

Ask everyone in your group: **What is the biggest gift you have ever been given?**

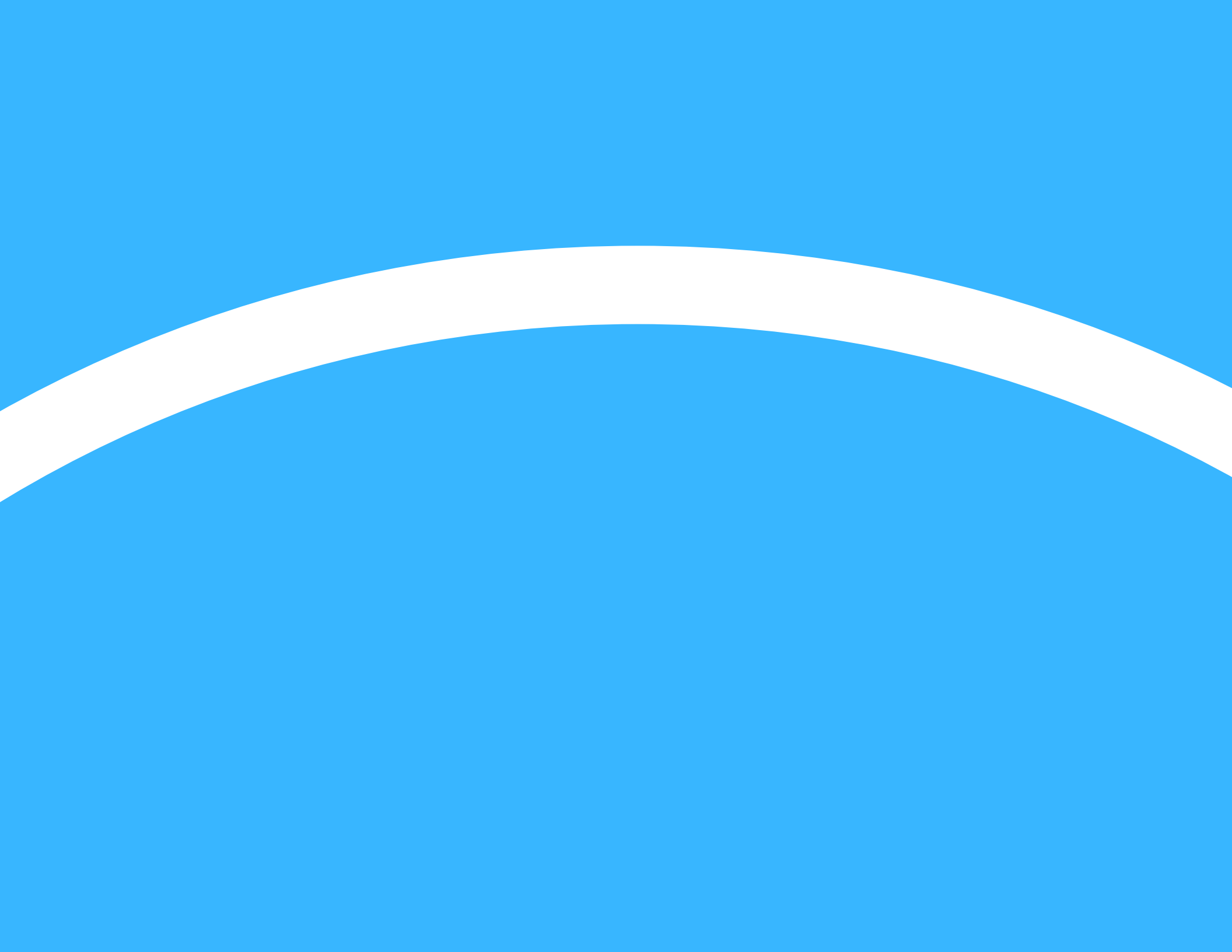
Did you know that some gifts are so enormous that you can't even see them? They're so huge that you have to go back to the beginning to even catch a glimpse. Or maybe even a little before the beginning.



In the beginning, there was... well, there wasn't very much. In the beginning, there was nothing. Except, perhaps, an enormous smile. But there was no one there to see it.

And then, on the first day, God gave us the gift of light. Now there was not just darkness, but there was light, too. God divided the light from the darkness, and they were both gifts.

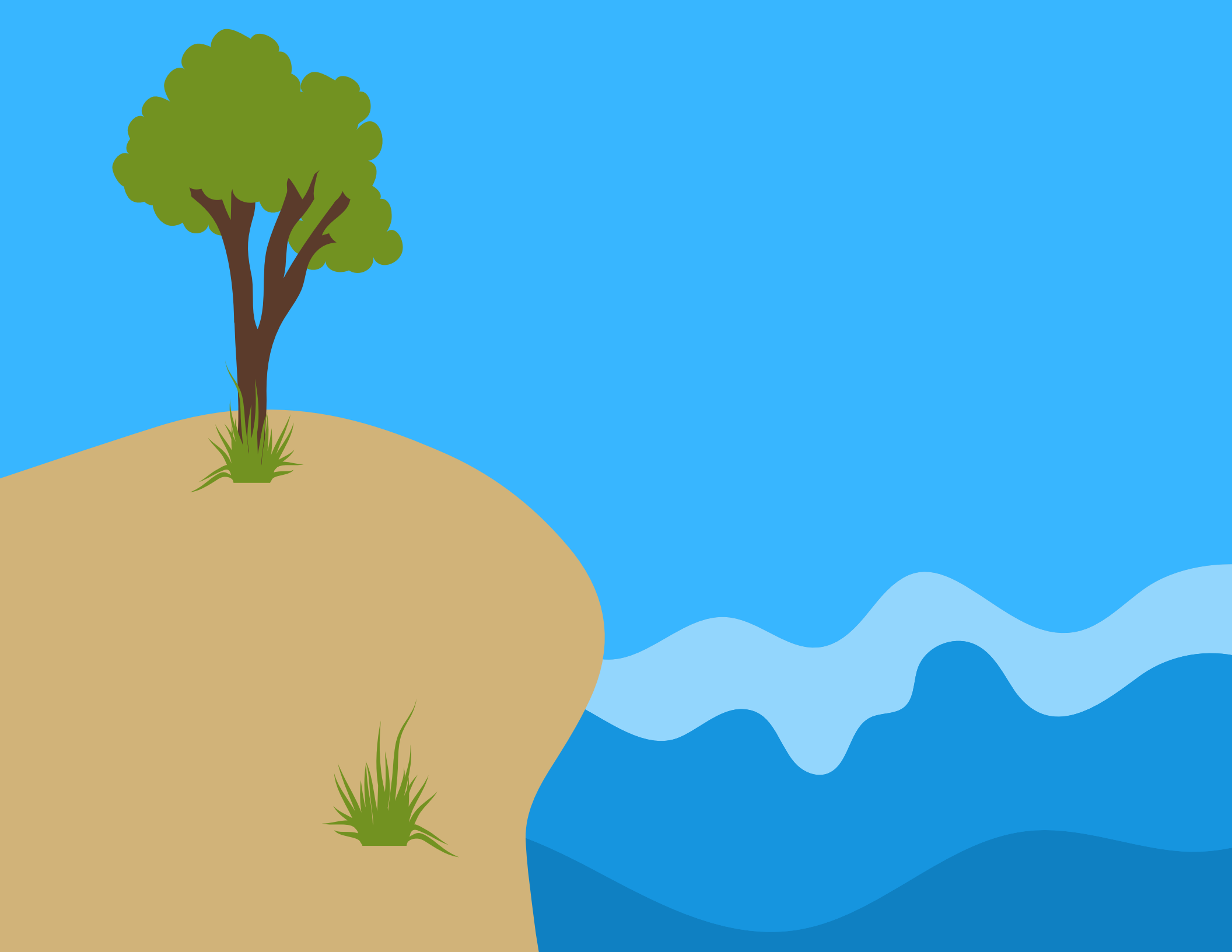
When God saw the light and the darkness, God said "**It is good.**" And that was the end of the first day.



On the second day, God gave us the gift of water. Now, I don't mean just the water in a glass of water, or even the water in the ocean, but I mean all the water that is water.

This is the "firmament"- that which divides the waters above from the waters below.

When God saw all that water, God said, "**It is good.**" And that was the end of the second day.



On the third day, God gave us the gift of the dry land. God divided the dry land and the water, and then God gave us the gift of the green and growing things. The green and growing things would start to fill up the earth with life.

When God saw the dry land, and the green and growing things, God said "**It is good.**" And that was the end of the third day.

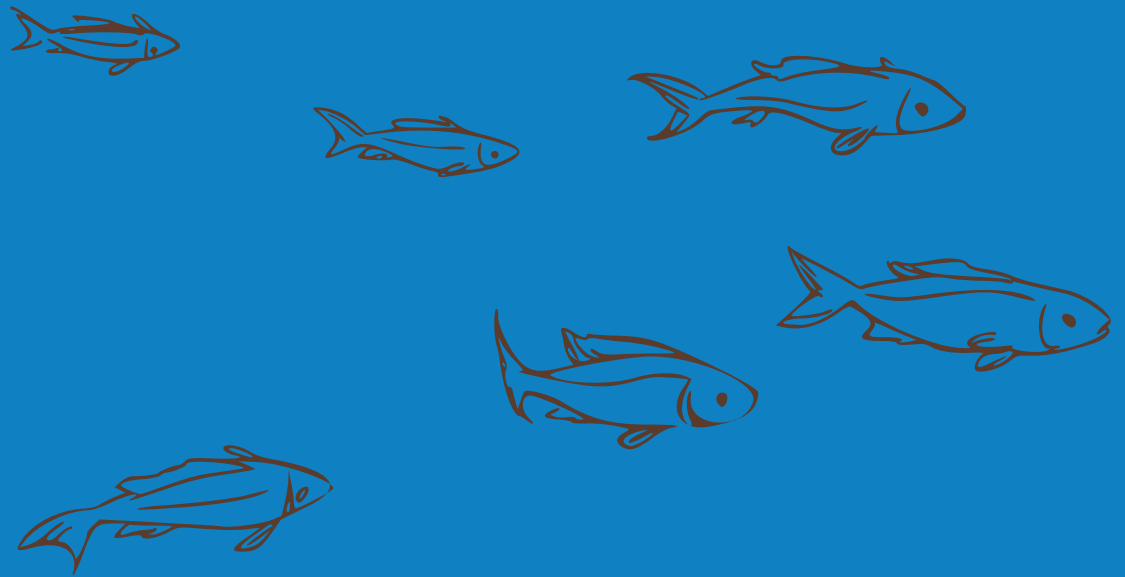
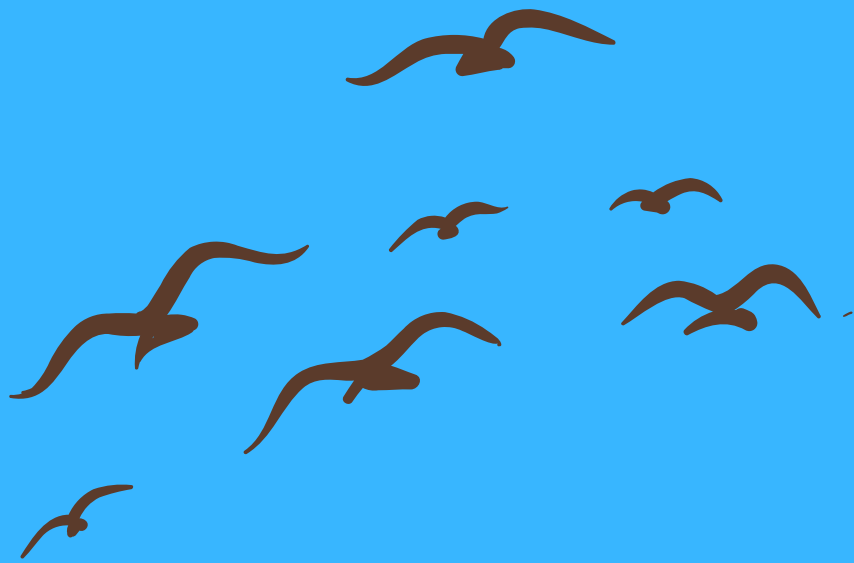


On the fourth day, God gave us the gift of the day and the night, a way to count our days.

Here is the great light that rules the day, the sun.

And here are the lights that rule the night, the moon and stars.

When God saw the day and the night, our way to keep time, God said, "**It is good.**" And that was the end of the fourth day.



On the fifth day, God gave us the gift of the creatures that fly in the air. Not just the birds, but all the creatures of the air.

And all the creatures that swim, all of them.

When God saw the creatures that fly, and all the creatures that swim, God said, "**It is good.**" And that was the end of the fifth day.



On the sixth day, God gave us the gift of all the creatures that walk upon the earth. Creatures that walk on two legs, like you and me, and creatures that walk on many legs.

When God saw the creatures that walk on two legs, and the creatures that walk on many legs, and all the gifts of the other days God said, "**It is very good.**" And that was the end of the sixth day.

On the seventh day, God rested, and gave us the gift of rest - a whole day of rest, and a time to remember the gifts of the other days. There's nothing here, because people go to different places to remember the great gifts. You can put your favorite place to rest and remember here. Maybe it's your synagogue or church, maybe it's under a tree in your back yard, maybe it's your bedroom. I can't tell you where your place is, only you know.

Questions to wonder through together:

I wonder which of these days you like best?

I wonder which day is the most important?

I wonder which day you are in, or which day is especially about you?

I wonder if we can leave out any of these days and still have everything we need?

Response: Use the container of clay to fashion some of the "missing parts" of this story. Maybe add some animals, trees, or your place of rest. Leave your sculpture here for the people who come after you to see, and keep creating along with God.

GENESIS 2: IN THE GARDEN



The sky, the earth, and all that filled them were finished.

By the seventh day God finished the work God had been doing, so God rested from all of God's work. God blessed the seventh day and made it a holy day, because on that day God rested from all the work God had done in creating the world.

...

This is the story of the creation of the sky and the earth. When the Lord God first made the earth and the sky, there were still no plants on the earth. Nothing was growing in the fields because the Lord God had not yet made it rain on the land. And there was no person to care for the ground, but a mist would rise up from the earth and water all the ground.

DID YOU KNOW THERE ARE TWO DIFFERENT CREATION STORIES IN OUR BIBLE? SO OFTEN WHEN WE READ THIS STORY FROM GENESIS 2, WE MOVE RIGHT ON THROUGH TO THE CREATION OF HUMANKIND. IN GENESIS 1, HUMANS WERE AMONG THE LAST THINGS TO BE CREATED, BUT IN GENESIS 2, THEY ARE CREATED BEFORE GOD EVEN CREATED THE GREEN AND GROWING THINGS, BEFORE EVEN RAIN WOULD FALL DOWN ON THE GROUND. IMAGINE WHAT A BARREN EARTH WOULD LOOK LIKE TO HA-ADAM (THE HUMAN, BEFORE THEY WERE SPLIT INTO ADAM AND EVE), AND GIVE THANKS FOR THE GREAT VARIETY OF LIFE THAT GOD PUT INTO OUR GARDEN HOME!

USE THE CHALK TO DRAW MORE LIFE IN THE PAVED AREAS. FILL IT UP WITH FLOWERS AND ANIMALS!

GENESIS 2: BREATH OF LIFE

Then the Lord God took dust from the ground (*adamah*) and formed the man (*ha-adam*) from it. God breathed the breath of life into *ha-adam's* nose, and *ha-adam* became a living person. Then the Lord God planted a garden in the east, in a place called Eden, and put *ha-adam* into it.

Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for *ha-adam* to be alone. I will make a helper who is right for them." [...] So the Lord God caused *ha-adam* to sleep very deeply, and while they were asleep, God took one side from *ha-adam*. Then God closed up the man's skin at the place where God took the side. The Lord God used the side of the man to make a woman, and then God brought the woman to the man. And the man said, "Now, this is someone whose bones came from my bones, whose body came from my body. I will call her 'woman,' because she was taken out of man."

IN THIS STORY OF CREATION, A HUMAN (HA-ADAM) IS CREATED WHEN GOD MOLDS THEM OUT OF DUST FROM THE GROUND (ADAMAH) AND BREATHES INTO THEIR NOSE. LATER, WHEN HA-ADAM DISCOVERS THAT THEY ARE ALONE AND DO NOT HAVE A HELPER, THE LORD GOD SPLITS HA-ADAM INTO TWO, AND FROM THEN ON, THE MAN IS REFERRED TO AS ADAM, AND THE WOMAN AS EVE. IN BOTH HEBREW AND GREEK, THE WORD THAT WE TRANSLATE AS "SPIRIT" IS THE SAME WORD AS "BREATH" AND "WIND."

SPEND SOME TIME WITH THE BUBBLES, AND ALLOW THE WIND TO BLOW SOME LARGE BUBBLES AND SOME SMALL BUBBLES. GOD TOOK THE PRIMAL STUFF THAT WE ARE MADE FROM, AND PUT GOD'S OWN BREATH OR SPIRIT INTO US. CELEBRATE THE DIVERSITY OF EVERYTHING THAT HAS LIFE AND BREATH!

SETTLING JARS

SWIRL THE JAR AND WATCH THE GLITTER SLOWLY SINK TO THE BOTTOM WHILE YOU PRAY FOR THE WHOLE EARTH TO BE CARED FOR.

Have someone (or more than one person!) in your group read these passages from Ezekiel 34:

This is what the Lord God says: How terrible it will be for the shepherds of Israel who feed only themselves! Why don't the shepherds feed the flock? You eat the milk curds, and you clothe yourselves with the wool. You kill the fat sheep, but you do not feed the flock. You have not made the weak strong. You have not healed the sick or put bandages on those that were hurt. You have not brought back those who strayed away or searched for the lost. But you have ruled the sheep with cruel force. The sheep were scattered, because there was no shepherd, and they became food for every wild animal. My flock wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered all over the face of the earth, and no one searched or looked for them. [...]

This is what the Lord God says: I, myself, will search for my sheep and take care of them. As a shepherd takes care of his scattered flock when it is found, I will take care of my sheep. I will save them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day. [...]

This is what the Lord God says: As for you, my flock, I will judge between one sheep and another, between the male sheep and the male goats. *Is it not enough for you to eat grass in the good land? Must you crush the rest of the grass with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink clear water? Must you make the rest of the water muddy with your feet? Must my flock eat what you crush, and must they drink what you make muddy with your feet?*

TO A JAR, ADD SOME WARM WATER, A SMALL SQUIRT OF GLUE, SOME GLITTER, AND A LITTLE BIT OF FOOD COLORING. FILL TO THE TOP WITH MORE WATER. GENTLY SWIRL AND WATCH THE GLITTER SETTLE DOWN OVER THE COURSE OF ABOUT A MINUTE. PRAY THAT WE WOULD STOP "CRUSHING THE PASTURE" AND "MUDDYING THE WATERS."

IT'S NOT JUST
ABOUT BEES! WANT
TO LEARN HOW TO
HELP ALL
POLLINATORS?

OPEN YOUR PHONE'S
CAMERA AND POINT IT AT
THIS QR CODE OR GO TO
POLLINATOR.ORG

SCAN ME

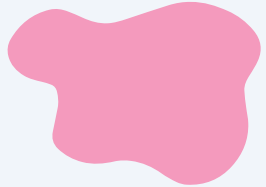


PRAYING WITH COLOR!

SAY A PRAYER AND THEN TIE A COLOR ON TO THE FRAME



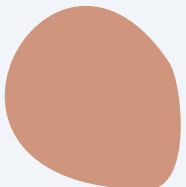
YELLOW - PRAY FOR THE BEES!
WE NEED OUR POLLINATORS TO HELP US TO EAT.



PINK - PRAY FOR THE ANIMALS!
MANY WILD ANIMALS ARE LOSING THEIR HOMES EACH YEAR.



GREEN - PRAY FOR THE FORESTS!
TREES ARE CUT DOWN AND WE NEED MORE TO BE PLANTED.



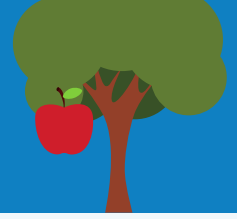
TAN - PRAY FOR THE SOIL AND FARMLAND!
IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE TAKE CARE OF THE SOIL.



BLUE - PRAY FOR THE WATERS OF THE EARTH!
PRAY FOR THE OCEANS AND PRAY FOR THE TAR RIVER.



GEN 3: THE TREE(S)



Then the Lord God planted a garden in the east, in a place called Eden, and put *ha-adam* into it. The Lord God caused every beautiful tree and every tree that was good for food to grow out of the ground. In the middle of the garden, God put the tree that gives life and the tree that gives the knowledge of good and evil. A river flowed through Eden and watered the garden. The Lord God put *ha-adam* in the garden of Eden to care for it and work it. The Lord God commanded them, "You may eat the fruit from any tree in the garden, but you must not eat the fruit from the tree which gives the knowledge of good and evil. If you ever eat fruit from that tree, you will die!" [...]

Now the snake was the most clever of all the wild animals the Lord God had made. One day the snake said to the woman, "Did God really say that you must not eat fruit from any tree in the garden?" The woman answered the snake, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden. But God told us, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden. You must not even touch it, or you will die.'" But the snake said to the woman, "You will not die. God knows that if you eat the fruit from that tree, you will learn about good and evil and you will be like God!" The woman saw that the tree was beautiful, that its fruit was good to eat, and that it would make her wise. So she took some of its fruit and ate it. She also gave some of the fruit to her husband who was with her, and he ate it. Then, it was as if their eyes were opened. They realized they were naked, so they sewed fig leaves together and made something to cover themselves.

THIS IS A VERY CONFUSING PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE! SOME SCHOLARS BELIEVE THAT THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL AND THE TREE OF LIFE ARE ONE AND THE SAME. IN THIS STORY, GOD TELLS HA-ADAM THAT THEY WILL DIE IF THEY EAT OF THIS TREE, AND THEN AFTER THEY ARE SPLIT INTO A MAN AND WOMAN, THEY EAT, AND THEY DON'T DIE, BUT THEY BECOME LIKE GOD. THEY LEARNED THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL, AND NOW THEY WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR CHOOSING THE GOOD.

WHAT THINGS MUST WE "OPEN OUR EYES TO" SO WE CAN KNOW WHAT'S GOOD OR EVIL FOR THE EARTH? WRITE YOUR PRAYERS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE EARTH ON THE LEAVES, AND ADD THEM TO THE TREE!

REMEMBER YOUR BAPTISM

Mark 1:9-11

At that time Jesus came from the town of Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan River. Immediately, as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven open. The Holy Spirit came down on him like a dove, and a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love, and I am very pleased with you."

A Thanksgiving Over the Water, BCP 306

We thank you, Almighty God, for the gift of water. Over it the Holy Spirit moved in the beginning of creation. Through it you led the children of Israel out of their bondage in Egypt into the land of promise. In it your Son Jesus received the baptism of John and was anointed by the Holy Spirit as the Messiah, the Christ, to lead us, through his death and resurrection, from the bondage of sin into everlasting life. We thank you, Father, for the water of Baptism. In it we are buried with Christ in his death. By it we share in his resurrection. Through it we are reborn by the Holy Spirit. Therefore in joyful obedience to your Son, we bring into his fellowship those who come to him in faith, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

The Collect for the Baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ, BCP 214

Father in heaven, who at the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan proclaimed him your beloved Son and anointed him with the Holy Spirit: Grant that all who are baptized into his Name may keep the covenant they have made, and boldly confess him as Lord and Savior; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, One God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

WATER IS ONE OF THE VERY FIRST GIFTS GIVEN BY GOD. TAKE SOME TIME TO MEDITATE ON THE THANKSGIVING OVER WATER. AND WHEN YOU'RE READY, SANITIZE YOUR HANDS, THEN REACH INTO THE BOWL OF WATER AND PULL OUT ONE OF THE GLASS BEADS. PRETEND THAT IT IS A LARGE DROPLET OF WATER, FROZEN IN TIME. THIS CAN BE FOR YOU A MEMENTO OF YOUR BAPTISM. TAKE IT WITH YOU, TREASURE IT, AND KEEP IT SAFE.