

Stories of Faith

Set 3

Contents

	PAGE
The Big Bang Theory	2
When Wonjuna made the Great Flood	4
Korea's First Missionaries	7
Fifth Man in Flight	9
Miracles in Indonesia	12
How are Pearls Formed?	14
How can I find the true God?	16
A King discovers the True God	19
What happened to God's perfect Creation?	21



The Big Bang Theory

Some people believe in the 'big bang' theory. That is, that somewhere out in space, billions of years ago, there was a big explosion of particles coming together. This led to the formation of the universe as we know it.

Some people also believe that somewhere in the middle if that big bang, the correct substances for the formation of life came together by accident. The first living single cell was formed. Eventually, the single cell divided in two, then in two again and a new living thing was formed. As cells kept dividing and changing over millions and millions of years, more and more new living creatures were made.

When a person believes that the world began this way, this person is believing in the theory of EVOLUTION. A theory is an idea which has yet to be tested and proved. It is not scientific fact, and yet so many people accept it as fact. Have you ever watched programs on T.V., or read books which claim that rocks or certain species of animals are millions of years old? This information is based on evolution. The theory of evolution is very different from the account on creation written in God's history book, Genesis.

The person who invented the theory was Darwin, who lived in England over a hundred years ago. At that time, people in Britain believed that God created the universe. However, as

Darwin studied the similarities between animals he came up with a new idea. Instead of each species being created after their own kind, as the Bible says, maybe one form of life developed into another, and that one developed into another, and so on. It would take a long, long time for this to happen, so we would have to say then that the animals as we know them took millions and millions of years to form, and not just six days as the Bible says. It also meant that instead of a perfect creation, as God made it in the beginning, the creation would have been imperfect, because a lot of death and suffering had to be involved. According to the theory, the weaker animals died out and only the strongest survived.

While Darwin tried hard to make the theory work, there were many problems with it. To begin with, it was opposite to what the Bible says, and besides, there should have been discoveries of skeletons like 'half-fish-half lizard', or 'half-lizard-half-bird' or even 'half-ape-half-man'. But no skeletons like this had ever been found.

However, many scientists decided they liked the theory. To believe in evolution meant that there was no God who created the universe. If there was no God who set rules to obey, then there was no such thing as sin. People could do as they wanted to without having to obey God. If there was no God, then people could do as they pleased! Yes, people liked the idea. Evolution was here to stay.

The Big Bang Theory Activities

PART A

1. What is the 'big bang' theory?
2. What is a theory?
3. What is the theory of evolution?
4. What might an 'in-between-species' look like?
5. What does the Bible say about 'in-between-species'?
6. What kinds of fossils are actually found?
7. Why wouldn't death be part of God's original perfect world?
8. Why would death necessary if living things evolved?
9. When did death come into the world?
10. Why do people want to believe in evolution?
11. How can I help others believe that God did not create the world through evolution?

PART B

Read:

Read Genesis 1, then go back and look at Genesis 1:24 again. If God created animals to reproduce after their own kind, then an elephant could not develop from an amoeba.

Think:

Think about the design and order in some of the complex aspects of the creation.

Think about the marvellous design of these:

- birds, and their amazing ability to fly.
- the human body

Such complex design and order could not happen by chance.

When Wonjuna Made the Great Flood

Many people groups, like the Chinese, the American Indians and the Australian Aborigines told stories about a great flood long before they had any contact with Christianity. Here is one. It is an Australian Aboriginal Legend. Try to pick out the similarities with the Biblical account.

There was once a medicine man called Tanjilli. There was also a man called Umbirri who did not like Tanjilli. He was jealous because Tanjilli was such a famous medicine man. Umbirri was a bad man. He did not belong to Tanjilli's tribe in the first place. He had come to live with them after being chased out of his own tribe for stealing.

Well, Umbirri was a real trouble maker. He decided that he would make Tanjilli look really foolish. There had not been any rain for a long time, so Umbirri suggested to the tribe that Tanjilli should try to make it rain. Umbirri didn't think for a minute that Tanjilli could do this. He only made the suggestion so that Tanjilli would look like a big failure.

Well, Tanjilli went to a secret place and tried to make rain. Soon drops of rain began to fall until everything was soaked. Tanjilli was very proud of himself. He walked around boasting about what he had done.

It rained and it rained. It did not stop raining and the great flood began to flow over the land. The tribe were very frightened for soon they would all be drowned. Tanjilli tried to stop the rain, but he could not. It kept raining for forty days and forty nights. One evening Tanjilli and Umbirri were both washed away. The people were frightened. Then an old man in the tribe called Oolpa called out, "Oh, Great Spirit, tell the rain to come no more." Almost at once the rain stopped falling, and soon after the blue sky showed through.

The tribe was puzzled.

"We know that it was not the medicine man who made the flood," they said, "or he would have not been washed away. Who did send the flood?" they asked.

"Perhaps Wonjuna did," answered one of the members of the tribe. (Wonjuna was the name they gave to the great spirit who made everything.)

They were not really sure, but they all agreed that the loss of Tanjilli and Umbirri was a good thing. Tanjilli, after all, was very proud, and Umbirri was really wicked.

Think about it...

Did the Great Flood really happen?

Because people chose to listen to Satan in the Garden of Eden, rather than God, the original plan for a perfect world was destroyed. As time went on, more and more people populated the earth. Fighting, killing, stealing, idol worship and other evils became so bad that God had to destroy the world with a flood. Only one family obeyed God. Only Noah and his family, along with two of each kind of animal, were saved.

God made a new start, and the earth started populating again. In the geography of every continent, there are signs that once the entire world was covered by a great flood. This evidence helps us to realize that the Bible is true.

Many of the great fossils found today exist because the original animals were buried quickly in soft mud. They were covered over and pressed down by the huge weight of the earth above them. Just as you can preserve a plant by pressing it, so too can animal bones be preserved. Because of the great flood described in the Bible, many fossils were formed as the rushing waters caused land-slides, and the earth beneath the waters became a churning mass.



When Wonjuna made the Great Flood

Activities

PART A

1. What similarities can you see between this story and the Biblical account? Comment on:
 - a) the extent of the flood
 - b) the duration of the flood
 - c) what happened to the sinful people
2. If people all around the world have stories of the great flood in their historical records, what does this show us?
3. If the story of the great flood is true, then what should we believe about the rest of Genesis?
4. Why is it important to believe that the events in book of Genesis happened exactly as God said?
5. 5. Many people think that the story of Noah's Ark is a fairy tale. How could you convince others that the Great Flood really happened?

PART B

Read:

Because people chose to listen to Satan in the Garden of Eden, rather than God, the original plan for a perfect world was destroyed. As time went on, more and more people populated the earth. Fighting, killing, stealing, idol worship and other evils became so bad that God had to destroy the world with a flood. Only one family obeyed God. Only Noah and his family, along with two of each kind of animal, were saved.

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Korea's First Missionaries

We don't have to go to a far away place to tell others about Jesus. We can show Christian love in the place where we live. Some people, however, do go to far away places. It is important for Christians who go to foreign lands, to try and understand the people in that place. Here is a story about the first Christian missionaries to Korea. Find Korea on the map.

In the 1880's the first Christian missionaries came to Korea. The Korean people accepted the missionaries because they showed the love of God. The missionaries did not come with a proud attitude. They did not say to the people, "You know nothing about God." Instead, they found out about the Korean's belief in God. To their surprise, they found that the Koreans actually knew something about the true and living God, even though no Christian missionary had ever been there before! The Koreans knew that there was one true God who had created the universe. They called Him by the name 'Hananim'.

The missionaries explained to the Koreans that Hananim had sent His Son to forgive all those who wanted to be forgiven. Hananim's son was born into the Jewish people, not because they were better than any other peoples, but simply because God needed to choose one group. Hananim then asked messengers to go into all the world to call all people to Jesus, the Son of Hananim.

Koreans by the thousands listened to the missionaries with awe.

"Here are men and women who know so much more about the true God than even our own king," they thought. "Here are people who pray freely to Hananim in the name of His Son, and get answers!"

Soon there were hundreds of Korean churches being run by their own people. Today, Koreans are still becoming Christians at an amazing rate.

Korea's First Missionaries Activities

PART A

1. How was the gospel spread in the days of the early Christians?
2. How do we spread the Gospel today?
3. If you were a missionary going into a country where the gospel had never been preached, how would you tell the people about Jesus?
4. Why do you think the Korean people listened to the first missionaries?
5. Describe the Christian church in Korea today.
6. What does Jesus command all Christians to do? (Mark 16:15-18)
7. Read about Paul's call to go to Macedonia, from Acts 16:6-15.
8. How obedient was Paul in obeying God's call? (verse 10)
9. How did the Lord help Paul? (verse 14)
10. How can I share God's love with people who do not know Him?

PART B

Read:

Jesus has told us that we must be willing to give everything we have to follow Him. He has also told us to go into all the world to preach the Gospel. Going to other places to share God's love may mean that we have to give up certain things. Why would we want to do that? Loving God is obeying His call. When He calls us, then we must be willing to go.

Fifth Man in the Flight

I was quite comfortable in the cockpit of my single-seat jet fighter when God intervened in my life in 1976.

I was a major in the United States Marine Corps. I was content with my lifestyle and career as a naval aviator. My church upbringing had taught me that there was a God and I knew about the historical Jesus, but I had long since ignored this training. There was no room for God in my life.

God was soon to change that. For thirteen years I had been a jet pilot, flying missions throughout many countries in different types of aircraft and in all kinds of weather conditions. I had experienced much combat in action.

In 1970 I was one of sixteen pilots selected by the Marine Corps to fly a uniquely new jet, the vertical takeoff-and-land AV8A Harrier. My squadron, VMA 513, was stationed in Japan, preparing to "transpac" seven Harriers from Japan to the United States. They would fly in two divisions one hour apart. This "transpac" (trans-Pacific flight) was a very extensive mission. Thirteen large aerial refuelling and maintenance tankers were needed to service the Harriers.

I was looking forward to the flight, and to the re-union with my wife and two children. My wife had recently become a Christian, but I had no time for her Christianity.

We were soon soaring over the ocean. The aerial refuelling, which is a precise and sensitive manoeuvre, went well. We were now past Hawaii, en-route to San Francisco, unaware of what lay ahead. Approximately 1000 miles east of Hawaii we encountered unexpected thunderstorms. We tried to find an area that was less difficult for refuelling. We 'plugged' into the refuelling basket just as we entered the storm. The next 100 miles turned out to be one of the wildest rides I had ever experienced. After what seemed like an eternity, we broke out of the storm into a thick layer of greyish cloud. Our visibility was limited to about two miles. We proceeded to re-establish our formation. While rejoining my flight, however, I lost my formation airspeed by deflecting my nozzles a fraction of a second too long. I began to fall behind the other three aircraft.

They couldn't pull their power back since they were climbing. I was rapidly becoming a flight of one. The three aircraft ahead became small dots as I continued to fall further behind.

"I'll be able to catch up with them later," I thought to myself, "when they have reached the necessary height. Then they'll be able to level off and pull their speed back."

Suddenly I sensed a presence to my left. I looked over and to my astonishment I saw another Harrier flying next to me. But one of us was upside down.

I was looking down on the pilot, canopy to canopy. His face, turned toward me, couldn't be seen because of his helmet visor and oxygen mask. Nevertheless, I saw that his gaze was calmly fixed upon me. He was flying rock-steady, perfect wing position, only a few feet away.

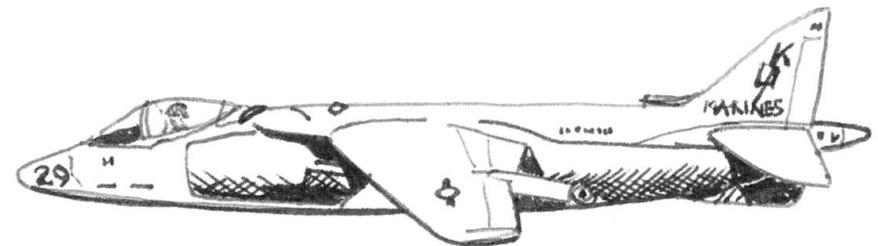
There couldn't possibly be another aircraft of any type in my vicinity...Did I over-fly my flight? Am I flying through their formation? Are we going to have a mid-air collision?

As these questions flashed through my mind I fixed my eyes on the altimeter. Until now I had neglected my instruments. To my utter disbelief, the altimeter showed that I had lost more than a mile of altitude. I thought I was climbing, but in reality, I was diving full speed toward the ocean. I had been experiencing something called vertigo, and had unknowingly rolled to a near-inverted position.

I righted my position then looked for the other plane, but it was nowhere in sight. My heart was pounding. I couldn't deny what I had just seen: another Harrier that wasn't supposed to be there. After joining the other three Harriers it slowly dawned upon me that something supernatural had just happened in my life. The appearance of that fifth aircraft, which caused me to check my instruments, had saved me from a fatal crash into the Pacific. And the timing was perfect; had I lost even one more mile of altitude, I would have insufficient fuel to fly the

remaining distance to San Francisco. When I finally landed at San Francisco I had approximately four minutes of fuel left.

Reunited with my family, I didn't share my experience right away with my wife. For months I went through an inner struggle, knowing that God wanted me to give my life to Him. Finally, I asked Jesus to forgive me for my sins and to become Lord of my life. Jesus was now fully revealed to me as the One who had saved me out over the Pacific. In church one Sunday, I heard about the three men who were thrown into the fiery furnace for not bowing to an idol. In the fire there appeared to be four men. The form of the fourth was like the Son of God. The three were unharmed. I realized that the fourth man in the furnace had been the fifth man in my flight.



Fifth Man in the Flight Activities

PART A

1. What was special about the AV8A Harrier?
2. Where did the flight take place?
3. How did the harriers refuel?
4. What made the pilot look at his instruments?
5. What is an altimeter?
6. What did the altimeter show?
7. What is vertigo?
8. How many harriers were there in the original formation?
9. How did the appearance of the fifth harrier save the pilot's life?
10. Where do you think the fifth harrier came from?
11. Find out what happened in the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. (Daniel 3:8-25)
12. Why was the fifth man in flight similar to the fourth man in the fiery furnace in the Bible story?
13. How did this miracle of protection cause the pilot to become a Christian?

PART B

Read:

Nothing is impossible with God. God can save us from situations that look impossible. God also prevents us from walking into danger. We may never know how many times God has saved from a dangerous situation, without us even knowing it!

Miracles in Indonesia

In Indonesia, in the 1970s, amazing things happened as God's Spirit moved throughout the land. This true story tells us about one of these miracles.

The story took place in a mountain village. Life in the mountains was not always easy. The flimsy palm huts were no match for the cruel winds. The huts contained little furniture. The bed, for instance, was nothing more than four notched sticks stuck in the dirt in the shape of a bed. The pillow was a small log placed at the end of the bed. There were no blankets. A fire was built in the middle of the house, filling the room with choking smoke.

In one of these huts lived a man named Stefanus Toto. For him, his house had become a grimy prison. He couldn't run outside in the morning to take a breath of fresh air. Nor could he see the smile of the sun. Stefanus was paralyzed.

He did nothing but lie on his scratchy bed all day. He couldn't move and he couldn't talk. In fact he couldn't do anything for himself. His wife and children had to feed and dress him. Stefanus was terribly depressed, until one day, a Christian lady named Ibu Marow came to pray for him.

She laid her hands on his head and prayed a simple prayer: 'Dear Jesus, I know you don't want Stefanus to be sick like this.

Please heal him. We know you have the power. Thank you that you are going to give him a brand new wonderful life. Amen.'

Stefanus fell into a deep sleep. For the first time in months he slept like a contented baby. Sometime during the night, while his whole being was relaxed, God's magnificent power entered his body and healed him completely from the paralysis.

When Stephanus woke up he suddenly realized that something wonderful had happened. He sat up slowly, then swung his legs over the side of the bed. He walked towards the door, free from his horrible dungeon forever. He couldn't stop thanking God for the new life he felt in his body.

Miracles in Indonesia Activities

PART A

1. Where is Indonesia?
2. Describe life in an Indonesian mountain village.
3. Describe the life of Stefanus.
4. What happened when a Christian lady prayed for him?
5. Can we expect God to demonstrate His power today, or was it only demonstrated in Bible times?

The Disciples Receive Power

1. Read the story from Acts 2:1-17 and verse 22.
2. In what way were the disciples more powerful once the Holy Spirit had come upon them? (See Acts 3:1-10)
3. Find out how Barnabas and Paul used God's power to put a stop to the work of Elymas the magician. (Acts 13:4-12).

PART B

Read:

God is the sources of power. We see His power in the creation. When we look at the power of the ocean, the power in a storm, the power of the solar system, we know that only a powerful God could have created them. When we need power in our lives, we can look to God, and He will give us the power we need.

Think: How can I demonstrate God's power in my life?

Write down the ones you would like to ask God for. Add some more to the list if you can.

- ◆ Power to pray for those who are sick.
- ◆ Power to say 'no' when tempted.
- ◆ Power to overcome problems.
- ◆ Power to forgive.
- ◆ Power to control anger.
- ◆ Power in speaking the truth at the right time.



How are Pearls Formed?

A pearl is born when something very tiny gets inside the oyster and irritates the animal. It may be a grain of sand. When the sand grain gets between the shell and the soft body of the shellfish, the oyster protects itself by covering the intruder with the same pearly substance that lines its shell. Few pearls are large, and few are perfect in shape. As few as one in a thousand pearl oysters may contain a pearl of any value.

These days pearls can be 'farmed' or 'cultured' by placing tiny grains of sand in the pearl oysters. The oysters are then carefully fed and protected, in special cages. Then, at the right time, opened up and the precious pearls are removed.

In the olden days, however, people did not know how to culture pearls. To find pearls, people had to search for them. Divers would collect thousands of oyster shells. Sometimes they would open the shells on the boat. Sometimes they would take them to the shore and open them there.

Imagine that you are a deep-sea diver looking for pearls. You know the type of shells which might contain the pearls, so you keep your eyes alert. When you have collected enough shells, you start to open each one carefully with your special tool. You patiently open one shell after another, but no luck.

You throw them back into the sea. Then finally you find a shell containing a pearl!

Finding pearls is a bit like finding hidden treasure. Things of value are not always easy to find. This is also true with finding gold and precious stones. In mining, tons of earth must be extracted in order to find tiny portions of precious minerals.

Panning for gold is not easy either. If you want to pan for gold you would go to a stream that is likely to contain gold, then fill your pan with water and stones from the stream. Then swish and swirl the mixture, looking carefully all the time for any little lumps of gold that may be amongst the stones. In your pocket you would have a little container for your findings.

Searching for truth is a bit like searching for treasure because truth is something of great value. Like the gold panner or the pearl diver, we also have to be very careful in our search, because we don't want to overlook it. The Bible is the source of truth. Understanding what God has to say is like finding treasure because having God's word in our heart is so valuable.

Activities – How Pearls are formed

1. How does the oyster protect itself from the irritation of a grain of sand caught inside its shell?
2. How are pearls 'farmed'?
3. How did people get pearls before there were pearl farms?
4. Why do you think pearls are so expensive?
5. Read Matthew 13: 44-45. Why would you say this pearl is very expensive?
6. Read Matthew 6:33. What is the most valuable thing in the world?
7. Read Luke 11:9. Why is searching for a pearl a bit like searching for the truth about God?



How Can I Find the True God?

In some countries it is not easy to find the truth about God, because people grow up learning to worship false gods.

Bindu lived in India and belonged to a Hindu family. Her father and grandfather and great grandfather before her had spent their lives as Hindu holy men. Another name for a Hindu holy man is a Yogi. To be a great Yogi you had to sit in a special yogi position day after day, meditating and reading the sacred book of Hinduism. Meditating in the Hindu way is to sit very still and allow your mind to think of nothing. In this way the Yogis would try to contact the many gods they worshipped. They would often experience the presence of these gods. Really they were experiencing the power of evil spirits. Although Bindu didn't really know her father, she thought that he was someone very special.

Bindu and her brother and sister were instructed in Hinduism each day. With their mother, they would sit in the prayer room, in front of the altar with its many little statues. They repeated certain prayers to these gods of clay, wood or brass.

From the age of five Bindu was taught to meditate. She would sit with crossed legs and stare at nothing. For a past-time the children would draw pictures of these gods and pin them up on their walls.

Some of the gods were terrifying, but the Hindus still worshipped them because of their great power. One of the gods, Shiva, was most fearsome. In fact his real title was Shiva the destroyer. Sometimes Bindu would have nightmares of Shiva, who presented himself as a huge cobra poised ready for attack.

One of the most sacred gods was the cow. All Hindus took great care of the cow, giving it prime place in family life. They were horrified at the thought of people who actually ate their god! In fact they were horrified at people who ate any living creature, for they believed in reincarnation. That is the belief that when something or someone dies, they return in the next life as another creature. You dare not tread on an ant, because it could just be your great grandmother.

Had the Hindus believed in the God of the Bible they would have realized that God created everything after its own kind, that people were far more special to God than animals, and that life after death was not here on this earth at all.

Bindu was taught to respect her father, the great Yogi, as someone so special that he could have been a god himself. "Surely the great creator of the universe is the only true God!" she thought one day. "Not the great Yogis, not Shiva, with his horrible evil eyes, not all the other gods. Surely there is only one true God, and surely He is a good God!"

"God, the true God and creator, please show me the truth," she prayed one day, to a God she had never prayed to before.

As Bindu grew older she met some Christians, who told her how she could meet the true God and know Him as a loving friend. Bindu knew what she must do. She opened her heart to Jesus, and at once felt such happiness and peace. She no longer experienced the terrible nightmares. She had found the God of love. She also knew that Jesus wasn't just another one of several million gods. He was the only true God.

Finding the truth about God is easier for some people than others. Some children grow up in Christian families. Others grow up in places where the name of Jesus is not known. However, even in these places it is possible to know the truth about God by looking at the greatness of His creation. The Bible says that God has shown His great power through the things He has made. God has placed within every person a desire to find out the truth about Himself.



How can I find the true God?

Activities

PART A

1. Why is it difficult for people who grow up in a Hindu society to become Christians?
2. Is it impossible for them to become Christians?
3. Some of the false gods worshipped by the Hindus really had power. Where do you think the power came from?
4. How were the children taught the Hindu religion?
5. Why do you think Bindu had nightmares?
6. How can we recognise a false god?
7. Why did the Hindus take great care of the cow?
8. What does God say about worshipping false gods?
9. Can a person worship the true God and other gods at the same time?
10. How can we tell if a person is really a Christian?
11. Many people in our society today practise a form of exercise called Yoga, which is taken directly from the Hindu religion. Do you think Christians should practise Yoga?
12. Why do you think that God wants Christians to 'Go into all the world'?

PART B - God is truth

Copy these Bible verses and fill in the missing words. Look up the Bible to find them.

You will ____ the truth and the truth will make you _____. (John 8:32)

Jesus said, "I am the ____, the truth and the _____." (John 14:6)

Jesus said, "Come and _____ me." (Matthew 4:19)

A King Discovers the True God

In South America, over 5000 years ago, lived the king of the Inca people. His name was King Pachacuti. The king organized the building of huge palaces and forts, as well as a beautiful temple in honour of the sun god who the Incas called Inti. Inti, of course, was a false god, but the Incas didn't know that.

Then one day, the king made a great discovery. If the light of Inti can be dimmed by clouds, then Inti cannot be all-powerful. He also thought about how restless Inti was, always moving across the sky. Surely such a great god would not be so restless. And why did Inti only give light some of the time?

Suddenly the king realized that he had only been worshipping a thing as a god. Inti was not a real god at all.

"If Inti is not the true god, then who is?" he thought.

The king realised that there was a more powerful One, the Lord, the Creator of all things. He called this God, Viracocha.

"A God who created all things deserves worship," thought the king. He called all his priests of Inti. He commanded that from that time forward, Inti be only respected as something created by Someone much more powerful.

He also commanded that now all prayer be directed to Viracocha. The king wrote many hymns to Viracocha, the great God of the universe.

Unfortunately, the king thought that He would be more special if he was the only one worshipping Viracocha. He therefore decided to keep it a secret. Only his own priests and closest friends knew about the true God. The rest of the Incas went on worshipping Inti, the sun god.

Many years later, when Christian missionaries arrived, they found the hymns written by the king. They were amazed that the king had discovered the true God, without their help.

This true story shows us that God can reveal Himself to people who have never been told of Him, if they are truly searching with all their heart. Peter, one of the disciples of Jesus was another who searched for the truth. When Jesus called him to leave his fishing nets and follow Him, something inside Peter said 'Go!' As Peter spent time with Jesus, day after day, he knew that Jesus was a very special person. No one had ever told Peter that Jesus was God's Son, but somehow he just knew.

One day, Jesus asked, "Who do you think I am?"
Straight away Peter answered, "You are the son of God."

A King Discovers the True God

Activities

1. How did the king come to realise that Inti was a false god?
2. Why did the king not want others to know about the great God who had made the universe?
3. What is the key to finding the true God? (Deuteronomy 4:29)
4. What did Jesus say to Peter in Matthew 16:17?

Think about it

Is it possible for people who have never heard about Jesus, to discover the true God?

What does the Bible say about people who have not heard the Good News of Jesus?

1. If someone does not know the gospel or has never heard about Jesus Christ, but yet is seeking the truth, then God will lead that person to the truth and to the knowledge of the gospel. An example is the story of Cornelius in Acts 10:1-48. Read this true story and make a summary of it in your own words.
2. All people are accountable to God, whether or not they have heard about Him. The Bible tells us that God has clearly revealed Himself in nature (Romans 1:20) and in the hearts of people (Ecclesiastes 3:11). Write these two verses and in your own words, explain what they mean.

What Happened to God's Perfect Creation?

Can you imagine a lion and a lamb lying peacefully together in the same field? It is hard to imagine but that is how it was in God's original perfect creation. That is how it will be in heaven where once again things will be perfect. Animals were originally made to live in peace with one another. There was no killing. All animals were vegetarians.

Can you imagine a world where people never fight or hate each other?... where people are never selfish or greedy? That is how it once was.

Can you imagine a world where no one gets sick or injured?... where no one gets old and dies? God originally made people and animals to have perfectly healthy bodies.

Can you imagine a world where there are no droughts or floods or earthquakes or other natural disasters? Can you imagine a world where there is no famine? The temperature is perfect and the vegetation is green and lush. There is no pollution to spoil the beautiful environment.

This is the creation as God made it. It was His plan. We know about the effects of Adam and Eve's sin upon God's perfect world. Suddenly, it was no longer perfect. The earth was now under a curse. Thorns and thistles started growing, choking the

beautiful plants. Ugly creatures with bites and stings started emerging. Animals started attacking each other. The world started becoming polluted. Worst of all, the men and women, whom God had created to be His friends, started going their own way. They rejected Him and did the things that displeased Him.

Much of the pollution we see today is due to greed, selfishness and carelessness. The state of our world is due to the sin of mankind. If people were really God's caretakers, as God asked us to be, then people would think more about the consequences of the things they do.

Although we all sin, we can ask for God's forgiveness. Jesus made this possible. By becoming a man, He took the punishment that WE deserved. If we have received forgiveness through Jesus then we can be in right relationship with our Heavenly Father.

Some people blame God for the sin and suffering in the world. They can understand why a robber or murderer may suffer, but what about innocent children? God is not to blame for suffering. When He created people, He placed THEM in charge of the Creation. People were not created like puppets. They can think for themselves and make responsible decisions. That's the way God wanted it to be. He wanted people to CHOOSE to love and obey Him. Unfortunately, mankind did not choose to obey God's laws, and as a result, the world is in a mess. In the

beginning, God set a plan in motion. This plan could not be changed. Because sin was not part of God's plan, there had to be consequences for disobedience. Adam and Eve chose to allow Satan into the world. They chose to give Satan power. Because of this, the world must continue to live under Satan's influence.

One day, in God's perfect timing, He will make a new heaven and earth, where everything will be perfect once again and Satan will be completely destroyed. However, until that time, God has provided special protection for those who love and obey Him. It is the armour of God. (Ephesians 6)

Activities

PART A

1. How different is today's world from the original Creation? In your answer, consider:
 - ◆ actions of people
 - ◆ animal behaviour
 - ◆ disease
 - ◆ ageing
 - ◆ the environment
2. What are some of the environmental disasters that are occurring in today's world?

3. How does God feel about all the destruction of His beautiful world?
4. How does God feel about sin?
5. What was His first act of judgement upon a world destroying itself? (Genesis 6-8)
6. Is there anyone in the world who is perfect? (Romans 3:23)
7. God is not responsible for the sin and suffering in the world? Who is?

PART B

Read:

God is pure, holy and righteous. He is also a person; this means He has feelings, just like you and me. Imagine how He feels about pollution... not just pollution of His beautiful world, but pollution of people's hearts and minds.

