



# Test of FAITH

Science and Christianity:

**An Introductory Course for Homeschoolers**

[www.testoffaith.com/homeschool](http://www.testoffaith.com/homeschool)

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# Test of FAITH

## Science and Christianity

## An Introductory Course for Homeschoolers

A three-week course for high school students on science and Christianity, featuring the documentary *Test of FAITH* and including study notes, follow-up questions, and essay topics.

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# A note to students and their parents/teachers

Some atheists use science as a weapon to attack faith, and some Christians use faith as a bomb-shelter to hide from science. But are faith and science really enemies? What do devout Christians working in the sciences today have to say? The *Test of FAITH* DVD and Introductory Course for Homeschoolers will help you explore the relationship between contemporary science and the Christian faith.

The course has been written from a Christian perspective, but it is up to you and your parent/teacher to discuss where you stand in terms of your faith. Our hope is that if you are a Christian, the material we cover will strengthen your belief in God and the Bible—and that if you are looking in on Christianity from the outside, this course will help you to consider the rational grounds for faith.

The *Test of FAITH* documentary offers you the opportunity to examine your assumptions and the worldviews of others. The various questions and essay assignments will encourage you to explore different topics and beliefs—not necessarily because all viewpoints are equally valid, but to push you to investigate different ideas and to begin to form your own conclusions. Completion of this course will lay a firm foundation for future intellectual pursuits and life as an informed and engaged citizen in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

All of the scientists and theologians interviewed in *Test of FAITH* are Christians who believe that God created all things and that Jesus Christ is their savior. They affirm the historic, orthodox confessions of the Christian faith and hold a high view of the Bible's authority as the inspired Word of God. You can read a short biography of each scientist and theologian in the Bonus Features of the DVD.

Most of the contributors to this documentary accept the evidence from scientific research that the universe is billions of years old, and that stars, planets, and all life on earth developed through evolutionary processes. The DVD makes a case for this view (which is called Theistic Evolution, or Evolutionary Creationism). The main concern of *Test of FAITH* is deeper, however. It is not so much about “evolution vs. creation” as it is about defending belief in God against popular claims that modern science eliminates the plausibility of religious belief.

Many resources on Christianity and science are available for homeschoolers, most of which have been written from the standpoint of Creation Science or Intelligent Design. The *Test of FAITH* DVD and the related Introductory Course for Homeschoolers aim to complement these materials by exploring Theistic Evolution, which is the most commonly held view among Christians working in the sciences. Although many evangelical theologians and biblical scholars also hold this view, Christians and media commentators are not often familiar with Theistic Evolution. The course covers several Christian perspectives on origins, including Young Earth Creation and Intelligent Design, and we encourage you to explore them all. We do not expect everyone to agree with everything in this curriculum; please see it not as a textbook for you to memorize but as a catalyst for further thought and discussion.

If Christianity is true, then Christians should have no fear of discussion and debate. Equipping you with a thorough knowledge of the range of views held within the Christian church will strengthen your critical thinking skills and your ability to understand and defend your faith. The goal is not for you to “make up your mind” but to develop your mind.

As you go through life, you will inevitably encounter new and unsettling ideas from other Christians, non-Christians, or people who actively oppose Christianity. And some of these ideas may shake your faith. The *Test of FAITH* DVD and study guide will help you to examine some of these ideas and issues and will prepare you to live as a thoughtful believer and witness in today's society. This course will challenge you to ask yourself some hard questions about what and why you believe.

Some issues do not come with easy “black and white” answers. The Bible was written in a pre-scientific time and does not speak directly to all the issues that new technologies and scientific ideas raise—but Christians can always apply broader biblical principles to any given situation. The course material will help you discover and understand those principles. Above all, the goal of *Test of FAITH* is to encourage and reassure you that Christian belief has what it takes to pass modern science's “test of faith.”

Our prayer is that you will not be “tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching” (Ephesians 4:14), but that these resources will help you give a “reason for the hope that you have” (1 Peter 3:15).



# Test of FAITH

In three half-hour episodes, the *Test of FAITH* documentary examines some “tests of faith” that modern science poses:

1. Astrophysics and Cosmology (God’s existence, the Big Bang, multiverses)
2. Biology and Ecology (creation and evolution, the environment)
3. Neuroscience and Technology (religious experiences, the brain, ethical issues)

The DVD and the supporting Introductory Course for Homeschoolers explore these topics and demonstrate that we do not have to choose between science and faith, and that Christianity is a rational and coherent way of understanding our universe.

## The Introductory Course for Homeschoolers

This course is designed for homeschooled high school students (ages 14–18), although advanced junior high students (ages 12–13) may also be able to tackle it. The extension essay assignments are differentiated by difficulty:

- Junior high (ages 12–13, 7–8<sup>th</sup> grades, where appropriate) – *foundation*
- Early high school (ages 14–15, 9–10<sup>th</sup> grades) – *intermediate*
- Late high school (ages 16–18, 11–12<sup>th</sup> grades) – *advanced*

We suggest that foundation level students watch the documentary with their teachers. (Of course, teachers may want to watch the documentary regardless of the level of their students.) Foundation level students may also shorten the course by skipping certain activities (marked with a red asterisk \*).

## Features of this course

- Ready-to-use, complete lessons.
- Teacher and student(s) can work through the lessons together from beginning to end.
- No lesson preparation is required (there is no separate teacher’s guide).
- Emphasizes personal engagement and reflection but also attempts to lay a basic academic foundation in the philosophic, theological, and scientific concepts discussed.
- Functions as a general introduction to the philosophy of science and religion and also provides opportunities for more in-depth exploration of current issues.
- Incorporates sufficient background information (descriptions and definitions of terms) to make it accessible to high school students and advanced junior high students.

## What you will need

- Printout of the free PDF file for each week
- The *Test of FAITH* documentary DVD, available from [wipfandstock.com/store/Test of Faith DVD Does Science Threaten Belief in God](http://wipfandstock.com/store/Test_of_Faith_DVD_Does_Science_Threaten_Belief_in_God)
- A DVD player or computer for watching the documentary
- Internet access for research
- A Bible (preferably NIV)




# Format

## A typical week

The course will take three weeks, with an optional fourth week. (You also have the option to spread the course out over 7-8 weeks-- see below.) In the three-week version, the material for each week covers one of the three episodes of the DVD documentary. As a general guideline, students will need to devote one to one-and-a-half hours of work per day to the course. The schedule is the same each week:

<i>Day 1 (Monday)</i>	Introduces the episode. The student completes preparatory activities to engage his or her interest and access prior knowledge. The student then watches the whole episode. Finally, the student completes a brief exercise to review the material covered in the episode.
<i>Days 2 and 3 (Tuesday–Wednesday)</i>	Cover the episode in more detail. The student proceeds chapter by chapter. He or she learns new concepts and terms, watches the relevant chapter of the DVD, and discusses/writes short answers to follow-up questions.
<i>Days 4 and 5 (Thursday–Friday)</i>	Extend and enrich learning. The student chooses an essay question to research and writes a 1–3 page essay or prepares a 10-minute presentation to share. The essay questions are differentiated by ability level and include recommended online resources.

These symbols will help you navigate through the material:

	<b>Watch</b>	Watch the DVD.
	<b>Read</b>	Read to learn more about the concepts and key terms.
	<b>Write</b>	Complete the exercises to deepen your understanding of the topic.

## Personalizing the course

Students will get the most out of this course by proceeding through the material linearly. Because every homeschooling family is different, however, you can adjust the course to your needs and schedule. Below are a few ideas for shortening, extending, and otherwise modifying the material.

- Use the alternative 7–8 week schedule (on pages 8–9).
- Skip the foundation level activities (**marked with a red asterisk \***) to shorten the course.
- Skip the essays on Days 4 and 5, and/or spread Days 1–3 over a whole week.
- Discuss the questions rather than writing out the answers.
- Break up Week 2 (the longest and possibly most challenging set of material). You could cover Theories of Origin (chapters 1–3 of the DVD) in one week and then cover the Problem of Suffering and Caring for Creation (chapters 4–5) the following week.
- Add a fourth week to enable the student to finish researching and writing a final essay.
- Extend the course to 6 weeks by allowing 2 weeks per episode of the DVD. You could cover Days 1–3 in one week, and Days 4–5 (researching and writing an essay) in another week.
- Choose individual topics from the course to supplement your existing curriculum (e.g., you could pull out the sections on theories of origin, the environment, or ethics, and incorporate them elsewhere). See the Course Overview for topics covered.

# Course overview: 3-4 weeks

## WEEK 1: *Beyond Reason? Faith, science, and the universe*

Day 1	Introduction	Starter questions and watch Episode 1 of the DVD
Day 2	DVD chapter 1.1	How do people see the world? Epistemology, worldview, truth
	DVD chapter 1.2	God of the gaps: The Big Bang and the limits of science
Day 3	DVD chapter 1.3	Fine-tuning: The Anthropic Principle
	DVD chapter 1.4	Models for relating science and faith
Days 4-5	Essay	Research and writing for extension essay assignments

## WEEK 2: *An Accident in the Making? Creation, evolution, and interpreting Genesis*

Day 1	Introduction	Starter questions and watch Episode 2 of the DVD
Day 2	DVD chapter 2.1	Views on creation: Young Earth Creation, Intelligent Design, Day-Age Creation
	DVD chapter 2.2	Another view on creation: Theistic Evolution and Genesis
Day 3	DVD chapter 2.3	Random chance? Convergent evolution
	DVD chapter 2.4	The problem of suffering: Evil, death, and the hope of the gospel
	DVD chapter 2.5	Caring for creation: Christians as stewards of the environment
Days 4-5	Essay	Research and writing for extension essay assignments

## WEEK 3: *Is Anybody There? Human identity and choice*

Day 1	Introduction	Starter questions and watch Episode 3 of the DVD
Day 2	DVD chapter 3.1	It's all in your head: Neuroscience and spiritual realities
	DVD chapter 3.2	Whole persons: Human identity and freedom
Day 3	DVD chapter 3.3	An ethical toolbox: Applying biblical principles to ethical issues
	DVD chapter 3.4	Believing science: Relating science and faith
Days 4-5	Essay	Research and writing for extension essay assignments

## WEEK 4 (OPTIONAL)

If you have enough time and interest, you can continue one of the extension essays that you began in Weeks 1-3, or start a new one. Write a five- to ten-page paper, consulting at least five academic sources to inform your conclusions.

# Alternative course overview: 7-8 weeks

## EPISODE 1: *Beyond Reason? Faith, science, and the universe*

Week	Day	Section	Topic	Pages
1	Monday	Introduction exercises		<a href="#">11-12</a>
	Tuesday	Watch whole episode and complete review sheet		<a href="#">13</a>
	Wednesday	Chapter 1	How do people see the world?: Epistemology, worldview, truth	<a href="#">14-17</a>
	Thursday	Chapter 2	God of the gaps: The Big Bang and the limits of science	<a href="#">17-21</a>
	Friday	Chapters 3-4	Fine-tuning: The Anthropic Principle / Models for relating science and faith	<a href="#">22-25</a>
2	Monday	Essay (or presentation)	Choose essay topic, begin research	<a href="#">26-29</a>
	Tuesday		Research essay	
	Wednesday		Write essay	
	Thursday		Write essay	
	Friday		Edit and finish essay	

## EPISODE 2: *An Accident in the Making? Creation, evolution, and interpreting Genesis*

Week	Day	Section	Topic	Pages
3	Monday	Introduction exercises		<a href="#">30-32</a>
	Tuesday	Watch whole episode and complete review sheet		<a href="#">33</a>
	Wednesday	Chapter 1	Views on creation: Young Earth Creation, Intelligent Design, Day-Age Creation	<a href="#">34-36</a>
	Thursday	Chapter 2 (exercises 1-2)	Another view on creation: Theistic Evolution and Genesis (Theistic Evolution / Literary genres in the Bible)	<a href="#">36-41</a>
	Friday	Chapter 2 (exercise 3)	Another view on creation: Theistic Evolution and Genesis (Interpretations of Genesis 1: A summary)	<a href="#">41-43</a>
4	Monday	Chapter 3	Random chance? Convergent evolution	<a href="#">44-45</a>
	Tuesday	Chapter 4	The problem of suffering: Evil, death, and the hope of the gospel	<a href="#">45-48</a>
	Wednesday	Chapter 5 (exercises 1-2)	Caring for Creation: Christians as stewards of the environment (A biblical framework for stewardship / Environmental issues)	<a href="#">48-50</a>
	Thursday	Chapter 5 (exercises 3-4)	Caring for Creation: Christians as stewards of the environment (Climate change / Practical implications)	<a href="#">50-55</a>
	Friday	Catch up day, choose essay topic		
5	Monday	Essay (or presentation)	Research essay	<a href="#">56-60</a>
	Tuesday		Research essay	
	Wednesday		Write essay	
	Thursday		Write essay	
	Friday		Edit and finish essay	



## EPISODE 3: *Is Anybody There? Human identity and choice*

Week	Day	Section	Topic	Pages
6	Monday	Introduction exercises		<a href="#">61-62</a>
	Tuesday	Watch whole episode and complete review sheet		<a href="#">63</a>
	Wednesday	Chapter 1	It's all in your head: Neuroscience and spiritual realities	<a href="#">64-66</a>
	Thursday	Chapter 2	Whole persons: Human identity and freedom	<a href="#">66-69</a>
	Friday	Chapter 3 (exercises 1-3)	An ethical toolbox: Applying biblical principles to ethical issues (Being human / An ethical toolbox / Using your ethical toolbox: Cloning)	<a href="#">70-74</a>
7	Monday	Chapter 3 (exercise 4), Chapter 4	An ethical toolbox: Applying biblical principles to ethical issues (Other ethical issues: Beginning of life and enhancement), Believing science: Relating science and faith	<a href="#">74-77</a>
	Tuesday	Essay (or presentation)	Choose essay topic, begin research	<a href="#">78-80</a>
	Wednesday		Research essay	
	Thursday		Write essay	
	Friday		Edit and finish essay	

## WEEK 8 (OPTIONAL)

If you have enough time and interest, you can continue one of the extension essays that you began in Weeks 1–7, or start a new one. Write a five- to ten-page paper, consulting at least five academic sources to inform your conclusions.

# Guidelines for writing essays

The goal of the “extension essays” at the end of each week is to help you *extend* your thinking. This is your chance to respond in a deeper way to some of the issues that *Test of FAITH* raises, to do some external research, and to stretch your thinking and communication skills.

The depth and length of your essay will depend on the level of your work in this course (foundation, intermediate, or advanced). We suggest that these essays be one to three pages, double-spaced (about 300–900 words), and that you use at least three outside sources for your research. For the optional fourth week, you will need to research more widely and develop one of your essays further—or begin a fourth essay on another topic that interests you. We suggest that this essay be five to ten pages (about 1500–3000 words) and that you consult at least five outside sources in the course of your research.

In lieu of any of the essays, a teacher may ask students to prepare and give a presentation. While the length and format of such presentations are up to the teacher’s discretion, we suggest that they be comparable to the essay in length and research sources.

## Essay structure

The extension essay questions will generally prompt two kinds of essay:

1. Research/informational essay – You describe and explain a topic. This kind of essay requires:
  - a. A paragraph introducing the topic
  - b. Body paragraphs, based on research, which explain the topic
  - c. A brief conclusion
  - d. Citation of any sources that you use
  
2. Expository/argumentative essay – You take a position on a topic and defend it. This kind of essay requires:
  - a. An introductory paragraph which engages the audience’s attention. This paragraph should end with your one-sentence thesis statement (the position which you will be defending throughout the essay).
  - b. Body paragraphs which defend your position. You should include research-based evidence and, if applicable, explain and rebut conflicting views.
  - c. A concluding paragraph which sums up your position and answers the “so what?” question. What is the impact of your thesis?
  - d. Citation of any sources that you use.

For more information on writing, visit Purdue’s Online Writing Lab: [owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/685/1](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/685/1)

## Research and citation

In each extension essay section, we have listed suggestions for sources and further reading. We have selected these sources for their academic credibility, and all of our suggestions are online to make them easier for students to access. Of course, you can always search for other sources online. A word of warning, however: anybody can write anything on the internet, without having had their findings reviewed by professional peers or subjected to academic standards.

Make sure that you are basing your research on solid academic sources. Beware of internet articles and blogs that do not list an author. If a site does list an author, do a little research: Does this person have academic qualifications? What is his or her bias? Does this author list his or her own sources at the end of the article? The best online sources are articles written for peer-reviewed journals (where a qualified person writes a piece which other professionals then review before publication).

Please use discernment as you research. Teachers should oversee the websites that students are accessing. *Test of FAITH* may not necessarily endorse all the material on the websites that we recommend.

After you have done your research, you will need to use the information you have gleaned to support the points you make in your essay. Do not cut and paste quotes from your sources into your essay without giving credit to the original author—this is plagiarism. If you paraphrase a key idea or use a direct quotation, you will need to credit the author (this is called “citing your source”). We recommend that you use the American Psychological Associate (APA) style of citation. Visit the Purdue Online Writing Lab ([owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2)) for detailed information on how to cite your sources.