

### 1: IN THE BEGINNING-ANIMALS AND CREATION – Activity 4

#### Dinosaur Trifle

**Equipment:** Biscuits or sweets (preferably dinosaur shaped), jelly (preferably vegetarian), ready-made custard, whipped cream and sprinkles; a transparent plastic or glass bowl or bowls; a smaller transparent plastic bowl or bowls; a microwave or kettle and enough spoons for everyone to have at least one.

**Activity:** To make dinosaur trifle. Unless you are doing this as part of a residential event or an all day holiday club, there is unlikely to be time for jelly to set. Therefore the jelly for the actual trifle/trifles will need to be made in advance, with the ‘dinosaurs’ already inside. Make up some jelly in a clear bowl, following the instructions on the packet, and place some biscuits or sweets in the bowl so that they set into the jelly. However so that everyone gets to see and understand the process, and also because it’s fun, have a little bit of liquid jelly in a smaller separate bowl on the day that you make the trifle. Let the children see this gloopy mixture, drop in a couple of dinosaurs and watch them sink. Then take out the bowl/bowls of jelly which have been premade, and get everyone to spoon over a layer of custard, a layer of cream and add some sprinkles. Depending on the age and number of the participants you can either make one big trifle or various individual ones.

**Purpose/teaching:** To explain how fossils are formed (see trifle based explanation below), and to discuss how and why science has developed its current understanding of creation and evolution. Also to explain that lots of Christians believe in evolution; that science and religion are not in opposition and that studying God’s world is one way of celebrating his work. This can be reassuring if children have heard from those outside the Church that Christians don’t believe in evolution! Depending upon the age of the participants it may be a way into talking about different understandings of Scripture, especially the creation stories in Genesis, and the importance of respecting other people’s viewpoint even if we disagree.

If like me you spent too much time in science lessons thinking about lunch or fiddling with the gas-taps, you may find the following (very simplified) explanation of fossilisation helpful:

- 🐾 When some animals died, their bodies were quickly covered over by mud or sand; often because they sank into soft ground or were buried by a sand-storm. (Hence the dinosaurs in the jelly).
- 🐾 Over time more and more layers of sediment covered the body (queue the custard, cream and sprinkles).
- 🐾 The soft parts of the body rotted away, and the hard parts which were left behind (i.e. bones and teeth) were encased in sediment.
- 🐾 Over time the remains underwent chemical changes. The bone slowly decayed, and water infused with minerals seeped inside, gradually replacing the bone with minerals.
- 🐾 Eventually a heavy rock-like copy of the original skeleton (i.e. a fossil) is left behind.
- 🐾 Because scientists are able to examine fossils, they can find out about animals which lived millions of years ago, and see how life on earth has evolved and changed.

