

## Discovery Time at Home for the First Sunday after Epiphany, January 10, 2021

### Introduction

*Explain how we are beginning a new season in the church year. This season is called Epiphany. An epiphany is a sudden awareness of something, like when you have been unsure about how to do a math problem and then in a split second you see what you couldn't before. We use this word for this church season because this is when we start to see Jesus for who he is, a person so connected to God that people felt they were with God when they were with him, that he is God's Son. This is why we start this season with the magi coming to see Jesus soon after he was born. When they see him they bow down and worship him. Another story told at this time of year is when Jesus was baptized in the River Jordan by John. During his baptism the Holy Spirit appeared like a dove and God spoke, saying "You are my Beloved Son". As you see, people had a new awareness of who Jesus is, an epiphany.*

*Throughout these next few weeks, we will be looking at bible stories and considering how they help us see the world around us in a new way.*

### This Week's Story:

*Our first reading is from the Book of Genesis, when we are told about how God created everything:*

In the beginning God created the sky and the earth. The earth was empty and had no form. Darkness covered the ocean, and God's Spirit was moving over the water.

Then God said, "Let there be light!" And there was light. God divided light from darkness. God named light "day" and darkness "night." Evening passed, and morning came. This was the first day.

Then God said, "Let there be something to divide the water in two!" So God made the air to divide the water in two. Some of the water was above the air, and some of the water was below it. God named the air "sky." Evening passed, and morning came. This was the second day.

Then God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered so dry land will appear." And it happened. God named the dry land "earth." God named the water that was gathered together "seas." God saw that this was good. Then God said, "Let the earth produce plants. Some will make grain for seeds. Others will make fruit with seeds in it. Every seed will produce more of its own kind of plant." And it happened. God saw that all this was good. Evening passed, and morning came. This was the third day.

Then God said, "Let there be lights in the sky. These lights will be used for signs, seasons, days and years. They will be in the sky to give light to the earth." And it happened. God made the sun and the moon as well as the stars. God put all these in the sky to shine on the earth. God saw that all these things were good. Evening passed, and morning came. This was the fourth day.

Then God said, "Let the water be filled with living things. And let birds fly in the air above the earth." So God created the large sea animals. God created every living thing that moves in the sea. The sea is

filled with these living things. Each one produces more of its own kind. God also made every bird that flies. And each bird produces more of its own kind. God saw that this was good. God blessed them and said, "Have many young ones and grow in number. Fill the water of the seas, and let the birds grow in number on the earth." Evening passed, and morning came. This was the fifth day.

Then God said, "Let the earth be filled with animals. And let each produce more of its own kind. Let there be tame animals and small crawling animals and wild animals. And let each produce more of its kind." And it happened. So God made the wild animals, the tame animals and all the small crawling animals to produce more of their own kind. God saw that this was good.

Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image and likeness." So God created human beings. God created them male and female, and blessed them." God said, "Look, I have given you all the plants that have grain for seeds. And I have given you all the trees whose fruits have seeds in them. They will be food for you. I have given all the green plants to all the animals to eat. They will be food for every wild animal, every bird of the air and every small crawling animal." And it happened. God looked at everything, and it was very good. Evening passed, and morning came. This was the sixth day.

*We realize that this isn't the way that scientists tell us that the world was created. That is okay. The bible isn't meant to be a science textbook. We know things now that people didn't know when the bible was written. But the bible gives us insight into how to look at things, including the Earth. One really important detail is how God keeps saying "It was good." That is a reminder that everything on the Earth, all around us, is good and needs to be cared for. Each of us is good. Our families and friends are good. People of different cultures and skin colours and languages are good. The animals and trees, rivers and lakes, the sun and the moon, everything is good.*

*Even though the bible tells us everything is good, people don't always act that way. They act like they are more important than the animals and trees, even other people. There is a story about a rabbi that reminds us how wrong this attitude is. Here it is:*

A Rabbi asked his students, "how do we know when the night has ended and the day has begun?" The students thought that they understood the question. There are prayers that can be recited and rituals that can be performed only at night and prayers and rituals that belong only to the day. So a student offered an answer: "When I look from the fields and I see a house and I can tell that it's my house and not the house of my neighbour." "No," the rabbi said.

A second student offered her answer: "When I can distinguish the animals in the yard – and I can tell a cow from a horse – that's when the night has ended." The rabbi shook his head. A third student asked if it is when you can tell the difference in colour between flowers. Again he said no.

Each time the rabbi frowned until finally he shouted: "No! You don't understand! You only know how to divide! You divide your house from the house of your neighbor, one animal from another, one colour from all the others. Is that all that we can do – divide, separate, split the world into pieces? Isn't the world broken enough? The Bible and our values want more from us."

The shocked students looked into the sad face of their Rabbi. One of them ventured, "Then Rabbi, tell us: How do we know that night has ended and day has begun?" With a gentle voice he responded:

“When you look into the face of the person beside you and can see that that person is your brother or sister, you can see that person as a friend, then, finally, the night has ended and the day has begun.”

*This story is an important reminder of how we should see each other, not divided into more and more groups but instead to be one family, all of us beloved children of God.*

**This Week’s Activity – Making a Natural Object Sun Mandala:**

In honour of both the story about creation and the rabbi's words about when the day has begun, take time this week to go for a walk with a parent or another caregiver.

Take your time to appreciate the sun and the sky, the birds and the snow, the other people. All of this amazing earth is good and needs to be looked after.

As you walk along, think about the sun. You are going to make a type of picture called a mandala. This is a picture that uses patterns to make an image. Often these patterns are repeated. As you go along, pick up natural objects that you can use to make of the sun when you get back home.

This is a mandala that Rev. James made last year. Here is one that was made using rocks and leaves.



When you are done, take a picture of it, then email it to Rev. James ([james@rhuc.org](mailto:james@rhuc.org)). We will post the pictures for people to admire your work.

Enjoy your walk!