

CREATION 1 – THE VERY BEGINNING

- We are told that when Kronos was stabbed life appeared wherever his blood hit the earth: ‘trees and plants, bright-winged insects and feathered birds, scaled fishes and furred animals. The whole lovely, green, living world that we know today came into being at that moment.’ What is missing from this list? (Human beings.) What role might Prometheus have in creating humans? Clue: think about what Prometheus does while the other Titans are celebrating.

Length

7 min 8 sec

Story summary

Ouranos (‘sky’) and Gaia (‘earth’) are lovers. The sky is pressed so tightly against earth nothing can pass between them and their children, the Titans, can barely move. One of them, Kronos, forces his parents apart by stabbing Ouranos, from whose spilled blood the living world springs forth. While all the other Titans are celebrating their new-found freedom, Prometheus buries jars packed with his mother’s flesh and father’s blood.

When Kronos and Rhea, another Titan, have children, Gaia warns that they will be more powerful than them. So Kronos swallows them whole – all except the youngest, Zeus, whom Rhea raises in secret. In time Zeus becomes his father’s cup-bearer and poisons him, causing Kronos to vomit up all his other children.

The children go to war with Kronos and the other Titans. They defeat them and confine them deep inside the earth; only Prometheus and Epimetheus are spared, because they turned their back on war. Then Zeus and his siblings make Mount Olympus their home. They draw lots to decide which realms they shall rule and give themselves the name ‘gods’.

Starting-points

- You could begin by exploring the children’s thoughts on creation. What stories do they know about the beginning of the world? How is the beginning of the world explained by scientists? What do they think the world was formed from? Was it always there? What do they think were the first animals to inhabit the earth?
- Recap the names of the Greek gods the children have already met: **Dionysos**, **Apollo**, **Artemis**, and **Zeus**. Focus on Zeus and ask them what they know about him. You could ask what other gods’ names they know and pick out any of the following and explain that they will meet them in this story:
 - **Hera** (queen of the gods)
 - **Poseidon** (god of the sea)
 - **Hades** (god of the underworld)
 - **Demeter** (goddess of the crops)
 - **Hestia** (goddess of the hearth)

Pause points

2 min 21 sec: *The whole lovely, green, living world that we know today came into being at that moment.*

- In what way is the ‘lovely, green, living world’ different from what was there previously? (*There was nothing in the world other than the Titans; there was no space for the Titans to move; there was no colour – even the Titans are called ‘grey’.*)
- How do you think the Titans will react to the new world around them?

3 min 44 sec: *He stamped his feet in the joyful circling measure of the Titan’s dance.*

- Why are the Titans dancing? What are they celebrating? (*They are dancing to celebrate the separation of earth and sky and the creation of the ‘whole lovely, green, living world’.*)

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- Prometheus ('Forethought') does not join in the dancing at first. What does he do instead? (*He fills three jars with clay and buries them in the earth.*) Do you have any idea why he might be doing this?

4 min 34 sec: *Kronos seized the stone and swallowed it.*

- Kronos did not think he was swallowing a stone: what did he think he was swallowing? (*A child.*) Why did he want to swallow all his children?
- What do you think will happen to Zeus?

Questions for discussion

- How does this story compare with other creation stories, e.g. the Maori story, Rangi and Papa?
- We are told that when Kronos was stabbed life appeared wherever his blood hit the earth: 'trees and plants, bright-winged insects and feathered birds, scaled fishes and furred animals. The whole lovely, green, living world that we know today came into being at that moment.' What is missing from this list? (Human beings.) What role might Prometheus have in creating humans? Clue: think about what Prometheus does while the other Titans are celebrating.

Suggested activities

- Retell the whole story in your own words, using the storyboard to prompt you if necessary.
- Tell the story through Prometheus' eyes. Some of the key elements might include:
 - the cramped world before the overthrow of Kronos;
 - the overthrow of Kronos and subsequent celebrations;
 - the filling and hiding of the stone jars;
 - the war of the Zeus and his siblings against the Titans;
 - life after the Titans' defeat.