**Biology 1—Irreducible Complexity**

Script

Instructions: Advance the PowerPoint slides at every new paragraph and anywhere you see “/”

[1] What is Irreducible Complexity?

[2] Something is irreducibly complex if it has several parts…

[3] …that work together to contribute to the basic function of the object.

[4] If any one of the parts is removed, // (click twice to advance)

[5] the system can’t function any more.

[6] To tell if something is irreducibly complex, / we have to specify the function of the system. In other words, we ask What is this thing supposed to do? / Then we Identify all the system parts, / and ask if all these parts are necessary in order for it to function.

[7] Take a mouse trap for example: / It has a flat wooden platform, / a metal hammer, / a spring, / a catch to release when pressure is applied, / and a metal bar that holds the hammer back when the trap is set.

[8] Which of these parts are necessary for the mouse trap to be effective?

[9] Without the wooden base, / there would be nothing to attach the other parts to.

[10] Without the spring, / the other parts would be loose and wiggle about.

[11] Without the hammer, / we wouldn’t be able to catch the mouse. / (wait for bites)

[12] Without the catch or metal bar, / the spring would make the hammer snap as soon as you let go of it.

[13] When all the parts are necessary for the mouse trap to function, we say it is irreducibly complex. That means it could not be any less complex and still be able to function.

[14] But what if there was something on the mouse trap that didn’t need to be there for it to function? / Like the red “A” painted on the wooden base, / or maybe a ribbon for decoration, / or a little bell that would ring when a mouse is caught? Since the mouse trap could still function without those things, they would not be considered part of the irreducibly complex system.

[15] The mouse trap is a simple example used by Michael Behe in his book Darwin’s Black Box to explain the irreducible complexity that we see in much more complex systems in nature.

[16] Our next presentation describes two irreducibly complex molecular machines at work in our bodies that are WAY more complex than a mouse trap.