



Test of FAITH

Science and Christianity Unpacked
Sessions for 14-18 year olds

www.testoffaith.com/youth

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Test of FAITH Sessions for 14-18 year olds

Session no.	Session title	Aim of session	Extra idea	Resources needed
1	And/Or/With	Linking science and faith	Introduce a 'question box' to be run through the sessions	Masking tape or chalk, Post-it notes, <i>Test of FAITH</i> DVD and DVD player, flip chart or display board
2	How Did We Get Here?	An exploration of the issues and discussions around creation and evolution	Run these sessions as part of a residential weekend so that the young people have a chance to experience God's creation in a new way	A4 paper, pens, newspaper, sticky tape, scissors, cardboard boxes, a watch and a toy car for each team, <i>Test of FAITH</i> DVD and DVD player
3	Would You Adam and Eve It?	Looking into the serving and preserving role God gave Adam and Eve, and what that means for us		Masking tape or chalk, Post-it notes, <i>Test of FAITH</i> DVD and DVD player, flip chart or display board, pens and paper
4	Who Am I?	An exploration of what makes people special	As this is the last session, run this one as a dinner party; choose a theme and get all the young people to dress up accordingly	Plasticine or play dough, <i>Test of FAITH</i> DVD and DVD player, pens and paper
5	Who Am I? Extra	A short session exploring the implications of human embryo research, cloning and genetic testing		Big sheets of paper, pens, <i>Test of FAITH</i> DVD, DVD player

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>GAME: To get the group moving and involved</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>DISCUSS: To get the group talking about the session</p> <p>The discussion activity is designed to flow from activity into debate and dialogue. 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>WATCH: <i>Test of FAITH</i> DVD (or alternative choice from movie)</p> <p>The <i>Test of FAITH</i> DVD is mentioned in each session and on it you will find a range of extra resources that can be used. Included at various stages is another suggested film you can use.</p>
	<p>BREAK</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>TALK: Prompt notes for youth leaders wanting to introduce the topic</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>BIBLE: Read and explore</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>CLOSING ACTION: Putting the session into action</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>PRAYER: Final exercise/meditation</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 more active, energetic learning. The second half of the sessions then 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 the 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.

14-18 Session 1: And/Or/With

Aim of session

Linking science and faith.

Resources Needed

Masking tape or chalk, Post-it notes, *Test of FAITH* DVD and DVD player, flip chart or display board.

extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra

This is the first session on this topic and is therefore likely to stimulate questions, conversations and a range of further topics that could be studied. Introduce a box at the beginning of the session which is there for people to post questions into. At the end of the session, you could take out any questions that have been written and agree who will explore them (if they aren't already going to be covered in this course). You could then set up a Facebook or Internet discussion group with your young people to explore the questions together. Alternatively, people could take a look at the questions over the next week and answers could be reviewed at the start of the second session.

Part 1: Fun learning, doing and watching



GAME: Adverb game

10 mins

NOTES

This game is designed to encourage young people to think about relationships and how different ideas are communicated. It is also a good energizer for building communication skills. A volunteer leaves the room. The rest of the young people decide on an adverb, for example 'angrily', 'boldly' or 'quickly'. The volunteer returns to the room and asks questions to which the rest of the group respond in the style of the adverb they have chosen. The volunteer can guess the adverb at any time.



DISCUSS: Prompt cards

10 mins

Print and cut out the prompt cards in Appendix A part 1. Ask the young people to work in groups of three to four and put the cards in one of three columns: 'agree', 'disagree', 'not sure'. When the groups have achieved this, ask each person to choose one or two statements that they are unchangeable on, i.e. this could be something they strongly agree or disagree with.

At the end of the activity, get the young people to feedback both in groups and as individuals, trying to reflect back any consensus that exists, as well as asking what underlies their decisions. You might also want to suggest some specific answers to some of the cards (see Appendix A part 2).



WATCH: Test of FAITH DVD part 1 chapter 1
(00:00–07:41)

8 mins

This introduces the topic and then reviews the history of the relationship between history and science and the grounds on which that relationship is founded. At the end of the DVD chapter ask the young people to choose three words/phrases that stood out to them from what they have seen so far, and write those phrases down on a flip chart/board so all can see. *At this stage, if you are having a question box you may want to remind the young people of the chance to use this*, then suggest taking a break to ponder what has been covered in the first section:

1. A game was played whereby they had to figure out relationships and learn to communicate in new ways
2. Discussions were held around a range of statements with which they agreed, disagreed or weren't sure about
3. Finally the DVD introduced the topic of the day, namely what is the relationship between science and faith and how can the two be drawn together?



BREAK

10 mins

During the break, take time to ask the young people what they thought of the DVD. What questions in this area have they asked, or heard asked before?

Part 2: Focused learning, talking and growing



TALK: Four models

20 mins

Gather the young people back together and explain how this session is going to look at the relationship between science and faith, and how different people see the connection between the two disciplines. Outline how, over the course of the next few weeks, there will be a range of sessions that explore specific topics from creation and evolution to neurology and bioethics. But at the heart of all the debate is the need to understand how science and faith relate. Recap how in the DVD there was a range of suggestions:

- That the science-faith debate explores practical and philosophical questions, such as: 'How do I obtain reliable knowledge about the world?' and 'Why is there something rather than nothing?'
- That scientists and people of faith are trying to make sense of the world, and find out whether there is a point to all that we see.
- That actually most of the early western scientists were Christian.

In order to move forward we need to explore how the two topics relate. There are four ways in which we could understand the relationship. Split the young people into four groups and ask each group to spend a few minutes exploring what they think each statement means:

- Science and faith are in conflict.
- Science and faith are complementary.
- Science and faith overlap.
- Science and faith don't overlap.

At the end of the group discussions, hand out the pictures from Appendix A part 3 that show pictorially how science and faith can relate. Then ask the young people:

1. What does each model represent? Do they make sense to you?
(Hint: Suggest the young people try to develop a definition in the box alongside the image.)
2. Which relationship do they think most of the scientists in the DVD believe in?
(Hint: The complementary model.)
3. Ask them which model they think they feel most comfortable with.
(Hint: Suggest the young people try assuming different positions to help themselves find out which position they feel comfortable with. Ideas for test cases include topics covered later in this series such as evolution, genetics, or the Big Bang.)



GOING FURTHER: *For groups that want more*

(This section has been taken from the *Test of FAITH Leader's Guide*, Paternoster, 2009.)

If you have a group hungry for more, then you can go on to explore *Test of FAITH* part 1, chapter 2 which explores the anthropic principle, God of the gaps and the multiverse (see also *Youth Leader's Guide* chapter 2 and Bonus Interview 1.6). Prompt the young people with questions on:

1. How do you think that people who view the age of the universe differently relate to the idea of the Big Bang (see Appendix B)?
2. What do you think are the constants that the anthropic principle relates to? *(Hints: See Youth Leader's Guide.)*
3. Does a multiverse suggest there is or isn't a God?
4. What do you think is the difference between evidence and proof?

At this stage you could read John 1:1-3. The 'Word' in John 1 is a translation of the Greek word logos, from which we get the English word 'logic'. It's generally agreed that John took the Greek idea of logos, a mind or rational principle governing the universe, and said that logos is Jesus, who was there in the beginning and came to earth as man. (Also see Isa. 55:8,9, a big God who could do anything; and Matt. 14:13-21 – a generous God.)

Watch the Bonus Clip: 1.2 where Ard Louis refers to the 'deep logos or logic behind the universe'. Ask the young people:

What do you think of the idea that we can do mathematics because a rational God created the world?



BIBLE: *Read Psalm 139:13-18*

10 mins

Explain how the psalm writer (assigned to David) talks about how he has learnt about life; how in this psalm he talks about things which are in the realm of biology, physics, chemistry and neurology. Dr Alasdair Coles is a neurologist at Addenbrookes Hospital in Cambridge. He has researched the links between brain activity and religious belief. In the *Test of FAITH* DVD (Time Code 3:12) he says that:

"Humans have had this spiritual experience for centuries, and there have been various different interpretations of them over that time. Clearly people of faith believe that they are truly encountering God, or the divine. At the other end of the spectrum are people that say that these experiences are nothing but the epiphenomena, the side-effects of a working brain getting on with its daily life, and they amount to nothing, they speak of nothing outside of the brain."

Coles says this exploration of these areas has not turned him away from God, but actually given him more wonder and amazement at how marvellous God is. He has taken peace from the fact that whilst complete knowledge of the world in which we live is beyond his grasp, it is fully within God's knowledge.

Split the young people into groups and ask them to:

1. Suggest places where the physical world has given them a greater sense of wonder and amazement about God? *(Hint: The beauty of nature, where science uncovers an anthropic principle.)*
2. Suggest things that might be uncovered during this course that illuminate God's involvement in an area that might not usually be appreciated *(Hint: The composition of the brain, the reoccurring fractal patterns in nature.)*
3. List places in the world where they are still trying to understand God's plan and action. *(Hint: Where there may be struggle, suffering or pain.)*



CLOSING ACTION

5 mins

Ask the young people to find a quiet place on their own where they can write a letter to God expressing their thanks for creating the world, and their God-given ability to explore and understand it. This letter could take the form of a coherent, grammatically correct letter or it could simply be 'Dear God' followed by a bullet point list.

NOTES

Dotted lines for notes



PRAYER

5 mins

Ask the young people to gather their letters in the middle of the room, then play the short reflection from the *Test of FAITH* DVD: 'Reflection Environment'. Ask the young people to reflect and meditate on God's world.

14-18 Session 2: How Did We Get Here?

Aim of session

An exploration of the issues and discussions around creation and evolution.

Resources Needed

A4 paper, pens, newspaper, sticky tape, scissors, cardboard boxes, a watch and a toy car for each team, *Test of FAITH* DVD and DVD player.

extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra

Given the various aspects of this and the next sessions, why not consider running them as part of a residential weekend? You could then undertake the sessions using a combination of settings that also seek to give the young people space to think through all the implications of the material being dealt with.

Part 1: Fun learning, doing and watching

NOTES.....



GAME: *Building bridges*

15 mins

Divide the main group into teams of up to six young people. Hand each a selection of newspaper, cardboard boxes, sticky tape, scissors, and finally a toy car. Also hand out the paper and pens. Explain that the task is to battle against time and design and build the longest free-standing bridge, capable of carrying the car from one end to the other. Encourage each group to work out a design on paper first before engineering the bridge. Call time after fifteen minutes and invite each team to demonstrate the effectiveness of their bridge. The team with the longest bridge, that successfully carries their car from one side to the other, wins!



DISCUSS: *What do you know?*

20 mins

Split the young people into groups of no more than four, and give them each a sheet of paper. Groups should be gathered according to ages. Give the groups ten minutes to come up with as much information as they can about the creation of the world/universe. At this stage, ask them to include everything from things that they agree with, to those they aren't sure about, or even disagree with. Ask them to add in things that they have learned about in school as well as those they know from the Bible.

At the end of ten minutes, ask each group to go through their paper, gathering together ten things they consider to be unquestionable, and then ten things they consider to be fallacy. Finally, ask them to come up with three questions per group that they would like answered.

Ask the groups to present their lists and questions back to the main group.



WATCH: Test of FAITH part 2 chapter 1
(00:00–10:05)

10 mins

This introduces the need to answer the question, ‘How did we get here?’ and the first couple of ways in which we can understand how the world came into being: Young Earth and Intelligent Design. (See the *Youth Leader’s Guide* for more.) At the end of the clip, recap what has just been watched:

- We saw how Christians are active in the pursuit of understanding how we got here
- That there are already a number of positions that explain this process: Young Earth and Intelligent Design
- That one of the big questions that each group is seeking to answer in this topic is, ‘Is the Bible always literal or can it be figurative?’ (Figurative means using language to heighten meaning by implicitly or explicitly representing something in terms of some other thing.)



WATCH: Film extra

Should your group need something a bit lighter than the *Test of FAITH* DVD, then you could watch an extract from *The Truman Show* where Truman finally learns that everything he has considered to be real is no longer true and that he has been living in a false reality.

Following *The Truman Show* clip you could ask:

1. What was Truman’s view of the world, and how is Truman’s view different to ours when we look at the world around us?
2. What do you think we can be afraid of when we come to ask questions about how the world came to be?
3. In *The Truman Show*, there is one man behind the whole show; he acts like a god, controlling the weather, the actions of the other people and also the state of the world. In what ways is the director in *The Truman Show* similar to, and different from, the God who created the world?



BREAK

10 mins

During the break try to keep the mood focused on the first half’s topic before gathering the young people together to watch the second video clip.

Part 2: Focused learning, talking and growing



WATCH: Test of FAITH part 2 chapter 2
(10:05–14:32)

5 mins

Watch the second chapter of part 2 on the DVD which introduces Theistic Evolution (otherwise known as Evolutionary Creationism). At the end of this section remind the young people that there are now three models that have been introduced: Young Earth, Intelligent Design and Theistic Evolution.

Using group feedback, ask them to remind you what theory each of those models represents (see *Youth Leader’s Guide*). (*Hint: Explain – this is what the scientists think, now they can see what makes the most sense, and what the Bible says.*)



TALK: How did we get here?

5 mins

Recap the key idea from week 1’s session that introduced the idea that science and faith need not be in conflict, but that there could be ways in which they are complementary and support each other (see *Youth Leader’s Guide*). Also, whilst different Christians hold different positions on the subject, they do so often using the same evidence: the same Bible and the same heart (i.e. to understand God better).

Explain that:

- As we come to explore Genesis we need to do so not trying to outdo science, or to find ways in which to prove there is/isn't God. Instead, we need to approach it in love and humility, knowing that we won't ever fully understand God's actions (Ps. 139:17) or other's interpretations of them.
- Much of what the Bible says is clear to all Christians; however, it is when we go into more depth that people disagree about how to understand some things. Similarly, when they come to read the Bible all Christians take some bits literally and some bits figuratively. If we didn't, then we would have churches full of people who had chopped off their arms or gouged out their eyes that had caused them to sin!
- Where Christians differ is in understanding the more complicated parts of the Bible and which bits of it to take literally and which figuratively. Likewise, people can also range in opinion on what the underlying meaning and message is in both the literal and figurative texts.
- When it comes to reading Genesis chapter 1 and understanding how old the universe is, some people believe it is around 6,000 years old, and some think it is closer to 13 billion years old. They range in opinion because some believe the Bible to be literally describing what happened 6,000 years ago, whilst others think that it is a more figurative text.
- For Christians to interpret the Bible differently is not bad and it isn't a sign of losing our faith! Rather, a desire to reveal the meaning in the Bible is a demonstration that the Christian faith is living and active, and relevant to today. What God does expect of us as we seek biblical understanding is that we do so honourably, that we ask all the questions we can, and that in this process we draw not only on our own understanding but also on that of others and the world around us.



BIBLE: Genesis 1:1–27

10 mins

Split into groups and explore the following questions:

- Although people vary in their understanding of how God created the world, what areas do you think that they agree on?
(Hint: God thought the world was good and he was intimately involved with its creation; that humankind had a special role and relationship.)
- The creation is described in passing of days ('there was evening, and there was morning'), yet the sun and moon did not appear until day four. How is this possible, and if there is a deeper meaning for the word 'day', what do you think it is?
(Hint: See Youth Leader's Guide.)
- In verses 26-30 it says human beings were made in God's image. What does this represent?
(Hint: See Youth Leader's Guide. We are created in God's image in 'knowledge, righteousness and holiness'. In other words, we are created rational, relational, spiritual beings.)

Gather the groups together and get some feedback before leading a large group discussion based on the ideas presented in Part 2 chapter 2 of the *Test of FAITH* DVD.

1. Francis Collins talked about us sharing certain DNA markers with other primates. In what way does this discovery affect how you understand Genesis?
2. How would you feel about the idea that God created the perfect conditions for creation to take place through evolution over millions of years?
3. How do you feel about the idea that God created the world in a near complete state a few thousand years ago?
4. What would cause you to change your understanding of how creation came to be?

14-18 Session 3:

Would You Adam and Eve it?

Aim of session

Looking into the serving and preserving role God gave Adam and Eve and what that means for us.

Resources Needed

Masking tape or chalk, Post-it notes, *Test of FAITH* DVD and DVD player, flip chart or display board, pens and paper.

extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra

Given the various aspects of this session (and the one before it), why not consider running them as part of a residential weekend? You could then undertake the sessions using a combination of settings that also seek to give the young people space to think through all the implications of the material being dealt with.

Part 1: Fun learning, doing and watching



GAME: *My island*

20 mins

NOTES

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.

Then give them time to spend in groups designing their own island. Ask them to think about where their food would come from, who would live on the island, where would they work, where would they play, etc. Once their island is designed, ask them to think about what rules they would have. They need to reduce these to between three and five rules. How would people live, how would they relate to each other, what would be the priorities for life? During this stage they may need to go back and revisit their island design in order to add some extra facilities or people (such as police, army, etc.).



DISCUSS: *Join me*

15 mins

Once all the islands have been designed and the rules established, bring the groups back together and ask them to present their design and 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 DVD part 2 chapter 5*
(26:10–29:15)

5 mins

Start this section by making a link to the previous section, showing how having come up with our suggestions for our own creation (whether they be good or bad!) we now turn our attention to God's. Now show the short extract from the *Test of FAITH* DVD that outlines the moral imperative of climate change.

Close this section by saying that after the break we will be looking at God's design and plans for his creation.

**BREAK**

10 mins

If you are meeting in a church, during the break suggest everyone takes time to look around the parts of the building that are accessible and to start to think about ways in which the church could improve its environmental impact.

Part 2: Focused learning, talking and growing**DISCUSS:** *What do you know?*

5 mins

Ask the young people what they already know about climate change and the environmental challenges facing the earth. Ask for general feedback. Try to encourage them to not focus on global warming but also draw out: clean water, population growth, habitat loss and reduced biodiversity.

**BIBLE:** *Genesis 1:28–31*

10 mins

After reading these verses, focus on verse 28 where God gave responsibility to human beings to care for creation. Mention that this is an area of great misunderstanding. We aren't there to dominate and take from creation, but rather are called to be its stewards, to be responsible for it – to SERVE and PRESERVE it (see *Youth Leader's Guide*).

Ask the young people to suggest what serving and preserving creation might look like.

**TALK**

10 mins

Ask the young people to answer the following in groups:

- In the film clip it said there was a moral imperative to do something. What do you think a 'moral imperative' is?
- What is the moral imperative for Christians that the film outlines?
- Are there things that we should stop doing in order to preserve the earth (i.e. drilling for oil in the arctic)?
- How do you think we can serve and preserve creation more?

**BIBLE:** *Genesis 3:8–19*

5 mins

After reading the above passage, ask the young people to suggest what has broken as a result of Adam and Eve's sin. Encourage them to look at:

- Broken relationship with God (vv. 8–11)
- Broken relationship between men and women (vv. 12,13) and families (Gen. 4:3–9)
- Broken relationship with the rest of creation (vv. 15–19).



DISCUSSION

5 mins

After the game has finished, asked 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?



BREAK

10 mins

Part 2: Focused learning, talking and growing



WATCH: *Test of FAITH* part 3 sections 1 and 2 (00:00–12:52)

15 mins

It is important to read ‘Thinking about Human Identity’ in the *Youth Leader’s Guide* before reading this section, to get an insight into the ideas being presented.

Recap what has been covered in the film, including:

- Scientists very often do something known as ‘reductionism’ (ask the young people at this stage if they know what this means). That is to take things apart and study them as their individual parts.
- Where this has been applied to religious phenomena (such as prayer, experiences of the Holy Spirit, etc.) this has sometimes resulted in faith encounters being described in terms of neurological activity or chemical imbalances.
- The temptation is then to consider these as ‘just’ neurological activities, where we create God, rather than God connecting with us.

Now ask the young people to comment on the following:

1. What does the fact that prayer can be measured as activity in the temporal lobe of the brain prove?
2. Some scientists have suggested that in each person is a God Spot; a part of the brain that is active when we pray (see *Youth Leader’s Guide* and *Test of FAITH* DVD clip). In your opinion, is this fact an evolutionary accident, divine intervention or something else? (*Hint: Use the two quotes below to help you.*)

(There’s) a place in the brain for everything. You know there’s a Jennifer Aniston spot and there’s a hamburger spot in my brain and in yours. Anything you know anything about, anything you have any bunch of beliefs about, there’s got to be something in your brain that’s holding those.

Professor Daniel Dennett, philosopher

If someone wanted to come along and link me up to electrodes while I was praying or while I was in worship and found that my brain patterns were slightly different, then that wouldn’t be a great surprise to me. I think spiritual experience is real and therefore there should be a way of looking at that in terms of the physicality of the brain. But just to look at those brain patterns and to say that that is all that spiritual experience is seems to me to be mistaken.

Dr David Wilkinson (on the *Test of FAITH* DVD)

A new development in the way in which science is done is known as ‘emergence’. The idea of emergence is: rather than taking things apart in order to understand their constituent parts, there is a scientific need to bring things together – to look at things in their collective whole.



WATCH: *Film extra*

In place of watching the *Test of FAITH* DVD you could watch an extract from films such as *Gattaca*, which explores the issues relating to identity. Draw attention to the fact that in order to achieve and be seen as valuable, the lead actor needs to become someone else. In this dystopian vision of a future, his potential heart condition has had him declared unfit and therefore worthless.

1. What does our society class as valuable: sporting ability, money, fame?
2. Do you think, if you could have been altered at birth, that you would have wanted to (a) be a better sportsperson, (b) have a different hair colour, (c) be more intelligent?
3. Where in life do you think that we are guilty of reducing people to their constituent parts rather than seeing them as a whole?



BIBLE: *Mark 12:28–31*

10 mins

This instruction of Jesus is one that is all-encompassing. In this passage Jesus tells his questioner that to find true fulfilment they need to love God with their heart, soul, mind and strength and that they are to love their neighbour as themselves.

What do you think this verse tells us about how God made us?

How could you obey this command? (*Hint: Think about things that involve each of the following: heart, soul, mind, strength.*)

Read Joshua 24:14,15, keeping in mind this idea of making choices.

- What does this passage say about our ability to choose?
(*Hint: Throughout the Bible people are asked to choose and are held responsible for their choices. This is a good working definition of that much-discussed concept of freewill.*)
- Think of a conscious choice that you made that changed the course of your life.



DISCUSS: *Reducing reductionism*

5 mins

Break into groups and ask the young people to list areas in life where they or their peers are judged or 'reduced' to be a particular way.

(*Hint: It is assumed you won't understand something; or, you are expected to get good results because your brother or sister did so well at school.*)

Once the groups have decided where they are judged by others, ask them to repeat the exercise, but this time to ascertain where they are guilty of judging others and reducing them.



CLOSING ACTION: *Encouraging letter*

5 mins

If you feel your group is able to respond well to it, then for the closing act of this session get each person to write down their name on the top of a piece of paper. Then they should pass that paper to the person on their right who will write a word of encouragement or a prayer of blessing on it before passing it on for the exercise to be repeated. Keep passing the papers around until everyone has prayed for everyone else.



PRAYER

5 mins

To close in prayer, offer each person in the group a chance to be prayed for by their peers. They should stand and hold their letter (see above) and people can gather round them. Even if people just say 'Thank you, God', or 'Help them, God', this can be a significant, unique experience for each person.

14-18 Session 5: Who Am I? Extra

Aim of session

A short session exploring the implications of human embryo research, cloning and genetic testing.

Resources Needed

Big sheets of paper, pens, *Test of FAITH* DVD, DVD player.

extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra ... extra

This short extra session is designed to provoke discussion around human embryo research, cloning and genetic testing. It is designed for a group that wants a more focused discussion and debate and therefore doesn't include suggested games. (Parts of this session are based on the *Test of FAITH Leader's Guide*, Paternoster, 2009).

Part 1: Fun learning, doing and watching



INTRODUCTION

3 mins

Introduce the focus of this session, explaining that it is about issues relating to human embryo research, cloning and genetic testing. Explain that human embryo research in particular is a sensitive area for some people, so although it can be discussed objectively in the group, it is a topic that needs to be handled carefully in every situation, especially when people have been unable to conceive, had an abortion, or even themselves been a 'test tube baby'.

NOTES



DISCUSS: *What do we know?*

20 mins

Split the young people into three groups. Ask them to work their way around three big sheets of paper, writing down what they know about the topics of:

1. Embryo Research
2. Human Cloning
3. Genetic Testing

Each group gets five to six minutes on each piece of paper before moving onto the next.



WATCH: *Test of FAITH DVD part 3 chapter 3*

10 mins

This section explores the issues of genetics, human cloning, and the ways in which Christians understand what makes us human.



DISCUSS: *What have we learned?*

5 mins

Before the break, ask the group: Having watched the DVD:

1. What was new or most interesting for you?
2. What did you find most surprising or challenging?
3. What do you think the main messages were?
4. What do you think? Do you agree?



BREAK

10 mins

Part 2: Focused learning, talking and growing



DISCUSS: *When does life begin?*

20 mins

Read the briefing sheet in Appendix D: When Does Human Life Begin? Then watch Bonus Clip 3.2 on the DVD (John Bryant).

Ask the young people to discuss the following:

1. What do you think is the essence of human-ness?
(Hint: God has made us in his image: this is a gift that is not necessarily defined by our own abilities. See the 'What does the image of God' briefing sheet on the testoffaith.com resources section.)
2. In your opinion, when do you think human life begins?
3. Are embryos simply disposable before the point at which you think human life begins?



DISCUSS: *Genetic investigation and exploration*

20 mins

Watch Bonus Clip 3.3 on the DVD (Denis Alexander).

Ask the young people:

1. What might be the arguments for and against testing for genetic diseases, and the possible destruction of affected embryos (this could happen by testing IVF embryos and deciding which ones to use)?
(Hints: Arguments for: An act of compassion for the individual who would die early from the disease, or for the parents – will they cope? Arguments against: It involves destruction of vulnerable human embryos; it is a form of 'eugenics' – discrimination against certain genetic types; certain diseases are not sufficiently serious to affect the life of the individual or the parents enough to justify destruction of the embryo.)
2. Who else do you think is affected by genetic testing, in addition to the embryo?
(Hints: Parents, couples or individuals who have to make decisions about genetic testing, have been through unsuccessful pregnancies or IVF, or have decided not to have children because of an inherited disease in the family. Individuals who are affected by genetic disease. Doctors and health care workers, including Christians who feel called to work in these areas. Families and friends of the above people.)



BIBLE: *Luke 4:18,19*

10 mins

In this passage in Luke, Jesus announces his mandate for the first time. In a fulfilment of Isaiah 61:1,2, Jesus shows how he is to bring about personal and social healing. This is a healing linked to wider justice and restoration. God is making everything into the way it was meant to be.

- Ask the young people what effect they think Christian healing will have on society.
- Ask the young people where they, their church and its members bring, or could bring, healing to their community.



PRAYER

10 mins

Ask the young people to break into groups to pray

- For wisdom in dealing with the issues that have been raised
- For those who are struggling, either through the loss of a child, the inability to conceive, or with disease
- For insight in addressing the new and more complex issues that arise as science develops

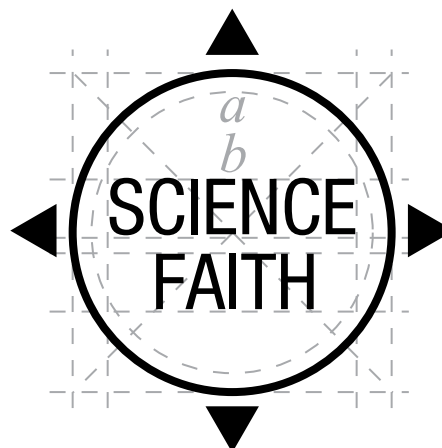
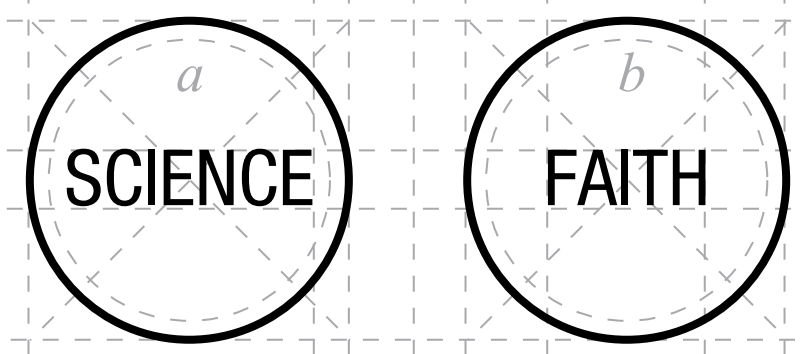
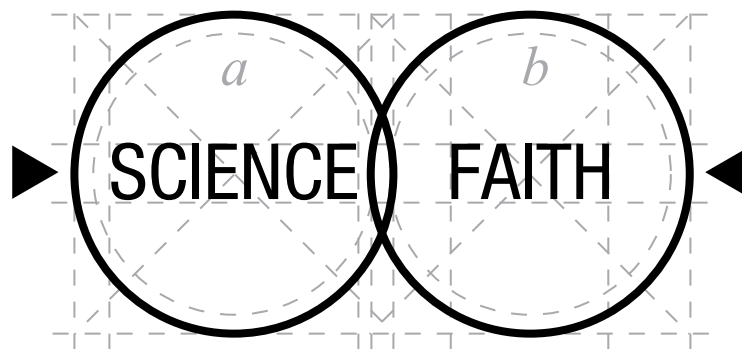
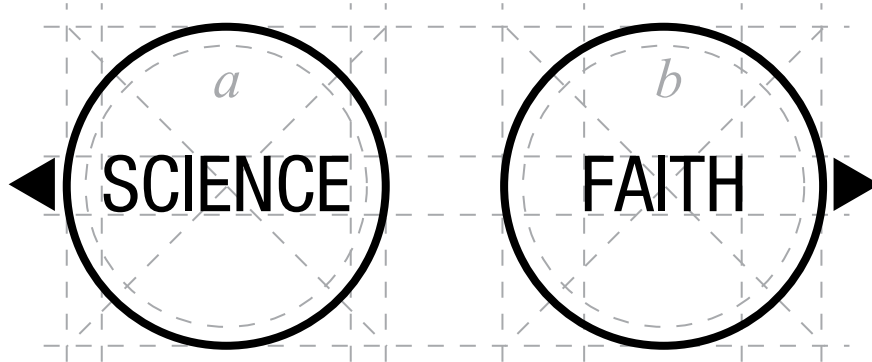
Appendix A part 1: Prompt cards

YOU CAN'T USE SCIENCE TO PROVE GOD	SCIENCE CAME FROM CHRISTIAN ROOTS	THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTIONS IN LIFE CAN'T BE SOLVED BY SCIENCE
WE NEED SCIENCE IN ORDER TO HELP US UNDERSTAND	THE CONFLICT BETWEEN SCIENCE AND FAITH IS JUST A CULTURAL IDEA	CHRISTIANS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN AGAINST SCIENCE AND ANYTHING RATIONAL
GOD MADE THE DINOSAURS	I THINK THAT EVERYTHING WE DO CAN BE EXPLAINED SCIENTIFICALLY	GOD LOVES US TO ASK SCIENTIFIC QUESTIONS
RELIGION CAN ALL BE EXPLAINED PSYCHOLOGICALLY	SCIENCE AND FAITH ASK DIFFERENT QUESTIONS	SO-CALLED 'MIRACLES' CAN ALL BE EXPLAINED SCIENTIFICALLY; THEY DON'T REALLY HAPPEN
GOD IS A POWERFUL MIND FORCE CONTROLLING EVERYTHING	WHEN SCIENCE CAN'T EXPLAIN SOMETHING, THAT'S WHERE YOU SEE EVIDENCE FOR GOD	EVOLUTION IS A THEORY ACCEPTABLE TO CHRISTIANS
SOME SCIENTISTS THINK THERE ARE MANY UNIVERSES	EXPLORING THE WORLD THROUGH SCIENCE CAN BE AN ACT OF WORSHIP	SOME QUESTIONS CANNOT BE ANSWERED BY THE BIBLE

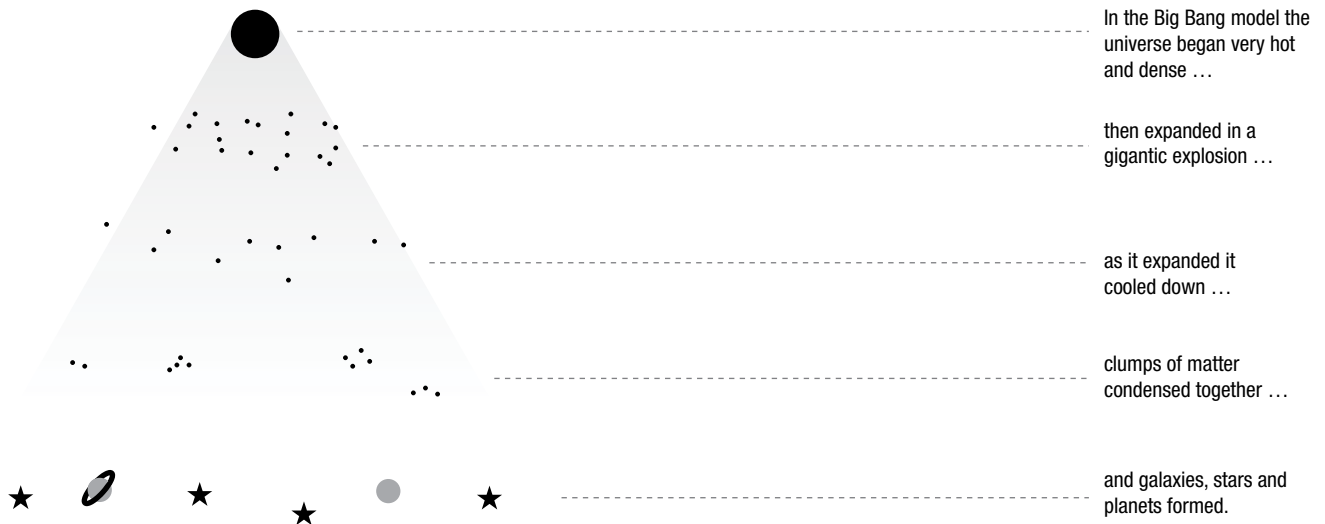
Appendix A part 2: Prompt card answers

<p>You can't use science to prove God</p> <p>True, although there are many hints we can use.</p>	<p>Science came from Christian roots</p> <p>True. Most of the first western scientists were Christian.</p>	<p>The most important questions in life can't be solved by science</p> <p>This depends on what your important questions are.</p>
<p>We need science in order to help us understand</p> <p>True. Science provides a methodical pursuit of how things happen.</p>	<p>The conflict between science and faith is just a cultural idea</p> <p>True. For many centuries and many people today there is no conflict.</p>	<p>Christians have always been against science and anything rational</p> <p>False.</p>
<p>God made the dinosaurs</p> <p>True.</p>	<p>I think that everything we do can be explained scientifically</p> <p>Not necessarily.</p>	<p>God loves us to ask scientific questions</p> <p>Throughout the Bible we are shown how God loves a hungry mind in pursuit of understanding.</p>
<p>Religion can all be explained psychologically</p> <p>Not necessarily. Whilst some religious experiences can be mapped neurologically, reducing religion to psychology is like explaining that a camera is simply a pile of plastic, metal and glass without saying anything about its purpose.</p>	<p>Science and faith ask different questions</p> <p>True, but most of the time they aren't mutually exclusive.</p>	<p>So-called 'miracles' can all be explained scientifically; they don't really happen</p> <p>Miracles don't have to be unprovable scientifically. They could be miraculous timing for example. But of course things do happen, such as the resurrection, that can't be explained scientifically and that is what we should expect if God exists!</p>
<p>God is a powerful mind force controlling everything</p> <p>This depends on your idea of control, and the Christian God is much more than that.</p>	<p>When science can't explain something, that's where you see evidence for God</p> <p>False.</p>	<p>Evolution is a theory acceptable to Christians</p> <p>True, although not for all.</p>
<p>Some scientists think there are many universes</p> <p>True.</p>	<p>Exploring the world through science can be an act of worship</p> <p>True.</p>	<p>Some questions cannot be answered by the Bible</p> <p>True, because it may not be focused on those questions.</p>

Appendix A part 3: Relating Science and Faith



Appendix B: The Big Bang¹



Several pieces of evidence support this model. Here are two of them:

In the 1920s, Edwin Hubble discovered that the universe is still expanding. Astronomers detect that all the galaxies are moving away from us, and that more distant galaxies are moving away faster. This relationship between distance and speed means that the universe as a whole is expanding. In the 1990s, astronomers found that the expansion rate is not constant but is speeding up over time. Using the current best measure of expansion rate and how it changes over time, astronomers calculate that the universe itself must have begun about 13.5–13.9 billion years ago.

In 1965, Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson detected faint noise in a radio receiver. Further study showed that these radio waves arrive at earth from all directions, so the radiation must be coming from the universe itself. And the radiation has a thermal signature, showing that it was emitted by something hot. It is the light and heat of the Big Bang. Because of the expansion, the radiation has cooled over time to near absolute zero, consistent with predictions made before it was discovered.

For further information read: http://map.gsfc.nasa.gov/universe/bb_tests.html

How old is the universe?

Astronomers are able to measure age using several methods. Here are two of them:

Astronomers can calculate how long it will take a star to burn out, based on its size. Big stars burn faster than small stars. A 'globular cluster' is a cluster of stars (of different sizes) that formed at the same time. Since the big stars die out first, when only small stars are left scientists can tell that it is an old cluster. So by looking at the size of stars still in the cluster, astronomers can measure its age. The oldest globular clusters found are at least 11 billion years old. The universe as a whole must, therefore, be older than this.

With the Hubble Telescope astronomers can see light that has travelled for about 13.3 billion years, from the very first stars. The universe must be older than this for the light to reach us today.

For further information read: <http://map.gsfc.nasa.gov/universe>

How have Christians responded to Big Bang theory? Here are three views that Christians hold:

-
- A. God made the universe and everything in it supernaturally about 10,000 years ago, as described in Genesis 1. The scientific evidence for the Big Bang and the great age of the universe is faulty. Creation scientists have suggested other possible explanations for the vast scale of the universe and the distance light must travel.
-
- B. God made the universe and everything in it supernaturally about 10,000 years ago, as described in Genesis 1. Scientists are correct about the evidence for the age of the universe, but this is only an appearance of history. Everything was created with this history built in: trees with rings representing hundreds of years, light already on the way from stars billions of light years away, etc.
-
- C. The scientific evidence for the Big Bang is correct. God used the Big Bang to make the universe 13.7 billion years ago and has been sustaining it ever since. Christians holding this view have different ways of reconciling this with Genesis 1, which will be discussed in Session 2.
-

1. Taken with permission from *Test of FAITH Leader's Guide* (Paternoster, 2009), p. 102.

Appendix C: I prefer

'I Prefer' statements

You can easily make up your own 'I prefer' statements. Here are a few to get you started:

1. I prefer BMWs to Minis
2. I prefer curry to fish and chips
3. I prefer winter to summer
4. I prefer the ocean to a river
5. I prefer cats to dogs
6. I prefer a soap opera to a detective series
7. I prefer salad to pizza
8. I prefer books to films
9. I prefer MTV to radio
10. I prefer cycling to running
11. I prefer rugby to football
12. I prefer the colour black to the colour red
13. I prefer trainers to boots
14. I prefer ice lollies to ice cream

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

Appendix D: When Does Human Life Begin?²

Below is a summary of the main views held on the status of the early embryo and the arguments that people use to defend them.

A) Human life begins at fertilization (0–6 hours)

Biblical/theological arguments

- The Bible names Jesus and other people by this stage.
- This is the origin of a ‘personal history’.
- This is when Jesus became incarnate as a man.
- Relationship with God is established.
- In the Bible the Hebrews believed life began as soon as they were aware of it being there.
- The message is that life begins as soon as there is something there. With our knowledge today, this means conception.

Biological arguments

- Fertilization provides a fairly precise moment of beginning.
- The genetic make-up of the individual is specified during this stage.

B) Human life begins at implantation (7–10 days)

Biblical/theological arguments

- Physical relationship with the mother begins – she can become aware of her pregnancy. Part of what defines us as human is being in relationship.
- Twinning may occur between the ‘blastocyst’ (hollow ball of cells) stage and implantation, so until implantation there isn’t ‘one’ individual present to relate to God.
- This is what passages about the unborn refer to because this is the time when pre-scientific societies became aware of pregnancy.

Biological arguments

- There is a high rate of embryo loss before implantation (70–80%).
- Until implantation, it is impossible to tell what parts will become the embryo and what will become the placenta.

C) Human life begins at the primitive streak stage (14 days)

Biological argument

- The development of the primitive streak marks where the nervous system will begin to develop. The capacity for sensation and pain are important in defining humanness and in determining how we treat others.

D) The beginning of human life is a continual process

- This is the view that all of the above ‘milestones’ are not that critical, since the development of human life is a continual process from fertilization through to birth and onwards. Human life deserves our care and protection all the way through, although prenatal care will increase in line with development.

2. Taken with permission from *Test of FAITH Leader's Guide* (Paternoster, 2009), p. 112.