

## **Assignment Discovery Online Curriculum Great Books: The Book of Genesis**

### **Curriculum Focus**

World History, Religion and Culture

### **Grade level**

9-12

### **Duration**

One or two class periods

### **Objectives**

Students will

- review what they've learned about the creation myth in Genesis;
- define the meaning of creation story or myth; and
- research and present a creation story, including illustrative artwork, from another religion or culture.

### **Materials**

- Computer with Internet access
- Print resources about creation myths from other religions or cultures
- Paper, paint, colored pencils, and other art supplies

### **Procedures**

1. Explain that the Book of Genesis reflects a creation story. As a class, discuss what is created in Genesis. (For example, the world, nature, man, and woman.) Focus the discussion around these questions:
  - Who or what is responsible for this creation?
  - Why are different elements of life created? Is the force responsible for the creation benevolent, cruel, or both? Explain.
  - What role do humans play in this story?
  - What elements of human life are explained in this creation story?
2. Next, have students use what they've learned about this creation story to develop a class definition for creation story or myth. (*Example: A legend or belief that answers profound questions about the universe, such as the origin of the world, mankind and nature, man's place in the world, natural phenomenon, and life and death.*)
3. Ask students if they know of any other creation stories. If so, have them share the stories with the class.
4. Explain that throughout human history, creation stories have emerged from every culture and religion in the world. Scholars have found such stories from every ancient culture, too, including the Greeks, Chinese, Egyptians, and early American civilizations. Explain that in this lesson, students will work with a partner to learn about a creation story other than Genesis. They will present this story to the class, along with artwork that illustrates a scene or event from the story.

5. Next, have students work in pairs to research their creation stories. Partners should use both print and online resources in their research. The following Web sites are a good starting point:

Mining Company: Links to Creation Myths

<http://ancienthistory.miningco.com/cs/creationmyths/>

The Genesis Project: Creation Myths

<http://library.thinkquest.org/29064/main.html>

Universal Myths (see first four sections on "Creation Myths")

<http://www.dreamscape.com/morgana/uranus.htm>

World Mythology (click map to learn about different cultures)

[http://www.windows.ucar.edu/tour/link=/mythology/worldmap\\_new.html&edu=high](http://www.windows.ucar.edu/tour/link=/mythology/worldmap_new.html&edu=high)

World Mythology: Creation Myths (based on artifacts)

<http://www.artsmia.org/mythology/creationmyths.html>

6. To guide their research, have students answer the following questions about their selected stories. (Note: Questions may not apply to all stories.)
  - Briefly describe the major events that take place in this story.
  - Who or what is created in this story?
  - Who or what is responsible for the creation?
  - Is the force responsible for the creation benevolent, cruel, or both? Explain.
  - Why are things created in this story?
  - What natural phenomenon is explained in this story?
  - What role do humans play in this story?
  - Explain any struggle or conflict in this story.
  - How does this story reflect the culture's period in history and location in the world?
7. Ask each pair to create artwork that illustrates a scene or event from their creation story. They can create a drawing, painting, collage using any materials and style.
8. Have pairs present their creation stories and artwork to the class. Their presentations should include the major events of the story and answer questions found in their research.
9. Discuss the importance of creation stories. Ask students these questions:
  - Why do you think people develop creation stories?
  - Why do people so strongly believe in creation stories? Do you think people today are more likely to believe a creation story than they were thousands of years ago? Why or why not?
  - Why do you think creation stories remain such an important part of a culture, even if some people doubt the events actually happened?

### **Extension activity**

Discuss how man's relationship with God evolves throughout the book of Genesis. Have students focus on four primary stories from Genesis: Adam and Eve; Noah; Abraham; and Jacob. For each story, answer these questions:

- How does God treat each of these people?
- How do they react to God's treatment?
- What is the tone or manner in which they speak with God?
- Finally, have students consider the Book of Genesis as a reflection on the development of man, from childhood to adulthood. How (or where) is each stage reflected in the book of Genesis?

### **Evaluation**

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

**3 points:** Students are highly engaged in class discussions and they create a comprehensive and thoughtful presentation of a creation story that includes many relevant facts.

**2 points:** Students participate in class discussions and they create a somewhat comprehensive presentation of a creation story that includes some facts.

**1 point:** Students participate minimally in class discussions and they create a simplistic presentation of a creation story that has few or no facts.

### **Vocabulary:**

#### **creation story**

Definition: A legend or belief that answers profound questions about the universe, such as the origin of the world, mankind and nature, man's place in the world, natural phenomenon, and life and death

Context: Throughout human history, creation stories have emerged from every culture and religion in all parts of the world.

#### **Genesis**

Definition: The first book of the Old Testament; its stories, which explain the beginning of our world, shaped Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. (The term "genesis" means beginning.)

Context: Stories in the Book of Genesis include those of Creation, Adam and Eve, the Fall of Man, and Noah and the Flood.

### **Academic Standards**

This lesson plan addresses the following standards from the National Council for the Social Studies:

I: Culture

II: Time, Continuity and Change

III: People, Places and Environments

IX: Global Connections

### **Credit**

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