

This prayer service is best used after Chapter 3 in the book *The Old Testament: Our Call to Faith and Justice*

**Prayer Service:
“Creation: God’s Power Over Chaos”**

Needs:

- a decorated prayer table with the Bible
- Each student should have a Bible and a prayer journal or paper on which to write.
- Divide the long creation reading among a few students in your class. (One suggestion is to assign one narrator and one person to read the voice of God.)
- some simple symbol of creation for each student, such as twigs, acorns, or stickers representing nature
- optional soft music for the time of journaling

Prayer Introduction

In times of great difficulty and defeat, times we will study during this Old Testament course, the Hebrew people would recall its covenants with God, especially the promise of God’s favor, and wonder how events could have turned out so badly. These times of confusion would shake their *shalom*, their term for full well-being, into *chaos*, the opposite of *shalom*. It was helpful to them to recall that through his creation of the world, Yahweh had displayed ultimate power over chaos. A God that could so mightily tame the great disorder could also bring them shalom in their present struggles.

Where in your life these days are you experiencing chaos? School, family, and friends—all of these can present us with stress that sometimes seems overwhelming. Our God wants us to know shalom and not chaos and has the power to make it happen. Today let us recall God’s power over all that threatens to shatter our shalom.

Opening Prayer

Creating God,
through your act of creation
you show us your power
to bring order, beauty, and peace
out of chaos.
Help us today to hear anew
the story of our origin
that, in knowing where we come from,
we will again see in you
our source and our hope.
Amen.

Reading 1: Genesis 1:1—2:3

God looked at all his work and saw that it was good.

Questions for Reflection/Journaling

Choose any of the following.

1. Is there anything troubling you today? What questions, concerns, or fears have bothered you lately? Write about these.
2. Have you recently experienced loss or sadness? Write about the experience.
3. Are there any relationships in your life right now that are troubled? Write out your concerns.
4. How is school? Are you facing any big assignments or tests? List your stressors.

Creation Litany

Leader: The response to the litany is, "Create us anew."

Leader:

Creating God...

Power over chaos...

Light in the darkness...

Maker of sky and sea...

Grower of fruit from seed...

You who set the seasons...

Creator of sun and moon and stars...

Creator of birds and fish and wild animals...

Creator of humankind...

Response:

...create us anew.

...create us anew.

...create us anew.

...create us anew.

...create us anew.

...create us anew.

...create us anew.

...create us anew.

...create us anew.

In our life's confusion...

...create us anew.

When we are alone...

...create us anew.

As we struggle...

...create us anew.

When family life is tough...

...create us anew.

As friends betray and hurt...

...create us anew.

When peers pressure us...

...create us anew.

As school and work weigh heavily...

...create us anew.

When illness weakens...

...create us anew.

As loved ones suffer...

...create us anew.

When death touches us...

...create us anew.

In our daily struggles...

...create us anew.

God, we call to you and say...

...create us anew.

As you control the universe, we pray...

...create us anew.

We trust in you today...

...create us anew.

Ritual

Leader: As a reminder God's power to bring life out of chaos, come forward and take one of these symbols of God's creation. Keep this symbol nearby for the times when, like the Hebrews, you need to remember during times of stress that God is with you, ready to restore your shalom.

Closing Prayer: Psalm 104

(Alternate sides of the room read alternate stanzas.)