

## Hopi<sup>1</sup> Creation Story [modified]

**HW: On the back, use the Graphic Organizer to make some comparisons with the Judeo-Christian Creation Story (Old Testament, Genesis, Chapters 1 & 2). Make sure to suggest reasons for your similarities or differences.**

In the beginning there were only two: Tawa, the Sun God, and Spider Woman, the Earth Goddess. All the mysteries and power in the Above belonged to Tawa, while Spider Woman controlled the magic of the Below. There was neither man nor woman, bird nor beast, no living thing until these Two willed it to be.

And then it came about that these Two had one Thought—that they would make the Earth to be between the Above and the Below where now lay shimmering only the Endless Waters. So they sat side by side, swaying their beautiful bronze bodies to the pulsing music of their own great voices, making the First Magic Song.

"I am Tawa," sang the Sun God. "I am Light. I am Life. I am Father of all that shall ever come." "I am the Spider Woman," the Earth Goddess crooned. "I receive Light and nourish Life. I am Mother of all that shall ever come."

"Now, let us make ones like unto you and me, so that they may rule over and enjoy the lesser creatures," sang Tawa, and Spider Woman shaped their thoughts into women and men. "Now that was a good thing and a mighty thing," said Tawa. "So now all this is finished, and there shall be no new things made by us. And now I shall go to turn my blazing shield upon the Endless Waters, so that the Dry Land may appear. And this day will be the first day upon Earth."

After Spider Woman had bent her wise, all-seeing eyes upon the thronging creatures about her, she walked among them, separating them into 5 groups. Spider Woman called all the people to follow her. Through all the Four Great Caverns of the Underworld, she led them until they finally came to an opening, which led above. Then Spider Woman chose a creature to lead each clan (group of 5) to a place to build their house. The Puma, the Snake, the Antelope, the Deer, and other Horn creatures, each led a clan to a place to build their house. Each clan henceforth bore the name of the creature who had led them.

The Spider Woman spoke to them thus: "The woman of the clan shall build the house, and the family name shall descend through her. She shall be house builder and homemaker. She shall mold the jars for the storing of food and water. She shall grind the grain for food and tenderly rear and teach the young. The man of the clan shall build kivas (rooms for religious rituals) under the ground. In these kivas, the man shall make altars. The man too shall weave the clan blankets with their proper symbols. The man shall make himself weapons and furnish his family with food."

The Spider Woman said, "Look upon me now, my children: Obey the words I have given you, and all will be well. If you are in need of help, call upon me." The people gazed wide-eyed upon her shining beauty. She held up her right hand and smiled upon them, then stepped upon the whirling sand. Wonder of wonders, before their eyes the sands seemed to suck her swiftly down until she disappeared entirely from their sight.

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<sup>1</sup> Hopis are a group of American Indians who have historically lived in what is now the Southwestern United States.

## Judeo-Christian<sup>2</sup> Creation Story [modified]

In the beginning, God created the heaven and earth. And the earth was without form; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light...And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.

And God said, Let the waters under Heaven be gathered unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters, he called the Seas...And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit.

And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creatures that have life, and birds that may fly above the earth. And God created great whales, and every living creature that move, which the waters brought forth abundantly, and every winged bird...And God said, let the earth bring forth living creatures: cattle, the creeping things, and beasts of the earth...

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that moves upon the earth. So God created man in his own image: male and female, he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them: Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.

Then God said, I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to every beast of the earth, and all the birds of the sky, and to every thing that creeps upon the earth—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food. And it was so.

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

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<sup>2</sup> Judeo-Christian is a term that refers to the common beliefs of Jews and Christians.

## Comparing & Contrasting Hopi and Judeo-Christian Creation Stories

*Directions:* Fill out the provided Venn diagram, noting how the creation stories are similar and different.

