

Ways to Include Science in Youth Ministry
By Dani Seckfort, creator of the Catechist Scientist

- 1) Don't go all in all at once.
 - a. Your youth want to know about the big questions, but if you've never mentioned science before, this change will be jarring.
 - b. They also will be less likely to receive what you have to say about science because they won't trust that you believe in science. Many youth see people of faith as anti-science and you have to earn that trust before you are able to speak with authority on the subject (to them at least).
- 2) Include science more in your daily life.
 - a. This doesn't mean performing science experiments each day, but it means being more aware of the things we interact with daily and how they relate to science.
 - i. Low water pressure in your shower? That's physics and fluid dynamics!
 - ii. Reading this on a cell phone? That's WiFi/data that's being transmitted through radio waves.
 - iii. Feeling tired after a big meal? That's different chemicals working in your body and your body working extra hard to digest it all.
 - b. Once you start seeing these things more often, feel free to include them in your regular talks just like you do any other relatable story about your family or daily life.
- 3) Bring in speakers.
 - a. It's great to bring in professional speakers. Kids are more willing to listen to them. That could get expensive, however.
 - b. Another great resource is the adults in your parish, especially if they are parents of the youth or core members who have jobs in STEM fields. Bring them in to give a short five- to ten-minute witness talk about how they see God in their work and how God influences the way they do their job.
- 4) Before you give a talk to the youth about the big topics of science and faith, make sure you educate your core members.
 - a. You do not want to have a talk on this sometimes difficult topic just to have your core members saying the exact opposite in their small group.
 - b. If we are aware that youth of today aren't educated on this topic, it's almost guaranteed that core members weren't educated on it when they went through youth education. Science isn't talked about often in the Church so even if your core members know the Church respects science, they might not know the details of specific topics.
- 5) Finally, since you only see your students for a small part of the week, make sure you include the parents.
 - a. Definitely mention in an email to parents that you are going to be speaking on these topics. A heads-up will help parents from being caught off guard.
 - b. Include a short educational video in the email, if possible. My YouTube channel has a number of videos covering the big topics. Other short videos from reputable sources are also available. Many kids get excited hearing about science at church and will want to share that with their parents. It would be a shame for the parents

to not have at least a basic understanding of the teaching and dismiss the youth's excitement.