

In the Classroom

by Holly Schwefel

Many of the concepts presented in this article are applicable to any grade level including high school, even though the author shares her thoughts for teaching 5-year-olds.

I recently took two Martin Luther College (MLC) 1-credit online courses: Creation Apologetics 101 and 102. These were my first experiences with apologetics. I am so thankful to have received such in-depth exposure on the topics of creation and evolution. As a result, I am able to tune into conversations differently now when these topics come up in my classroom and in daily conversation.

**Natural selection can produce
new species, but not new kinds.**

**Natural selection shows how animals from Noah's
Ark diversified into the many species alive today.¹**

The above two statements are among the top concepts I took away from my two MLC creation apologetics classes. I couldn't have made these statements, or even understood them properly, at this time last year! Prior to these classes, I would not have been comfortable using words like "natural selection," "dinosaurs," or "fossil evidence." They screamed evolution to me, and, well, any talk of evolution was bad... or so I thought. I have a much deeper understanding of the concept of evolution now, and am no longer afraid to face it "head on" in the classroom.

¹ Both statements are paraphrased from "Natural Selection" in the fall 2016 *LSI Journal*. www.LutheranScience.org/2016fall (accessed April 8, 2019)

Kindergarteners Can Be Discerning

During these two MLC courses, I was able to brainstorm about ways I could use this newfound information in my kindergarten classroom. For one MLC assignment, I planned out a follow-up discussion for the Old Testament lessons surrounding Creation and the fall into sin. The idea is to provide several statements for the children to evaluate.

Since children learn in different ways, it is useful to offer the statements visually (either on an interactive white board or on chart paper) and auditorily (read out loud while tracking the printed version). To engage both the body and the brain, the children may stand up for true statements and sit down for false, give a thumbs up for true and thumbs down for false, or display one side of a circle to show a smiley face for true and the other side a frown for false. Discussion should ensue on any relevant point that needs to be emphasized, but especially surrounding false statements in order to make them true.

A sampling of these true/false statements could read as follows:

1. God created animals and people on the 6th day of creation.
2. God created the world millions of years ago.
3. Animals were on the earth, then some animals turned into people.
4. Some people think there is no God who created the world.
5. People were created in the “image of God.”
6. Dogs could turn into cats someday.
7. God created the whole world in six days.
8. One of the first people on earth was named Lucy.
9. God designed people to be the most special part of his creation.

As long as the Biblical account has been taught well and thoroughly prior to this exercise, five and six-year-old children (in all their purity of heart and fullness of faith) will think the false statements are so crazy and silly, they will laugh at the absurdity of them. In most cases, on their own or with simple prompting from a classmate or the teacher, they will easily be able to correct the statements to make them true.

Kindergarten applications need to be simple and obvious. Even so, it is incredibly useful to have young children evaluate statements for truth, based on what they've learned in their Bible lessons and from that, what they know to be true about God and his Word. It helps to train them to be discerning and to realize that not everything they hear will line up with Scripture.

Teach students discernment regarding evolutionist claims

Dinosaurs and Birds

This past fall, one of my kindergarteners commented in passing that “birds are really dinosaurs.” He LOVES dinosaurs and could tell you anything you want to know. My pre-creation-apologetic and dinosaur-il-literate self probably would've said something like, “That sounds silly! Do we even know if there really was such a thing as dinosaurs?” I used to equate dinosaurs with millions of years. Therefore, dinosaurs were a fictional evolutionary idea. This all seems so amateur to my current creation-apologetic self!

At his simple statement, I snapped to attention and asked him where he had heard about birds being dinosaurs. He shrugged and said, “We read it in a book!” At that point, and knowing his fairly advanced memory for Bible stories, I said something like: “Oh....but remember: Sometimes those dinosaur books say things like millions and millions and millions of years.”

Student: “And that’s not right because the world isn’t that old.”

Me: “Right. So tell me, what did God create on the 5th day of creation?”

Student: “Birds and fish.” (I taught that lesson back during a preschool session six months prior! This kindergartener has a great memory!)

Me: “...and what did God create on the 6th day?”

Student: “Animals and people.”

Me: “So, if birds were created on the 5th day, and animals including *dinosaurs* were created on the 6th day, could birds have come from dinosaurs?”

Student: “No! I didn’t even think about that! Sometimes those dinosaur books say the wrong things.”

Me: ****smiles****

Biblical Connections in Other Subjects

Creation Apologetic applications are not limited to the first few Bible lessons of the school year.

Math: In math, I regularly point out the order and consistency of numbers, which speaks to the order and consistency of God’s creation and how he would like us to be orderly and consistent in our own lives. We also notice numbers that come up in our Bible lessons. We pay special attention to how they are repeated throughout Scripture, and how they point us to other details and truths in the Bible (40 days/nights of rain during the Flood, Jesus in the wilderness for 40 days/nights; 12 sons of Jacob, 12 tribes of Israel, 12 disciples of Jesus, etc.). 1 Corinthians 14:40 (EHV),

Let all things be done decently and in good order.

Science: We do a science lesson in which the children color the tip of each finger, one at a time, and roll out all five fingerprints for each hand. We bring out the magnifying glasses and they inspect the intricacies of their own fingerprints. We discuss how God created each person in the world to be unique, one of a kind. We understand that no two people have the same fingerprints. Once they’ve had ample time to inspect their own prints, they walk around, check out their friends’ fingerprints, and try to spot the similarities and differences. At that point, we take a fun class picture because there are tons of tiny colored fingertips to be held up in the air! Psalm 139:14 (EHV),

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful, and my soul knows that very well.

Personal Goals

In my daily ministry, I am blessed to guide kindergarteners, showing them how important it is to be discerning when evaluating references to evolution that they may see in science videos or read in books. I can help them, in an age-appropriate kindergarten way, to see the *assumptions* that evolutionists make (millions of years, no creator god, etc.). They can be taught to see that evolutionary assumptions are false, as they compare these false assumptions to what they have learned to be truths from God's Word. I want the children to love science, and to be able to navigate it with confidence during their years in school and beyond.

As both teacher and parent, it is important to pray regularly for wisdom and understanding. In seeking additional growth opportunities, I will be leaning primarily on the *LSI Journal* for solid information, but would also like to peruse the *Answers in Genesis* website to explore the topics offered there. Our church library has several options on the topics of creation and evolution, and, thanks to technology, there are also acquaintances from my online classes I am able to seek out as resources.

Creation Apologetics is a challenge, but so fascinating and very important. It is my prayer that we all continue to grow in our apologetic views so that we can educate future generations of faithful creationist Christians, as well as speak clearly and intelligently should we be given the opportunity to engage in conversation with others who may believe the lies of evolution, that we may point them to the truths of God and his Word.

Holly Schwefel teaches kindergarten (5K) at Redeemer Lutheran School in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.