

Origins Series: Sample Lesson Excerpt

From the Story of the Universe suite — showing format, tone, and structure

This is a structural sample showing the format and approach of the Origins Series. The full suite includes complete narrative guides, visual anchor cards, timeline materials, discussion prompts, and extension activities. Available at montessorimakersgroup.org/learning/origins

About the Origins Series

The Origins Series is a complete reconstruction of the five Montessori Great Lessons — updated for scientific accuracy and rewritten with justice at the center. Each suite covers one of the Great Lessons: the Story of the Universe, the Coming of Life, the Story of Humans, the Story of Language, and the Story of Numbers.

The series was built from two convictions: that the Great Lessons are among the most powerful educational experiences available to elementary-age children, and that the traditional presentations contain scientific inaccuracies and cultural blind spots that are no longer acceptable to pass on to children.

What Each Suite Contains

Narrative Guide

The complete written presentation — with exact language for every section, pauses for child response, and guidance on pacing. Designed to be read aloud, adapted to your voice over time.

Visual Anchor Cards

Full-color cards illustrating key moments in the lesson. Designed to be held, passed, and revisited — not projected. Sized for small-group presentation.

Timeline Materials

Printable timeline components for each lesson, including scaling guidance so children can physically experience deep time and vast scale.

Discussion Prompts

Open questions organized by lesson section — designed to invite children into genuine inquiry rather than comprehension check.

Extension Activities

Follow-up research invitations organized by material type: reading, artwork, writing, scientific investigation, and map work.

Guide Notes

Background information for the guide — the science, the justice framing, and the specific choices made in the reconstruction.

Sample: Story of the Universe — Opening

Guide Notes (excerpt)

This lesson opens with darkness and silence — not as drama, but as accuracy. Before the universe, there was no space, no time, no matter, no energy. This is genuinely difficult for children (and adults) to imagine, and that difficulty is part of the lesson. Do not rush past it. Let children sit with the incomprehensibility for a moment before the story begins.

Presentation Opening (sample language)

Place a dark cloth over the table. The room should be as quiet as possible. "Before I begin, I want you to do something difficult. I want you to try to imagine — nothing. Not empty space. Not darkness. Nothing. No space. No time. Nothing at all. [Pause. Give children 20–30 seconds.] "That is where this story begins. Not in the middle of something. At the beginning of everything. "About 13.8 billion years ago — a number so large we cannot really hold it — something happened. Something that had never happened before, because before that moment, there was no 'before.' There was no 'when.' "The universe began." [Slowly remove the cloth to reveal a bright light source or the first visual anchor card.] "Not with a bang. Not in space. There was no space yet. The universe did not expand into anything. Space itself began to expand. And everything that would ever exist — every star, every planet, every living thing, every one of you — was present in that first moment, in a form beyond anything we can imagine."

What Makes This Different

Scientifically accurate framing

The universe is 13.8 billion years old, not 'billions and billions.' The Big Bang was not an explosion in space — space itself expanded. These distinctions matter, and children can handle them.

Justice-centered narrative

The Story of Humans in the Origins Series does not move from 'primitive' to 'advanced.' It does not center European civilization. It presents human ingenuity as distributed across all peoples, all geographies, all times.

Language for the guide, not just the child

Each suite includes Guide Notes — background reading so the guide can present with confidence and answer the questions children will ask. The guide should understand the science. Not as an expert, but as an informed storyteller.

The full Origins Series — all five suites — is available as individual downloads (\$110 each) or as a complete bundle (\$475). montessorimakersgroup.org/learning/origins