

Scripture Handout

In the Bible, we possess a library of voices on a variety of subjects, and here we will focus on different models (in the sense of conceptual views of how something *functions*) of God's creative activity from the Old Testament. (Teachers may wish to divide students up to look up certain passages and share their results with each other). Models are often presented in metaphorical language. A *metaphor* is thinking or conceiving of one thing or action in terms of another. Many passages in Scripture are poetic and metaphorical; others are parabolic (that is, parables or etiological stories) and metaphorical.

In each column, underline the key verses on God and how God creates. At the bottom, write down what your group thinks is the *operating* or *primary* metaphor used in each.

Psalms		
Ps 89:6–14	74:12–17	104:1–13
<p>For who in the skies can be compared to the LORD? Who among the heavenly beings is like the LORD, ⁷ a God feared in the council of the holy ones, great and awesome above all that are around him? ⁸ O LORD God of hosts, who is as mighty as you, O LORD? Your faithfulness surrounds you. ⁹ You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, you still them. ¹⁰ You crushed Rahab like a carcass; you scattered your enemies with your mighty arm. ¹¹ The heavens are yours, the earth also is yours; the world and all that is in it—you have founded them. ¹² The north and the south—you created them; Tabor and Hermon joyously praise your name. ¹³ You have a mighty arm; strong is your hand, high your right hand. ¹⁴ Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before you.</p>	<p>Yet God my King is from of old, working salvation in the earth. ¹³ You divided the sea by your might; you broke the heads of the dragons in the waters. ¹⁴ You crushed the heads of Leviathan; you gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness. ¹⁵ You cut openings for springs and torrents; you dried up ever-flowing streams. ¹⁶ Yours is the day, yours also the night; you established the luminaries and the sun. ¹⁷ You have fixed all the bounds of the earth; you made summer and winter.</p>	<p>Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, you are very great. You are clothed with honour and majesty, ² wrapped in light as with a garment. You stretch out the heavens like a tent, ³ you set the beams of your chambers on the waters, you make the clouds your chariot, you ride on the wings of the wind, ⁴ you make the winds your messengers, fire and flame your ministers. ⁵ You set the earth on its foundations, so that it shall never be shaken. ⁶ You cover it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. ⁷ At your rebuke they flee; at the sound of your thunder they take to flight. ⁸ They rose up to the mountains, ran down to the valleys to the place that you appointed for them. ⁹ You set a boundary that they may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth. ¹⁰ You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills, ¹¹ giving drink to every wild animal; the wild asses quench their thirst. ¹² By the streams the birds of the air have their habitation; they sing among the branches. ¹³ From your lofty abode you water the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.</p>

1. Primary Metaphor in Each?

2. What depictions of God were surprising to you from each?

In each column, underline the key verses on Wisdom and Wisdom's role in creation. The figure of Wisdom is associated with the Son in most Greek and Latin-speaking theologians, while She (feminine in both Greek and Hebrew) is associated with the Holy Spirit in early Greek and most Syriac and Ethiopic-speaking theologians. At the bottom, write down what your group thinks is the *operating* or *primary* metaphor used in each.

Wisdom Literature	
Proverbs 8:1–3, 22–31	Wisdom 7:21–30
<p>Does not wisdom call, and does not understanding raise her voice? ² On the heights, beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand; ³ beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries out:</p> <p>²² The LORD created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago. ²³ Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth. ²⁴ When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. ²⁵ Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth— ²⁶ when he had not yet made earth and fields, or the world's first bits of soil. ²⁷ When he established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, ²⁸ when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, ²⁹ when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, ³⁰ then I was beside him, like a master worker; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, ³¹ rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race.</p>	<p>I learned both what is secret and what is manifest, ²² for wisdom, the fashioner of all things, taught me. There is in her a spirit that is intelligent, holy, unique, manifold, subtle, mobile, clear, unpolluted, distinct, invulnerable, loving the good, keen, irresistible, ²³beneficent, humane, steadfast, sure, free from anxiety, all-powerful, overseeing all, and penetrating through all spirits that are intelligent, pure, and altogether subtle. ²⁴ For wisdom is more mobile than any motion; because of her pureness she pervades and penetrates all things. ²⁵ For she is a breath of the power of God, and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty; therefore nothing defiled gains entrance into her. ²⁶ For she is a reflection of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God, and an image of his goodness. ²⁷ Although she is but one, she can do all things, and while remaining in herself, she renews all things; in every generation she passes into holy souls and makes them friends of God, and prophets; ²⁸ for God loves nothing so much as the person who lives with wisdom. ²⁹ She is more beautiful than the sun, and excels every constellation of the stars. Compared with the light she is found to be superior, ³⁰ for it is succeeded by the night, but against wisdom evil does not prevail.</p>

3. Primary Metaphor in Each?

4. What depictions of Wisdom were surprising to you from each?