

What About Science? Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. What was your favorite subject in school?
2. If you were going to spend time away from the city, where would you choose to go?

Read the following passage: Psalm 19:1-4; Romans 1:18-20.

In much of the west, three big assumptions often shape conversations about science and faith. Firstly, it is claimed that modern science demonstrates that the biblical documents (specifically the book of Genesis) are completely unreliable guides to reality. Secondly, many people assume that a “scientific” mindset and a “religious” mindset are fundamentally incompatible. And thirdly, it is often assumed that there is no scientific evidence that supports any aspect of the Christian faith. Biblical, historical, and scientific considerations demonstrate that each of these assumptions is misguided.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Why do you think so many people believe that the teachings of science and the Christian faith are in severe conflict with one another?
2. Would you describe becoming a follower of Jesus as a blind leap of faith? Why or why not?
3. Compare the two accounts of creation at the end of this document. The first comes from one of the best known creation stories in the ancient near east, *Enuma Elish*. The second comes from Genesis 1. What stands out to you? What are the big ideas communicated by the creation account in Genesis 1?
4. The ancient Israelites held views about deity that stood in stark contrast to the beliefs of all of their pagan neighbors. How do you think the ancient Israelites arrived at these beliefs?
5. The mathematician and philosopher Alfred North Whitehead (who was not a Christian) recognized that “faith in the possibility of science” must exist before any actual scientific theory can be developed. What do you think he meant by this? What are some biblical concepts that helped pave the way for modern science to emerge?
6. Do you think there is any scientific evidence that points to the existence of God? Explain.

Pray

...to enraged Tiamat [Marduk] spoke the following words:

*“Why have you risen, why have you arrogantly exalted?
You have charged your own heart to stir up conflict...
...Stand alone, that I and you may meet in single combat!”*

*When Tiamat heard this,
She was like one possessed; she took leave of her senses.
In fury Tiamat cried out aloud....*

*Tiamat and Marduk, wisest of gods then joined battle,
They strove in single combat, locked in conflict.
The lord spread out his net to enfold her,
He let loose in her face The Evil Wind, which followed
behind.
When Tiamat opened her mouth to consume him,
He drove in the Evil Wind and she could not close her lips.
As the fierce winds encumbered her belly,
Her body was distended and her mouth was wide open.
He released an arrow, it tore her belly,
It cut through her insides, splitting her heart.
Having subdued her, he blotted out her life.
He threw down her carcass and stood upon it....*

*The lord trampled on the legs of Tiamat,
With his unsparing mace he crushed her skull.
When the arteries of her blood he had severed,
The North Wind bore it to places undisclosed....*

*He split her like a shellfish into two parts:
Half of her he sat up as the ceiling of the sky,
He pulled down the bar and posted guards.
He ordered them not to allow her waters to escape....*

*(Marduk speaking) “... I will establish a savage, ‘man’ shall be his name.
Yes, savage-man I will create.
He shall be charged with the service of the gods
That they might be at ease!”...*

*Out of [guilty Kingu’s] blood they fashioned mankind.
[Ea] imposed the service and let free the gods.*

Enuma Elish, Tablet 4

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

3 And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. 4 God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

26 Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

*27 So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.*

28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

Genesis 1:1-5, 26-31