

Our School: Our World

How can we help to care for the planet?

1 PETER 4:10

Each of you should use whatever gifts you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.





A Guide for Teachers

Introduction

‘Our school: our world’ has been produced to support all schools in enabling staff and pupils to play their part in realising this commitment to care for the planet.

It provides teachers with clear background information on Christian teaching about the world and its importance; introduces the ecological beliefs and practices of other religions and world views; lists useful supporting resources across many media (further resources can also be found on our website www.dioceseofnorwich.org) and contains suggested ways of engaging with the Christian belief in the importance of caring for the planet through Collective Worship and Religious Education.

This document also supports the SIAMS Schedule, in particular gaining evidence for: **‘How well the School’s Christian Vision inspires the whole school community to engage in social action and to be courageous advocates for change in their local, national and global communities.’**

High on the OFSTED criteria for good and outstanding schools is the ability to provide opportunities for pupils to transfer knowledge. Engaging in social change projects, debates and asking big questions enables pupils to develop this skill.

The document also supports the Eco Schools initiative (www.eco-schools.org.uk) which stresses the importance of schools involving their pupils in issues related to the future of the planet on which they live.

We truly hope that you will find this resource both useful and engaging and enjoy using it in schools as much as we enjoyed creating it.



Bishop Graham foreword

Dear friends

When I was young I went to a school that was still in a Victorian building. The windows were so high I couldn't look out of them! That was how they were designed. The Victorians felt the children should only look at their books and their teachers. I wanted also to look outside and daydream.

What do you see outside your classroom window? I hope you can see the different clouds scurrying by, the changes to trees during each season and perhaps birds flying around.

If you had the most amazing eyes perhaps you could zoom in on the tiniest insect, see bees collecting pollen, watch a blackbird tugging at a worm for lunch, wonder at a ladybird taking off in flight, or even see the tiny microbes that live in the soil.

Then your amazing eyes might zoom out to see the stars and the planets. If you got into a spaceship you could look back at our amazing blue planet floating in the universe. You might notice how this is the only home we have – this one incredibly diverse planet.

As you read this, I hope you are feeling a sense of awe and wonder at God's creation.

You will have also have heard how we are hurting our planet home. We are throwing away too much. We are polluting the land and rivers. We are using too much carbon which is causing global warming. This is already affecting the world's poorest people, some of whom can no longer live in their homes because they get frequently flooded or the sea level is rising.

You already know so much about our world and I hope that 'Our School: Our World' will help you to treasure it more. I know that children and young people are really passionate about how we live well and how we care for plants and animals. Thank you for doing that because it is a message that adults need to keep hearing. Please keep telling us.

Jesus noticed nature and so must we. The Gospels are full of stories of the growth of seeds, the choking of thistles, the beauty of lilies and the fruitfulness of trees. We have the privilege and responsibility to care for the earth and to tread gently on it.

With meaningful steps forward we can all be part of a global movement to turn the situation around and be the generation which, when faced with our biggest test, chose the path of hope for all creation.

Thank you for being part of that.
With all good wishes and every blessing,

+ *Graham Norris*

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A Maori Prayer

This prayer can be used to engage pupils in reflection that global issues and concerns are just as important as local issues.

**Lord, Holy Spirit,
you blow like the wind in a thousand paddocks.
Inside and outside the fences,
you blow where you wish to blow.**

**Lord, Holy Spirit,
you are the sun who shines on the little plant.
You warm him gently, you give him life,
you raise him up to become a tree with many leaves.**

**Lord, Holy Spirit,
you are the mother eagle with her young,
holding them in peace under your feathers.
On the highest mountain you have built your nest,
above the valley, above the storms of the world,
where no hunter ever comes.**

**Lord, Holy Spirit,
you are the bright cloud in whom we hide,
in whom we know already that the battle has been won.
You bring us to our Brother Jesus,
to rest our heads upon his shoulder.**

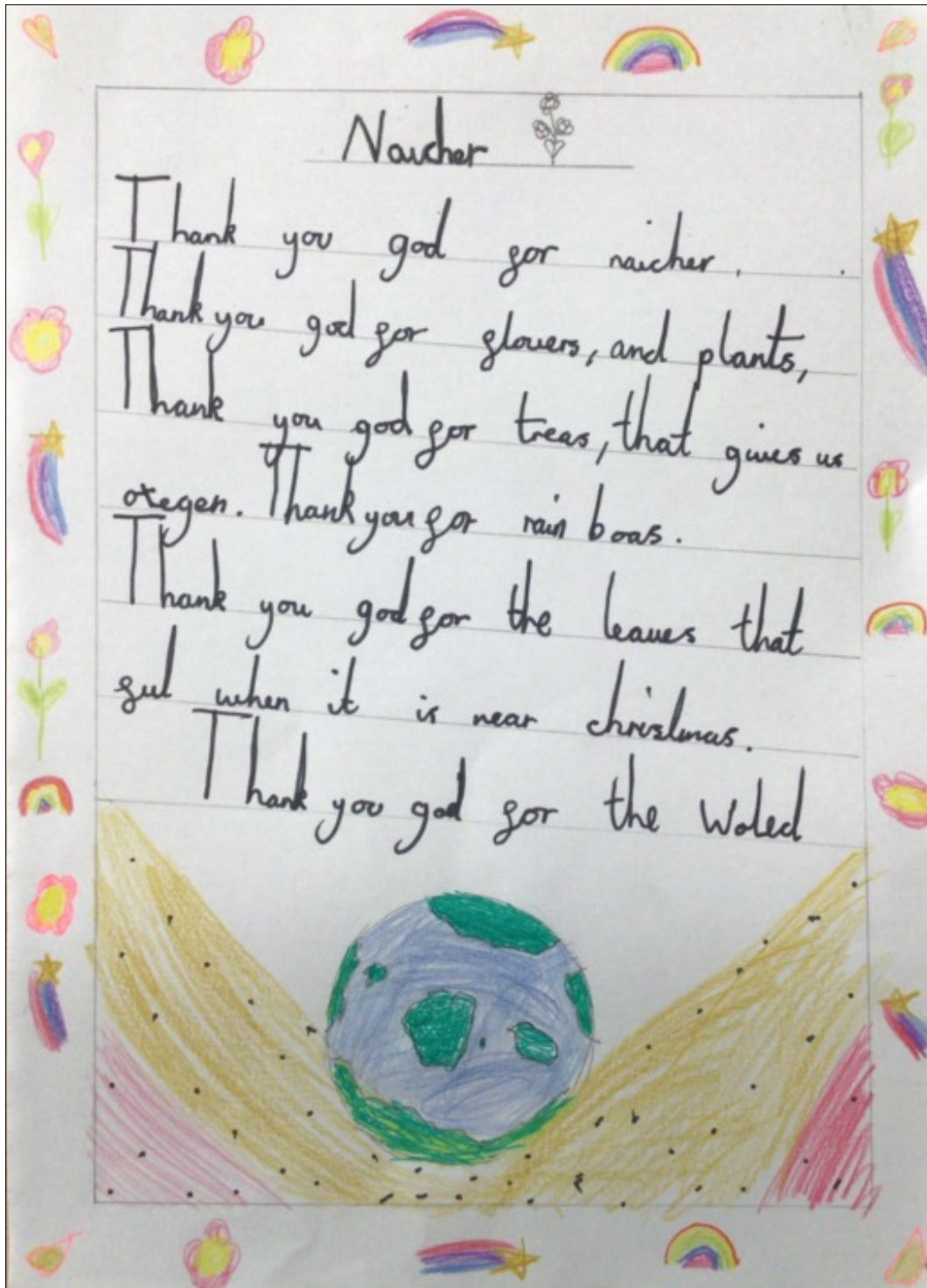
**Lord, Holy Spirit,
in the love of friends you are building a new house.
Heaven is with us when you are with us.
You are singing your song in the hearts of the poor.
Guide us, wound us, heal us. Bring us to God.**

James Keir Baxter (1928-72)

James K Baxter was a notorious rebel who became the most eminent of New Zealand's poets. A devout Roman Catholic, he became a religious mystic and spent his last years in self-imposed poverty in a Maori settlement.

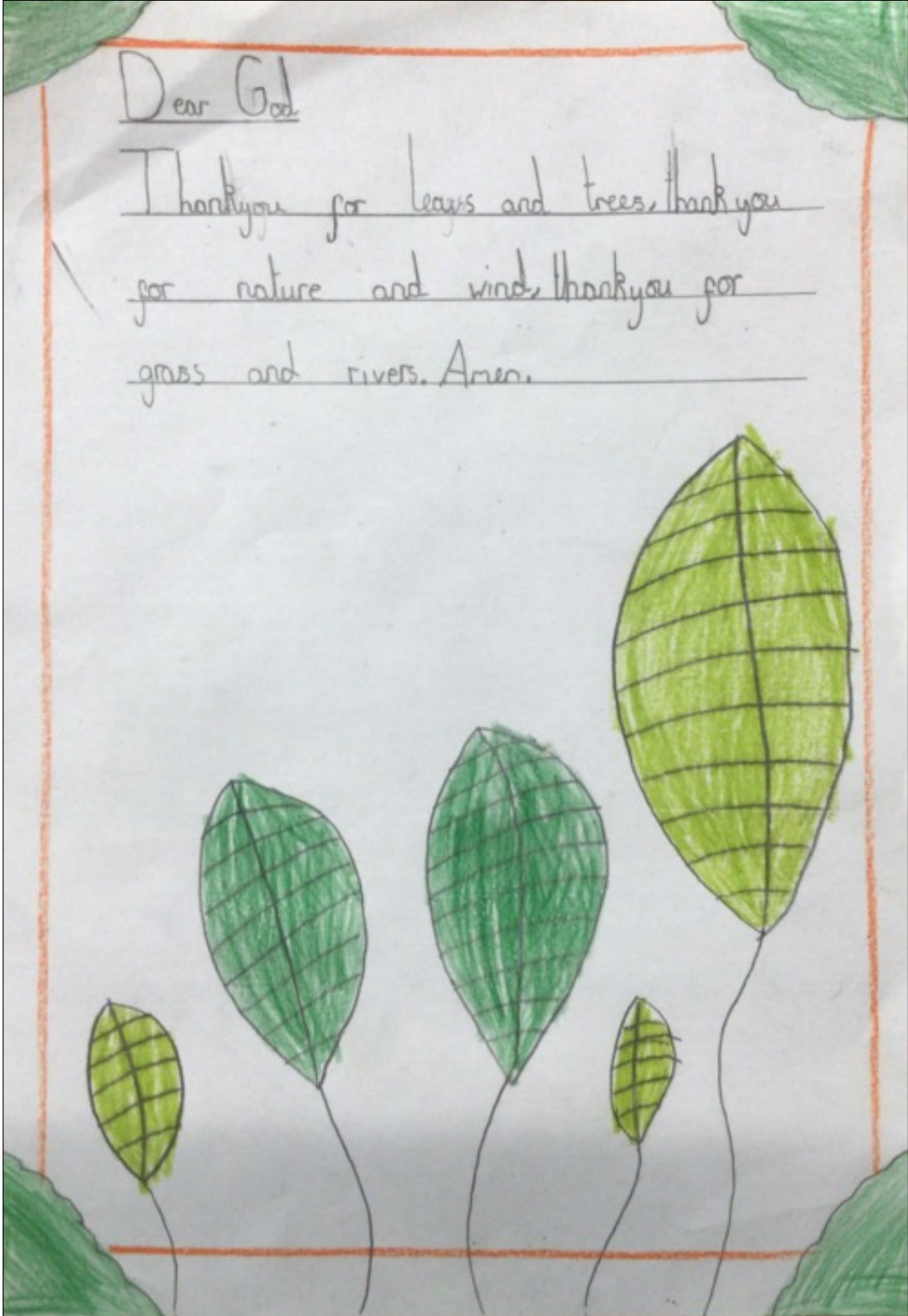
This prayer is based on Baxter's reading of Deuteronomy 32:10-12, part of the Song of Moses. The Hebrew understanding of God revealed in the natural order harmonises with the Maori sense of the divine in the trees and rivers that sustain us, and in the life-enhancing wind of the Spirit.

Pupil Prayers



Dear God

Thankyou for leays and trees,thankyou
for nature and wind,thankyou for
grass and rivers. Amen.



Christian Teaching



Exploring the teachings found in the Bible offers teachers opportunities to encourage pupils to see the Earth on which we all live as precious and a gift from God. These include the creation stories; the Psalms; the Law; poetic passages and the New Testament.

The Understanding Christianity frieze is a good resource to use for pupils to discuss Creation and The Fall.

The Creation Stories

The creation stories to be found in Genesis see human beings as the pinnacle of God's work, but given a special responsibility to take care of the world in which they are to live. The first of the two stories is in Genesis chapter 1. This is a poetic representation of the creation, where God creates a world in perfect balance; a world that pleases him with its beauty and harmony; where he places man and woman created in his own image. The days are ordered and logical in sequence; in each, God sees that his creation is good and there is a refrain at the end of each creation - there was evening and there was morning; a second/third day.

In Genesis chapter 2, Adam, the Hebrew word for 'man', is created first and the rest is created for him. The final creation is woman, because he needed a companion of equal worth, and she is so closely related that she is described as being taken from his rib. Adam is asked to name all the animals which are brought to him and he is given a garden in which to live to provide all his needs. Human beings are in God's care, and God will provide all that is needed. This is the paradise which the Garden of Eden represents.

It is humanity which spoils this arrangement by disobedience to the Creator. This is the story of The Fall, which describes the situation in which the human species finds itself.

The Understanding Christianity Resource (RE Today) is a fantastic way to introduce children to Creation and The Fall. It places both into the context of the big Bible story. The use of the

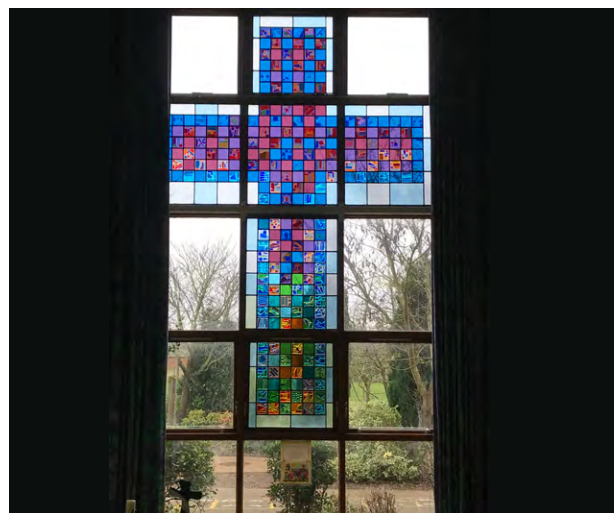
Big Frieze from Understanding Christianity and the accompanying booklet enables teachers to introduce the concept of Creation in a Christian context and compare it to other religions and worldviews. It then links this concept to The Fall and allows teachers to explore how humans in the form of Adam and Eve began to exploit the environment around them. It then provides further links to the concepts of People of God, Incarnation, Gospel, Salvation and Kingdom of God. Each of these is seen not only in the seven panels of the Big Frieze but the associated unit of learning connected to each concept. In each of these concepts' aspects of moral duty, care, compassion and respect are explored within the beliefs of Christianity and in comparison to other religions and worldviews. The overarching theme that is encountered in this resource is God the Creator and how Christians today live their lives to protect his creation through being living stewards on earth.

These stories also tell how, when God created man and woman, he gave them stewardship over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground (Genesis 1:26). Humans rely on the world (creation) to sustain them. Christians believe that all creatures rely on God for life, therefore they have an interdependent relationship with planet Earth.

The Christian perspective of allowing ourselves to be God-guided can enable us to do many works for the good of the planet. Having been created as intelligent beings, we can create medicines and other technologies for the benefit of God's creation. Genesis 1:28 refers to humanity's responsibility as steward of creation. This requires us to understand how modern science can be part of humanity's responsible stewardship.

It is important to acknowledge and discuss the scientific approach in the classroom. The creation stories need to be read for their meaning and not seen as scientific fact. In this way they offer a rich mine of information about the nature of human beings and their relationship to each other, to the world and to God and creation.

A Jewish story/Midrash written about 1,500 years ago to expand on the meaning of creation and humanity's place in it says when God created the first man, he led him round all the trees in the Garden of Eden. God said to him, "See my works, how beautiful and praiseworthy they are. Everything I have created has been created for your sake. Think of this, and do not corrupt or destroy my world; for if you corrupt it, there will be no one to set it right after you." This emphasises how important it is for each person to take responsibility for our world.



The Psalms



The idea of human beings as stewards of God's creation is a continuing theme in the Old Testament. How creation responds to its creator and the awe in which individuals hold the world as God's creation is clear in a number of passages, particularly in the Psalms - the hymns of the Old Testament.

The power and majesty of God are to be observed in the natural world which is described as the work of his hands. These can be used in the classroom to encourage pupils to consider their importance both to God and to humankind. Humanity may rule but the earth still belongs to God and him alone.

Psalm 24:1-2

**The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;
for he founded it upon the seas
and established it upon the waters.**

Psalm 104:16-24

**The trees of the LORD are well watered,
the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.**

**There the birds make their nests;
the stork has its home in the pine trees.**

**The high mountains belong to the wild goats;
the crags are a refuge for the coney.**

**The moon marks off the seasons,
and the sun knows when to go down.**

**You bring darkness, it becomes night,
and all the beasts of the forest prowl.**

**The lions roar for their prey
and seek their food from God.**

**The sun rises, and they steal away;
they return and lie down in their dens.**

**Then man goes out to his work,
to his labour until evening.**

**How many are your works, O LORD! In wisdom you made them all;
the Earth is full of your creatures.**

Psalm 96:11-13

**Let the heavens rejoice, let the Earth be glad;
let the sea resound, and all that is in it;**

**let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them.
Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy;**

**they will sing before the LORD, for he comes, he comes to judge the Earth.
He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his truth.**

Psalm 8:3-9

**When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,**

**what is man that you are mindful of him,
the son of man that you care for him?**

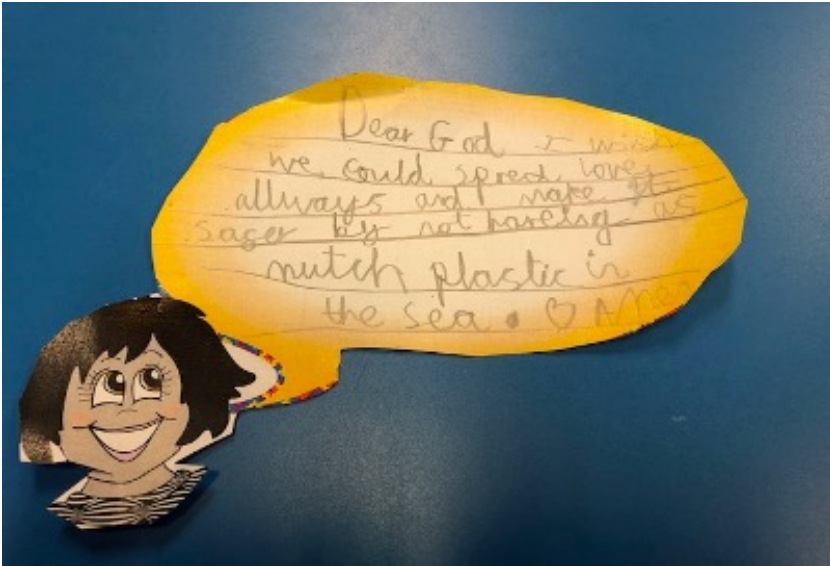
You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honour.

**You made him ruler over the works of your hands;
you put everything under his feet:**

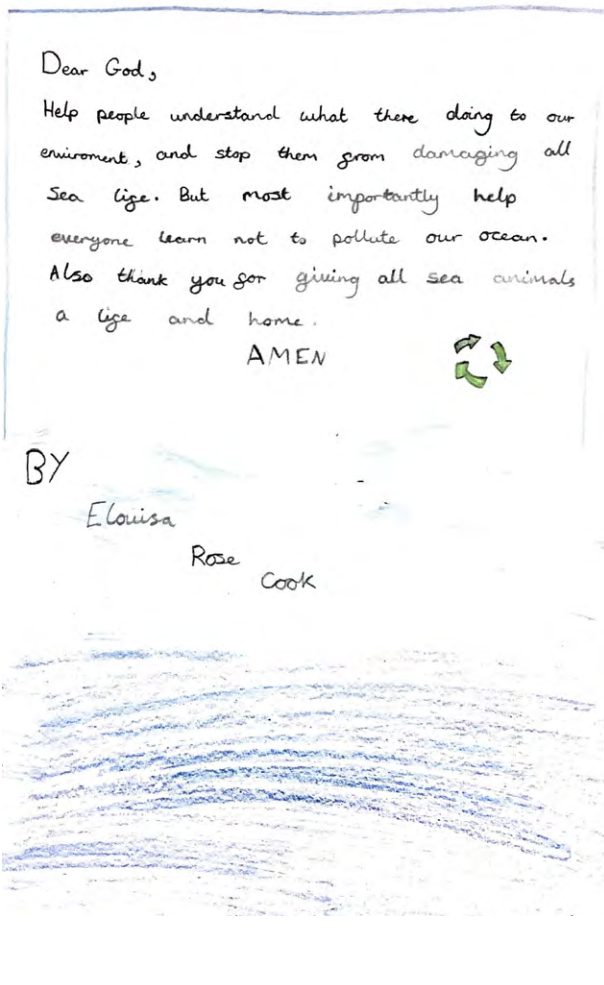
**all flocks and herds,
and the beasts of the field,**

**the birds of the air,
and the fish of the sea,
all that swim the paths of the seas.**

**O LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the Earth.**



These Psalms remind Christians that God cares for his creation and that it can all respond to him in praise and thanksgiving. It is into this context that people are created as a part of the whole work of creation.



Bible References on Creation

The Creation - Genesis 1 and 2

Two stories about how God made the world, the wonder and perfection of the creation, with human beings as the pinnacle of God's work. Genesis 1 is a grand poetic description with the refrain of each day's creation being good and leads up to the creation of men and women as equals, made in God's image. Genesis 2 sees the creation of Adam (the Hebrew word for man) and then the rest of the creation is provided to help and support him, until eventually Eve is created as the perfect companion for Adam/Man.

The Fall from Paradise & Perfection - Genesis 3

Creation is still good but no longer perfect. This is because humanity, the crown of creation, the image of God, is no longer perfect because of its disobedience.

Covenant of Noah - Genesis 9:8-17

Through making a covenant with Noah and all creation after the flood, God is showing that creation is still important to him and that he is still actively involved in it. The sign of this covenant is the rainbow - put in the sky to assure humankind that he will never destroy the Earth with water again. (When using this story please remember that it is about God's wrath and judgement, although ultimately salvation of the good for a new creation.)



Psalm 19:1-3

The creation, as a whole, is described as though it were the first cathedral.

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.

Psalm 148

A hymn of praise from all of God's creation.

Acts 17:24-25

Christians believe God has ultimate control over the world he made and that he does not live in temples built by hands and is not served by humans because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.

The Understanding Christianity Big Frieze is excellent for pupils visualising these different concepts.

The Law (Torah) Old Testament

The Law (or Torah) in the first five books of the Old Testament gives God's instructions, through Moses to the Jewish people, to ensure that the natural world is taken care of and not exploited.

Much of the Old Testament law ensures that, while humankind should use the natural world to meet its needs, the land and animals were not used to exhaustion. It lays down how fields were to be left fallow; that enough seeds for replanting would be kept from the harvest; that there was provision for the poor and the animals to take what they needed to live, rather than it being taken by the farmer for profit.

The Lord said to Moses on Mount Sinai, "Say to the people of Israel, When you come into the land which I give you, the land shall keep a Sabbath to the Lord. Six years shall you sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in its fruits; but in the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a Sabbath to the Lord; you shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard. What grows of itself in your harvest you shall not reap, and the grapes of your undressed vine you shall not gather; it shall be a year of solemn rest for the land" (Leviticus 25:1-5).

The New Testament



All the teaching found in the New Testament reflects Old Testament Jewish thought about creation and the role of humankind in it.

Jesus's parables and other teaching are full of references to nature, farming and fishing (e.g. the Sower; the Lost Sheep).

Jesus emphasises God's care of all his creatures (see Matthew 6:25-34) whilst teaching that human beings are worthy of particular care

Matthew 25:14-30 refers to the responsibility to use assets wisely. Preservation is not enough, mankind must also use the gifts God has bestowed, which would include the gifts of the world and creation.

We believe the ultimate teaching on the importance of God's creation and his continuing involvement in it is the Christian belief in the Incarnation - that God became part of his own creation in the person of Jesus in order to save it from itself. 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son...' (John 3:16). This is the Christian teaching that Jesus came to restore the relationship with God which had been damaged by humankind's disobedience and so allows the idea that paradise can be restored.

The Fall and free will

'God looked at what he had made and was well pleased' Genesis 1:31 So why does God allow his creation to be mistreated?

In Religious Education and Collective Worship, safe spaces are created for pupils to explore and critically reflect on big questions such as this.

The question of wars and suffering in the world is one that may be raised at some point by a pupil: How can God allow these things to happen? When Job questioned God as to why he was allowing his suffering, and challenged him to come to speak with him, God's answer put Job firmly in his place; 'Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge? ... Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation?' (Job 38:2 onwards). The sheer complexity of nature itself is awe-inspiring. God uses creation to put Job's self-righteousness into perspective.

Teachers in church schools should be aware of this pertinent question and be prepared to present the counter-argument that, although Christians accept that they do not live in a perfect world, they believe that human suffering is not through a lack of faith but through the reality of existence. There are many examples of suffering – pandemics, drought, famine, tsunami - that are not caused by direct human action. Christians seek the revelation of God in the lives of the people affected, and in the sometimes unnoticed good that comes of the suffering. It is the challenge of educators to encourage pupils to see the potential in all situations. It is also important that we do not expect God to intervene to solve all the problems of the world; humankind is given that responsibility as part of their free will.

Matthew 5:3-10 (the beatitudes)

**Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

**Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.**

**Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the Earth.**

**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst
for righteousness,
for they will be filled.**

**Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.**

**Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.**

**Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.**

**Blessed are those who are persecuted
because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

The Church School

Within the church school environment there is a great opportunity to take stewardship for creation seriously, not just in terms of self-interest but as part of a wider Christian responsibility reflecting the Christian values which underpin the life and work of the school.

Environmental responsibility forms part of daily life and there are many ways to encourage pupils to interact with the world around them, from a creation-table display to litter-picking in the playground; from growing vegetables to clearing a wildlife area or recycling paper in the classroom.

Pupils can be encouraged to foster a caring attitude towards their school environment and their fellow pupils and then to reflect on their stewardship role in the wider community, leading to responsible, forward-thinking, considerate citizens. Sustainable development is an

obligation; the alleviation of poverty through fair trade and the sharing of natural resources and technologies are also linked to this aim.

To increase the pupils' awareness of the ethos of a church school, God's creation should be celebrated and highlighted throughout; perhaps explicit in the school's vision statement, school improvement plan aiming for zero carbon classrooms. An eco-council could be formed, a school garden created and the curriculum understood through big questions.

Becoming stewards of God's creation

1 Peter 4:10 'Each of you should use whatever gifts you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.'

The Church of England Vision for Education and the SIAMS schedule focuses on empowering learners through developing 'courageous advocacy' across the curriculum. At the heart of the vision are the words Jesus spoke 'I have come, so that you may have life, life in all its fullness' (John 10:10)

Part of this fullness of life is the intent for all pupils to develop character virtues such as wisdom, respect, courage and compassion so they become aware and responsible people who aspire to serve and use their learning to make a positive difference in the world.

This part of the document sets out ideas and reflections to extend the understanding of local and global environmental issues so that pupils can recognise the impact of their actions and respond to God's call to be stewards of his creation.



Reflections

- 1 Have you established an eco-committee?
- 2 How does your School Vision reflect stewardship for creation?
- 3 Does your curriculum intent focus on developing courageous advocates?
- 4 When studying environmental issues and character values such as responsibility, do you refer to big questions in the context of Bible verses such as Genesis 1:26?
- 5 What does your spiritual development plan look like? Are there opportunities for pupils to pause and reflect on creation?

There is a significant place here for work within the Religious Education curriculum about Christian teaching on creation and responsibility for the world in which we live. Locally agreed syllabi, as well as additional guidance for church schools from the diocese, offer helpful advice and materials.

Celebrations within Collective Worship, with the opportunity to reflect with awe and wonder on the marvels of God's creation, will support and underpin much of the work done in the curriculum in relation to this.



RE + Creation

It is important to remember that the other religions and worldviews also have teachings about humankind's place in the world and their beliefs and views can contribute to our own thinking about how we should approach issues to do with the future of the planet and humankind's use of it.

In Norfolk's RE Agreed Syllabus (2019) it states "RE is an essential area of study if pupils are to be well prepared for life in a world where controversy over such matters is pervasive and where people lack the knowledge to make their own informed decisions. It is a subject for all pupils, whatever their own family background and personal beliefs and practices. It is rooted in a vision for the subject which acknowledges the importance of religious and non-religious worldviews in all human life."

This booklet supports and promotes an inclusive study of religion and worldviews, thereby supporting pupils' balanced understanding of the world in which they live, including that related to caring for the environment and God's creation.

There are many belief systems throughout the world. Many have their own stories to tell about how and why the world was created. There is the Aborigine Dreamtime; the Chinese tradition of the two forces of Yin and Yang; the Sanema tribe's belief in the spirit of the ancestors; and the Yoruba people's belief in the Sky God Olorun and the gods of mountains, river and trees. A list of creation stories from world religions can be found in the Values for Life folder (p.42).

By exploring the different ideas around the world we can enable pupils to start thinking more deeply about their own impact on the environment around them.

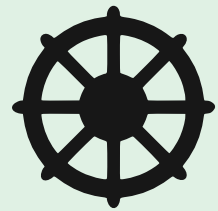


Religion + worldviews

The following section of the booklet offers an overview of some of the world-wide beliefs and teachings about the environment.

Buddhism

The Buddha taught that all living things are interrelated, therefore respect for life and care for the natural world is an essential element of Buddhist teaching. Buddha also taught that everything is impermanent and that everything is changing. For Buddhists, caring for the environment begins with the individual person. **The Noble Eightfold Path** encourages generosity, wisdom and lovingkindness. Buddhist teachings encourage people to be more aware of their thoughts, actions, feelings and emotions. **The Five Moral Precepts** help Buddhists to form the right attitudes towards the world around them; they include not harming or killing living things and not misusing the senses.



Aware of the suffering caused by the destruction of life, I undertake to cultivate compassion and learn ways to protect the lives of people, animals, plants and minerals Thich Nhat Hanh - The First Precept: Reverence for Life

Something to try: exploring interconnectedness: use a ball of string and sit the children in a circle, ideally outside. Begin with a word relating to nature or the environment (e.g. tree, flower, etc). As you say the word keep hold of your end of the string and throw it to a child. Ask them to think of a word connecting with yours. You may want to prompt with a question, such as, 'Who lives in the tree?' or 'Who eats the leaves?' Continue throwing the ball and making connections until all the children have had a go (suggested Lower KS2 activity).

Hinduism

Hinduism is an 'umbrella' term for the traditions which follow the **Vedas**. There are a range of different beliefs and teachings within these traditions. A popular Hindu story describes how Lord Brahma creates the world, Lord Vishnu sustains the world and that Lord Shiva brings destruction. **The Bhagavad Gita**, a popular Hindu scripture explains that the soul or atman is present in all living things - including animals, fish and birds - and that the atman passes from one to another in successive births. The importance of the natural world is therefore paramount in the Hindu traditions. Festivals frequently use natural elements as offerings to God. In addition, a central teaching for many Hindus is that of ahimsa or non-violence. Many Hindus are therefore vegetarians and treat animals like their own children. Hindu teachings stress that humans are part of the natural world and should be in harmony with it.



Thou (Krishna) art the dark blue butterfly, and the green parrot with red eyes. Thou art the thundercloud, the seasons and the oceans. Shvetashvatara Upanishad, 4.4

Something to try: appreciating cows: ask children to bring in food wrappers from items that contain milk or are derived from milk. Create a display of the items. Talk about the health benefits of milk for many people. Ask children why Hindus might consider the cow to be like a mother. Tell the children a story about Krishna caring for the cows and how he used to decorate them with garlands and flowers and give them names. Ask the children for their own ideas about showing respect for cows; these could then be drawn or made using craft materials (suggested KS1 activity).

Islam

Islam means 'peace' - peace between humans, peace between humans and Allah, but also peace between humans and the natural environment. Muslims believe that Allah is the Maker and Sustainer of Creation. Humans are regarded as 'Ashraf al makhluqat', the most noble of Allah's creatures. Muslims believe that Allah has made each human being a guardian (Khalifah) of creation, and that the natural environment has been given on trust to be looked after and not abused. **The Qur'an** makes numerous references to nature and particularly to water. 'Allah sends down water from the heavens and with it gives life to the Earth after its death' 30:24. The importance of water is also reflected in ritual purification and Paradise gardens.

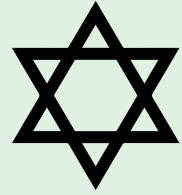


Allah has set up the balance in order that you may not transgress from this balance... It is he who has spread out the Earth for His creatures. Qur'an 67:3-4

Something to try: exploring pattern and order in the universe: use a range of images of Islamic geometric art, ideally on a whiteboard. Ask the children to write down words that come to mind as they reflect on the images. e.g. shape, colour, pattern, feelings... Collect the ideas together and ask the children to write short poems based on the artwork. Children might then create their own Islamic art to accompany their poem (suggested KS2 activity).

Judaism

Jews believe that God is creator of the world. They share the story of creation with Christianity and promote similar values as a result. The concept of stewardship is therefore an important teaching within the Jewish faith. Many festivals in the Jewish year originated as harvest festivals; **Pesach** in the spring which celebrates the Exodus from Egypt; **Shavout**, celebrating the giving of the Torah to Moses; **Sukkot** marking the years spent in the wilderness. During Sukkot, temporary leafy shelters are made in gardens to remind Jews of the huts the Israelites lives in after leaving Egypt. Compassionate care of animals is referred to in the Hebrew Bible, and Kashrut rules include references to types of animal that cannot be eaten, as well as methods for quick and painless slaughter. The Prophets, especially Isaiah, spoke of the messianic future when the deserts would bloom and animals would live together in harmony (Isaiah 11 v6-9).



When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have set in place, what is man that You are mindful of him, the son of man that You care for him? Psalm 8 :3-4

Something to try: exploring a vision for the future: show the children Isaiah's vision for the future, along with other Jewish examples (e.g. from the Psalms, Judy Chicago), this may be accompanied with images on a whiteboard, or children may be asked to close their eyes and imagine what it would be like. Discuss the ideas, and ask the children what their 'ideal future' would be like. Ask the children to draw, write about or create a model of what they would like the future to be like (suggested KS1 or 2 activity).

Sikhism

The Sikh faith teaches both respect and responsibility towards God's creation and the needs of future generations to halt the present destructive trends in society. **The Gurus** taught that the world belongs to God. In fact, one of the names of God is Karta Purukh, the Creator. Sikhs also believe that creation is a continual process and that God is within creation. Some Sikhs are vegetarian, but this is generally left to the individual conscience. In gurdwaras the langar meal is vegetarian so that it will not offend anyone. Seva, service, is a fundamental teaching within the Sikh faith. The Gurus highlighted the importance of devotion to God through caring for all human beings and the world around them.



I see the Creator pervading everywhere. (AG 21)

Creating the world, God has made it a place to practice spirituality. (AG 1035)

Something to try: creating a langar meal: invite the children to create a menu for a langar meal. Explore Sikh references to vegetarianism, food being appropriately sourced and so on. Consider the Sikh attitude to animals and the importance of seva in the community. Children may create a menu, or they might write a review of an imaginary meal they had eaten in the langar. Some children may create signs/symbols/slogans to show the type of food and ethos that there would be in a langar (suggested KS1 or 2 activity).

Humanism

Humanists do not believe in any kind of god or supernatural force that will solve their problems; they believe that human beings must take sole responsibility for solving the world's environmental problems. Only humans are capable of finding the solutions that can lead to a sustainable existence. As on most things, there is no humanist authority or orthodoxy on the environment, although they tend to rely on science for information about the issues and how best to overcome the problems. Some humanists have written very eloquently about the importance of the natural environment in our lives:

There are 'features of nature which...contribute to the meaning the world has for us...essential features of the sense we make of our experience. In that way they enrich our lives, not necessarily because they are beautiful, but because they are emotionally evocative.'

Philosopher Richard Norman on "Nature, Science and the Sacred"

Something to try: why not explore stewardship of the environment as a Humanist and compare it to that of a Christian? Get your children to answer the following questions from both angles:

1. **Does it matter if a species dies out? Why?**
2. **Is the natural world only valuable due to its use to human beings?**
3. **How much would you be prepared to give up to prevent further damage to the environment?**
4. **Should we be more concerned for the needs of people alive today or in the future?**
5. **Does David Attenborough belong here?**

Units of work for RE

Knowledge and Skills – Supporting Curriculum Content on the Environment (based on the Diocese of Norwich Age-Related Expectations)

Theology	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
A. Where beliefs come from	<p>Give a clear, simple account of at least one narrative, story or important text used by at least one religion or worldview.</p> <p>UCP – Unit 1.2 Who made the world?</p>	<p>Retell a narrative, story or important text from at least one religion or worldview and recognise a link with a belief.</p> <p>Recognise different types of writing from within one text.</p> <p>UCP – Unit 1.2 Who made the world?</p>	<p>Show awareness of different sources of authority and how they link with beliefs.</p> <p>Identify different types of writing and give an example of how a believer might interpret a source of authority.</p>	<p>Identify different sources of authority and how they link with beliefs.</p> <p>Give examples of different writings and different ways believers interpret sources of authority.</p>	<p>Describe different sources of authority and how they link with beliefs.</p> <p>Describe a range of different interpretations of sources of authority and consider the reliability of these sources for a group of believers.</p>
B. How beliefs change over time	N/A	N/A	<p>Recognise that beliefs are influenced by events in the past and present.</p>	<p>Identify events in history and society which have influenced some religious and non-religious worldviews.</p> <p>UCP 2a.4 What kind of world did Jesus want?</p>	<p>Describe how events in history and society have influenced some religious and non-religious worldviews.</p> <p>UCP 2b.6 What did Jesus do to save human beings?</p>
C. How beliefs relate to each other	<p>Recognise that narratives, stories and texts used by at least one religion or worldview contain beliefs.</p> <p>Humanism 1: What makes us special?</p>	<p>Recognise that some beliefs connect together and begin to talk about these connections.</p>	<p>Identify some links between beliefs being studied within a religion or worldview.</p> <p>Show awareness of some of the similarities and differences between and within religions and worldviews.</p>	<p>Make clear links between different beliefs being studied within a religion or worldview.</p> <p>Identify some of the similarities and differences between and within religions and worldviews.</p> <p>Humanism 2: What do Humanists believe about the origins of the universe?</p>	<p>Describe some of the key theological similarities and differences between and within religions and worldviews.</p> <p>UCP - Unit 2b.2 Creation and Science</p>
D. How beliefs shape the way believers see the world and each other	<p>Give an example of how _____ use beliefs to guide their daily lives.</p> <p>Agreed Syllabus – Yr1 Enquiry 5: How did the universe come to be? (Christian/Hindu)</p>	<p>Recognise that some beliefs connect together and begin to talk about these connections.</p>	<p>Recognise ways in which beliefs might make a _____ think about how they live their life, how they see the world in which they live and how they view others.</p> <p>UCP – Unit 2a.1 What do Christians learn from the creation story?</p>	<p>Identify ways in which beliefs might make a _____ think about how they live their life, how they see the world in which they live and how they view others.</p> <p>UCP – Unit 2a.1 What do Christians learn from the creation story?</p>	<p>Describe the connections between different beliefs being studied and link them to sources of authority.</p> <p>Describe some of the key theological similarities and differences between and within religions and worldviews.</p>

¹ Sources of authority include sacred texts, creeds, statements of belief, tradition, principles or rules, conscience, rational thinking.

- UCP – Understanding Christianity Project
- Christian Aid Resources

- Agreed Syllabus – Norfolk RE Agreed Syllabus 2019
- Humanism UK Resources

Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
<p>Explain different sources of authority and the connections with beliefs.</p> <p>Begin to discuss the reliability and authenticity of texts that are authoritative for a group of believers.</p>	<p>Begin to analyse and evaluate different sources of authority, considering the writings of key thinkers, and how these have shaped and formed beliefs.</p> <p>Begin to analyse a range of genre and interpretations of sources of authority applying knowledge of reliability of sources when enquiring into religions and worldviews.</p>	<p>Begin to contextualise and evaluate sources of authority including the writings of a range of key thinkers and how these have shaped and formed beliefs.</p> <p>Begin to evaluate a range of genre and interpretations of sources of authority applying knowledge of authenticity, historical accuracy and authorship coherently and competently when enquiring into religions and worldviews.</p>	<p>Contextualise, analyse and evaluate where beliefs come from using evidence relating to sources of authority, teachings and interpretations, the writing of key thinkers and the impact of experiences.</p> <p>Contextualise, analyse and evaluate propositions about the reliability, authenticity, historical accuracy and authorship of sources when enquiring into religions and worldviews.</p>
<p>Explain how events in history and society have influenced some religious and non-religious worldviews.</p> <p>Agreed Syllabus: Yr6 Enquiry 5 – How do Hindu’s make sense of the world?</p>	<p>Begin to analyse and evaluate how events in history and society have influenced some religious and non-religious worldviews.</p> <p>UCP 3.4 Does the world need prophets today?</p>	<p>Begin to contextualise and evaluate the impact of events in history and society on shaping and changing some religious and non-religious worldviews.</p> <p>UCP 3.4 Does the world need prophets today?</p>	<p>Contextualise, analyse and evaluate the impact of events in history and society on shaping and changing religious and non-religious beliefs over time.</p> <p>UCP 3.4 Does the world need prophets today?</p>
<p>Explain the key theological similarities and differences between and within religions and worldviews.</p> <p>Agreed Syllabus: Yr6 Enquiry 5: Creation & Conflict (Christian/ Humanist)</p>	<p>Begin to analyse and evaluate connections between sources of authority and key concepts or beliefs studied using theological terms accurately.</p> <p>Begin to analyse the key theological similarities and differences between and within religions and worldviews.</p> <p>Humanism 4: Do Humanists trust in science too much?</p>	<p>Analyse and evaluate how beliefs and concepts relate to each other, competently drawing on theological terminology and using a range of sources of authority as evidence.</p> <p>Begin to evaluate the key theological similarities and differences between and within religions and worldviews.</p> <p>Agreed Syllabus: Yr8 Enquiry 3: What does it mean to live a good life? (Christian/ Humanist/Buddhist)</p>	<p>Contextualise, analyse and evaluate how beliefs and concepts relate to each other drawing on theological terminology and a range of sources of authority as evidence.</p> <p>Theorise about the different ways of understanding the key theological similarities and differences between and within and worldviews.</p>
<p>Explain connections different beliefs being studied and link them to sources of authority using theological terms.</p> <p>Explain the key theological similarities and differences between and within religions and worldviews.</p> <p>Humanism 3: Can humans alone make the world a better place?</p>	<p>Begin to analyse and evaluate how beliefs shape the way _____ view the world in which they live and how they view others.</p> <p>UCP- 3.2 Should Christian’s be greener than everyone one else?</p>	<p>Analyse and evaluate how beliefs shape the way _____ view the world in which they live and how they view others.</p> <p>Agreed Syllabus: Yr8 Enquiry 1: How do creation narratives shape what is means to be human? (Christian/Sikh)</p>	<p>Contextualise, analyse and evaluate propositions about how beliefs shape the way _____ view the world in which they live and how they view others.</p> <p>UCP- 3.2 Should Christian’s be greener than everyone one else?</p>

²Where _____ is indicated, the teacher is invited to insert the adherent of a religion or worldview they are studying e.g. Muslims.

- UCP – Understanding Christianity Project
- Christian Aid Resources

- Agreed Syllabus – Norfolk RE Agreed Syllabus 2019
- Humanism UK Resources

Philosophy	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
A. The Nature of knowledge, meaning and existence	<p>Ask questions about the world around them and talk about these questions.</p> <p>Begin to make connections between using their senses and what they know about the world around them.</p> <p>Agreed Syllabus Yr1 Enquiry 1: What do my senses tell me about the world? (Christian/Hindu/Jewish)</p> <p>Agreed Syllabus – Yr1 Enquiry 5: How did the universe come to be? (Christian/Hindu)</p>	<p>Talk about the questions a story or practice from a religion or worldview might make them ask about the world around them.</p> <p>Talk about what people mean when they say they 'know' something.</p>	<p>Recognise that there are many different religious and non-religious answers to questions people raise about the world around them.</p> <p>Talk about the difference between knowing and believing.</p> <p>Agreed Syllabus Yr3 Enquiry 3: How do people make moral decisions? (Christian/Humanist)</p>	<p>Describe different philosophical answers to questions about the world around them, including questions relating to meaning and existence.</p> <p>Begin to use philosophical vocabulary when discussing issues relating to truth, reality and knowledge.</p> <p>Christian Aid: Fumes of the Future.</p>	<p>Explain different philosophical answers to questions about the world around them, including questions relating to meaning and existence.</p> <p>Explain some of the different ways in which philosophers understand abstract concepts.</p> <p>Christian Aid: Window on the World</p>

Human/Social Sciences	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
A. The ways in which beliefs shape individual identity, and impact on communities and society and vice versa	<p>Recognise that beliefs can have an impact on a believer's daily life, their family or local community.</p>	<p>Identify ways in which beliefs can have an impact on a believer's daily life, their family or local community.</p>	<p>Identify a range of ways in which beliefs can have an impact on a believer's daily life, their family, community and society.</p> <p>Agreed Syllabus Yr3: Enquiry 5 What difference does being a Muslim make to daily life? (Muslim)</p> <p>Christian Aid: Disaster Strikes</p>	<p>Describe ways in which beliefs can impact on and influence individual lives, communities and society and show awareness of how individuals, communities and society can also shape beliefs.</p> <p>Agreed Syllabus Yr4: Enquiry 4: How do/have religious groups contributed to society and culture? (Christian/Hindu)</p>	<p>Explain how beliefs impact on and influence individual lives, communities and society, and how individuals, communities and society can also shape beliefs.</p> <p>Christian Aid: Forest Foods Forever</p>

Year 6

Begin to analyse and evaluate a range of philosophical answers to questions about the world around them, including questions relating to meaning and existence.

Begin to analyse and evaluate different ways in which philosophers understand abstract concepts.

Christian Aid: Beliefs and Actions in the World

Year 7

Analyse and evaluate a range of philosophical answers to questions about the world around them including questions relating to meaning and existence.

Analyse and evaluate different ways in which philosophers understand knowledge, demonstrating with examples that not everything can be known for certain.

Year 8

Analyse and evaluate a range of philosophical answers to questions of knowledge, meaning and existence, showing increasing awareness of the impact of culture and context on divergence of opinion.

Begin to contextualise and evaluate the diverse ways in which philosophers understand knowledge.

Agreed Syllabus: Yr8 Enquiry 3: What does it mean to live a good life? (Christian/Humanist/Buddhist)

Year 9

Contextualise, analyse and evaluate a range of philosophical answers to questions of knowledge, meaning and existence and critique those of others discussing areas of strength, weakness and uncertainty.

Contextualise, analyse and evaluate the diverse ways in which philosophers understand the nature of knowledge.

Year 6

Begin to analyse and evaluate how beliefs impact on, influence and change individual lives, communities and society, and how individuals, communities and society can also shape beliefs.

Agreed Syllabus Yr6:
Enquiry 1: How and why does religion bring peace and conflict? (Multi-faith)

Year 7

Analyse and evaluate how beliefs impact on, shape and change individual lives, communities and society, and how individuals, communities and society can also shape beliefs.

Agreed Syllabus Yr7:
Enquiry 5: How do Sikhs interact with culture and society? (Sikh)

Year 8

Begin to contextualise and evaluate the impact of beliefs on individual, communities and society, and how historical, cultural, social and philosophical factors impact on and shape beliefs.

Agreed Syllabus Yr8:
Enquiry 5: How do Christians interact with culture and society? (Christian)

Year 9

Contextualise, analyse and evaluate how beliefs impact on, shape and change individual lives, communities and society, and how historical, cultural, social and philosophical factors impact on and shape beliefs.

Electronic Resources

Christian Aid – taken from Christian Aid teaching resources

- 1 Fumes of the Future resources pack, download at
www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/schools/fumes-or-futures
- 2 Window on the World resource pack, download at
www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/schools/window-world
- 3 Forest Foods Forever resource pack, download at
www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/schools/forest-foods-forever-game
- 4 Beliefs and Actions in the World resource pack, download at
www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/schools/beliefs-and-actions-world
- 5 Disaster Strikes resource pack, download at
www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/schools/disaster-strikes

Humanism – taken from Understanding Humanism teaching resources

- 1 What makes us special?
<https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/uhteme/knowledge-and-belief/?age=5>
- 2 What do Humanists believe about the origins of the universe?
<https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/uhteme/knowledge-and-belief/?age=7>
- 3 Can human beings alone make the world a better place for everyone?
<https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/uhteme/knowledge-and-belief/?age=7>
- 4 How do Humanists decide what is true? Do they trust in science too much?
<https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/uhteme/knowledge-and-belief/?age=11>

Collective Worship + creation

Collective Worship is a time when the school community draws together in different groupings to reflect on the vision of the school and explore the role of humanity in advocating Christian values. Below are some suggested worships.



Whole School

Showing gratitude for the beauty of our world

Preparation/Resources

- Teach the greeting
- Prepare the worship table
- Choose and check the music
- Check PowerPoint

Creating 'Place'

- Music to enter by e.g. 'Spring' Vivaldi
- Worship table e.g. green cloth; plant in pot; rainbow ribbons; praying hands

Gather

- This is the day that the Lord has made
- We will rejoice and be glad in it

Engage

- What is the most precious thing you have ever been given? (Take four or five answers)
- What do you do when you have been given something special? (Look for answers reflecting thanks, care etc)
- In the Bible there are special poems and songs, called psalms, written to God. This is one which talks about the wonderful world that God has created and how thankful we all are to live in it. (Show PowerPoint)

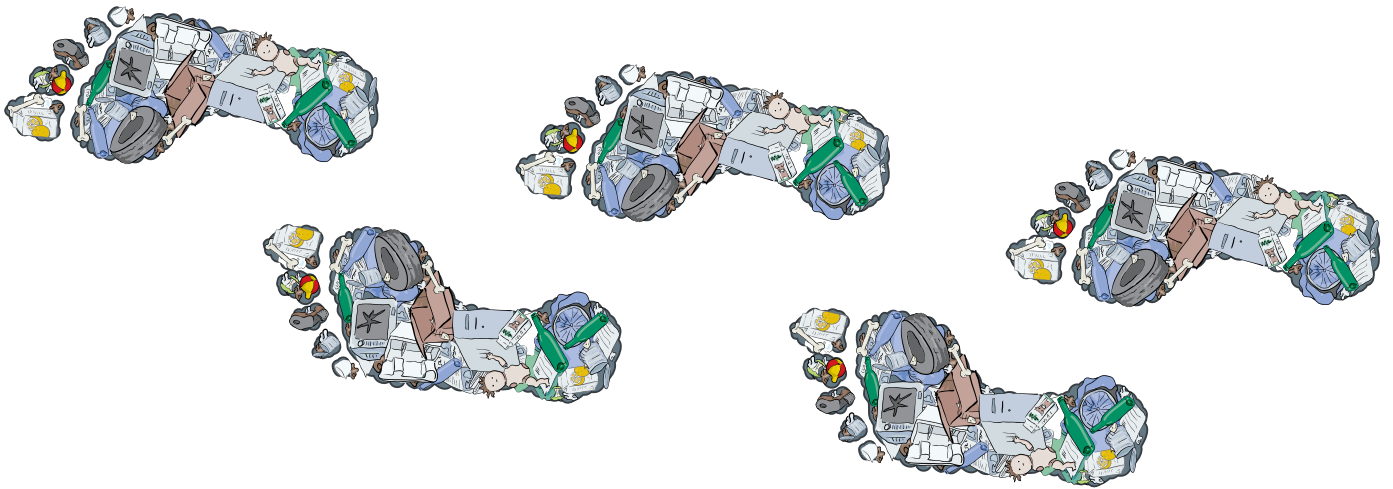
Respond

- God gave this world to us. How can we show that we appreciate it? (Encourage answers which reflect stewardship)
- What can we do today to help look after our world? (Reflection time)
- I am going to say a prayer. If you want to make this your prayer, say 'amen' after me at the end. Dear God, thank you for our beautiful world. Help us always to remember that it is our job to look after it and keep it beautiful. Help us to think of ways that we can keep it beautiful for everyone. Amen
- Now we are going to sing a song about how beautiful our world is. Think carefully about the words as we sing.

Send

What will you do to make our school a more beautiful place? Think of at least one idea and feed it back to your school council representative. (Play music as pupils exit)

Foundation Stage/Key Stage 1



One person can make a difference

Preparation/Resources

- A large picture of a scene familiar to the children.
- Glue stick.
- Small pieces of paper, screwed up into balls.

Creating 'Place'

- Pictures of beautiful places on the wall.

Gather

- Play a song (e.g. who put the colours in the rainbow) for children to join in as they arrive.

Engage

- (Show picture). Who can tell me where this is? What words can we think of to describe it? (Encourage adjectives reflecting beauty).
- Aren't we lucky to have such a lovely place to play (work/walk) in? One of the things that helps to make it so beautiful is how nicely everyone looks after it. Do you know, one of the things that makes me really sad is how often people forget that it is their job to look after places and keep them beautiful. It's really important that every single person helps.
- Sometimes we think that we can't make a difference. Does it really matter if we drop just one small piece of litter? Let's see. (Put glue

on the picture. Ask one child to take a piece of paper and stick it on. Invite other children to do the same).

- What does our special place look like now? (Encourage negative responses). Don't you wish that no-one had dropped any litter? But they have.
- (Invite a child to come out and look at picture). 'You didn't drop this litter did you but would you please pick up one piece anyway? (Ask others to remove one piece until all gone).

Respond

- What has happened here? (Take a few responses). What can we do to make sure that our beautiful places don't get spoiled? (Take a few responses).
- Close your eyes and think about somewhere you like to be. How might you help to keep it beautiful?
- Dear God, thank you for making beautiful places. Help us to look after them well. Amen.

Send

- I have a challenge for you. Always put your litter in a bin, and if you see any litter around school, pick it up.

Key Stage 2



Is our world a fashion victim?

Preparation/Resources

- Pictures/slides of logos or trendy people in adverts.
- Prepare the worship table.
- Choose and check the music.

Creating 'Place'

- Music to enter by e.g. 'Say no to the logo' Henry Priestman.
- Worship table e.g. choose different examples of one popular item such as latest toy or game fad; trainers etc. Add pictures of oil refinery; destroyed rain forest or similar. Add some celebrity advertisements.

Gather

- The Earth is the Lord's, and everything in it.
- Alleluia!

Engage

- What's really 'cool' to wear at the moment? (Take four or five answers)
- How often do you wear your favourite item of clothing? (Take two or three answers)
- Think of any clothes you have that still fit but that you don't wear any more.
- When you grow out of your clothes are most of them worn out or are lots of them hardly worn? (Take two or three answers)
- Think about; what resources are used to make, say, a t-shirt; how much those who make them are paid; how many clothes end up in landfill sites?
- Look at these pictures and think about how influenced we are by famous names. Do we sometimes think we want things because someone famous says we should?

Respond

- God gave this world to us. He told us to use its resources. What do you think he meant?
- How do you decide what you need and what you want? Is there a difference?
- Listen to these verses from the Bible (Leviticus 19:9-10) 'When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor'
- What message do they give to you? (Reflection time)
- I am going to say a prayer. To make this your prayer, say 'amen' after me at the end.
- Dear God, you provide for us in great abundance but we do not always respect the resources of our world. Help us always to remember that we are stewards for the future so that we are not greedy or wasteful. Help us to think what our desire to have the latest fashions might do to our planet. Amen.
- Sing an appropriate song, asking pupils to think about the words.

Send

- How can you make a difference? Think about the things you want and decide how many of them you really need. (Play music as pupils exit)

Useful resources

The Diocese of Norwich

On our website you will find further resources, additional teaching ideas, links to useful web resources and much more to support the teaching of caring for the planet.

www.dioceseofnorwich.org

Christian Aid

A website devoted to developing awareness of and advocating against global poverty.

www.christianaid.org.uk

The Church of England's Environmental Advisory Group has called for all parts of the Church to recognise the Climate Crisis and step up its action to safeguard God's creation.

www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/church-englands-environment-group-calls-greater-action-climate-change-across

REEP - The Religious Education and Environment Programme

This organisation provides unusual and thought-provoking resources for teachers and learners. REEP specialises in the fields of spirituality, the environment and religion. Resources are free to schools via the website.

www.reep.org

Resources and links to other helpful websites can be found at:

www.reep.org/resources/weblinks.php

REEP also have a Collective Worship site:

www.reep.org/cw/index.php

Global Neighbours

Global neighbours is a fantastic resource/ accreditation scheme for encouraging and supporting pupils to become involved in global advocacy.

www.christianaid.org.uk/schools/global-neighbours/about-accreditation-scheme

Barnabus in Education

A website with exciting resources all about creation with links to Collective Worship and texts in the Bible.

www.barnabasinschools.org.uk/topics/creation

A Rocha UK

A Rocha is an international Christian organisation dedicated to environmental conservation. It was launched in 1983 and focuses primarily on community-based projects. A Rocha UK was founded in 2001 by the Revd Dave Bookless and his wife Anne. The organisation is interdenominational. A Rocha projects focus on science, practical conservation and environmental education.

www.arocha.org

Operation Noah

A Christian environmental organisation which focuses on combating climate change.

www.operationnoah.org

www.inspiredclassrooms.org

www.understandingchristianity.org.uk

Other resources

Great songs for learning about creation

- From a Tiny Ant
- All things Bright and Beautiful
- He's Got the Whole World in His Hands
- Everywhere Around Me
- As the Deer Pants
- Come and Praise 2 has a great selection from No 73 to 85.
- (No 78 "By brother sun" was actually written for St Andrew's School when author David Self was Chair of Governors!)
- "Milk bottle tops and paper bags" - from 'Someone's singing, Lord', is good for KS1
- "The Green umbrella" - words and music by Nick Keir, is good for KS2

Books

Revd Canon Susanna Gunner, Diocesan Adviser in Spirituality and Discipleship has written a series of six booklets inviting Christians to make connections between the world and faith. Of particular relevance to this project is the sixth booklet in this series about nature and faith. These booklets can be downloaded from www.dioceseofnorwich.org/resource/connect-booklets

The Diocese of Norwich Education team have created a topic box which contains several exciting books to stimulate a topic on creation. This can be borrowed through the resource library. The titles of the books are listed below.

Red Alert - Barr and Wilson
Helping Our Planet - Bingham
Clean Up - Bryan
Oi! Get Off Our Train - Burningham
Wonderful Earth - Butterworth and Inkpen
Greta's Story - Camerini
The Barefoot Book of Earth Tales - Casey & Wilson
The Great Kapok Tree - Cherry
The Enduring Ark - Chitraker and Wolf
Creation Myths - Cooper
Noah's Ark - Cousins
The Lorax Dr. Seuss - Dr. Seuss
One World - Foreman
We Are All Greta - Giannella
Daisy And The Trouble With Nature - Gray
The Last Tree - Haworth-Booth
Alba The Hundred Year Old Fish - Hawthorne

How The Whale Became - Hughes
Dear Greenpeace - James
Here We Are - Jeffers
Song Of The Dolphin Boy - Laird
A climate in Chaos - Layton
The Tree - Layton
A Planet Full Of Plastic - Layton
The Tale Of a Toothbrush - Leonard
Noah's Ark - Leonard
Hello Mr World - Morpurgo
Great Women Who Saved The Planet - Pankhurst
George Saves The World At Lunchtime - Readman
Somebody Swallowed Stanley - Roberts
The Whales' Song - Sheldon
Nellie Choc-Ice and The Plastic Island - Strong
My Green Day - Walsh
Noah's Ark and Other Bible Stories - Williams

Ideas for parishes and schools working together

We are very grateful for the following ideas from the Diocese of Norwich Environmental Working Party.

- Listening to sap with a stethoscope
- Measuring a tree with children through linking hands
- Eco-benches and Eco-Altar (using old bottles)
- Seed exchange in villages – to encourage biodiversity
- Parish audit of plants in the church yards and wider into the parish
- Planting flowers, seeds in churches
- Drafting a Collect
- Workshops to reduce carbon
- Inspired Classrooms – creating bug hotels

Further ideas for developing an environmental curriculum

- Setting up an environmental committee
- Becoming involved in environmental action such as [COP 26](#)
- Writing poems and reflections about nature
- Creating mini greenhouses from plastic bottles
- Reducing energy usage in the school and monitoring
- Developing persuasive writing and producing a video about the importance of the world.
- Signing up to become an [eco-school](#)
- A school environmental week
- Promoting plastic free lunches
- Community litter picks
- Promoting www.worldwildlife.org/pages/our-planet
- Music projects based on Holst's The Planets
- Researching young environmentalists such as Greta Thunberg
- A further 25 ideas are listed [here](#)

Appendix 1

Theological thinkers on Creation

Christian teachers through the ages

Christian teachers have continued to see creation as important over the centuries and their views are helpful resources.

St. Francis of Assisi was declared the patron saint of ecology by Pope John Paul II in 1979.

Stories of St Francis and the animals, as well as his song of creation, appeal to pupils and support this teaching. St Bonaventure, one of St Francis' first followers and an immensely influential figure in the formation of the Franciscan Order of Brothers, said of him:

Francis sought occasion to love God in everything... In everything beautiful, he saw him who is beauty itself, and he followed his Beloved everywhere by his likeness imprinted on creation; of all creation he made a ladder by which he might mount up

and embrace Him who is all-desirable ('Major Life,' quoted by Helen Julian).

His teaching was centred on the humanity of Christ and on his love and care for all his creation. To St Francis, nature was a sign of the love and generosity of God, and when he spoke of birds and animals as being his sisters and brothers, he meant they were all part of the same great family under God. That God was prepared to send his Son to walk the Earth as a man, to share the joys, sorrows, and hardships of God's children is another sign of the integral relationship between God and his creation. The story of St Francis and the wolf is a good illustration of this.

Julian of Norwich was an anchoress (female hermit) in 14th-century Norwich. She took her name from the church of St Julian where she spent her time alone in a tiny cell, praying and writing. During a serious illness Julian had a series of intense visions of Jesus Christ and she wrote about them in her book 'Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love' (circa 1393), believed to be the first book written in the English language by a woman. Although she lived in troubled times Julian's theology was optimistic, talking of God in terms of joy and compassion rather than law and duty. She was unusual in that she viewed Christ as a mother figure, nurturing and loving, and that influenced how she wrote about creation. She wrote:

And in this he showed me a little thing, the quantity of a hazelnut, lying in the palm of my hand, and to

my understanding it was round as any ball. I looked upon it and thought: what may this be? And I was answered generally this way: it is all that is made. I marveled how it might last, for I thought it might fall into nothing because of its littleness. And I was answered in my understanding: it lasts and always shall, for God loves it; and so all things have being through the love of God.

First and foremost, the hazelnut represents the love of God, and it rests in the palm of her hand. One might be inclined to view the love of God as universal, filling the immensity of creation. The fact that it is a hazelnut that is placed in the palm of Julian's hand suggests that God's love is personal; it is something small and familiar that everyone can possess.

Hilda, the great niece of King Edwin, became Abbess of Whitby in CE 680. She was acknowledged to be a very humble and wise spiritual leader and many people, including the rich and powerful, sought and followed her advice. At Whitby the cowherd Caedmon was too ashamed to sing to the harp the pagan songs, such as Beowulf, that the others sang. But one night he received a vision in which he was told by an angel to sing of the creation of the world. Like Mary at the Annunciation he protested his unworthiness but then obeyed. Bede records the song he sang for the angel and for Hilda.

Praise we the fashioner now of heaven's fabric, the

Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) was a remarkable woman, a 'first' in many fields. At a time when few women wrote, Hildegard, known as 'Sybil of the Rhine', produced major works of theology and visionary writings. When few women were accorded respect, she was consulted by and advised bishops, popes, and kings. She used the curative powers of natural objects for healing, and wrote treatises about natural history and medicinal uses of

majesty of his might and his mind's wisdom, Work of the world warden, worker of all wonders, How he the Lord of Glory everlasting, Wrought first for the race of men Heaven as a roof-tree, Then made he Middle Earth to be their mansion.

The Abbess Hilda had Cædmon become a brother in the Abbey and would give him passages of scripture so that he could return the next day with that Bible story rendered into Old English poetry. In this way he sang of the creation of the world and many of the great events of the Old and New Testaments.

plants, animals, trees and stones. She is the first composer whose biography is known. She founded, and became abbess of, a vibrant convent, where her musical plays were performed. She wrote:

All creation is a song of praise to God and All nature is at the disposal of humankind. We are to work with it. Without it we cannot survive.

Cuthbert was of Northumbrian origin. As a young shepherd boy he had a vision of Aiden, a missionary monk of Lindisfarne, being carried to heaven by angels. As a result of this he took holy orders. A wise and gentle man, he became a monk in the priory of Old Melrose, becoming Abbot in 664. In 676 he became a hermit on one of the Farne Islands, south of Lindisfarne, at first receiving visitors and washing their feet but later only opening his cell window

to bless them. He delighted in the wildlife on the Farne Islands. Whilst there he instituted special laws to protect the eider ducks and other sea birds nesting on the islands; these may have been the first bird protection laws anywhere in the world. Even today eider ducks are often called 'cuddy ducks' (Cuthbert's ducks) in Northumberland. In 684 Cuthbert reluctantly left his hermit's cell to become Bishop of Lindisfarne, where he died in 687.

John Stott - pastor; theologian; author

Humans have learnt to cultivate the earth, to harness forms of power, to research and to be resourceful... In exercising our God-given dominion humans are not creating the processes of nature, but co-operating with them. We can control and even accelerate things. But it is an artificial control of essentially natural processes. It is humans co-operating with God. We have developed an extraordinary expertise in

controlling and taming nature. In this respect we are 'lords' as God meant us and told us to be. But we are also children in our ultimate dependence on the fatherly providence of the God who gives us sunshine, rain and fruitful seasons. If we think of the earth as a kingdom, then we are not kings ruling our own territory, but viceroys doing it on the king's behalf, since the king has not abdicated his throne. God makes people, in the most literal sense, 'caretakers' of his property.

**Jurgen Moltmann,
an influential modern theologian**

Faced as we are with the progressive industrial exploitation of nature and its irreparable destruction, what does it mean to say that we believe in God the Creator, and in this world as his

creation? What we call the environmental crisis is not merely a crisis in the natural environment of human beings themselves. It is a crisis of life on this planet, a crisis so comprehensive and so irreversible that it cannot unjustly be described as apocalyptic.

**The Rt Revd David Atkinson,
formerly Bishop of Thetford**

At creation's heart is, so to speak, the personal commitment of God to the wellbeing of God's earth. Creation is not just 'Nature' - which was wrongly thought of as 'the world out there which we are free to use and exploit at our pleasure'. There have sadly been times when Christian people have (wrongly) taken as a charter for exploitation the words of the psalmist, *You have given them dominion over the works of your hands* (Ps 8:6), without remembering the context of

humble reverence and wonder earlier in that psalm, that human dignity finds its value in being God's gift, and without remembering that humanity is 'crowned' with the kingly function, is commissioned by God to caring for 'the works of God's hands'. The true king, another psalm reminds us, is committed to the cause of the poor and saves the needy from oppression (Ps 72).

As climate change mostly affects the poor and needy of the world, the obligation to care grows on the nations which have enough.

Other environment thinkers

Greta Thunberg

Greta Thunberg is an environmental activist who became concerned with the lack of action on climate change from a very young age. Greta has Aspergers Syndrome and often refers to this condition as her 'superpower' stating that there are 'no grey areas when it comes to climate change'. Greta decided that it was important to take action against climate change and wanted politicians to take notice and act, so she created a sign which read 'SCHOOL STRIKE FOR CLIMATE' and sat outside the Swedish parliament in the summer of 2018. Her protests spread across the world and gained considerable news coverage.

Greta inspired a global climate campaign in 2019 when 125 countries came together to strike. She has since given many speeches to politicians and was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize.

Some of her most famous quotes include:

"We live in a strange world where children must sacrifice their own education in order to protest against the destruction of their future. Where the people who have contributed the least to the crisis are the ones who are going to be affected the most."

"If we haven't made the changes required by approximately the year 2030, we will probably set off an irreversible chain reaction beyond human control. Then we will pass a point of no return which will be catastrophic." 17,000 people attended the event from 30 different countries.

"This is all wrong. I shouldn't be up here. I should be back in school on the other side of the ocean. Yet you all come to us young people for hope? How dare you! You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words. And yet I'm one of the lucky ones. People are suffering. People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are in the beginning of a mass extinction. And all you can talk about is money and fairytales of eternal economic growth. How dare you!" ... "You are failing us." Thunberg stated. "But the young people are starting to understand your betrayal. The eyes of all future generations are upon you. And if you choose to fail us, I say: We will never forgive you. "

www.theyearofgreta.com is a comprehensive website around the life of Greta.

Sir David Attenborough

Sir David Attenborough is a natural historian and broadcaster who has encouraged humans to work with their planet and environment instead of going against it. His interview with Greta Thunberg www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/science-environment-50904881 can be seen as a remarkable plea for human beings to act now.

He has produced many studies on the planet and nature including 'A Life On Our Planet' and 'Perfect Planet'. Many schools have also been inspired by Attenborough's 'Blue Planet 11' and in particular his plastics message. These videos can be readily downloaded on youtube.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Sir David Attenborough engaged with BBC Bitesize to produce a number of online learning resources for home learning. Some of his most famous quotes include:

"There is no question climate change is happening. The only arguable point is what part humans are playing in it."

"The only way to save a rhinoceros is to save the environment in which it lives. Because there's a mutual dependency between it and millions of other species."

"It seems to me that the natural world is the greatest source of excitement; the greatest source of visual beauty; the greatest source of intellectual interest. It is the greatest source of so much in life that makes life worth living."

"If my grandchildren were to look at me and say, 'You were aware species were disappearing and you did nothing, you said nothing', that I think is culpable. I don't know how much more they expect me to be doing, I'd better ask them."

Appendix 2 - Buildings & Creation: A Diocese of Norwich case study



Left: St Thomas' Heigham, 1952 / Right: St Mary's Cranwich, pre-Conquest tower and a possible 7th-century foundation

Church of England churches come in many shapes and forms. Some are 20th-century red brick buildings while others have seen pre-Conquest England; some are mighty minsters but others are tiny chapels; some have modern interiors while others are homes to the most valuable medieval wall paintings that must be preserved; some are heavily used every day and others are open a few times a month. We have buildings with modern heating and lighting systems and buildings with no heating and lighting at all!

Considering all this, the carbon footprint of our churches differs greatly from church to church. For example, St Peter Mancroft in Norwich uses up a lot of energy and needs to do a lot of work to become greener, whereas All Saints' church at Crostwight, which has no water, heating or electricity, is already carbon zero.

Perhaps most problematically in the case of historic listed churches, the range of available solutions to reduce our churches' carbon footprints can be very different. It is not always possible to introduce certain changes available for other buildings, such as sub-division of larger

spaces into smaller compartments or insulation of the roof to reduce heat use and loss. It is even more difficult to introduce things like solar panels or heat pumps – the listed status of the building means that anything that changes its historic appearance, even for a good cause like reducing its carbon footprint, needs a special permission from planning authorities, which is often difficult to secure. We are working on trying to make this process easier but in the meantime, there is still lots that we can do.

In our churches, we start by measuring their carbon footprint. We need to know how much



The churchyard at St Mary's Haddiscoe

energy we are using and what effect it is having on the environment in order to make a plan. Then we start small, but small does not mean insignificant! The churches are switching to greener electricity suppliers, use LED lightbulbs, set their heating and lighting on a timer, use recyclable or compostable coffee cups and alternatives to oasis in flower arrangements. One can also hear about climate change and the actions we all must be taking during sermons and at PCC meetings.

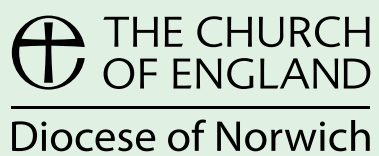
Many churchyards are rich in diverse plants and wildlife. Some church communities have already partnered up with organisations such as Norfolk Wildlife Trust, are protecting the areas of wilderness found in churchyards or creating them by planting wild flowers while others are only starting on this journey. This is where there is a lot of potential for collaboration between schools and churches!

Unclean sources of heating have a significant contribution to our churches' overall carbon footprint.

The Church Buildings Council estimates that the largest proportion – 72% - of the church energy use results from heating. This means that the most critical aspect of church energy consumption where we need to switch to the cleanest sources possible is heating. This aspect, however, is also the most challenging one. A significant proportion of boilers in our churches are oil-fired – the worst type of boiler one can have from an ecological point of view. These need to be replaced with greener types but this is expensive and few churches have sufficient money for this, particularly following the COVID-19 crisis. Another problem is that in some areas of our diocese better alternatives, such as gas, are not available.

There is a long journey ahead and lots to be done but we are hopeful and optimistic! A lot of people are working hard to come up with ideas and affordable solutions to reduce our churches' carbon footprint. If you would like to know more about how churches can become greener, do read about the Eco Church initiative here:

<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk>



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