

PAGE THREE – WHAT’S THE BIG DEAL?

Note: If you are starting with a new session, remind the group of the agreement to honor one another’s opinions and to keep shared ideas in the group. Check in with group members regarding any conversations they might have had with family or friends regarding their understanding of scientific and theological ways of knowing about the world.

Prior to gathering the group to review this third page, preview the slide show at the top of the page and become familiar with the following information:

The slideshow displayed at the top of this page contains a number of images that represent the subject of ways of knowing about the world. These are images that are among the many available in the media and on the Internet and are only a small representation of what youth might encounter. The group will view these images during this portion of the lesson. From the start of the slide show they appear as follows:

A statement: We All Have Questions,

A picture with the statement: Without emotions...we would barely know which life choices to make, because choices are based on preferences, and preferences are ultimately emotional,

A scientist with a scientific instrument,

A picture with the statement: Grow in the wisdom and knowledge of God,

A picture with the statement: Demand evidence and

think critically,

A picture with two books: One is a math text for calculus and one is a book that addresses the connections between religion and science.

To begin this portion of the lesson, have page three visible to the group and ask:

How do you respond to an announcement, either in the news or on the Internet, that someone has had a revelation from God? *As group members discuss this question, be sure to note that this might include a revelation about a worldwide event or a revelation about a personal event.*

How do you know if the revelation might be true or false without knowing the final result of the predicted outcome?

Next, have the group read the story located on the link of PAGE THREE.

Discuss with the group the event reported in the article and recall any other publicized revelations they might know of from the media. Ask the group to consider types of revelation that might be of benefit to others, such as a person choosing to give service or help to homeless people based upon a divine revelation.

Ask: Have there been times when a person or group claimed the God was revealed in an event where it was validated in some way? *An example of this might be a person claiming to have prayed or meditated seeking God's will, or revelation, to accept a challenge and then*

a successful outcome validated the revelation.

Next, read through the remaining portion of PAGE THREE and click on the link from the PBS dialogue.

Ask the group to respond to the statement by psychiatrist Freud: *"The scientific method," Freud writes, "is our only source of knowledge." The Ten Commandments, according to Freud, come from human experience, not from revelation.*

Next, read the dialogue between physician Frederick Lee and author on spirituality Winifred Gallagher:

Frederick Lee: But I'm troubled by the idea that one can be willing to believe in something if it's not true.

Winifred Gallagher: But just because it's not scientific doesn't mean it's not true. If reality is sitting in the middle of the table and there's a wall around the table, then we all are looking through a different window. To me, science is just one of those windows. I can go over there and see the art window, I can see the religion window, I can see the music window of reality. I don't understand why science in our age by some people is regarded as sort of the be all and end all of reality.

Ask the group to consider how both the use of the scientific method (testing hypotheses) and the experience of individuals might be equally valid for knowing about and understanding the world. *Continue the conversation as long as there is interest.*

Note: Some of the conversation in this dialogue suggests that there is a problem with the religious claims of knowing the truth by different organized

religions. Be sure to emphasize to the group that this is an issue between differing religions, and not between religion and science. Science is neither theistic, nor atheistic or tasked with proving or disproving the claims of religion.

Next, have the group look at the slideshow at the top of the page, and ask that everyone wait until all pictures are viewed before making comments.

Invite the group to respond to the images and allow time for each member to add to the conversation.

Using the information provided at the beginning of this session, talk about each of the images. (Remind the group to be respectful of each other's response.) The white dots that appear at the lower right of the slideshow can be used to select and navigate through the ten images.

Ask the group to share what each image might mean to them, or how the image might cause them to respond to the scientific and theological methods of knowing about and understanding the world.

Use the following as prompts for discussion:

The statement, "We All Have Questions," reminds us that as humans we are all curious about the world. Should people always consider both the scientific and theological methods of answering questions about the world? Why or why not?

A picture with the statement, "Without emotions...we would barely know which life choices to make, because choices are based on preferences, and preferences are

ultimately emotional,” might suggest that we make decisions based upon only emotions. How do our emotions affect our perception of data, facts, or religious experiences?

A scientist with a scientific instrument could be an image that shows how valuable scientific methods are to society. How do you see that society values the understandings and knowledge of religion?

The next two slides are in contrast with one another as they state: “Grow in the wisdom and knowledge of God,” and “Demand evidence and think critically.” How does each statement lead us to seek important understandings and knowledge of the world?

The two books, a math text for calculus and a book that addresses the connections between religion and science, are together in one photo. What are ways that you see both methods of religion and science working together?

Next, ask the group to define intolerance. *Allow all answers. One definition is the refusal to accept views different from ones own.*

Ask: What are some of the dangers of intolerance?

Discuss the issue of intolerance and how it can create conflicts, which sometimes escalate to violence. Ask: What are ways to promote tolerance?

Allow all answers. Encourage group members to think about the use of listening skills and conversation as a way to understand another’s viewpoint. Help the group to understand that being tolerant of another viewpoint

does not require that you give up your own beliefs.

Discuss with the group their experiences in talking to others about how the methods of science and religion might or might not work together. What is most difficult, or easiest to talk about?

To close the session, talk about what these images might promote that is challenging or helpful to the conversation about scientific and religious methods of learning about and understanding the world. Ask that they spend time at home looking at the website and researching other information about ideas covered in the lesson. Ask each member to bring a copy of any images that represent their understanding of the material.