows how you grew from a single cell, and how you will continue to grow.

D. Closing

1. Summary

- We talked about how God created the Heavens and the Earth, and we learned a beautiful Scripture verse. Let's say it again. "In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth."
- We have learned that our lives began before we were born; we saw how we grew from a tiny cell, just like the giant oak tree grows from a tiny acorn. And just as that tiny acorn doesn't look like an oak tree, we too look different while we are growing up.
- Even though you do not look like you did when you were that tiny cell, you are still the very same person. When you get to be a mom or dad, you will still be the same person.
- We read the Scripture that tells us that even before our birth, God knew us and loved us and that we are very important to Him.

2. Closing Prayer

Thank You, God, for teaching us about ourselves through something as small as an acorn. Thank You for all the ways we have grown, even before we were born. Thank you for all the ways in which you have made each of us special and different from one another. Help us to grow stronger and stronger as you care for us during all the stages of our lives, and help us care for one another. Amen

Remember to pass out the Take Home Packets.