***Monday: Creatures of the Earth***

***Genesis 1:1-2:4***

**Devo: Read the text first, then read the stuff below, then read the text again. You may use any translation you like; however, the curriculum you’ll be using this summer comes from the Contemporary English Version.**

This is potentially the most simple and beautiful text of the week… and also the most intricate and messy text of the week.

On the one hand, it’s pretty straight-forward. This well-known chapter is a poem that speaks to the beginning of the earth. It’s beauty and repetition draws us in and assures us that God is the origin of life, that there’s intention to the world, and that we’re a part of it all. On the other hand, when we start really digging into it asking questions of this text, things get a little more murky.

* Was the earth void (empty) before God, or nonexistent? Did God create the earth, or did God create life on the earth? Or both?
* Is a day meant to be an exact measurement of time (whatever constitutes a day) or is it a poetic device?
* Did God simply speak things into being, or did God’s words give the world that was already there the ability to create for itself? Or both? (Compare verses 3 and 24)
* In verse 26, God says “Let us make humankind in our image” – is there more than one God? The Trinity is a Christian concept and the poet would have been Jewish, so it’s not a reference to the other parts of the Trinity…

For Christians, the call is to let the beauty and simplicity of the word of God wash over us and let it soak in... *and* to dig deeply into it, asking our questions, testing the limits, and searching for response… all to then take a step back and simply trust. Every piece of this is necessary and good.

Think of your interaction with scripture like that of a dating relationship. Part of it is simply enjoying the other person’s presence. You don’t ask too many questions; you just like how you feel around them. But at some point, if we’re truly enjoying this other person, we want to know more. It’s not enough to just be hanging out with them. We want to know their views on things, we want their advice, we want to learn from them, and we want them to show us new pieces of the world that we hadn’t thought to explore yet. So we ask questions. And sometimes, the answers fill us up and reinforce everything we know to be right and good. Other times, the answers challenge us, catch us off-guard, make us question ourselves or the relationship, or even anger us. But usually, if there’s enough trust between both of you, the challenging stuff doesn’t make us walk away. It makes us sit back and think. We might table that discussion for a bit and just hang out for a while before trying it again. Ultimately, we probably won’t be fully comfortable with who they are, but we also come to know that the mystery and tension is ok when put in context of the love and trust that’s there.

Do the same with this text and with every text you come across. Know that the God behind the text is a God of love, of movement, of joy, and of creating powers. Relish the joy of the poet who took great pains to show us the simple beauty of the creation we’re a part of. Stand in awe of the God who takes time and care with creation. Seek to go deeper and understand more of who God is and how God works and why, and do it earnestly and pointedly and thoroughly. In the tense moments of not knowing or of disagreeing with other children of God, be ok with the ambiguity and the mystery. Trust that God will still hold us all. And then help your campers to do the same.

**For a Point:** write one thing that strikes you as particularly beautiful or poignant about this text, and then write one question that’s gnawing at you about this text. Email it to Sarah or post in the Facebook group.