

IMPLEMENTING GOD'S WORD...

YEAR FIVE | FALL QUARTER
CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS 1

SSY05F

SUNDAY SCHOOL CURRICULUM
FOR HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH





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GOD'S WORD...**

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LESSON SEQUENCE

FALL QUARTER

The **Lesson Sequence** gives the teacher an overview of the entire quarter. The central goal of the **Implementing God's Word...** curriculum is to equip youth to put the truths of Scripture together in their minds and to work in their hearts, by the help of the Holy Spirit.

Existence and Nature of God

LESSON ONE	Does God Exist?
LESSON TWO	Consequences of Atheism?
LESSON THREE	Good God Allow Evil?
LESSON FOUR	God Allow Suffering?
LESSON FIVE	God Send People to Hell?
LESSON SIX	OT vs. NT God?
LESSON SEVEN	Trinity Really Three Gods?

Truth and Worldview

LESSON EIGHT	Is there Absolute Truth?
LESSON NINE	Competing Truth Claims?
LESSON TEN	Only True Religion?
LESSON ELEVEN	All Religions Lead to God?
LESSON TWELVE	Christianity or Evolution?
LESSON THIRTEEN	What's my Worldview?



DEDICATED TO THE YOUTH MINISTRY OF
PEAR ORCHARD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (PCA)

LESSON ONE --- DOES GOD EXIST?

OVERVIEW

In our study of Christian Apologetics, each “Mind-In-Training” will be devoted to teaching the students the basics of apologetics and logic. They need to know how to think through arguments and objections as they learn to defend their faith. Then, each week, the “Bible Implementation” time will focus on one big apologetic question.

This week’s question is: Does God exist? This is the foundational question of all Christian apologetics. It can only be answered in the positive or the negative—there is no middle ground. God either exists or He doesn’t exist. Scripture clearly teaches that God exists. From there, we can form two main arguments: The Cosmological Argument and the Teleological Argument.

The Cosmological Argument states that since the “cosmos” (universe) exists, then a creator of the universe must exist. In other words, since there is an effect (the universe), there must be a cause. And, there must be an ultimate cause, not just an infinite series of causes. The objections to this argument are: (1) The universe is eternal, or (2) The universe created itself.

The Teleological Argument is an argument from design. It states that the universe is so intricately designed that there must have been an intelligent designer. By analogy, human inventions show us design, so the world around us demands an even more powerful designer. The main objection to this argument is that the universe is actually more chaotic than orderly.

TEACHING ENCOURAGEMENT

Our children and youth are often taught to believe something is true just because “we said so.” So parents are surprised and even shocked when their children begin to reject Christianity. Maybe what was missing in their education were lessons in WHY we believe what we believe, and WHY it’s true! Here’s your opportunity to take part in this vital training. Our young people need to know why they believe what they believe, and then how to defend its veracity. As you teach, pray that the Holy Spirit will open their minds and hearts so that they truly believe!

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

WELCOME

Proverbs 1:5
2–3 mins.

DRILL TIME

Bible Basics
3–5 mins.

MIND-IN-TRAINING

What is
Apologetics?
6–8 mins.

BIBLE IMPLEMENTATION

Does God Exist?
30 mins.

MIND-IN-ACTION

Live like God exists
3–5 mins.



WELCOME

THE **WELCOME** SERVES AS BOTH AN OPPORTUNITY TO GREET YOUR STUDENTS AS WELL AS AN EFFORT TO HELP THEM GET FOCUSED.

EACH WEEK, YOU WILL BEGIN WITH A PASSAGE FROM PROVERBS THAT WILL “CALL” THEM TO STUDY AND GROW IN WISDOM!

DRILL TIME GIVES YOUR YOUTH THE OPPORTUNITY TO RECALL AND REHEARSE WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN TAUGHT IN THE PAST. THESE WILL BE QUESTIONS FROM A PREVIOUS LESSON OR FROM THE SCRIPTURES.

Greet the students. Welcome visitors. Open with prayer.

Listen to God’s Word. Read Proverbs 1:5.

⁵ Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance...

Each week, we will be “called to study” with a verse or two from the Book of Proverbs. As this verse says, the wise are called to hear and increase in learning. The gaining of wisdom never ends! Are you ready to grow in knowledge and wisdom today?



DRILL TIME

Now, we will move on to DRILL TIME—our weekly opportunity to review what we have learned in the past. Are you ready?

Today’s questions: *How many books are there in the Bible? What word do we use to describe that the Bible is the Word of God? What words do we use to describe how the Bible is without error and fully trustworthy? How was the Bible given to us? How do we know for certain these truths about the Bible?*

Call on students to answer.

Answers:

1. 66 books.
2. Inspiration.
3. Inerrant. Infallible.
4. Holy men wrote it, inspired by the Holy Spirit.
5. Because the Bible says it!

In order to defend the truth of Christianity, you must be able to defend the Word of God. If the Bible isn’t true, or is just the words of men, then all of Christianity is cast into doubt. So continue to study the Scriptures and become convinced that it is the truth and power of God for salvation and life!



MIND-IN-TRAINING

Say: *Each week, we will train our minds to think the way God wants us to think. We need to think Biblically in order to defend the truth before a watching world.*

*This year, we will be doing an intensive study of APOLOGETICS. Who can tell me what APOLOGETICS is? **Allow answers.** I know it sounds like it must be the study of saying “I’m sorry.” But this discipline actually comes from the Greek word APOLOGIA, meaning “a verbal defense.” So APOLOGETICS is the “work of defending one’s beliefs,” or to put it another way, the “work of convincing others to change their beliefs.”*

We find the word APOLOGIA several places in Scripture. One occurs when Paul is imprisoned in Rome:

Acts 22:1 (ESV)

¹ “Brothers and fathers, hear the defense that I now make before you.”

Paul was making a DEFENSE of his faith in Jesus Christ. The apostle uses the word again in 1 Corinthians 9:3.

1 Corinthians 9:3 (ESV)

³ This is my defense to those who would examine me.

Do you hear the word APOLOGIA again? Then, there’s this verse in Philippians 1.

Philippians 1:7 (ESV)

⁷ It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.

And finally, here’s the clearest verse that shows us the Christian’s responsibility to be an APOLOGIST:

1 Peter 3:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect...

We’ll continue to define APOLOGETICS next time.

THE **MIND-IN-TRAINING** SECTION IS DESIGNED TO HELP YOUR STUDENTS TO LEARN TO THINK.

THIS ELEMENT TEACHES A BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE MIND AS WELL AS USEFUL TOOLS TO ENGAGE YOUNG MINDS.



BIBLE IMPLEMENTATION

THE BIBLE IMPLEMENTATION

TIME IS THE HEART AND SOUL OF THE WEEK'S LESSON. IT TAKES THE STUDENT ALL THROUGH GOD'S WORD, TRAINING THEM TO BE CHRISTIAN APOLOGISTS.

ALL SCRIPTURE TEXT INCLUDED IN THE CURRICULUM IS FROM THE ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION (ESV).

Introduction: *As we just said, this year we will be studying APOLOGETICS—learning to defend our Christian faith. Each week we will be looking at answering ONE BIG QUESTION of the faith. Our major topics will include: The existence of God, truth and worldview, Jesus Christ, the Bible, the Church, worship, and the Christian mind. So, here's are first BIG QUESTION.*

Does God exist?

Discussion: *For the APOLOGIST, this always the best place to start when defending Christianity. It is the most essential of all questions, isn't it? So what are the possible answers to this question? **Allow answers.** Yes, there are really only two answers to this question:*

- Yes, God exists.**
- No, God does not exist.**

We call this "The Law of the Excluded Middle." There is no middle ground to this particular question. Either God exists or God doesn't exist. It is either true or false.

Application: *So, why do Christians consider this the most fundamental of all apologetic questions? **Allow answers.** If one believes God doesn't exist, then every other BIG question in life is impacted. We'll talk more about that over the next few lessons.*

Summary: *How does the Christian answer this question? Does God exist? [Yes.] Good. But, how do we know we are right? How do we know this is the truth, and not just our opinion? Well, we need some evidence, in the form of "arguments." So let's talk about a first argument for the existence of God:*

THE COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

Discussion: *What is the COSMOS? [The universe.] So this argument says that since the universe is here, it's existence has to somehow be explained. In logic, this is the "Law of Cause and Effect." The universe has to have a CAUSE. So, let's break it down this way:*

- 1. Everything that has a beginning must have a cause.**
- 2. The universe had a beginning.**



3. So, the universe must have a cause.

4. And, there must be an original cause of all causes.

This should remind you of the opening words of the Old Testament:

Read Genesis 1:1.

¹ In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Discussion: *Do the heavens and the earth exist? [Yes.] So, there must have been a CAUSE to this EFFECT. And what does Genesis 1:1 say is the CAUSE? [God!] Therefore, God exists!*

Objections: *In this class, you will learn that there will always be OBJECTIONS to our arguments. Can anyone already see an objection to the COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT? **Allow answers.** Well, let's work through two of these objections.*

Objection #1: The universe is eternal.

*Now, this is the easiest objection for people who don't believe God exists. If the universe has always been around and will always be around, then there doesn't have to be an original CAUSE. So, how would you answer this objection? **Allow answers.***

*This is a tough one, but we can use a scientific law to help us. The second law of thermodynamics states that our usable energy is actually running down. That means, there must have been a time where our universe had MORE energy. Do you see how that implies a beginning for our universe? **Allow discussion.** Also, we know that the universe is still EXPANDING. That means there would have had to be a starting point to that expansion. Again, we have a BEGINNING!*

Objection #2: The universe created itself.

*Okay, how would you answer this second objection? Could the universe have created itself out of nothing? **Allow answers.** This is quite a far-fetched objection—that the universe just popped out of nowhere, all by itself. It doesn't make any scientific sense or common sense! Everything else in God's creation has to have a CAUSE. The universe is CREATION, it is not CREATOR.*

THIS SIDEBAR FOUND ON ALL PAGES IS FOR THE TEACHER TO WRITE NOTES AS HE OR SHE PREPARES THE LESSON.



Summary: *So that brings us back to this truth: The universe was CREATED by something or someone. And, the Bible teaches us that that CREATOR was God. This is the heart of the cosmological argument. God exists because the Cosmos exists. Let's remind ourselves of what Scripture says.*

Read Psalm 90:2.

² Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Read Romans 1:18-20.

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ¹⁹ For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰ For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

Read Revelation 4:11.

¹¹ "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."

Now, let's move on to a second major argument for the existence of God, called:

THE TELEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

Summary: *The Greek word "TELOS" means "end," "purpose," or "goal." So, a TELEOLOGICAL argument is one that is focused on an end goal or purpose of something. Related to the existence of God, this argument is also called the "argument from design." Basically, it states that a DESIGNER must exist because living things exhibit marks of DESIGN.*

Discussion: *So, let's get our head around this argument with a very famous analogy called the "Watchmaker Argument" (made by William Paley). The argument goes something like this: Suppose you are walking in an empty field and you find a watch on the ground. You pick it up and notice its intricate design. Would you assume it just appeared as part of the ground or that it was DESIGNED by someone and then dropped there? **Allow answers.** Do you see the analogy? When we look at*



anything in this world that has a DESIGN to it (like a watch, a computer, a car, etc.), we naturally know there someone had to MAKE it. It just didn't appear on its own. So, the same goes for the universe.

Here's an example from Scripture. **Read Genesis 1:27.**

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Discussion: In other words, when we look at how intricately human beings are made, we recognize there must be a great designer. And according to God's Word, human beings were made by God, in the image of God.

Summary: So, let's summarize the TELEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT briefly:

- 1. Human inventions are products of intelligent design.**
- 2. The universe resembles human inventions.**
- 3. Therefore, the universe is a product of intelligent design.**
- 4. But the universe is much more complex than human inventions.**
- 5. So, a much more powerful designer must exist!**

Discussion: So, what are the strengths of this argument? **Allow answers.** We can easily understand that humans are very creative in our inventions, thus making it logical that there is a much bigger and better creator out there.

Objections: Let's just handle one objection to this argument:

Objection #1: Much of the universe is chaotic, not orderly.

In other words, the idea of a DESIGNED universe can be subjective. You look at the world and see order and creativity. But someone else looks at it and sees chaos and disorder. And if the universe looks CHAOTIC, then there is no intelligent CREATOR. How would you answer this objection?

Allow answers.

Summary: On the whole, most people see amazing design in the universe. Our bodies show incredible design in every part. Think about your eye or your brain or your heart. Then, consider things you see every day in nature, from plants to animals, to earth formations and the oceans. It's easy to see intelligent design and thus believe in a DESIGNER.



Let's read Romans 1:20 one more time. **Read Romans 1:20.**

²⁰ For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

Discussion: *As we look at our world, we see that God exists!*

Conclusion: *So this concludes our first DEFENSE of the Christian faith. You are beginning to become an APOLOGIST. When we rest on God's Word and use our Christian minds, we can give a DEFENSE of the faith to those who want to learn!*



MIND-IN-ACTION

THE **MIND-IN-ACTION** SECTION IS DESIGNED TO MOVE YOUR STUDENTS TO ACTION. AS THEIR MINDS GROW IN KNOWLEDGE, THEY ARE CHALLENGED TO GROW IN WISDOM. THEY WILL NEVER TRULY LEARN IF THEY DON'T PUT WHAT THEY HAVE STUDIED INTO PASSIONATE ACTION!

Each week, we will end our time together with a MIND-IN-ACTION section. You and I must put what we learn from God's Word and God's world into action so we are DOERS of the Word, and not hearers only.

So, here's my challenge to you as we close today:

Give thanks to God that He exists.

Imagine what the world would be like if God didn't exist! It would be totally out of control and chaotic all the way around. There would be no purpose for life, and total meaninglessness. So thank God every day that He exists. Praise Him that before the universe began, He always was!

The second part of my challenge is this:

Live like God exists.

Do you know that even Christians can live like "practical atheists?" We can live our lives with no serious thought towards God, except for when we are in church. So, do you live like God really exists, or do you live like an atheist? Commit your mind to thinking about God daily and submitting all of your thoughts, words, and actions to Him!

Close in prayer.