

## Alliance of Religions and Conservation

### Religions and the environment: Background information for pupils (to be used with ARC GCSE lesson plan 1)

|  | <b>Christianity</b>  | <b>Islam</b>   | <b>Hinduism</b>  |
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| <i>Status of the human race in nature</i>  | The human race is in a special relationship with God, having 'dominion' over nature. Humanity has awareness/ consciousness that makes it able to appreciate the greatness of God's creation. | The human race is in a special relationship with Allah, having 'dominion' over nature. Humanity has awareness/ consciousness that makes it able to appreciate the greatness of Allah's creation. | Part of the unity of nature, equal in status – all living beings are sacred: Man has evolved from lower forms of life. We are, therefore, related to the whole creation. There is no life that is inferior. All lives enjoy the same importance in the universe and all play their fixed roles. They are to function together and no link in the chain is to be lost. If some link is lost, the whole ecological balance would be disturbed. |
| <i>Responsibilities to care for nature</i> | Responsibility to preserve the balance of nature and all the different species of creation   | Responsibility to preserve the balance of nature and all the different species of creation.  | It is narrated in the third chapter of the Bhagavad Gita that a life without contribution toward the preservation of ecology is a life of sin and a life without specific purpose or use.  |

*Notes on faith and conservation developed by the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) for religious education teachers.*

*Further resources available from ARC's website [www.arcworld.org](http://www.arcworld.org)*

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| <i>Key concepts</i> | <b>Stewardship</b> – taking care of the natural world for God | Vice-regency ( <b>khalifa</b> ) – taking care of the natural world for God<br>Unity ( <b>tawheed</b> ) – maintaining the integrity of the Earth, keeping balance and harmony in Allah’s creation | <b>Ahimsa</b> – ‘do no harm’: a non-violent relationship with the universe: God’s creation is sacred. Humanity does not have the right to destroy what it cannot create. |
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| <p><i>Quotes</i></p> | <p>And God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" – Genesis 1:26</p> <p>"The Lord God took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden to cultivate and take care of it" – Genesis 2:15</p> | <p>"And He sent down rain from the sky<br/>And made every kind of species grow on the earth" – Qur'an 31:10</p> <p>"... He created everything and determined them in exact proportions" – Qur'an 25:2</p> <p>"It is He that has made you custodians, inheritors of the earth" – Surah 6:165</p> <p>"The world is green and beautiful, and Allah has appointed you his guardian over it," taught the prophet Muhammad.</p> <p>It is said in the Qur'an that Allah invites us to enjoy the fruits of the earth, but to avoid excess leading to waste, "O children of Adam! ... eat and drink: but waste not by excess for Allah loveth not the wasters" – 007.031</p> | <p>"Every living creature is the son of the supreme Lord, and He does not tolerate even ants being killed" – Bhakitvedanta Swāmī Prabhupada A.C. Purport, Bhagavad Gita As It Is, 14.16</p> <p>"Indulgence in animal killing for the taste of the tongue is the grossest kind of ignorance" – Bhakitvedanta Swāmī Prabhupada A.C. Purport, Bhagavad Gita As It Is, 14.16</p> |
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|  | <p>"The gravity of the ecological situation reveals how deep is the human moral crisis" – Pope John Paul II, message for World Peace Day in 1990.</p> <p>"Climate change is an issue that impels us to think about God's justice and how we are to echo it in our world" – Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, during the Bali COP, 2007</p> | <p>"Furthermore, Allah has also ordered humans to administer his responsibilities with Justice. Above all, people should conserve the balance of Allah's creation on Earth. By virtue of their intelligence, humanity (when it believes in the One Universal Allah, the Creator of the Universe) is the only creation of Allah to be entrusted with the overall responsibility of maintaining planet Earth in the overall balanced ecology that man found" – Hyder Ihsan Mahasneh, Muslim World League</p> | <p>"There is enough for everyone's need, but not for their greed" – Mahatma Gandhi</p> <p>"A certain degree of physical harmony and comfort is necessary, but above a certain level it becomes a hindrance instead of a help. Therefore the ideal of creating an unlimited number of wants and satisfying them seems to be a delusion and a snare" – Mahatma Gandhi</p> |
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