

God, the Father of creation

session handout

How do we know God exists?

We cannot prove or disprove the existence of God but we can reflect upon our experience of the world and also our experience of life. If God created the world then he is also our creator. Our experience is important.



We can also show that belief in God is not unreasonable. The Church has developed certain arguments to help us here:

- *The world has to have begun somewhere and somehow. There has to have been a 'first cause' and this first cause had to be self-sufficient and not itself caused by anything else.*
- *The world is not random but displays design. The more recent discoveries of physics amply demonstrate the marvellous order of the universe. Many people imagine that science and scripture contradict each other. This is not so. Both describe a world of purpose and design. The Scriptures in poetic language tell us that the origin of the world is with a creator God. Human reason, and science in particular, has gone on to discover the laws that govern the universe: laws that God has put in place.*
- *Human beings are rational and reasonable – creative, social and individual. By reflection upon our own being we are pointed beyond ourselves to a creator.*

The kernel of all these arguments is that, if there is a creation, there must be a creator.

Reflecting on creation

Reflection on creation is very important, but creation by itself cannot lead us to a full understanding of God or of life. Reflecting on the created order can lead to worshipping creation itself. The Christian view is that the world reveals something of the nature of God but we do not worship the world. Our God is both intimately involved with the world, but also separate from it.



God is also a God whose presence is revealed in human history and throughout the Scriptures. Supremely, this revelation is made known to us in Jesus Christ – God's Word made flesh. It is also prepared for in the whole history of the people of Israel to whom God makes a special revelation of himself: he is the one God and through them he will make his love known to everyone.

We can only know God completely through Jesus Christ. The creation shows us a God of order and design, but it does not show us that God loves us or has a purpose for our lives.

What is the Christian understanding of our relationship with the world?

Christians are called to be good stewards of God's creation. The world does not belong to us, it is God's. We cannot and should not do with it what we like, rather we should see that our stewardship of the world is concerned to preserve and enhance the beauty and biodiversity of creation. The Old Testament speaks about this loving care of the creation. If we take the Bible seriously then the Church will be the original Green Party!

The Old Testament speaks of a wisdom, which we would now understand as the brooding presence of the Holy Spirit, active at the dawn of creation.

The Lord created me at the beginning of his work,
the first of his acts of long ago.
Ages ago I was set up,
at the first, before the beginning of the earth.
When there were no depths I was brought forth,
when there were no springs abounding with water.
Before the mountains had been shaped,
before the hills, I was brought forth –
when he had not yet made earth and fields,
or the world's first bits of soil.
When he established the heavens, I was there,
when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,
when he made firm the skies above
when he established the fountains of the deep,
when he assigned to the sea its limit,
so that the waters might not transgress his command,
when he marked out the foundations of the earth,
then I was beside him, like a master worker,
and I was daily his delight,
rejoicing before him always,
rejoicing in his inhabited world
and delighting in the human race.

Proverbs 8.22-31

This delight in creation is the mark of true Christian living. God has made the world and it is very good. He has made us to enjoy the world and his presence. The world is made from and filled with love. Into the world – that the beloved may know the lover – he has sent his Son.

Putting it into practice

This week think of the ways we use (or misuse) God's creation; and about any changes in lifestyle we might make as a result of our reflections.

