

# M3 – SHARING JESUS WORKSHOP

## Responses and tactics to answer ten of the most common objections to the Gospel

(The information contained here are excerpts from Alex McFarland's book, *The 10 Most Common Objections to Christianity* – found on Crosswalk.com. We recommend this book highly.)

**\* Make your responses theological, reasonable, and practical.** Ask yourself: "Does what I have to say square up with the Bible?", "Does what I say make sense?", "Is it credible and factually correct?", "Am I giving people truth in a way that they can understand and relate to?" and "Have I successfully bridged the gap from the 'ivory towers of academia' to the 'real world' where people live their day-to-day lives?"

**\* Understand the questions behind the questions.** Get to know why people are asking the questions they're asking in the first place. Find out what issues are stirring their souls and motivating them to seek answers.

### 1. "I don't believe that God exists. How can anybody be sure?"

**Recognize that, logically, neither atheism nor agnosticism make sense.**

Atheism requires complete knowledge of everything (which no human has) in order to declare for certain that there is no God. Agnostics claim that they can't know anything for sure, but it's a contradiction to say, "One thing I know about God: You can't know anything about Him." Explain the evidence for God's existence: Every effect has a cause (Both science and the Bible acknowledge that the universe had a beginning, and that it couldn't have arrived without a force behind it), Every creation has a Creator (Nature itself points toward its Creator and reveals what He is like), Every design has a Designer (The intricate design all around you - from the patterns the universe to the uniqueness of a DNA strand - show that they must have resulted from an intelligent Designer rather than just mindless happenstance), Communication requires a Communicator (the cells in people's bodies are filled with complex instructions that were programmed by Someone intelligent to communicate that information), and Every law has a Lawgiver (The universal moral law of what's right and what's wrong transcends cultures, and must have come from an outside source - the One who gave all humans a conscience. Not only that, but people's universal inability to keep the moral code perfectly reveals that all humans need forgiveness from a Savior).

Understand that God must be personal, as well, because He created people to be personal (with wills, emotions, personalities, volitions, and ambitions), and He Himself must be at least as sophisticated as who He has created. Realize also that God reveals Himself to the

world so He can be sought. Know that He wants people to seek Him, and promises that if they do, they'll find Him.

## **2. "But what about evolution? Couldn't God have created us but used evolution to do it?"**

**Acknowledge that species have indeed changed over time to survive, but that the theory of evolution mistakenly claims that those adaptations can actually result in the creation of new species.**

It also inaccurately claims that life itself could have randomly evolved from non-living material. Understand that the mathematical probability of life originating at random is so miniscule as to render that concept absurd. Know that the process of evolution (new, additional genetic information occurring in living forms or new life by genetic mutation) has never been observed in all of recorded history. Realize that the earth's fossil record reveals that every living form has appeared suddenly and completely developed - not through gradual transition, as the evolution theory would suggest.

Understand that current research in molecular biology has revealed what evolution's original theorist, Charles Darwin, didn't know: Proteins and nucleic acids are too structurally complex to have arisen spontaneously in the same place at the same time, and all the amino acids in DNA are of the same molecular orientation and couldn't have begun by chance, so life could not have originated solely by chemical means. Acknowledge that it's irrational to believe that something can come from nothing, that chaos birthed order, and that lifeless matter produced consciousness. Remember that, while evolutionists claim that biological life arose accidentally, people don't see information arising accidentally anywhere in the physical world. Realize that accepting the theory of evolution requires faith, just as believing in creationism does, because no human alive today can travel back in time to observe what happened when the universe began. Acknowledge that creationism is just as scientific as evolution, because each seeks to explain within its framework all the real known data of science and history. Know that, while the Bible leaves the time frame meant by "day" in the creation account unspecified, the point isn't how much time the process took. Recognize that the Bible is very clear about what matters most - Who is responsible for creation (God).

## **3. "How do I know the Bible is really true?"**

**Realize that many more ancient copies and portions of the Bible have been found than those of any other ancient manuscript.**

Know that each of those biblical writings have been accepted as authentic by historians. Recognize that many of the biblical accounts were recorded just a short time after they took place, in contrast to the huge time gap of centuries that existed with most other ancient manuscripts.

Understand that when various biblical manuscripts have been scrutinized against each other, they've been proven to be consistent. Realize that no other ancient document can even come close to the New Testament in terms of number of manuscripts found and the closeness in time to the original autographs, so questioning the New Testament's credibility would require tossing out the validity of every other ancient manuscript ever found. Recognize that the Bible qualifies as the most reliable, verifiable source ever written. Consider the myriad of archeological discoveries that verify people, places, and events the Bible mentions.

Also consider the hundreds of biblical prophecies that have been fulfilled in specific and meticulous ways - often, long after the prophetic writer had died. Think about the Bible's historical and scientific accuracy. Ponder how indestructible the Bible has proven to be, despite many attempts throughout history to either censor or eradicate it. Realize that the Bible's unique structure points to its reliability, since it maintains perfect unity and consistency throughout, despite its 66 different books written by at least 40 different people from all walks of life over a period of 2,000 years.

Consider how profoundly the Bible has impacted world culture and events - more than any other document in human history. Think about the Bible's unique power to change people's lives.

#### **4. "What about all the errors in the Bible?"**

**Admit that the Bible contains complicated passages that can be difficult to understand. But be assured that a proven error has never been found in all of Scripture.**

All 66 books of the Bible are the inspired, inerrant and infallible Word of God. Remember that, although the New Testament wasn't officially compiled until the Council of Nicea in 327 A.D., the early Church already acknowledged the same 27 New Testament books long before then. Understand that, while early Christians wrestled with doctrinal differences, they agreed on the core of the faith - the essential beliefs related to Jesus and the salvation He offers. Know that what can appear to be variations in biblical narratives are not contradictions. Realize that, just like modern journalists, the author of each biblical book mentioned only the details that were most vividly impressed on their minds or the minds of those who witnessed the different events. Understand that a partial account doesn't mean a false account, and that none of the details mentioned in any of the accounts conflict with details in other accounts.

Consider that all of the biblical authors openly acknowledged that they were writing with divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and if all of them were wrong in those claims, then they were either lying or insane - neither of which makes sense, because they wrote the world's most beautiful literature containing the most perfect moral code ever devised. Think beyond mere assumptions as you wrestle with the Bible's difficult passages. For example, rather than assuming that a race of people not descended from Adam and Eve must have existed for Cain to find a wife, realize that he could have married one of his sisters, especially since the command against incest didn't come from Moses until at least 400 years later. Understand

that the Bible is reliable because its specific and verifiable claims have all been found to be true, eyewitnesses to biblical events and many other people throughout history have testified to its credibility, and biblical teachings have profoundly impacted the world in ways that go far beyond any other book.

## **5. "What makes Jesus so different from other great men of history?"**

**Recognize that Jesus stands out above all people because of: His prophesied coming, His supernatural birth, His miraculous deeds, His distinctive teaching, and His actions that substantiated His claims.**

Understand that the greatest proof of Jesus' uniqueness is His resurrection, which has been verified extensively, through evidence such as the testimonies of the empty tomb, the numerous appearances of Jesus after He was resurrected, the instant and powerful change in the disciples afterward, and the complete silence of Jewish and Roman authorities.

## **6. "Aren't there many roads to heaven? Don't all paths ultimately lead to the same place?"**

**Understand that all religious viewpoints can't be true, because they're bound to contradict at some point.**

Know that it's logical for opposite roads to lead to different destinations. Remember that Jesus explicitly stated, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me," (John 14:6) and that the Bible is unmistakably clear that there is only one road to heaven - through the salvation Jesus alone offers. Recognize the legitimate authority Jesus has to speak on the subject. Know that popular opinion to the contrary, while politically correct, is spiritually wrong.

## **7. "Is hell for real? If so, how can a loving God send people there?"**

Don't deny the truth that hell exists. Understand that hell is necessary because God's just nature demands that sin be punished. Realize that all people actually deserve hell, but God's great love compelled Him to offer heaven to everyone who trusts Him. Know that **God gives everyone the freedom to decide what they want for themselves**, and those who end up in hell put themselves there by rejecting Jesus' offer of salvation and choosing to trust in their own imperfect efforts (which are bound to fail) instead. Remember God's promise to allow everyone who truly seeks Him to find Him. Be assured that no one goes to hell because they can't be reached; they go because they don't want God.

## **8. "I don't think I'm a sinner. I'm not so bad."**

**Know that being "not so bad" or "pretty good" isn't enough to earn your way to heaven.**

Understand that you must be perfectly righteous to go to heaven, and that is only possible by trusting in Jesus' work on the cross for you. Realize that God doesn't rank sins as people do; to God, sin is sin, even though one person might be a murderer and another might be a child who simply lies about brushing her teeth before bedtime. Remember that, in His holiness, God can't stand any kind of sin, but a saving relationship with Jesus will make a person perfectly pure and acceptable to God.

## **9. "Christians are all hypocrites. Why would I want to become one of them?"**

**Admit that all Christians, because they're imperfect humans, sometimes fail to live up to the standard Jesus set.**

Understand that Christians don't claim to be perfect - just forgiven - and that they're all growing into better and better people, thanks to God's grace. Focus on Jesus Himself and decide to believe in Christianity, despite the behavior of some Christians, because: God offers you Christ instead of Christians, Christian truth is not negated by human failures, all people are hypocrites in reality, and human failures make the need for Jesus all the more clear.

## **10. "Why is there evil in the world? What about suffering?"**

**Understand that, while God allows evil because He has given His creatures free will, God never causes evil Himself.**

Recognize that humanity is to blame for the evil that has corrupted our natural world. Remember God's promises in Scripture to handle evil in His way and timing, because He is in ultimate control. Trust in God's love, power, and wisdom and notice all the ways He constantly uses suffering to accomplish good purposes in people's lives. Know that the existence of suffering does not negate the reality of God. Rely on God's strength to help you and others deal with suffering well and emerge better people as a result.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

McFarland, Alex. "How to Answer the 10 Most Common Objections to Christianity." Crosswalk.com. Salem Web Network, December 19, 2017. <https://www.crosswalk.com/slideshows/how-to-answer-the-10-most-common-objections-to-christianity.html>.