



Wondering at Creation A 10- 15 Minute Discussion

This session has been adapted from the 2016 Practice Discipleship Curriculum on *Wonder*. The full session can be downloaded at www.nemnsynod.org/Discipleship or www.practicediscipleship.org

SESSION DESCRIPTION

Given the scientifically-oriented culture within which we live and engage in God's mission, we have an obligation to help our young people understand that what science teaches us about the universe is not only comprehensible within the context of faith, but can also nurture a healthy and faithful wonder at what it means to be part of, and stewards of, God's creation. Wonder at creation, and specifically at the universe, can help us integrate our faith with the world in which we live.

BIBLICAL FOCUS

Psalm 8:3-5

Ephesians 1:9-10

MATERIALS NEEDED

Bibles

23 foot long string

DISCUSSION PLAN

Part of the wonder of the universe is the deep sense of time that it can give us. Have a ball of string or yarn that is 23 feet long. Place a small mark on the string every 12 inches. Have one member of the group hold the end, and unravel the ball as it is passed from one person to the next, until the entire length is being held out by the group. If this is the timeline of the universe from the big bang until now (13.8 billion years), ask the group where on the string they think the earth formed (it would be at about 15 1/3 feet from the beginning). Then ask them when the first single-celled organisms appeared on earth (that would be at about 17 feet from the beginning). Next, when did dinosaurs like the T. Rex show up on the timeline? (about 1 1/2 inches from the end). Finally, where would humans show up? That would leave only 1/250" at the end of the string for human history. (The scale here is 1 inch for every 50 million years of history; scientists identify the earliest members of *homo sapiens* from about 200,000 years ago; 1/250" is about the thickness of two sheets of paper). Prompt some conversation with these questions:

- What does this imply about the things that God cares about in the universe?
- How does this make you feel about the role of humans in God's creation?
- What do you think Ephesians 1:9-10 means when it talks about God bringing all things together in Christ?

(Note: thanks to Pastor Randal Palm for suggesting this timeline analogy)

Questions for Discussion:

1. What part of creation most fills you with wonder? Is that the same as a sense of God's presence?
2. Which would describe the way in which scientific discoveries have intersected with your faith:
 - a. Scientific awareness of the world has increased my sense of wonder at creation, and so deepened my sense of faith and worship.
 - b. The claims of science have challenged my faith, and caused me to rethink some theological issues.
 - c. The claims of science contradict my faith, and so I reject them.
 - d. The claims of science never seem to affect my faith or understanding of God at all.

Closing Prayer:

"Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights above. Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his heavenly hosts. Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars. Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies."
(Psalm 148:1-4)



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