

C.S. LEWIS INSTITUTE - BASIC APOLOGETICS COURSE

Small Group Participant Guide

Set I: Reasons for Faith	Set II: Objections to Faith	Set III: Responding to Atheism	Set IV: New Age & Cults
☒ 1. Cosmological Argument	☐ 6. Gospels: Can They Be Trusted?	☐ 11. Reason & Imagination	☐ 16. Responding to New Age
☒ 2. Argument from Desire	☐ 7. Problem of Evil	☐ 12. Faith & Reason	☐ 17. Neopaganism
☒ 3. Who Is the Real Jesus?	☐ 8. Is Christ the Only Way?	☐ 13. Postmodernism	☐ 18. What Is a Cult?
☐ 4. Prophecy about Christ	☐ 9. Atheism: Wish-Fulfillment?	☐ 14. Relativism	☐ 19. Dealing with Cults
☐ 5. Case for the Resurrection	☐ 10. Apologetics & the Ascension	☐ 15. Abolition of Man	☐ 20. Argument from Agape

"This is a journey of faith and reason — learning to know why we believe, defend truth, and share Christ with grace."

RECAP-SET 1 - Session 1 – 3

I. Session 1: The Cosmological Argument

Synopsis

This session introduced the foundational question of why there is something rather than nothing. It explored the cosmological argument, which reasons from the existence of the universe to the necessity of a First Cause—an uncaused, necessary being we understand to be God. The discussion addressed the implications of contingency, the limitations of infinite regression, and how scientific discoveries like the Big Bang affirm a beginning. Participants were encouraged to wrestle with the logic of causation, the metaphysical implications of existence, and how this points to a rational belief in a Creator beyond the material world.

10 Key Points

1. The universe had a beginning.
2. Everything that begins to exist has a cause.
3. An infinite regress of causes is logically impossible.

4. The cause of the universe must be outside of space, time, and matter.
5. Science supports a beginning (Big Bang).
6. Contingent beings require a necessary being.
7. The universe is not self-caused.
8. The cosmological argument supports theism, not atheism.
9. God is the best explanation for the universe's existence.
10. Faith is not blind—it aligns with reason and evidence.

5 Life Lessons

1. Ask people what they believe caused the universe and why.
2. Be confident that belief in God is not anti-scientific.
3. Reflect on how creation inspires awe and gratitude.
4. Use logic and kindness in spiritual discussions.
5. Realize God as Creator gives life meaning and direction.

Bridge to Next Session

Having seen that God is the best explanation for the existence of the universe, we now explore the deep human longing for meaning, purpose, and fulfillment—a longing that points beyond this world.

II. Session 2: The Argument from Desire

Synopsis

This session addressed our deep, unshakable longing for something more—perfect beauty, justice, love, and eternal joy. These desires go beyond anything this world can satisfy. Drawing from C.S. Lewis' insight, the session showed that innate desires correspond to real objects (e.g., hunger for food, thirst for water), suggesting that our longing for eternal joy points to a supernatural fulfillment. The Argument from Desire points toward the existence of God as the true satisfaction of our soul's longing. Participants reflected on how personal experiences of longing can become starting points for meaningful conversations with others.

10 Key Points

1. We all have deep desires nothing in this world fully satisfies.
2. Innate desires usually point to real fulfillments.
3. C.S. Lewis argued that our longing for heaven is a clue.

4. Worldly pleasures never ultimately satisfy us.
5. Desire is not a weakness—it's a pointer to something more.
6. Christianity makes sense of this universal experience.
7. Our desire for eternity suggests we are made for more.
8. Atheism cannot explain the longing for transcendence.
9. Evangelism can begin with our common longings.
10. Christ is the fulfillment of our deepest desire.

5 Life Lessons

1. Invite others to explore what they deeply long for.
2. Be honest about your own unmet longings and how faith speaks to them.
3. See desire as a bridge to share Christ's hope.
4. Resist settling for temporary satisfactions.
5. Allow longing to deepen your prayer and worship.

Bridge to Next Session

After recognizing our inner longing points to God, the next session explores whether the historical Jesus was merely a creation of the church—or if He is indeed who He claimed to be.

III. Session 3: Who is the Real Jesus?

Synopsis

This session tackled popular theories that claim the early Church invented the Jesus of the Gospels. It addressed skepticism fueled by books like *The Da Vinci Code* and the Gnostic Gospels. Participants examined the reliability of the New Testament, the importance of eyewitness testimony, and the early belief in Jesus' divinity. The session showed how historical, cultural, and literary evidence supports the authenticity of the Gospels. Eyewitnesses, oral tradition, and cultural reverence for memory all safeguard the historical core of Christian belief. The real Jesus—divine, crucified, and risen—was not a myth but the central truth around which the early Church gathered and grew.

10 Key Points

1. Skeptics often claim Jesus was invented by the early Church.
2. Gnostic texts were written much later than the canonical Gospels.
3. Eyewitness testimony supports the New Testament accounts.

4. The early church believed in Jesus' divinity before Nicaea.
5. Jesus' teachings are utterly unique and enduring.
6. Ancient cultures had strong oral memory traditions.
7. The time span was too short for myth to develop.
8. Modern theories often recycle disproven claims.
9. Historical evidence affirms Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection.
10. Faith in Jesus is rooted in fact, not fiction.

5 Life Lessons

1. Know the claims made by popular culture—and their flaws.
2. Be ready to give reasons for trusting Scripture.
3. Use conversations about Jesus to share historical truth.
4. Anchor your faith in eyewitness-based testimony.
5. See Jesus' singleness as strength, not deficiency.

Bridge to Next Session

With confidence in the historical Jesus established, we now turn to Jesus' moral teaching—was He merely a good man, or something more? This next session invites us to confront His claims directly.