

Spirituality for Children

(ages 8 to 14 and all ages everywhere)

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Series I - The Foundation

Unit 1 - The Basics

Lesson 4 - **Who or what is God?**

God is a Presence, an Intelligence, Love. *God* is Life itself. *God* is of Spirit, not the physical. With *God* there is only Eternity with no limits of time or space. With *God* there is only the creation of goodness, of beauty and knowledge. Spirituality recognizes us as a part of *God* and so *God* is a part of all of us.

Universally *God* is recognized as *Love*. *Love* is usually seen as one of the four ancient Greek words: *eros*, *agape*, *philia*, and *storge*. *God's Love* is not just romantic, passionate or physical love that the Greeks called *eros*. *God's love* is associated with *agape*, the highest form of love; the love of *God* for man and of man for *God*. This is not to be confused with *philia*, often translated as brotherly love, friendship or affection. *Storge* is also called **familial love**, natural affection such as the love of parents towards their children and children for their parents. (Wikipedia)

So *God's love* is understood to be *unconditional love*, being loving and loveable no matter what! For us this means that it doesn't matter who a person is, what they look like, what they do or say or where they are from; what they have or don't have. Nothing is important or necessary for *God* to love them or even for us to love them with *God's agape* love!

We can say that *God is Love*, but otherwise the concept of *God* is difficult to define. We can talk more easily about what *God* is not. *God* is not fear or hate,

lack or anything negative. *God* does not punish or hurt anyone in any way at any time. *God* does not reject or damn anyone. He only loves everyone with *unconditional love*. We are all His children and therefore can only be like Him. *God* does not know anything but good, because He is good. *God* is not a man or a woman because He is not a body. He is only spirit, the essence of All That Is. We often refer to *God* as *He* or *Him*, but this is simply our way of talking about Him in our language.

There are many names for *God*: Creator, Father or Mother, Goddess, All That Is, I AM, Source, the Universe, the Great, the Good, Goodness, the Divine, Divinity, the One, Oneness, One Power, the Supreme Being, Consciousness, Christ Consciousness, Spirit, Great Spirit, Allah, Jehovah, Yaweh, Buddha, Brahman, Krishna, and many more.

God in different religions can be viewed as having many different names or different aspects or features. Islam, for example, has 99 names for Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful and 97 more. In Hinduism each masculine "god" has a feminine "goddess" counterpart and several to many *aspects* of itself. Christianity has a *Trinity* or three parts - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We refer to those close, personal aspects of *God* as *Imminent* and the non-personal, Creator aspects as *Transcendent*. Spirituality usually looks at *Source* or *Divinity* as both Transcendent and Imminent, but all of them refer to Him as a Power greater than ourselves. The transcendent *God* is thought of as outside of us while the Imminent *God* is recognized as being within us, a part of us as we are a part of Him.

In His transcendent aspect, *God* is understood to be the Creator, the Beginning, the Cause or Source of all that is. This Source power does not even know the physical world. *God* is seen as the initiator of Life, the creator of us as His children, but not involved with the imperfect material world in which we seem to exist. In his imminent aspect, *God* is Spirit - the bridge between the world of the Transcendent *God* and us in our material world. Spirit is here with us to guide

us and awaken us to who we really are - eternal spirit beings who are perfect, innocent, powerful, and loving - the divine children of *God*.

Reflection For Deeper Understanding

I. Meditation - Meeting *God*...

Sit on the floor with your legs crossed or in a chair with your feet on the floor. Don't cross your ankles or sit with your feet straight out. Let your hands lie quietly in your lap, palms up. Take a few deep breaths and feel the air move through your body. Continue breathing deeply until you feel your body begin to relax. Now close your eyes and focus on the stillness inside. Let your thoughts glide by when they appear. Don't follow your thoughts, just let them go. See them drifting away like in a bubble or a balloon floating along in the breeze.

Take another few deep breaths and close your eyes. This time let your focus go to the idea of meeting *God*. In your mind's eye see yourself entering a beautiful garden with fragrant flowers and luscious fruit trees everywhere. Breathe in the wonderful scents and enjoy a juicy piece of fruit or two. Walk around the garden until the warm sun, the fragrances and the delicious fruit make you sleepy. You find an inviting patch of thick grass and sit down to rest. Gradually you slip down to lie in the deep lawn and fall into a peaceful sleep.

Here you begin a wonderful dream about angels and many beings and people from the different religious cultures of the world. You talk to Buddha and Jesus and Krishna, asking them your most important questions like "Who am I?" and "Who is *God*?" These beings all agree that you are in truth spirit like them and are an important part of All that Is, *God*. They tell you that we are all one, not separate bodies, but one in Spirit. There is no physical place in which we speak, and there is no time here either. You are floating within a glorious rainbow of light and sound and energy. The beings around you are iridescent and transparent, not physical bodies at all, and now, while you're here, so are you.

The feeling here is of pure love and peace and joy. You are happy and express your happiness by singing and laughing and creating. You feel like you could stay here forever. You are told that this is Reality and that the world you think you live in is actually the fantasy world. All you have to do is wake up and recognize the Truth. This heavenly dream has been just a

sample of Reality, but right now you are still living and dreaming in the material world and it seems very real to you. Know that you are living in a body to learn who you really are and to let go of all ideas of negativity, fear and pain. And as you awaken to love, you will eventually even see the physical world as you see the spirit world like the garden you fell asleep in, full of love and peace and joy. When you feel this you will be very close to the spirit world and filled with happiness.

So, now it is time to begin saying goodbye to the angels and other spirit beings who promise to be with you while you are still dreaming on earth. You thank them for their guidance and their promise and for the glimpse of *God* and eternity. Little by little you begin to wake up and find yourself back in the earthly garden. As you leave the garden, focus your attention on arriving back home, in your room, on the floor or in a chair, back in your physical body, awake, rested and energized. When you are completely back and feel ready, you can open your eyes.

How do you feel right now? What did you feel during the meditation? Were you able to quiet your thoughts? What did your dream of being in the spirit world feel like? Could you imagine it clearly? Who is *God* according to this meditation and who are you?

II. Contemplate and Research the following questions - ask yourself, your parents, other adults, your friends, look it up on the internet or find it in a book. Make sure you understand the ideas:

1. What does *God* mean to you?
2. Has this lesson made the idea of *God* clearer to you or not? How or why not?
3. What word in the lesson or other word comes closest to describing or best describes your idea of *God*?
4. How do your parents describe *God*? Do you agree or not?
5. Look up the following 15 words in a dictionary:
 - a. Presence
 - b. Intelligence
 - c. Eternity
 - d. Love

- e. Unconditional
- f. Reject
- g. Damn
- h. Creator
- i. Divine
- j. Divinity
- k. Consciousness
- l. Imminent
- m. Transcendent
- n. Supreme
- o. Essence

III. Activities

IV. Reference Materials

1. World Religion Terminology