

TREK: AN EXPLORATION OF THE YOUCAT



“God alone, who is beyond time and space, created the world out of nothing and called all things into being.” - YOUCAT #44

AIM:

- ▶ To understand how reason can lead us to find God
- ▶ To explore the clues that are *within* us and *without* us, that point us towards a creator God.

OVERVIEW:

This session has two distinct parts or themes. The first explores the idea that *innate conscience* points us towards a creator. The second part considers how the design of the universe also indicates that there a designer or creator behind everything.

YOU WILL NEED:

- ✓ YOUCATs
- ✓ Journals
- ✓ Internet access
- ✓ Computer, projector and screen
- ✓ Plasticine
- ✓ The numbers, ‘#4’ ‘#293’ and ‘#294’ on pieces of card, hidden somewhere in the room!

Trek
Session
No 1



Image: Courtesy of www.waouo.com

Conscience
and
Creation



ICEBREAKER:

Mascot

Begin by having a quick chat in your group. Think of something that you all have in common. Is there a type of takeaway food that you all love? Is there a sport that everyone is in to?

Your task is to race against the clock to sculpt a 3D model to represent whatever it is you have in common.

As an added challenge every person in the group must play a part in the sculpting: Whenever your youth-leader shouts "Change!" you must pass the sculpture to the person on your left and that person will carry on working on your group's masterpiece!

Don't get too attached to your mascot, because we'll need to re-mould the plasticine later on!



LISTEN:

Fair play

A few months ago a video was doing the rounds on Facebook. The video was a collection of footage from different sporting events, showing athletes performing various acts of kindness.

One video showed a football match between Iran and Denmark. When somebody in the crowd whistled, an Iranian player, (thinking it was half time) picked up the ball and kicked it away. Even though it might have seemed unfair, the referee gave Denmark a penalty.

Watch what happens when the Danish player takes the penalty.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mKPBIS3_BSo

After the Danish player misses the penalty there is applause all around the stadium. People on opposing sides, from different parts of the world, could see the fairness of what had happened. We all seem to have a sense of what is fair, or what is right and wrong, even though we don't always stick to it.



HINT:

Instead of typing in the whole link, you could copy it from our website, or search for 'Weighorst misses a penalty' in the YouTube search bar



DISCUSS:

Right and Wrong

aged 11 - 13 group

▶Where do we get a sense of right and wrong from?

▶Do people still believe in 'right and wrong' even when they do bad things?

aged 14 - 15 group

▶Where do we get a sense of right and wrong from?

▶Imagine if you saw somebody being attacked in the street. It would be safer not to get involved. What might make somebody go and help even if they knew it was dangerous?

aged 16 - 18 group

▶Where do we get a sense of right and wrong from?

▶Perhaps doing good things for people is just an instinct, like animals that have a herd instinct; we just naturally look out for each other. Do you think this is true? Why?



SHARE:

Tweet

Each group works together to post a "tweet" (a 140 character summary of what they have discussed) One person in the group will read the tweet aloud to the large group. You can use your journals to help you count your characters. #getgoing!



HINT:

We've called this a "tweet" but it's really just a sentence or two with less than 140 characters. But why not actually tweet what the young people come up with? Could your YOUCAT group could have it's own Twitter profile? Remember to put '#YOUCAT' and '@luxnymo' somewhere in the tweets so other YOUCAT groups can find it and we at NYMO can retweet! Read about online safety in the leaders' notes.



STUDY:

Hide and Seek

Hidden somewhere in the room is a number that will help you find what the YOUCAT says about our conscience. Once you have found a number get back to your group and look up that reference in your YOUCAT. Once everyone has found their reference, your small group will explain it to the large group.



PICTURE:

Creation and meditation

The Bible is full of people who have dreams and visions but sometimes we forget that our imagination is a God-given gift that can help us be prayerful. Close your eyes for a moment and try not to be distracted by anybody else around you...Without changing it, concentrate on your own breathing...As you breath in, imagine that you are breathing in calm and peace...As you breath out, you are letting go of anything that could worry or bother you...Be perfectly relaxed in God's loving presence...

Picture yourself stood alone, very still, looking out at the most beautiful scenery imaginable...Just stay there for a moment and take in everything you can see...And then, slowly, so as not to miss anything, turn around on the spot and see how the breathtaking view is all around you; the scenery goes on and on...What is the furthest thing you can see?

Something shines in the distance, and your eye is drawn towards it...You notice how the light reflects off a far-away stream, shining and dancing. You think of how the water flows down from the mountains bringing life to countless plants and animals...

Finally you look straight up at the sky...What colours can you see? Tiny points of light have begun to emerge in the sky and you can make out stars, thousands upon thousands of them scattered across the heavens.

Listen to these words from the book of Psalms:

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge...their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. (Psalm 18, 1 - 2,5)

How does God use creation to give a message? What 'words' are written in creation for you to hear...?

How do you respond to this message...?

When you are ready, open your eyes.

HINT:



Allow time for people to settle. It's worth waiting a few minutes to avoid false starts. It's sometimes helpful to have some gentle instrumental music on in the background to encourage a prayerful atmosphere during meditation. Read the meditation as slowly as you dare; even if it feels painfully slow as you read, it's probably about right!



DISCUSS:

Line 'em up!

Imagine there is a line running down the middle of the room. At one end of the room, is 'strongly agree.' At the other, is 'strongly disagree'. You are allowed to stand anywhere on the line to reflect how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:

(You may be asked to explain why you chose to stand where you did!)

- ➔ The story of creation at the beginning of Genesis is completely true.
- ➔ When it comes to understanding how the world was made, you have to either believe science, or you have to believe religion.
- ➔ There are lots of things in nature that are very well designed. There must be someone who designed them!
- ➔ The more we understand science, the more we understand about God.



Photo: by Kathy & Sam (Flickr: Green-breasted Mango) via Wikimedia Commons

All together, read #42 and #43 in your YOUCATs



HINT:

Check people understand the numbering in YOUCAT. We'll always refer to a question number rather than a page number.



SHARE:

Just a minute

In this session we've thought about two really big clues that point us towards God (conscience and creation). With the whole group sitting in a circle, we're going to have one minute, to summarise what we have thought about, discussed and meditated upon. As soon as somebody repeats a word, the next person in the group carries on until a minute is up.



PRAYER:

The Potter's hand

You each need your own small piece of plasticine and then you are going to be guided in prayer.

Roll your plasticine between your hands until you have rolled it into a ball...Hold your plasticine ball out in front of you, and look at it for a moment...Imagine God holding the whole world in his hands. God himself has moulded the whole of creation. There is a purpose and a careful design to even the tiniest detail of our vast universe.

Across every centimeter of our planet, God's own handwriting exists, pointing us towards him. St. Paul writes, "Ever since God created the world, his everlasting power and deity - however invisible - have been there for the mind to see in the things he has made." (Romans 1: 20)

Where in the world are you? You are just a dot, too small to see, and yet you too have been moulded by God, with great care and great love...the God who holds the whole of creation in his hands, the God who put countless stars in their place in the heavens, is the same God that shaped you.

Take your plasticine ball and flatten it out into a little pancake. Then press your thumb firmly into your pancake. Look carefully at the impression your thumb has made. Nobody else throughout eternity has ever had or will ever have the same thumbprint as you. You are completely unique, and God knows every detail of you, even down to how many hairs are on your head.



SONG:

If you have time, you could play *The Potter's Hand* by Darlene Zschech before the final prayer.

Look once more at the finger print. Know that God's own fingerprint is on you. Deep within you, guiding you throughout your life, the voice that tells you what is right and what is not, is God's mark on you. God has made you to do good and to be a sign of his love to others in his creation.

Lord, help us look at the world with fresh eyes, knowing that we are looking at your handiwork. Give us grateful hearts to appreciate our world. You have made each of us with a conscience that urges us to make good choices. Help us not resist our consciences but to instead to say "Yes!" to you Lord. Amen.

We would love to hear from you! If you have any feedback or suggestions please email: info@nymo.org

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