

Key Question

Creation and science: conflicting or complementary?

Key Concepts

Creation (Biblical view)
Some Christians view the biblical creation story as a historical account explaining exactly how God created the world, true in all literal detail. Other Christians believe it to be poetic in nature, helping to explain how the world was formed before the early Christians had any scientific proof.

Big Bang theory (Scientific view)
The big bang is how astronomers explain the way the universe began. It is the idea that the universe began as just a single point, then expanded and stretched to grow as large as it is right now – and it is still stretching!

Theory of evolution (Scientific view)
In biology, evolution is the change in the characteristics of a species over several generations and relies on the process of natural selection. The theory of evolution is based on the idea that all species are related and gradually change over time.

Key Bible Passages

Genesis 1:1 to 2:3

The Book of Genesis opens the Hebrew Bible with the story of creation. God, a spirit hovering over an empty, watery void, creates the world by speaking into the darkness and calling into being light, sky, land, vegetation, and living creatures over the course of six days.

Key Vocabulary

Conflicting	Where two or more things are incompatible; they disagree and clash.
Complementary	Combining in such a way as to enhance or emphasise the qualities of each other or another.
Genre	A style or category of art, music, or literature.
Theory	A set of principles or ideas intended to explain something.
Mutually exclusive	Where you can only have one thing or another but not both
Co-exist	To exist in the same time and place in harmony despite different ideologies or interests.
Scientist	A person who is studying or has expert knowledge of science.



The Seven Days of Creation

Key Learning: Creation and science: conflicting or complementary?

- 1 What's so wonderful about this world?**
Read together : Genesis 1:1-2:3. Talk about the messages of this Bible passage. Many Christians disagree with the genre and purpose of Genesis. Some Christians see it as a poem to explain how the world was formed before the early Christians had any scientific proof. However, some see it as an actual account of the beginning of the world. Think about the world and in small groups complete a 'wonder poem'.
- 2 What are the alternative scientific viewpoints on the creation of the world?**
Retrieve current understanding of the 'Big Bang' and 'Evolution' scientific theories. Watch videos to explain each of these theories and discuss new knowledge acquired. Compare to Genesis in the Bible, examining opposing views (e.g. some people do not believe Genesis can be true as science – evolution – contradicts it). Explore awareness of different interpretations then draw own representation of the 'Big Bang' or 'Theory of Evolution' to demonstrate learning.
- 3 Are science and religion mutually exclusive?**
Read Genesis 1 and reflect together on the various explanations for creation. Discuss: How do Christians interpret the alternative theories? How do Christians interpret Genesis? Write down questions about the Genesis text and about the beginnings of the universe and life, then sort into those that are better answered by science and those by Genesis.
- 4 What are the viewpoints of Christian scientists?**
Watch an interview with Jennifer Wiseman – a Christian scientist. Discuss: 'When you look at the universe / the world around you, can you see anything of the characteristics of God?' Imagine you are a journalist and produce a list of questions that you would ask a visiting Christian scientist drawing on learning so far.
- 5 Can a Christian viewpoint and a scientific viewpoint co- exist?**
Discuss: 'Genesis explains why the universe and life exists. Science explains how the universe works the way it does.' Do you agree or disagree, why? Discuss: 'Why is science important? Are there any questions that science cannot answer? Can religion answer all questions?' Write own questions on post-its and organise into a Venn diagram based on whether they can be answered by science, religion or both. Lead discussion, linking to unit's key question to assess understanding: 'Creation and science: conflicting or complementary?'