FAITHWEAVER NOW®

Weaving faith into today's families

FALL SUNDAY SCHOOL

MIDDLE SCHOOL LEADER GUIDE

Group

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This Group resource incorporates our R.E.A.L. approach to ministry. It reinforces a growing friendship with Jesus, encourages long-term learning, and results in life transformation, because it's

Relational
Learner-to-learner interaction enhances learning and builds Christian friendships.

Experiential
What learners experience through discussion and action sticks with them up to 9 times longer than what they simply hear or read.

Applicable
The aim of Christian education is to equip learners to be both hearers and doers of God's Word.

Learner-based
Learners understand and retain more when the learning process takes into consideration how they learn best.

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FaithWeaver NOW® Bible Curriculum, Middle School Bible Studies, Fall
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Contents

Introduction 4

The Studies

Study 1: God Creates the World—Genesis 1:1–2:3 5

Study 2: God Creates Adam and Eve—Genesis 2:4-22 15

Study 3: Adam and Eve Sin—Genesis 3 25

Study 4: Cain Kills Abel—Genesis 4:1-16 35

Study 5: Noah Builds the Ark—Genesis 6:5-22 45

Study 6: God Floods the Earth—Genesis 7–8; 9:8-16 57

Study 7: People Build a Tower at Babel—Genesis 11:1-9 67

Study 8: Abram Follows God's Direction—Genesis 12:1-8 77

Study 9: Lot and Abram Divide the Land—Genesis 13 87

Study 10: God Makes a Covenant With Abram—Genesis 15:1-18 97

Study 11: Abraham's Visitors/Sodom and Gomorrah
Genesis 18:1–19:29 105

Study 12: Isaac Is Born—Genesis 21:1-6 115

Study 13: God Cares for Hagar and Ishmael—Genesis 21:8-21 123

The future of Sunday school + family ministry is NOW.

No doubt about it, the world is changing. Families used to go to church every week. Kids used to have longer attention spans. Teachers used to have more time to prepare. And didn't our budgets used to be bigger?

Even the Sunday school Bible curriculum you used just a couple of years ago is already out of date. But there's one thing that's never changed: the need to grow families closer to Jesus.

That's why we created FaithWeaver NOW®, and it's different from anything you've ever seen before!

It combines Sunday school with family ministry.

Sure, you've seen Sunday school aimed at families. But FaithWeaver NOW actually hits the target by having everyone in the family learning about the same Scripture each week.

It's simpler and easier.

Sometimes change is a wonderful thing. Gone are the days when you needed to spend hours preparing your lessons and hunting for supplies. FaithWeaver NOW will have you and your team ready to go in a snap.

It's made for NOW.

Life is complicated and full of distractions. FaithWeaver NOW keeps faith on track through even the most frenzied lifestyles.

What makes FaithWeaver NOW the perfect curriculum for TODAY's church?

- Families learn the same Bible passage in age-appropriate ways.
- Kids don't just hear the Word. They experience it.
- Simple and easy lessons fit even the busiest lives.
- Kids see God in their everyday world.
- The Scope & Sequence goes through the Bible every three years.
- You can customize it however you like, with both print and digital versions.

Create a vibrant family ministry that's new…that's wow…that's NOW. FaithWeaver NOW gives you a fresh strategy for being more successful than ever in bringing families closer to Jesus.

Thom and Joani Schultz
Chairman and Chief Creative Officer
Group Publishing, Inc.

God Creates the World

Genesis 1:1–2:3

Many middle schoolers have studied theories that contradict the biblical account of Creation, and they may be confused about the beginning of the world. Therefore, understanding practically and personally how God created the world is extremely important for them. Throughout this study, concentrate your students' attention on God's amazing handiwork. Their grasp of God's awesome creative power will be something they'll keep with them their entire lives.

STUDY	WHAT STUDENTS DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Faith Connection	**Who Knows Everything?** *(about 10 min.)* Participate in a game show about Creation.	paper, pens	
	Media Connection (Option) *(about 10 min.)* Watch a movie clip in which an unusual invention begins to work.	video player, movie *Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs*	Cue *Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs* to 00:18:08, when Sam introduces herself.
2 Bible Exploration	**God's Creative Touch** *(about 20 min.)* See how quickly they can name creations for each day of Creation.	Bibles, Bible Trek, ball, pens	Tear out the Study 1 pages from each Bible Trek student book.

Bold text *within the lesson is spoken text.*

▶Bible Point

God made the world.

Key Verse

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).

Weaving Faith Into Life

Students will spend time exploring God's creation and thanking him for the beauty of his world.

STUDY	WHAT STUDENTS DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	**Choose Your Own Adventure** *(about 20 min.)*		
	Adventure 1: Greetings, Earthlings! Write an article as if they were visiting earth for the first time.	Bibles, Bible Trek, paper, pens	Set out the supplies for each adventure at different stations.
	Adventure 2: My Earth Creatively depict what happened during the creation of the world.	Bibles, Bible Trek, modeling dough (many colors), newspaper or disposable tablecloth, several plastic knives	At the Adventure 2 station, cover a table with newspaper or a disposable tablecloth.
	Tree of Thanks *(about 10 min.)* Make a tree mural to express thanks for Creation, in a reflective prayer exercise.	Bible, brown construction paper (optional), scissors, tape, sticky notes, pens	Optionally, tape brown construction paper to the wall as a tree trunk, adding branches if you desire.
4 Lasting Impressions	**Daily Challenges** *(about 5 min.)* Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God's Word.	Bible Trek, pens	
	Weaving Faith at Home *(about 2 min.)* Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.	Bible Trek	Tear out the letter to parents from the back of each Bible Trek student book.

***Bold text** within the lesson is spoken text.*

God Creates the World

Genesis 1:1–2:3

BIBLE BACKGROUND FOR LEADERS

God's Beginnings With Humans

The book of Genesis gives us the beginnings. Not the beginning of God; God has existed eternally. Nor is it just the beginning of our world. It's the beginnings of God's working with humans. In fact, "beginning" is the meaning of the Greek word from which the name *Genesis* came. What better place to start a new season than at the beginning!

Elohim is the Hebrew name used for God in Genesis 1:1. It's interesting that the name is plural, but the verb *created* is singular. Even though God exists in three persons, the action of creating the universe was unified.

God's Creation Was Good

Genesis 1:1–2:3 describes a vast variety of things God created, but the focus isn't so much on the creation as it is on the Creator. Nine times in this passage we read "God said" and then some variation of "and it was so." God spoke our universe, our planet, and humankind into existence. And what God did was good.

The word translated "good" here is a common Hebrew word that, like our word *good*, can have several meanings. Here, it likely has no moral connotation but means "just as it should be." God looked at what he had done and knew it was right.

After Creating, God Rested

God was creating a bountiful, beautiful home for the treasured beings that he created last. Notice that God created many of each thing: not just one tree, but "seed-bearing plants and trees…according to their various kinds"; not just one star, but "lights in the expanse of the sky"; not just one fish, but "every living and moving thing with which the water teems." God prepared a marvelous earth for his crowning creation to enjoy. And then God created humans. We're a vital part of everything good that God made.

When God finished creating the heavens and the earth "in all their vast array," he rested. Why? God wasn't tired. God didn't need to rest. No, God rested as a signal that Creation was complete. The seventh day became a holy day—a day to reflect on the wonder of what God had done, a day to smile and to know that it was good.

The Jesus Connection

God's creation is inspiring, and the gift of his Son is lifesaving. Thank God for the beauty of life in nature and in our hearts through a relationship with Jesus! Show love for God's creation during the lesson this week, and help others see that the Creator has given them new life through Jesus as well.

What in nature amazes you? Oceans of beautifully colored fish? Massive forests? Take some time to appreciate the creativity of God's design, and consider how God has designed your life, too. You can write your prayer here.

Who Knows Everything?
Supplies

paper
pens

1 FAITH CONNECTION

Who Knows Everything?

What You'll Do

Welcome your students, and have them sit facing one another, either on the floor or in chairs. Each student will need a pen and paper.

Say: **Hello, and welcome to the hit game show *Who Knows Everything*! Here's how it works: I'm going to read a few questions. Write your answers on your paper without sharing them with anyone else. If you don't know the answer, have fun guessing. Let's start!**

Ask each of the following questions, and pause for students to write answers.

Question 1: What kind of animal is an *Anas Platyrhynchos*? (Answer: mallard duck)

Question 2: How many different species of insects are there in the world? (Answer: about 900 thousand known; an estimated 2-30 million)

Question 3: What is a group of emus called? (Answer: a mob)

Question 4: What is the most common kind of tree in the United States? (Answer: red maple)

Question 5: What is a fossa? (Answer: a cat-like animal from Madagascar)

Question 6: What is the name of the star closest to the sun? (Answer: Alpha Centauri)

When you've finished, give your students the answers so they can see how they did. Although very few students will get the correct answers, encourage all the students who made an effort. Have each student keep his or her own personal score so there's no competition.

Talk With Students

Lead students in this discussion.

Ask:

- **Did you know all the answers? Why or why not?**
- **When you think about all the things you don't know about the world around you, how does that make you feel? Explain.**
- **Tell an interesting fact you know about creation.**
- **What are some animals or other things in our world that you think are funny or strange?**

Say: **Our world is full of interesting creatures, things, and even people. And ▶ GOD MADE THE WORLD and all these interesting things. Let's dig a little deeper**.

Media Connection (Option)

Tip In general, federal copyright laws do not allow you to use videos or DVDs (even ones you own) for any purpose other than home viewing. Your church can obtain a license from Christian Video Licensing International for a small fee. Just visit cvli.com or call 1-888-771-2854 for more information.

Many movie clips are available at youtube.com. This clip is also available at wingclips.com under the title "It Really Works."

What You'll Do

Instead of doing the "Who Knows Everything?" activity, use a clip from *Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs* to demonstrate human creativity. Start the clip at 00:18:08, when Sam introduces herself. In this clip, inventor Flint's creation that makes weather systems produce food begins to work. Stop the clip at 00:21:16, when a little boy catches a burger and takes a big bite.

Talk With Students

Lead students in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What do you think about Flint's invention?**
- **In what ways have you seen real humans show amazing creativity?**
- **Explain whether or not you agree with this statement: Humans can make things that improve upon God's creation.**

Say: **Flint's invention was an amazing scientific feat (even if it was fictional). But—spoiler alert—problems arose! Nonetheless, humans have invented some real and wonderful things that have saved lives. And as amazing as those things may be, no human has ever made something out of nothing. Every man-made thing comes from the things God made. And every idea for a man-made thing comes from a brain God made. Human creativity simply points us to our Creator. So, let's explore how ▶ GOD MADE THE WORLD.**

Media Connection
Supplies

video player
movie *Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs*

Media Connection
Easy Prep

Cue *Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs* to 00:18:08, when Sam introduces herself.

God's Creative Touch Supplies

Bibles
Bible Trek
ball
pens

God's Creative Touch Easy Prep

Tear out the Study 1 pages from each Bible Trek student book.

2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

God's Creative Touch

What You'll Do

Say: **Genesis 1:1–2:3 gives us the awesome history of how ▶ GOD MADE THE WORLD. All he did was speak and things came into existence! That's not just amazing power—it's amazing that he could think of as many kinds of creations as he did. Let's see how quickly we can think of things related to God's creation.**

Choose seven students to each read one Bible passage from the list below. After each passage, have students toss a ball around and name something in the corresponding category listed below. If a student with the ball takes more than two seconds to answer or repeats an answer, he or she will sit down until everyone is sitting. Then move on to the next passage and have everyone stand up to play again.

- Genesis1:3-5. Category: things that light up.
- Genesis 1:6-8. Category: names of lakes or oceans.
- Genesis 1:9-13. Category: kinds of plants.
- Genesis 1:14-19. Category: things that can be found in the sky.
- Genesis 1:20-23. Category: kinds of water animals OR birds.
- Genesis 1:24-31. Category: kinds of land animals.
- Genesis 2:1-3. Category: leisure activities. (For this category, slow the game down and allow as much time as students need, so that no one has to sit. End the game after everyone has shared one or two things.)

Talk With Students

Lead students in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What are some other views on how the earth was created?**
- **What evidence is there for Creation or for those other views?**
- **Why do you or don't you personally believe that ▶ GOD MADE THE WORLD?**
- **What stands out to you about the order in which God created things?**

Say: **Isn't it amazing to think about how God created things we see every single day? Sometimes in our busy world, we don't slow down long enough to look at something and say, "Hey, God created that." But God showed us an example by resting to enjoy his creation. So let's do that now by answering the questions on our Bible Trek pages.** Have students turn to the "Think It Over" section of their Bible Trek pages and write answers to the questions.

Say: **God is the most creative force in the universe. God's seen and unseen power makes his creativity an amazing mystery. But isn't God's handiwork and plan for**

creation incredible? ▶ GOD MADE THE WORLD and everything in it—the birds, the trees, even you and me. And if God can do all that, what problem can't God solve creatively and powerfully in our lives?

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Choose Your Own Adventure

What You'll Do

Say: **In our adventures today, we have two activities you can choose from. Adventure 1 uses creative writing, and Adventure 2 uses sculpting. The directions are on your Bible Trek pages. Look them over and decide which activity you want to do. You can work with the others who choose the same activity.** Allow time for students to decide which adventure they want to do. Summaries of each adventure follow.

ADVENTURE 1—CREATIVE WRITING: GREETINGS, EARTHLINGS!
In this adventure, students will write an article imagining that they are seeing earth for the very first time.

ADVENTURE 2—SCULPTING: MY EARTH
In this adventure, students will use their own creativity to model God's creativity in forming the earth. Students will represent creation as a way of showing their appreciation and thanksgiving toward God for what they've learned.

Say: **After you finish your adventures, you'll present some of what you experienced, so keep that in mind. When everyone has finished, we'll talk about what we've learned. You have 15 minutes to complete your adventures.** While students are working, move between the stations and offer assistance as needed. Let groups know when they have about five minutes left so they can wrap up their work.

After 15 minutes, have your groups take turns presenting what they experienced.

Talk With Students

Lead students in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What new thoughts did you have about Creation?**
- **What elements of creation do you tend to take for granted? How can you show more appreciation?**
- **What elements of creation do you most rely on? Why?**

Say: ▶ **GOD MADE THE WORLD, and he put humans in charge of everything else.**

Choose Your Own Adventure
Supplies

Bibles
Bible Trek
Adventure 1
paper
pens
Adventure 2
modeling dough (many colors)
newspaper or disposable tablecloth
several plastic knives

Choose Your Own Adventure
Easy Prep

Set out the supplies for each adventure at different stations.

At adventure station 2, station, cover a table with newspaper or a disposable tablecloth and set out plastic knives.

He wants us to care for his earth and to appreciate the things he's given us. His creative work can draw us into deep awe and worship for our God who obviously cares about what he made. We can remind ourselves every day just how powerful and creative God is as we look at the world around us.

Tree of Thanks

Tree of Thanks
Supplies

Bible
brown construction paper (optional)
scissors
tape
sticky notes
pens

Tree of Thanks
Easy Prep

Optionally, tape brown construction paper to the wall as a tree trunk, adding branches if you desire.

What You'll Do

Say: **God's creation is amazing, and it's something we can take time to thank him for. His amazing creation points us to an even more amazing creator.**

Point to the tree on the wall if you created one beforehand. Otherwise, students will use their sticky notes to make a tree trunk *and* leaves. Say: **We're going to create a tree of thanks, adding sticky-note leaves to show our appreciation for God.** Hand out four sticky notes to each student.

Say: **On one sticky note, write something God created. Then stick it on our tree, leaving room for more sticky notes around it.** Allow time.

Say: **Now come and look at our tree. Choose one thing someone wrote—you can choose your own if you want—and spend a few minutes talking to God about what that part of creation reveals about its Creator. Write any thoughts you have on a new sticky note, and stick it next to the original "leaf."** Allow time.

Repeat this prayer experience two more times or as time allows, having students each choose new creations each time.

Talk With Students

Lead students in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What did God show you about himself as you thanked him for his creation?**

Read aloud Romans 1:20.

Ask:

- **Tell about a time you interacted with nature in a way that helped you learn something about God.**
- **How can you be more aware of seeing God through his creation?**

Say: ▶ **GOD MADE THE EARTH. Despite what some people say, it didn't just happen. *God* made it. And he made things in such a way that, if we're paying attention, they can point us to him. This week, make an effort to see what God is showing you about himself through the things he created. And remember, these things are just a small glimpse of our amazing Creator!**

4 LASTING **IMPRESSIONS**

Daily Challenges

What You'll Do

Direct students to find this week's Daily Challenges in their Bible Trek pages and to choose one to do this week. They can choose one or more of these three options:

- **Spend time outside praising God for the beauty of creation.**
- **Identify a tough situation, and ask God to bring light and hope, just as he created light when there was nothing.**
- **Pick one category of creation to focus on each day. As you see things in that category, ask God to reveal himself to you through what you can see in his creation.**

Talk With Students

Ask:

- **What's a practical way you're going to do your Daily Challenge? Share a time, place, or other ideas.**

Say: ▶ **GOD MADE THE EARTH, and we can enjoy his creation and thank him for it! Let's do that this week as we follow through with our Daily Challenges.**

Daily Challenges
Supplies

Bible Trek
pens

Weaving Faith at Home

Hand out the letter to parents from the Bible Trek student books, one to each student. Also encourage students to talk with their parents about the Daily Challenges they chose and what they learned about Creation. Students can also do the activities on the "Bringing It Home" section of their Bible Trek pages with their families.

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families. Available at group.com/digital.

End the study with a prayer. Pray: **Thank you, God, for your entire creation. Thank you especially for...** Have students fill in the prayer with things they're glad God created.

Weaving Faith at Home
Supplies

Bible Trek

Weaving Faith at Home
Easy Prep

Tear out the letter to parents from the back of each Bible Trek student book.

FAITHWEAVER NOW®
Weaving faith into today's families

FALL SUNDAY SCHOOL
MIDDLE SCHOOL LEADER GUIDE

FaithWeaver NOW is for today's Sunday school teachers. It's developed by real Sunday school teachers, examined by real ministry leaders, and tested and approved by thousands of churches so you get great lessons that work with today's families.

This quarter you'll explore these Bible passages:

	BIBLE CONTENT/SCRIPTURE	KEY VERSE	BIBLE POINT
WEEK 1	God Creates the World (Genesis 1:1–2:3)	"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).	God made the world.
WEEK 2	God Creates Adam and Eve (Genesis 2:4-22)	"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well" (Psalm 139:14).	God made us.
WEEK 3	Adam and Eve Sin (Genesis 3)	"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).	God doesn't want us to sin.
WEEK 4	Cain Kills Abel (Genesis 4:1-16)	"Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves" (Romans 12:10).	God wants us to love our families.
WEEK 5	Noah Builds the Ark (Genesis 6:5-22)	"Peter and the other apostles replied: 'We must obey God rather than men!' " (Acts 5:29).	God wants us to obey.
WEEK 6	God Floods the Earth (Genesis 7–8; 9:8-16)	"The Lord is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made" (Psalm 145:13).	We can count on God's promises.
WEEK 7	People Build a Tower at Babel (Genesis 11:1-9)	"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength" (Deuteronomy 6:5).	We put God first.
WEEK 8	Abram Follows God's Direction (Genesis 12:1-8)	"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:5-6).	We can always trust God.
WEEK 9	Lot and Abram Divide the Land (Genesis 13)	"Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6:31).	God wants us to put others first.
WEEK 10	God Makes a Covenant With Abram (Genesis 15:1-18)	" 'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future' " (Jeremiah 29:11).	God has good plans for us.
WEEK 11	Abraham's Visitors/ Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:1–19:29)	"For nothing is impossible with God" (Luke 1:37).	God does amazing things.
WEEK 12	Isaac Is Born (Genesis 21:1-6)	"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4).	Thank God for his gifts.
WEEK 13	God Cares for Hagar and Ishmael (Genesis 21:8-21)	"So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the the door will be opened to you" (Luke 11:9).	God always hears us when we pray.

PLUS...

Access all these FREE FaithWeaver NOW digital resources at group.com/digital:

- **FREE digital copies of Leader Guides** in Word and PDF format so you can easily customize any lesson to your ministry. Sharing lessons with busy volunteers couldn't be easier! *See inside for activation code.*
- **A FREE downloadable Director Manual** to help you structure your program for maximum effectiveness.
- **FREE weekly FamilyConnect pages** you can print out or email to parents to help families grow together in faith throughout the week.

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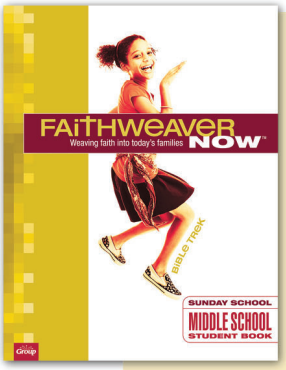

***Get a colorful, age-appropriate student book for every student! Each week, you'll get...**

- Engaging activities that bring the Bible to life for every student
- Easy faith conversation-starters for students to take home
- Meaningful at-home activities for families to dig into Scripture

****You'll need one per student. Sold separately.***

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