

Topic Title: Christianity - Creation

Year 6 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. Can a scientist be a Christian?

Enquiry Question:

Creation and Science:
Conflicting or Complimentary?

Disciplinary Focus:

Theology

Big Questions:

What does Psalm 8 tell the reader about God? About humans?

What might Psalm 8 make Christians think and feel about God, the world, themselves and other creatures?

What does Psalm 8 say about humanity's status on Earth?

How does Psalm 8, and what it says about God and humans, relate to religion and science?

How might Christians behave in light of the ideas expressed in Psalm 8?

How well are humans responding to their authority for the Earth?

How might humans show that they have taken responsibility of being a little lower than the angels seriously?

Why should all humans care for the Earth, without God?

LEARNING OBJECTIVE		WHOLE CLASS INTRODUCTION / FOCUS	DIFFERENTIATED ACTIVITIES	PLENARY
Lesson 1	<p>LO: to explain what Psalm 8 says about the idea of God as Creator and the place of humans in Creation.</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. Can a scientist be a Christian?</p> <p>Input: Find some amazing images of the heavens and the earth, humans and animals. For example: www.spacetelescope.org Distribute some images and ask children to work in groups of five to use their sense imaginatively as they look at their image using these sentence starters: Set 1: <i>I see ... I hear ... I smell ... I feel ... I taste ... I wonder ...</i> Set 2: <i>I notice ... I want to say ... I imagine ... It reminds me of ... It's like ... It makes me think ...</i> Then weave these sentences together, alternating between sets 1 and 2 to form a poem – see Resource Sheet 6. Invite each group to share their poem. How do they feel about our amazing universe?</p> <p>Read Psalm 8 – you could play a piece of music in the background as you read. Psalm 8 is about the greatness of God and the privileged role given to humans by God so choose a stately and uplifting piece. What do the children think the link between the poetry and this is? Explain that this is the Psalmist’s response to Creation in the form of a poem or prayer. Work collaboratively to create a glossary of key vocabulary with which the children are unfamiliar – or the children could do so independently or in pairs using dictionaries.</p>	<p>Task: Give the children a copy of Resource Sheet 7, either individually or in pairs, containing extracts from Psalm 8. Ask the children to identify who the blue boxes describe and who the white boxes describe (blue is God, white is humans). What does the psalm tell the reader about God? What does the psalm tell the reader about humans? Offer some words on the board to help describe God and humans e.g. scary, powerful, great, in charge and so on. The children could also use words from the text such as ‘majestic’ and ‘rulers. Ask the children to write these words around the corresponding blue and white boxes.</p>	<p>Plenary: Explain that this is a psalm – a prayer used in worship. What might it make Christians think and feel about God, the world, themselves and other creatures?</p>

LEARNING OBJECTIVE		WHOLE CLASS INTRODUCTION / FOCUS	DIFFERENTIATED ACTIVITIES	PLENARY
Lesson 2	<p>LO: to explain what Psalm 8 has to say about the idea of God as Creator and the place of humans in Creation.</p> <p>Core concept focus: Making sense of the text Understanding the impact Making Connections</p>	<p>Starter: Return to Psalm 8 and focus on the description ‘<i>a little lower than angels</i>’ – what might this mean? Where does it seem to place humans? What does Psalm 8 say about humanity’s status on Earth? Identify the notion that humans have control over the planet, derived from their place as being in the ‘image of God’ (Genesis 1: 28).</p> <p>Input: Explain to the children that today, their task will be to illustrate each of the six extracts from Psalm 8 – and that together, these illustrations should communicate the overall meaning of the text. Show the first extract on the board. What is the meaning of this extract? How could this meaning be communicated through illustration?</p>	<p>Task: Children to illustrate each of the six extracts from Psalm 8 – and challenge themselves to communicate the overall meaning of the text through combining these illustrations. Annotate each with a quote from the scripture.</p> <p>Further Challenge: what does this psalm tell Christians about God and humans? How do their illustrations work together to communicate this?</p>	<p>Plenary: How does this psalm, and what it tells Christians about God and humans, relate to questions of religion and science?</p>

LEARNING OBJECTIVE		WHOLE CLASS INTRODUCTION / FOCUS	DIFFERENTIATED ACTIVITIES	PLENARY
Lesson 3	<p>LO: to make clear connections between Psalm 8 and some ways Christians respond to God the Creator.</p> <p>Core concept focus: <i>Making sense of the text</i> <i>Understanding the impact</i> <i>Making Connections</i></p>	<p>Starter: How do the children think Christians might behave in the light of ideas expressed in Psalm 8? What kinds of actions might you expect to find among Christians? List the evidence the children would expect. For example, some might worship God, or become scientists to explore creation more, or artists to express God's creativity in their art, or farmers to care for the planet, or architects who create places of worship, or therapists to care for humans who are suffering from depression ...</p> <p>Input: Divide the list created during the starter activity among the class and ask the children to produce a short case study – a one-page leaflet or a couple of PowerPoint slides – to show how Christians worship their Creator, look after Creation and other people; and where science fits into their work.</p> <p>Model the following example: <i>Christian Scientists</i> – the organisations <i>Christians in Science</i> and <i>Christians in Engineering</i> – belief in God is no barrier to their work in science.</p>	<p>Task: Children to carry out research for their leaflet or PowerPoint slides (to be produced next week) to show how Christians worship their Creator, look after Creation and other people; and where science fits into their work.</p> <p>You might provide the following starting points for the children to work from:</p> <p><i>Christian artists:</i> this regular Christian music festival? www.creationfest.org.uk or this annual festival www.greenbelt.org.uk or the gallery of www.christianartists.org.uk .</p> <p><i>Christian farmers:</i> what kinds of things do the Farming Community Network do? www.fcn.org.uk</p> <p><i>Christian architects:</i> find out about the building and design of some Christian cathedrals – how do they put the ideas of Psalm 8 into action? Coventry Cathedral as an example.</p>	<p>Plenary: Children to snowball into groups with other children with the same research focus. One child from each group to circulate to each other group and summarise findings.</p>

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Lesson 4	<p>LO: to weigh up how well humans are responding to their responsibility for the Earth.</p> <p>Core concept focus: <i>Making sense of the text</i> <i>Understanding the impact</i> <i>Making Connections</i></p>	<p>Starter: Return to the phrase ‘a little lower than the angels’ from Psalm 8 – what does this suggest about the position and authority of humans in God’s creation? Build on the children’s ideas to recap how humans have a very high position and great authority.</p> <p>Input: Return to the idea of ‘stewardship’ explored during previous years – the idea of being responsible for looking after the world in which we have been placed. How well do the children think humans have used this authority? A scale from 1 to 10 or a percentage could be used, with 10 or 100% being perfect use.</p> <p>Explain how some people argue that people have misused this authority by treating the Earth badly. What evidence do the children have to support this view? For example, deforestation, greenhouse gases leading to climate change, fossil fuels, litter, waste etc.). How well do the children think humans have looked after the world now? How does this compare to their initial opinion?</p>	<p>Task: Children to capture how well they think humans have used the authority to look after the world in which we have been placed. This could be a paragraph, an annotated scale from 1-10 etc.</p> <p>Further Challenge: imagine that there is a God and that God gives humans a clear message that the Creator is going to come to Earth in a year’s time to inspect what humans have done as stewards or caretakers of the world. What might people do to prepare?</p>	<p>Plenary: If the Creator was going to come to Earth in a year’s time to inspect what humans have done as stewards or caretakers of the world, how might they show that they have taken their responsibility of being a little lower than the angels seriously?</p>

Lesson 5: celebration of knowledge and skills gained (opportunities for assessment):

Possible approaches to celebrating knowledge and skills gained:

- What argument can the children offer for why all humans should care for the Earth, without God? What might the many people who do not believe in God do? What do children think their own responsibility is?
- Is it easier to judge others and how well they are caring for the Earth or to change their own behaviour?
- Write their own version of Psalm 8.
- Reflect on how the biblical idea of God as Creator and humans as God's representatives relates to the enquiry question: '*Creation and science: conflicting or complementary?*' Children should be able to offer a selection of responses on both sides, referring to Genesis, Psalm 8 and diverse Christian views as well as atheist responses.
- Hold a debate: are creation and science conflicting or complementary?

Creation and Science: Conflicting or Complementary? (Digging Deeper)	
Some 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.
Most children will ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify the type of text that Psalm 8 is and its purpose.• Explain how Psalm 8 influences Christian beliefs about the idea of God as Creator and the place of humans in Creation.• Explain the connections between Psalm 8 and some ways in which Christians respond to God the Creator.• Explain why some Christians find science and faith compatible.
Some children will ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Begin to analyse and evaluate how Creation reveals something about the nature of God – for example, power, creativity, concern for life – and reminds humans of their place as dependent upon the Creator.