

## Revision Booklet GCSE RS Religion and Life Issues – Paper One

### Unit One Relationships:

**Chastity** – Decision not to have sex before marriage. For example, because it is believed that sex is sacred.

**Commitment** – Making and keeping a promise, such as wedding vows.

**Love** – To have a deep affection and express it through words and actions

**Responsibilities** – Duties you should carry out, such as looking after family members.

**Conflict** – Working against each other rather than in unity. For example, conflict in marriages can end in divorce.

**Reconciliation** – Apologise or say sorry, and become friends again. Many faith communities have reconciliation services.

### **Christian Attitude to sex before marriage**

Sexual activity needs to be controlled and reserved for two people within the context of marriage. Christians are often encouraged to love one another in a non-sexual way. This type of love, sometimes called ‘**agape**’, is the love that Jesus showed to other people when he gave his life for them. Some denominations, such as Roman Catholic do not believe sex before marriage is acceptable. Sex is seen as a gift from God and it is, therefore, sacred and holy. All Christian denominations would be against casual sex (sleeping around) as this is an abuse of God’s gift. Some Christian groups believe sex is acceptable before marriage if the couple is in love and in a permanent relationship. The majority of Christians believe that marriage is the most appropriate context for having sex.

### **Muslim Attitude to sex before marriage**

Islam has very strict views on love and sex. These are based on passages from the **Qur’an** and **Hadith** (the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad). Muslims view sexual intercourse as an act of worship that fulfils emotional and physical needs as well as being procreative. Having children is the way in which humans can contribute towards Allah’s creation. Sexual activity needs to be controlled and reserved for two people within the context of marriage. Polygamy is allowed, but sex outside this is not. Sexual intercourse is a gift from **Allah** and therefore can only take place within a married relationship. Islam encourages people to marry and not to lead **celibate** lives. Marriage places a responsibility on both the husband and the wife to meet each other’s sexual needs.

### **Marriage ceremony**

#### **Christianity**

The vicar or priest begins with an opening statement about the importance of marriage. The couple makes promises (vows) in front of their family, friends and God. They exchange rings symbolising everlasting love. The vicar or priest pronounces them husband and wife with the words ‘What God has joined together let no man put asunder.’ There will also be hymns and prayers signifying the sacredness of marriage, their new life together and the support they will receive from the

Christian community. In the Catholic tradition there will also be Holy Communion or Mass again this signifies the holiness of marriage.

### **Islam**

There is usually payment in the form of a dowry (mahr) for an assisted or arranged marriage; the wife will keep this should there be a divorce. Readings from the Qur'an are recited, signifying that this is a social contract with Allah's blessing. The couple then exchange vows to demonstrate the responsibility that each undertakes in the marriage. The couple then signs the marriage contract (Nikah). This is a visible sign of the legal nature of marriage. There should be at least two witnesses. The ceremony can take place in the home or in a mosque.

### **Marriage Ceremony Judaism**

Before the wedding, the bride might visit a mikveh (immersion pool) to make her ritually pure. Sometimes too on the day of the wedding, the couple will fast to ask for God's forgiveness. Often held in a synagogue, under a Chuppah (to remind the couple of their future home together). Blessings over a cup of wine this symbolises joy and happiness. Wedding rings are then exchanged. There is also music from a choir and the rabbi will give a sermon (talk). The marriage contract, the Ketubah is signed. Seven blessings are said by the rabbi. At the end of the ceremony the groom breaks a glass to represent the fragility of love and also the destruction of the temple. The ceremony might end with family and friends shouting mazel tov (good luck).

### **Contraception**

#### **Christianity**

Roman Catholic does not believe in any artificial forms of birth control as sexual intercourse should always be open to the possibility of having children. They would look to the teaching from the Bible such as Genesis which states 'Be fruitful and multiply.' Roman Catholics can use natural forms of contraception – rhythm method, withdrawal or abstain.

*Other groups* – Church of England, Methodist and Baptist believe contraception is acceptable providing both partners agree. They believe that family planning allows couples to have more opportunities for their relationships to develop – either with each other and or with their existing children.

### **Islam**

Sex and children are seen as a gift from God so contraception is not desirable. Interpretation of Islamic teaching varies; however, contraception should never be used to encourage promiscuity. Some couples do use artificial methods of contraception; the pill and condom are considered more acceptable than those which are difficult to reverse, such as vasectomy. Contraception is usually considered acceptable if the woman has ill health or the family are living in poverty.

### **Adultery**

#### **Christianity**

Marriage is meant to be sexually exclusive. Adultery is forbidden in the 10 Commandments – 'Thou shalt not commit adultery', adultery breaks the marriage vows 'till death do us part', Jesus was against adultery and even said that if someone looks at someone with a lustful eye they have already committed adultery in their

hearts. Marriage is also seen as a sacrament by Roman Catholics and adultery breaks this sacrament. Adultery is seen as wrong as it destroys trust and harms the marriage.

### **Islam**

Sex outside marriage is seen as wrong. The traditional punishment for adultery is stoning which still takes place in some countries. Sexual relationships should only take place within marriage although polygamy is allowed and men can have up to 4 wives. During the marriage ceremony, Muslims make vows of fidelity. Adultery is seen as wrong as it destroys trust and harms the marriage.

### **Divorce**

#### **Christianity**

There is no single viewpoint on divorce, but Christians use a variety of sources as guidance. The **Catholic Church** does not accept divorce. The Church considers the bond of marriage to be a sacred bond, that is based on life-long love, fidelity (faithful/loyal) and family. They believe divorce is wrong because Jesus said ‘Anyone who divorces his wife... and marries another commits adultery.’ This is because they believe adultery is a sin and view marriage as a sacrament (given by God) and therefore, what is made by God should not be broken. Roman Catholics will, on occasion, allow an annulment. However, this would require special permission, for example, the marriage may have been forced.

The Church of England does not encourage divorce, but it has the structure to help and sympathise with those who find themselves in such a situation. Some might argue that although Jesus is against divorce, times have changed and divorce is now more acceptable. The Church of England teaches that marriage is for life, however, they also recognise that humans make mistakes and relationships can break down. Therefore, in some circumstances, divorce might need to be an option. For example, some argue that in the Bible, Jesus allowed divorce for adultery.

### **Islam**

Divorce is sometimes acceptable as a last resort. It is expected that the family will try to help the couple overcome their problems. If the couple does decide to divorce then the husband must state on three separate occasions that the marriage is over. A period of three months begins (Iddah). The couple will stay in the same house but not sleep together. This ensures that there is no confusion about who is the father of any children born after the divorce. The woman would also be given her dowry back.

#### **How might religious believers help a married couple with marriage problems?**

The priest or minister may offer advice or counselling. Members of the community may offer support. They might pray for them. They might spend social time with them or offer practical help e.g. looking after the couple’s children to give the couple ‘quality time’ together.

### **Re-marriage**

**Church of England** – allows that there are circumstances in which a divorced person may be married in a church while the ex-husband/wife is still alive, for example, for

adultery or abuse or if the person wasn't the cause of the split. It is up to individual ministers to decide whether or not they are willing to perform such a marriage service. Some will not perform second marriages but will give a blessing after a registry office ceremony.

Roman Catholic Church – as this church does not accept divorce – *‘what God has joined together let no man put asunder’*, it doesn't accept remarriage in church either. A divorced person who has remarried may attend services, but cannot take part in Holy Communion. If a person remarries while their ex-partner is still alive, this is considered to be adultery.

Islam - A man and a woman can **remarry** twice, but after a third divorce remarriage to each other cannot take place unless the woman has been married to another man in the meantime. Marriage is seen as a social contract which Allah has sanctioned. But, as it is not seen as a sacrament it can be broken and divorce allowed. In fact being married is encouraged as family life is an ideal way of living. Polygamy is also allowed providing that all wives are treated equally.

#### Contemporary Examples:

- Pope & Mother Theresa – remains celibate

*Other issues to prep for – Same-sex relationships and marriage in a place of worship, teachings about family life – is it important in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? And also, whether marriage is out of date or not and if re-marriage should take place in a church or place of worship.*

## Unit Two: Is It Fair?

### **Key Concepts**

**Injustice** – Withholding someone’s human rights, for example – imprisonment without trial

**Authority** – Right or power over others. For example a priest or set of teachings from a sacred text.

**Prejudice** – When a person is judged without any evidence – all religions agree people should treat others how they would wish to be treated.

**Identity** – The personality and character of an individual. Each person has their own identity and is unique.

**Discrimination** – Treating people differently because of their race, gender, religion or class. This is wrong as everyone is part of God’s divine creation.

**Equality** – Being treated the same. Many believers would say everyone is equal as they are made in God’s image.

### **Christian teaching about wealth/charity**

Christians follow Jesus’ example and teachings in the bible e.g. ‘Let the man who has two coats share it with the man who has none’ and Jesus’ commandment to ‘Love thy neighbour.’ Christians believe it’s not wrong to be wealthy but it’s important to use your wealth in the right way. The story of the Rich Fool illustrates the wrong use of wealth. Many Christians believe that if you have spare time or money you should give to charity or help others in some way. Some traditions such as Methodist believe it is wrong to make a profit out of lending people money (usury). Coveting (desiring things) is also seen as wrong as this can lead to jealousy and materialism – this is one of the 10 Commandments – You shall not covet your neighbours possessions.

### **Muslim teaching about wealth/charity**

Muslims believe that all wealth is a gift from Allah and should never be used to harm others. Zakat is paid according to personal wealth and giving to charity is seen as one of the Five Pillars of Islam (2.5% of a person's income). Muslims can also pay extra voluntary contributions to charity – known as sadaqah – the more wealth someone has the most generous someone can be. Helping those less fortunate than yourself is seen as a duty particularly family members. There are many references in the Quran about helping others and Muhammad often spoke out against social injustices.

### **Christian teaching about prejudice and equality**

God created everyone in his image, therefore, everyone is equal and should be treated equally. Jesus did not discriminate between men and women and differences so Christians believe that neither should they. The story of the Good Samaritan demonstrates equality and that everyone is considered our neighbour and that we should ‘love thy neighbour.’ Teachings such as ‘There is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free you are all one in Jesus Christ’ also illustrates the idea of equality. Today many Churches allow women to be ordained as vicars – however, the Catholic Church still does not allow women to become priests.

### **Muslim teaching about prejudice and equality**

All people are equal though not the same. All people are important in their own right, as created by Allah. Muhammad treated everyone equally and is a good role model

for Muslims today. All Muslims are part of one big family (Ummah) or brotherhood, this crosses all national, cultural, political, and racial and language boundaries. In Islam, an act of prayer shows the importance of equality as individuals literally stand side by side each other during prayer. Other rituals also show Islam's commitment to equality – giving to charity, simple graves, all wearing the same white ihram during the pilgrimage.

### **Christian teaching on Human Dignity**

Human beings are unique but equal. Christians believe that God created everyone to be treated equally – all made in the 'image of God' this means that everyone should be treated respectfully. Jesus treated everyone with dignity – prostitutes and tax collectors were treated with the same respect as Pharisees and Rabbis. As a Christian you should stand up for injustice, you should 'treat others as you'd like to be treated.' Some people are even prepared to die for the right to be treated with dignity – Martin Luther King died fighting the indignity of racism.

### **What have religions done to bring about peace?**

Followed in the example of the founder – Jesus. For example, Mother Teresa devoted her whole life to helping the poor. Others have tried to work for peace – Bono; lead singer of U2 uses his fame and songs to help campaign for peace and social justice across the world. Other Christians have developed Christian charities – CAFOD, Christian Aid etc. Other individuals have campaigned and risked their lives to try to bring about peace – Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi are two of the many examples.

### **Describe one religious person or religious organisation which has worked for human rights**

Could write about any number of people, for example, Martin Luther King – campaigned for justice for black Americans in the 1950's and 1960's. It began with the bus boycott in 1955. King led many marches and demonstrates, gave speeches (most famous) I have a dream. He met with the president of America (JK Kennedy) to persuade him to give equal rights to black Americans. All protests were non-violent but he was prepared to die for what he believed in. He believed it was his Christian duty to stand up to injustice and was assassinated for trying to do so. The Civil Rights Bill was passed in America largely due to King's work. Other people, you could write about are Gandhi, Mandela etc

Could talk about the work of Christian Aid, CAFOD or Salvation Army, Muslim Aid.

### **Christian Aid –**

A Christian charity set up just after ww2. It tries to promote justice for all people all over the world. The charity helps with long and short term aid both abroad and in the UK. They raise money through the door to door collections which take place every year in MAY (Christian Aid Week). They are involved in various projects around the world – in Senegal, they are currently working with farmers to support literacy and farming skills. They provide loans at low rates so people don't have to borrow money from corrupt loan dealers. They are also involved in many fair trade projects and campaign with other charities to abolish the third world debt. The charity is based on Christian principles of agape and love thy neighbour and reflects Jesus' own example of helping others. Their motto is 'we believe in life before death'.

### **Salvation Army-**

This is a Christian denomination which has a strong element of its worship as helping others – so they are a charity as well as a religious group. They call themselves ‘soldiers’ as they try to fight poverty and they try to get rid of the injustice of poverty in our world. Like Christian Aid, the Salvation Army is based on Christian principles of agape and love thy neighbour and also reflects Jesus’ own example of helping others. In this country they run soup kitchens, charity shops called the Thrift Shop. In Reading, they run a drink/drugs rehab centre. To raise the money they play in bands in town centres and sell a magazine called the ‘war cry’. The Beatles even wrote a song about them – Strawberry Fields, to help raise awareness of what they do. James Cordon is a member of this Christian group and when he was young played in one of the Salvation Army’s bands.

### **Contemporary Examples:**

- Gee Walker – wasn’t discriminative against her son’s killer
- Malala – Fought for equality for Girls education

*Other Issues to learn from your workbooks – social responsibility and why religious people think this is their duty. The media and how religion is portrayed fairly or unfairly in the media.*

### Unit Three: Looking for meaning

**God** – An ultimate being. He is considered the creator and sustainer of the world.

**Symbolism** – Something that points to or explains something else. For example, the cross symbolises that Jesus died for everyone.

**Awe** – Completely overwhelmed by a sense of God's presence. In many religions, experiencing God or his presence is sought through various ways.

**Revelation** – Something showed or explained that was previously hidden. For example, God might reveal his nature during worship.

**Afterlife** – The belief that there is some kind of life after the death of a body. For example, Christians believe in heaven and hell.

**Community** – A group of people with something in common. For example, Corrymeela is a community working together for peace between Catholics and Protestants.

### **Arguments for believing in God**

Many religious people believe that there must be more to this life. That this life simply can't be the end, that there must be something greater than us. They argue that the world shows evidence that it has to be designed e.g. the beauty of the sunset or a snowflake. They believe that the world is too intricate and complex for it to be an accident. Other people also believe that they have seen God or have experienced some sort of a miracle for themselves. Philosophers such as Richard Swinburne have argued that God is the simplest explanation for why the universe exists.

### **Arguments against believing in God**

Many people who don't believe in God point to the fact that there is so much suffering in the world there can't be a god or that if there is, He can't be all omnipotent (all powerful), one- benevolent (all loving) and omniscience (all knowing). Some scholars such as Richard Dawkins suggests that the world is random and the way it has evolved is down to evolution, not God. People who claim to have experienced God are mistaken and that there are other logical explanations for these events.

### **What is God like? Christianity**

God is all powerful (omnipotent), all-knowing (omniscience) and all loving (omnibenevolent). They believe that God is the creator of the world and that there are three aspects of God: the father, son and holy spirit – known as the trinity. Christians believe that Jesus is God's son and that he gave up his life by dying on the cross so that sins may be forgiven.

### **What is God like? Islam**

Like Christianity, Muslims believe that God is all-powerful (omnipotent), all-knowing (omniscience) and all loving (omnibenevolent). They believe that God is the creator of the world. They do not have any images of God as they believe that this would lead to the worship of idols and that God is NOT a person. Muhammad is a prophet and NOT the son of God. They believe that there is only one God (tawhid) and that we should obey God. Prayer beads (Subha beads) are used as a way to express Muslim belief about God – there are 99 names for God. The word Islam means someone who has submitted to the will of God.

## **Why do people use symbols?**

### **Christianity**

Crucifix reminds Christians of Jesus' sacrifice that he died to save everyone's sins. Through his death, Christians have hope that if they live a good life they will be resurrected from the dead. The cross is also a reminder that Jesus overcame death and rose from the dead. Other symbols within Christianity include stained glass windows which tell important stories about key events from the bible, also Easter eggs – Jesus' sacrifice and new life and hope, candles represent Jesus light of the world, bread and wine – the body and blood of Jesus reminding believers of his sacrifice.

### **Islam**

Muslims do not draw God or Muhammad instead they have the word of Allah written in calligraphy to help them reflect on their beliefs about God. They also have prayer beads (Subha beads) which are used as a way to express Muslim belief about God – there are 99 names for God. Many Muslims use this in their daily prayers as it helps them show their devotion to their religion. Other Muslim symbols include the crescent and star which represents finding your way to God. Green is also a typical Muslim colour as it reminds Muslims that God created the world.

### **Christian Funerals**

Service usually begins in the Church with the words, 'I am the resurrection and the life' and other passages from the Bible, prayers and hymns. The priest or vicar will often give a short sermon and a close friend or relative of the deceased may make a tribute. Priest or vicar often wears white. Then at the graveside or where the body is cremated, the final words are said, 'ashes to ashes, dust to dust ...' Flowers are often placed at the graveside to remind the mourners of the beauty of heaven.

### **Christian beliefs about Life after Death**

When a person dies their soul continues to live on – in heaven hell or purgatory. Christians believe they will be judged for how they have lived and this will affect their destiny of the soul. The resurrection of the dead is a central belief in Christianity because Jesus rose from the dead. Christians believe that the resurrection of Jesus was a victory over death and sin that all believers can share for themselves.

### **Muslim Funerals**

Family members gather around the dying person to read the Qur'an and offer prayers. The dying person may repeat the Shahadah. The last words to be heard should be the adhan (call to prayer). After death, the body is washed at least 3 times by a close relative. The body is wrapped in a white cloth, if the person has been on pilgrimage the ihram is used. The imam leads the prayers in the mosque and at the graveside. Usually, the funeral should take place within 24 hours of death. Traditionally only men attend. Burial is preferred, as it is believed Allah will rise up bodies on the Last Day. Usually, the body is laid on the right side, facing Makkah. Expensive memorials should not be set up and mourning should last no longer than three days.

### **Muslim belief about life after death**

There is no life after death (Aakhirah). At death the body stays in the ground until the Day of Judgement, then there will be a resurrection of the body. At death, the soul is taken by the angel of death to a state of waiting for judgement. Each person will be judged according to how they have followed the teachings of Islam. Those who have lived a good life will be rewarded with paradise whilst those who have not will be in hell.

### **How do people respond to God?**

Worship, prayer, living a good life, service to others. For example, Bono who is the lead singer of U2 and a committed Christian uses his work to do good for others. He writes songs which encourage people to think of others and through his music he has spoken out against violence (IRA) and poverty. He uses his fame and money to work on long-term projects to help third world debt and poverty. People listen to him and he is an influence for the good – both the Pope and George Bush sr are counted as his friends and again he is able to influence world politics to get things done. Because of his work he has been nominated for a noble peace prize. Other people, you could discuss in this area include Ant and Dec – they opened their youth village in county Durham for victims of crime and bullying.

### **Acts of Worship:**

#### **Christianity**

Holy day Sunday, most will receive communion (bread and wine) there would also be a sermon (talk from priest or vicar). Private prayer and reading of the bible are also encouraged.

#### **Islam**

Pray 5 times per day, facing Makkah. Prayers can take place anywhere but going to the mosque for prayers is usually encouraged. Before prayer washing (wudu) is performed. Friday is the Muslim holy day and usually, Muslims try to attend the Mosque on a Friday for Jumma prayers. Private prayer and reading of the Quran are also encouraged. Some Muslims even learn the Qur'an by heart (hafiz)

### **Contemporary Examples:**

- Freud – Religion is just a comfort blanket
- Richard Dawkins, William Paley and Thomas Aquinas

*Other Issues to learn from your workbooks – Religion in a secular society - Is religion necessary in our world today? The nature of God – How do people experience him e.g. through Holy Books, miracles and great leaders etc. How people respond to God. For example, through vocation, preaching, changing their lifestyle etc. Is belief in an afterlife important?*

## Unit Four: Our World

### **Key Concepts:**

**Creation** – Making something deliberately, for a purpose. For example, Christians believe God created the world in 6 days and rested on the 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Dominion** – Being in charge of the world for God. For example, some Christians believe they have dominion over the animals.

**Environment** – The natural world all around us: plants, insect, animals and humans. Most religions believe God created the world.

**Stewardship** – To look after and care for the world. Christians believe they have a God-given responsibility of Stewardship.

**Soul** – The part of humans that lives on after the body dies. Some religions teach there is a spiritual side of the body that survives.

**Humanity** – Caring for other human beings. Many religions teach that it is expected that human beings will care for each other and show kindness.

### **Purpose and meaning of Life – Mankind’s Place in the world - Christian**

To serve and worship God, to ‘love thy neighbour’, to have a family, to look after God’s earth, to follow the teachings of Jesus. For some people, this may mean dedicating their lives to God as a priest, nun or monk. Or working for a charity.

### **Purpose and meaning of Life – Mankind’s Place in the world - Buddhism**

To gain enlightenment to be free from the cycle of death and rebirth. This is achieved by living a good life; showing care, compassion and loving kindness towards others and generally following Buddhist teachings. Buddhists believe that by doing good deeds they will gain good karma and eventually culminate in a good rebirth and eventually enlightenment.

### **Teaching about the soul – Christian**

The soul is part of a person which survives after death. It is the spiritual aspect of human nature which influences each person's personality – ‘the real you.’ It is believed to be a reflection of ‘the image of God’ in humanity. The soul is believed to be one of the things which separate humans from animals.

### **Teaching about the soul – Buddhism**

As nothing lasts forever and everything is constantly changing there is no such thing as a fixed soul or anatta. Buddhists believe that this is an illusion. They use the analogy of a candle being light from a flickering flame, the new flame has arisen from the old one but is constantly changing – this is like the soul.

### **Care for the environment – Christian**

Act as stewards looking after the world for God. Respect and care for other people and animals. Use the world’s resources wisely. Christians have dominion over all other beings on the planet but must not abuse this trust. There are various environmental charities that Christians might get involved in such as Green Peace which was set up by a group of Quakers.

### **Christian teaching about how the world was created**

God created the world – out of nothing 'ex nihilo'. There were six periods of creation and then the seventh period of rest. First, there was light and darkness, then sea and sky, land and sea and plants, next sun, moon and stars, then birds and fish and finally animals and humans. Humans were the only ones created in the 'image of God' and were given special responsibilities to rule over all other creatures – dominion.

### **Buddhist teaching about how the world was created**

Buddhists do not believe in a creator god. The Buddha regarded the origins of the universe as 'undeclared'. It is not, therefore, possible to state how the world began. Some Buddhists would support the scientific theory of the big bang in explaining how the world began. The question of the origins is of no consequence to the main purpose of life – which is to eliminate craving and ignorance and ultimately achieve enlightenment. The Buddha told a story of the poison arrow and the doctor to illustrate this point.

### **Care for the environment – Buddhism**

All life is inter-connected and therefore, all life deserves respect. Buddhists should follow the five precepts especially the first precept – non-violence (ahimsa). Therefore, Buddhists should try to live peacefully and not harm the environment. Many Buddhists because of this precept choose to be vegetarian. Some Buddhist monks have become actively involved in campaigning against deforestation in South East Asia. The Dalai Lama has spoken against the Chinese mistreatment of the Tibetans natural environment as this goes against the Buddhist principle of non-harming (ahimsa).

### **People or organisations that have cared for the environment**

#### **Christianity – Chico Mendes**

He was a Brazilian rubber tapper. He organised other rubber tappers to defend their homes against the cattle ranchers. From the 1970's he organised non-violent resistance against the misuse of the rainforest. He organised the local people to make human barricades to stop the progress of the bulldozers. He also organised other events to defend peoples' rights to own land. He found ways to use the rainforest for the benefit of the local people whilst still protecting the environment from logging and cattle ranching. In 1988, he was successful in making an area of the forest into a nature reserve. He was killed outside his home in the same year but the land he fought for remains to this day a conservation area.

#### **Buddhism – Ajahn Pongsak**

About 30 years ago, a monk from Thailand began to observe the loss of trees and topsoil on the mountains of northern Thailand. Ajahn Pongsak took a radical step to reverse the deforestation. He explained that the Buddhist precepts left him with no choice but to act. The Buddhist principle of ahimsa (non-harming) and the teaching of right livelihood are particularly important in connection with Ajahn's decision to act to save the local environment. Under Ajahn's guidance, villagers began to work as a collective group. They planted thousands of seedlings and by 1992, more than 1,000 villages and around 97,000 people were involved in reforestation. Today, the villagers have many tree varieties to protect the soil and restore the natural balance of the forest in the long term. Many monks today follow Ajahn's example and are actively

acquiring land for reforestation. This type of Buddhism is known as Engaged Buddhism.

### **Animal Rights – Christianity**

In Genesis, it states that mankind is to have dominion over animals. For this reason, many Christians justify eating meat as long as the animals have been humanely reared and killed. As Christians are stewards of the world they must not abuse their power. Animals are God's creatures but are believed not to be able to make moral choices or have a soul.

### **Animal Rights – Buddhism**

All life is inter-connected and therefore, all life deserves respect, including animals. Buddhists believe that you can be reborn as an animal, depending on how you have lived your life. Buddhists believe you should live life peacefully and avoid harming any living creature. Vegetarianism is, therefore, encouraged.

### **Contemporary Examples:**

- Chico Mendes
- St Francis of Assisi – Patron Saint of Animals

*Other Issues to learn from your workbooks – How did the universe begin – Literal and symbolic view of creation. Scientific theories for the creation of the world – big bang and evolution. Using our talents in today's society – for example, the parable of the talents and why using our talents is important. The Vrindavan Forest Revival Project as an example of stewardship. Festivals that celebrate and take care of the environment. For example, Tu B'Shevat and interfaith creation festival.*