

Topic Title: Christianity - Creation

Year 5 Autumn 1



Background for Teachers:

Taken from *Understanding Christianity*.

We revisit the story of Creation from Genesis 1. Here we address what the texts say about God and human nature, and begin to think about the purpose of the Genesis Creation text (and Psalm 8). Pupils may ask whether or not the Genesis account is 'true', reflecting a common view that religious accounts of the universe's origins are in conflict with scientific accounts (whether cosmological accounts of the origins of the universe, such as the 'big bang', or the biological account of the origins and development of life, evolution).

The controversy depends upon how the Genesis account is interpreted. Some Christians do believe that the text is literally true – the earth is only a few thousand years old, God created it in six days of 24 hours. This view holds that scientific accounts of the big bang and of evolution must be incorrect, because you cannot hold both competing views.

This is not the only way Christians interpret the text, however. Many reject the idea that the purpose of the text is to give a scientific description at all. Some see the genre as poetic, requiring different methods of interpretation. Some see it as communicating a message about the nature of God the Creator rather than the mechanism of creation. They see it as a picture of a glorious Creator and the wonderful creation, perhaps written partly to persuade other ancient nations to abandon their beliefs in many gods, but now seen as something to inspire worship and awe at God and the place of humanity within creation. Rather than seeing scientific accounts and Genesis as being in conflict, there are many Christians who see them as complementary. One simple explanation offered by many Christians is that science addresses *how* questions about the universe, its origins and mechanisms, whereas religion – in this case, Christian belief in a Creator – addresses *why* questions: why is there a universe at all? Why do humans matter?

Previously On ... (Links to Prior Learning):

What do the children already know about how the world was made? Word it like this, rather than asking what they already know about who made the world, to open their thinking to different interpretations ahead of this unit.

Enquiry Question:

Creation and Science:
Conflicting or Complimentary?

Disciplinary Focus:

Theology

Big Questions:

What type of text do some Christians say Genesis 1 is? Why might it have been written?

How reliable is the creation story for Christians?

What different ways do Christians have of interpreting Genesis 1? Why?

How might a Christian scientist interpret Genesis?

Why do many Christians find science and faith go together?

How might Christians make sense of believing in a Creator God as well as evolution? As science more generally?

'Genesis explores why the universe and life exists. Science explores how the universe works the way it does.'

– to what extent do you agree?

LEARNING OBJECTIVE		WHOLE CLASS INTRODUCTION / FOCUS	DIFFERENTIATED ACTIVITIES	PLENARY
Lessons 1 & 2	<p>LO: to identify what type of text some Christians say Genesis 1 is – and its purpose.</p> <p>Core concept focus: Making sense of the text Understanding the impact Making Connections</p>	<p>Starter: ‘Previously On’ – what do the children already know about how the world was made? Word it like this, rather than asking what they already know about who made the world, to open their thinking to different interpretations ahead of this unit.</p> <p>Input: Read Genesis 1:1-2:3 using an appropriate translation – see Resources for suggestions. Choose some suitable music without words to accompany this and ask the children to draw the events as they occur, or just the impression they gain from the text. Afterwards, you might like to discuss what is suitable music and why – which features of the text does it reflect? What about the atmosphere?</p> <p>Ask the children to summarise the key message of the text, writing seven key words onto their sketches and a brief explanation of their ideas. What does this story mean? How does it make them feel? Were there any surprising, interesting or puzzling moments?</p> <p>Suggest to the children that this text is a detective story and ask them to find evidence for or against this. What evidence do they have that it is a detective story? What evidence do they have that it isn’t?</p>	<p>Task: Children to create a T-diagram – one column listing evidence for Genesis 1:1-2:3 being a detective story and one column listing evidence against.</p> <p>Further Challenge: What type or genre of writing do the children think Genesis 1 is? How do they know – what evidence is there? You might want to give them a range of text types to choose from e.g. newspaper report, letter, children’s fiction picturebook, poem, manual, a prayer, a shopping list ...</p>	<p>Plenary: Q- How reliable is the creation story for Christians?</p> <p>Remind the children that Genesis 1 is at least 2,500 years old – think about what life was like at the time and whether that makes a difference.</p>

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Lesson 3	<p>LO: to identify what type of text some Christians say Genesis 1 is – and its purpose.</p> <p>Core concept focus: Making sense of the text Understanding the impact Making Connections</p>	<p>Starter: Look at the translation <i>The Message</i> on Resource Sheet 1 – what type of text do the children think this is? It is set out as a poem – are there any clues in the text that it is a poem? Are there repeated phrases? What do they suggest is important? Make the point that people, including Christians, disagree about the genre and purpose of Genesis, which has implications for addressing the unit’s key question.</p> <p>Input: Introduce children to a scientific account of cosmology (the beginning of the universe) and of evolution (the development of living beings) – see Resource Sheet 2. Remind the children of what they have learned in science and give them time to draw simple diagrams to explain cosmology and evolution.</p> <p>Explain that some people think that Genesis 1 cannot be true because the scientific account contradicts it but that that depends how you interpret Genesis. Use Resource Sheet 3 to explore these views and show awareness of different interpretations. Think, pair, share – children to complete independently before discussing in pairs and snowballing into whole-class discussion.</p>	<p>Task: Children to come up with as many questions as they can about the Genesis text and the beginnings of the universe and life – each to be written on a small piece of paper or Post-It note. Children to write two headings – ‘Questions Answered Better by Science’ and ‘Questions Answered Better by Genesis’ and sort their questions. For example, <i>Why doesn’t Genesis mention dinosaurs? Why is the universe here? Does my life have a meaning?</i></p>	<p>Plenary: GPC: what do you think the genre of the Genesis creation text may be? Why might it have been written?</p> <p>Offer alternatives, for example, for a science textbook or for a service to worship God? To explain to believers who we are or who God is? To explain to believers why the world is beautiful or that God is good?</p>

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Lesson 4	<p>LO: to show understanding of why many Christians find science and faith go together.</p> <p>Core concept focus: <i>Making sense of the text</i> Understanding the impact <i>Making Connections</i></p>	<p>Starter: Have a look at some artistic responses to God and Creation – for example, the <i>Picturing Christianity</i> pack or the Creation stained glass in the Rondo Chapel (see Resources). You could listen and read the hymn ‘<i>O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder, consider all the works thy hand hath made.</i>’ Discuss how Christians celebrate God as Creator through harvest, but also in art and music.</p> <p>Input: Explain to the children that there are many Christians who are scientists. Watch the interviews with Dr. Jennifer Wiseman, astrophysicist (see Resources).</p>	<p>Task: What questions would the children want to ask Dr. Jennifer Wiseman?</p> <p>Further Challenge: How do the children think Dr. Jennifer Wiseman interprets Genesis? Why?</p>	<p>Plenary: See if any of the video clip interviews from the Faraday Institute (see Resources) answer the children’s questions.</p> <p>Return to the enquiry question – what might Dr. Jennifer Wiseman or other interviewees say about whether Creation and science are in conflict or complementary?</p>

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Lesson 5	<p>LO: to understand that Christians have different ways of understanding Genesis.</p> <p>Core concept focus: <i>Making sense of the text</i> Understanding the impact <i>Making Connections</i></p>	<p>Starter: Return to the metaphor of ‘warm fires and open doors’ introduced during Collective Worship last year – the warmth of the fire derives from the clarity and authenticity of the Christian message at its heart. The door is open and all are welcome to come in and sit as near or far away from the fire as they feel comfortable.</p> <p>Christians have different ways of understanding Genesis and Christians who are scientists make sense of believing in God as Creator in different ways. What connections are there between this metaphor and the fact that Christians have different ways of reading Genesis?</p> <p>Input: Explain that the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches have accepted the theory of evolution – the process by which living things gradually change over time. How do the children think Christians might make sense of believing in a Creator God and also evolution?</p> <p>Introduce Resource Sheet 4 and explain that Dan and Anna are both Christians that understand Genesis differently – and explain their thinking. What are the similarities underpinning their beliefs? The differences? Which of them would be sitting nearer the fire, if either?</p>	<p>Task: Children to complete the activity on Resource Sheet 4, deciding which are Dan’s views and which are Anna’s views.</p> <p>Further Challenge: Would it be Dan, Anna or neither of them sitting closer to the fire? What makes you think this?</p>	<p>Plenary: Would Dan and Anna say that faith and science are compatible or in conflict? Why?</p>

Lesson 6: celebration of knowledge and skills gained (opportunities for assessment):

- Show this statement:
'Genesis explores why the universe and life exists. Science explores how the universe works the way it does.'
How far do the children agree or disagree? Why?
- Science is really important for lots of reasons e.g. technology, medicine, construction. What questions can science not answer? How should we live? What is my purpose in life? What is more important, truth or freedom? What is right and wrong? Why should I help someone who is in need? Is there life after death? Which questions do the children have that can be answered by science and which cannot? You could present a cardboard box with two slots cut into it as a 'Question Machine' – one slot labelled 'science' and one slot labelled 'religion'. Children to post their questions into the appropriate slots, explaining why.
Open the Question Machine and sort them onto a large Venn diagram – science/religion with an overlap.
- Children to express their understanding with a written answer to the enquiry question, including an explanation, evidence and examples.
- Alternatively, children could respond creatively, expressing their own views about the universe, Creation, a Creator, science, cosmology and evolution.

Creation and Science: Conflicting or Complementary? (Core Learning)	
Some children will ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place the concepts of God, Creation and the Fall on a timeline of the Bible's 'Big Story' and identify how events during the story of Adam and Eve influence Christian belief about human nature and how to act. • Identify the key Christian belief that the Bible tells a story about how humans spoiled their friendship with God, which means that humans cannot get close to God without God's help. • Identify some different ways in which Christians believe the Bible shows that God <i>wants</i> to help people to be close to him. • Identify some different ways in which Christians might pray to God to say sorry, forgive and ask for forgiveness and make clear links between this and the Christian belief that accepting responsibility will help them grow closer to God.
Most children will ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the importance of Creation on the timeline of the 'Big Story' of the Bible and how this links to Christian belief about the purpose of Genesis 1. • Give examples of what Genesis 1 might mean, taking account of the context, and compare ideas with ways in which Christians interpret it, showing awareness of different interpretations. • Make clear connections between the Christian belief in God as Creator and Genesis 1. • Identify some ways in which many Christians find science and faith go together and weigh up how far the Genesis 1 creation narrative is in conflict, or is complementary, with a scientific account.
Some children will ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show awareness of the debate and controversies around the relationship between the accounts of creation in Genesis and contemporary scientific accounts. • Explain how the discoveries of science have influenced Christian belief and made them wonder even more about the power and majesty of the Creator. • Explain and discuss how some Christians find science and faith compatible.