



Session 1

- Welcome and Introduction

## What is truth?

Don't people have different truths? Can we know the truth?

Why it's important to talk about Truth.

### 1. Wouldn't it be great if there were some basic truths that are common to everyone?

Self-evident truths: Existence and Reason.

- Everyone assumes that they exist, that there is something that exists.
- Everyone uses reason to think, and uses logic, the rules of reasoning, to think about anything.

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### 2. A working definition of "Truth"

An idea, thought, or statement that matches the way things really are.

Truth is a matching relationship between a thought and reality.

Example: "There is a class in Dierenfield Hall called *'The Great Questions'*."

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### 3. Isn't truth different for different people?

It is helpful to distinguish between Subjective Truths and Objective Truths.

A Subjective Truth is based on a taste, preference, or feeling—of a person, "the subject" who is tasting, preferring, or feeling.

Objective Truths are about those realities outside the individual—the "objects" or realities that aren't based on feelings or preferences or tastes.

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### 4. The Laws of Logic: These laws are universal. For everybody everywhere.

The Fundamental Laws of Logic

**The law of identity.**

A equals A.

An apple = an apple

**The law of non-contradiction.**

A does not equal non-A.

"There is an apple tree in

my yard" is not equal to "There is no apple tree in my yard."

**The law of excluded middle.**

It is either A or non-A.

There either is a tree in

your backyard, or there isn't. There is no middle way.

Illustration:

“You can only get to Catalina Island by boat.”

“You can get to Catalina Island by helicopter.”

We all *just know* the laws of logic. Some examples:

**What logic can do: reveal error. But logic alone cannot lead us to truth.** The laws of Logic are just the necessary rules involving thought.

**The laws of logic are universal.** But is there a Western logic and an Eastern logic? Any teaching assumes and uses the laws of logic, even in statements that deny them.

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**5. Is the subject of God subjective? Is it about an inside reality (my personal tastes and preferences) or about an outside reality (true whether I know it or like it)?**

Can we know truth about God?

**Some say no...“No one can know about God.”**

- You would have to know something about God to know that.
- You would have to know everything that can be known to know that. Illus: Circle
- If God exists, could that God reveal Himself if He wanted to?

**Conclusion and encouragement:**

1. There is basic common ground with all people. Everyone assumes that truth exists.  
Everyone lives that way. Everyone uses the laws of logic.
2. We should be tolerant of people’s varied preferences, or tastes.
3. But, God’s existence or the nature of God is not based on people.
4. Knowing about God will be a matter of investigation.
5. It’s okay to say “I respect you, and I disagree with your idea.”
6. It’s also good to realize “I could be wrong.”

**A Personal Example**