The Catholic Church’s teaching on creationism and evolution

Prepared by Donna Maus

Lesson Overview

Students will read the Catholic Answers tract, Adam, Eve and Evolution online (linked below), and then use their reading to answer questions on a worksheet. The worksheet can then be used the next day as a springboard for discussion, either before or after teaching biological evolution in Biology class.

1st period: Give the students the worksheet and have them read the tract, Adam Eve and Evolution online. Then the students work alone to analyze the reading and answer questions on the worksheet.

2nd period: Class discussion of the questions, how did life begin? how did new species come into existence? Show how the basic tenets of biological evolution compare to the teachings of the Catholic Church on this issue.

The worksheet and key to the worksheet are included as Word files.

Also includes links to Humani Generis, MESSAGE TO THE PONTIFICAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES: ON EVOLUTION by Saint Pope John Paul II, and a Catholic Answers tract on Aquinas vs. Intelligent Design.

Lesson Materials

Additional materials for this lesson can be accessed at https://sophiainstituteforteachers.org/curriculum/lesson/the-catholic-churchs-teaching-on-creationism-and-evolution

The author of this lesson shared it with other educators within the Sophia Institute for Teachers Catholic Curriculum Exchange. Find more resources and share your own at https://www.SophiaInstituteforTeachers.org.
Materials include:
- Adam_and_Eve_Evolution_worksheet_new
- Adam_and_Eve_Evolution_worksheet_key

Lesson Details
Subject area(s): Science, Biology
Grade Level: High School
Resource Type: Close Reading/Reflection, Discussion Guide

Special Learners
This resource was developed with the following special learners in mind:
- Traditional Classroom
- Homeschooled Students
- CCD/Parish-Based Education
Lesson Plan

Biology

Worksheet – The Catholic position on Evolution

Directions: Go to http://www.catholic.com/tracts/adam-eve-and-evolution. READ THE ENTIRE ARTICLE FIRST. Then go back and answer the questions. If you attempt to use the “find” function alone, you will get frustrated, because you MUST read and then THINK to answer the questions.

1. List the three basic positions on the origins of the universe, living things, and human beings. Briefly define these three basic positions on origins, and then tell if the Church teaches that they could be truth. Try using a graphic organizer for this.

2. What are the differences between cosmological evolution, biological evolution and human evolution? Be specific. Note: I’m NOT asking about the Church’s teachings here, just read about these three and from your reading, tell me what they are.

3. What’s the difference between a chronological reading of Genesis and a topical reading of Genesis? What do Catholics believe about this?

4. Is the Genesis account of creation fiction, or real history? Were Adam and Eve real people, or did they just represent a large population of people from whom modern man evolved, according to the Church’s teaching?

5. If a Catholic person believes that biological evolution has taken place and is taking place, what basic truth about human evolution and the human soul must they understand?

6. Why isn’t the Catholic Church completely against evolution, as are many other churches? What is the Church’s attitude towards science and scientific discovery?
7. Answer the following T/F questions according to the Church’s teachings as outlined in your reading:

T or F: God made the universe – stars, planets, and the sun – from nothing.
T or F: The Big Bang could have formed our solar system, but if it did, God made it happen.
T or F: The universe definitely was created several billion years ago and not a few thousand years ago.
T or F: We did not come from just one man and one woman, but from a pool of early humans.
T or F: If you believe in the chronological reading of Genesis, you also believe that one day was longer than a 24-hour period, because the word “day” in the Bible really means longer than 24 hours.
T or F: Topical readings of Genesis show God creating in a certain order – first, God formed the environment, then He filled the environment with living things.
T or F: Those who believe in a topical reading of Genesis believe it is a legend or myth, but not history.
T or F: It’s OK to believe in biological evolution, just not the evolution of man from ape.
T or F: It’s OK to believe in biological evolution, as long as you know God designed it and if humans evolved, at some point God infused a specially created soul into the body of man.
T or F: It’s OK to believe in special or instantaneous creation, but not atheistic evolution.
T or F: Original sin really did originate from our individual first parents at the beginning of human history.
T or F: Religious truth and scientific truth can’t conflict if they are really truth, because they come from the same God.

8. What do you think about evolution? Did reading this article help you or tell you some things that you didn’t know? What questions do you have that we could discuss in class?

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Materials include:

Worksheet - The Catholic Church's teachings on biological evolution

Key - Worksheet - The Catholic Church's teachings on biological evolution

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