

7th grade Session 1
Nov, 6, 2022
Make up Session

Please complete, print and return to Religious Formation Office. Be sure to put your name at the top.

Opening

We are going to think about God, the Creator; Jesus, his life, teachings and death, the Holy Spirit and how all of this fits in to our lives.

Who is God?

All our language about God relies on image, metaphor, and story. God can be found in any of them. Use your own language skills—however developed or not—to discover what other people down through the centuries have known: God can be found in the words and pictures we use.

What images, words, or stories would you use to tell other people who God is for you today?

The most meaningful and important images of God for me are . . .

- **Picture.** What pictures reveal who God is to you? Think of photos, paintings, stained glass windows, statues. If you had to create a picture, what would it look like?

- **Metaphor.** Complete this sentence: “God is like . . .”
- **Story.** What is your favorite Old Testament story? What does that story tell you about God? What is your favorite Gospel story? Again, what does that story tell you about God?

When you have answered the questions above, share them with your parent and/or sponsor. Compare what you saw differently, and what you saw similarly.

Our concept of God matters. There are major consequences for how we think of God. It can make God seem credible or incredible, plausible or highly improbable. It can also make God seem distant or near, absent or present. How we conceptualize God also affects our sense of what the Christian life is about.

Our images of God matter. How we imagine God shapes not only what we think God is like but also what we think our life is about. People who think of God as compassionate are likely to emphasize compassion. People who think God is angry at the world are likely to be angry at the world themselves.

Let’s look at a few biblical images of God. Think about the implications of this image for your relationship with God. What are the implications for how you live?

Read each Scripture passage and ask yourselves:

- If we were writing this Scripture passage today, what words would we use to communicate this image of God?
- How can we update this image of God so that it speaks to people today?

1. God the All Powerful - Psalm 29:1-4

Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name;
worship the Lord in holy splendor.

The voice of the Lord is over the waters;
the God of glory thunders,
the Lord, over mighty waters.
The voice of the Lord is powerful;
the voice of the Lord is full of majesty

If we were writing this Scripture passage today, what words would we use to communicate this image of God? How would you re-write it so that we update this image of God so that it speaks to people today?

2. God the Creator - Genesis 1 (excerpts)

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. (1-3)

And God said, 'Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.' God called the dome Sky. (6, 8)

And God said, 'Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.' Then God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.' (9, 11)

And God said, 'Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night . . . God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. (14, 16)

And God said, 'Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.' (20)

And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.' (24)

Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness . . .
So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them. (26-27)

God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. (31)

If we were writing this Scripture passage today, what words would we use to communicate this image of God? How would you re-write it so that we update this image of God so that it speaks to people today?

3. God the Defender of Poor and Oppressed - Psalm 146:5-9

Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the Lord their God,
who made heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that is in them;
who keeps faith forever;
who executes justice for the oppressed;
who gives food to the hungry.
The Lord sets the prisoners free;
the Lord opens the eyes of the blind.
The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;
the Lord loves the righteous.
The Lord watches over the strangers;
he upholds the orphan and the widow,
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

If we were writing this Scripture passage today, what words would we use to communicate this image of God? How would you re-write it so that we update this image of God so that it speaks to people today?

4. God the King - Psalm 95:3-7

For the Lord is a great God,
and a great King above all gods.
In his hand are the depths of the earth;
the heights of the mountains are his also.
The sea is his, for he made it,
and the dry land, which his hands have formed.

O come, let us worship and bow down,
let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!
For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture,
and the sheep of his hand.

If we were writing this Scripture passage today, what words would we use to communicate this image of God? How would you re-write it so that we update this image of God so that it speaks to people today?

5. God the Shepherd - Ezekiel 34:11-12, 30-31

For thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness.

They shall know that I, the Lord their God, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, says the Lord God. You are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, says the Lord God.

If we were writing this Scripture passage today, what words would we use to communicate this image of God? How would you re-write it so that we update this image of God so that it speaks to people today?

6. God the Rock and Fortress and Refuge - Psalm 18:1-2, 31-32

I love you, O Lord, my strength.
The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer,
my God, my rock in whom I take refuge,
my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

For who is God except the Lord?
And who is a rock besides our God?—
the God who girded me with strength,
and made my way safe.

If we were writing this Scripture passage today, what words would we use to communicate this image of God? How would you re-write it so that we update this image of God so that it speaks to people today?

7. God the Eagle - Deuteronomy 32:10-14

He sustained him in a desert land,
in a howling wilderness waste;
he shielded him, cared for him,
guarded him as the apple of his eye.
As an eagle stirs up its nest,
and hovers over its young;
as it spreads its wings, takes them up,
and bears them aloft on its pinions,
the Lord alone guided him;
no foreign god was with him.

If we were writing this Scripture passage today, what words would we use to communicate this image of God? How would you re-write it so that we update this image of God so that it speaks to people today?

8. God the Liberator - Exodus 3:7-12, 16-17

Then the Lord said, 'I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey . . . The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.' But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?' He said, 'I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.'

Go and assemble the elders of Israel, and say to them, "The Lord, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying: I have given heed to you and to what has been done to you in Egypt. I declare that I will bring you up out of the misery of Egypt . . .

If we were writing this Scripture passage today, what words would we use to communicate this image of God? How would you re-write it so that we update this image of God so that it speaks to people today?

9. God of Justice - Micah 4:1-4

In days to come
the mountain of the Lord's house
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be raised up above the hills.
Peoples shall stream to it,
and many nations shall come and say:
'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the house of the God of Jacob;
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.'
For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

He shall judge between many peoples,
and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away;
they shall beat their swords into ploughshares,
and their spears into pruning-hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war anymore;
but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees,
and no one shall make them afraid;
for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.

If we were writing this Scripture passage today, what words would we use to communicate this image of God? How would you re-write it so that we update this image of God so that it speaks to people today?

10. God of the Covenant and Relationship - Jeremiah 31:31-34

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, 'Know the Lord', for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

If we were writing this Scripture passage today, what words would we use to communicate this image of God? How would you re-write it so that we update this image of God so that it speaks to people today?

11. God the Parent - Hosea 11:1-9

When Israel was a child, I loved him,
and out of Egypt I called my son.
The more I called them,
the more they went from me. . .

Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk,
I took them up in my arms;
but they did not know that I healed them.
I led them with cords of human kindness,
with bands of love.
I was to them like those
who lift infants to their cheeks.
I bent down to them and fed them.

If we were writing this Scripture passage today, what words would we use to communicate this image of God? How would you re-write it so that we update this image of God so that it speaks to people today?

12. God of Caring and Compassion - Isaiah 43:1-2

But now thus says the Lord,
he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel:
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you.

If we were writing this Scripture passage today, what words would we use to communicate this image of God? How would you re-write it so that we update this image of God so that it speaks to people today?

13. God the Potter - Isaiah 64:8

Yet, O Lord, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.

If we were writing this Scripture passage today, what words would we use to communicate this image of God? How would you re-write it so that we update this image of God so that it speaks to people today?

14. God of Love - 1 John 4:7-12, 16

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.

If we were writing this Scripture passage today, what words would we use to communicate this image of God? How would you re-write it so that we update this image of God so that it speaks to people today?

God from A-Z

The purpose of this activity is to create a chart using a different letter of the alphabet to think about the variety of images of God. Here are some examples:

For *C*, God is *Compassionate*. God is gracious and merciful. His compassion comforts us. We know God loves us always.

For *R*, God is our *Rock*. God is our strength, even when we are weak. When we have times of trouble we turn to God. God's love never fails.

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| A | B | C | D |
| E | F | G | H |
| I | J | K | L |
| M | N | O | P |
| Q | R | S | T |
| U | V | W | X |
| Y | Z | | |

Things to think about:

- Good chooses to be with us always
- It is impossible to know all there is to know about God.
- God created the universe out of nothing. Order out of chaos
- God created all out of love. We are all God's children and there are no exceptions.
- God created humans in God's image. God shared God's breath with us giving each person born and unborn a special human dignity. And, God invites all of us to be in relationship with God. We come from God and God is our destiny. We are all connected.

If you could ask God one question, what would you ask?