PRESENTATION 1 GUIDE

SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE AND
PHILOSOPHICAL PROOF OF
GOD’S EXISTENCE

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Welcome to CREDIBLE CATHOLIC!

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM? It is unbelief and skepticism. In our culture, derision of religion, God, the soul, Jesus, and the prospect of finding spiritual meaning in suffering, are not only tolerated but preached and sometimes even celebrated. Many are already infected by the faulty messages which are delivered in four popular, but inaccurate, secular myths. These myths, in one form or another, are the following:

**Myth 1:** Science and faith are incompatible, and since science is true, it has replaced religion.
**Myth 2:** Human beings are like every other animal—merely a complex of atoms and molecules. We have no soul, no eternal destiny, and no transcendent nature. When we die, we die.
**Myth 3:** There is no explanation for why an all-loving God would allow suffering. Therefore, suffering is fundamentally negative and a loving God probably does not exist.
**Myth 4:** There is no evidence for Jesus as an historical figure, and therefore his resurrection or divinity. If Jesus did exist he was just an interesting prophet, but not a Savior or the Son of God.

The 2016 Pew Research Center’s Religious Landscape Study indicates that over 40% of millennials have abandoned their faith to unbelief because these four challenges have not been adequately addressed. Unless we specifically and effectively address these challenges to faith, the percentage will continue to grow. What can be done?

WHAT IS OUR SOLUTION? Credible Catholic, a Magis Center curriculum correlated to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, was specifically created to address these myths.

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CC Presentation 1a: Scientific Evidence of God’s Existence

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4. Data collected by the Pew Research Center shows that while the percentage of older Americans who believe in God has stayed relatively consistent, the percentage of Millennials who believe in God has been steadily declining over the past 10 years.

5. Possible answers include: 1. Some have a misperception about the role of science and its findings, believing that science can, or eventually will, answer and solve all of our problems, making religion unnecessary. This contributes to the strong sense of secularism in our culture. Others see suffering in the world as proof that God does not exist or that God does not care. 2. No! There can be no conflict between truths about the natural world created by God, and the religious truths that have been revealed by God. If there are what appear to be “conflicts,” it would be due to science or religion taking the other’s role. 3. Yes! Many kinds of evidence for God’s existence come from science and philosophy, and are covered here and in Presentation 1b.
6. Myths are cultures' attempts to teach truths about reality, as they understand them. Science has replaced the need for most of the mythology of unrevealed religions. That has led some people to reject all religion as primitive and uninformed. Faith has been perceived by many as among these myths. The irony is that our cultural myths are based on the biased conclusion that ALL religious truth is erroneous (see pg. 5).

7. VIDEO #1: “Blind Leap of Faith scene from “Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade”” Hebrews 11:1 defines faith as: “The realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen.”

8. Possible answers include: 1. He could have fallen into the chasm and either seriously injured himself or died. 2. He could have “tested” what appeared to be the empty space in front and below him by reaching his hand into it, throwing a rock, or using his whip. 3. If he wanted to stay alive, he should have “tested” the empty space. 4. Faith and reason are both helpful in navigating through the challenges of life.

9. Faith is more than belief. It is living one’s life based on the certainty of God's love and providence as revealed and shown by Jesus. St. Albert was a teacher of St. Thomas Aquinas. St. Pope John Paul II said: “Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth; and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth—in a word, to know himself—so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves.” (Fides et Ratio, Greeting)

10. Kinds of “Proofs” for God’s Existence

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11. There can be and, in fact, there is enough evidence to convince about 60% of all scientists that God does, or at least may, exist. These numbers are from: https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2016/2/8/1481377/-Most-Scientists-Believe-in-God1.

12. Can there be Scientific Evidence for God?

13 An article telling the story of Fr. Lemaitre’s discovery can be found at: http://www.catholiceducation.org/en/science/faith-and-science/a-day-without-yesterday-georges-lemaitre-amp-the-big-bang.html

14. The Big Bang

15. ACTIVITY #1: 1. The dot at 1” traveled one inch, the dot at 2” traveled 2” and the dot at 3 inches traveled 3”. The farther a dot is from the starting point, the faster it is moving away in the same amount of time. 2. The dots grow closer together. 3. The starting point represents the Big Bang and the dots represent galaxies. If the expansion were reversed, all the matter and energy of the universe would converge in one point at a specific moment in the past (about 13.8 billion years ago).

16. Einstein “fudged” a number in his General Theory of Relativity to avoid the conclusion that the universe was expanding. When he saw Fr. Lemaitre’s calculations, he changed the number (to what it should have been), and admitted it was the biggest blunder of his career.
17. **#1—Red-Shift**

Besides expansion, what is the Red-Shifting of galaxies evidence of?

**18. VIDEO #2: “Stephen Hawking—The Expanding Universe”** The red-shifting of galaxies is evidence of our universe’s expansion, not beginning. The red shift on the light spectrum works in a similar way to the Doppler Effect where sound raises in frequency as it moves toward us, but drops in frequency as it moves away from us (i.e., the sound of an ambulance as it approaches and leaves).

**19. More information about Penzias’ and Wilson’s discovery can be found at:**


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20. **VIDEO #3: “Hearing the Big Bang”** The significance of hiss coming from all directions is that the energy was nearly equally distributed, which is what we would expect if it came from a single source, like water rippling in concentric circles when a stone is dropped into a pond.

**21. Since the initial discovery of the CMB noted earlier, there have been several satellites used to measure it with greater accuracy. Among these are the Cosmic Background Explorer (COBE) from 1989 to 1993, the Wilkinson Microwave Anisotropy Probe (WMAP) from 2001 to 2010, and the Planck Space Observatory (PLANCK), from 2009 to 2013 from which the image on the slide originates.**

**22. VIDEO #4: “Planck’s View of the Universe”** This video shows how the CMB image was made.
23. The Big Bang is not proof of the beginning of the universe; only for its expansion. Obviously, the next question is: “Where did the matter and energy of the universe (that expanded) come from?” Persons of faith will naturally say, “a Creator,” but science is committed to seeking the best explanation, including natural ones. Scientists are humans with biases and gaps in their knowledge. Peer review exists to eliminate these problems, but if a group of scientists all have the same bias or lack of knowledge, it may not be identified.


25. More information can be found at: https://www.gotquestions.org/multiverse-theory.html.

26. More information can be found at: https://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v302/n5908/abs/302505a0.html.

28. The BVG Theorem is proof of a beginning, but only suggestive of a Creator. Scientific evidence and philosophical reasons for why a beginning of the universe requires a creator will be addressed later in Presentation 1a and 1b. Dr. Arvind Borde is a fellow at the Kavli Institute of the University California Santa Barbara. Dr. Alexander Vilenkin is the director of Institute of Cosmology at Tufts University in Boston. Dr. Alan Guth is chair of cosmology at MIT, and the Father of the Inflationary Theory of the Universe.

29. A link to a video that explains the evidence for their conclusion can be found at the end of this presentation.

30. The BVG Proof

Notes:

31. Entropy

32. Entropy

33. If there is a multiverse, it could not be dead because our living universe is a part of it.
34. **What Caused the Universe?** The sign is illogical. You can’t have to press “something” to get to “nothing.” Only “nothing” can come from nothing.

35. **What Caused the Universe?**

36. For the Law of Gravity to exist before the universe presupposes that something or someone existed before it, contradicting the very point Hawking is making (that the universe could spontaneously create itself from nothing).

**Notes:**

37. This is a syllogism: A kind of logical argument that applies deductive reasoning to arrive at a conclusion based on two or more propositions that are asserted or assumed to be true. For example: If the first premise is “all men are mortal,” and the second premise is “Socrates is a man,” the conclusion is, “therefore Socrates is mortal.”

38. **VIDEO #5: “The Kalam Cosmological Argument”**

The conclusion in the video is that God exists, because: 1. All things that begin to exist must be caused, and 2. The universe had a beginning, so 3. It was caused. Since the universe can’t cause itself before it existed, it needed a cause that was spaceless, timeless, and immaterial, like God.
39. Because entropy is an excellent example of the concept of the “fine-tuning” of the universe, we are using it as a segue. If the universe has always existed, all of the usable energy would have been used up by now, and it would be in a state of maximum disorder. Since there is still much usable energy and order in the universe, it had to have a beginning a finite amount of time ago.

40. This is known as The Penrose Number. Dr. Roger Penrose is a mathematical physicist, known in particular for his contributions to general relativity and cosmology.

41. Fine-Tuning of the Universe

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42. Possible answers may include: 1. To adjust precisely so as to bring to the highest level of performance or effectiveness. 2. Pianos or the engines of high-performance sports cars.

43. More information about the universal conditions and constants can be found at: http://math.ucr.edu/home/baez/constants.html.

44. Fine-Tuning of the Universe
45. Fine-Tuning of the Universe

Example #2: The Strong Nuclear Force makes ordinary matter possible; it holds particles together in the atom. If it were 2% stronger, there would be no hydrogen and no life. If 2% weaker, there would be nothing but hydrogen and no life.

46. Fine-Tuning of the Universe

When asked if the properties of a single atom, carbon, could have happened by pure chance, Astronomer Fred Hoyle said: “A common sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a super-intellect has monkeyed with physics, as well as with chemistry and biology, and that there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature.” ACTIVITY: Restate this in your own words.

47. Fine-Tuning of the Universe

To illustrate his point, Hoyle went on to say: “a junkyard contains all the bits and pieces of a Boeing 747, dismembered and in disarray. A whirlwind happens to blow through the yard. What is the chance that a fully assembled 747, ready to fly, will be found standing there? [The odds are] so small as to be negligible, even if a tornado were to blow through enough junkyards to fill the whole universe.” DISCUSS: What do you think of Hoyle’s conclusion that the odds of carbon’s properties happening by pure chance is extremely unlikely? Here’s how one person put it in his own words...

48. Fine-Tuning of the Universe

49. An Alternative Explanation for the Fine-Tuning of the Universe: Again, without any evidence, a multiverse is offered as a solution. The BVG Proof has already demonstrated that even a multiverse, because it would have an expansion rate greater than zero, would require a beginning and therefore need to be created, and is being ignored. What does this say about the state of mainstream science in our culture?

50. Besides entropy, this is another reason why the multiverse cannot be used to “get-around” the need for a Creator.

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51. More information about Occam’s Razor can be found at: http://science.howstuffworks.com/innovation/scientific-experiments/occams-razor.htm. The quote from Einstein is referring to the elegance and simplicity of the equations of the laws of physics.

52. VIDEO #7: “The Fine-Tuning of the Universe”
Besides providing numerous examples of “fine-tuning” in the universe, this video also explains why the best explanation for the “fine-tuning” is design rather than necessity or chance. Mathematically, the odds are simply beyond reason to consider it happening accidentally by random chance.

53. Conclusion

Notes:

54. VIDEO #7: “Dr. Francis Collins on the Scientific Evidence for God”

55. ACTIVITY #2: Why Would Anyone Think it is Unreasonable to Believe in God?

56. Closing Prayer
57. Presentation 1a Closing Slide

58. Presentation 1a Additional Resources

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Notes:
CREDIBLE CATHOLIC Presentation 1a ACTIVITIES
Scientific Evidence of God’s Existence

ACTIVITY #1: Big Bang Rubber Bands: Lay a cut rubber band (unstretched) next to the ruler. Draw dots at 0 inches, 1 inch, 2 inches and 3 inches. Hold one end at 0 inches and stretch the other end until the dot at 3 inches is at 6 inches. Answer the following questions (inside the rubber bands): 1. What’s different about the dots closer to one another from the dots farther away? Why? 2. What happens when you release the tension? 3. How do each of these relate to the universe?

ACTIVITY #2: Why Would Anyone Think it Unreasonable to Believe in God?

Dr. Francis Collins, Director of the NIH and former lead in the Human Genome Project, believes that scientific evidence makes it reasonable to believe in God.

Answer these questions and be prepared to discuss them:
1. Why would anyone think it is unreasonable to believe in God or that the best scientific evidence doesn’t point to God?
2. Could it be just because people don’t want to believe in God?
CC Presentation 1b: Philosophical Proof of God’s Existence

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4. Introduction to Presentation 1b

5. The term “philosophy” is commonly used to mean “worldview,” as in: What is your “philosophy” of life? That is not how we’re using it here. We are using it in its actual meaning: A “reasoned study of the truth of things.” The cartoon is being used to show how easily someone’s “philosophy” can be unreasonable, and thus the need for “reasoned study.”

6. VIDEO #1: This video gives five reasons for philosophy. In part, it’s because: 1. We don’t ask big questions. 2. We are vulnerable to errors of common sense. 3. We are mentally confused. 4. We have muddled ideas about what makes us happy. 5. We panic and lose perspective. The remainder of this presentation answers the question on the slide.
7. More information about St. Thomas Aquinas can be found at: [http://catholicsaints.info/saint-thomas-aquinas/](http://catholicsaints.info/saint-thomas-aquinas/)

8. The chain is either attached to something, like an anchor or a dock, or is unattached; but either way, there is a first link.

9. Everything that has a beginning is “caused” by whatever brought it into existence. Logically, this cannot go on forever into the past; there must be uncaused being that always existed for anything else to exist.

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10. Step 1

11. Step 2

12. Step 2
13. There can’t be two uncaused, unrestricted Gods because they would necessarily be different in some way(s). If they were identical in every way, they would be one and the same God (e.g., in the same place—everywhere—at all times).

14. Step 3

15. This is the logical conclusion to St. Thomas’ first three steps.

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16. ACTIVITY #1

17. Two Common Objections to Thomas’ Proofs

18. This was addressed in Thomas’ first step.

19. VIDEO #2: “There has to be an Uncaused Being”
20. This was addressed in St. Thomas’ 2nd step.

21. Richard Dawkins is thought to be the most famous atheist in the world, but he has admitted he is an agnostic (as we’ll see later). More information about Dawkins, and his thinking, can be found at: http://www.catholiceducation.org/en/religion-and-philosophy/apologetics/whats-wrong-with-richard-dawkins.html.

22. A Newer Objection to St. Thomas’ Proof

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23. God desires relationships with us, and just as in any relationship, knowledge about a person is not the same as knowing that person.

24. VIDEO #3: “Why Does God Reveal Himself?” God is love, and as a perfect lover wants to share the greatest good with us (His life) for our happiness.

25. These were first identified as the “Five Transcendental Desires” by Plato. He realized then that desiring something we’ve never experienced meant that “something else” must have given that desire to us. God is also identified as having “Five Transcendental Attributes” or perfections that correspond to our desire for perfection.
26. Evidence for God from Our Desire for Perfection


28. VIDEO #4: “Chances are...you’re living with unfulfilled desires”

29. Evidence for God from Our Desire for Perfection

30. Since there are many things in the universe that can’t be disproven, like aliens, how are we supposed to disprove God, who by definition resides “outside” of the universe? Some obvious answers to the discussion question are unicorns, and fairies.

31. By saying “God does not exist,” an atheist is making a claim. Claims need to be supported with evidence or shown to be reasonable. In the last few slides, we have shown that their claim is unsubstantiated and illogical. Of course, theists need to support their claim that God exists, as we show in Presentations 1a and 1b.
32. Can God’s Existence be Disproved?

33. VIDEO #6: “Richard Dawkins: I am an Agnostic”

34. ACTIVITY #2: Possible answers include: 1. Dawkins is admitting that science cannot disprove God, or he would be an atheist. 2. By saying he is a #6 agnostic, but a “de-facto” atheist, he is fitting himself into one of the several reasons given for scientists to be atheists. 3. Answers will vary, but guide the class to use the reasoning given earlier in this presentation answering common objections to St. Thomas’s proofs.

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35. According to Scripture: “Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1) In order to realize something, you have to experience it. God intends us to experience his perfect truth, love, justice (or goodness), beauty, and home with Him. Just knowing that God exists gives us none of those.

36. If there is so much Evidence for God, why do We need Faith? The image shows that theists believe God is involved in His creation; deists believe God is not; and atheists do not believe God exists.

37. If there is so much Evidence for God, why do We need Faith?
38. VIDEO #5: “Leap of Faith” The main difference between this and Indiana Jones’ “leap of faith” (in Presentation 1a) is that the young bird has the guidance and support of his mother telling him that he can fly. Jones’ leap was “blind” without giving him any reasonable chance of success.

39. This will be covered in detail in Presentation 19. A saying about the wisdom gained from suffering goes: “Suffering passes, but the experience of suffering doesn’t.”

40. Not wanting to be answerable is irresponsible and immature. Ignoring the ramifications of a human’s natural desire for perfection and the inclination toward religion is living an unexamined life. This will be covered in greater detail in Presentation 13.

41. This attitude is actually very common in our contemporary culture, and one of the primary reasons for this series. See the introductory remarks on page 3 of this guide for a fuller explanation. This will be covered in greater detail in Presentation 13.

42. This will be covered in detail in Presentation 19.

43. More info. about naturalism can be found at: http://www.philosophybasics.com/branch_naturalism.html. Look especially at “Absolute Methodological Naturalism” and “Contingent Methodological Naturalism” as they apply to our discussion.

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44. This view that the world is less than 10,000 years old is called Young Earth Creationism. In this view, the age of the world is calculated by literally adding the ages of the people in the Bible from Adam to Abraham, whose date is pretty well established at about 1800 BC. While Catholics are free to believe various ages for the world, there is much scientific evidence for a much older earth (about 4.6 billion years old), and universe (about 13.8 billion years old) that must be accounted for.

45. The Bible contains God’s revelation concerning our relationship with Him and our salvation. It was not written as a science or history text, although it contains both. Science, which is a tool developed by humans to explore the natural world, has nothing to say about God or our salvation other than recognizing the need for a Creator (Presentation 1b), and acknowledging that consciousness survives bodily death (Presentation 1a).

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46. The full text of Pope Pius XII’s 1943 encyclical, DIVINO AFFLANTE SPIRITU can be found at: http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_30091943_divino-afflante-spiritu.html.


49. Are Science and the Bible in Conflict?

Besides, the Catholic Church has a long history of involvement in scientific development, including the contributions of John Capernicus, Galileo, Louis Pasteur, Gregor Mendel, and many others.

Q4: Are Science and the Bible in Conflict?

50. More information about the Galileo case can be found at:

51. The full text of Pope Pius XII’s 1950 encyclical, HUMANI GENERIS can be found at:
http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_12081950_humani-generis.html.

52. The full text of Pope John Paul II’s address to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences can be found at:

53. VIDEO #6—The Catholic Church and Evolution:
The video doesn’t mention “souls” directly, but indirectly by saying that God “specially added” to the creation of Adam and Eve. More information about Catholics and Evolution can be found at:

54. More information about Catholics and the possibility of Aliens can be found at:
55. **What about the possibility of Aliens?**

If aliens exist, we can assume the creation of intelligent life would include souls, that such beings would be invited into relationship with God, and are included in Christ’s offer of salvation. **DISCUSS: What do you think about these ideas?**

56. **Closing Prayer**

Lord, the evidence for Your existence from philosophy is compelling. Give us the courage to share what it shows us about You with others so that Your Kingdom may come to Earth as it already is in Heaven. Amen.

57. **Presentation 1b Additional Resources Slide**

We have several options available for you to continue exploring **Presentation 1b:**

1. For additional resources:
   - **Books and Videos**
2. For more background read:
   - *Credible Catholic Catholic*: article [link]
   - *Credible Catholic Daily*: article [link]
3. For in-depth study read:
   - *The Credible Catholic Big Book III*

Much more is available at: [http://www.crediblecatholic.com](http://www.crediblecatholic.com)

58. **Credits Slide**

**CREDITS**

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CREDIBLE CATHOLIC Presentation 1b ACTIVITIES

Philosophical Proof of God’s Existence

ACTIVITY #1: Explain a Step of St. Thomas’ Argument to Someone Else: We have given you examples—a chain, dominoes, a chicken and an egg, a book, a weak-link, and twins—to help you understand St. Thomas Aquinas’ proof for God’s existence. **Think of an example that you can use to explain ONE of St. Thomas’ steps (assigned by the presenter):** 1. God is uncaused. 2. God is unrestricted. 3. God is one. 4. God is the cause of all else that exists. **Write out your explanation and be ready to share it with the class.**

ACTIVITY #2: **Respond to Richard Dawkins?** Richard Dawkins describes himself as a #6 agnostic, but says he lives like an atheist.

1. **What is he admitting about science by describing himself this way?**

2. **Why do you think he describes himself like this?**

3. **How would you respond to him if you had the chance?**
What is CREDIBLE CATHOLIC?

CREDIBLE CATHOLIC is a Magis Center 20-module curriculum designed to confront the secular and anti-religious challenges of our culture head on. It is correlated to the four parts of the Catechism of the Catholic Church as follows:

**Part One (Catechism of the Catholic Church - CCC): The Profession of Faith**

- CC1 Scientific Evidence and Philosophical Proof of God's Existence
- CC2 Medical Evidence and Philosophical Proof of a Soul
- CC3 Proof of Jesus' Resurrection and Divinity
- CC4 The Significance of Jesus' Life and Teachings
- CC5 The Trinity, Incarnation, and the Last Things

**Part Two (From the CCC): The Celebration of the Christian Mystery**

- CC6 Why Be Catholic?
- CC7 The Inspiration and Canonicity of the Old Testament
- CC8 Jesus and the New Testament
- CC9 The Sacraments, Part 1—The Sacred Eucharistic Liturgy
- CC10 The Sacraments, Part 2—Baptism, Confirmation, Reconciliation, Holy Orders, and the Anointing of the Sick
- CC11 The Sacraments, Part 3—Marriage
- CC12 Sacramentals, Devotions, and Traditions

**Part Three (From the CCC): Life in Christ**

- CC13 True Happiness
- CC14 Suffering, Spiritual Evil, and Jesus' Defeat of Satan
- CC15 The Seven Deadly Sins
- CC16 Contending with Evil Through Virtue and Prayer
- CC17 Personal Ethics and Social Ethics

**Part Four (From the CCC): Christian Prayer**

- CC18 Relationship with Christ and Spontaneous Prayers
- CC19 Why Would an All-loving God Allow Suffering?
- CC20 Examen, Discernment, and Contemplation

CREDIBLE CATHOLIC modules contain the following products: 1. **Presentation** - slide presentations with optional voiceovers, 2. **Presentation Guide** - Adds information, activities and quizzes, 3. **Little Book** - A summary of the Big Book and the primary source for the Presentation, 4. **Big Book** - 1,500+ pages in 20 volumes, the foundation of the Credible Catholic Modules. At crediblecatholic.com, everything is free online and printed materials may be purchased. 01-27-18