

Curiosity about life's big questions

What Does This Mean?

Apathy is a lack of interest, involvement, and curiosity in the world. Such an attitude makes it difficult to ask big questions, feel the needs of others, or be moved to do anything about them. Apathy is related to laziness; it is sleepwalking through life, not being fully alive. Jesus said he came to bring fullness of life ([John 10:10](#)).

Apathy is the acceptance of the unacceptable. John Stott

A different world cannot be built by indifferent people. Peter Marshall

Curiosity and questioning are not the opposite of faith; rather, they grow out of faith and feed faith by sending us in search of answers. Big questions can be asked not only from outside but also from within a relationship with God. Curiosity is not necessarily idle speculation, and questioning does not have to be doubt; they are part of being alive to God's world. In the Bible, people ask big questions such as why the wicked prosper ([Job 21:7](#)).

Another barrier to genuine questioning is reductionism. This is a view of the world that expects all questions in the end to boil down to physics or biology and uses those branches of knowledge to explain away questions about meaning, purpose, beauty, hope, and justice. Faith can actually open up the mind to engage with the richness of creation and give the full range of questions about life their due.

The glory of God is a man fully alive. Irenaeus

What Does This Mean in School?

Curiosity can be encouraged in any subject.

- Pose the big questions, and encourage students to ask them (e.g., "How did the pattern get into numbers?").

- Create time and space for the questions (e.g., create space for student responses on displays).
- Use big questions to guide your planning and frame your lessons. Objectives can be written in the form of questions.
- Reward wrestling with hard questions in students' work, not just right answers or answers arrived at too quickly.
- Discuss with students the limits of different disciplines in terms of the kinds of questions they can effectively answer.
- Use local believers when teaching subjects in which they have expertise. Students can prepare questions for them. If you do not have access to a local expert, try e-mailing students' questions to relevant specialists.

Think of a time when a big question was asked in a subject other than Bible or religion class. Did you feel able to follow it up? Or did students show apathy and have to be stimulated to ask such questions? Identify a lesson that has potential for big questions, particularly relating to faith and values. How could you teach this in a way that stimulates students to engage with it? You might display the objective, in the form of a big question, at the beginning of a science lesson, structure the lesson around it, and then come back to it at the end.



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