

Unit 6.3: Beliefs in Action - The Environment.
How do our beliefs - religious and otherwise - impact how we act in relation to the environment we share?



People we will learn about:
Rabbi Katy Allen:



A **Jew**, she set up Jewish Climate Action to educate people about climate change. Leads worship outside surrounded by nature. Encourages others to make small changes in their lives to tackle climate change. Cranberry Shabbat sees wild cranberries picked for the homeless.

People we will learn about:
Dr Vandana Shiva:



A **Hindu**, she challenges people and companies to use the world's natural resources with care - and to see the connection between all living things.

She is part of the Chipko movement - people who 'hug' trees to stop them from being felled.

She set up an organisation that helps farmers grow crops in a way that protects the environment and biodiversity.

Organisations we will learn about:

A Rocha UK

This is a Christian organisation, which engages in scientific research aimed at protecting the environment. In addition, they run community-based conservation projects and nature reserves (e.g. Foxearth Meadows). Their Eco Church helps churches of all different denominations take practical actions in caring for God's earth.



Vocabulary:

activist:		Someone who campaigns to bring about change/ improvement.
ahimsa:		The Buddhist principle of not causing harm to any other living things.
atheist:		A person who does not believe in the existence of a god or any gods.
climate change:		How weather and climate changes because of mankind's industrial activity.
environment:		The belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods.
mandate:		Be given authority to act in a certain way.
stewardship:		The act of protecting something that is worth caring about.
khalifah:		Acting as a guardian (of the environment).
sewa:		The Sikh concept of duty (a moral obligation/ responsibility).
dharma:		The Hindu concept of duty (a moral obligation/ responsibility).

Religions:

Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism.
 We will also learn about Humanism.

Key knowledge:

Many challenges face our Earth today: global warming, pollution, deforestation, landfills.

Most people believe that the earth is special and that it should be treated with respect.

Many **religious people** would say that the world is holy or sacred because it was created by a higher power than humans.

Many non-religious people also believe the world needs protection, but their reasons are different from religious people.

Humanists base their thinking about the environment in reason and science.

Big Questions:

What do we know and think about the environment we live in?

How do we feel about it, and what do we think our responsibilities are?

What does Christianity teach about looking after the planet and caring for the earth and all its creatures?

What do other religions believe about the care of the environment?

How do these views compare and contrast?

What do Humanists believe about the care of the environment?



Jewish people, Christians and Muslims believe that God created the world and that it belongs to him but he put humans in charge of it- this is called **stewardship in Judaism and Christianity but khalifah in Islam.**



Jewish people also believe in 'bal taschit', meaning you should **never act to destroy.** They also believe in 'tikkun olam', meaning that there is a **responsibility to repair** the world and save it for future generations.

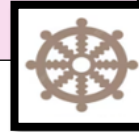


Muslims believe Allah created

perfection when he made the Earth and man must ensure he does not change what is perfect.

Water is considered vital for creating & sustaining life - so must be kept clean.

Muslims believe that **all living creatures are communities (umma)** and so must be respected and protected.



Buddhists do not believe in a god that created the world but rather that **all things in the world are connected** and cannot survive on their own. They live by the principle of **ahimsa**, not harming any living thing.



Hindus believe that the world is sacred because it was created by a supreme being, Brahman. They believe that Brahman is present in everything in the world - so harming the world is harming Brahman. They believe that all creation is connected - so humans are a part of nature, not separate from it.



Sikhs also acknowledge a duty of care to the world their God created, which they call 'sewa'. They call the Earth '**our mother**' as a sign of great respect.

Humanists:

Humanists strongly believe that humankind must take responsibility for improving the world, and increasingly today for protecting the environment that sustains us all. For humanists, care for the environment is important because we and other species depend on it, and future generations will suffer if we allow it to degrade too far or exhaust Earth's resources.

