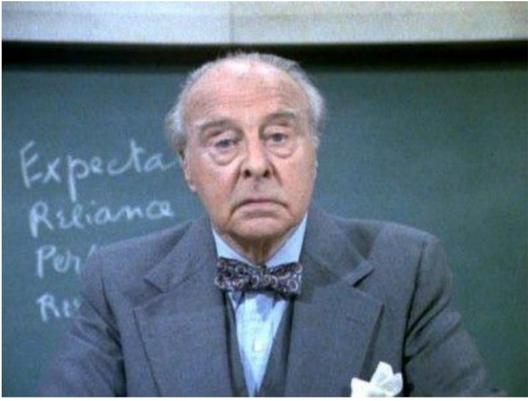


A Different Tool to Employ for Christmas 2018



1978 TV series "The Paper Chase" – Story of a hard working student & a distinguished "prickly" Harvard Law Proff

- "A photographic memory is of absolutely no use to you...without the ability to analyze that vast mass of facts between your ears." – Kingsfield
- "We use the **Socratic method** here. I call on you. Ask you a question and you answer it. Why don't I just give you a lecture? Because through my questions **you'll learn to teach yourselves**. Through this method of questioning, answering, questioning, answering we seek to **develop in you** the ability to analyze that vast complex of facts that constitute the relationships of members within a given society." – Kingsfield
- At times you may feel that you have found the correct answer. I assure you that this is a total delusion on your part. You'll never find the correct, absolute and final answer. In my classroom there is always another question, another question to follow your answer. As you are on a treadmill, my little questions spin the tumblers of your mind. You are on an operating table. My little questions are the fingers probing your brain. We do brain surgery here. You teach yourselves the law, **but I train your mind...**" – Kingsfield

... the shroud ...

=====

Socratic Questions are a method of "pull influencing" (not "pushing") ... that can be used to stimulate **critical thinking**.

=====

Socrates (Born 470 BC – Died 399 BC) was a classical Greek (Athenian) philosopher credited as one of the founders of Western philosophy, and as being the first moral philosopher, of the Western ethical tradition of thought. An enigmatic figure, he made no writings, and is known chiefly through the accounts of classical writers writing after his lifetime, particularly his student Plato.

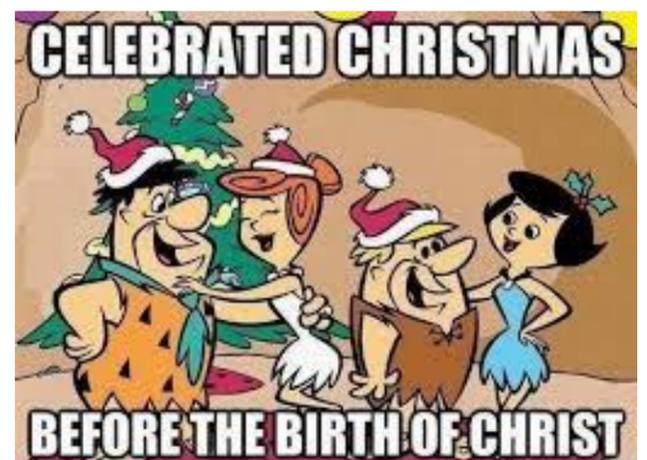
To illustrate the use of the **Socratic method**, a series of questions are posed to help a person or group to determine their underlying beliefs and the extent of their knowledge. The Socratic method is a (negative) method of **hypothesis elimination**, in that better hypotheses are found by steadily identifying and eliminating those that lead to contradictions. **It was designed to force one to examine one's own beliefs and the validity of such beliefs.**

=====



Primary goal Of Socratic Dialog is not to have unanswerable questions. It is about **Critical thinking... the objective analysis and evaluation of an issue, in order to form a judgment.**

(Stone age = 2.5 Million Years to 9600 **BC**)



THE 6 TYPES OF SOCRATIC QUESTIONS



Socratic questions can be used in influencing, leading and coaching to stimulate critical thinking



CLARIFYING THINKING & UNDERSTANDING

Can you give me an example?
 Could you explain further?
 Are you saying ... ?
 What is the problem you are trying to solve?



CHALLENGING ASSUMPTIONS

Is that always the case?
 Are you assuming ... ?
 How could you verify or disprove that?
 What would happen if ... ?



EXAMINING EVIDENCE & RATIONALE

Why do you say that?
 How do you know?
 Why?
 What evidence is there that supports ... ?



CONSIDERING ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES

Are there any alternatives?
 What is the other side of the argument?
 What makes your viewpoint better?
 Who would be affected and what would they think?



CONSIDERING IMPLICATIONS & CONSEQUENCES

What are the implications/consequences of ... ?
 How does that affect ... ?
 What if you are wrong?
 What does our experience tell us will happen?



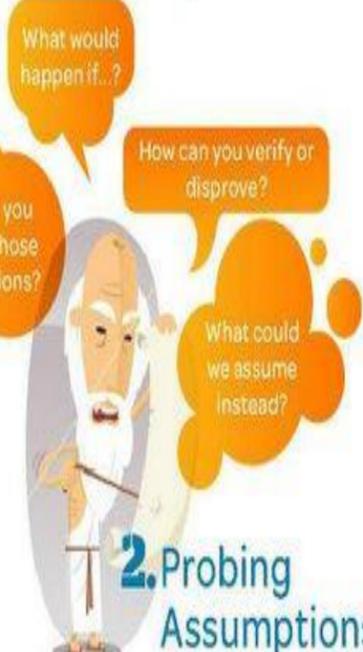
META QUESTIONS

Why do you think I asked that question?
 What does ... mean?
 What is the point of the question?
 What else might I ask?

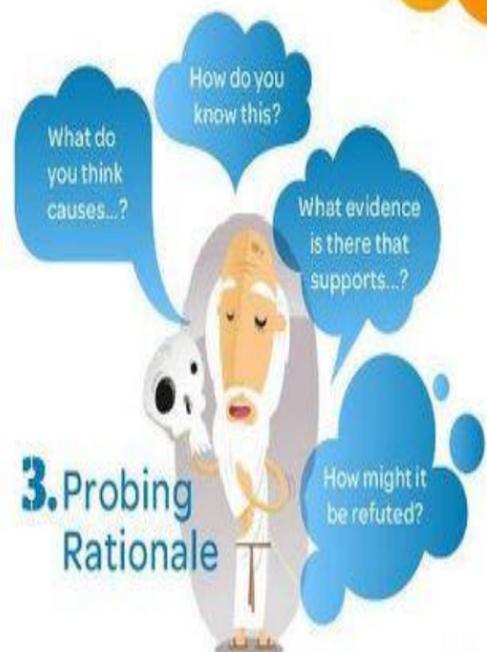
The Socratic Process

6 Steps of Questioning

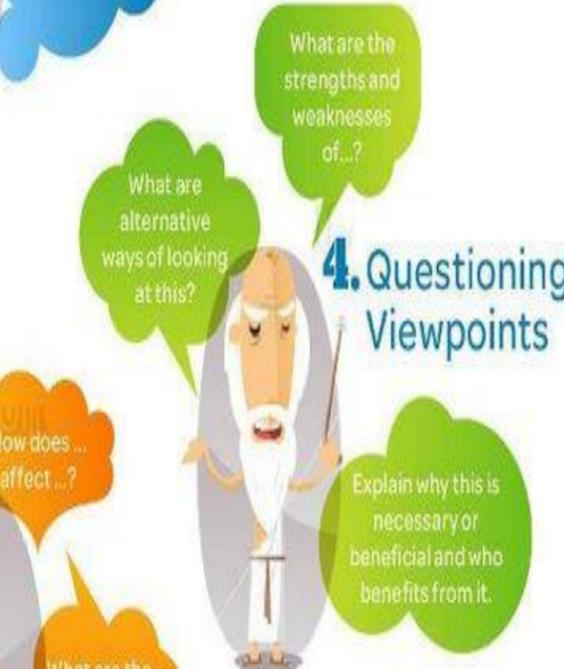
1. Clarification



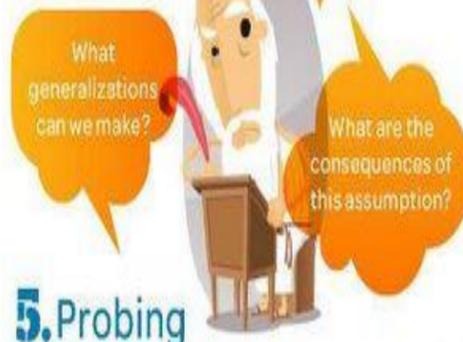
2. Probing Assumptions



3. Probing Rationale



4. Questioning Viewpoints



5. Probing Consequences



6. Questions on the Question

Catholic Encyclopedia - Christmas

- **Early celebration**

Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the Church. Irenaeus and Tertullian omit it from their lists of feasts; Origen, asserts that in the Scriptures, **sinners** alone, not saints, celebrate their birthday; Others still **ridicule** "birthdays" of the gods.

What ? are the Best type to explore here? 5. *Consider Implications* 6. *Questions on the question* What does it mean?

- **Alexandria**

The **first evidence** of the feast is from Egypt. About **A.D. 200**, Clement of Alexandria (Stromata I.21) says that certain Egyptian theologians "over curiously" assign, not the year alone, but the day of Christ's birth, placing it on 25 Pachon (**20 May**) in the twenty-eighth year of Augustus.

But Lupi has shown (Zaccaria, Dissertazioni ecc. del p. A.M. Lupi, Faenza, 1785, p. 219) that **there is no month** in the year to which respectable **authorities have not assigned** Christ's birth.

More important, but scarcely better accredited, is Erbes' contention (Zeitschrift f. Kirchengesch., XXVI, 1905, 20-31) that the feast **was brought in by Constantine as early as 330-35**.

What ? 3. *Probing evidence and rationale*

- **Origin of date**

The gospels

Concerning the date of Christ's birth the Gospels give no help; upon their data contradictory arguments are based. The census would have been impossible in winter: a whole population could not then be put in motion. Again, in winter it must have been; then only field labour was suspended. But Rome was not thus considerate. Authorities moreover differ as to whether shepherds could or would keep flocks exposed during the nights of the rainy season.

Zachary's temple service

Arguments based on Zachary's temple ministry are unreliable, though the calculations of antiquity have been revived

Analogy to Old Testament festivals

It seems impossible, on analogy of the relation of Passover and Pentecost to Easter and Whitsuntide, to connect the Nativity with the feast of Tabernacles, as did, e.g., Lightfoot (Horæ Hebr. et Talm., II, 32), arguing from Old Testament prophecy, e.g. Zacharias 14:16 sqq.; combining, too, the fact of Christ's death in Nisan with Daniel's prophecy of a three and one-half years' ministry (9:27), he puts the birth in Tisri, i.e. **September**.

What ? 4. *Considering alternative perspectives*

- **Natalis Invicti**

The well-known solar feast, however, of Natalis Invicti, celebrated on 25 December, has a strong claim on the responsibility for our December date. For the history of the solar cult, its position in the Roman Empire, and syncretism with Mithraism, see Cumont. It would be impossible here even to outline the history of solar symbolism and language as applied to God, the Messiah, and Christ in Jewish or Christian canonical, patristic, or devotional works. Hymns and Christmas offices abound in instances; the texts are well arranged by Cumont (op. cit., addit. Note C, p. 355).

Already Tertullian (Apol., 16; cf. Ad. Nat., I, 13; Orig. c. Cels., VIII, 67, etc) had to assert that Sol was not the Christians' God; Augustine (Tract xxxiv, in Joan. In P.L., XXXV, 1652) denounces the heretical identification of Christ with Sol.

Pope Leo I (Serm. xxxvii in nat. dom., VII, 4; xxii, II, 6 in P.L., LIV, 218 and 198) bitterly reproves solar survivals — Christians, on the very doorstep of the Apostles' basilica, turn to adore the rising sun. Sun-worship has bequeathed features to modern popular worship in Armenia, where Christians had once temporarily and externally conformed to the cult of the material sun (Cumont, op. cit., p. 356).

What ? 2. *Challenging Assumptions*

- **Other theories of pagan origin**

The origin of Christmas should not be sought in the Saturnalia (1-23 December)

What ? 3. *Probing evidence and rationale*

- **Conclusion**

The present writer is inclined to think that, be the origin of the feast in East or West, and though the abundance of analogous midwinter festivals may indefinitely have helped the choice of the December date, the same instinct which set Natalis Invicti at the winter solstice will have sufficed, apart from deliberate adaptation or curious calculation, to set the Christian feast there too.

What ? 1. *Clarifying thinking and understanding* 6. *Questions on the question* What does it mean?

- **Liturgy and customs - Popular merry-making**

Braga (563) forbids fasting on Christmas Day. Popular merry-making, however, so increased that the "Laws of King Cnut", fabricated c. 1110, order a fast from Christmas to Epiphany.

- **Dramatic presentations**

the practice of giving dramatic, or at least spectacular, expression to the incidents of the Nativity early gave rise to more or less liturgical mysteries. "To out-herod Herod", i.e. to over-act, dates from Herod's violence in these plays.

- **Hymns and carols**

- **Cards and presents**

Pagan customs centering round the January calends gravitated to Christmas. Tiele (Yule and Christmas, London, 1899) has collected many interesting examples. The *strenæ* (eacute;trennes) of the Roman 1 January (bitterly condemned by Tertullian, , and by Maximus of Turin) survive as Christmas presents, cards, boxes.

- **The yule log**

The calend fires were a scandal even to Rome, and St. Boniface obtained from Pope Zachary their abolition. But probably the Yule-log in its many forms was originally lit only in view of the cold season. Only in 1577 did it become a public ceremony in England; its popularity, however, grew immense, especially in Provence; in Tuscany, Christmas is simply called *ceppo* (block, log — Bonaccorsi, op. cit., p. 145, n. 2).

- **Greenery**

Gervase of Tilbury (thirteenth century) says that in England grain is exposed on Christmas night to gain fertility from the dew which falls in response to "Rorate Cæli"; the tradition that trees and flowers blossomed on this night is first quoted from an Arab geographer of the tenth century, and extended to England. In a thirteenth-century French epic, candles are seen on the flowering tree. In England it was Joseph of Arimathea's rod which flowered at Glastonbury and elsewhere; when 3 September became 14 September, in 1752, 2000 people watched to see if the Quainton thorn (*cratagus præcox*) would blow on Christmas New Style; and as it did not, they refused to keep the New Style festival. From this belief of the calends practice of greenery decorations (forbidden by Archbishop Martin of Braga, c. 575, P.L., LXXIII — mistletoe was bequeathed by the Druids) developed the Christmas tree, first definitely mentioned in 1605 at Strasburg, and introduced into France and England in 1840 only, by Princess Helena of Mecklenburg and the Prince Consort respectively.

- **The mysterious visitor**

Only with great caution should the mysterious benefactor of Christmas night — Knecht Ruprecht, Pelzmärtel on a wooden horse, St. Martin on a white charger, St. Nicholas and his "reformed" equivalent, Father Christmas — be ascribed to the stepping of a saint into the shoes of Woden, who, with his wife Berchta, descended on the nights between 25 December and 6 January, on a white horse to bless earth and men. Fires and blazing wheels starred the hills, houses were adorned, trials suspended and feasts celebrated (cf. Bonaccorse, op. cit., p. 151). Knecht Ruprecht, at any rate (first found in a mystery of 1668 and condemned in 1680 as a devil) was only a servant of the Holy Child.

- **Non-Catholic observances**

In England, Christmas was forbidden by Act of Parliament in 1644; the day was to be a fast and a market day; shops were compelled to be open; plum puddings and mince pies condemned as heathen. The conservatives resisted; at Canterbury blood was shed; but after the Restoration Dissenters continued to call Yuletide "Fooltide".

=====

Asking Questions ... is not unique to Socrates – Before Socrates we see this importance in Scripture!

In the plagues and the exodus... we turn three times to the subject of children and the duty of parents to educate them. Jews today believe that to *defend a country* you need an army, but to *defend a civilization* you need education. Freedom is lost when it is taken for granted. Unless parents hand on their memories and ideals to the next generation –we lose our way.

The Torah emphasizes the fact that **children must ask questions**. Some call this **The 4 children**:

1. **Exo 12:26-27** And it shall be, when your children say to you, '**What do you mean by this service?**' that you shall say, 'It *is* the Passover sacrifice of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households.' " So the people bowed their heads and worshiped.

2. **Exo 13:14** So it shall be, when your son asks you in time to come, saying, '**What is this?**' that you shall say to him, 'By strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.'

3. **Deu 6:20-21** "When your son asks you in time to come, saying, '**What is the meaning of the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God has commanded you?**' then you shall say to your son: 'We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand;

4. **Exo 13:8** And you shall tell your son in that day, saying, '*This (unleavened bread observance) is done* because of what the LORD did for me when I came up from Egypt.'

They are the four children:

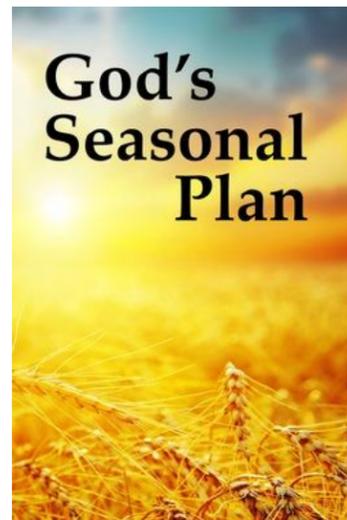
- one wise,
- one wicked or rebellious,
- one simple and
- “one who does not know how to ask.”

Reading them together we can come to the conclusions that:

1. children should ask questions,
2. the Passover narrative can be constructed in response to, and begin with, questions asked by a child,
3. it is the duty of a parent to encourage his or her children to ask questions, and the child who does not yet know how to ask should be taught to ask.

4 Other awesome examples of great scriptural questioning ... to reveal knowledge:

1. **Abraham ... Gen 18:23-25** And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare *it* for the fifty righteous that were in it? Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"
2. **Moses ... Exo 5:22-23** So Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Lord, why have You brought trouble on this people? Why *is* it You have sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done evil to this people; neither have You delivered Your people at all."
3. **Jeremiah ... 12:1** Righteous *are* You, O LORD, when I plead with You; Yet let me talk with You about *Your* judgments. Why does the way of the wicked prosper? *Why* are those happy who deal so treacherously?
4. **God answers Job out of a whirlwind with 4 chapters of questions! ... Job 38-41** "Who *is* this who darkens counsel By words without knowledge? Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me. "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell *Me*, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it?"



- Armor of God WebChat – Bill & Wayne – [Unmasking Christmas](#)
 Armor of God – Bronson James – [Is Christmas Christian?](#)
 Armor of God – Bronson James – [Should Christians Observe Christmas?](#)
 Sermon – Bill Watson – [Exposing Christmas](#)
 Sermon – Wes White – [Should you Join the War on Christmas?](#)
 Sermon – Murray Palmatier - [Should Christians Observe Christmas?](#)



What happened to “Mr Hart?” The student who was shrouded by Professor Kingsfield?

In closing ... A Noble Prize winning scientist was asked ... why he became a scientist? and he replied ... Every other child would come back from school and be asked, ‘What did you learn today?’ But my mother used to ask:

Did you ask a good question today?

This December season and beyond ... Seek to ask Good questions! Because Questions help you to focus attention in certain areas AND Good questions ... Socratic dialog ... helps to lead others to form critical thinking skills