

KS3 Religion and Worldviews

Was the universe created by God?

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About this unit: This study is intended to develop philosophical thinking. It encourages students to reflect upon the ultimate question of whether the universe was created as a deliberate act by a deity, whether an explanation lies in the 'Big Bang' theory, or whether it is possible to understand existence from both perspectives. Students should develop their own reasoned response to this question and are expected to illustrate their understanding by reference to actual arguments put forward by philosophers in relation to the issue.



Where this unit fits in: The topic builds on the skills developed at KS1 and KS2 where Students are encouraged to be curious and to ask increasingly challenging questions about beliefs. They will have learnt to express their own ideas in response to the material they engage with, identifying relevant information, selecting examples and giving reasons to support their ideas and views. The syllabus requires the RE curriculum to include the study of Religion, Philosophy and Ethics. This unit primarily supports learning about Aim B of the syllabus covering philosophy and ultimate questions. Specifically, it supports these elements of the syllabus:

A. Investigate the beliefs and practices of religions and other world views, including:

Beliefs and authority: core beliefs and concepts; sources of authority including written traditions and leaders;

B. Investigate how religions and other world views address questions of meaning, purpose and value, including:

The nature of religion and belief and its key concepts;

Ultimate Questions of belonging, meaning, purpose and truth.

The religions studied in this unit: It focuses on philosophy from a Christian or Enlightenment tradition but could be adapted for use with any faith. It also brings perspectives of non-religious approaches such as Humanism.

Estimated teaching time for this unit:



Material in this unit covers 7-8 hours of teaching, though it could be extended or subdivided as appropriate. Teachers may wish to select or supplement activities suggested. The sections are not necessarily designed to cover one single lesson but are organised in progression of learning.

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Vocabulary	Resources
<p>In this unit, students will have an opportunity to use words and phrases related to:</p> <p>Atheism, agnosticism and theism The First Cause argument The Design argument Morality Religious experience The Big Bang theory and evolution</p>	<p>Information sheets, worksheets and other resources have been specially created to support the delivery of this unit. They can be found in the Resource Pack online.</p>

EXPECTATIONS: At the end of this unit		
<p>Students working towards the age related expectations for Year 8 will be partially achieving KS3 goals and will be able to:</p> <p>Explore a range of religious and other views that address the question “does a creator God exist?” to show some links between beliefs and proofs</p> <p>Express their own views, giving some examples and reasons.</p>	<p>Students working at the age related expectations for Year 8 will be achieving the end of KS3 goals and will be able to:</p> <p>Explore a range of religious and other views that address the question “does a creator God exist?”</p> <p>Explore the reasons why people hold these views making reference to different types of proof</p> <p>Express their own view about whether there is a creator God with well-informed arguments</p>	<p>Students who are deepening and widening their knowledge and understanding might also:</p> <p>Explain and interpret a range of different religious and secular views with regards to the existence of a creator God.</p> <p>Give a well-informed and reasoned account of what inspires religious believers.</p> <p>Investigate and express insight into a range of answers to the question “does a creator God exist?”</p>

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Key Questions	Learning Objectives <i>Students:</i>	Teaching and Learning Opportunities	Learning Outcomes <i>Students:</i>	Wider Learning Opportunities/Points to Note
<p>What is an atheist, an agnostic and a theist?</p> <p>How do people prove or reject the existence of God?</p>	<p>Understand the key terms: atheist, agnostic and theist.</p> <p>Consider how people prove things, including God, exist.</p> <p>Analyse why people are atheist, agnostic or theist.</p>	<p>Explain definitions of atheist, agnostic, theist. Atheist = a person who believes that there is no god/s Agnostic = a person who believes there is insufficient evidence to determine whether god/s exist Theist = a person who believes in the existence of god/s</p> <p>Students to understand different types of proof. Can they come up with an example of each?</p> <p>Reliable evidence Personal experience Reasoning</p> <p>Using an example (Loch Ness monster, UFOs, historical figures, etc) ask groups to research using the internet evidence that is available to offer evidence or proof for their existence. Groups to present findings, explaining what types of proof they have found as well as offering a statement about how reliable they think their evidence is. What do proofs need to be in order to be considered reliable? (e.g. shared experience, personal witness, scientific evidence, rational argument)</p> <p>Students to come up with different types of evidence that might constitute proof of God. There are examples below as a starting point.</p>	<p>Explain what atheists, agnostics and theists are and suggests a number of reasons for these beliefs.</p> <p>Understand the concept of proof and the different ways that people try to find it</p>	<p>Material provided in resource pack.</p>

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		<p>Reliable evidence - <i>Accept the accounts that other people have given of their experience of God as evidence that God exists</i></p> <p>Personal experience - <i>Certain that they have been in direct contact with God</i></p> <p>Reasoning - <i>Believe that God is the only logical explanation for the origin of the universe and the order within it</i></p> <p>Divide class into groups representing atheist, agnostic, and theist views. With reference to the different types of proofs they should explain their position.</p>		
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Key Questions	Learning Objectives <i>Students:</i>	Teaching and Learning Opportunities	Learning Outcomes <i>Students:</i>	Wider Learning Opportunities/Points to Note
<p>What is the First Cause argument?</p> <p>Why is it called the 'cosmological argument'?</p> <p>Did the universe have a beginning or cause?</p>	<p>Demonstrate a good understanding of the First Cause argument for God's existence</p>	<p>Do students think that the universe had a beginning or cause? Make links to our own experience that everything has a beginning or cause.</p> <p>Provide students with a simplified version of Aquinas' First Cause argument. Students to create their own illustration to explain it. Everything that exists was caused to exist. The universe exists, so it too must have a cause There has to be something eternal (without a beginning or end) that was not caused by anything The eternal first cause is God Therefore, God exists</p> <p>Give groups a copy of the Creation Story from one of the World Religions? (Resource sheet 2.1). Does this story support Aquinas' First Cause argument? How/ how not? Feedback ideas.</p> <p>Is this 'proof'? Make links back to last lesson and the different types of proof (Reliable evidence, personal experience and reasoning) Evaluation questions: Why is the first cause argument often referred to as the cosmological argument (Give them a hint of what the word cosmos means)? How convincing is the First Cause argument?</p>	<p>Create an illustration to explain the First Cause argument.</p> <p>Compare the Creation Stories to the argument and reach a personal conclusion as to whether it can be considered to be 'proof'</p>	<p>Can students see any drawbacks? This will be returned to later in the unit when we consider the Big Bang theory and evolution.</p> <p>Homework suggestion: Profile of Thomas Aquinas</p>

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SAMPLE PART UNIT – FURTHER LESSONS AND PLANNING FOLLOW IN FULL UNIT

SAMPLE