

Creation Celebration



- Great for Sunday school, VBS, and other summer programs
- Five large group sessions
- Five small group sessions for Kindergarten-Grade 3 and Grades 4-8
- Five original dramas
- Large selection of crafts and activities
- Complete—no other resources to buy

LEADER'S GUIDE K-8 SUMMER BOOK 8

Creation Celebration



Grand Rapids, Michigan

Any questions or comments about this unit?
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Walk With Me curriculum has been developed by Faith Alive Christian Resources in cooperation with the Children's Ministry Office of the Reformed Church in America and with Presbyterians for Renewal.

We are grateful to Janifer DeVos for her work in developing this unit of *Walk With Me*. We also thank artist Margo Burian for providing illustrations.

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Walk With Me

Grades K-8

Summer Book 8: Creation Celebration

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10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

ISBN 978-1-59255-247-4

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How to Use This Book

“Let them praise the name of the Lord, for at his command they were created.”

—Psalm 148:5

The warm days of summer invite kids to enjoy God’s marvelous creation, to spend time outdoors with family and friends, to swim, ride bikes, go on picnics, enjoy the beach, take hikes, play sports, go on vacation, and do a ton of other fun things. This unit builds on all that, teaching kids the biblical details of God’s amazing creative activities as described in Genesis and encouraging them to respond with a praise-filled life that pleases the God who created them.

Goal and Theme

The unique format of this five-session course allows you to use it as a lively and exciting curriculum for your summer Sunday school or for an entire week of summer ministry such as vacation Bible school (see page 6 for helpful tips). The large group/small group format can also be used for a midweek program.

Whether you choose to use this course in a church school or summer ministry setting, the goal is to celebrate God’s amazing creation. Our focus is on our great God and the wonderful way he assembled this world. In the first four sessions children learn the details of creation as told in Genesis 1-2. In the last session they see that God is so great that he forgives our failures, continues to love us, and sends us a Savior (Gen. 3).

Throughout the children will respond in praise and worship of this great God.

To support our theme, this book offers a variety of ideas and options for large group sessions, small group sessions, and a summer celebration program. Use the ideas and options that work best with your Sunday school or vacation Bible school. Ideally the large group session would take about 15-20 minutes, and then the children would break up into their small group sessions for about 30-40 minutes. You may also want to schedule an extra practice time or two if your church is planning on doing the summer celebration program.

Finding time to do everything in this book will not be possible or desirable in most settings, so you will need to choose what you think your group will be able to handle in the time frame you have available. You will need one copy of this book for each of your leaders. As purchaser of this book you are hereby given permission to photocopy the dramas and all the material on reproducible pages 190-235.

Getting Started

Because these materials suggest a different format and approach than regular *Walk With Me* units, you’ll want to spend some extra time planning and preparing to teach these sessions. Although each church situation is unique, you may find some of the following suggestions helpful:

- In early spring, organize a small team to read through this book. They can review the session plans, dramas, and songs, then choose what they think will work best for your church.
- After the committee makes its recommendations, recruit teachers, song leaders, accompanists, and drama participants.
- Recruit volunteers who are willing to gather materials for these special sessions. Give them plenty of time for this task (a month or two) since they will likely want to ask the congregation to save and/or gather some of the items.
- Schedule rehearsals for the drama team.
- If you wish to have costumes and props for the drama team, recruit volunteers to gather materials. Costuming is simple throughout, often just modern clothing of a particular

color. Dr. Great Scott can dress up like a “mad scientist” in a white lab coat or shirt; his assistant Fritz can dress in scrubs or something to set him apart (see dramas for suggestions). Props are minimal.

- If you’re planning to use the summer celebration program, schedule a single, final rehearsal for everyone involved in the program.

Large Group Sessions and Summer Celebration Program

The large group session materials include a drama for each week and a list of songs to learn as a whole group. Presenting a drama may at first sound intimidating, but these dramas are written in such a way that children as well as adults will enjoy performing and/or viewing them. Each drama will take about ten to fifteen minutes and require six to a dozen actors (you can easily add more nonspeaking parts to most of the dramas). Costumes and sets may be as simple or elaborate as you would like.

You’ll probably want middle schoolers or a team of older teens to play these roles. Some of the dramas offer ways to include younger children in nonspeaking roles as well, if you wish to do so. And you’ll need adults to play the role of Dr. Scott, Fritz, and the narrator.

The dramas and songs can be used not only for each large group session, but also for the “sharing celebration program.” You’ll find a sample program along with ideas for organizing and producing it on pages 10-12.

Small Group Sessions

Small group sessions give you the opportunity to apply the story to the children’s lives. If you are unable to present the story as a drama in the large group setting, you can still use the drama or another form of the story in the small group setting. It’s a story you want children to hear!

Each small group opens with a *Hello* step designed to catch the children’s interest and get them thinking about the lesson’s theme.

Next comes the *Know* step (telling the story). If the children have already heard the story in the large group session, you’ll want to use this time to review the story with them. If you did not participate in a large group session, either use the drama or another interesting way to present the story to the group (see sessions for suggestions).

The *Grow* step will help children understand what the story means for their lives, and the *Show* step will guide them to respond to what they learned in this session.

At the end of the small group sessions you will find a large number of “Additional Activities” grouped under ideas for kids in K-3 grade levels, 4-8 grade levels, and for all grade levels. These activities can be used to extend the session or to replace parts of the regular small group sessions.

You’ll find that we’ve listed far more for each session than you’ll be able to use. Choose the items that best fit your schedule, the children you’re teaching, and the facilities/equipment you have available. Once you’ve decided which crafts and activities to use, you may want to appoint two or more volunteers (possibly parents of children in the group) who will gather materials and do any necessary preliminary work. Having a helper in the classroom is also a plus when doing crafts and other activities with young children.

We trust that God will use you to share these creation stories and to help children respond with praise, worship, and a life that’s pleasing to their Creator.



Small group leaders may want to send a short letter to the families of the kids in their group at the beginning of this unit. Explain what these five sessions will be like, and invite families to share in the experience by praying for you, asking their kids about the stories they hear, helping out in your sessions, and/or attending the summer celebration program (if you plan to have one).

How to Use This Book for VBS or Other Summer Ministries

You can use the five sessions for a five-day vacation Bible school or for five weekly sessions. Below is a suggested schedule and format for using the large group and small group approach for Bible school. If you have fewer than five sessions, you may choose to omit one or more of the sessions in this unit, but we recommend that you do not omit session 5, the story that points us to Jesus.

Terrific Tees



Make your summer program special for kids by ordering T-shirts printed with the program logo for all participants (see reproducible page 190 for a logo that can be screen-printed or printed on a program.) When ordered in large quantities, these T-shirts are quite inexpensive. Look for a printer in your area.

Opening Large Group Session (30 minutes)

Welcome Center/Arrival Time Activities (optional, 10-15 minutes)

A warm, heart-felt greeting can make all the difference in a child's morning! Greet children enthusiastically as they arrive, welcoming them to the experiences of the day. Make visitors feel welcomed. Learning names and faces can be challenging, but being able to call children (and adults) by name adds a wonderful dimension of hospitality.

You may also want to set up a Creation Celebration welcome center where arriving children can do a number of interesting activities as they wait for the large group session to begin. Here are some ideas for your welcome center:

- Have a creation mural for the children to work on. Each time they arrive add a new panel that reflects the theme of the day. Consider providing a variety of media for kids to use: markers, paint, mosaic pieces, even collage (see page 41 for more details).
- Set up a corner where children can practice the memory verses. Have a cassette recorder or CD player available with a recording of the verses so kids can listen to the passage as many times as they like. Have some paper and pencil activities on hand for verse review.
- Set up computers with Bible games and Internet access. Provide a list of kid-friendly sites related to session topics (for example, for session 1, they can search for fun facts about the sun, moon, and stars; for session 2, they can find out how plants use the sun for energy; for session 3 they can find new information about their favorite animal, and so on).
- Have a puzzle center where kids can make their own creation floor puzzles or work on a variety of age-appropriate jigsaw puzzles (see p. 43 for details).

- Create a “praise tree” on one wall of your welcome center. Have leaf patterns available for kids to color and add praise phrases to each week. Fill tree limbs with the colored, phrase-filled leaves (see p. 41 for details).
- Appoint a “scribe” in a prayer corner to jot down any prayer requests kids might have. The request list should be given to the person in charge of the large group session to include in his or her closing prayer. The scribe should be accepting of whatever is offered for prayer requests but should edit wisely and sensitively (choose a responsible person for this job). Be sure the children know their requests will be included in a public prayer. If requests aren’t appropriate for general sharing, the scribe can offer to pray with the student right away or at some other point during the day’s activities.
- Have kids create nametags using a variety of shapes in nature (sun, moon, stars, leaves, trees, plants, animals, and so on). But please be aware that making nametags is the suggested first step of the small group sessions for K-3 and 4-8. Make nametags as an arrival activity on the first day *only if small group leaders indicate they are using the options* for step 1 of their sessions. You can add a nametag center starting with the second session of your program to accommodate any new children who might arrive later in the week.
- Have a creation center filled with cool things like rocks, leaves, shells, flowers, caged gerbils or birds, and interesting books about God’s creation. Add to the center from week to week.

Opening Prayer and Singing Time

Check each session for song suggestions; all songs are on the CD that accompanies this course.

Drama Time

See pages 155-173 for dramas for each of the sessions and tips on how to present them. Purchasers of this book have permission to photocopy all drama scripts.

Snack Break

Break-out Small Group Sessions (45-90+ minutes)

Small groups may spend 90 minutes or more enjoying the more four steps of the session plans. Use the “Additional Activities” to extend your session for as long as you like.

Closing Large Group Session (15 minutes)

You may want to get the entire VBS back together for a time of singing and sharing. If you’re planning a summer celebration program, you can use this time to review the songs that are part of that program. Kids can recite their Memory Challenge and show their crafts or other projects to the entire group. Your time together can be closed with a leader-led prayer—invite everyone to join hands for the prayer.

Forming Ministry Teams

“Creation Celebration” provides a great opportunity for many people from your congregation to become involved in summer outreach ministry. Here are a few suggestions:

Planning Team: Decides the dates and organizes the teams listed below. Assists and guides the various teams so that the main theme and vision of the VBS or other outreach program is apparent.

Music Team: Chooses music, finds the music leader and musicians, and selects music for program. This course suggests a number of songs and includes them on a CD.

Publicity Team: Creates small fliers and distributes them throughout the neighborhood. Gets the word out about the location, date, and theme. Can also prepare a daily newsletter called “Creation News” that updates parents about what goes on each day. The newsletter could feature a section for leaders as well as “fun facts” for kids to read at home. The publicity team could also include a photographer who wanders around during the entire Creation Celebration event. His or her photos could be displayed in the newsletter and at the program that concludes the week.

Program Team: Organizes the program and sends invitations; possibly organizes an “after-program” event such as an ice cream social or small picnic.

Small Group Session Team: Selects the ideas that will be used for the small group sessions, especially the craft and activity time.

Drama Team: Recruits actors, obtains the necessary items for each drama (including props and costumes), and presents the drama to the entire group. See session 1 for additional comments. *Note:* You may want to create separate props and costumes teams.

Decoration Team: Decorates the large group session area as desired, creating a visual focus for community gathering time. For example, the team could make a banner using all or part of Psalm 148:1-5 (the Memory Challenge for all five sessions for grades 4-8; grades K-3 learn just the first verse). Another possibility is to create a backdrop to illustrate the Scripture passage of the day by projecting one of the images we’ve provided on pages 231-235 of this guide. You could scan the images, print them on a transparency, and then project them with an overhead projector or import them into PowerPoint software. Of course, if you prefer, you can create a single “creation” mural for all five sessions, showing God’s creative activity for each day.

We encourage you to draw on the diverse gifts of members when you compose your teams. Involve as many people from the congregation as you can! Thinking about these stories and how the children will respond to them makes planning an exciting task.

Tailoring Your Sessions to the Ways Children Learn

How do young people learn? The answer to that question can be almost as varied as the kids in your group. Some learn best through words. Others through music. Still others through nature or through movement.

Sessions in the *Walk With Me* curriculum try to respect the many ways kids learn. *Walk With Me* sessions include a wide range of activities that speak to kids with the following types of intelligence (based on Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences). Within each session, the icons below highlight the learning styles represented by each activity. As you teach, you'll begin to get a sense for how the kids in your group learn best. Kids who are



Word Smart

learn best through verbal activities (listening, reading, or speaking), including discussions, worksheets, writing, reading, storytelling, and word games.



Music Smart

learn best through sound, music, and rhythm—playing musical instruments, writing their own songs and raps, listening to recordings, singing, and so on.



Number Smart

learn best by exploring patterns and relationships through activities such as problem solving, logic puzzles or games, making charts and graphs, or putting things in sequence.



People Smart

learn best through doing things with others, cooperating and working in small or large groups, role playing, conversations, brainstorming, and other interactive exercises.



Picture Smart

learn best by visualizing concepts. These kids enjoy viewing maps, slides, pictures, videos, and diagrams; making jigsaw puzzles; and expressing their ideas with shape, color, and design.



Self Smart

learn best by working independently through such things as writing in a journal, meditating, reading, and reflecting.



Body Smart

learn best by using their bodies, acting things out, using puppets, moving—anything hands-on.



Earth Smart

learn best through activities connected to living things and natural phenomena, through nature walks, examining plants and animals, nature experiments, and activities that focus on ecology.

—The ideas on this page are based on material from the following resources: *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom* by Thomas Armstrong, © 2000, and a chart prepared by Donald L. Griggs, Livermore, California.

Sample Summer Celebration Program

Creation Celebration

Processional and Greeting: “Ha-La-La-La!”

Opening Prayer

Reader: Our God is so big that he spoke and the sun, moon, and stars appeared.

Bible Story: “Sounds of Creation”

Song: “My God Is So Great” (folk song)

Reader: Our God is so big that he spoke and water, earth and growing things appeared.

Song: “Waves of Praise” (Genesis 1:1, 6-13)

Congregational Song: “All Things Bright and Beautiful”

Reader: Our God is so big that he spoke and all kinds of animals appeared.

Reading: Genesis 1:1, 20-25

Song: “Thank You, Lord, for Making Me” (Vince Barlow)

Reader: Our God is so big that he created us and put us in charge.

Drama: “Large and in Charge”

Congregational Song: “We Bow Down” (Twila Paris)

Reader: Our God is so great that he forgives our failures, continues to love us, and sends us a Savior.

Reading and Response: “Why Didn’t They Just Say No?”

Song: “Your Everlasting Love” (Bill Batstone)

Memory Fun and Memory Challenge: Psalm 148:1-5

Meditation

Closing Prayer

Additional Program Ideas

Having a summer celebration program is a great way to help focus your church's attention on sharing the good news about Jesus. This program can be used on the last day of your vacation Bible school, during a Sunday service, or for a special weeknight "bring-a-neighbor" service. Read through the sample program above and use it as a guide to create your own unique worship time. You may want to use the logo on page 190 for a program cover.

Here are a few additional ideas:

Scripture Readings

- Middle schoolers and younger children who are good readers can nicely present this part of the program. Consider using simplified English versions such as the NIV or the New Living Bible. You may want to use a paraphrase such as *The Message* for one or two of the readings.
- Children can recite their Memory Fun (younger kids) or Memory Challenge (older kids) together. Another possibility is to print Psalm 148:1-5 in your program and have the audience say it with the children.

Singing

- All the songs we suggest are included on the CD that accompanies this course. Feel free to substitute other songs that the children have enjoyed throughout the unit. Having a closing song time during your weekly or daily sessions will give children the opportunity to become more familiar with the songs.
- You may want to divide your group for some of the singing, with younger children singing the songs they learned and older kids singing the remainder. For example, K-3 kids could practice and sing "God Is Big."
- If the children made kazoos and clappers during the sessions, be sure to use them for some of the songs in your program.

Drama

- Presenting "Large and in Charge" (see session 4) is bound to delight your audience, but if you think one of the other skits would be more effective, feel free to substitute. You could also add a second drama if you wish. For example, you could substitute "Things That Go Twinkle in the Night" for the story "Sounds of Creation" early in the program.
- If you hold the final program in the same place you have been gathering the children, then your staging area will already be in place. However, wherever you find yourself presenting the program, keep your preparations simple! After all, you've worked very hard through the five sessions of Creation Celebration. Enjoy the program and give yourself the gift of less stress!

Stage Direction Ideas

- **Pre-processional:** Have the children line up in the back of the area where you're presenting your program. Have the welcome screen up and running right through the processional.
- **Processional:** All of the children enter the worship space from the back, singing "Ha-La-La-La." Encourage the children to smile and greet people as they enter and to interact with the congregation as they sing and walk to their seats.
- **Opening prayer:** You may want to have one of the older children open with prayer. He or she can thank God for the Bible, for favorite parts of God's creation, and for the people who helped make Creation Celebration possible, as well as ask God's blessing on the program.
- **Formation up front:** Line kids up in front. They can be spread across the front of your worship space in a single row or several rows. (During practice time, assign each child a special spot or area to stand when they sing during the program.)

- **Singing:** If you are planning on having all of the kids sing all of the songs, they may all stay up in front of the church. If smaller groups are singing certain songs, have the others stay seated until it is their turn to sing.
- **Readings:** Have kids who are reading move to a visible location. Have readers use mikes, unless your worship space is small and the readers have big voices! Tell your readers to take it nice and slow: kids tend to rush through their lines, making it hard to understand them. The script for “Why Didn’t They Just Say No?” can be found in session 4, K-3, step 2.
- **“Waves of Praise”:** (see session 2, K-3, step 2). Think about giving streamers grouped by color to your entire congregation. Have kids turn around during the reading so they can see how it looks to have many people praising God!
- **Drama:** The drama team can set up the stage ahead of time. Keep the set simple—remember, God gave us great imaginations!
- **Meditation:** Be sure to give your pastor (or whoever is doing the meditation) a copy of the program and the script(s) for the drama(s) you are presenting. Include any other items the presenter may want to weave into his or her remarks, such as the script for the reading “Why Didn’t They Just Say No?”

Options

Here are a few other ideas you may want to consider for presenting your program:

- Scripture Pyramid with John 3:16 (see session 5, 4-8, p. 146).
- Creation Mural (see Additional Activities, all sessions). Display the finished mural where folks coming to the program can admire it.
- Praise Tree (see Additional Activities, all sessions). Display the tree where the audience can get close enough to read some of its leaves.
- Refreshments: Invite the congregation for punch and cookies after the program. Host it in the room where your Praise Tree is “growing.” Display some of the other projects the children have made.

1

Things That Go Twinkle in the Night

Scripture

Genesis 1:1-5, 14-19

Focus

Our God is so big that he spoke and the sun, moon, and stars appeared.

WORDSearch

Think About It

There's one big problem that confronts the reader of this wonderful text. Maybe even some of the older kids will bring it up. How is it that God's first act is to create light, followed some "days" later by the sun, moon, and stars? There are many possible answers to that question, depending on what you think the purpose of the text is and what kind of literature it is.

Try thinking of it this way. Rather than a scientific description of how the world was created, Genesis 1 is more like a great epic poem or song. The "days" are like stanzas in the poem. There's the rhythm of the repeated refrain: "And there was evening and there was morning . . ." In this understanding, light is more than the rays of the sun. It comes first because, as the gospel of John says, "God is light." The Israelites understood light as a characteristic of the presence of God that pushed back darkness and made creation possible. One commentator says that it's as though every morning were a kind of new creation.

This great chapter was written from a prescientific point of view. The sun and stars are "lights" pierced into the "vault of the sky." It's all written from the point of view of a person standing on the ground looking up. We now look at the universe through the lens of the Hubble telescope. As we read these words today, we can shiver with even greater wonder, knowing that the lights here are parts of millions of vast galaxies stretching light-years across the universe.

It's also important to know that in the ancient world in which this passage was written, many people worshiped the sun, moon, and stars. For example, the Egyptians built their whole cult around the worship of the sun god Ra. Other cultures worshiped the various heavenly bodies. One of the purposes of this great "hymn of creation" is to remind us that all the things people worshiped are actually the creatures of God, brought into being by the Word of his mouth. Truly this passage puts all these heavenly bodies "in their place." They are not gods but creatures. They are not objects of our worship, but creatures of such beauty, power, and wonder that they inspire us to worship the Creator God who spoke them into being.

The children are urged to memorize part of Psalm 148 in this unit. Notice how the Psalm invites the heavenly bodies to worship God. "Praise him, sun and moon; praise him all you shining stars" (Ps. 148:3). The whole creation is ordered to worship the Lord, the Creator of

Pray About It

The psalms are often called the "prayer book of the Bible." They teach us how to pray. Why not use Psalm 148 as your prayer for today. Or even better, use it for several weeks as you move through this unit. It will grow on you as you begin to feel its rhythms and join your praise with the whole creation.

Tell About It

The operative term this week is "wonder"—the wonder of the universe and the wonder of the God who made it all. The best preparation is to get in touch with your own sense of wonder as you look out on a starry night or witness another sunrise.

heaven and earth. “Let them praise the name of the LORD, for at his command they were created” (v. 5).

The awesomeness of the vast universe, just a small part of which is pictured in the nebula, places our worship of God in its proper context. The God who commanded such a universe into being is unimaginably great. Yet this is the God who spoke his final and complete word to us in the “word made flesh” (John 1:14), Jesus Christ. The God who created the universe is the God who loves each and every one of us in giving his only begotten Son that we might have new life and light in him.

Planning the Session

You are in charge of presenting the amazing story of God’s creating, powerful presence at the beginning of time right up to this very moment to all the children in your church school or VBS—from kindergarten to grade 8. That’s no small challenge!

Today’s large group and small group sessions focus on God’s initial act of creation on day one (“Let there be light”) and day four (“Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky”). The purpose of the community gathering time (large group) is to highlight the Scripture theme of the day through singing and drama, and to reinforce the sense of community among the participants in your program. Small group sessions focus on helping the children interpret and respond to the Bible story and teachings.

Depending on how much time you have, you’ll probably want to take at least ten minutes for singing and another ten to fifteen minutes for presenting the skit (if you’re using this material for VBS or other summer ministries, you may well want to spend more time with the large group gathering). The suggestions that follow assume that after the large group session, children will be breaking into small groups for further discussion and related activities. Adult leadership options for the large group session include a music leader, a master of ceremonies who could also serve as the drama narrator, and the actors needed for the drama of the day.

If you’re going to be presenting a summer celebration program, you may want to use part of the large group session to help the children prepare. You’ll find suggestions for planning that special program on pages 10-12.

You may want to create a visual focus for community gathering time. For example, you could make a banner using all or part of Psalm 148:1-5 (the Memory Challenge for all five sessions for grades 4-8; grades K-3 learn just the first verse). Another possibility is to create a backdrop to illustrate the Scripture passage of the day by projecting one of the images we’ve provided on pages 231-235. Today’s image is a swirling nebula. You can scan it, print it on a transparency, and then project it with an overhead projector or import it into PowerPoint. Of course, if you prefer, you can create a single “creation” mural that can be left on display unaltered for all five sessions, showing God’s creative activity for each day.

As part of your preparation, you could also set up a number of “arrival activities” for children to enjoy while they’re waiting for the community gathering time to begin. Please see page 6 for some suggestions.

Singing

A CD with many of the suggested songs is found at the back of this leader’s guide. You’ll find printed music and words on pages 175-189 of this book.

Having a musically gifted, consistent, enthusiastic song leader is a plus for these five sessions. Don’t forget to share the tips in “Introducing a New Song” (p. 16). Singing is a powerful, positive, easy way to plant and nurture seeds of truth in participants.

We recommend selecting a theme song for your large group session. When you're ready for the large group session to begin, play the theme song as a musical cue, in addition to any verbal invitation you give. A great theme song that will involve all your kids is "Ha La La La" (p. 175; CD, track 1). Check out the CD for other choices.

As director of the large group session, you'll want to give kids a warm welcome and a brief explanation of what we're up to. You might say something along these lines:

Welcome, each and every one of you. I'm so happy you're here today. We're going to have a great time together looking at God's incredible creation. Each time we meet together we'll sing, and then we'll hear from the world-renowned scientist, Dr. Great Scott, and take a look at God's Word, the Bible.

Open your Bible to Psalm 148, then continue. Psalm 148 says: "Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights above. Praise him, all his angels, praise him all his heavenly hosts. Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars."

Our God is so big! So big that he spoke and the sun, moon, and stars appeared! Let's sing some praise songs to our great God!

Introduce your song leader and spend some time singing praises to God. Here are a few suggestions (feel free to make your own choices):

- "In the Beginning" (p. 176; CD, track 2)
- "Shout to the Lord" (p. 177; CD, track 3)
- "Famous One" (p. 179; CD, track 4)
- "My God Is So Great" (p. 180; CD track 5)

We suggest ending with "My God Is So Great" because it echoes the focus of our session today and of the entire course. It's also an easy song for younger children to learn and to clap along with.

Ask your song leader to watch for songs that that might work well in your final program at the end of

Creation Celebration, should you decided to have one. If your group is large enough, consider dividing kids into smaller groups to present a variety of songs appropriate to their ages, abilities, and interests at your program.



Consider projecting words to songs on an overhead projector. Invite an older child to keep the group on track with a pointer as the group sings. Words on the overhead get kids' eyes and voices UP instead of DOWN in a book. Also, cue that first song before the children come in so that you are ready to go when they get there.

Introducing a New Song

The way you introduce a new song is crucial. Of course you'll want to know it well yourself. But you'll also want to think through how you'll introduce it to your group. Here are a few ideas to keep in mind:

Many kids learn mostly by rote and repetition. Listen to the CD or play the tune, and encourage kids to join in on a line or phrase that is repeated often.

To help kids remember the words, make up motions that go with simple words like *step*, *Jesus*, and so on.

Be enthusiastic! Model your love of singing instead of being concerned about your performance.

Drama

There's nothing like a play to get children's attention and to present information creatively. All five dramas for the sessions in this book begin with a short, humorous vignette featuring the continuing adventures of Dr. Great Scott and his faithful sidekick, Fritz. Each drama also covers the Scripture passage focus for that particular day. You will need eight or more actors for the Scripture portions of the first two dramas. The last three dramas require a much smaller cast and just a couple of readings ahead of time.

Dr. Scott and Fritz can be played by young adults or adults who practice their roles separately. They could practice for the first two sessions during the weekend before the summer ministries program begins. Once the program is underway, they can rehearse and learn their lines in the evening. Encourage a "loose" memorization, with plenty of room left for improvisation.

For cast members other than Dr. Scott and his assistant, consider using older kids for your drama team. This could be a wonderful gift for your middle school group to offer to the younger children. Give your actors copies of the scripts at least two weeks ahead of time. The dramas for the first two sessions do require at least one rehearsal because of the connection between spoken lines and character movements. It isn't necessary to memorize lines, but practicing them several times will make for a smoother delivery.

All five dramas require a narrator. This part is important to the success of the skits and can be played by one individual or by several. Narrators should be expressive readers. They will likely be reading their lines, not memorizing them.

Costuming throughout is simple, often just modern clothing of a particular color. Dr. Scott can dress up like a "mad scientist." Sets can be very minimal or more elaborate, as you wish (see skit for suggestions).

Plan to have at least one adult serve as the "stage manager" who assigns parts, distributes scripts, collects props, and oversees rehearsals and readings.

This week's drama—"Things That Go Twinkle in the Night" (pp. 155-157)—requires a minimum of seven actors in addition to Dr. Scott and his assistant and the narrator. Please notice, however, that you can add any number of actors to play the role of the stars.

Before presenting "Things That Go Twinkle in the Night," you—or a good reader from your middle school—should read Genesis 1:1-5, 14-19 to the audience, using an easy-to-understand version such as the New International Reader's Version (NIrV). Though this passage is repeated in the drama itself, a careful, slow reading now will help the children understand what the drama is about.

Introduce the drama by saying something like this:

Now it is my delight to introduce to you the famous Dr. Great Scott, known throughout the world for his/her new and exciting ways of looking at life!

After the drama is presented, you could say something along these lines:



You may want to ask your pastor to play the part of Dr. Scott, with perhaps another staff member in the role of his assistant.

According to one pastor who participated in dramas like these, kids enjoyed seeing him in a new role—and were especially gleeful when he goofed up his lines! Why not give it a try?



Encourage your actors to speak slowly and clearly. Understanding the words in a drama makes all the difference to the audience. Give actors permission to be loud and to go slowly! If the actors are nervous about forgetting their lines, they can hide a copy of the script in a basket they're carrying or in some other item you incorporate into your character's costume.

Our God is an amazing creator. He is so powerful that he only had to say the word and our world came into being! We have so much more to experience together, and I am sure Dr. Great Scott and Fritz will be back with more scientific ideas, too!

At this point, you may decide you want to sing again or you may decide to separate into small groups.

Before dismissing kids to their small group, ask for God's blessing on the activities of the day. Thank God for the incredible gifts of creation. Be sure to include any prayer requests gathered earlier by the scribe before the community gathering time started (see p. 7 for a description of this function).

Dismiss the children by age group, starting with the youngest. Sing each group out the door with "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands" (p. 181; CD, track 6) or "Shout to the Lord" (p. 177; CD, track 3) or any response song of your choice.

Small Groups

After the large group session, children will meet in small groups. Notice that we've included two session plans: one for children in kindergarten-grade 3 and another for children in grades 4-8. If your regular church school leaders are present, it's probably best to have the children meet in their regular groups as usual; however, you could also choose to combine several groups together. Each small group leader will need to adapt the plan to the needs of his or her children.

At the end of the small group sessions, leaders will find "Additional Activities." These may be substituted for activities in the small group sessions or, if this material is being used for VBS or other summer ministry programs, they may be used to extend the session to the length desired. Additional Activities are listed first for K-3, then for 4-8, and finally for all grade levels. You'll notice that we've listed many more activities than leaders will be able to use—they'll need to choose the items that best fit their schedule and the space and materials that are available.