

## Science as search for knowledge about God

### Suggested lesson plan for

#### KS2\_Year 6

*Aims: To show that science and religious belief are compatible; to look at key figures in the history of science and their understanding of science as a search for knowledge about God*

*Outcomes: understanding the Christian origins of modern science; understanding how religious faith can inspire scientific enquiry; understanding that for some Christians, science can be a way of learning about God*

*Brief explanation of both science and religion:*

*Both science & religion are ways in which human beings search for understanding and meaning in the world.*

*Both science & religion can be a response to feelings of awe and wonder.*

*Christian belief about God and nature*

Christians believe that God created the world (see eg, Genesis chapters 1 & 2)

*Romans 1.19–20:*

*“For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made.”*

*In the Christian tradition, exploring the nature of the creation in order to learn about God the creator is understood as a good thing to do.*

*Well-known early scientists*

**Galileo** wrote to a friend that God has given humanity two books through which we can learn about God. The two books, according to Galileo are the book of scripture & book of nature. He also said that if observations of nature appeared to contradict what the Bible said, then the problem wasn't with nature or with the Bible, but that the way the Bible was being interpreted and understood. In other words, there are different ways to understand the Bible – it isn't necessary to think that everything in the Bible is meant to be understood literally.

**Sir Francis Bacon** said that science should be “to the glory of God and for the relief of man’s estate”. For the believer, science can be for the glory of God because opens our minds to the wonder of the universe and creates a sense of awe at God’s magnificence (because of how amazing the universe is). What Bacon meant by the relief of man’s estate is the products of science should be used to improve the quality of people’s life. Christians understand this as part of the command to “love your neighbour as yourself.”

**Sir Isaac Newton** said that his work was investigating God’s creation and that this was his religious duty because nature reflects the creativity of its maker.

*What do we think? (class discussion)*

Ask students if they are surprised to learn that these famous, pioneering scientists believed in God – why/why not?

Ask students if they are surprised that religious belief can inspire scientific enquiry – why/why not?

*Is there only one way to understand the Bible?*

*Can understanding nature help people think about God?*

*Something to think about*

*Even though we now think of science and religion as two very different areas of human life, they are closely related. An important part of being human is our wanting to understand how the world works – both **how** things work and **why** things are the way that they are. Both science and religion can help people to understand and make sense of the world. Both science and religion can fire people’s imaginations and can create feelings of awe and wonder. Many of the pioneers of modern science were inspired by their faith to do their science. That’s also true of many scientists today.*