



Inklings
ON
PHILOSOPHY
AND
WORLDVIEW

GUIDEBOOK

*Inspired by C.S. Lewis,
G.K. Chesterton,
and J.R.R. Tolkien*

MATTHEW DOMINGUEZ



Inklings

ON PHILOSOPHY AND WORLDVIEW

GUIDEBOOK



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Inklings on Philosophy and Worldview Guidebook

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Edited by Jonathan Schindler

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A Note for Leaders



This companion book to *Inklings on Philosophy and Worldview* is meant to be used as a guidebook, like an adventure guidebook, except for the heart, soul, and mind. I have led students on rock climbing, backpacking, mountain climbing, ice climbing, and sailing adventures in various parts of our world. When I get to a gorgeous granite cliff with the hope of taking an eager group of voyagers up and down the steep facade, I always bring a professional guidebook with me. I use it to navigate the terrain, find the right spots, learn about the safety concerns, and plot out a course for the day of adventure and exploration. I also train my students in how to use the guidebook so that if they come back, they can safely and strategically lead themselves and others through the climb.

This is the conceptual framework of this book. It is meant to be a tool to help young people (and their leaders) grow on this adventure of life. Leaders must model the adventure and eventually master the material. At first the people you lead will be using the book with you as you learn the material together. However, like a repeated adventure trip to the same mountain, after several visits, the terrain and skills become more familiar and personal. The same is true for anyone using these texts and tools. After enough use, the leaders and youth applying this material will be able to eventually use it in their own way and even extend it into new learning and growth. This book and the supplemental material

available on the InTheTrueMyth.org website are designed to guide you to extend your learning and process the information in the *Inklings on Philosophy and Worldview* book in a deeper and more practical way. The best rock-climbing guidebooks help me get to the base of the rock cliffs. When I find the climb I want to do, I then put the book down, get on my safety gear, and put my hands and feet on the actual rock and start climbing. My hope is that this guidebook gets used in a similar way.

My favorite guidebooks are annotated, drawn in, dog eared, tattered, torn, and worn with coffee stains and dirt. Similarly, when used well, this book should guide you in experiencing, interacting with, participating in, and processing the information and concepts in the *Inklings* book and well beyond. Guidebooks for rock climbing are designed to be used at the cliffs, to actually rock climb, but it's hard to climb with a book in your hands. These books and even the information in them are tools and means to the end, not the end themselves. Philosophy needs to be more than just thinking; it needs to be doing! Paul writes to the church at Corinth, "While knowledge makes us feel important, it is love that strengthens the church. Anyone who claims to know all the answers doesn't really know very much. But the person who loves God is the one whom God recognizes" (1 Corinthians 8:1-3). Philosophy that is worth anything will be put to use in lives that actually live the concepts.

Training is essential. Paul refers to it often in his letters to the early churches. Training implies repeated hard work and perpetually pushing oneself to become more adept and stronger. Coaches are often essential to help us focus and persevere, but ultimately the responsibility rests on the player or the student. On my own educational and spiritual journey, and after thirty years of teaching, I have learned that good books, great authors, and strong primary texts speak for themselves. As teachers, parents, and mentors, we need to get young people to actually read and personally engage with primary texts and their messages. Of course, guided discussion and helpful insights enhance and often unlock treasure chests of meaning. Nevertheless, the best resources we have at our fingertips, like Scripture, bear much more fruit the more we read them, the more we contemplate them, and the more we practice them. Furthermore,

it is vital to read the Word of God in the context of the other primary sources offered in this text. This is one of the reasons why the publisher has put many of the Scripture readings right into this guidebook. This can help young people to see that Scripture is also a primary text with authority and relevance.

The *Inklings on Philosophy and Worldview* book and this guidebook have been carefully designed and developed from over twenty years of teaching this material to produce these tools for continual use as a guide and resource for a lifetime of Christ-centered biblical worldview growth, development, and practice. I owe a special thanks to one of my former students, Tate Fritz, for his tireless and seemingly endless work to help get the first draft of this guidebook started. Almost eight years later, I have the privilege of teaching this class alongside Tate this spring. Like Tate, readers (and those who lead them) are meant to use this book for their own journeys and then as guides to help others through the process.

There are many activities offered in this text that will help readers to further engage with the concepts in the *Inklings on Philosophy and Worldview* book. These activities have been carefully engineered and organized to be effective in a wide variety of learning environments including mentoring and small groups, homeschools and co-schools, and collegiate and traditional high schools. **Learning adventures** are assignments that can be completed right in the guidebook. They are responses to the text and discussions that will help readers to better understand the material. **Extend your learning** activities are designed to get readers outside the book and guidebook and into their world. These require interaction with other texts or media and conversations with other people and will help them make connections between what they're learning and the world they inhabit each day. **Exploring ideas** sections offer readers the opportunity to engage with primary texts—both Scripture and other sources, ancient and modern—that will help them better understand the implications of what they're learning. And finally, **beyond the book** sections extend the material within the *Inklings*

on *Philosophy and Worldview* book further, both deeper within topics and broader to subjects not covered in the main text.

Beyond this guidebook, you will find more assignments and resources on InTheTrueMyth.org. Ultimately, your goal will be to design your own course or program in your own flare and style, with your own creative and practical lessons. But the InTheTrueMyth.org website has unit plans, lesson plans, creative assignment ideas, video links, handouts, and slideshow presentations, all for free. Please use these to get started. And as you make the material your own, be sure to share your ideas on the website for others to use.

One of the most important aspects of this curriculum is a focus on love and honor and the necessity of approaching worldview and philosophy with “gentleness and respect,” as the apostle Peter puts it. Be sure not to skip past these pages in order to save time or get to the “real lessons” on philosophy. Remember, if we empower young people with knowledge but do not help them to be more loving, we are likely creating “noisy gong[s]” and “clanging cymbal[s]” (1 Corinthians 13:1) rather than loving ambassadors of Christ. Again, on the website, there are plenty of resources available to help you start to build or rebuild a “Kingdom community” for your learning environment. Harnessing the power of words and the language of trust for mentoring, parenting, and teaching is of utmost importance because this is the premise of this entire approach to worldview.

Additionally, an essential component for leading others through this material is to maintain an atmosphere of open inquiry and free will. Readers are ultimately being offered worldview options with informed consent. We as leaders, especially in Christian cultures and subcultures, must remember that Jesus only *invited* people to follow him. Jesus didn’t force or coerce people to follow him. He invited people into his worldview and his lifestyle. As parents, pastors, and teachers, we should also be modeling his worldview and inviting our children and students into this. When a decision is forced or coerced, we are going against what Jesus did and does. He never forced anyone; he always invited and always invites us. Jesus defines and models for us our

primary pedagogical principle for philosophy and worldview: “Seek and you will find” (Matthew 7:7, NIV). This book is a guidebook to help teachers, parents, and young people alike to keep seeking the Truth, who is Christ. If we keep seeking the Truth, we have been assured that we will find the Truth. Paradoxically and simultaneously, we will also be found by him.

A final word: it has been so rewarding to see the power of this curriculum and vocabulary spread throughout entire communities, especially educational communities all around the globe. The experience at the school where I teach has been exponentially enriched for our students and faculty because our entire faculty and staff have adopted this approach to worldview in all subject areas and extracurricular experiences. James Davis writes, “Integrating philosophy across the curriculum forces instructors and students alike to consider how their entire curriculum fits together. Often students are inadvertently, and perhaps occasionally intentionally, encouraged to see subjects in distinct compartments. . . . Students might see the connection between math and science, but many seem to think that the concerns of English are entirely distinct from history and science. Philosophy can help break down some of these artificial divisions . . . by showing that the ‘big questions’ are present in all courses.”* Seneca helps us see that this concept applies not only to each academic discipline but to all of life, every day! “Philosophy . . . moulds and constructs the soul; it orders our life, guides our conduct, shows us what we should do and what we should leave undone; it sits at the helm and directs our course as we waver amid uncertainties. Without it, no one can live fearlessly or in peace of mind. Countless things that happen every hour call for advice; and such advice is to be sought in philosophy.”

You are doing important work. Enjoy the journey.

Matthew Dominguez

DECEMBER 2019

* James Davis, “Socrates in Homeroom: A Case Study for Integrating Philosophy across a High School Curriculum,” *Teaching Philosophy* 36, no. 3 (2013): 217–38.



PART ONE

Trust and the Nature of Reality

Because of God's tender mercy,
the morning light from heaven is about
to break upon us,
to give light to those who sit in darkness
and in the shadow of death,
and to guide us to the path of peace.

LUKE 1:78-79



PART ONE

Outline

PART ONE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

These questions are essential to our learning and growth for this course of study. They are the focus of part 1 of the *Inklings on Philosophy and Worldview* book and the driving force behind this guidebook. The book, your instruction, the supplemental podcasts (available at IntheTrueMyth.org), and the assignments in this guidebook are all developed to help you answer these questions:

1. Why does philosophy matter?
2. Where am I in my spiritual journey? Where do I want to be?
3. What is the nature of reality?
4. How do humans create a belief system or worldview?
5. What is the suicide of thought? How do I get out of it or help others out of it?
6. What is a philosophical axiom?
7. What is the difference between subjective and objective truth?
8. What is the nature of reality? What is truly real?
9. How does my “trust list” affect my daily decisions and how I interact with others?

PART ONE SUGGESTED READINGS

- All of part 1 from the *Inklings on Philosophy and Worldview* book (pages 9–50)
- William E. Brown: “World of Worldviews” (supplemental)
- Plato: “The Allegory of the Cave” from *The Republic* (pages 22–28)
- Phillip Yancey: “Prophet of Mirth” (supplemental)
- Paul: Ephesians (pages 37–48)
- G. K. Chesterton: “The Suicide of Thought” from *Orthodoxy* (pages 52–70)

PART ONE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES***Learning Adventures***

- Faith Island and the Trust Lists (pages 8–10)
- Learning about Big Philosophical Questions in Life: Views of Reality and Core Philosophy (pages 14–18)
- Notes on Faith, Trust, and Belief: Anna’s Pet (page 19–20)
- Faith Island and the Trust Lists: Identifying “Isms” (page 21)
- Coming Out of the Cave: A Look at Plato and Scripture (pages 31–34)
- John 1 and “The Allegory of the Cave” (pages 35–36)
- “The Suicide of Thought”: Choice and Free Will (pages 71–72)
- How and What to Trust: Personal Connections to Subjective/ Objective Truth (pages 80–82)
- Four Perspectives on Morality: Ethical Dilemmas (pages 89–92)
- Four Perspectives on Perfection: What Is Perfect? (pages 96–98)

Extend Your Learning

- “Always Be Prepared . . .” (pages 11–13)
- Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave”: A Personal Response (pages 29–30)
- How and What to Trust: Discussion Starters (pages 83–85)

Exploring Ideas

- “The Allegory of the Cave” from Plato’s *Republic* (pages 22–28)
- Ephesians, Faith Island, the Trust List, and the Cave (pages 37–48)
- “The Suicide of Thought” from G. K. Chesterton’s *Orthodoxy* (pages 52–70)

Beyond the Book

- How to Read G. K. Chesterton: Three Helpful Metaphors (pages 49–51)
- Philosophical Foundations: Axioms (pages 73–76)
- How and What to Trust: Subjective and Objective Truth (pages 77–79)
- Four Perspectives on Morality (pages 86–88)
- Four Perspectives on Perfection (pages 93–95)
- Reflections on Morality and Perfection (pages 73–76)

Coordinates and Bearings for Learning Adventures: Part One

Part 1 is meant to guide you to the beginning of your spiritual journey: trust. It's important to start a journey at the proper trailhead and with the proper gear. No one will begin climbing an unfamiliar mountain without knowing that he or she is on the right trail and without the appropriate gear. Likewise, to begin your spiritual journey, you need to be equipped to begin at the right trailhead of trust and with the appropriate equipment: honesty, love, honor, and an open mind.

This section of your learning journey will focus on and invite you into . . .

- + Embracing this truth: everything in life is based on trust.
- + Growing in awareness and understanding that everyone and every culture has a “trust list.”
- + Knowing there are direct, inescapable, natural consequences for what we trust.
- + Seeing the four basic philosophical “trust lists” for everyone on “Faith Island.”

- + Acknowledging and expressing love and honor as essential in a global community of trust.
- + Experiencing Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave” as a foundational example of reality and a powerful metaphor for our adventure to “renew our minds.”
- + Getting to know G. K. Chesterton as a tour de force of writing and thinking on worldview and philosophy.
- + Successfully navigating people through what Chesterton calls the “suicide of thought.”
- + Understanding the concept of philosophical axioms and learning about a few key axioms for this adventure in worldview and philosophy.
- + Becoming more aware of subjective and objective truths.
- + Understanding the categorical differences between the expressions and definitions of perfection and morality between the four worldviews and the natural consequences of these differences.

PART 1 SUMMARY

In part 1, we will look at the common denominator of trust. No matter what “ism” we follow—be it idealism, monism, materialism, theism, or a variation of one of these main four—we are trusting in something. Everything is based on trust. The only way we humans live is to make decisions based on whatever we consider trustworthy, though we differ on the object in which we place our confidence. We give authority to whom and what we trust, and it is essential for us to understand that every decision we make is based on our conclusions regarding the nature of reality.



Faith Island and the Trust Lists

We use what we trust. We give authority to what we trust.

We use what we trust to formulate our conclusions on the nature of reality. What are you using? What should you be using?

Complete this basic trust list:

+ I trust

+ I trust

+ I trust

+ I trust

+ I trust

+ I trust

If you are doing this with a learning group, create a trust list for the rest of the adventure together. What are you as a group going to use to figure out reality?

What are some things or people that are trustworthy?

What makes something or someone trustworthy?

+ We trust

+ We trust

+ We trust

+ We trust

+ We trust

+ We trust

Key concept: If objective truth exists—which it most likely does—we must accept that our access to it is through that which is subjective.



EXTEND YOUR LEARNING

“Always Be Prepared . . .”

1 Peter 3:15 says, “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect” (NIV). Here are some reflection opportunities, discussion questions, and ideas to ponder around this verse.

1. What “answers” to life’s tough questions are you looking for? How about your friends? (If you need help thinking of tough questions, consider looking ahead to chapter 7 of the *Inklings on Philosophy and Worldview* book.)

2. Describe some real-life scenarios where you were not prepared to give an answer to life's hard questions. Describe some situations where you were prepared. What were the key differences in these situations? Why were you were prepared in one situation and not the other?

3. Where have you seen in books, videos, movies, lectures, or sermons people who were and were not prepared to answer life's hardest questions? What were the key differences between those who were and were not prepared?

4. Describe some situations where conversations about hard questions were not handled "with gentleness and respect." What was the outcome?

5. Where have you seen in books, videos, movies, lectures, or sermons people who were and were not displaying "gentleness and respect" in tackling the hardest questions of our journeys?

6. Often people will say that an “inclusive approach” to spirituality would work well in answering life’s hard questions. They say that the answers are all the same and it does not really matter what religion or belief you pick. In light of the vast differences between the four major worldviews, why does an “inclusive approach” (or pluralistic approach) not actually work? (You may want to see chapter 3 and chapter 5 of *Inklings on Philosophy and Worldview* book if you need a clear picture of the four worldviews and how they are different.)