

JOURNEY IN... YEAR THREE

THE NATURE OF GOD SCIENCE

This lesson's Big Ideas:

- God is the Great Mystery
- While our hearts and minds help us to collect clues about God, part of God will always remain unknowable.

Lesson Materials

- Fingerprinting kit
- Magnifying glasses
- Copies of guidesheet for fingerprint categories (attached)
- Book: *That's Weird: Awesome Science Mysteries*

TEACHER REFLECTION AND PREPARATION

🕒 Ahead of time

As I plunge deeper, in fits and starts, seeking to penetrate the mystery of life and God, the mystery grows. It grows in wonder, power, moment, and depth. There are times, many times, when God is not with me, times of distraction, fragmentation, alienation, and brokenness. But when I open myself to God, incrementally my wholeness is restored. Perhaps that which I call God is no more than the mystery of life itself. I cannot know, nor do I care, for the power that emanates from deep within the heart of this mystery is redemptive. It is divine. Without hoping or presuming to understand it, opening myself to it, I find peace.

- Rev. Forrest Church

Wisdom and deep intelligence require an honest appreciation of mystery.

- Thomas Moore

The insight into the mystery of life, coupled though it be with fear, has also given rise to religion. To know what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty, which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms - this knowledge, this feeling is at the center of true religiousness.

- Albert Einstein

When I was young, I said to God, 'God, tell me the mystery of the universe.' But God answered, 'that knowledge is for me alone.' So I said, 'God, tell me the mystery of the peanut.' Then God said, 'Well, George, that's more nearly your size.'

-George Washington Carver

Questions for reflection:

- How do you define your experience of and your relationship to Mystery?
- Where does 'what I know for sure' leave off for you and the unknowable pick up?
- Do you love to read and watch mysteries? Why?

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LESSON

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YOUR FIELD EXPERIENCES: FEEDBACK AND NOTES

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GATHERING AND FOCUSING

🕒 2-3 minutes

A quick poll about kids favorite science mysteries: Raise your hand if you know the answer to the following questions. Are you 100% sure?

- Why the sky is blue?
- Why we can see lightning before we hear the thunder?
- Why dinosaurs became extinct?
- (think of other mysterious science facts together)

**PRIMARY ACTIVITY ONE
OUR FINGERPRINTS, GOD'S FINGERPRINTS**

🕒 20-25 minutes

If a scientist has to help solve a mystery, what are some of the clues (the evidence) that she might use to answer the big questions in the case?

Fingerprints are important evidence in solving mysteries. What do you know about fingerprints? Even if no fingerprints are identical, did you know that all prints can be classified in a just few different categories? Let's make some fingerprints and check them out.

- Give each child a fingerprint card (attached) and take turns using inkless pads to put prints of each finger on the right hand onto the card.
- Pass out a few copies of the forensic categories of fingerprints and provide kids with magnifying glasses. What types of prints do the members of the class have?

Wondering Together

- I wonder if we can be absolutely sure that no one has fingerprints just like ours?
- I wonder when people found out about the uniqueness of fingerprints?
- How do you think your fingerprint got to be different from the other kids in our class?
- Unitarian Universalists talk about God being a Great Mystery. If God is a Mystery, what are the clues?
- Does God leave fingerprints anywhere? Is there something we can look for to learn about what God is and where to find God?
- Do you think that you might solve the Great Mystery that is God?
- Would you rather that God the Mystery got solved or stayed a mystery?

PRIMARY ACTIVITY TWO

THAT'S WEIRD: UNSOLVED SCIENCE MYSTERIES

🕒 Remaining class time

We'll share what we know about mysteries in the worlds of the sciences and learn a little bit more with the help of a book called, *That's Weird: Awesome Science Mysteries*.

One by one, mention the mysteries below. Invite the kids to share what they know and what they think we don't know about the subjects below.

- The Lost City of Atlantis
- The Bermuda Triangle
- Black Holes
- Dinosaur Extinction
- The Stone Giants of Easter Island
- The Loch Ness Monster
- Life on Mars
- The Big Bang
- Stonehenge
- UFOs

Wondering Together

- I wonder which of these you'd most like to see solved? Why?
- I wonder if you'd prefer any of them to remain a mystery?
- Do you think any of these science mysteries has anything to do with the Great Mystery about God and the Universe?
- How does it make you feel when you think about these mysteries?
- How will scientists of the future find more clues about these mysteries?
- How might scientists find more clues about the Mystery of God?
- Do you think that science can solve the Mystery of God?

CLOSING AND LEAVE-TAKING

🕒 2 minutes

Invite the class to sit in a circle for the closing. You can read the lines of the closing below and the children can respond in unison: *It's a mystery!*

Where did the Universe come from?

It's a mystery! (repeat after each question)

Where is the Universe going?

What is God?

Why does my brain keep wondering?

Why is it a Mystery?

FINGERPRINT CATEGORIES



Left-leaning loop



Whorl



Right-leaning loop



Double loop



Double loop with pocket



Simple arch



Tented arch