

Week 9 – Debates: Testing the Case & Our Responses

(Based on Chapter 8 – “The Verdict: Is There a Case for a Creator?”)

Opening Message

“You’ve spent eight weeks exploring the evidence for a Creator — from the beginning of the universe to the language of DNA. Today is your chance to test those ideas out loud.”

Opening Prayer

Ask a student volunteer to pray for wisdom and respectful dialogue.

Recap

We built a cumulative case from multiple scientific and logical clues.

Each strand gave facts and reasonable interpretations:

1. **Cosmology** – The universe had a beginning, pointing to a **Beginner**.
2. **Fine-Tuning** – The laws of physics are perfectly balanced, pointing to a **Designer**.
3. **Biochemistry** – Life’s molecular machines need all their parts, pointing to a **Builder**.
4. **DNA / Information** – The genetic code carries intelligent information, pointing to a **Mind**.

Together, these four strands form a **cumulative case** — stronger together than any single argument.

Teaching – How to Have Faith Conversations

Teach students to think like **ambassadors**, not debaters.

Key principles:

- **Clarity** – Define terms before defending them.
- **Charity** – Treat people, not positions, with respect.
- **Courage** – Don’t shrink from hard questions.
- **Curiosity** – Ask questions that help people think.

“We don’t argue to win; we reason to build bridges between truth and people.”

Debate Activity

Divide the class into four groups, each tackling a major challenge:

1. “Science explains everything.”
2. “If God is real, why is there suffering?”
3. “Faith is wishful thinking.”
4. “Can we be good without God?”

Each group:

- Prepares for 8 minutes.
 - Presents for 8–10 minutes.
 - Wraps up with 2 minutes of summary.
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Instructor Summaries

****1) Science explains everything**** — Science is powerful for studying nature, but it presupposes logic, math, and a uniform universe it cannot itself explain. It also doesn’t adjudicate meaning, morality, or purpose. These realities point beyond physics to a Mind that grounds them.

****2) Why suffering?**** — Christianity doesn’t deny evil; it names it and offers hope. God entered suffering in Jesus, promises justice, and brings redemption out of pain. The very fact that we call evil ‘evil’ hints at a real moral standard.

****3) Faith is wishful thinking**** — In Scripture, faith is trust based on reasons and testimony. The book’s case appeals to evidence in cosmology, fine-tuning, biochemistry, and information. Faith isn’t fantasy; it’s commitment to the best explanation.

****4) Can we be good without God?**** — People without belief in God can act morally (Romans 2:15). The question isn’t ****can**** we do good, but ****what grounds**** objective right and wrong? Without God, morality tends to become opinion or convention; with God, there is a real, universal standard.

Discussion

- Which question was hardest to answer?
 - How did these strengthen or stretch your faith?
 - What does it mean to give an answer “with gentleness and respect”?
 - How could you use this in a real conversation?
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Scripture Tie-Ins

- **1 Peter 3:15** – Be ready to give an answer with gentleness and respect.
 - **Micah 6:8** – Act justly, love mercy, walk humbly.
 - **Romans 2:15** – The moral law is written on our hearts.
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Homework

Final “Why I Believe” Reflection – 3-minute video.

Include:

- One verse that supports your belief.
 - One scientific or logical argument from *The Case for a Creator*.
 - One personal reason that connects to your faith.
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Closing Challenge

“Truth and love aren’t opposites — they work together. Live in a way that points others to the Creator.”

Closing Prayer

Ask for courage and compassion to share truth with others.