

## ***Series: From the Garden***

### **Lesson 2: Home in the Garden**

#### **Lesson Objectives:**

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to...

- Summarize God's original plan for the world
- Identify that we were designed to be in relationship with God, each other, and nature

#### **Materials Needed:**

- ☐ Scrap Paper
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Double-sided copies of handout "From the Garden: Two"
- ☐ Board and markers

## **Lead In:**

Ask the students if any of them can define “utopia.” Utopia is an idealistic or perfect place where everything is marvellous. Tell students to imagine their own utopia, specifically, what would one perfect day in utopia be like?

Give each student a scrap piece of paper and a pen and ask them to imagine the perfect day. They should draw or list at least five ideas about the perfect day. Once they are finished, ask them to gather in small groups of three or four and compare their drawings. Have them identify and list anything that the drawings had in common. Once they are done, solicit some of the common themes. Any similarities are welcome but you are looking to see whether students identified sharing the day with others as a common theme. Were they alone on their perfect days or were they with friends and family? If they did have this in common, ask them why they think that is. If they didn't, ask them why not. You are likely to get an answer that will transition into the idea of the way we were created to be. If they say that utopia includes others, that is because we were designed to be that way. If they say that utopia doesn't include others, that is because our relationships have deviated from the way they were meant to be. Two sides of the same coin, I believe is the expression.

## **Task One:**

Introduce this task by saying something like, *Do you know what book ends are or what they do? They go on either side of books to keep the middle together. People have said that the Bible is boo- ended by utopia. What they mean is that the Bible starts with paradise, the Garden of Eden, and ends with paradise, Heaven. Understanding God's plan for the Garden of Eden is important because it is what God intended before sin entered the story. In other words, when we look at the Garden of Eden we are able to see what God's original plan for us might have looked like.*

Tell the students that you are going to give them a handout, a double-sided copy of “From the Garden: Two”, that will guide them through the Garden of Eden story and ask them some questions. They can work in their same small groups for this task. Give out the handouts and allow sufficient time for their completion.

Once students have finished, review the answers orally as a whole class. Focus on questions 2, 3, and 4. The desired answer for question 4 is that humans were designed to be in relationship (wording can vary).

## **Task Two:**

In your whole group, ask students what words or phrases they would use to describe what life in Eden would have been like. Some answers might be directly from scripture (e.g. beautiful) and some might be speculation (e.g. you would have so much energy). Encourage creative answers. Use a board or similar surface to record their answers.

Once you have come up with what you consider to be a good list, write the following categories above the list: 1) Relationship with God, 2) Relationship with Each Other, 3) Relationship with Nature. Instruct students to use the remaining space of their handout or a piece of scrap paper to group the things from the list into each of the three categories. Ask for some volunteers to come up to the board and put their answers on the board. Ask the others whether they are satisfied with the groupings and change around any that are misplaced.

### **Task Three:**

Once you have words under the three headings, ask students the following questions:

1. *Have a look at the words and phrases that we wrote up. These represent how life was originally meant to be. In what ways is this similar to your life? In what ways is it different?*
2. *Why are there similarities and why are there differences?*
3. *How could knowing this help you live your life today?* Solicit some answers and guide some discussion on recovering the way we were meant to be (e.g. committing to relationships because they are part of our design, not feeling guilty for having fun or enjoying life, taking better care of the earth, etc.)

### **Closing:**

Tell students that understanding our original purpose is very important. In the last lesson we looked at who God is, a relational being. In this lesson, we looked at how God created the world to be, and in the remaining lessons, we will look at the implications of those two things. What does it mean to be created by a relational being as relational beings?

Bring the lesson to a close and pray together if appropriate.