‘Global Concerns – Environment’

Christian views on the word begin with the creation story in Genesis

Christians believe the world has special value and that they must live responsibly and be good stewards of creation.

Stewardship: the belief that believers have a duty to look after the environment on behalf of God.

Bible
‘God saw all that he had made, and it was very good’ Genesis 1:31

1. Explain how this quote affects Christian’s beliefs about the world

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_____
_____
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2. Are things valuable because they have something good within them? What sort of goodness can be found within the natural world?

3. In what ways can it be argued that the environment enhances and enriches human life?

4. Create a painting/poem or some other form of art to express Christian views on the world as God's creation or the role of humanity within it.

Stewardship and Responsibility

Bible

'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule 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

5. Give examples of how Christians can be good stewards

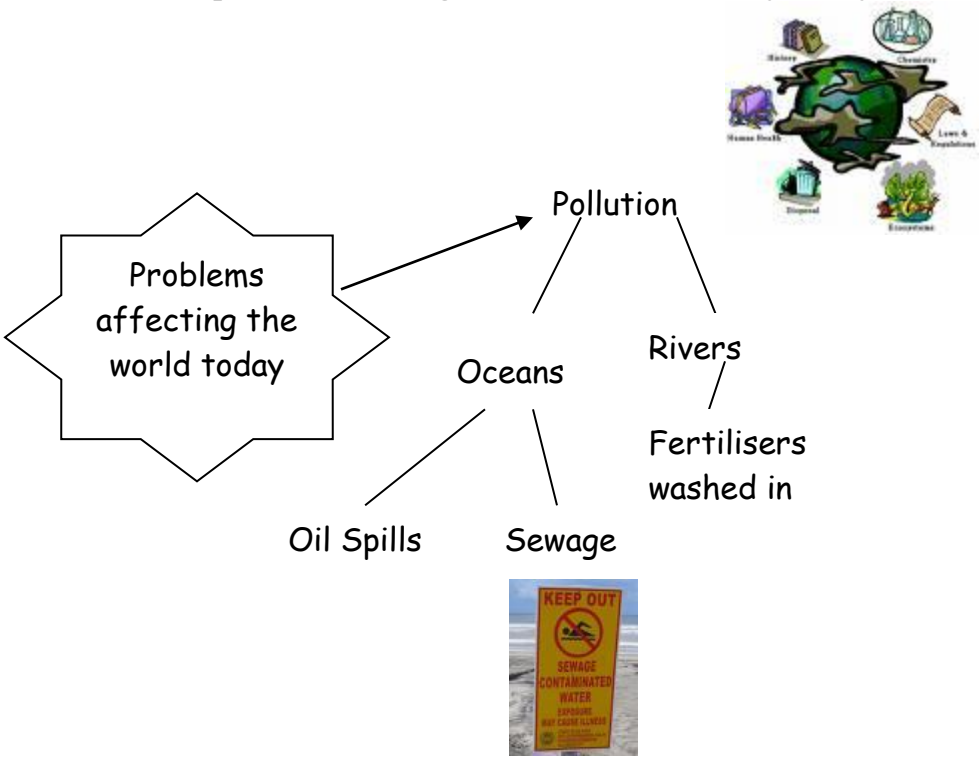
The World Community

What do you think the expressions **World Community** and **Global village** mean?

If we belong to a world community, then problems in one part of the community should be the concern of the whole community.

TASKS:

1) Brainstorm the problems facing the world community today



2) Research in detail one problem you have identified. Present your findings to the class.

3) Using the articles provided and any other information gathered from task 2, write an article entitled '**Planet in Crisis**'

Is the water clean?

This morning I heard on the news that “we” have been taking sewage waste from cruise-ships for the past eight years.’ This was the opening line of a recent letter to the Editor, written by Lianna Jarecki and published in the Standpoint newspaper, 10 February 2006, in the British Virgin Islands, a small group of islands in the Caribbean. The letter continues: Must I then conclude that, knowing that we have a severe problem dealing with our own sewage from 20,000 people on Tortola, we are facilitating the disposal of sewage from 450,000 cruise-ship passengers who visit each year? I find this shocking. We have no sewage treatment facilities (except a small one serving Cane Garden Bay), and therefore we are obliged to pump untreated sewage into the sea at Slaney Point, 150 yards offshore, with leaks into nearby marinas. If the line gets blocked, the sewage gets diverted into Road Harbour. To make things worse, the septic tanks that serve most of the hillside buildings are ineffective because Tortola’s soil layer is too thin to retain the septic overflow, which therefore runs straight into the waterways and the sea. Are we surprised that tourists write editorials in our newspapers about pollution and the condition of our waters? Are we surprised that Road Town and Nanny Cay smell like cesspools? Are we surprised that our nearshore waters are turning brown and green from micro organisms that feed on this sewage while our coral reefs and seagrass beds are dying? I am not surprised at the falling water quality and loss of marine life caused by sewage pollution. But, I am surprised that instead of addressing the long-standing problem of sewage pollution, “we” are wilfully adding to it by inviting the cruise ships to effectively dump in our waters. How is it possible that the people of Tortola watch this, breathe this, fish and swim and ride on boats without forming a strong desire to change the way we treat our environment?

The problems of marine pollution do not stop in the British Virgin Islands. An article in the Fiji Times (2 February 2006) had the headline “Don’t eat shellfish from Suva Harbour: Warning.” Studies in the past had proven the Harbour was heavily contaminated with high levels of paint and rubbish. This pollution is a threat to marine life and could ultimately affect people eating marine life from there. But who is responsible for cleaning up the Harbour? Mrs. Singh of the Environment Department says: “It is not only the Government's responsibility to clean up the Harbour. It's everyone’s."

Taking the discussion further, the question arises – how clean is the water from the tap? Recent articles from Fiji indicate cause for concern. Five-year-old Sovia rests on her mother’s shoulder as they join a queue waiting for medical attention at the Health Centre in Nasinu, Fiji (Pacific), reports the Fiji Times (15 February 2006). Too late for Sovia, Health officials call for caution, and authorities warn that all tap water must be boiled after fears that a waterborne virus is causing infections. Health officials report a high number of patients suffering from abdominal pain, muscle pain, vomiting and diarrhoea. Whilst the Ministry of Works treats tap water to make it safe to drink and to ensure that it does not carry waterborne diseases, there are many rural water schemes in Fiji and people also use creeks and wells for drinking water and washing.

Meanwhile in the Labasa area of Fiji, the number of cases of influenza and diarrhoea increased sharply in February, believed by Health officials to be a result of flooding around the country. One farmer was reported in serious condition with leptospirosis, a waterborne disease caused by the urine of livestock contaminating water, and there have been reports of typhoid. Health Ministry officials called for increased care with sanitation and personal hygiene by those living in areas that have been affected by the floods (Fiji Times, 11 February 2006).

Global Warming Heats Up

Sunday, Mar. 26, 2006 By JEFFREY KLUGER

The photograph taken in 1928, above, shows how the Upsala Glacier, part of the South American Andes in Argentina, used to look. The ice on the Upsala Glacier today, shown in 2004 below, is retreating at least 180 ft. per year
GREENPEACE

No one can say exactly what it looks like when a planet takes ill, but it probably looks a lot like Earth. Never mind what you've heard about global warming as a slow-motion emergency that would take decades to play out. Suddenly and unexpectedly, the crisis is upon us.

It certainly looked that way last week as the atmospheric bomb that was Cyclone Larry--a Category 4 storm with wind bursts that reached 125 m.p.h.--exploded through northeastern Australia. It certainly looked that way last year as curtains of fire and dust turned the skies of Indonesia orange, thanks to drought-fueled blazes sweeping the island nation. It certainly looks that way as sections of ice the size of small states calve from the disintegrating Arctic and Antarctic. And it certainly looks that way as the sodden wreckage of New Orleans continues to molder, while the waters of the Atlantic gather themselves for a new hurricane season just two months away. Disasters have always been with us and surely always will be. But when they hit this hard and come this fast--when the emergency becomes commonplace--something has gone grievously wrong. That something is global warming.

The image of Earth as organism--famously dubbed Gaia by environmentalist James Lovelock-- has probably been overworked, but that's not to say the planet can't behave like a living thing, and these days, it's a living thing fighting a fever. From heat waves to storms to floods to fires to massive glacial melts, the global climate seems to be crashing around us. Scientists have been calling this shot for decades. This is precisely what they have been warning would happen if we continued pumping greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, trapping the heat that flows in from the sun and raising global temperatures.

Environmentalists and lawmakers spent years shouting at one another about whether the grim forecasts were true, but in the past five years or so, the serious debate has quietly ended. Global warming, even most sceptics have concluded, is the real deal, and human activity has been causing it. If there was any consolation, it was that the glacial pace of nature would give us decades or even centuries to sort out the problem.

But glaciers, it turns out, can move with surprising speed, and so can nature. What few people reckoned on was that global climate systems are booby-trapped with tipping points and feedback loops, thresholds past which the slow creep of environmental decay gives way to sudden and self-perpetuating collapse. Pump enough CO_2 into the sky, and that last part per million of greenhouse gas behaves like the 212th degree Fahrenheit that turns a pot of hot water into a plume of billowing steam. Melt enough Greenland ice, and you reach the point at which you're not simply dripping meltwater into the sea but dumping whole glaciers. By one recent measure, several Greenland ice sheets have doubled their rate of slide, and just last week the

journal Science published a study suggesting that by the end of the century, the world could be locked in to an eventual rise in sea levels of as much as 20 ft. Nature, it seems, has finally got a bellyful of us.

WILDLIFE ON THE BRINK

The gray whale, the bighorn sheep, the desert tortoise, the steelhead trout -- these are just a few of the creatures whose habitats and very existence are now in danger. The threats vary, from pollution to logging to harmful development, but the effect on wildlife is the same: shrinking habitat and the inability to survive and reproduce.

Worksheet 2

Why should a Christian be concerned about environmental problems?

1) List the problems affecting the environment today.

2) Read the following quotes

"you placed him (man) over all creation." Ps 8:6 OT

"AND GOD SAW ALL THAT HE HAD MADE AND IT WAS GOOD" Genesis 1:31

Pslams 24
The world and all that is in it
Belong to the Lord;
The earth and all who live in it are his,
He built on the deep waters beneath the earth
And laid its foundations in the ocean depths

"in as much as you have done it unto one of the least of my people, you have done it unto me Matt 25:40 (Jesus)

Love is not content with evil.
1 Corin 13:6

"Care of water resources and attention to climate change are matters of grave importance for the entire human family," Pope Benedict XVI, St Peter's Square, September 5, 2007.

"I believe that the world is God's creation, and therefore it is sacred. Human beings must act as responsible guardians"
Bishop of Lincoln

"How clearly the sky reveals God's glory" Psalms 19:1

They (man) will have power over the fish, the birds and all animals … Your descendants will live over the earth and bring it under their control.
Gen 1:26-27

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" Gen 1:1

"The dignity of nature as creation needs to be bound up without responsibility for the preservation of life"
World Council of Churches

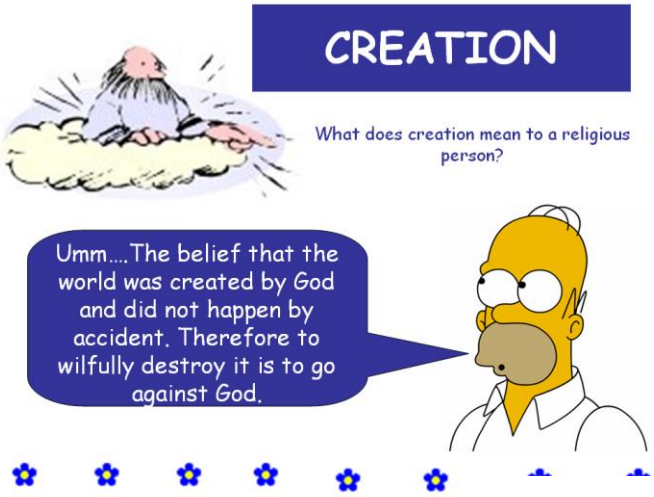
Tasks:

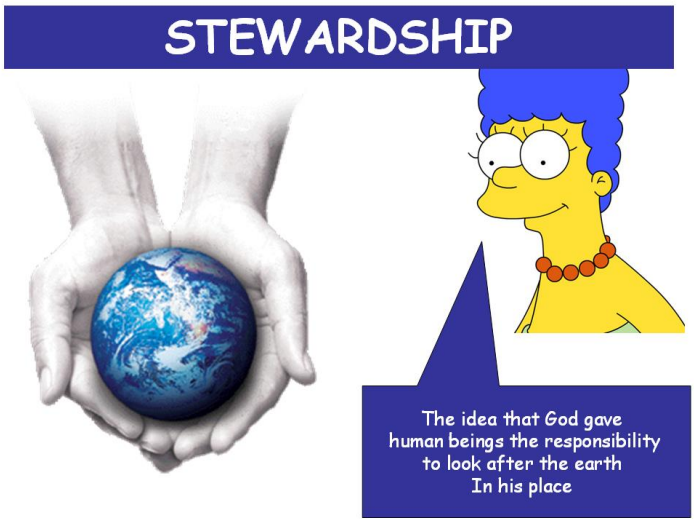
1. Write out and link these quotes to the environment and how the earth should be treated.

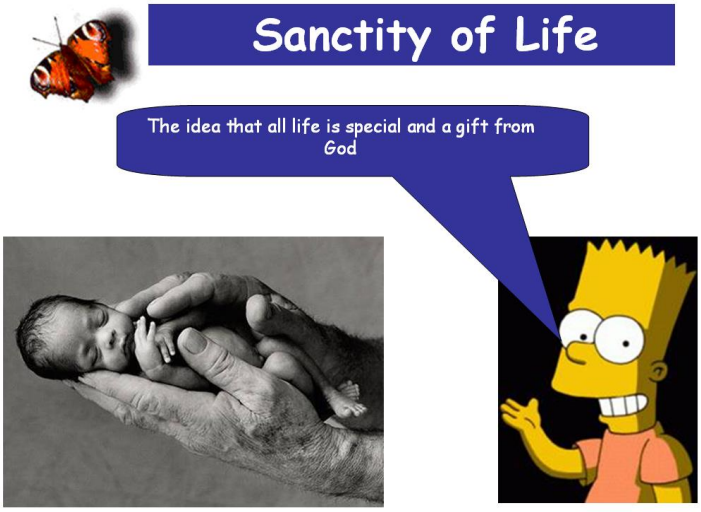
2. Some Christians believe nature is only here to serve mankind and that we have the right to exploit it (use to our own advantage). How could you use some of the above quotations to justify (back up) that point of view?

3. Which quotes could be used to suggest that human beings should work with nature and not against it?

The environment







1. Explain why religious people think the environment should be protected. Use religious teachings and beliefs in your answer.

2. Describe 2 ways in which religious believers could care for the environment.

Greenpeace

Greenpeace was found in 1971 to protest against nuclear testing in USA.

Greenpeace is a global campaigning organization that acts to change attitudes and behavior, to protect and conserve the environment and to promote peace.

They are based on the Quaker idea of "bearing witness", the idea of passive resistance.

Their protests include such things as:

- *Human chains across roads*
- *Driving inflatable boats between whales and the harpoons to save whales*
- *Doing their own scientific tests on environmental issues*
- *Lobbying governments for changing of their laws on environmental issues*
- *Providing fact sheets and general education on environmental issues to interested parties.*

Specific Projects

On the trail of trawlers

Activists from Greenpeace are trying to end whaling in the southern ocean.

44 activists from the Greenpeace ships Esperanza and Arctic Sunrise appeal for help in their campaign to end whaling in the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary, by spelling out the words `Help End Whaling!' using their bodies.

End the nuclear age

Greenpeace has always fought - and will continue to fight - vigorously against nuclear power because it is an unacceptable risk to the environment and to humanity. The only solution is to halt the expansion of all nuclear power, and for the shutdown of existing plants.

Nastya, from Belarus was only three years old when she was diagnosed with cancer of the uterus and lungs. According to local doctors the region has seen a huge increase in childhood cancer cases since the Chernobyl disaster.