



#12 - A Sea of Life

Genesis 1:20-23

PICTURES NEEDED

- 12-1 A sea of life
- 12-2 Marine food chain

REVIEW (Before Teaching Lesson)

- **Journal Review:** Ask students to share an important truth that they learned from their journal readings at home that week. Share some of your own insights.
- **Previous Lesson Review:** (Use the visual from the last lesson to aid in review)
What is unique about the sun compared to other stars? What does that mean for the earth? How do the heavens declare the glory of God? How does what they have to say extend to the ends of the earth? What does God's word do for us?
- **The Big Question Review:** Why can all people know God through his creation?
Let the students give their answers to the question.
- **Bible Verse Review:** Psalm 19:1-3
The heavens declare the glory of God to everyone on earth.
¹(The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.)
²Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.
³There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.

LESSON CONTENT

Note: The Bible verses included in the lesson are from the NIV 1984 edition. The wording of the questions is derived from that version. If another version of the Bible is used, questions may need to be adapted.

On the fifth day of creation, God created the first animals. What type of animal do people usually think of when we say animal? When people think of animals most will usually picture a mammal such as a cat, dog, horse, monkey, etc. However there are millions of different types of animals that we don't think of as being animals.

What makes a living thing an animal? Something is classified as an animal if it breathes, moves about, eats and reproduces its own kind.

What are other types of animals besides mammals? (List what the children say and add some of your own: insects, fish, snakes, frogs, birds, etc.)

What are the major differences between living plants and living animals? (List the differences on the board as the students give them.)

Need/Activity	Plants	Animals
Food	Produce own food from sunlight	Eat food to survive
Air	Take in carbon dioxide, expel oxygen	Take in oxygen expel carbon dioxide
Reproduction	Produce seeds	Produce offspring (eggs, babies)
Senses	Don't have senses	Use senses to explore
Movement	Rooted in ground	Move around

Genesis 1:20-23 describes the fifth day of creation when God brought forth the first animals.

²⁰And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." ²¹So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." ²³And there was evening, and there was morning--the fifth day.

What did God create on the fifth day? On the fifth day, God brought forth all the creatures that live and move in the waters and all the birds that fly in the air. In this lesson, we will examine what lives in the oceans, lakes and rivers and in the next lesson, we will study the birds of the air.

When God created animals to live in the water he said, "Let the water teem with living creatures." What does it mean "to teem"? Teem means to both give birth to and to be filled to overflowing. The waters of the earth gave birth to and are filled with life because of God's command.

What kinds of animals did God design to live in water? (Write down the things the children name and add a few of your own.)

(picture 12-1) Scientists divide sea creatures into three biographic groups: plankton, nekton and benthos. (Draw the chart below on the board as you go through the explanation.)

Name	Plankton	Nekton	Benthos
Description	Drifting	Swimming	Deep
Types	Phytoplankton, zooplankton, jelly fish	Fish, mammals, octopus, squid	Crabs, coral, sponges, clams
Area of ocean	Surface	Upper layer	Ocean floor

The **plankton group** is made up of plant and animal-like organisms that drift along with the ocean currents. Most plankton are so tiny that they can only be seen through a microscope but jellyfish are plankton and can grow to be quite large. There are two types of plankton. The plant-like plankton is called phytoplankton and produces its own food from sunlight. Phyto comes from the Greek word for plant. The animal-like plankton is called zooplankton. Zoo comes from the Greek word for animal. Plankton comes from the Greek word for drifting, as that is what plankton does in the ocean; it drifts with the current.

The **nekton group** is made up of sea creatures that move and swim freely in the ocean. Nekton comes from the Greek word for swimming. Most members of the nekton live in the upper layer of the ocean, although some are found in the deep parts. What would be the sea life in the nekton group? Fish are the largest part of this group although it also includes other types of sea life like squids and octopuses, and also mammals like manatees, whales, seals, otters, etc.

The **benthos** is the group of sea life that live on or near the ocean floor. Benthos comes from the Greek word for deep or depth. Some creatures in this group burrow into the ocean floor, while others attach themselves to the bottom. What would be the sea life that attach themselves to the floor of the ocean? Coral, sponges, oysters, and other sea life are stationary and attach themselves to the ocean floor.

There are some members of the benthos that crawl on or swim about the sea floor. What would be the sea life that crawl or swim about the ocean floor? These would include crabs, lobsters and worms and some fish like halibut and sole. During the early stages of their life, most of the sea creatures in the benthos make up part of the zooplankton. Once they become adults, they sink to the ocean floor and live there, becoming part of the benthos.

The seas teem with life the way God designed, forming a food chain and providing food for the people of the earth. What should the variety and complexity of life in the sea remind us of? The variety and complexity of sea life speak of the wisdom and creativity of God. The life in the ocean is critical for the life on the land to exist and shows us God's loving provision.

Psalm 104:24-25 says, *How many are your works, O LORD! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number-- living things both large and small.*

When you examine sea life, it should remind you that God in his wisdom made the earth and all creatures that inhabit it for his purposes.

LESSON WRAP-UP

- **Overview Questions:** What are the differences between living plants and living animals? What did God mean when he said, "Let the water teem with living creatures"? What are the groups of animals that live in the ocean?
- **Thought Questions:** What can be learned about God by studying the creatures of the sea? What would the earth be like if there were no sea creatures? What is your reaction when you see a picture of a bizarre ocean creature? Why?
- **Prayer:** Thank God for the variety of life that lives in the oceans. Thank him that he had a plan for everything that he created and that it was good. Pray that you would grow in awe of his wisdom and creativity when you study all that lives in the sea.
- **The Big Question:** **What should sea creatures remind us of?**
Let the students give their answers to the question. Share the memory verse. Ask how it answers the question.
- **Memory Verse:** **Psalm 104:24-25** In wisdom God made all things.

(²⁴How many are your works, O LORD! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.) ²⁵There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number-- living things both large and small.

Questions: *What are God's works? Why is the earth full of God's creatures?*

ACTIVITIES (Completed after the lesson)

Any age appropriate activity can be included which fits into the class time. The activities with a star are included on the class notes.

★ **Lesson Notes:** Ask the students to summarize in one sentence what the lesson was about. Then have them give three main points covered in the lesson. An example is below.

Theme: On day five of creation, God created sea creatures and things that fly.

1. God told the water to be filled with living creatures.
2. The water in the ocean teems with living creatures in three geographic levels.
3. The life in the ocean provides for the life on the earth.

★ **Memory Verse:** Read the memory verse on the cover of the class notes and then have the students fill in the blanks in the verse.

★ **Activity Page:** Sea Creatures

Instructions: On the journal sheet identify and label the listed sea creatures. Describe the differences between the creatures and determine which group they are part of: plankton, nekton or benthos.

★ **Further Understanding:** Investigation/Reasoning Skills

The Marine Food Chain (picture 12-2)

- The marine food chain begins with the phytoplankton. Like plants phytoplankton produce food from sunlight, carbon dioxide, water and nutrients through the process of photosynthesis.
- Some members of the zooplankton eat the phytoplankton and are then eaten as food themselves by fish and other sea creatures in the nekton.
- Some phytoplankton is also directly consumed by animals like squid, shrimp and small fish. The smaller consumers are then eaten by larger fish.
- When sea animals die they sink. As they drift down toward the ocean floor most are eaten by other animals. What isn't eaten decays and is broken down into mineral salts by bacteria.
- Ocean currents carry the mineral salts back to the surface where they are used by the phytoplankton to make food.

Marine Consumers

- Food Chain Base – phytoplankton
- Primary Consumers – Feed on phytoplankton
- Secondary Consumers – Feed on zooplankton or eat animals that feed on phytoplankton
- Tertiary Consumers – Eat the animals that feed on zooplankton or other secondary consumers

Discussion Questions: What would be the result if there were no plankton? No tertiary consumers? No bacteria? What does the marine food chain say about God?

The journal is passed out at the end of class for the students to complete at home. It has six readings that answer a digging deeper question. It would be beneficial for the teacher to work through the journal readings also.

- **Digging Deeper:** What should we look to God for?

Reading 1: Psalm 104:24-35 All things look to God for provision.

In what did God make all things? (24) What does that mean? What do all things look to God for? Why? What should be our response to God? Why?

Reading 2: Psalm 148:7-14 God is greater than his creation.

What does it mean to exalt? Why should God's name alone be exalted? Why should all things praise God? How do all things praise God?

Reading 3: Psalm 93:1-5 God reigns over his creation.

Why does God reign over his creation? What can we trust about God and his reign?

Reading 4: Psalm 69:30-36 We look to God for salvation

What pleases God? What happens to those who seek God?

Reading 5: Psalm 74:10-23 We look to God to protect and defend us.

What does God's enemy do? Why does the Psalmist know that God can overcome his enemy? What is he asking God to do? Why do you think he wrote this Psalm?

Reading 6: Psalm 107:17-32 Strange Sea Creatures

The sea is full of all kinds of different and strange looking creatures. It can cause a person to wonder what God's purpose in creating them was. Look up strange sea creatures on the Internet and describe their design.