# Thomas Aquinas’ 5 Arguments for God: Lesson Plan

## Topic
Thomas Aquinas sought proof of God's existence by examining the natural world. Each of his five arguments, the cosmological arguments, originates from a concept in the cosmos that needs an explanation.

### Possible subjects/classes | Time needed
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Philosophy, World Religions, Public speaking | 30-35 minutes

### Video link:
https://academy4sc.org/topic/thomas-aquinas-5-arguments-for-god-natural-reasoning/

### Objective: What will students know/be able to do at the end of class?
Students will be able to...
- Define and present Aquinas's cosmological arguments.
- List influences that shaped his cosmological arguments.
- Critique the reasoning and conclusions of his arguments.

### Key Concepts & Vocabulary
Contingency/necessary being, Ontological argument, Aristotle, Teleological argument

### Materials Needed
Worksheet.

### Before you watch
Ask the students as a class to consider what it would look like to prove something seemingly abstract is true. Give them a real life example, like 2+2 =4, or that
people landed on the moon, and ask them to try to prove to you that it is true. If needed, have them talk in pairs first before bringing ideas to the class. Then, discuss what methods people used to show something is true. Did they show you two fingers on one hand and two on the other and count them? Did they cite the video as proof humans landed on the moon? Then ask them to consider what it would look like to prove that God existed.

**While you watch**

1. What is a Cosmological Argument?
2. List the names of Aquinas’ five arguments.
3. Name one objection to the arguments.
4. Name one person who influenced Thomas Aquinas.

**After you watch/discussion questions**

1. Which of the five ways is most and least convincing to you? Why?
2. What might have motivated Thomas Aquinas to write five proofs instead of one?
3. If Thomas Aquinas already believed in God, why would he need to prove God’s existence?

**Activity Ideas**

- Get into five small groups. Assign each group one of the arguments and have them choose to either support the argument or rebuke it by coming up with their own comparisons based on what they see in the natural world. For example, Newton’s laws of motion or the big bang theory can be used to support Aquinas’s arguments. Use the Worksheet to help guide student’s arguments.
- Have students write or give a speech in opposition to Thomas Aquinas. Ask them to challenge his thinking and present a case of why he is wrong. Give them a chance to research a bit about Kant or Hume to help them critique one (or more) of the five arguments.
- Ask students to apply the cosmological arguments to a current situation. Do they agree with an argument’s conclusion but not its reasoning? Have a class discussion to see how they apply merit to arguments and conclusions in their life.

**Sources/places to learn more**


