

BEAUTIFUL WORLD, WONDERFUL GOD

AT1:

Pupils will:

- *Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of some of the influences of life experiences, beliefs, values and faith traditions upon individuals, communities, societies and cultures.*

AT2:

Pupils will:

- *Develop awareness of some of the fundamental questions of life raised by human experiences, and of how religious teachings can relate to them.*
- *Respond to questions with reference to the teachings and practices of religions and to their own understanding and experience.*
- *Reflect on their own beliefs, values, perceptions and experiences in the light of their study of religion.*
- *Develop positive attitudes of respect towards other people who hold views and beliefs that are different from their own.*

Pupils will be enabled to:

- *Begin to appreciate the beauty of the natural world and make their own responses to it.*
- *Understand the responsibilities they have in caring for our world.*
- *Consider their own beliefs about creation and understand the Christian beliefs about the creation of the world.*
- *Know and understand what the Bible teaches about the relationship between God and mankind and how mankind destroyed their privileged position in God's world.*

SESSION 1: Introduction

1. Explore natural objects outside.

- *Discuss what is beautiful and how it came to be there.*
- *Talk about why some things are beautiful to some people. Give reasons why not all people find the same things attractive.*
- *Being in a beautiful environment – how does it make you feel?*

2. Choose a natural object to bring inside and look at in detail – use magnifying glasses etc.

- *Why do you think your chosen object is beautiful?*
- *What is the most beautiful thing you have ever seen?*
- *How did it make you feel?*

3. Sketch your chosen object (include all the detail) and write down why you think it is beautiful.

SESSION 2: Creation Stories.

1. Explore how various groups of people throughout history have explained how the world came to be in existence. Examine and consider religious creation stories and the functions they might serve.

- *Why do you think there are so many different stories about how the world was created?*
- *Why isn't there one official version of how the world was created?*
- *If the children were able to create a perfect world, what would they leave in and what would they take out?*
- *If they were to create their own 'Creation Story', what would it be?*

2. Read the Biblical creation stories in Genesis 1 and 2 noting the order in which things were created and God's response to his creation. Then tell the Biblical story of the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve's responsibilities to the world and their disobedience of God's rule (Genesis 3).

- *Why do you think Jews and Christians believe God created the world in the order he did?*
- *What might the story of Adam and Eve tell us about looking after the world?*

3. Retell the story of Adam and Eve in cartoon strip form. Explain what the story teaches about God and his intentions for mankind.

SESSION 3: Looking after our world

1. Explore ways in which we can actively care for our world, starting with our own school grounds, moving on to the local environment and the wider world.

- *Tell stories of animals and plants that are now extinct eg. dodo, passenger pigeon.*
- *Discuss the present situation with endangered species – plants and animals.*
- *Learn about the work of environmental organisations eg. Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, Animal Rights organisations, Worldwide Fund for Nature, RSPCA, RSPB, Forestry Commission etc.*
- *Are there times when we do things we shouldn't to our beautiful world?*
- *Why should we look after our world?*
- *How can we care for our environment?*
- *Why is there a need for environmental organisations?*
- *Is it right that environmental organisations put pressure on people to change their ways?*
- *Are people ever justified in breaking the law for a cause they believe in?*

2. Write a letter to the next generation about an animal or plant which could become extinct in the future and explain why we should look after our world.

SESSION 4: God is all around us.

- 1. Discuss the concept that God is all around us and we can sense God in nature.**
 - *Who believes this? Who does not?*
 - *Does a beautiful world suggest a wonderful God?*
 - *What are the responsibilities of the human race for the beautiful world? What are our responsibilities?*
 - *Consider ways in which artists, poets, musicians throughout history have responded to the natural world through their particular artistic talents.*
- 2. Encourage children to show their own responses to an aspect of the natural world through art, music, poetry etc.**
- 3. Consider the Country Code, create their own rules to look after their own environment.**

SESSION 5: Religious Festivals

- 1. Discuss some religious festivals which focus on giving thanks for the natural world.**
 - *These might include: Christian – Harvest Festival / Jewish – Tu B'Shevat (celebration of trees) and Sukkot (thanksgiving for the harvest) / Hindu – Holi (Festival of love and harvest)*
 - *Why is the Harvest festival an important occasion for Christians?*
 - *What have you learned about festivals like Sukkot (Jewish) or Holi (Hindu)?*
- 2. Consider the ways in which different religions teach their followers to care for the world**
 - *eg. Hindu duty (Dharma), Buddhism (Five Moral Precepts), Sikhism (Guru Nanak's teachings), Christian.*
- 3. Look at the words of Psalm 8 and Psalm 147.**
 - *What do these words tell us about Christian beliefs in God and nature?*
- 4. Write your own poem – giving thanks for the natural world.**

SESSION 6: What have we learnt?

- 1. Discuss what the world would be like without any:- colour, light, trees, flowers, water, birds etc (choose one).**
 - *Children can bring their own natural object in to discuss why it is essential to preserve.*
- 2. Write a comment on the natural world as it is now – the importance of protecting and caring for it and in the home.**
 - *Put this response away in a safe place to be opened and read in the future when they are grown up, or display them as "leaves on a tree of the future.*
- 3. Consider what can be learnt from the study.**
 - *How do we express thanks for natural beauty?*
 - *Does a beautiful world suggest a wonderful God?*
 - *What are the responsibilities of the human race for the beautiful world?*
 - *What are our own responsibilities?*

Genesis

Chapter 1

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. God made the two great lights - the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night - and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky." So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Chapter 2

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation. These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created. In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up - for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground - then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being.

And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches. The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Cush. The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken."

Chapter 3

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?'" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate.

They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" He said, "I heard the sound of you in

the garden, and I was afraid." He said, "Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate."

The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel." To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." And to the man he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

The man named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all living. And the LORD God made garments of skins for the man and for his wife, and clothed them. Then the LORD God said, "See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"-- therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life.

PSALM 8

LORD, our Lord,

how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory

in the heavens.

² Through the praise of children and infants

you have established a stronghold against your enemies,
to silence the foe and the avenger.

³ When I consider your heavens,

the work of your fingers,

the moon and the stars,

which you have set in place,

⁴ what is mankind that you are mindful of them,

human beings that you care for them?^[c]

⁵ You have made them^[d] a little lower than the angels^[e]

and crowned them^[f] with glory and honor.

⁶ You made them rulers over the works of your hands;

you put everything under their^[g] feet:

⁷ all flocks and herds,

and the animals of the wild,

⁸ the birds in the sky,

and the fish in the sea,

all that swim the paths of the seas.

⁹ LORD, our Lord,

how majestic is your name in all the earth!

PSALM 147

¹ Praise the LORD.^[a]

How good it is to sing praises to our God,
how pleasant and fitting to praise him!

² The LORD builds up Jerusalem;
he gathers the exiles of Israel.

³ He heals the brokenhearted
and binds up their wounds.

⁴ He determines the number of the stars
and calls them each by name.

⁵ Great is our Lord and mighty in power;
his understanding has no limit.

⁶ The LORD sustains the humble
but casts the wicked to the ground.

⁷ Sing to the LORD with grateful praise;
make music to our God on the harp.

⁸ He covers the sky with clouds;
he supplies the earth with rain
and makes grass grow on the hills.

⁹ He provides food for the cattle
and for the young ravens when they call.

¹⁰ His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse,
nor his delight in the legs of the warrior;

¹¹ the LORD delights in those who fear him,
who put their hope in his unfailing love.

¹² Extol the LORD, Jerusalem;
praise your God, Zion.

¹³ He strengthens the bars of your gates
and blesses your people within you.

¹⁴ He grants peace to your borders
and satisfies you with the finest of wheat.

¹⁵ He sends his command to the earth;
his word runs swiftly.

¹⁶ He spreads the snow like wool
and scatters the frost like ashes.

¹⁷ He hurls down his hail like pebbles.
Who can withstand his icy blast?

¹⁸ He sends his word and melts them;
he stirs up his breezes, and the waters flow.

¹⁹ He has revealed his word to Jacob,
his laws and decrees to Israel.

²⁰ He has done this for no other nation;
they do not know his laws.^[b]

Praise the LORD.

The Countryside Code

1. Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs
2. Leave gates and property as you find them
3. Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
4. Keep dogs under close control
5. Consider other people

Natural England