

re:View Worldview Study Topic 06 – Theism

(To teach this session you will need: “06_Help_Theism” DVD, television or projector, DVD player, student handouts, and this leader’s guide. You may also wish to use “reView_06_VerseSlides.ppt” for the verses.)

*NOTE: If you’re teaching the abbreviated 7-session series, this is Session 6.
If you’re teaching the extended 13-session series, this is Session 10.*

Suggested Session Layout

Watch “Help” Film [3:35]
Film Discussion [5:00]
Watch “Theism” Teaching Segment [8:28]
Teaching Segment Discussion [5:00]
Activity [15:00]
Challenge [3:00]
Total session time [35-40 mins.]

Watch “Help” Film [3:35]

Brief Synopsis: Katie is a five-year-old on a mission – the creation of the perfect peanut butter and jelly sandwich. All of the essential materials are present: a plate, knife, bread, peanut butter, jelly, and a glass of juice. And all is well until Katie realizes that making a sandwich might be something easier said than done. *(For further insight, be sure to watch the directorial comments before viewing the film with your students. You may also choose to show the directorial comments as part of the discussion time.)*

Film Discussion [5:00]

What was Katie trying to accomplish?

She was trying to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

Was Katie ever in any danger? If so, give examples. Did she know she was in danger?

- 1) She stood on a stool to get the peanut butter.*
- 2) She went in the knife drawer.*
- 3) She mistakenly poured cleaner instead of juice.*

Was Katie asked if she needed help? Was help available all along? Did she eventually ask for help? Why?

Katie was asked what she was doing twice. She didn’t respond the first time and the second time said, “Nothing.” Help was available all the time, she just needed to acknowledge she needed it and ask. Katie asked for help when she began struggling with the jelly. This “help” also prevented her from poisoning herself (an area that she didn’t even know she needed help in).

What do you think Katie represents? What do you think the mom represents? The juice? *Katie represents the normal person going through a theistic life. A lot of times we are like children, we know help is available, but we don’t ask for it. The mom expresses characteristics of a “god” figure. The mom can see the big picture, has more experience, and was readily available when Katie finally got around to calling on her. The juice represents a typical pitfall we get into when we figure we can get through life on our own means and not rely upon our “god” figure.*

(Feel free to use optional handout “reView_06_HelpFilmQuestions.pdf”)

Watch “Theism” Teaching Segment [8:28]

Synopsis and Outline: There is a powerful God who created the universe and us. He gives meaning. He determines morality and promises a specific destiny.

- I. Theism: The World from God’s Hand
- II. The Focus of Theism: The Existence of God
 - a. The Challenges to God’s Existence
 - b. The Answers to the Challenges
- III. The Consequences of Believing in God
- IV. The Three Theistic Religions: Judaism, Islam, and Christianity
- V. *Christus Nexus*: “Christ at the Center”

(For your reference, a teaching outline of Dr. Brown’s teaching segment can be found under “reView_06_TeachingSegmentOutline.pdf.”)

Teaching Segment Discussion [5:00]

What are the five things that Theism explains?

- 1) *Theism explains the existence of everything else.*
- 2) *Theism explains why there is order and design in the world.*
- 3) *Theism explains the existence of humans (intelligent, moral, creative beings).*
- 4) *Theism explains why every culture has some belief in God.*
- 5) *Theism explains why we all have a sense of morality.*

Why do so many people not want to believe in God?

Many people do not want to believe in God for three reasons. The first is a theological one: they can not reconcile the existence of a good God with the presence of evil in the world. Why would a good God allow innocent suffering? Why doesn’t God do something about the evil in the world? The answer is, of course, God will do something about it. That is the point of God’s revelation in the Bible. A second reason is a sociological one. Many people don’t want to believe in God because they don’t want to become like the Christians they see on television or read about in the news. If believing in God makes them become an extremist, they want no part of it. A third reason is a personal one. They do not want to believe in God because it means they become accountable to someone other than themselves. They do not want there to be a God who will evaluate them, tell them what is really true, or provide guidelines for life.

Why do many people think that believing in God restricts life?

As noted above, the moment we believe God exists, we acknowledge we are dependent on Him for our existence and our current lives. If the most important American virtue is choice, believing in God seems to take away the ability to choose our own path in life.

What more could God do if he wanted more people to believe in Him?

This question should provoke interesting responses. Biblically, we know that God has revealed enough of Himself to convince the heart and the mind of a seeker, but not enough to convince the mind and the heart of a skeptic.

Activity [15:00]

One of the main questions of this session is this: Why are some people theists, and why are others atheists? Why do we as theists believe in a god? Why are we not all just atheists? Use the following structured controversy to help your students think through why they are theists rather than atheists. You may need to explain to your students that this is a role play and that no one is being disloyal or un-Christian by articulating the worldview of the atheist. If you have adult leaders in the room, you may want to make them leaders of the small groups just to help the flow of discussion.

Activity (cont.)

1. Split your youth group into two halves (the left side will be atheists, and the right side will be theists).
2. Divide each half into small groups of 4-6 students each.
3. Each small group should:
 - a. Have a leader who keeps the group on task. (Choose by who has the largest shoe size).
 - b. Have a secretary who writes down all comments to share with the whole group (choose by who has the smallest shoe size).
4. In their small groups, have them work through the questions on the handout (*reView_06_Handout_Debate.pdf*) from their already selected viewpoint. Spend no more than five minutes in small groups.
5. Put two panels (of the secretaries) together in the front of the room, and have them debate the issues their side discussed (give them three minutes to compare the best answers amongst each of their respective notes and choose a spokesperson).
 - a. "Does NOT exist" panel goes first. They should state their best argument along with the best evidence for it. (2-minute time limit)
 - b. "Does exist" panel goes next. They should state their best argument along with the best evidence for it. (2-minute time limit)
 - c. "Does NOT exist" rebuttal. This is for counter-evidence and arguments. (2-minute time limit)
 - d. "Does exist" rebuttal. This is for counter-evidence and arguments. (2-minute time limit)
 - e. "Does NOT exist" closing comments. (1-minute time limit)
 - f. "Does exist" closing comments. (1-minute time limit)

Challenge [3:00]

Have your students turn in their Bibles to Genesis 1:1. Have someone read it. How does the Bible attempt to prove God's existence? It doesn't. The Bible assumes God exists, which is the default assumption for every person and culture.

Turn in your Bible to 1 Timothy 2:3-6, and read it for your students. Explain that this passage reveals God's character, His passion, His love, and His involvement in the affairs of humans. If you have the time, this may lead into a discussion about what this passage reveals about the heart of God.

Close this session with a recap of the questions brought up in the debate. These are some of the most important worldview questions that can be asked, and your students may have wondered deeply about them in the past or may be wondering about them even now. That's OK, because they need to think about them and answer them for themselves. Tell them you have a list of resources, and challenge them to investigate this further on their own.

Some resources we recommend are:

Making Sense of Your World by W. Gary Phillips and Dr. Bill Brown
Why Should Anyone Believe Anything at All? by James W. Sire
Know Why You Believe: Connecting Faith & Reason by Paul E. Little

If at the end of this session, a student has a question about a particular movie or song, please go to re-films.com to download the review of that element of popular culture. If it is not there, please contact us so that we can review and have it available for a future group.

PLEASE NOTE: If you are teaching the abbreviated 7-week study, spend some time discussing who the person of Christ is, and how our lives should exemplify Christ since that is the only picture of Jesus that others will see. If you are teaching the extended 13-week study, we will go into detail on this, as well as why we are “Christian” theists in next week’s extended session (Topic 06x).

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