

Lesson 3: The Firmament

We are going to talk again about how God created the world we live in. Do you remember what He created on the first day? Yes, He created light.

Now we are going to talk about the second day of God's creation. On the second day, God created the firmament. Here is a new word for us: firmament. Can you say that word? Firmament. Let's talk about what this word means.

Let's pretend something, shall we? Pretend that we are outside on a bright, sunny day with no clouds. Can you hear the birds singing? Can you smell the fresh grass and sweet flowers? When we look up into the sky, what do we see? All above us is a beautiful blue. It stretches over us like a big blanket. It is like a dome over our heads. Do you know what a dome is? Make a big circle over your head, lacing your fingers together like this. Now look up into your hands. You are making a dome over your head. The sunny sky is like a big blue dome over us, isn't it?

Now let's pretend that we are outside on a dark, moonless night. I can hear an owl hooting and some frogs croaking, but I can't see very much. Now let's look up into the sky. What do we see? We see so many, many stars that we cannot count them! They are sprinkled all over the sky. The sky is like a big blanket over us, and it is filled with God's stars. The night sky is a dome of stars over our heads.

On the second day God created the firmament. The firmament is the big dome stretching over our heads like a blanket. We can see it in the day and in the night when we look up into the sky. How big is the firmament? It is as big as the whole world! It is always there. Sometimes it is filled with sunshine or clouds, wind or rain; sometimes it is filled with the moon and the stars.

Do you know why God made the firmament? He needed a special place for all the things He was going to create. He wanted to make a place where beautiful gardens could grow. He wanted to make a place where all of His children could live and be happy. So on the second day, God made a place for our home to be. He covered this place with the firmament so that it would be safe and cozy for us inside.

We live underneath the blanket of the firmament. On top of the blanket there is something different than our place; it is God's place.

We don't know exactly what is above the firmament, although we have some ideas about it. One thing we know is that beyond the firmament of our own world there is something we call "space". It is a place where there is lots and lots of empty room. God has hung the sun and moon and stars in this space. It has a kind of air that we cannot breathe. Sometimes people go into space in a special kind of airplane called a "rocket". It shoots straight up through the firmament and out into space, travelling very very fast. Do you know what the people are called who ride in a rocket? They are called astronauts. And they must wear special suits and take some of our air with them so that they can breathe.

Our special place is under the firmament. This is the place that has everything we need to live. But God has created other beings that are not people and they don't need the same things we do. Do you know who I'm talking about? The angels! We know St. Michael and St. Gabriel the archangels. There are many many other kinds of angels, too, like seraphim and cherubim, aren't there?

The angels don't have to stay under the firmament. They don't need to breathe the air like we do. All of the angels are around God singing and praising Him. They help him in many different ways. Sometimes the angels come into our place under the firmament to help us. But they can also live above the firmament where God lives, too. They can go in places that we can't go.

Well, God certainly gave us something very special when He made the firmament. Without it, we wouldn't have a place to be. Do you know what the firmament reminds me of? It reminds me of a story about the Mother of God and a special way that she protected people. Do you remember the story of the Protection of the Theotokos? What did she hold out over the people to protect them? It was her precious veil. God's firmament stretched out over us is like the veil of the Theotokos. God wanted to make a place for us where we would be safe and happy, so he made the firmament for us. Let's say our little prayer to thank Him: *Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!*

Creation Book Artwork, Page 3:

On the second day, God created the firmament.

Materials Needed
<i>Drawing paper, 8x11, one sheet</i>
<i>Block crayons: blue, yellow or gold</i>

1. With blue, draw 2 arcs in the middle of your paper as you would for a rainbow, leaving about 2 inches of white space in between them.
2. With yellow, draw a third arc in between the 2 blue ones. This golden arc is the firmament.
3. Draw "waves" or swirls coming from your blue arcs, both above and below the firmament, representing the "waters above and waters below". If you make a few initial swirls, your child can trace them and add some of his own.

