

# JOURNEY IN... YEAR THREE

## ON BEING HUMAN SCIENCE

This lesson's Big Ideas:

- Being human means having a capacity to speak and do both good and evil things and plenty of things in-between.
- Good and evil aren't forces that can exist in a vacuum. They are consequences of our actions which are influenced by many factors in our lives. We have to live with the consequences of all our actions, both good and evil and everywhere in between.
- Unitarian Universalists commit themselves to discerning good from evil using our own hearts and minds, to affirming the inherent worth and dignity of all, and to standing on the side of goodness. and love.

### Lesson Materials

- DVD: Top 100 Discoveries (Discovery Channel)
- TV/DVD player
- Box of 20 everyday tools and inventions (tape, calculator, a match, pencil, wrench, etc)

### TEACHER REFLECTION AND PREPARATION

🕒 Ahead of time

Even on this small stage we have our two sides, and something might be done by throwing all one's weight on the scale of breadth, tolerance, charity, temperance, peace, and kindness to man and beast. We can't all strike very big blows, and even the little ones count for something.

- Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

"Are there, infinitely varying with each individual, inbred forces of Good and Evil in all of us, deep down below the reach of mortal encouragement and mortal repression - hidden Good and hidden Evil, both alike at the mercy of the liberating opportunity and the sufficient temptation?"

- Wilkie Collins

"The forces that tend for evil are great and terrible, but the forces of truth and love and courage and honesty and generosity and sympathy are also stronger than ever before."

"War with evil; but show no spirit of malignity toward the man who may be responsible for the evil. Put it out of his power to do wrong."

- Theodore Roosevelt

"It is a man's own mind, not his enemy or foe, that lures him to evil ways." —

-Siddhartha Buddha

"Men do not differ much about what things they will call evils; they differ enormously about what evils they will call excusable."

- GK Chesterton

"All that is required for evil to prevail is for good men to do nothing."

- Edmund Burke

- **Reflect** on your own perspective on good and evil. What has your life taught you about human nature? Do any of the above ideas conflict with or reflect your own beliefs? As a Unitarian Universalist, what is your relationship to these forces, to the struggle between them, both within and without? ? 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

Humans have amazing potential. We can be creative, we can be inventive, we can be curious. We have the capacity to be kind. We also have the capacity to do great harm. We have the ability to discover things and invent things.

If you had to guess at the 10 most important things that human scientists have discovered about nature, what would they be? Is electricity important? How about discovering the things that make us sick, like viruses and bacteria? How about discovering the planet Pluto?

Guess together at the Top 10 Greatest Human Discoveries.

**PRIMARY ACTIVITY ONE  
SCIENCE AND MORALITY – HUMAN  
DISCOVERY, GOOD AND EVIL**

🕒 45-50 minutes

So often, learning something new means that we can *do* something we've never done before. Scientific discoveries lead to inventions—new tools and technologies. Throughout human history, new knowledge has meant a choice—a choice to use science for good (positive, helpful) purposes or for evil (destructive, unjust, hurtful) purposes.

We've got a cool video naming the most important things we've *ever* learned in science. Let's watch it and pause often to take a moment to discuss the good and evil that these discoveries and inventions have brought into the world.

- Screen a clip or show one section of a book about one important discovery. If you have limited time or would rather spend more time talking in-depth about fewer discoveries, feel free to hold a class vote on the three most interesting discoveries on the video. Watch a section and then stop before moving on to another topic; take a few minutes to engage the children in a discussion with the following questions:

**Wondering Together**

- Were any of our lives affected by this discovery today? This week? Ever?
- Have human beings ever used this knowledge for good purposes? To be helpful? To save lives? To make life easier or healthier?

**TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LESSON**

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- Have human beings ever used this knowledge for evil purposes? To be hurtful? To kill? To make life harder for anyone or to make people sick or sad?
- I wonder why sometimes human beings choose to do good things with scientific knowledge and sometimes they do bad things?
- If you were a scientist, would you rather your discovery or invention were used for good or for evil? Why? How would you feel if something you discovered or invented were used for evil purposes?

**PRIMARY ACTIVITY TWO  
EVERYDAY CHOICES**

🕒 10-15 minutes

In a box in your classroom, there will be an assortment of 20 or so “inventions” – tools that humans have created and use every day.

Pass the box around and invite each child to take out one invention or tool. Give them a minute to think about this questions: What’s one way a person could choose to use this tool for unkind, unfair or even evil purposes? Then, what’s one way a person could choose to use it for something good, kind or helpful? Which use would you choose and why?

**More Wondering Together:**

- Do you think everyone agrees on what’s good and what’s evil? Has everyone in our class agreed?
- How, as Unitarian Universalist kids, do we live our best lives in a world that has good and evil in it? What should we do to live out what we believe?

**CLOSING AND LEAVE-TAKING**

🕒 2 minutes

Gather in a circle, take each other’s hands and speak these words responsively, teacher beginning and children responding:

Inside us all is a seed of hate and a seed of love

*I will water the seed of love.*

Inside us all is a seed of anger and a seed of calm

*I will water the seed of calm*

Inside us all is a seed of violence and a seed of peace

*I will water the seed of peace*

Inside us all is a seed of evil and a seed of good

*I will water the seed of good*

- inspired by the teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh