1) Read Genesis 1:1-2:3. One way to understand this poetic and rhythmic story is to notice that first God makes things to be visible (light, sky, and land in the first three days), and then God fills those spaces with life. How does this correspond to science’s current understanding of how the universe and life on earth have developed? What do you think the Genesis story wants to say about God’s work as Creator?

2) Thomas Aquinas, the great theologian of the 13th century, said that every created thing is like God, because every created thing is a dim reflection of God’s own beauty, justice, and goodness. Do you think that’s true? How do we understand such a claim after Charles Darwin, when it is clear that the world we know, and the evolution of species, came about through millions of years of competition, killing, and extinction? (If you wish to pursue this question farther, I recommend the book *The Groaning of Creation* by Christopher Southgate [Westminster John Knox Press, 2008].

3) The Nicene Creed’s phrase “visible and invisible” comes from Colossians 1:16, where it seems to refer to super-human powers, probably angelic beings that the Colossian believers were obsessed with and worried about. The author of Colossians says that all these things were created through and for Christ and are finally reconciled through Christ. Thus, there is no power in the whole universe that is not under Jesus’ lordship, and so there’s no need to worry about any other being, “visible or invisible”: not rulers, not armies, not even angels.

   We don’t talk much about angels. They don’t really seem necessary for faith. But perhaps the lack of their necessity is an important part of why the Bible does talk about angels. In the biblical texts, angels often show up in scenes of worship and of God’s glory. They are part of the Bible’s claim that creation is filled with the glory and beauty of an extravagant God, they are an image of the overflow of God’s majesty.

   Where do you most clearly see God’s extravagant glory?

   What role do you think angels play in the church’s art and music?

4) Visit the website [http://scaleofuniverse.com/](http://scaleofuniverse.com/). View the tab “The Scale of the Universe” and explore the entire range of the scale slider there. Can you see God at work in whole clusters of galaxies? Can you see God at work at the tiny level of DNA? How do such recent realizations of the world’s dynamics at the very small and the very large scales affect the way you see God at work in your own life?

5) On the same website, view the short video “The Most Astounding Fact.” Do you think it is important, as Neil DeGrasse Tyson does, that the very stuff of your body is connected to and came from the rest of the universe? Do you find this cosmic perspective comforting, or disturbing? Do you find such a “most astounding fact” compatible with what the Bible says about God as Creator?