

03. Is there proof that God made the world?



BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

**Genesis 1:1-2:4, Psalm
33:6**

Note for leaders: This session will probably require more consideration and adaptation than many of the others to suit your group whilst still faithfully representing the key messages, so please take time to read over the different sections and decide what is appropriate. If your group is new to exploring the Bible, you may want to focus on the creation account from Genesis, but if you have a group that is more familiar with the Bible, they may be ready to explore some of the questions in the Additional Ideas section.



AIMS

To help the children understand what the Bible says about the world being made, as well as some of the scientific evidence pointing towards it being intentionally created.

To help them reflect on what these things can show us about God.

The Bible teaches that God created the world – that it did not just happen, but that there was purpose and design. There is also evidence from science that points to this conclusion.



PREP FOR LEADERS

Read the Bible verses for today, and reflect:

- As you think about the world, what evidence do you see that fits with the idea that God created it?
- What characteristics of God do you see as you consider the world he created?

Take some time to pray for your group.

If you would like to read more on this topic, you could read chapters 2 and 3 of *Talking With Your Kids About God* by Natasha Crain, or *The Case For A Creator For Kids* by Lee Strobel. (This book is also one to recommend if any of the children in your group would like to find out more on this topic.)



GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one or more of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

▶ **Count To Ten**

Get all the children to stand in a circle. Their task is to count to ten as a group. Each person can only say one number at a time, and they cannot decide an order in advance or go in sequence round the circle.

If two or more people say the same number at the same time, they must start counting

from the beginning again. See if they can make it all the way to ten.

This is more difficult than it sounds.

▶ **Creation Challenge**

You will need: some art/ collage materials – whatever you have available

Supply the children with some materials and challenge them to create something using what they have been given. You could give them a theme or you could simply allow them to be creative. Give them a time limit (probably around five minutes) to complete the task and see what they have come up with.

▶ Team Challenge

Divide the children into teams of four or five (or keep them as one group if you have a small number).

Tell them that their task is to work as a team to create something based on the theme you give them – just using their bodies, for example, to create a scene from a film.

Give them a minute or so to create their scene and then see what they have come up with.

If you have more than one team, you could award a point to the one you think is best.

Then give them a different theme and repeat. Some other possible themes could be: sporting event, kitchen appliance, scene from the Bible, famous landmark.



INTRO TO QUESTION

Last time we thought about what evidence there might be that God is real and one of the pieces of evidence we thought about is the world. Christians believe that God created everything and that the world can show us something of what he is like, but today we are looking at the question: Is there proof that God made the world? This question came from a child on an SU weekend away.

Just like with the question from last time, the Bible doesn't give us proof that God made the world, but it does give us some evidence to look at which points to that.



EXPLORING THE BIBLE

Use one of the methods below. The storytelling script also appeared in One Big Story, so if

you have recently used that programme with your group, you may wish to select a different method this time.

▶ Creation Account Storytelling

You will need: cards numbered 1-7 and props for each day as listed below

Involve seven children, each holding a card with a number on it from 1-7. (See additional document: Creation number cards) As their number is mentioned, get them to turn the card around so the number is visible to the group, describe what was made on that day of creation and give them a prop to hold symbolising what was made on that day. Get children to join in with response: when you say "God looked at what he had made", they respond, "and he saw that it was good."

Day 1: In the beginning the earth was dark and empty. Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. (Give child 1 a torch to shine.) **God separated the light from the darkness. He called the light "day" and the darkness "night."**

Day 2: God said, "Let there be a space to separate the waters of the earth from the waters of the heavens." That is what happened and he called the space "sky". (Give child 2 a card with a picture of the sea and sky. See additional document: Sea and sky picture.)

Day 3: God commanded the waters on the earth to flow together so that dry ground could appear. He called the dry ground "land" and the water "sea." Then he caused the earth to sprout with every kind of plant and tree. (Give child 3 flowers/plant (real or artificial).) **God looked at what he had made, and he saw that it was good.**

Day 4: God said, "Let great lights appear in the sky to separate day and night and to mark off the seasons, the days and the years." So God made 2 great lights: the sun to light the day and the moon to light the night. He also made smaller lights called stars. (Give child 4 sun, moon and stars picture. See additional document: Sun, moon and stars.) **God looked at what he had made, and he saw that it was good.**

Day 5: Then God said, "Let the waters be filled with every type of fish and sea creature and let the skies be filled with every kind of bird. Let them multiply and produce more of their own kind." (Give child 5 toy fish and bird.) **Once again God looked at what he had made, and he saw that it was good.**

Day 6: God created every kind of animal: livestock, small animals and wild animals, every kind you could think of. (Give child 6 animal toys.) **God looked at what he had made, and he saw that it was good.**

He also made human beings, both men and women and he asked them to rule over the earth and its creatures and to look after it. Again God looked at what he had made, but this time it is slightly different. The Bible says he saw that it was very good.

Day 7: God had finished creating everything so he rested from his work. (Give child 7 a pillow.)

▶ Video

You will need: equipment to play video

Show this four minute video to tell the story of Creation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=teu7BCZTgDs>

In various books in the Bible, it tells us clearly that God made

the world. The Bible is not like a science textbook full of details of the processes God used, but the writers of the Bible all agree that God made everything.

Psalm 33:6 (NLT) says, “The Lord merely spoke, and the heavens were created. He breathed the word and all the stars were born.”

It’s amazing to think that he created just by speaking!

If you used the Creation Challenge or the Team Challenge intro activities, you could point out to the group that they made something, but they needed to use the craft materials or their bodies to do that.

None of us could make something out of nothing, but the Bible tells us that’s how powerful God is.

If we believe that the Bible is true, we can see the Bible’s teaching about God as creator as evidence that he made the world. But what other kinds of evidence might fit with the idea of God creating the world?

▶ **Expanding Universe/The Big Bang**

You will need: balloon, marker pen (prepare the balloon by drawing some dots on it to represent different galaxies in the universe)

For hundreds of years many scientists believed that the earth had always been there, but in the 1920s Edwin Hubble used the world’s most powerful telescope (at that time) to look at the universe and discovered that the galaxies were moving away from earth, and the universe was getting bigger.

Show the children the balloon you have prepared. Get them to imagine that the balloon

represents the universe and the dots represent the different galaxies. Blow some air into the balloon to illustrate the universe getting bigger and the galaxies moving further apart.

Scientists realised that if the universe was getting bigger and bigger, if you turned the clock backwards, it must have been smaller and smaller (let some air out of the balloon) until you get back to a point where it began.

Science can be seen as a wonderful gift from God which allows us to explore and discover lots about His amazing universe. People who love God have been exploring His universe for thousands of years and, bit by bit we’re learning more about it.

One of those scientists was Georges Lemaitre, a priest who was one of the first people to come up with the idea we now call the Big Bang (the name we give to the beginning of the Universe). There are still lots of mysteries to explore in God’s universe and some of them are about exactly what happened in the first few milliseconds.

People like Georges Lemaitre show us that the wonders of the universe, including the beginning of it all, can support the idea of an amazing, praise-worthy God behind it all.

▶ **Attention to Detail**

You will need: picture printed from additional document: Mount Rushmore

Show the group a picture of Mount Rushmore. See if they have any idea where/what it is.

Mount Rushmore is a mountain in America, in South Dakota, and the four faces represent four presidents of the USA: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln.

Ask the children how they think the faces of the four presidents got on the mountain.

Does anyone think they just appeared there? Why/why not?

When we look at something like that it seems obvious that it didn’t just happen by itself, but that someone planned it and created it – someone who was very skilled and clever.

What about when we look at the world?

People have always been amazed by the world around us. Christians believe that God made us curious and creative so we could explore His amazing creation. And the more we discover, the more amazing it gets!

One of the things we’ve discovered is how incredibly detailed and finely balanced God’s universe is.

- **Did you know that life is only able to exist on earth because our planet is just the right distance from the sun? If we were closer to the sun, we’d be burned up. If we were further away, we would freeze.**
- **Also, if the earth was closer to the sun or further away, water wouldn’t be able to exist in liquid form, and we need water as a liquid for human life.**
- **Did you know that the way the earth rotates means that the sun comes up each morning and goes down each evening? If it didn’t rotate like this, one side of the earth would freeze and the other would burn.**
- **Did you know that gravity, the force that stops us from floating away into the air, is exactly the right strength for us to be able to live?**

When we look at these wonderful details, it certainly seems to fit with the idea that it has all been created by a clever, caring and hugely powerful God.

So, together with the ideas about God we get from the Bible and the way we see and know God acting in our lives and the lives of others, exploring the wonders of the universe can be evidence that supports the idea that God made it all.



REFLECT & RESPOND

Reflection

You will need: large sheet of paper or post-it notes, pens, equipment to play music/video (optional)

Give the children a moment to reflect on what they have heard today. What do they think of the idea of God creating the world? As they look at the world and as they think about some of this evidence, what words would they use to describe God?

You could get them to write these down, either on a large sheet of paper or on post-it notes, which can be stuck together on the wall so that everyone can see.

As they do this, you could play the song Indescribable: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sM5YReFSm0I>

Lead the children in prayer using some of the words they have come up with to praise God.



ADDITIONAL IDEAS

Other questions about creation

Depending on the stage your group is at, both in terms of age and understanding, it might be appropriate to look briefly at a few other questions about creation and some of the different views that Christians have about creation. These all came from children at an SU weekend, so they may be questions that the children ask, or you may feel they are ready to look at things in a bit more detail.

- How long did it take God to make the world?
- Did it really happen in just six days?
- How come there were dinosaurs that lived millions of years before humans?

The first important thing to say is that Christians have different opinions on some of these questions. There are people who believe the Bible is true and who look at what it says and look at the evidence from science, but they reach different conclusions.

The second important thing to say is: that's okay! God loves it when we explore his universe and try to find out about him. It's good to ask questions and think about the evidence. But it's okay if we don't agree with all other Christians about everything.

Although they might have some different opinions about how it happened, Christians all agree that

God created the world, so we can all worship God together. And we can explore together and learn from each other even when we have different ideas.

The third important thing to say is that we might not ever find definite answers to all our questions. The Bible tells us that God is so much bigger, more powerful and more intelligent than we are, so we will probably never understand everything about him or what he has made. But that definitely doesn't mean we should stop asking questions!

In the creation account in the Bible it talks about six days where God made things and then says he rested on the seventh day.

That sometimes leads people to ask if God really made the world in just six days. Some Christians believe that is what the Bible means and when it mentions a day it is talking about a period of 24 hours, but other Christians believe that when it talks about a day, it just means a period of time, so it could be much longer than an actual day.

Some Christians believe it is a story painting a word picture illustrating that, however it was created, it was God who made it all.

There are lots of points for and against these different views, which we don't have time to talk about in lots of detail. But here are some of the main areas of debate.

If you take the days in Genesis as being 24 hour days and use other information given in the Bible about how long people lived, it could mean that the earth is about

6000-10,000 years old.

Most scientists (lots of whom are Christians) would say the earth is much older than that because of evidence from things like rocks and fossils.

Again, people have different opinions. Some would say that just because the earth appears to be older doesn't mean it is. For example, when the Bible talks about God creating Adam and Eve, it talks about him creating man and woman. It doesn't say that he created them as babies, so they might have looked like they were 30 years old when actually they had just been created.

We don't know if that is how it happened but it's one idea people have.

Others, who think the days described in Genesis are longer than 24 hours, or that the Bible is telling a story of God's creation, think the scientists are right, that the world is much older.

Dinosaurs are never mentioned in the Bible. In fact, the word "dinosaur" didn't exist until 1842 so it definitely wouldn't have been used when the Bible was written. It's worth remembering that there are also lots of other animals that aren't mentioned in the Bible, like penguins, tigers and polar bears!

The Bible does tell us that God made everything, so that includes the dinosaurs even though they're not mentioned. Those who believe the days mentioned in Genesis are 24 hours long believe that dinosaurs lived in the world at the same time as humans and became extinct at some

point, possibly around the time of Noah's ark when God sent a flood. Those who believe the days mentioned in Genesis are longer than 24 hours believe that dinosaurs lived before humans.

But whatever we decide makes the most sense to us, remember the most important things about being a Christian are loving God and loving other people, and we can do that even if we have different ideas about things like dinosaurs!

Chapters 33-36 of Keeping Your Kids On God's Side contain more information about some of the different views on creation so they may be helpful background reading if this is an area your group is keen to explore in depth.

Evolution will be discussed in Session 4, so if questions come up about that, it may be best to note them as important and exciting questions and wait and deal with them then.