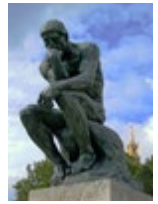


NAME: _____

RE TEACHER _____

YEAR 9 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

PHILOSOPHY

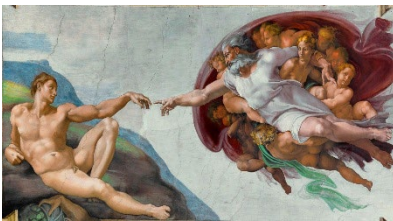


BELIEVING IN GOD

1. Throughout history many have come to believe that there is a God. The belief that God exists is called **theism**.
2. Others have argued that no such God exists. The belief that there is no God is called **atheism**.
3. Some look at the arguments and are not sure whether God exists or not. This is known as **agnosticism**.
4. The word **philosophy** comes from Greek origins and literally means '**friend of wisdom**.'

THEISM

5. Many great philosophers such as **Plato** and **Aristotle** have argued that if the universe exists then God must exist.
6. Many theists believe that God needs to be greater than everything else because God made everything else!
7. God must be all-powerful (**omnipotent**), all knowing (**omniscient**) and all-loving (**omni-benevolent**)
8. St Thomas Aquinas said that God is **outside of time and space** because God cannot age and is not physical.



HOLY BOOKS

Many religious people believe in God because of what is said in their Holy Books. Christians learn in the **Bible** that God created the heavens and the Earth. Jews believe this same message because of their Holy Book the **TeNaKh**. Muslims also believe this because of what is said in the **Qu'ran**. Religious people often believe that their Holy Books are true because they contain the **Word of God**.

CREATIONISTS

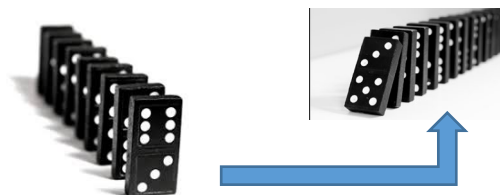
The Creation Story

Creationists believe that God created the world in 7 Days. In Genesis 1 God says 'Let there be light' and there is light! This continues on until God creates the starry heavens and the Earth full of all living things. This is a literal interpretation of the Bible. Catholic Christians along with many others believe that Genesis 1 should **NOT** be read literally.



SCIENCE AND RELIGION

9. Fr George Lemaitre (a Belgian Catholic priest) believed that the universe began to exist with a **Big Bang**.
10. Edwin Hubble first observed '**red shift**' in 1929 showing that Fr George Lemaitre could be right.
11. We know from **Sir Isaac Newton's laws of physics** that movement can only happen if a force makes it happen.
12. Many followed **St Thomas Aquinas** from centuries before believing that only God could make this happen.



The Great Question

Which force was great enough to cause all movement in our universe to happen?

13. Many of the greatest scientists of all time have come to believe in God through their own discoveries.
14. Some of the world's leading atheists have also started believing in God because of new scientific discoveries.
15. Pope Francis says that science and religion should 'compliment' each other as they both seek answers.

THE ARGUMENT OF DESIGN



Imagine that you are out walking with your friend through a forest. All of a sudden your friend is pulled up through the air! You look up and see that the noose of a rope has tightened around her ankle and she is now hanging upside down from a tree. **You can clearly see that a trap has been designed** as you look down the rope to the ground. Sometimes we do not need to see a designer to clearly see and believe that something has been designed.

(Michael Behe)

Paley's Watch

William Paley once said if you found a stone on the beach you might think that it had always been there. However, if you found a watch in the same place you would reach a different conclusion. The watch has hundreds of elements all working together to make it work. It has different hands, cogs and batteries, a watch-face and a strap to fit around your wrist. Paley said you would conclude that the watch had been designed by somebody and left there. To Paley the universe was like a giant watch. He said it makes sense that there is a universe designer.

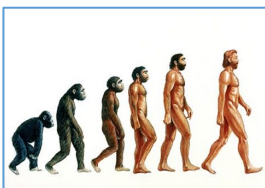


"The chances that life just occurred are about as unlikely as a typhoon blowing through a junkyard and constructing a Boeing-747."

Sir Fred Hoyle

ATHEISM

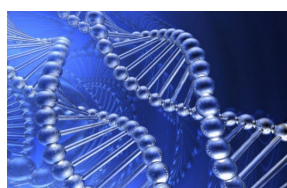
16. Many **atheists** would say that it is not logical to believe in God because there is **no physical evidence**.
17. Some psychologists believe that **God is a fantasy** to help us deal with death and the loss of loved ones.
18. **Sigmund Freud** believed that 'God' is something created in the mind to people find purpose to their lives.
19. **Friedrich Nietzsche** argued that **real atheism** is **nihilism** and that any other type of atheism is **unintelligent**.
20. Nihilism is nothingness... Nietzsche said that '**truth**' and '**goodness**' do not really exist as they depend on God.
21. It is impossible that Holy Books are the '**Word of God**' if there is no God to start with!
22. If God is real then... Why does evil exist? Why do good people suffer? Why do so many different religions exist?
23. **Richard Dawkins** is a famous atheist. He makes the following points...



Evolution in time will provide all of the answers for life on Earth. We don't need to believe in God in order to fill in the gaps!



If God made the world then why are there so many problems? We have natural disasters and many species are now extinct.



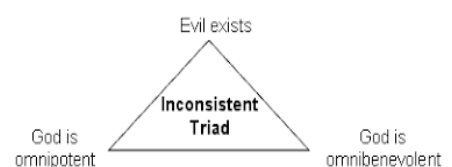
There is nothing that special about human life! Human DNA is approximately 50% identical to that of a potato!



If everything in the world needs a designer or a reason for being here then surely God would need a designer or a reason too!

EVIL AND SUFFERING

If God is all-loving, all-powerful and all-knowing then why do bad things happen to good people? Why do we have cancer in young children or recent events like the holocaust? Surely God either does not love us enough to help or He can't do anything to help us in our situations. It is easier to conclude that God does not exist.





Easter Sunday Terror Attacks 2019

Terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka left over 250 dead and several hundreds of others injured. Bombers targeted hotels, cafés and Catholic Churches during the Easter Sunday celebrations. Families were unable to have funeral Masses for their dead relatives for fear of further attacks. Surely a loving God would not have let this happen?

RELIGIOUS RESPONSES

24. It is often the case that evil and suffering leads people to believe more deeply than ever in an all-loving God.
25. Theists sometimes believe that suffering is a **test** or a part of **God's plan** ('My ways are not your ways' Isaiah 55)
26. Most Christians believe that sharing in the suffering of Jesus is actually the path towards finding God!
27. We would never truly understand love or value another person unless we could experience pain or loss.
28. It is through suffering that we become more God-like. **'Take up your cross and follow me'** (Luke 9: 23).

PROBLEMS WITH ATHEISM

29. If God does not exist and did not create the world then this leaves only two possible solutions...
30. A number of atheists believe that **the universe came into existence out of nothing** (quarks etc.)
31. Other atheists believe that **the universe was always there** and did not need to be created (steady state theory)
32. Most philosophers agree that both of these solutions raise even more impossible questions.
33. **'Ex nihilo nihil fit'** (Rene Descartes)... It is a basic principle in philosophy that nothing comes from nothing.
34. If there was no beginning then you can't solve the problem of movement because things don't move themselves.

RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

35. Many people believe that they have experienced the presence of God in their lives directly or indirectly.
36. Some people believe that God has **answered their prayers**. They believe that God has given them a miracle.
37. Some claim they have had visions of Mary or Jesus or one of God's angels. These visions are called **apparitions**.
38. Others have had **conversion experiences** when God turns their lives around (St Paul on the road to Damascus).



The Annunciation



The Burning Bush



John Pridmore



Jesus walks on water

POSSIBLE CONCLUSIONS

Atheists may well conclude that God is a fantasy created in the mind of believers to help them deal with death. They may find arguments for the existence of God unconvincing without hard physical evidence. Many atheists will try to explain events in a logical way. It is far more likely that those having religious experiences are mistaken or they are lying. Some may be on drugs or be struggling with their mental health.

Theists may conclude that whilst the existence of God is a great mystery it is also the only possible explanation for the existence of everything. Without God there would be nothing at all. Atheistic arguments to explain the existence of our universe are not just weak, they are actually impossible. We cannot possibly understand what God is as He is greater than anything and everything we know but to deny God's existence is poor philosophy.

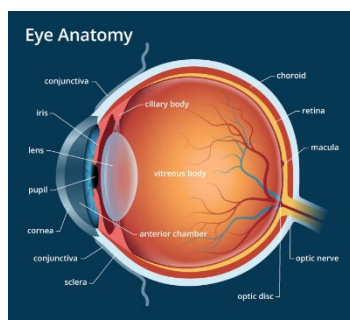
Key Terms

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Philosophy | A word with Greek origins literally meaning 'friend of wisdom'. |
| Theism | The belief that God exists. |
| Atheism | The belief that God does not exist. |
| Agnosticism | No belief as to whether God exists or not. |
| Inconsistent Triad | The argument that an all loving and all-powerful God cannot exist if suffering does. |
| Theodicy | An argument which defends the existence of God. |
| Nihilism | The belief that God does not exist and that there is no purpose or meaning to anything. |
| Omnipotent | The belief that God is all powerful. |
| Omnibenevolent | The belief that God is all loving. |
| Omniscient | The belief that God is all knowing. |
| Omnipresent | The belief that God is always present. |
| Transcendent | The belief that God exists beyond time and space. |
| Design Argument | The belief that God exists because everything clearly has a design and a purpose. |
| Causation | The belief that God exists because something non-physical had to start everything else. |
| Religious Experience | An encounter with God or something directly related. |
| Numinous | An experience of something greater than you which makes you believe that God is real. |
| Apparition | A vision of something or somebody that could not possibly be there. |
| Miracle | Something which breaks the laws of science. |
| Answered Prayer | The belief that God has answered a prayer. |
| Conversion | A dramatic change to your life as a result of an encounter with God. |

Stretch yourself further...

Did you know...?

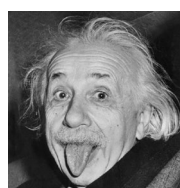
Fr George Lemaitre (Big Bang Theory), Albert Einstein (General Theory of Relativity) Lord Kelvin (Second Law of Thermodynamics), Isaac Newton (Laws of Motion), Galileo Galilei (father of modern physics), Friar Gregor Mendel (genetics pioneer) and many more of the greatest scientists of all time believed in God BECAUSE of science. A large number of our world leading scientists continue to believe in God to this day and many have a strong religious identity.



Darwin believed in **survival of the fittest**. This was the idea that over thousands of years each species **evolves**. Those that adapt to fit their environment survive. Those that do not eventually die out. This process is known as **natural selection**.

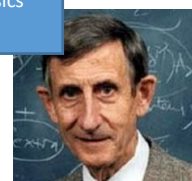
Darwin explained that his own theory did not answer all questions. He used the **human eye** to show the limitations of his own Theory of Evolution. He believed a designer was still necessary and continued to believe in God.

Michael Behe is an esteemed Biological Scientist. He refers to the human eye as an 'irreducibly complex organism' meaning there is no way to explain how so many parts come to work together at the same time in the way that they do. The argument that something as complicated as the human eye could evolve purely by chance is not scientific. Michael Behe uses other examples such as bacterial flagellum to make this point. The function it performs is incredibly complicated. It relies on so many different components operating together in a particular way that it cannot be explained by evolution alone.



Einstein presented his theory of a 'cosmological constant' in 1917. Were the rate of expansion in the universe out by even 1 in 10^{120} then the universe would either have expanded so rapidly that no physical matter could form at all or it would have imploded on itself! Einstein famously stated...
'The more I study science, the more I believe in God.'

"There are many lucky accidents in physics"
(Freeman Dyson; 1979)



Further reflection: <https://evolutionnews.org/2020/12/a-physician-describes-how-behe-and-intelligent-design-changed-his-mind/>