



Is Science More or Less True Than the Bible?



Session Objective

Participants will investigate what science and religion are, the sorts of things the two fields care about, and what “truth” can mean to each of them. These foundations should help the group better understand the scope and value of the relationship between science, religion, and their personal faith.

Faith Statement

We do not fully comprehend who God is or how God works. God’s reality far exceeds all our words can say. The Lord’s requirements are not always what we think is best. The Lord’s care for us is not always what we want. God comes to us on God’s own terms and is able to do far more than we ask or think.

—A Declaration of Faith (1.2)



Engage

Open your time together in prayer and lead a conversation based on the following questions:

- What does the word *science* mean to you?
- What does the word *religion* mean to you?
- In what ways do science and religion connect? In what ways do they clash?
- What questions do you have about science and faith?



Explore

Read Genesis 11:1-9 and the faith statement, and explore the following questions:

- Why were the people building a tower? Why did they fail?
- None of us believe we can literally build a tower to God, but what contemporary developments may be seen as symbolic towers in current society?
- Can science ever reveal information about God or about how God works? How, or why not?
- Should there be limits to what science studies? Why or why not? What subjects might religion want to limit?
- Could science ever explain the world so well that humans no longer need faith?



Express

Use the following questions to help the participants express what they’ve learned:

- How are people’s faiths different if they take certain passages of Scripture more literally or figuratively?
- How can you know whether to take a passage literally or figuratively? Is there a general rule, or is it case by case?
- What does this exercise help you understand about the relationship between faith and science?
- How would you respond if someone asked you, “Is science more or less true than the Bible?”
- How can you have a discussion about Bible passages with people who interpret them differently than you do?



Exit

Discuss ideas about how to keep conversations about the relationship between faith and science civil and not combative. Close your time together with prayer.





Session Objective

Participants will dive into a question central to the science-and-faith conversation, with enough respect for the topic and each other to actually search for an answer. The group will discuss what the Bible says and does not say, and how that informs their personal faith.

Faith Statement

The interpretation of Scripture, we confess, does not belong to any private or public person, nor yet to any [Church] . . . but pertains to the Spirit of God by whom the Scriptures were written. When controversy arises about the right understanding of any passage or sentence of Scripture . . . we ought not so much to ask what men have said or done before us, as what the Holy [Spirit] uniformly speaks within the body of the Scriptures and what Christ Jesus himself did and commanded.

—Scots Confession (3.18)



Engage

Open your time together in prayer and lead a conversation based on the following questions:

- What is the difference between understanding something literally or figuratively?
- When the Bible talks about creation in seven “days,” is it speaking literally or figuratively? Why?
- Regardless of how or when God created the world, how does it feel to know that God created it?
- What questions do you have about creation?



Explore

Read Genesis 1:1–2:4 and the faith statement. Explore the following questions:

- If God created the world in seven days, where do dinosaurs and fossils come in? What might be God’s purpose in giving us fossils, biology, physics, and all the other sciences that rely on the assumption of a multibillion-year-old world?
- If God created the world in billions of years, what might be the purpose in all that time?
- How would it affect your view of God or your personal faith if God used a few hundred human generations to create you, or millions of years and natural selections?



Express

Use the following questions to help the participants express what they’ve learned:

- How would you try to test the question of when the earth was created? What could you use as evidence?
- Why might someone deny that scientific research can serve as evidence? Why might someone deny that Scripture can serve as evidence?
- What’s more important, the good news of Jesus Christ or how old the earth is?



Exit

On a napkin or sheet of scrap paper, have participants draw a picture of how they understand God the Creator. Close your time together with prayer, giving participants an opportunity to thank God for creation.





Why Do People Put Jesus and Darwin Fish on Their Cars?



Session Objective

Participants will investigate why different Christians do or do not believe in evolution, how they understand God's role in human and other life development, and how those issues affect their personal faith.

Faith Statement

Q. What do you understand by the providence of God?

A. The almighty and ever-present power of God . . . upholds, as it were by his own hand, heaven and earth together with all creatures, and rules in such a way that leaves and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and unfruitful years, food and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, and everything else, come to us not by chance but by his fatherly hand.

—Heidelberg Catechism (4.027)



Engage

Open your time together in prayer, and lead a conversation about the *facts* of Darwin and evolution, based on the following questions:

- Why do many people engage evolution and creationism from an emotional perspective instead of a scientific perspective?
- Should evolution be taught in public schools? Why or why not?
- Can science or faith ever *prove* anything about the origin of the human species? Why or why not?
- Would you ever put a Jesus or Darwin fish on your car? Why or why not?



Explore

Read Genesis 2:4b-7, and explain that in the Hebrew language the word *adam* means "man" or "humankind," and the word *adamah* means "ground." Read verse 7 again, and continue the conversation with the following questions:

- How does this awareness of the Hebrew language affect your understanding of the story?
- What would it mean about God if God literally formed the first man out of dust and literally formed the first woman out of the man's rib?
- What would it mean about God if God started a multimillion-year process of forming human beings through natural processes of evolution?
- What would it mean about Scripture if Genesis was intended to be read figuratively?



Express

Use the following questions to help the participants express what they've learned:

- Should schools teach the scientific theory of natural evolution? Why or why not?
- Should schools teach the religious theory that God created the first humans on the sixth day, about 6,000 years ago? Why or why not?
- Should schools teach any other theories about the origins of humankind?
- Should schools just leave the issue alone, because it is too controversial or because the answers aren't clear? Or should schools help students work out the issue?



Exit

Have each person draw a Jesus fish and Darwin fish together, on a napkin or sheet of scrap paper. Encourage them to take the images home to remember that God created them, one way or another. Close your time together with prayer.





Does God Really Care If I Pass Chemistry?



Session Objective

Participants will learn how God can use science and technology, and their own personal scientific gifts, to promote God's kingdom in the world.

Faith Statement

The church calls every [person] to use [his or her] abilities, possessions, and the fruits of technology as gifts entrusted to [him or her] by God for the maintenance of [his or her] family and the advancement of the common welfare.

—Confession of 1967 (9.46)



Engage

Open your time together in prayer and lead a conversation based on the following questions:

- What can science teach us about God?
- How can God use science to teach us something about our faith? How can God use science to get us to do something faithful?
- Is it a religious virtue to learn about science? Is it a sin to ignore it? Why or why not?
- If God calls you to serve scientifically (for instance, as a cancer researcher), would it be sinful to flunk chemistry? Why or why not?



Explore

Read Deuteronomy 6:4–5 and Mark 12:28–30 and explore the following questions:

- What is the main difference between these passages?
- Why do you think Jesus also included the word *mind* in the list?
- Does a Christian who loves God with his or her whole mind necessarily study or appreciate science? Why or why not?
- How can a career in science be a way to love God with one's whole mind?
- Should the church support scientific research? Why or why not?
- How can science be involved in mission work in the United States and around the world?



Express

Use the following questions to help the participants express what they've learned:

- Do you think God would call someone like you to a career in the sciences? Why or why not?
- How would you respond if God called you to a career in the sciences? How would you respond if you felt called to a scientific field that some Christians found controversial?
- Why is learning about science important in God's world?



Exit

Ask: How does the relationship between faith and science fit into your faith journey? Close in prayer.

