

MAKES YOU THINK?

An Approach to issues related to Creation and Evolution

The approach is intended to help a group of 6-8 people to discuss the underpinning issues of the Creation of the Universe and the development of Life. The objective is to allow those taking part to discuss the facts, issues and challenges. The approach emphasises the variation in attitudes, which can and do exist in society.

MAKES YOU THINK? is an Interactive Group Discussion Game for 6-8 Players and a Facilitator that is designed to give participants the chance to address, evaluate and challenge a range of facts, issues and attitudes around Creation /Evolution /the Bible / and Science in today's world

Recommended Time allocation 90-120 minutes

PLAYING MATERIALS

Number of copies of material to be printed off for each step indicated below

1 Set of 8 **STORY CARDS** for **Step 1 - IT TAKES ALL TYPES**

1 Set of 10 copies of an **INFORMATION SHEET for Step 2-** containing documented factual information about the Nature of the Universe and about Evolution

1 Set of 25 **ISSUE CARDS for Step 3/4-** colour coded as follows

- BLUE Science Issues
- RED Existence of man Issues
- GREEN The Creation of the Universe Issues
- YELLOW Ideological/mental conflict Issues

1 Set of 10 copies of randomly listed statements/questions entitled **WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THESE? Step 5**

How to play the game **MAKES YOU THINK ?**

Welcome and Introduction 5 mins

The Facilitator should follow this format

Establish from the start that the object of the game is to encourage discussion and assessment of facts and opinions but stress there is no blueprint for what is the right answer /opinion and so respect for each others' views is paramount

but as the Title of the Game says **MAKES YOU THINK ?**

– the CLUE is in the Question Mark

Timing suggestions are approximate to be used with discretion

Step One IT TAKES ALL TYPES Time allocation 15 mins.

Give out Story Cards to each person in the group

In turn they then read out the details of the person on their card -this is not Role Play – merely highlighting some recognisable views around the issues

Encourage some discussion about the characters outlined

Step two FACTUAL INFORMATION Time allocation 10 mins

Give each member of the Group a copy of the Information sheet and ask them to read it through silently to themselves

On it are actual facts about The Nature of the Universe and Evolution

Step Three ISSUE CARDS Time allocation 5 mins

These colour-coded cards should be laid out in advance by the Facilitator in colour-coded groups on a table

Participants are then asked to walk around the table and having studied the cards they should then select and pick up 2/max 3 Issues which interest them to discuss or debate in the group setting They then return to their seats with their cards

Indicate that the cards are coded thus

BLUE Science Issues

RED Existence of man Issues

GREEN The Creation of the Universe Issues

YELLOW Ideological /Mental conflict Issues

Step Four GROUP DISCUSSION AROUND THE CARDS SELECTED

Time allocation 30 mins

When all back encourage free flowing discussion of why that particular issue interested or concerned them

COFFEE BREAK 15 mins

STEP FIVE GROUP DISCUSSION Time allocation 25 mins

Back in their group give each person a copy of the

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THESE? Sheet and ask them to read through to themselves the randomly ordered statements on it

The Facilitator can then either say 'OK what does anyone feel about A?'

Or can say 'OK who would like to kick off with their choice to get us going?'

Encourage discussion and counter-argument using the points on the Sheet and facts and issues raised earlier in the Game

STEP SIX CLOSING REMARKS Time allocation 5 mins

Facilitator thanks group for participation /hopes it was enjoyable and will lead to continuing debate and consideration

Story Cards – It Takes All Types (page 1)

Professor Bernard Worcester

A Physicist and astronomer interested in the events, which saw the Universe, come into existence, the Big Bang and their immediate consequences. The questions, which he asks about the nature of the Universe and its development can, for him, all be answered without the need for a God or for any divine involvement in the process. The scientific information available is able to explain all of the key questions that he asks himself.

Professor Donald Rawson

An evolutionary Biologist, who is interested in the Evolution of animals on land. The information available about the genome and the development of genetic complexity is able to answer many of his questions about the process of how simple life was able to increase in complexity and to radiate out into the range of species which were in existence around 300 million years ago. This information rather than answering all questions gives him a sense of awe and a feeling of purpose. This allows him to see the place of God in being with the process of being involved but as yet in a way that we are not able to fully understand.

Story Cards – It Takes All Types (page 2)

Mrs Joan Youngson

A life long church member who has always put scripture at the heart of her life. She believes that scripture speaks directly and that we need to accept what is written even when that is difficult. She takes a literal view of the first chapter of Genesis and so feels that the Earth and life on Earth can only be a few thousand years old with all current living things created just as they are. Views that the Earth is much older she feels to be due to the events around the flood, which caused so much confusion that many things are just so much younger than they seem, otherwise to be. For her scripture will always top science.

The Rev Fred Oldman

An evangelical centred minister with significant knowledge of the scriptures but who during a long ministry has come across significant knowledge of the working of science. He believes that the account of the Creation in Genesis 1 is fundamentally correct but that it needs to be seen alongside what we now know of geological history. He understands that when scripture is translated from one language to another that compromises have to be made in the selection of words and so he believes that the word “days” can reasonably be understood to mean “epochs” i.e. significant periods of time. As a result, for him it is possible to accept creation by God as suggested in Genesis 1 and reconcile this with the geological record. For him species have not evolved from a common ancestor and man was a distinct divine creation

Story Cards – It Takes All Types (page 3)

Mrs Diana Davidson

A recent church attender who has in the past found scripture a barrier to faith. She has come to accept the wisdom and the importance of scripture and its role in regulating our conduct and beliefs. Genesis and its account of Creation have for her been a problem in the past but she is now able to see ways of reconciling her faith and her understanding of science. The Earth and the Universe are millions of years old. All life forms share common ancestry. Over the process of evolutionary time God was able to perform miracles so as to be involved in the evolutionary process. As a result life forms have become more complex as a result of God's direction of the process.

Dr Monty Morgan

The chief executive of a biotechnology company and a life long atheist. He sees the impact of scriptural understanding and belief in a God as leading to a barrier to what biological businesses are able to do. Concerns about the sanctity of life lead to restrictions in how our increasing knowledge of all genomes - but especially the human genome - would allow us to do. Research on life is needed to allow the next phase of business development and the generation of economic activity. The God concept is a barrier to progress and results in costly regulation. If we all came to accept that God doesn't exist then life would be so much easier.

Story Cards – It Takes All Types (page 4)

Miss Wendy Smith

A member of a progressive church congregation and a primary school teacher who has attended church for much of her life. Church gives her a sense of purpose, clear guidance as to what is important and standards by which we ought to live. She is confused about the constant debate about Creation and Evolution. Clever and famous people seem to have conflicting views-these very different takes seem to be convincing when first heard but they can't all be right. She doesn't know what she ought to believe.

Major George Fields

A life long member of a traditional church and a senior member of a right leaning political party. He sees a traditional take on scripture as important because it tells us just how we should interact both with other things on Earth and other people. Man was given dominion over the planet and so it is all right for us to use the resources that God has given us to develop wealth. Evolution makes sense and gives a clear rationale for man as the ultimate product of the process, the one who can make the decisions and has the right to use Creation. Evolution shows that the fittest will come out on top and so it's only right that successful individuals should have the power to organise others and have a monopoly of wealth.

INFORMATION SHEET

Nature of the Universe

- 1 The Universe is 13.75bn years old. The Universe is 93bn light years wide
- 2 It takes 4years for light from the nearest star to reach Earth. The edge of the visible Universe is 15bn light years away.
- 3 The first stars formed 100 million years after the Big Bang.
- 4 There are 100bn Galaxies in the Universe each with vast numbers of stars. 95% of the mass of Galaxies is dark matter.
- 5 Space is still stretching and so is housing both old galaxies and new star forming regions.
- 6 There are 94 naturally occurring chemical elements from which everything is made
- 7 In a fraction of a second after the Big Bang gravity separated from other natural forces and so the Universe began to expand massively. Less than a second after the Big Bang the first chemical element Hydrogen was created. The second Helium came along after 180 seconds. The fusion of 4 Hydrogen atoms to become Helium, with the loss of energy, was the key to the production of matter.
- 8 There are four fundamental forces, Gravity, Electromagnetic forces, Strong Nuclear forces and Weak Nuclear forces (the forces which hold atoms together)
- 9 Life depends on a fine tuned Universe such that the smallest of changes would render life impossible.

Evolution

- 10 Most evolutionary change is invisible as it is too slow to be seen in a lifetime.
- 11 Evolution represents a systematic change in the frequency of a particular gene in a gene pool.
- 12 The oldest fossils found to date are around 540 million years old. Multicellular life on Earth seemed to begin in the Cambrian geological period around half a billion years ago.
- 13 Every species shares an ancestor with every other species
- 14 DNA is at the heart of all life. Any mutation in the genetic code, rather than in the genes it encodes, would have catastrophic consequences. DNA is not a template it's more like a script. Each gene is a stand-alone entity. They do not blend.
- 15 All species have a large potential to increase in numbers- however the numbers within a species remain roughly constant at given times.
- 16 Science is a process through which we gain knowledge.

Science Issues (Blue, page 1)

1 In relation to the history of the Universe science and faith can seem to be mutually exclusive. Science is primarily concerned with the mechanism of events and the Bible with the purposes of God where the causes of natural events are a framework for God.

2 Does the theory of Evolution really answer all of our questions?

3 Science can answer how questions but not why questions

4 Science can solve problems but it can't tell you what to do with the answer. Science can't solve ethics problems.

5 Science and faith are only in conflict when science claims it can explain everything and Christians read the Bible as a science text

Science Issues (Blue, page 2)

6 Is there a scriptural reason to disbelieve that God worked using scientific mechanisms resulting in Evolution?

Existence of man (Red)

1 Why does anything exist at all?

2 Has God always been involved with Creation and how?

3 Every faith has at its heart a Creation story, which explains how we came to be here.

4 Man can legitimately be regarded as a special Creation.

The Creation of the Universe (Green, page 1)

1 To know what the Universe means we need to look at the Bible.

2 Big Bang Cosmology may seem to fit with Genesis 1 but should not become dogma.

3 How long did it take God to create the world, six 24 hr. days or billions of years?

4 Is the meaning of Genesis always clear? How could there be light before there was a sun?

5 Rejecting a 6-day Creation opens the door to other compromises with God's word

The Creation of the Universe (Green, page 2)

6 Is the view that the world was created in six days and man placed in the Garden of Eden the only possible reading of Genesis?

7 40% of Americans deny that humans evolved from animals and think that we were created by God within the last 10 thousand years.

Ideological/Mental conflict (Yellow, page 1)

1 From a Christian perspective Evolution is one of the greatest of God's works

2 Is it appropriate for Christians to allow what we learn from the study of Creation to effect how we read scripture?

3 Establishing a belief about how God created the world is not fundamental to our loving and saving relationship with him.

4 Science is one particular organised way of asking questions about the world and doesn't necessarily invalidate other approaches.

5 How God revealed him self in Christ is not accessible by experimentation but by the same way as we know people which is by experience.

Ideological/Mental conflict (Yellow, page 2)

6 Science is silent on the big issues of life such as why is there so much suffering?

7 The early chapters of Genesis are written in a different literary style to the narrative accounts we find in the Gospels and Acts.

8 Scriptural interpretation involves reasoning.

What do you think about these?

- A** There is more to life than what science can tell us.
- B** Which pieces of scripture should we take symbolically and which literally and how do we decide?
- C** Much Christian preaching while accepting Evolution will continue to make theological points about Adam and Eve.
- D** The scientific description of events is complementary and not contradictory to scripture.
- E** In science there are no sacred tomes and no certainty just the current best explanation
- F** Where modern science seems to clash with Scripture we need to be willing to rethink our interpretation of our texts
- G** Is DNA the language in which God created life?
- H** The purpose of the Bible is to help us to a relationship with God through Christ
- I** The Christian Gospel gives a coherent explanation of the Universe, life and our mixed nature that no other philosophy can match.
- J** Trusting in a personal God is no more irrational than trusting in a human relationship
- K** Scientific theories are always provisional and may need amendment with the emergence of new evidence.
- L** Can a caring God be equated with suffering, illness, disability and wars
- M** Surely the diverse beauty of nature is proof that God exists
- N** Scientific accounts of the origin of living diversity undermines the inspiration of scripture