

## **Series: Born To Believe**

### **Lesson 4: The Non-Religious Religions**

#### **Lesson Objectives:**

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to...

- Identify how five non-religious belief systems answer The Four Big Questions.
- Discover the logical conclusions that non-religious belief systems lead to.
- Discover ways to dialogue with people of non-religious belief systems in order to highlight God's grace.

#### **Materials Needed:**

- ☐ Copies of page A-52
- ☐ Pens for everybody.
- ☐ One copy of page A-51 (complete version)
- ☐ Board and markers
- ☐ Bibles

## Lead In:

Introduce the lesson by saying something like, *In our first session we talked about how everyone believes in something. This week we are going to talk about the non-religious religions. You have probably all heard people talk about how they are spiritual but not religious. It is trendy these days to be spiritual but not religious. These systems of belief can be called the non-religious religions. They don't necessarily have organized churches and religious groups, but they do have a system of beliefs, just like religions do. Can anyone think of a belief system that people follow that isn't an organized religion?*

Allow students to respond. Here are the types of answers you are looking for (the name or the description are fine). You may need to give an example. They may know none or several and either is okay. They will learn more information in the first task.

<b>Atheism</b>	There is no god.
<b>Agnosticism</b>	There may be a god or universal being but even if there is we cannot interact with it.
<b>Science, Reason, Information</b>	All we need is the right information about the world.
<b>Hedonism</b>	Individual pleasure is the most important thing.
<b>Religionless Spirituality</b>	Pick and choose from religion because all paths lead to enlightenment.
<b>Yoga</b>	An ancient Hindu spiritual practice involving movement and physical postures.
<b>Martial Arts</b>	Systematized movement historically connected with Hindu, Buddhist, and Confucian ideas and traditions
<b>Wicca</b>	A neopagan religious movement of the last hundred years; a revival of old witch cults.

## **Task One:**

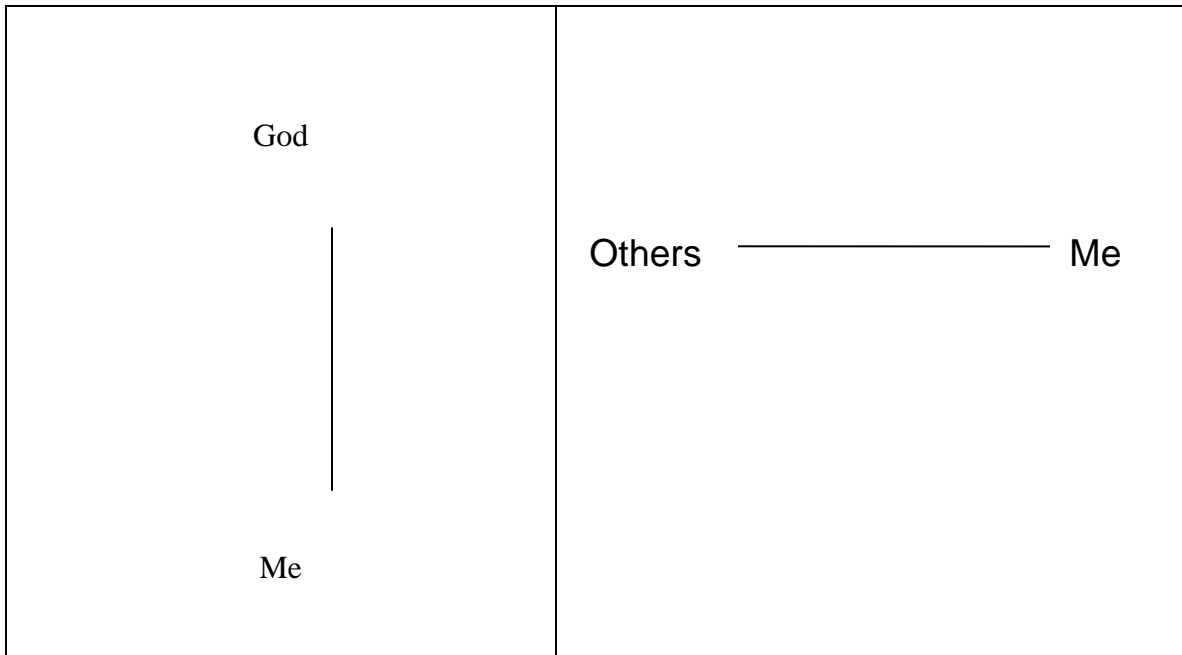
Tell the students that once again, and for the last time, they are going to work together to figure out how these religions answer The Four Big Questions. Have the students break into four groups and assign one question to each group. Have them work together to guess fill in the missing answers on page A-52, the incomplete Non-religious Religions chart. For example, one group will work only on the first question, Where am I?, by making a guess as to how each of the belief systems would answer the question. Do an example together to get them started. The completed chart is on page A-51.

Gather the group and have each group report to the others what they thought the answers might be. Encourage the other groups to agree and disagree with the answers as they fill in their complete charts. Compare the oral answers to the completed chart on page A-51 and give corrections if necessary. Now work as a whole group to fill in the final column, the conflict with Christianity column.

At the end, allow for questions. Again, you may not know the answers to questions about other religions and it's okay to tell your students so. Other students may even be able to answer the questions and that's great too.

## **Task Two:**

Draw two lines on the board as in the diagram below. Include the words God, me, and others as in the diagram below. Ask the students to draw the same lines on the back of their handout. Then instruct students to put the number of the non-religious religions on each line corresponding to the emphasis that they place on God, me, and others. Do an example together. A good one is hedonism, which would be on the extreme of "Me" on both lines because it prioritizes personal pleasure over everything else.



After students have completed this task, invite them to the board to put some guesses up. Have the students look at the completed diagram on the board and agree or disagree with what is up there. Guide some conversation about the answers. There are no exact answers; look to see if students have a basic understanding of the religions. Then ask them if there are any common themes. Likely, they will have discovered that largely the non-religious religions emphasize Me, The Individual above all else.

### **Task Three:**

Ask for a volunteer to read Matthew 22:36-40. Tell the other students to listen and identify where Christianity fits on the diagram that is on the board. After the text is read, have students call out where they think Christianity fits on the scale. One of the big differences between Christianity and the non-religious belief systems is that Christians live to love God and others.

Ask the students why they think that people are attracted to the other belief systems. They may say because they are popular in the culture, because it is fun to live for oneself, because it is hard to live for others, and so on.

If you have time left over, go through the list of non-religious religions on the sheet and ask the students to identify what God would say to the people of those belief systems. For example, God might say to an agnostic that he wants to be in a relationship with him or her; that he knows him or her by name; and so on. Try to think of examples for the others. These are of course the kinds of things that you could say to a person who wants to know about what you believe! You can remind the students of that.

### **Closing:**

Consider wrapping up the evening by saying something like this:

*Over the last four weeks we have studied other religions and looked at what it means to be people who believe. We all believe in something the question is what are we going to put our faith in? We live in a culture where Christianity is no longer the dominant religion. As Christians we can see that as something that we are frustrated by or we can see it as an opportunity to find authentic ways to live out our faith so that others will see the impact that Christ can have in their lives. One of the ways you can impact your friends for Christ is to find out what they believe about the big questions of life. Perhaps they will also ask you about what you believe and you can share the hope that you have in Christ.*

End by praying for these opportunities.