

PAGE TWO - THE TWO METHODS

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 to relate any conversations that they might have observed or experienced with others regarding the different ways of knowing or learning about the world.

To begin, review the information on PAGE TWO under the heading: THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD. Ask the group to recall and discuss any scientific experiments they may have conducted along with the steps taken to prove a hypothesis. Discuss scientific discoveries that have helped in understanding ways that the world works such as, space travel, seismic activity, or global warming. Remind students that with regard to the scientific method, when new data is gathered, it sometimes is used to disprove previous scientific understandings. Scientific discovery, or revelation, is not static.

Share with the group an additional important discovery by scientists Watson and Crick who discovered DNA. Have the group go to <http://gizmodo.com/5987534/watson-and-crick-discovered-dna-60-years-ago-today> to read about the discovery of DNA, which is the basic building block of all life.

Discuss with the group how this discovery has helped science and medicine to develop treatments and cures for genetic-related illnesses or disease.

Next: Review the information under the heading THE

THEOLOGICAL METHOD. Discuss the idea of revelation and what that might mean for each member of the group. *Allow all answers. Help students understand that revelation is not the act of humans choosing to access God, but God being made known in some new way.*

Review the six key points of revelation and discuss any ideas the group might have for how God or God's will is revealed today. This concept can be difficult to understand and it's important to stress that understanding a revelation of God needs to be done with a supportive community to discern the ways in which God might be active in our lives. Below are helpful prompts for students to understand the six points of revelation:

1) Revelation refers to God revealing God's self

God reveals God's self in the person of Jesus Christ

2) Revelation points to particular events and particular people God uses to reveal what God wants

In the Bible prophets are known as particular people to reveal God's will

3) Revelation of God is also ironically a hiding of God (God is shown but at the same time hidden.)

We can never fully know who God is, even when God is revealed to us

4) Revelation of God calls us to make a personal response to it and accept it

A person who has a sense that God has been revealed in some way is called to discern what it might mean for their life and take this revelation to heart

5) Revelation of God always surprises us and is unsettling

A revelation from God can come as a shock and upset our plans for life

6) Revelation becomes a new way for understanding and interpreting God, the world, and ourselves

A revelation can change our previous way of thinking about how God is present in our life

Other examples might include the selection of a Pope (as a way God reveals a new leader), or decisions made by a church to engage in social justice issues.

Next, review the information on PAGE TWO regarding Muslim, Jewish, and Buddhist views of revelation. Discuss how Muslim, Jewish, and Christian faiths each use a source of scripture as a way to reveal God's will. Read the information in the links for Muslim and Jewish understandings of revelation.

Note that Rabbi Gershon states: "Every religion relies on revelation as a source of truth." However, this is not the case for Buddhism, and it appears that Rabbi Gershon is referring to the three Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Islam, and Christianity.) Be sure to note this to the group.

Have the group explore the Buddhist website. *Allow*

students to look at the various aspects of Buddhism and encourage them to compare these to the different aspects of Christian, Jewish, and Muslim faiths.

Help students think about how God might be revealed in the world and ask them to consider which of the methods, scientific or theological, may or may not help them understand the world. Promote respectful listening as each group member offers his or her personal view.

Next: Ask the group to think about the similarities and differences between the scientific and religious methods of understanding the world. Discuss the reasons for why others might disagree about these two methods.

Ask: How can we know if our understanding of the world is from a source of scientific knowledge or from a revelation by God? *Allow all answers. Encourage the group to understand how each person's viewpoint might reflect the understandings discussed above.*

To close this portion of the lesson, ask the group if they can tell one way that they might talk to others about the scientific and theological understandings of learning about the world. Encourage members to make a list of "I Believe" and/or "I Know" statements that include both understandings.

If the session will end, encourage students to ask family and friends about how they view the scientific and religious methods of understanding the world and to bring those ideas back to future sessions.