



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on September 20, 2011

Richard Dawkins' New Children's Book Encourages Atheism, Evolution

Atheist Richard Dawkins (left) has written a children's book, entitled *The Magic of Reality: How We Know What's Really True*, which encourages the notions of atheism and evolution and describes Judeo-Christian beliefs as a myth. According to Dawkins, the work is intended for families to read together and "enjoy [his] take on the universe's truths."



Dawkins explains something of what motivated him to write the book:

I've had perfectly wonderful conversations with Anglican bishops, and I rather suspect if you asked in a candid moment, they'd say they don't believe in the virgin birth. But for every one of them, four others would tell a child she'll rot in hell for doubting.

NewScientist's Andy Coghlan has this to say about the new book:

Dawkins has repackaged his passion for atheism — and for the capacity of science to deliver demonstrable truths about nature — in a book designed to appeal to teenagers. [...]

The writing is also masterly, if a little waffly in places. From the strident polemicism of *The God Delusion*, Dawkins has shifted into "wise grandad" mode. His strategy is laid bare in the list of chapters, a clear "scientific" rewrite of the contents of *Genesis*. The formula is simple: each chapter addresses a basic question: "Who was the first person?" or "When and how did everything begin?" Dawkins then supplies imaginative answers provided by ancient myths from around the world — among them prominent tales from the Bible. Finally, he demolishes these myths by supplying the "real" answers provided by science.

Dawkins worked with comic book artist Dave McKean to create a "graphic detective story" which asks and answers questions pondered by nearly everyone during the course of their lives. He believes his book will raise basic questions among children, helping them better understand the world around them by encouraging what he considers science instead of religious doctrine.

Still, Dawkins contends his book cannot be considered indoctrination. "I am almost pathologically afraid of indoctrinating children," he claims. "It would be a 'Think for Yourself Academy.' "

However, *The Magic of Reality* seems to reveal at least some attempts at indoctrination. According to Dawkins, children will have an easier time accepting evolution as a scientific truth because they are not "weighed down by misleading familiarity." He adds:



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When children ask “where did I come from” they are quite capable of understanding — and being taught evolution. Evolution could be taught in such a way as to make it easier to understand than a myth. That is because myths leave the child’s questions unanswered, or they raise more questions than they appear to answer. Evolution is a truly satisfying and complete explanation of existence, and I suspect that this thing is something a child can appreciate from an early age.

Regardless of how satisfying evolution may be for some, evangelist and geneticist Francis Collins [asserts](#) that the question of “What happened before that?” continues to plague scientific theories. The only way to answer those questions, asserts Collins, is through the recognition of a First Cause — a Creator: “A creator who is not limited by time, doesn’t need to have such a beginning,” notes Collins. “[Dawkins’] question doesn’t make any sense if you have a creator outside of time.”

Dawkins book has already been released for sale in the United Kingdom, and will be available in the United States on October 4.



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