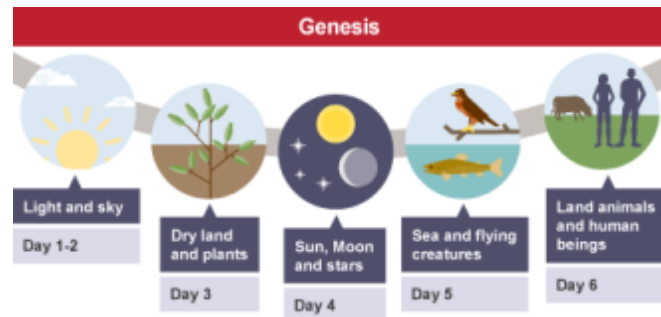


Key Words

- 1. Assisi** Town in Italy, where a meeting of the world's major religions took place in 1986 and produced a declaration on the environment.
- 2. Atmosphere** The layers of gases that surround the Earth. The important gases in the atmosphere are nitrogen, oxygen and carbon dioxide.
- 3. Creation** The act of bringing something into existence. In religion, this refers to the creation of the world by God.
- 4. Cultivate** To work the land so that it produces crops.
- 5. Endangered species** Animals that are close to extinction because of their low numbers.
- 6. Environment** The immediate surroundings in which people live, or the natural world such as the land, air or water.
- 7. Exploitation** Unfair advantage taken of something or somebody just for your own benefit, not for the good of the other person or thing.
- 8. Dominion** The idea that God put human beings in charge of the world, to bring it under their control and be responsible for its maintenance.

Creation & Christianity

God is the only creator.
 God existed before he created the world.
 The world was well planned and is sustained by God.
 God blessed creation, which means that all creation is holy.
 God created everything in Heaven and on Earth in six days.
 On the seventh day, God rested.



Environment & Christianity

Most Christians believe that God gave human beings a special responsibility within creation to cultivate it, guard it and use it wisely. This is called stewardship.

These passages from the Bible show the dominant message is that God is the one who provides for humans and humans should show they are thankful by taking care of what God has given them.

Islam & Creation

Islam is very clear about the belief that Allah was responsible for the creation of the universe. There is no single story of creation, but there are references to it in many places in the Qur'an. From these it is possible to build a picture:

- Allah is eternal, and so not bound by the constraints of time.
- Allah decided to create the universe and because of his unlimited power and authority he commanded things to come into being.
- Allah then made all living creatures, the angels, the planets and the rain to allow vegetation to grow.
- Allah sent angels to Earth to collect seven handfuls of soil, all different colours, and that with soil Allah made the first man, Adam, breathing life and power into him.
- Eve (Hawa), the first woman, was created from the side of Adam and lived with him in Paradise.
- Adam and Eve disobeyed Allah, though they were forgiven, and were sent from Paradise to the Earth which Allah had created.
- The Earth had been created to allow Adam and Eve and their descendants (the human race) to live and thrive.
- Creation took Allah six days to complete.

Environment & Islam

The Qur'an says that Allah (God) is the **creator** of the world. Human beings are on the world as trustees or viceregents - they are told to look after the world for Allah and for the future. Muslims believe that all people are khalifahs, or guardians, of the planet and have a duty and responsibility for its care.

A number of the Hadith refer to the Prophet Muhammad's concern about the environment and treatment of animals, and he encourages those around him to value the Earth and all of nature.

In the Qur'an, Muslims are instructed to look after the environment and not to damage it.

Assisi 1986

In 1986 HRH Prince Philip, then International President of the WWF, invited five leaders of five of the major religions of the world - Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism - to meet to discuss how their faiths could help save the natural world.

The meeting took place in Assisi in Italy, because it was the birth place of St Francis, the Catholic saint of ecology. From this meeting arose key statements by the five faiths outlining their own distinctive traditions and approach to the care for nature.