

## What is teachFASTly?

### 10 Minutes

At the start, have **slide 1** of **Introduction to Seeing FASTly.pptx** on the screen to show the topic. Explain that participants are going to learn about an approach to teaching faith and science that informs the resources available at [www.teachfastly.com](http://www.teachfastly.com). Explain briefly that this website is a Christian resource for high school science and Bible teachers.

Display **slide 2** and explain briefly that the site is not a whole curriculum, or a guide to all faith and science questions, but a collection of activities and resources designed to illustrate and enable a particular approach to teaching and learning.

Display **slide 3** and ask participants to take a few minutes individually to choose one of the words at the bottom of the slide to complete each sentence. When participants have had two or three minutes to complete this, tell them that this exercise is part of an introductory activity from [www.teachfastly.com](http://www.teachfastly.com). Then use the following talking points to summarize the purpose behind this kind of activity:

- The notion that science and religion have long been at war, which is sometimes called the “conflict thesis,” is an idea popularized in the 19th century. Many still assume it to be correct, and culture war debates around prominent issues such as origins and climate change reinforce that assumption.
- Since the 19th century, however, most historians have come to see the warfare model as, at best, simplistic. For background, see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conflict\\_thesis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conflict_thesis).
- Research into the beliefs of scientists shows that most scientists do not believe that there is a necessary conflict between science and faith, and many scientists are Christians. See this article <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-5906.2009.01447.x/abstract>.
- The relationship between science and faith is best viewed as more varied and complex.
- The teachFASTly resources aim to help teachers and their students explore this complex relationship in a way that moves beyond the simplistic notion of faith and science as inherently in conflict with one another.

Display **slide 4** and allow participants to read the quotation from Francis Collins, a leading scientist involved in the Human Genome Project.

Explain to participants:

- The teachFASTly resources are not designed to provide answers to major debates about science and religion. They are not about taking positions on controversial topics.
- Instead these resources focus on teaching. How can we teach about faith and science in a way that helps students embrace them both and explore their connections?
- FAST stands for **F**aith **A**nd **S**cience **T**eaching. Teaching FASTly means teaching in a way that honors both faith and science.

Now move to **Two Teachers**. If time is short, go straight to **Only Photosynthesis?**.

## **Two Teachers**

### **12 Minutes**

During this activity you can display **slide 5** from **Introduction to Seeing FASTly.pptx** which shows two roads as a background image. Organize participants into groups of three, or if the numbers don't work, some groups of two or four are fine. Hand out copies of **Two Teachers.pdf**. Ask the groups to read the story and discuss the three questions below it. Allow about 6-8 minutes for this.

- After about 6-8 minutes, draw the group discussions to a close and explain that the teachFASTly resources are based on the conviction that there is always more going on in a classroom than just conveying content. Not only *what* we teach, but how we teach, sends messages to students about what is important and trains them in ways of engaging with the topic.
- Building a supportive community did not mean that the second teacher had to teach science less well; in fact his addition might have increased student engagement and enabled more students to succeed. The teacher made a connection between his faith and the way he taught science, and he continued to teach science in a way that took that connection into account.
- But is supportive community enough? What other connections could the teacher make between his faith and the way he teaches science? Allow a few minutes for the whole class to brainstorm.

Now move to **Only Photosynthesis?**

## Only Photosynthesis?

### 20 Minutes

During this activity you can display **slide 6** of **Introduction to Seeing FASTly.pptx** as a background image during group discussion. Hand out copies of **Only Photosynthesis.pdf**. Ask participants to return to their small groups, read the story and make written notes on the sheet in response to the questions. Emphasize that they should complete the first side of the sheet before moving on to the second part of the story on the second side. Allow about 10 minutes in total for this activity. You may find it helpful for time management to pause and briefly collect ideas from the groups about the first side of the sheet, and then have everyone begin the second side together.

Draw people back into the whole group and display slide 5. Explain that the teachFASTly resources explore a range of connections between faith and science. Different activities draw upon different connections. Show **slides 7-12** in turn to illustrate the different facets of faith and science teaching addressed in teachFASTly resources. These include:

- **Truth** – What kinds of truth can we know through science or by faith? How do we handle apparent conflicts in light of the Christian conviction that both the Scriptures and the natural world are authored by God?
- **Virtues** – What character qualities are needed to learn science well, or to work well as a scientist? What virtues inform scientific practices or teaching practices? How are these connected to faith?
- **Motivations** – What motivates people to study and work in science and technology? How can the range of motivations be informed by faith?
- **Society** – Learning about faith and science impacts our relationships. Science and technology impact society. How can faith frame the way we approach these wider impacts?
- **Practices** – What do our teaching practices and our scientific practices say about the kinds of truth, virtues, motivations, and societal connections we value?
- **FASTly** – Teaching FASTly includes paying attention to all of the above.

Finally, display **slide 13** and hand out copies of **What is Teaching FASTly.pdf** for each participant. Explain that this handout offers a quick guide to the thinking behind the teachFASTly resources. If there is time, have people read it over; otherwise recommend they read it over after the session.

Display **slide 11** and conclude with an overview of what [www.teachfastly.com](http://www.teachfastly.com) is and is not. There is text to accompany these bullet points on the handout. The key points to emphasize are:

### What teachFASTly IS:

- A modeled approach. The activity resources are designed to offer a practical model of a comprehensive approach to teaching faith and science. This is the most important idea, whether you choose to use or skip any particular activities.
- A push at the boundaries. Some activities may be new or surprising because they join together things that we often habitually keep separate.
- A collection of free resources. There is no charge or obligation in using these resources and they can be adapted to local needs.

### What teachFASTly is NOT:

- **A replacement science or Bible curriculum.** The resources enrich existing curriculum; they do not cover all topics or assessment needs, and need not be used in sequence.
- **An attempt to replace science class with Bible class.** Some resources address cross-curricular connections between science and Bible class, but the particular goals of each are not suspended.
- **A set of positions on controversial faith/science questions.** The resources offer an approach to teaching, not a set of answers to controversial questions. They aim to provoke reflection from both teachers and students.