

## D'oh, God!

First Parish in Lincoln has this curriculum... in the locked Parish House. I don't know that it's ever been used in classes. This might be a good time to pull it out, dust it off, and engage with it at home.

*The Simpsons* cartoon show isn't for everyone. But if you like the cheek and social commentary amidst the toilet humor, then you may just like this curriculum for older middle schoolers (and, hey, even my high schoolers think it's funny). If these seem to "work" at your house, **let me know! I'll do some more research and/or YOU and your kids can watch an episode and come up with discussion questions and we'll share our work!** Stuck? Give me a shout – let's talk it out!

From the website <http://www.imagine-re.com/d-oh--god-.html>

D'oh, God! uses episodes of *The Simpsons* as the basis for in-depth discussions of a wide variety of religious topics. At each class, an entire episode is viewed, a distinct advantage when discussion is the intention. After viewing, the class engages in discussion and activities, designed to encourage deep contemplation of issues.

Kids like it because it's the Simpsons. Adults tolerate it because there are some gems of ideas slipped in between the goofy fun of the show. ***This does not work unless there is discussion! For full religious exploration benefit, you can't just watch an episode and leave it at that.***

### The episodes used include...

Bart Gets and F - Season 2 - Prayer

Homer and Lisa vs the Eighth Commandment - Season 2 - Christianity, Stealing

Homer the Heretic - Season 4 - Christianity, Faith

Bart Sells His Soul - Season 7 - Christianity, the existence of the soul

In Marge We Trust - Season 8 - Christianity, the power of listening

Lisa the Skeptic - Season 9 - Faith

The Joy of Sect - Season 9 - Cults

Faith Off - Season 11 - Faith Healing

Missionary Impossible - Season 11 - Missionaries

She of Little Faith - Season 13 - Buddhism

Today I Am a Clown - Season 15 – Judaism

Thank God It's Doomsday – Season 16 – Christianity, Judgment Day

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Guest Star – Season 16 – Christian Faiths

Mypods and Broomsticks – Season 20 – Islam

Rednecks and Broomsticks – Season 21 – Wicca

The Greatest Story Ever D'oh'd – Season 21 – Christianity, Judaism, and Islam

...Sadly, full versions can't be found for free – unless you do some computer work. I pieced together two episodes from clips on YouTube... that's one way. You can order DVDs from Amazon. Or see what you can find on Disney+ or On Demand.

Here is an example of how to view and discuss an episode (from the D'oh God website)...

**The Father, The Son and the Holy Guest Star** - Season 16, Episode 21 – available on DVD and via digital streaming on the compilation video “Kiss Me, I'm a Simpson” – and in 2 minute clips below...

Theme: Christian Religions – similarities and differences

Synopsis: Bart is unjustly blamed for a prank and expelled from school. After looking at other schools, Marge decides to enroll Bart in St. Jerome's Catholic School.

Marge becomes concerned over Bart's interest in the Catholic Church. Homer goes to the school to confront Father Sean, but reconsiders after having a pancake dinner and playing Bingo. Homer decides to convert to Catholicism, as well, to be absolved of his sins.

With Bart and Homer both considering joining the Church, Marge seeks help from Rev. Lovejoy and Ned Flanders, who agree to stop them. Marge, Lovejoy, and Ned capture Bart and try to bring Bart back to the "one true faith": The Western Branch of American Reform Presbylutheranism.

Bart says it is stupid that all the different forms of Christianity are feuding, explaining that the few stupid things they disagree on are nothing compared to the many stupid things they agree on.

The episode then jumps 1,000 years into the future, when Bart is believed to be the last Prophet of God. In this age, mankind is waging war over whether Bart's teachings were about love and tolerance, or understanding and peace. Unable to come to an agreement, one side cries Bart's catchphrase "Eat my shorts", the other cries "Cowabunga" and both sides engage in a bloody battle.

### **Discussion:**

- Have you ever been unjustly accused of doing something wrong? How did you handle it?

- What does Marge mean when she says “I love you but sometimes I don’t like your choices”?
- How did Father Sean come to join the Catholic Church?
- Why is Marge so concerned about Bart’s interest in Catholicism?
- Why does Homer have an interest in Catholicism?
- Homer says, “I never heard of anyone getting so upset about religion.” Have you experienced people getting upset about discussions of religion?
- Rev. Lovejoy says, “A different faith means a different afterlife.” Marge pictures the afterlife for her and for a Catholic Homer to be very different. Do you believe in an afterlife? What would it be like?
- Bart says, “This is the Catholic Church. Chicks don’t have any authority here.” What does he mean by this?
- Should churches use entertainment to try to get people to join? What about this activity?!?! Homer says, “Shouldn’t Bart and I be allowed to choose our own religion?” Lisa agrees with him and expresses her belief in Buddhism. How does that fit in with your principles? What about your family members’ principles? You could chat with a grandparent, aunt/uncle, or cousin and see what they think.
- Discuss this quote from Bart: “Don’t you get it? It’s all Christianity, people. The little stupid differences are nothing next to the big stupid similarities.” Do most Christian faiths differ mostly in the details? Why do people care so much about the details? Discuss the differences and similarities in beliefs between different denominations.

**Here are the two-minute YouTube clips for “The Father, The Son and The Holy Guest Star”**

- Clip 1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I0HTz-W5P9s>
- Clip 2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSetQkvOFno>
- Clip 3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6itXEjUFYtA>
- Clip 4 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g2iEz3lZljE>
- Clip 5 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LAWe08nSq\\_s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LAWe08nSq_s)
- Clip 6 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8fHD0lj6Ngg>
- Clip 7 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pkzCS2nDqj0>
- Clip 8 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=05YKoVt1yLs>
- Clip 9 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NIEndIFuG4Q>
- Clip 10 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wxNsNvzg3EM>
- Clip 11 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=um4j6\\_KpPBs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=um4j6_KpPBs)

Here's another episode to view and discuss. It considers how and why we pray, and what the results might be when we do.

“**Bart Gets and F**” – Season 2, Episode 1 - available on DVD and streaming “The Complete Second Season” – and 3-minute clips on YouTube below...

This is from “Toons that Teach” - #54, pg. 122 (so many great ideas in this book!!!)

<https://www.amazon.com/Toons-That-Teach-Cartoon-Teenagers/dp/0310259924>

**THEMES:** Integrity, Prayer, Siblings

**SCRIPTURES:**

- Job 22:23-29: Don't let the world get you down.
- Psalm 3: God, save us from prisons of our own creation.
- Matthew 6:5-6: It's a prayer, not a Broadway production.

**SYNOPSIS:**

After a series of gigantic missteps, Bart is on the verge of failing the fourth grade. With just one chance left, he falls to his knees in desperation and prays for a miracle. He gets one. Of course, what he does with it is another matter...

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- ▶ What do you think Bart will be doing when he's thirty?
- ▶ Do you agree with Lisa that prayer is “the last refuge of a scoundrel”?
- ▶ When do you pray most often? Do you pray before you take a test?
- ▶ Have you ever had to deal with a sibling who seemed to do everything better than you?
- ▶ People often behave in ways that match other people's expectations for them. People expect Bart to mess around and get low grades, and he usually does. Is Bart a product of his environment? Would he do better in school if his teachers expected him to be a better student?
- ▶ Do you feel sorry for Bart? Explain.
- ▶ What is so striking about Bart's prayer? Why was the answer ironic?

- ▶ Do you think God's answers to our prayers come with strings attached?
- ▶ Does God have a sense of humor?
- ▶ Have you ever prayed for something **and** gotten it? How did you react?
- ▶ Have you ever prayed for something that didn't happen? Explain.
- ▶ Have you ever not gotten something you prayed for **and** then realized later that you were probably better off without it? Talk about that.
- ▶ If **Bart** had not asked his teacher to grade the test immediately, he never would have "demonstrated applied learning" **and** would have failed. Is this grace? Did **Bart** get grace from the teacher or from God?



### **CLOSING PRAYER:**

Loving God, we are praying to you now. We're not asking for snow or test answers, but just to know you a little better. Speak to us, God. We are listening. Amen.

Here is another great resource for discussion of this episode...

From "The Gospel According to the Simpsons" - [HERE](#) is the section for *Bart Gets and F...*  
 The Gospel According to the Simpsons, by Mark I. Pinsky - available on Amazon

**Here are the 3-minute YouTube clips for "Bart Gets and F" – Season 2, Episode 1**

Part 1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cGB9fWFIGI0>

Part 2 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_OkURnUYaM0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_OkURnUYaM0)

Part 3 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sm9zDCq9J\\_k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sm9zDCq9J_k)

Part 4 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q8GJZV4Ozps>

Part 5 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P3g2iHhA9bg>

If you have a New York Times subscription, you might find this interesting...

<https://www.nytimes.com/2003/06/14/us/religion-journal-of-bart-and-homer-and-the-many-ways-of-faith.html>