

Leader's Guide

Following the Clues: Creation, Cause, and the God Who Calls

Devotional Theme

The world around us is filled with clues. Golfers know how to read clues on the course: a ball mark, a divot pattern, a ball flight, a shaft that does not fit the swing. In the same way, creation gives us clues about God. The universe did not come from nothing, and its life-permitting design points beyond itself to the eternal God who made it.

Leader's Goal

Help the men see that creation is not silent. The universe points beyond itself to a Creator. The purpose is not to win an argument, embarrass anyone, or turn the meeting into a science lecture. The goal is to help golfers follow the clues from the course, to creation, and ultimately to God.

You do not need to prove everything in one discussion. You are simply helping men ask honest questions:

- Why is there something rather than nothing?
- Why does the universe appear ordered and life-permitting?
- What is the best explanation for what we see?
- If God made us, what does that mean for how we live

Opening Question: Golf-Related

“When you see a ball mark on the green, a divot pointing left, or a ball slicing into trouble, what do those clues tell you?”

Let several men answer. Keep it light. They may mention swing path, clubface, contact, wind, lie, or equipment.

Follow-Up

“On the golf course, we rarely see the exact moment of cause, but we still draw reasonable conclusions from the evidence. We see the result and work backward.”

Leader's Point

Golfers already understand cause and effect. If a ball mark appears near the hole, something caused it. If a shot starts left and finds the bunker, something happened at impact. If a driver is badly fitted, the results will show it.

That same kind of reasoning applies to larger questions. When we look at the universe, life, design, beauty, order, conscience, and human longing, we are right to ask, “What caused this?”

Read the Opening Portion of the Devotional

Read or summarize the section about the ball mark, the 7-iron, the bunker, and the closed clubface.

Discussion Question

“Why do you think we are comfortable using cause-and-effect reasoning in golf, medicine, engineering, and everyday life, but sometimes hesitate to use it when talking about the universe?”

Possible Answers

- We do not want to face what the answer might require of us.
- We have been taught to think faith and reason are enemies.
- We assume science has already explained everything.
- We are afraid of sounding religious or unsophisticated.
- We are more comfortable with smaller questions than ultimate ones.

Leader’s Note

Science helps us understand many things about the created world. The point is that science studies the universe; it does not explain why there is a universe in the first place. A telescope can show us stars, but it cannot finally tell us why anything exists.

Page 2 — Cause and Effect

Main Idea

If something begins to exist, it needs a cause. The universe had a beginning, so it is reasonable to ask what caused it.

Read Genesis 1:1- “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”

Simple Explanation

The Bible begins with a direct statement: God created. It does not begin by arguing that God exists. It announces that before the universe, before time, before matter, before people, before golf courses, before mountains and oceans, God already was.

This matters because the universe cannot be the ultimate explanation for itself. If the universe had a beginning, then something beyond the universe must explain it. Christians believe that “something” is not an impersonal force, blind luck, or aliens. The cause behind creation is the eternal, self-existent God.

Golf Illustration: Royal County Down

Royal County Down gives us a simple way to think about this. The dunes, gorse, sea, and mountains were there before the golf course. But they did not turn themselves into Royal County Down. Wind and waves can shape land, but they do not design eighteen holes.

Someone had to see the land, imagine the course, route the holes, and bring it into being. The course required intelligence, purpose, and action.

Transition

In the same way, the universe contains matter, energy, laws, order, beauty, and life. But those realities raise the question: where did they come from, and why are they arranged in a way that allows human life?

Leader's Note

Keep this simple. You are not trying to explain all of cosmology. You are helping the men see that asking about a cause is not foolish. It is the normal way we think about everything else.

Page 3 — Creation Points Beyond Itself

Read Psalm 19:1

“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.”

Main Idea-Creation is not God, but creation points to God.

Explain It Simply - When we look at mountains, oceans, stars, sunrises, sunsets, and human life, we are meant to ask deeper questions. The beauty and order of creation are not random noise. They are signals. They do not save us, but they point us toward the One who made us.

The devotional says, “We are meant to inquire.” **That is an important line.** God made us with minds that ask questions. He made us with hearts that search for meaning. He made us with eyes that notice beauty and order.

Discussion Question

“Where in creation have you most clearly sensed that there must be more behind the world than chance?” Let the men answer personally. Some may mention mountains, the ocean, children, the human body, the night sky, birth, death, conscience, or even the beauty of a golf course at sunrise.

Leader's Point

Romans 1 says that God has made Himself known through what He has made. That does not mean every person responds rightly. It means God is constantly bearing witness via creation. The

issue is not that God has been silent. The issue is that we often ignore, suppress, or explain away what He is showing us.

Read Romans 1:19–20

“For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived... in the things that have been made.”

Plain Explanation

Paul is saying that creation reveals enough for us to know that God is powerful, eternal, and real. Creation does not tell us everything about salvation, Christ, the cross, or forgiveness. For that, we need Scripture. But creation does tell us that we are not accidents and that the world is not self-created.

Important Balance

Creation points us to God as Maker. Scripture points us more fully to God as Redeemer. We need both. The world shows us that God exists. The Bible shows us who He is, what we are, what sin has done, and what Christ has done to save sinners.

Page 4 — Fine-Tuning and the Fitted Driver

Main Idea- Just as a golfer’s equipment must be precisely fitted, the universe appears precisely ordered for life.

Golf Illustration: Rory’s Driver

Ask the group to imagine Rory McIlroy arriving on the first tee on Sunday at a major championship. He reaches for his driver and discovers it has been replaced with one built for a much slower swing speed.

The shaft is too soft. The weight is wrong. The kick point is wrong. The loft and setup do not match him. Rory has not changed, but the equipment is no longer fitted to him. A world-class swing requires equipment built to very exact specifications.

Discussion Question - “What happens when a good golfer plays equipment that is badly fitted?”

Possible Answers

- Ball flight becomes unpredictable.
- Distance suffers.
- Accuracy suffers.
- Timing feels off.
- The player loses confidence.

- Even a great swing can produce poor results.

Connect the Illustration

The devotional makes a larger point. Scientists have discovered that the universe operates within very narrow life-permitting ranges. Gravity, the expansion rate of the universe, and other physical constants must be “just so” for stars, planets, chemistry, and life to exist.

If those realities were even slightly different, there would be no us.

Keep It Simple - You do not need to explain all the physics. Just say: “The basic idea is that the universe appears carefully calibrated for life. The settings are not random-looking. They are life permitting.”

Discussion Question

“When you see something precisely fitted or calibrated, what does that usually suggest?”

Possible Answers

- Someone measured it.
- Someone designed it.
- Someone intended it for a purpose.
- It did not happen by accident.
- It was made to work a certain way.

Leader’s Point

When we see a fitted driver, we infer a fitter. When we see a world-class golf course, we infer a designer. When we see a life-permitting universe, it is reasonable to infer an intelligent Creator.

This does not mean every question is answered. It does mean the Christian view of creation makes sense of the clues.

Page 5 — Three Players: God, Nature, and Humanity

Main Idea

Many people think only in terms of humanity and nature. The Bible says there are three players: God, nature, and humanity.

Explain It Simply - Modern people often talk as if nature is all there is. In that view, we are simply part of nature, and nature is the final reality. But Christianity says nature is not final. Nature is created. Humanity is created. God alone is eternal. So, the world is not just “man and nature.” It is God, nature, and man.

That changes everything: If God made the world, then creation has meaning. If God made us, then human life has dignity. If God made us, then we are accountable to Him. If God made us, then ignoring Him is not a small mistake. If God made us, then the right response is worship, gratitude, trust, and obedience.

Read Colossians 1:16 - “For by him all things were created... all things were created through him and for him.”

Christ Connection

This verse tells us that creation is not merely about a generic “higher power.” All things were created by Christ, through Christ, and for Christ. The One who made the universe is also the One who entered His creation to redeem sinners.

Try to move the discussion from Maker to Redeemer. God is not only the cause behind everything. He is the God who calls us to Himself.

Discussion Question- “What changes if we believe we were created not only by God, but for God?”

Possible Answers: Life is not mainly about self-fulfillment. Our bodies, time, talents, and relationships belong to Him. Worship becomes the proper response. Sin becomes rebellion against our Maker. The gospel becomes good news, not religious advice. We are not accidents; we are stewards accountable to the owner.

Leader’s Note - This is where the discussion may become personal. Some men may be comfortable talking about “design” or “a Creator” but less comfortable talking about accountability, sin, Christ, and redemption. Be patient, but do not avoid the point. Creation points us to God, but the gospel tells us how we can be reconciled to Him.

Page 6 — Objections, Application, and Closing

Common Objection 1: “Hasn’t science explained all this?”

A simple response: “Science helps us understand how many things in the universe work. But the deeper question is why there is a universe at all, and why it is ordered in a way that permits life. Christianity is not against science. It says the universe is understandable because it was made by an intelligent God.”

Common Objection 2: “Couldn’t it all be chance?”

A simple response: “Chance is not really a cause. Chance is a word we use to describe probability. If I ask who built Royal County Down, ‘chance’ is not a satisfying answer. The same is true at a much deeper level when we ask why the universe exists and why it is life permitting.”

Common Objection 3: “I believe in God, but I don’t think much about Him.”

A simple response: “That may be where many of us live. But if God made us and sustains us, then He is not a side issue. He is the central reality of life. The question is not merely whether we believe He exists, but whether we honor Him as God.”

Common Objection 4: “I’m not sure I’m ready to believe all this.”

A simple response: “That is an honest place to be. The encouragement today is simply this: keep following the clues. Do not shut your eyes to what creation is saying. Ask God to show you who He is.”

Application Questions

Use one or two, depending on time: 1) What part of creation most often causes you to think about God? 2) Do you tend to see the world as a gift from God or just as the environment around you? 3) If God made you for Himself, what part of your life needs to be re-ordered around Him? 4) ***What keeps men from following the clues of creation all the way to God?*** 5) How does seeing God as Creator prepare us to understand our need for Him as Redeemer?

Closing Summary - The universe is not self-existent. It is the handiwork of the eternal God. He made all things, sustains all things, and calls us to Himself through what He has made and through His Word. The right response is not merely to admit that God exists. The right response is to honor Him, worship Him, trust Him, and come to Him through Jesus Christ.

Final Encouragement to the Leader - You do not have to be a theologian, philosopher, or physicist to lead this discussion. Stay with the main point: clues point to causes. Creation points to God. And the God who made us is calling us to Himself.

Keep the conversation grounded, gracious, and clear. Let the men talk. Use the golf illustrations. Avoid getting pulled into technical arguments you are not equipped to answer. Bring the group back to the central question: “If the universe points beyond itself to God, how should we respond to Him?”