



Creativity

Creativity

In this module we are going to consider **CREATIVITY** - what it means, how it can affect our behaviour and the behaviour of others.

First of all what does the word "creativity" mean?

Creativity means bringing imagination and inspiration to something that you are doing. Creating something new requires ingenuity, inventiveness and resourcefulness, and more than anything, a sense of vision.

What does the Bible say about creativity?

"Your hearts and minds must be made completely new, and you must put on the new self, which is created in God's likeness and reveals itself in the true life that is upright and holy." Ephesians 4 v 24.

Does the Bible give us any examples of creativity?

The Bible shows us many examples of creativity, the main one being the creation of the world by God. The story of the creation is a wonderful example of how God created the whole order of nature from something that was void and without form and made it work in perfect harmony in order to sustain life. But the most astonishing thing of all is that God, who created human beings and fashioned them in His own likeness, designed a way back to Him when sin threatened to alienate His creation from Him, by sacrificing His only Son Jesus on the cross to purge our sin and make us clean again. So let us look at the story of the creation.

The Story of Creation

(You can find this story in the Book of Genesis Chapter 1 through to Chapter 2 verse 4.)

Here are some interesting facts about this story:

1. In the beginning, when God created the universe, the earth was formless and desolate. The raging ocean that covered everything was engulfed in total darkness, and the Spirit of God was moving over the water.

2. Then God commanded, "Let there be light," - and light appeared. God was pleased with what he saw. Then he separated the light from the darkness, and he named the light "Day" and the darkness "Night." Evening passed and morning came - that was the first day.

3. Then God commanded, "Let there be a dome to divide the water and to keep it in two separate places," - and it was done. So God made a dome, and it separated the water under it from the water above it. He named the dome "Sky." Evening passed and morning came - that was the second day.

4. Then God commanded, "Let the water below the sky come together in one place, so that the land will appear," - and it was done. He named the land "Earth," and the water which had come together he named "Sea." And God was pleased with what he saw. Then he commanded, "Let the earth produce all kinds of plants, those that bear grain and those that bear fruit," - and it was done. So the earth produced all kinds of plants, and God was pleased with what he saw. Evening passed and morning came - that was the third day.

5. Then God commanded, "Let lights appear in the sky to separate day from night and to show the time when days, years, and religious festivals begin; they will shine in the sky to give light to the earth," - and it was done. So God made the two larger lights, the sun to rule over the day and the moon to rule over the night; he also made the stars. He placed the lights in the sky to shine on the earth, to rule over the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God was pleased with what he saw. Evening passed and morning came - that was the fourth day.

6. Then God commanded, "Let the water be filled with many kinds of living beings, and let the air be filled with birds." So God created the great sea monsters, all kinds of creatures that live in the water, and all kinds of birds. And God was pleased with what he saw. He blessed them all and told the creatures that live in the water to reproduce and to fill the sea, and he told the birds to increase in number. Evening passed and morning came - that was the fifth day.

7. Then God commanded, "Let the earth produce all kinds of animal life: domestic and wild, large and small," - and it was done. So God made them all, and he was pleased with what he saw.

8. Then God said, "And now we will make human beings; they will be like us and resemble us. They will have power over the fish, the birds, and all animals, domestic and wild, large and small." So God created human beings, making them to be like Himself. He created them male and female, blessed them, and said, "Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under their control. I am putting you in charge of the fish, the birds, and all the wild animals. I have provided all kinds of grain and all kinds of fruit for you to eat; but for all the wild animals and for all the birds I have provided grass and leafy plants for food," - and it was done. God looked at everything he had made, and he was very pleased. Evening passed and morning came - that was the sixth day.

9. And so the whole universe was completed. By the seventh day God finished what he had been doing and stopped working. He blessed the seventh day and set it apart as a special day, because by that day He had completed His creation and stopped working. And that is how the universe was created.

The creation of the world by God is quite beyond our own human understanding, but if you consider the order in which each element was created you will begin to appreciate the imagination and inspiration that God brought to bear. Plants were not created until there was earth and sea. This allowed time for their habitats to establish. Man was not created until the plants, birds, fish and animals were in place, to provide him with nutritious food. There is a magnificent order to creation and it is worth spending some time considering this.

Activity

Provide the children with as many resources as you can gather together to enable them to create something, such as a picture, a model etc. You will need paper, scissors, glue, paints, crayons, brushes, coloured paper, and modeling clay. Ask the children to create anything they want to. Encourage them to use their imagination and put the resources you have gathered to good use. Afterwards get each child to explain what they have created and why they decided to make that particular thing.

The Word of Life

(You can find this story in the Gospel of John Chapter 1 verses 1 to 18.)

Here are some interesting facts about this story:

1. In the beginning the Word already existed; the Word was with God, and the Word was God. From the very beginning the Word was with God.
2. Through him God made all things; not one thing in all creation was made without him. The Word was the source of life, and this life brought light to people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out.
3. God sent his messenger, a man named John, who came to tell people about the light, so that all should hear the message and believe. He himself was not the light; he came to tell about the light. This was the real light—the light that comes into the world and shines on all people.
4. The Word was in the world, and though God made the world through him, yet the world did not recognize him. He came to his own country, but his own people did not receive him. Some, however, did receive him and believed in him; so he gave them the right to become God's children. They did not become God's children by natural means, that is, by being born as the children of a human father; God himself was their Father.
5. The Word became a human being and, full of grace and truth, lived among us. We saw His glory, the glory which He received as the Father's only Son.
6. John spoke about him. He cried out, "This is the one I was talking about when I said, 'He comes after me, but He is greater than I am, because He existed before I was born.'"
7. Out of the fullness of His grace He has blessed us all, giving us one blessing after another. God gave the Law through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. The only Son, who is the same as God and is at the Father's side, He has made him known.

This is a wonderful passage of Scripture and shows us that, "The Word" (i.e. Jesus) was there at the beginning of creation. The Bible tells us that, "The Word was with God and was God and became flesh and dwelt among us". The Trinity is difficult for adults to fully understand let alone children, but God Himself has three aspects to His nature. God Himself as ruler of the world, Jesus who is God in human form and the Holy Spirit

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who indwells God's people and gives them the power to live their lives in obedience to Him. Each aspect of the Godhead has a vital function. Without God there would have been no creation. Without Jesus we could not have been saved from our sins. Without the Holy Spirit we would be unable to grow in faith and become more like Him. What a creative God we serve!

When we allow the Lord into our hearts through the Holy Spirit we become new creations. Our old selfish nature ebbs away and we become more like Him. Just like the magnificence of creation, the Lord can work a similar miracle in our lives too. He will give us the ability and inclination to work tirelessly for Him and give us a peace and joy that transcends understanding.

Activity

One of the best examples you can use to explain the Trinity to children is an apple. An apple comprises of three parts: the peel, the flesh and finally the seeds. Cut the apple in half and show the children what it looks like on the inside. Explain that the peel is like God the Father, who surrounds us and protects us with His love. The flesh is like God the Son, because Jesus is God made flesh. Finally, the seeds are like the Holy Spirit because He helps us to grow as Christians. Yet again we realise just how creative our God is!

Jeremiah at the Potter's House

(You can find this story in the Book of Jeremiah Chapter 18 verses 1 to - 12.)

Here are some interesting facts about this story:

1. The Lord said to me, "Go down to the potter's house, where I will give you my message." So I went there and saw the potter working at his wheel. Whenever a piece of pottery turned out imperfect, he would take the clay and make it into something else.
2. Then the Lord said to me, "Don't I have the right to do with you people of Israel what the potter did with the clay? You are in my hands just like clay in the potter's hands. If at any time I say that I am going to uproot, break down, or destroy any nation or kingdom, but then that nation turns from its evil, I will not do what I said I would. On the other hand, if I say that I am going to plant or build up any nation or kingdom,

but then that nation disobeys me and does evil, I will not do what I said I would.

3. Now then, tell the people of Judah and of Jerusalem that I am making plans against them and getting ready to punish them. Tell them to stop living sinful lives—to change their ways and the things they are doing. They will answer, 'No, why should we? We will all be just as stubborn and evil as we want to be.'

This was a powerful way in which God showed Jeremiah how He deals with His people. The people of Judah and Jerusalem were ignoring God and continued to live sinful lives. God called Jeremiah the prophet to warn them what would happen to them if they continued to live in this godless way. Just like a potter making clay pots, on finding that one was misshapen, he would destroy it and remould it into something else. We, as human beings, are in our Creator's hands and we must allow ourselves to be refashioned and made into people that are useful to Him. We cannot turn around to God and criticise how we are made. He is the master potter and we are His clay, so we must allow Him to make us into the people He wants us to be. When we submit to His will for our lives, He will give us the fruit of the Spirit which we can use creatively to grow and be more useful in His service.

Personal testimony

Share about a time you when you were creative for God, using all the talents God has given you. Discuss with the children if you found this difficult or challenging and why. Ask the children if they have ever been creative. As a group discuss how they can begin to be more creative in using their talents for God.

[Here is an up-to-date story about creativity](#)

There was great excitement in the school that day. A large colourful poster had been placed on the notice board announcing that there was to be an art competition among all the schools in the area. The prize was new sports and computer equipment. Every school in the area was keen to take part, as funding for sports and computer equipment was difficult to raise. The headmaster read out all the details to the school at their morning assembly and said how much their school needed to win. Some of the children shrugged their shoulders and walked off, particularly those who didn't care much for art. But others were very keen. The art teacher and

computing teacher got their heads together and discussed which pupils in the school could produce work to a standard that might give them a chance of winning. Three or four names came to mind, but the name at the top of their list was Wasim.



Wasim was a quiet, rather shy boy who was somewhat of a loner. The difficulty was going to be how to persuade him that the school needed him.

Mr Patel, the art teacher, and Mr Atak, the computer teacher, decided they would get a group of pupils together to gauge interest in the competition and to see just who might be prepared to take part. After a good deal of discussion with a number of pupils, there seemed only one pupil who certainly displayed artistic skills, and it was Wasim.

When Wasim was approached by Mr Patel, he really didn't sound very enthusiastic. "Well, I don't really think I'm good enough sir," said Wasim respectfully. "But my dear boy," reassured Mr Patel, "you really are a very accomplished artist for your age, I think if you chose the right subject to paint then we might stand a chance of winning." "Oh I couldn't do that sir," said Wasim quietly, "I'm not good enough. No one would want to see my work." Mr Patel began to get rather frustrated with Wasim. "Please Wasim," he said. "You are not doing this for yourself but for the good of everyone in the school!" That frightened Wasim all the more and he walked away with his head hung down. Just then Mr Atak came along. "What's wrong with Wasim?" he asked Mr Patel. "He won't participate in the competition, despite everything I can say to reassure him. The boy doesn't understand how good he is." "How very frustrating," said Mr Atak. "Look let's leave it for a little while and let things settle down. In the meantime I'll try and have a word with him outside school hours when we meet up at church." "Okay," said Mr Patel. "I wish you the best of luck!"

The following Sunday, Wasim and his mother attended church as usual. To Wasim's surprise Mr Atak took the service as their minister had been invited to preach elsewhere. Mr Atak led a wonderful service with lots of activities for the children to join in. His theme was, "Using the gifts God has given us". Mr Atak relayed a number of stories from the Bible about people who had used their talents to work for God. One of the stories

was about the boy David who killed Goliath the giant Philistine. How brave David had been, in fact far more than the soldiers in Israel's army. David had used the skills God had given him to be a good shepherd boy to his father's sheep. David was brilliant with the sling and could kill wolves that might sneak up at night and attack the sheep. All David did was to apply those same skills to killing the giant Goliath. The soldiers in the army would never have thought of using a sling with stones. They would have worn heavy armour and flourished their swords. But David was brave enough to use what talents he had in his service for God. All through the story Wasim listened carefully. He knew exactly what Mr Atak meant and began to wonder if he too should use the skills God had given him. But what if they weren't good enough? At the end of the service Mr Atak shook hands with Wasim and his mother at the door, but didn't mention anything to him about the art competition.

Wasim thought about the boy David all day. How scared David must have been to take on the might of Goliath. I bet a lot of people laughed at David that day when they saw this little boy attack the giant with a sling and small stones, he thought. That was a really brave thing to do. Maybe the Lord is calling me to be brave enough to use my skills too!

First thing Monday morning, Wasim went along to the art room and spoke to Mr Patel. "I've been thinking about the art competition all weekend," said Wasim to Mr Patel. "Perhaps I should be brave enough to use my talents and at least try and win the competition." "Bravo!" shouted Mr Patel. "You won't regret it. We will give you all the support you need. Of course we would love you to win, however, it's not the winning, but the taking part that is really important," he smiled.

Wasim had two weeks to create a masterpiece. The competition stipulated that the title of the painting had to be, "What my school means to me." All the teachers allowed Wasim to spend every school hour working on the painting. Wasim came up with lots of ideas for the painting and showed them all to Mr Patel and Mr Atak. They were thrilled with his initial ideas but chose the picture that looked like a collage of all the activities in the school and the smiling faces of the children as they enjoyed working at each of the



activities. It was a very hard picture to draw and paint. A simple landscape picture of the school would have been much easier, but Wasim's picture showed lots of different children engaging in numerous activities. Gradually a number of children began to take an interest in Wasim's painting and soon every day a small group of pupils would gather round Wasim and encourage him. They would bring him sweets, fruit and water to keep him going. Wasim enjoyed having friends around him. Although he was very tired at the end of each day, he felt happier than he had ever done before. Everyone seemed to appreciate all the effort he was putting into the painting.

After ten whole days of working really hard, with only a break at the weekend, Wasim finished the painting. It was magnificent. Even he thought it was quite good. The headmaster was absolutely thrilled with it and showed it to the whole school during the assembly. "What a magnificent creation," said the headmaster. "I don't really mind if we win or not," he said. "This painting will be hung on the wall in the entrance to the school after the competition where it will stay for a very long time." All the children cheered with excitement. And so Wasim's painting was entered into the competition.



It took ages for the result to be announced; it seemed like weeks and weeks. Wasim didn't really mind because he had made such good friends. Then one morning as assembly was about to start, the headmaster called for silence and told the school that he had received a letter from the competition organisers that very morning. He held the envelope up in his hands. "I haven't actually opened the letter yet," he said. "My secretary only gave it to me as I walked in this room." A hush descended on the entire hall. "Is Wasim here?" he asked. A little voice came from the middle of the hall. "Yes sir," Wasim said. "Well," said the headmaster. "I think you should be the one to open this letter as you put all the hard work in." Wasim was very nervous. What if the school hadn't won, how would he feel? But then he remembered the boy David and how God had given him the courage and skill to be creative and defeat the Philistine Goliath. Wasim made his way to the stage at the front of the hall and climbed the stairs onto the stage. The headmaster handed the letter to Wasim, who took it with trembling hands. "Don't worry," said the headmaster quietly. "It's not the winning but the taking part that's

important." Wasim tore open the envelope and unfolded the letter inside. He was so nervous he could only see a jumble of letters. "Take your time," said the headmaster. "Read it out carefully so that we can all hear." Wasim cleared his throat and began to read the letter.

"Dear headmaster and children of the Patak School for boys. Thank you for your contribution to the art competition. The standard of entries was extremely high and the judges found it difficult to choose a winner. After much deliberation we have come to a decision."

Wasim took a deep breath. His heart was beating so fast it felt as if it might jump straight out of his chest. "I have great pleasure in announcing that your school is the winner of the competition. Your painting was of



an incredibly high standard and outshone its competitors. The judges recognised the amount of effort that had gone into the painting, the love and attention to detail by someone who has been blessed with a most wonderful gift from God. The hard work by this artist has enabled your school to receive sports and computer equipment that you might otherwise not have had. The artist is to be commended for his creativity and bravery." Wasim could feel himself on the verge of tears; tears of relief. "Hurrah, Hurrah!" shouted the children. Wasim was hailed a hero by his school friends. Of course he was very proud of his painting which was hung in the entrance to the school for pupils, teachers and visitors to see, but most of all it had brought him lots of new friends and for that he was very grateful to God.

Prayer Time

Pray with the children that God will help them to be creative and put their talents to good use.

Activity

Here is an activity that will nurture the children's creativity. You will need a piece of paper for each child. On each piece of paper draw a squiggle or random shape. (It can be different for each child.) Then ask

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the children to create something out of the shape and colour it in. When all the children have finished go around the group and ask each child to describe their object.

Activity

Here is a mnemonic which describes the steps you can take to encourage creativity.

Combine : *Can you add something else to it? Can you combine purposes, ideas?*

Rearrange: *Can parts of it be moved or changed?*

Eliminate : *What could you remove or replace - in part or whole? Can it be simplified?*

Adapt: *Can it be adapted? What else is this like? What ideas does it suggest?*

Try another use: *Can it be put to other uses - or given a new use if you changed one part?*

Extend: *What could be added - words, pictures, symbols, functions, decoration, logos?*

With this in mind ask the children to consider an ordinary object (e.g. a utensil from the kitchen, a tool from the garage or a piece of clothing etc.) By applying the stages above see if they can change the object so it can be put to a different use.

TEACHING NOTES TO ACCOMPANY THE MODULE ON "CREATIVITY"

These notes are to be used in conjunction with the teaching module on "Creativity".

The Bible stories used in this module are from the Book of *Genesis* Chapter 1 through to Chapter 2 verse 4, which tells how God created the world; also how God reveals three aspects of Himself, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit in John's Gospel Chapter 1 verses 1 to 18, and finally how God fashions us for His own purpose in the Book of *Jeremiah* Chapter 18 verses 1 to 12. It will be useful to familiarise yourself with these passages of Scripture before presenting the module to the children.

You will need paper, pencils, crayons, paints, brushes, modelling clay, card and glue. Also you need to make enough squiggle drawings for each of the children to have one. Slice an apple in half to show the children the three layers (peel, flesh and seeds). You may also wish to write out the mnemonic of CREATE on a large piece of paper.

The Story of Creation

The creation of the world by God is quite beyond our own human understanding, but if you consider the order in which each element was created you will begin to appreciate the imagination and inspiration that God brought to bear. Plants were not created until there was earth and sea. This allowed time for their habitats to establish. Man was not created until the plants, birds, fish and animals were in place, to provide him with nutritious food. There is a magnificent order to creation and it is worth getting the children to spend some time considering this.

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unable to grow in faith and become more like Him. What a creative God we serve!

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Conclusion

We serve a wonderfully creative God, evident in nature all around us. Not only that, but God gives skills and talents to His people to use to His praise and glory. As Christians we should do everything we can to explore the talents we have been given by God and put them to good use. This is something that has to be worked at with patience and perseverance. The more we explore our talents and put them into practice, the more we can achieve. This will benefit those around us and please our Heavenly Father.