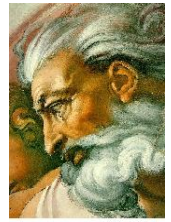


Believing in God

This is about what reasons people have for believing in God, and reasons some people do not.



Believing in God

WORDS THEY CAN ASK YOU FOR THE MEANING IN THE EXAM:-

Agnosticism = Not being sure whether God exists.
Atheism = Believing that God does not exist.
Free will = The ability of human beings to make their own decisions.
Conversion = When your life is changed by giving yourself to God
Miracle = Something that seems to break a law of science & makes you think only God could have done it.
Moral evil = Bad things that are the result of human actions (e.g. murder)
Natural evil = Bad things that are the result of nature (e.g. people dying in an earthquake)
Numinous = The feeling of the presence of something greater than you.
Omni-benevolent = The belief that God is all good.
Omnipotent = The belief that God is all-powerful
Omniscient = The belief that God knows everything that has happened and is going to happen.
Prayer = An attempt to contact God, normally through words.

1. WHY DO PEOPLE BELIEVE IN GOD?

RELIGIOUS UPBRINGING.

How do Christian parents encourage their children to believe in God?

- Child is baptised
- Is taken to Church every Sunday
- May go to a Church school
- Will be encouraged to make a commitment to Christianity through confirmation
- The child will celebrate Christian festivals e.g. Christmas.
- Will belong to church groups for Bible study, prayer, church camps etc..
- The parents will provide a stable family home because, as Christians, they will believe that marriage is permanent.



Why do some people believe in God?

JESUS CAMP
www.jesus.org.uk



How might religious upbringing lead someone to believe in God?

RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

Some people come to believe in God because of a religious experience.

These might include:-

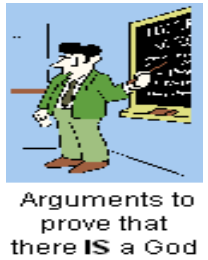
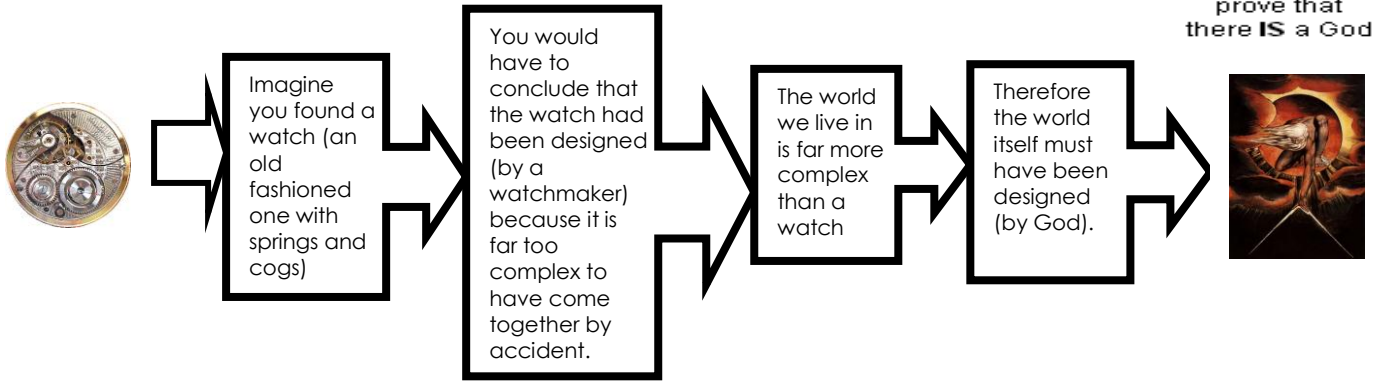
- Seeing a religious vision
- Witnessing a miracle
- Feeling the presence of God near them (known as a "numinous")
- Having a life changing experience which leads them to believe in God (a "conversion" experience) e.g. the drug dealer you may learn about in your RE lessons.
- A "Near Death Experience" – when you are brought back to life by doctors but have in the meantime seen an afterlife.



What is a numinous experience?

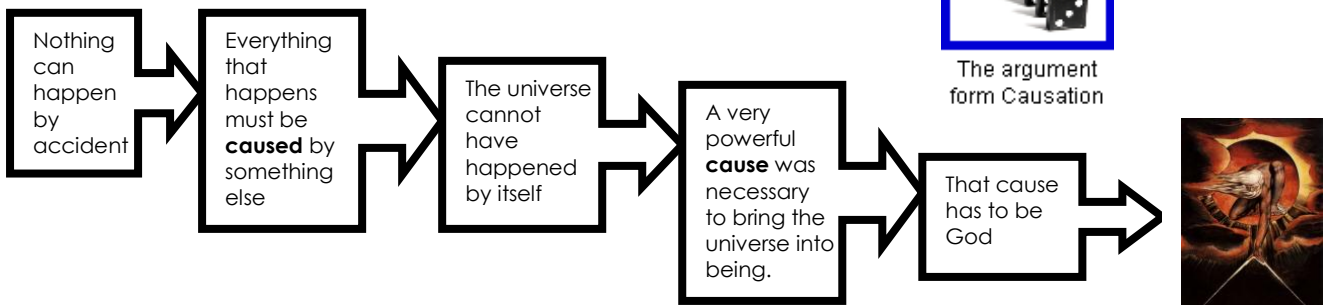
ARGUMENTS TO PROVE THAT GOD EXISTS.

THE DESIGN ARGUMENT:-



Problems: The theory of evolution explains why our world is so complex without the need of God.

THE CAUSATION ARGUMENT:-



The argument form Causation

Problems: Why does the cause have to be God?

2. WHY DO PEOPLE NOT BELIEVE IN GOD?

SCIENCE, NOT RELIGION, CAN EXPLAIN EVERYTHING:-

Religions provide an account of how the world was created – they claim it was by God. But science can now explain how the universe got here (the Big Bang) & how life got so complex (evolution). Both these ideas have evidence to support them. There is no direct evidence that God created us.



Atheists: The Real Ghostbusters

Why do some people not believe in God?



Science can explain things better than religions

HOW DO CHRISTIANS RESPOND TO THE SCIENTISTS CLAIMS?:-

- Christian “creationists” say: Every word in the Bible is true. The Big Bang and Evolution theories are therefore false. God created the world in 6 days. The first human beings were created by God on the 6th day. We did not evolve.
- Most other Christians: The scientists are correct – there was a Big Bang and life evolved. The Bible is not always literally true but needs to be interpreted. The Bible explains why the world was created and science can explain how. So they are both true.

GOD DOES NOT ANSWER PRAYERS:-

- Many people pray to God to help them in their lives. But often it seems God does not help them. This leads some people to conclude that there is no God.
- Some Christians respond to this by arguing that some prayers go unanswered because they do not fulfil God's plan. Human beings do not understand the plan God has for us – we must just trust in God.



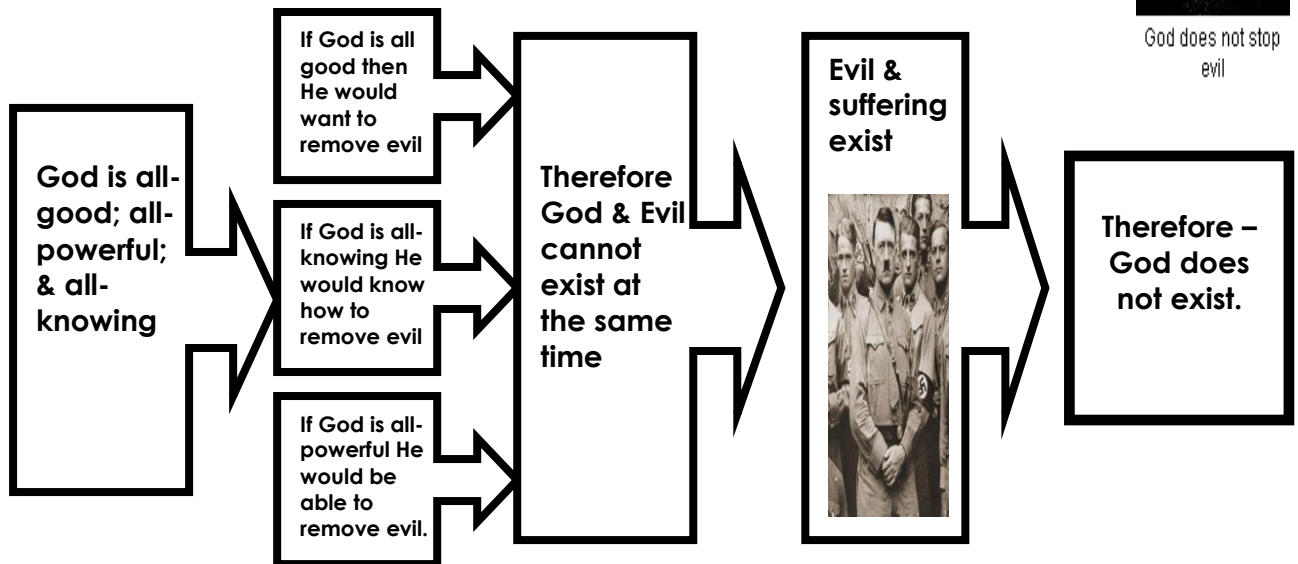
God does not answer prayers

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL:-

- This is probably the biggest reason why many people do not believe in God.



God does not stop evil



HOW DO CHRISTIANS RESPOND TO THE PROBLEM OF EVIL?:-

Three main arguments are used by Christians:-

- Evil & suffering is a test from God. He is testing our faith in him.






How do Christians respond to this problem?

- Free will: God gave us the gift of free will – the ability to make choices for ourselves. We sometimes choose to do evil – this is the cost of having free will.
- God has a plan: The existence of evil is part of God's plan. We may not understand it but we should trust in God who has a really good reason for allowing evil to exist.

2. THE MEDIA AND BELIEF IN GOD

You will get an opportunity in RE lessons to see TV programmes and films which may influence people's beliefs about God. They might include: Bruce Almighty, The vicar of Dibly.

Name of programme / film	What issues did it deal with? What was the plot?	How effective was it (up to 5 stars)
		
		
		

Exam Question

(a) What is **atheism**? (2 marks)

(b) Do you think prayer is a waste of time?

Give **two** reasons for your point of view (4 marks)

(c) Explain how a religious upbringing can lead to belief in God. (8 marks)

(d) "Evil & suffering prove that God does not exist"

In your answer you should refer to at least one religion.

(i) Do you agree? Give reasons for your opinion (3 marks).

(ii) Give reasons why some people may disagree with you (3 marks).

IN THE EXAM YOU WILL BE
ASKED THE MEANING OF ONE OF
THESE WORDS.

Example 'b' question from the exam: Do you think a religious upbringing makes children believe in God? Give TWO reasons for your answer. (4 marks).

Example 'd' question from the exam.

"Miracles cannot happen today"

In your answer you should refer to at least ONE religion.

- (i) Do you agree? Give reasons for your opinion (3 marks)
- (ii) Give reasons why some people may disagree with you (3 marks)

Example 'b' question:-

Do you agree with the design argument (4 marks)

Example 'd' question:-

"The world is so beautiful it must have been designed by God

In your answer you should refer to at least ONE religion.

- (i) Do you agree? Give reasons for your opinion (3 marks)
- (ii) Give reasons why some people may disagree with you (3 marks)

Example 'b' question: Do you think science proves God did not create the world? Give TWO reasons for your point of view (4 marks).

Example 'b' question:-

Do you think prayer is a waste of time? Give TWO reasons for your point of view (4 marks).

Example 'c' question:-

Explain why evil and suffering may lead some people not to believe in God (8 marks).

Example 'd' question:-

"Evil & suffering prove that God does not exist".

In your answer you should refer to at least ONE religion.

- (i) Do you agree? Give reasons for your opinion (3 marks)
- (ii) Give reasons why some people may disagree with you (3 marks)

