



# Test of FAITH

Science and Christianity Unpacked  
**Sessions for 11-14 year olds**

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

# Test of FAITH

## Science and Christianity Unpacked Sessions for 11-14 year olds

### Contents









Test of FAITH Sessions for 11-14 year olds	3
Guide to the Sessions	4
11-14 Session 1: Understanding God's World	5
11-14 Session 2: Science We See	8
11-14 Session 3: In the Beginning	11
11-14 Session 4: Who Am I?	14
Appendix A: Games and Experiments	18
Appendix B: True or false	19
Appendix C: Taking Responsibility for the Earth	20
Appendix D: Modelling game – Clue card Ideas	21

# Test of FAITH Sessions for 11-14 year olds

Session no.	Session title	Aim of session	Extra idea	Resources needed
1	Understanding God's World	An introductory session to explore the issues around science and faith	Make room into a <i>Brainiac</i> TV set	Equipment for science experiments (see below), paper, pens, Bibles, lego, <i>Test of FAITH</i> DVD, DVD player
2	Science We See	A chance to explore what is meant by God's big universe and how it came to be	Run the session as a late night meeting, or even do a sleepover so you can see the stars!	Star Trek DVD, food for tasting competition, paper, pens, <i>Test of FAITH</i> DVD, DVD player
3	In the Beginning	Introducing the creation of humankind and the challenge of taking care of God's creation	Make this a jungle theme with music from <i>The Jungle Book</i> , jungle juices and sweets	Lining paper, coloured pens and pencils, flip chart or a form of projection (OHP/Data), <i>Test of FAITH</i> DVD, DVD player
4	Who Am I?	An exploration of what makes people special	Have a superhero fancy dress party with each person coming as their own – or a well-known – superhero	Plasticine, rolls of toilet paper, <i>The Incredibles</i> DVD <i>Test of FAITH</i> DVD, DVD player, lining paper, coloured pens, Blu-Tack or sticky tape

# Guide to the Sessions

The youth work sessions are planned to last between one and one and a half hours each. You can extend the time they take by introducing an act of worship and prayer before the session (whatever is your normal practice). Each session contains the same activities, which are:

	<p><b>GAME: To get the group moving and involved</b></p> <p>During this time look out for those who are on the fringes, not wanting to be involved, and those who are looking to dominate. Think about how you can draw in those who are stepping back, or rein in those who aren't allowing others to speak.</p>
	<p><b>DISCUSS: To get the group talking about the session</b></p> <p>Following the game there is a discussion activity with suggested questions. This is designed to use the energy created in the game to get good discussion flowing. Don't be afraid of weird and wacky answers at this stage. If you have several groups, make sure you have a chance to get feedback from each one.</p>
	<p><b>WATCH: <i>Test of FAITH</i> DVD (or alternative choice from movie)</b></p> <p>To focus the session there are a range of clips suggested from the <i>Test of FAITH</i> DVD (available from Paternoster). These include extracts from the main sessions, Bonus Films (available under Bonus Features) and reflections (also available under Bonus Features). In addition to the <i>Test of FAITH</i> media, a complementary contemporary film clip is also suggested.</p>
	<p><b>BREAK</b></p> <p>A chance to take a short break for a drink/snack or toilet break. If the game has been a wild one, then use this time to rearrange the room so that people return to a calmer environment. Also, it is useful for the young people to return with their refreshments: it means that those who need something to fiddle with have a cup or biscuit to hold.</p>
	<p><b>TALK: Prompt notes for youth leaders wanting to introduce the topic</b></p> <p>Gather groups together, try to get some focus for a few minutes as you introduce the subject for discussion. Prompts are given for a short, focused talk that will illustrate the issues being discussed. Depending on the attentiveness of your group, you should feel free to intersperse this talk section with discussion questions.</p>
	<p><b>BIBLE: Read and explore</b></p> <p>Each session has a Bible story or a series of readings to help the young people to understand God's perspective on the issues raised.</p>
	<p><b>CLOSING ACTION: Putting the session into action</b></p> <p>Finally, as a drawing together and closing up of the session, a closing action has been suggested. This closing action has been designed to encourage the young people to come together and apply what they have been exploring. It is the point at which the hyperbole and debate becomes applied and real.</p>
	<p><b>PRAYER: Final exercise/meditation</b></p> <p>The final act of the session is a time of prayer. Different prayer activities have been suggested. If you feel your group is adventurous, feel free to try these out. If you feel it more appropriate to draw the group together in a prayer yourself, then this can also be done.</p>

The first half of the sessions is set to last between twenty and forty minutes and is for more active, energetic learning. The second half of the sessions follows a break and is designed to provide a bit more focus. This second part should last between thirty and forty-five minutes, although the sessions can be extended by feedback and questions from the young people.

Given the nature of the topic, you may want to think about a procedure for tough questions because it is inevitable that there will be queries you can't answer straight away. In this case, it is best to acknowledge the question, write it down in a journal and then send the challenge back to the young people, asking them to explore and find answers during the week. If you have done this in previous weeks, you can use the second half of the session to feedback answers.

Should you have a bold and imaginative group, then an extra idea has been suggested to theme each session. These include turning the session into a dinner party, or praying late at night whilst peering up at the stars. These extra ideas are designed to introduce more memory-makers into the sessions, finding ways in which the theory can be related to the practice.

The Test of FAITH youth materials are developed to help groups of Christian young people explore issues relating to science and faith. As such activities have been provided that enable Bible study, discussion and prayer. Whilst the groups are aimed at Christian young people they can be adapted to raise awareness of the issues and encourage open discussion among young people of many beliefs and none. Each youth worker leading the sessions should make their own decision about how to approach these activities with their groups, depending on the young people's level of interest in, or commitment to, Christian faith, and adapt the session as appropriate.

# 11-14 Session 1: Understanding God's World

## Aim of session

An introductory session to explore the issues around science and faith.

## Resources needed

Equipment for science experiments (see below), paper, pens, Bibles, Lego, *Test of FAITH* DVD, DVD player.

## extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra

Why not transform your session into something like the *Braniac* show on TV? You can show amazing science experiment film clips taken from YouTube, put up pictures from amazing science feats on the wall, and stick up facts that you can get from the *Guinness Book of World Records*. If you have the means, use flashing lights, atmospheric music and even a smoke machine to create an enticing setting. Then, out of the smoke, you could come like *Braniac* scientists, dressed in overalls with goggles, lab coats and thick rubber gloves.

## Part 1: Fun learning, doing and watching

NOTES



### GAME: Science experiment

5-10 mins

To introduce the subject of science, it is great to undertake a cool home science experiment. There are several suggested in Appendix A, but feel free to look around the Internet to find ones that would amaze your group. Whichever experiment you choose to do, make sure that you try it out at home, checking what risks there are (fire, mess, dirtied clothes, etc.).



### DISCUSS: Science and faith

10-15 mins

Get the young people to name some famous scientists: maybe people they have learnt about in school. Ask them to draw a face, write a famous scientist's name on it, and then suggest why they are known. (You may need to start them off at this stage with people like Darwin, Einstein, Newton, Stephen Hawking, etc.).

Now the young people have started to get their minds into the right area of thinking, allocate one end of your room as the 'true zone' and the other as the 'false zone'. Then, reading out the statements in Appendix B, get the young people to move around the room depending on whether they agree or disagree with the statements. They can also put themselves in the middle if they are not sure. After each statement, take some time to get feedback on why the young people moved to certain places.

The statements are designed to be suggestive rather than needing black and white answers, so allow time for exploring opinions. Try not to suggest what you think at this stage – rather, take time to encourage the young people to express their opinions.



### WATCH: Harry Potter

10 mins

Harry Potter is a film packed with wonder and magic. It crosses the line between things that are real and things that are unseen. It pushes the viewer to explore amazing new worlds, see things that aren't immediately apparent, and also suggests that there may be an alternative way in which to understand the world in which we live. So, leading up to a break, it would be good to show a clip from a Harry Potter film. At the end of the clip, ask the young people to:

- List under two columns which bits were (1) scientifically provable and (2) magic.
- Come up with three questions they would ask Harry Potter if they were to meet him.





**BREAK**

10 mins

During the break, why not serve drinks/snacks which are strange combinations or unusual colours, such as green custard tarts, banana and marmite sandwiches, or purple-coloured lemonade? You can do this easily by buying food colourings or finding things in your local supermarket that wouldn't normally go together.



**WATCH:** *Test of FAITH Bonus Short Videos part 1 nos. 1 and 2*

5 mins

These great short clip videos help introduce the subject, set the scene and give an overview of the subject being covered.



**TALK**

5 mins

Gather the groups back together with a short overview of what they have been involved in so far.

- To start with, they undertook a science experiment which tested the boundaries of their knowledge. They made something happen that they didn't know could or would happen. No matter how small or weird it was, they learned something new about the world through undertaking the experiment.
- After the experiment, they thought about some famous scientists and then gave their opinions – suggesting what they thought about science and God.
- Finally, they watched a clip from Harry Potter where, a bit like in the science experiments, things that seem strange to us as 'muggles' happened to Harry and his friends.

After recapping, give them a brief talk, based on the following:

- When you thought of famous scientists you thought of people who were known for understanding and changing the world in amazing ways. They were people who asked incredible mind-bending questions, and often gave all their time and energy to finding answers.
- God wants us to live lives like this. We don't have to all become scientists, but he wants us to know, learn and find out more about his world.
- We are now going to look at someone in the Bible who is considered to be one of the greatest kings who ever lived. He is at the centre of some of the most famous stories in the Old Testament as well as being behind the Bible's song book, which is called the Psalms.



**BIBLE:** *1 Samuel 16:1–13; Psalm 8:1–4*

10 mins

God has created an incredibly big, yet beautifully intricate, universe. When we look into the night sky, we can see amazing galaxies that are millions of light years away. There are millions of others we can't see that are even farther away. The universe is too huge for us humans to imagine, yet it exists in astonishing, finely balanced detail. Everything that makes existence possible is balanced perfectly and scientists, whether they are Christians or not, are astounded by how beautiful this balance is. Some of these scientists believe that this balance is only possible because God has made it so: he has made everything from gravity to light and time so perfect that we can be here now.

Whilst we can be blown away by the amazing size of the universe, we can also marvel at the tiny stuff which we often take for granted. Take our taste buds: the mechanism and detail that goes into such small things is so complicated that it takes a very clever scientist to understand it all. Yet we have the joy of eating ice cream, drinking a Coke or juice and knowing that this tastes great; that we feel good.

We need to be inspired by the fact that we have a God who is God of the big and the small; he is Lord of the universe, and Friend to us. We can see this when we read about one of the most important kings in the Bible: a man called David.

The reading in 1 Samuel tells of the beginning of David's life, when he was first anointed by the prophet Samuel, who was following God's guidance. Use this passage as a starting point to get the young people to list what they know about David. Ask them to suggest stories about David writing the psalms, fighting Goliath, defeating foreign gods, and even being a man with uncontrolled impulses! When the young people's suggestions have dried up, take time to review David's life.

- He was the youngest son.
- He was a musician and songwriter.
- He was inspired by the world around him, by creation and even the stars in the sky.
- He became king, a great ruler of his people, and the greatest king remembered in Israel.
- He was a warrior who defeated personal enemies such as Goliath, and led his armies to defeat invading armies such as the Moabites and Ammonites.
- He was known as a man after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14).

David was a man who loved God's amazing world. He loved creation, the stars in the sky and the earth all around. He was inspired by the size of everything God had done, but he also knew God cared about the small things as well. As a result, David was a young man who God went on to use for really big things.



### GROUP WORK

5 mins

Break into groups of two to three young people and get them to write the science subjects that they are studying in school on post-it notes: from physics to sports science and sociology. Then having listed the subjects get the young people to suggest how those subjects help them learn more about God's world. *For example: physics helps us understand how the universe began, sports science helps us to know how God made us as people ...*



### CLOSING ACTION: Lego mounuments

5-10 mins

In the same groups as above, give the young people a bundle of Lego. Then, get them to construct one of the following: a person (representing understanding God's creation through the science of human biology), a school/laboratory (representing understanding God's creation through science in school), a small town (representing understanding God's creation in the wider world) or a car/bike/gadget (representing understanding God's creation in technology). Once the Lego constructions are complete, bring them to the front and lay them out in a circle (Should Lego be unavailable, you can use other children's building material, or get them to draw their ideas.)



### PRAYER

5 mins

With your Lego (or other) offerings in front of the group, print and hand out the prayer below which everyone can pray together.

*"God, thank you for being with us in our session today. Thank you, too, for creating an amazing, wonderful and complex world and people. As we grow and develop, be with us as we study in school, live in the world, relax at home and worship in our church – help us to be hungry to learn about and understand your world, as David was. Give us brains to understand, and hearts to love. Allow our understanding of your world to make it a better place, and give us big dreams of what you want us to be. God, we also ask that you would increase our understanding so we might grow wise like David's son, Solomon and in the process come to help solve many of the problems that exist.*

*Amen."*

# 11-14 Session 2: Science We See

## Aim of session

A chance to explore what is meant by God's big universe and how it came to be.

## Resources needed

Star Trek DVD, food for tasting competition, paper, pens, Test of FAITH DVD, DVD player.

## extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra

Why not add an extra dimension to your session by running it as part of a sleepover or even as part of a residential weekend? You could give the young people free time in the evening, then do the session late at night under the stars, or at least in a place where they could go outside and see the galaxies unveiled above them (weather permitting!). The later in the evening you run the session the more 'special' it might feel to the young people, and the more memorable the experience.

## Part 1: Fun learning, doing and watching



### GAME: *Jupiter to Mars*

5-10 mins

NOTES

This is a game like musical chairs, where after each round you remove one more chair. Ask for a volunteer to start the game by standing in the middle: this person is the Sun. The other young people are then each assigned a planet in equal numbers: Jupiter, Saturn, Neptune, Venus, Uranus, Mercury, Mars. The Sun stands in the middle of the room, and around him should be placed enough chairs for all but one of the participants in each planet grouping.

At the start of each round, the planets should orbit the Sun. When they are ready, the Sun volunteer should then suddenly call out the name of a planet, for example 'Jupiter!' All 'Jupiters' should then race to find a chair in the circle. The one failing to find a chair should then become the Sun. At any time the Sun can call 'Big Bang' and everyone has to drop to the floor – the person to drop last becomes the Sun.



### DISCUSS: *Tasty world*

5-10 mins

Gather the young people into teams for a food tasting competition. Gather together some food with a wide range of flavours (crisps, jam, apple, Marmite, etc.). Having checked for any allergies first, blindfold one young person in each team at a time and then get them to guess what food you have given them. Award points for each correct guess and, at the end, award a weird food prize to the winning group! Mix up the food so that you have a blend of sweet, sour and savoury. This will ensure the young people are confused by different flavours.



### WATCH: *Rob Bell, Louie Giglio or STAR TREK*

5 mins

Show a clip from Louie Giglio's *Indescribable* or Rob Bell's *Everything is Spiritual Tour*. Use this to highlight the awesome size of the universe.

Should your group be more interested in science fiction programmes, why not show them an introductory scene from *Star Trek*, with the challenge of going into the unknown of space?



At the end of the clip, recap what has been achieved in the first half of the session:

1. We have played a planets game, reminding ourselves of the amazing size of our universe which comprises nine planets and their 172 known moons.
2. Then we played a taste game, where we reminded ourselves of the amazing smallness of the universe as we tried lots of different flavours using our thousands of tiny taste buds.
3. Finally, we watched a clip from Louie Giglio/Rob Bell/*Star Trek*, where we saw the adventure that the universe has for us, and whilst we might not travel to other planets we do have a wonderful chance to explore all around us.



**DISCUSS: *The biggest bang***

5-10 mins

Split the room into two halves, with some young people at one end and the rest at the other. Give each group a pen and some paper. Explain that there are a range of views on the interpretation of the Bible: some focus on a literal interpretation of everything the Bible says, others interpret some passages in a more figurative way. When it comes to thinking about how old the universe is, some people believe it is around 6,000 years old, and some others think it is closer to 13 billion years old.

At this stage make the one group the 6,000 group, the others the 13 billion group. Then ask each group to write down reasons why the universe might be either 6,000 or 13 billion years old. (*For hints, see below.*)

13 billion	6,000 years
The Bible tells us why things happened, not when.	The Bible tells us when things happened, and why.
We can measure how far light has travelled and find out how old the universe is in a number of ways (could refer to the NASA homepage link on the Big Bang briefing sheet).	The measurements for the rocks are wrong.
The oldest rocks on earth can be dated to 3.8 billion years.	It is impossible to date things accurately; we are just guessing.
There are fossils that go back to 3.5 billion years.	There are not enough 'missing link' fossils to show how things developed.
	The sedimentary and fossil layers are not consistent enough to suggest a fossil development.

Each of us as Christians can ask God to help us find the right answer to this question: How old is the earth, and why was it made?



**BREAK**

10 mins

Why not theme the snacks and break time with sweets such as Space Raiders, Space Dust, Rocket Lollies etc.?

**Part 2: Focused learning, talking and growing**



**WATCH: *Test of FAITH: Short Videos part 1 no. 1* 5 mins**

This video introduces the challenge facing scientists who are trying to uncover the origins of the world we live in: what science can tell us, and what faith teaches us.



**BIBLE: Genesis 1:1–25**

10 mins

Read Genesis chapter 1, but break up the reading of the chapter by having a ‘scribe’ who writes down in big letters on a piece of paper what happened on each day, and then puts it on display so that the days are spread out in order. When you have finished all the days, turn over the sheets of paper and run a quiz to see who can remember the correct order of things.



**TALK**

5 mins

Ask the young people a range of ‘Would you rather ...?’ questions, such as: Would you rather live in the city or the countryside? Would you rather live around lots of people, or be with a few close friends? Would you rather have a bird or a dog as a pet? Would you rather have night time or daytime? Would you rather eat only fruit or only vegetables? (Add more ideas of your own.)

At the end of the ‘Would you rather ...?’ questions, do a stand up/sit down survey, getting the young people to stand up/sit down in response to questions about (1) what part of God’s world they have seen or been to (for example, has anyone seen the desert, the jungle, the open ocean, the middle of big cities, the forests, the rolling hills); and (2) who has been/or who knows anything about Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Antarctica, Europe, Australasia.

Recap the session by reminding the young people that in this session we have: played a game with all the planets, watched a DVD outlining the awesomeness of the universe, undertaken a taste test game trying out different flavours, and then remembered whilst the universe might be huge, within it are tiny subtle things that make it exciting and different. After the taste test, we looked at the age of the universe and what different people thought about how old it might be. Along the way we discovered that we had different opinions, different bits of knowledge and a range of interests. Whilst we might not have all the answers, what we also discovered was it was possible to have some fun as we sought to find out more.

Having fun as we find out shouldn’t surprise us, for God loves us exploring the world like this: he loves us asking questions, finding out more about his creation and about him. Genesis says God created (or began to create) the heavens and the earth. Remind the young people that last week we learned that God loves us to ask questions, to explore and understand his creation. Genesis chapter 1 says that in the beginning there was just darkness: a formless nothingness. So because God loves us to ask questions, suggest that when they go on holiday and see beautiful creation all around them, when they look into the night sky and lose count of the stars, when they eat dinner and taste all the different flavours, that (1) they be amazed at the awesome universe God created and (2) they should ask God in their prayers to help them understand why he did it all.



**CLOSING ACTION: Picture, poem or rap**

5 mins

For the closing action, get the young people to break into small groups to draw a picture, write a poem or develop a rap that expresses in a psalm-like way how God is the God of the small things, and also God of the big things. Split up the groups on the basis of which activity each young person would like to focus on.



**PRAYER**

5 mins

The closing prayer should take the form of either a display and explanation of the pictures, a reading of the poems, or a performance of the raps that have been developed in the activity above. Before each group presents their work, explain that as they do so, they are engaging in an act of prayer and worship, demonstrating and displaying to God and others what they think of him and how much they are inspired by his world. At the end of the group presentations, close with a simple two-sentence prayer giving thanks to God not only for what the young people have shown, said or rapped, but for their God-given creativity and intellectual ability.

# 11-14 Session 3: In the Beginning

## Aim of session

Introducing the creation of humankind and the challenge of taking care of God's creation.

## Resources needed

Lining paper, coloured pens and pencils, flip chart or a form of projection (OHP/Data), *Test of FAITH* DVD, DVD player.

## extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra

Why not make this session special by giving it a jungle theme? Play songs from *The Jungle Book*, and get the young people to dress up as explorers who are going to explore a new world. For drinks and snacks, serve Jungle Juice (mixed fruit juice) and jungle snacks (everything from fruit pieces to animal Haribo sweets).

## Part 1: Fun learning, doing and watching

NOTES



### GAME: *My Island*

15 mins

Split into groups of two to three young people, and give each group a big sheet of paper (such as a torn-off piece of lining paper or a sheet from a flip chart). Explain to each group that they have been approached by the United Nations to design their own island. They have an unlimited budget and therefore should apply unlimited imagination to their design. However, they should think about where their food would come from, who would live on the island, would they work, where the animals would be, where people would work and play etc. They then have eight minutes to design their own island.

Once their designs are finished, ask them to think of three rules that people would need to follow to look after their island. What might need to happen to make sure that the island prospered and survived?



### DISCUSS: *Join me*

10 mins

Once all the islands have been designed and the rules established, bring the groups back together and ask them to present their ideas to the rest of the room. Ask those who are watching to give a secret score out of ten (which they can write on a piece of paper and put into a hat) for each island they see. At the end of the presentations, add up the score and award a round of applause to the winning island design and team.



### WATCH: *Test of FAITH short videos part 2*

#### *Caring for the environment*

5 mins

This video introduces the topic before the break by outlining the challenge of climate change, and the moral imperative and personal responsibility of caring for the planet.



### BREAK

10 mins

## Part 2: Focused learning, talking and growing



### BIBLE: Genesis 1:26–31

5 mins

Remind the young people that last week the reading focused on the first part of creation and took us up to the first half of day six: the creation of land creatures. This reading takes us to the second part of day six, when humankind enters the scene.



### TALK

10 mins

Remind the group that over the last few weeks we have discovered that God loves us to ask him questions. Today we are asking what makes us special in God’s creation, and why that matters for us.

Ask the groups to suggest answers based on the reading.

- How was the humankind that God created different to everything else?  
*(Hint: Humanity was created in his image, had a relationship with God, had a different role.)*
- What did God use to create humankind? (See Gen. 2:7.)  
*(Hint: He used the dust of the ground; man was formed out of creation, but was given God’s image.)*
- What two instructions did God give to humankind? (See Gen. 1:28; also, 2:15.)  
*(Hint: The first is to fill the earth – to have families; the second is to subdue it. Make the point that ‘subdue’ doesn’t mean to break it, but rather to take responsibility: in the words of Gen. 2:15, to ‘work it and take care of it’, which is also translated as serve and preserve.)*
- What did God think of the earth he created? (See Gen. 1:31)  
*(Hint: He thought it was good. He was pleased that he had made something beautiful that he enjoyed and wanted to take part in – see Gen. 3:8, God walking in the garden.)*

### We are responsible

Draw out the point that what God does in Genesis is to trust us: he gives us responsibility for taking care of the earth. He wants us to serve and preserve what he has created. He loves us so much that he has a role for us in his creation, which is to be responsible, to take charge and make sure everything is taken care of. For Christians, this means we are told by God to take care of the planet, so when we see news stories about global warming, chemical pollution and the destruction of rainforests, we know we have a special role to make it all right.



### GOING FURTHER WITH SCIENCE

Christians have had different views on what Genesis 1 means for science. This means that when they read the same Bible, they think it has different meanings (see *Youth Leader’s Guide* for more details).

- Some people think that Genesis 1 is an exact explanation of what God did in six days. These people are often known as ‘Young Earth Creationists’.
- Some people believe something called Intelligent Design (note: ID says nothing about the Bible, it is a secular theory about evidence for a ‘designer’. Some Christians have taken this and said that the ‘designer’ is God).
- Some people think that this is a story with a special meaning that doesn’t tell us exactly how things happened, but rather helps us understand why they did. It helps us to understand more about God and our relationship with him. These people usually think that evolution and the Bible are complementary, and are often known as ‘Theistic Evolutionists’.



## GOING FURTHER WITH THE BIBLE

Explain that all Christians believe in God as creator, which is the most important message of the text. But because the Bible is such an ancient book, written by people thousands of years ago who had a different culture, and were not scientific, we sometimes find it hard to interpret (at this stage you could give another example of interpretation, such as reading and interpreting Shakespeare for essays in school). What this means for Christians is that while they all agree on the most important things, they can have different opinions on secondary things, such as exactly how creation happened.

No matter which of these ideas we believe in, the Bible tells us that God loves it when we ask deep and hard questions of him, and of the world. Knowing more about the world he created allows us to understand more about God. With this in mind, what do you think are the answers to the following questions?

- How old is the earth?  
*(Hint: Mainstream science says it is 4.5 billion years; Young Earth Creationists suggest 6–10,000 years.)*
- What do you think makes humans different from animals?  
*(Hint: It is our being made in the image of God. At this stage, it is important to make the point that this doesn't mean we are like gods, rather we have things such as awareness and conscience as well as an instruction to serve and preserve (the animals weren't given – or didn't need – instructions to care for creation, but humanity did. See the 'What does the image of God mean?' briefing sheet on the testoffaith.com resources section).*
- If we evolved over time rather than being created in a single moment (on the sixth day), does that mean God doesn't have a special relationship with us?  
*(Hint: Think about ways in which you think we are different to animals or unique as individuals – might some of those be due to being made in God's image?)*

No matter what view we think makes the most sense for Genesis, we need to remember that Christians who believe different things to us still believe in the same God, and they also still believe in the same Bible; they just read and understand it in a different way. We need to ask God for understanding and help in learning to listen to each other. This week, why not ask God for this, and promise to look into each of these three views?



## DISCUSS

15 mins

Outline what was covered in the video: that each of us has a responsibility to take care of the earth. Split the young people into up to four groups. Write the following words on separate sheets of paper: Refuse (as in turn down, not as in waste), Reduce, Re-use and Recycle. Get the groups of young people to work around each sheet of paper, coming up with ideas for actions that young people can actually do in each of those categories. See Appendix C for suggested ideas.



## PRAYER

5 mins

Close the session by laying out the pledges worked out in the discussion above. Ask each person to choose three things to pledge to do over the course of the week. They could kneel in front of the pledge and then pray a simple prayer that pledges them to take responsibility for God's good creation.



# 11-14 Session 4: Who Am I?

## Aim of session

An exploration of what makes people special.

## Resources needed

Plasticine, rolls of toilet paper, *The Incredibles* DVD, *Test of FAITH* DVD, DVD player, lining paper, coloured pens, Post-it notes.

## extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra

Why not run the session as a fancy dress party? You could make it a superhero theme, with people free to make up their own superhero, or come along as a well-known one. Make sure everyone calls each other by their superhero name! Then, as *The Incredibles* is part of the session, why not finish this session, the last in the series, by watching *The Incredibles*?

## Part 1: Fun learning, doing and watching



### GAME: Modelling

15 mins

NOTES

Give each group of young people an equal amount of Plasticine. Each team has to nominate a team member to be the first modeller. The rest of the team then become the guessers.

One of the modellers comes up and takes a clue card from the pile (see Appendix D) and shows it to the other modellers. After an agreed few seconds of thinking time, someone shouts 'go' and the modellers begin modelling their word/s.

A round is won when one of the teams guess the correct word. Gestures and actions not involving the model are never allowed – including 'mouthing' words to team mates!

The team that wins a round gets an agreed amount from each of the opposing teams' Plasticine. The opposing teams now have less Plasticine to model with! When one team runs out, the team with the most Plasticine left, wins.



### DISCUSS

5 mins

After the game has finished, ask the young people for feedback:

- Which things were hardest to represent?
- What made the game harder – less time or less Plasticine?
- Were there times when they tried to make something that was completely misunderstood by their team?



### MUMMY'S TOILET DRESSING

15 mins

Ask the young people to form small teams with up to four in each. One person on each team will be the 'Mummy'. Hand each team two rolls of toilet paper. On the word 'go', the rest of the team should use the toilet paper to wrap the Mummy. Allow ten minutes, and call time. Each team should present their Mummy for judging, and the best wrapped wins!

**DISCUSS**

5 mins

After Toilet Dressing and judging is finished, ask the young people what they were trying to achieve in their Mummy design: what was their aim in trying to dress them like they did? Draw out the point that, like this game, we all have a desire to be unique, or different. This is a God-given ability. Yet some people say there's no difference between us and animals, or that we don't have any free choice – they think that we are determined to be the way we are by the make-up of our bodies, or the environment we live in. In this session, we are going to be looking at what makes us special in God's eyes, but we are also going to look at the responsibility that brings for us.

**WATCH: *The Incredibles***

10 mins

Watch the start of *The Incredibles* film, where Mr Incredible is having a bad day. He is trying to fit in with everyone at work, whilst his children, who all have different super powers, are trying to be like every other kid in school. Draw out the point that whilst we aren't cartoon characters, God did make each of us special and has a unique relationship with each one of us.

**BREAK**

10 mins

**Part 2: Focused learning, talking and growing****WATCH: *Test of FAITH Short Videos part 3 no. 2*** 5 mins

Bill Newsome is interviewed about what makes a person, a person.

**DISCUSS: *What makes me, me?***

5 mins

Get the young people into groups. Ask one person from each group to lie on the floor, then draw round them on a big sheet of lining paper. Give each group five minutes to write down, inside their person shape, as many things that they can think of that make up a person. These can be as diverse as iron, water, happiness, friendship and energy. There are no limits; the more things the better. When the time is up, gather together the sheets of paper and keep them safe to one side.

**BIBLE: STORY OF ESTHER**

10 mins

Tell the story of Esther from the Bible. You could use the Dramatized Bible and turn it into a play. Along the way, mention:

- She was a young Jewish woman who was chosen to become queen.
- Under advice, she kept the fact she was Jewish secret.
- Haman, the king's chief official, tricked the king into agreeing to kill all the Jews.
- Esther's cousin Mordecai asked Esther for help.
- Esther risked her life in exposing the trickery, and saved all the Jews.
- Haman and all the enemies of the Jews were then killed as punishment.

**DISCUSS**

10 mins

At the end of the story, ask the young people:

- Why do you think Esther did what she did?
- Why do you think Haman didn't expect Esther to be a Jew, and to save her people?
- Do you think you could have stood up and be counted, like Esther was?





## CLOSING ACTION

5 mins

At this stage it would be good to stick up the drawings of people from the discussion above. Get the young people to write prayers on Post-it notes that ask God to help them better understand how people work. Also suggest they write prayers that ask God for help in seeing the big picture, to see what people are like. Ask the young people to stick the prayers on the paper people that are hung up.



## PRAYER

5 mins

Close in prayer, asking that God will bring to mind everything that has been learnt about in the previous weeks, that he will encourage and inspire a greater understanding of both science and faith in each person, and that in that way each person in the room may come to know Jesus a little better.

NOTES

Dotted lines for notes

# Appendix A: Games and Experiments

## From the internet

Turn milk into plastic

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmopPijhXXI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmopPijhXXI)

Get an egg into a milk bottle

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZdfcRiDs8I](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZdfcRiDs8I)

Make magic milk

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=RKVzI-zpV4Y](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RKVzI-zpV4Y)

Make a vomiting monster

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=NkH7E7HBv2E](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NkH7E7HBv2E)

## Rising tissue paper races

### You will need:

- Scissors
- Tissue paper
- Woollen jumper/sweater
- A plastic comb/pen

1. Cut up some small pieces of tissue paper.
2. Charge up the comb/pen by rubbing it against a jumper/sweater or by combing through your hair about ten times.
3. Hold the comb/pen over the small pieces of tissue paper.
4. Have a competition to see how long the young people can keep their tissue up in the air, or even set them a distance to walk with their tissue in the air.



## Appendix B: True or false

1. God is the perfect scientist
2. There are scientists in the Bible
3. We need science in order to help us understand
4. God made the dinosaurs
5. I think that everything we do can be explained scientifically
6. There's no evidence for the existence of God – soon no one will believe in him
7. God is a powerful mind force controlling everything
8. Miracles do happen
9. The Bible has the answer to every question
10. People believe in God because it makes them feel good

# Appendix C: Taking Responsibility for the Earth

There are loads of ideas on [www.arochalivinglightly.org.uk](http://www.arochalivinglightly.org.uk). Here are ten:

## WORK

Get the bus or train, or cycle rather than travel by car to school or to social events.

Check that the things you buy aren't produced by people who have taken advantages of others (Fair Trade) or the environment (organic, etc.).

Reuse paper and cardboard rather than just throw it out. When you come to buy books and paper, make sure they are recycled.

## REST

Make sure all stand-by switches and lights are turned off when not in use.

Unplug any charging devices not in use.

If you have a garden, ask if you can grow your own vegetables. Hold an old-fashioned 'biggest vegetable competition'.

## PLAY

Volunteer in the holidays or after school to help out on an environmental project.

Suggest to parents that you take an Eco Holiday.

Buy less clothes; share what you have with others in the group.

When you have finished with something, try to find a way to pass it on to someone else; don't simply bin it.

## Appendix D: Modelling game – Clue card Ideas

FOOTBALL	CAR	BALLROOM DANCING	DVD
HAPPY	CARDIGAN	TREE	IPOD
LAPTOP	BABY	TEACHER	AUSTRALIA
AUSTRALIA	WIND	AEROPLANE	TIME
RESULTS DAY	NEWSPAPER	BOOK	GEOGRAPHY