

WE CARE FOR
GOOD'S
EARTH



Mary-Ann Casanova



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CHAPTER 1: THE STORY OF THE UNIVERSE

Sample

CHAPTER 1:

The Story of the Universe

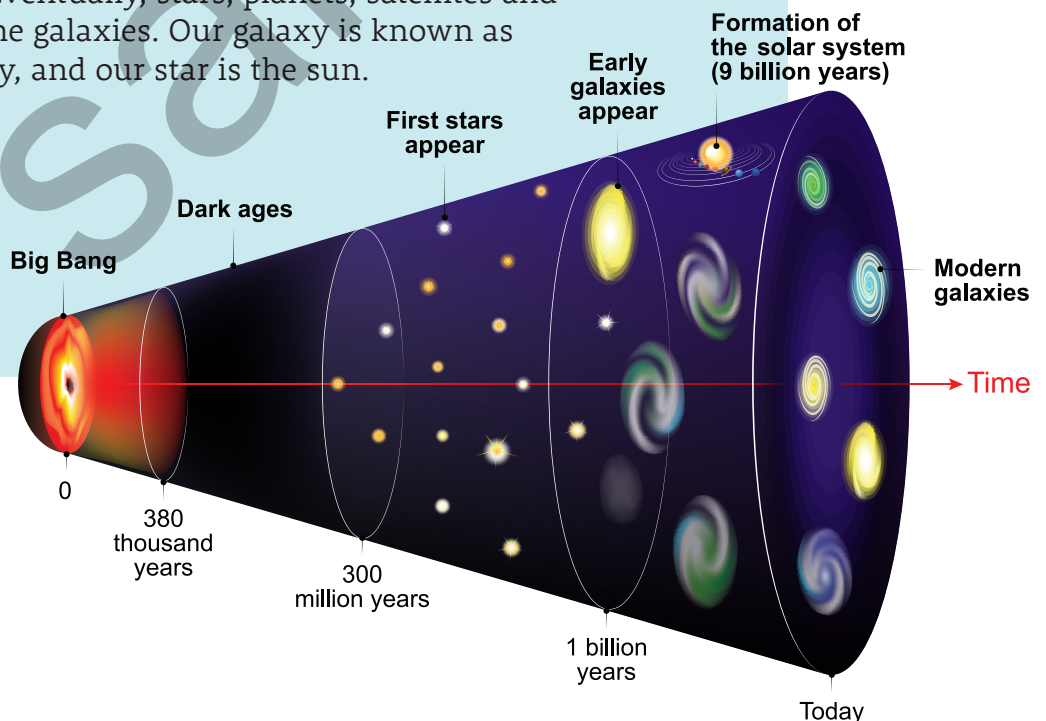
The story of the universe is about 13.7 billion years long.

For millennia, people have wondered about the origins and the story of the universe. The night sky has fascinated people. They noticed the changing location of the star constellations and the phases of the moon. The beauty, mystery and immense size of the night sky helped people to know that there was a God.

The story we tell today is currently the most credible story available to us. It is backed up by scientific research and ideas. In the future, as new information becomes available, the story may change a little or a lot. This has happened in the past.

Q: How did the universe begin?

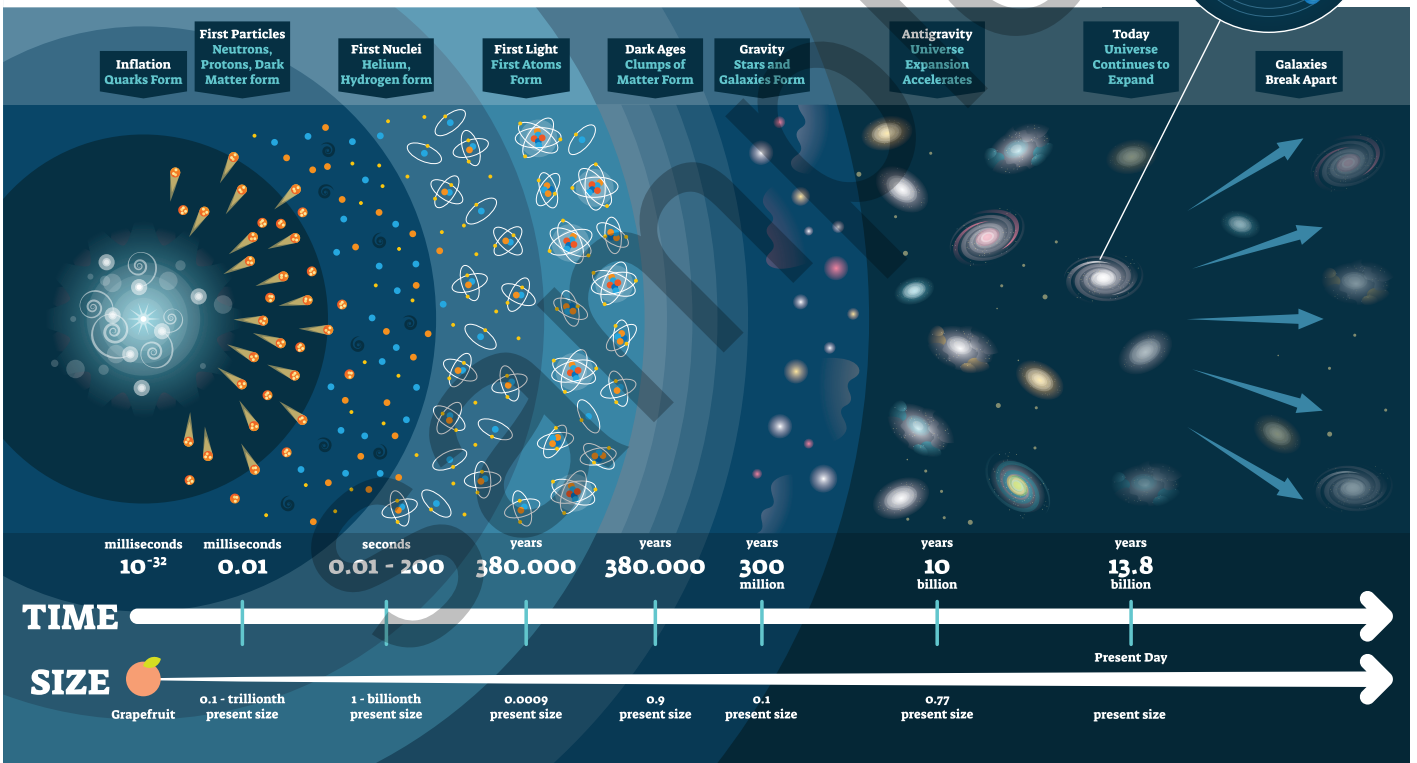
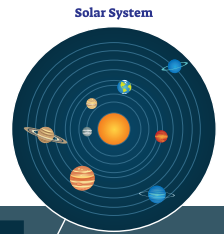
The universe exploded into being. Everything in the universe has its origins in this 'big bang'. As the young universe cooled quickly, atoms formed. Atoms clumped together and became matter. Matter clumped together and became stars. Stars exploded and became new stars, planets, satellites and moons. Eventually, stars, planets, satellites and moons became galaxies. Our galaxy is known as the Milky Way, and our star is the sun.



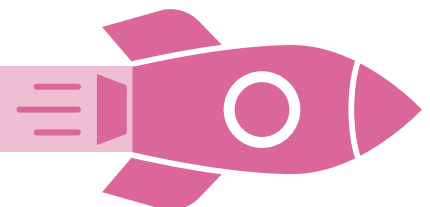
'Big Bang' was a term invented in 1927 by physicist Georges Lemaître. This Belgium priest imagined the expanding universe in reverse. Father Lemaître reasoned that the universe evolved from a single 'super atom' – a very small and condensed point.



BIG BANG THEORY



If 1km = 1 year, it would take about 340,000 trips around Earth's equator to cover the 13.7 billion years since the Big Bang.



Q: What came before the Big Bang?

As Christians, we believe that God existed before the Big Bang. God continues to create our universe and Earth. The Gospel of St John begins with: “All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life” (John 1:3–4).

Scientists have not been able to establish what came before the Big Bang. Recent images from the Webb Telescope suggest there may have been many ‘big bangs’ and, therefore, the potential of multiple universes. Regardless of how many universes exist, our God is the Creator God of them all.

Q: How do we see the universe changing?

The universe is constantly changing and full of waves of energy. The human eye can see a limited range of forms of light energy. Forms such as ultraviolet, solar, infrared, gamma ray, microwave and radio wave cannot be detected by the human eye. We have used the gift of intelligence, which God gave us, to invent ways of detecting and understanding other forms of light energy.

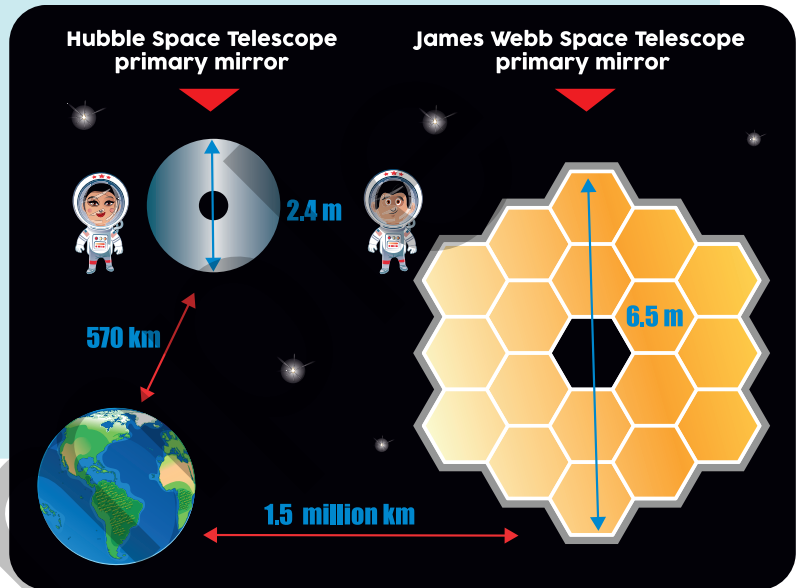
Telescopes have helped scientists and mathematicians to read the story of the universe. The first hand-held telescopes, such those invented by Galileo (1609), Kepler (1611) and Newton (1668), either refracted (bent) or reflected light. Amateur and professional astronomers have many types of telescopes available to observe and analyse the universe.



Q: How do we use telescopes today?

Two of the most sophisticated telescopes are in space and send images back to Earth. The Webb Telescope was launched on Christmas Day 2021 and is positioned 1.5 million kilometres above Earth. This telescope can 'read' infrared light that has been travelling for 13.7 billion years. The Hubble Space Telescope was launched in 1990.

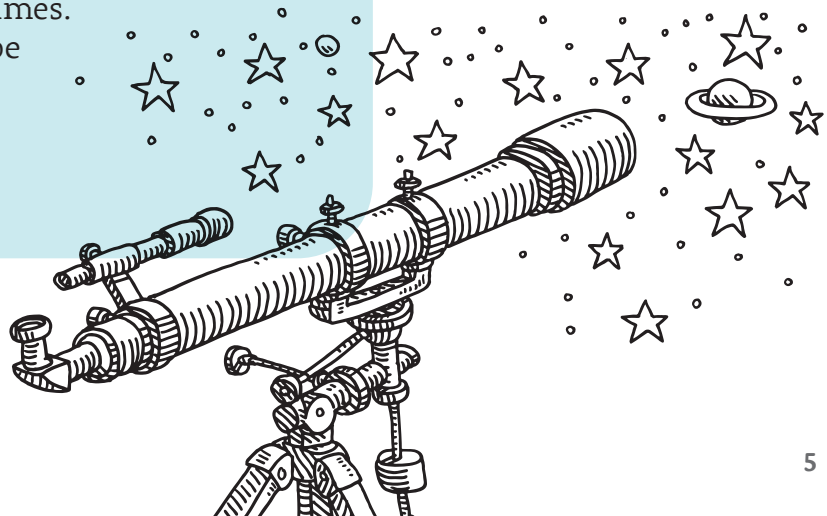
These telescopes are important tools to help us understand more about the amazing ways in which God continues to unfold creation. As Christians, we believe that God loved the universe into being and waits in delight as the heavens, the stars, Earth – and all that is – bring light and life to the story.



Q: Who invented the telescope?

The first telescopes were invented about 500 years ago by Hans Lipperhey, who made reading glasses in the Netherlands. The first telescope had the magnification power of three times.

In 1609, Galileo designed a telescope with the magnifying power of 20 times! With his telescope, Galileo was able to see two large moons near Saturn.

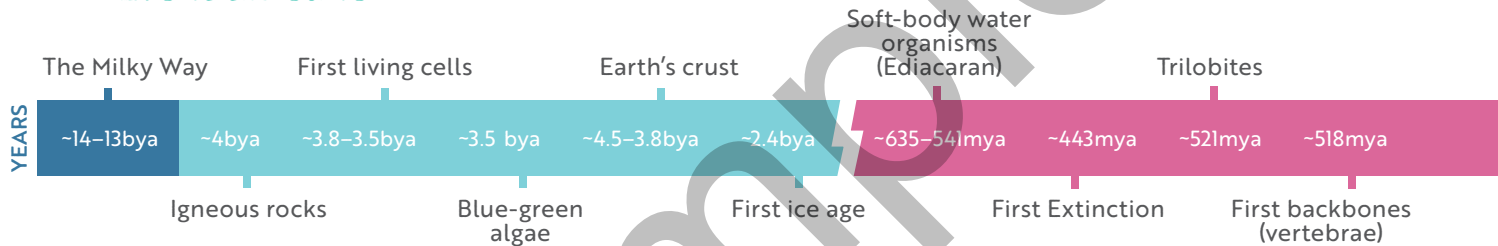


Q: When did the universe begin?

To put a date or time on any of the events that have taken place as the universe evolves, scientists use methods similar to those of physicist Georges Lemaître. Scientists look back through time and use approximate dates using the best information available at the time.

A wiggly line symbol ~ means 'approximately.' Time is expressed as 'years ago', and this is shortened to 'ya'. For example, ~10bya is read as 'approximately 10 billion years ago'.

Event timeline



KEY

- = approximately
- ya = years ago
- bya = billion years ago
- mya = million years ago

It is difficult for us to imagine the length of time that our universe has existed. The Bible tells us that God measures time in God's way: a thousand years to God is like a day (Psalm 90:4; 2 Peter 3:8).

"The Spirit of God has filled the universe with possibilities and therefore, from the very heart of things, something new can always emerge."
 (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, para. 81)

