

Study Guides for Faith & Science Integration

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An Introduction to All Curricula

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Introduction to All Curricula

Our Perspective:

We believe that all truth is God’s truth. We profess that the created world and Scripture are not inherently in conflict because God has revealed Himself to us through both. However, human interpretation of the truths revealed in Creation (science) and Scripture (theology) are limited by our fallibility. As a result, we might perceive conflict between science and religion because we cannot fully understand what we observe in Scripture or Creation.

Our Goal:

We desire to equip young adults with the knowledge and attitudes they need to graciously contribute to and lead discussions about the relationship between the Christian faith and modern science.

Our Methods:

We have collected numerous big questions about the relationship between science and religion. For each question, we have developed a set of modules that explores the discussions in depth. No special knowledge is required to implement these modules; the leader’s guide should give you all you need to know to get started. (The documents whose titles end with (Lea) are the leader’s guides, the ones that end with (Pa) are for participants.) These curricula can be used in church groups, school groups, Bible studies, or even among friends. Group size can vary, but groups of six individuals or fewer tend to have the richest conversations.

First, some important notes:

Science employs certain terms and attitudes that are quite different from the way the rest of society understands things. Science functions with a high degree of **skepticism**—scientists should never claim to have *proved* something, and even the most well-validated hypotheses are always called “theories”—but this skepticism does not mean that the conclusions gathered by scientists are untrue.

Scientists are (or should be) **cautious**: they methodically pursue truth about the natural world, but they may not readily say that they have found truth. Science relies on hypotheses being falsifiable—that is, hypotheses can be shown to be inaccurate—and scientific research at its most basic form seeks to prove hypotheses false. For example, some hypotheses have been tested for centuries, and all new evidence seems to support the hypothesis. In this case, the **hypothesis** is carefully promoted to “**theory**.” Theories can be safely assumed to be accurate, though all

subsequent science will continue to interrogate the theory. After all, if it isn't testable, measurable, and falsifiable, it isn't science.

Science likes to be certain before jumping to any definite conclusions (pardon the personification). The degree of skepticism that is considered normal in the scientific realm may seem absurd to the non-scientist. If scientists are in fact seeking truth, why don't they ever find it? We believe that scientists do find truths, but they recognize that finding truth is an on-going process—one that is never completed. Though many scientists would not recognize human finiteness as the source of our inability to be certain about our interpretation of the natural world, an **understanding of human error and fallibility** is built into the scientific method. Scientists are skeptical because science desires to be as certain as possible about truth.

We are inclined to believe that the majority of modern scientific knowledge can be trusted. No special "Christian science" is necessary to learn truths about God—in reality, recognizing certain truths about God are, in essence, unavoidable when one studies the natural world.

Terms:

Science: the systematic study of Creation that accumulates and organizes reliable knowledge using testable explanations and predictions about the universe.

Hypothesis: a proposed explanation for a phenomenon that is used as a starting point for future inquiry.

Theory: a well-confirmed, self-consistent explanation of a fundamental natural process that is built on scientific observations.

The Big Questions:

Is the theory of evolution compatible with the Christian faith?

How can Christians understand and respond to the concept of mass extinctions?

How can Christians understand the idea of human evolution?

How can Christians understand the story of Noah's ark?

How do Christians view the creation of the world?

What do Christians believe about gender identity?

Can we explain human nature using evolutionary psychology?

Was Galileo Galilei's science and Scripture in conflict?

Is Christian theology threatened by the study of neuroscience?

What are the ethics of eating?

How will technology shape the future of humankind?

Is faith genetic?

Are there philosophical conflicts between science and religion?

How can we understand the universe?

Have science and religion conflicted in the past?