

Our World

Key words:

- Creation - when something is made, nothing was there until it was created (ex nihilo)
- Soul - the spiritual part of a person that lives on after the body has died
- Humanity - compassion and caring about other human beings
- Stewardship - a God given responsibility to manage or control the earth

Key facts:

Creation

Hindu:

- They believe that creation is anadi (has no beginning) and that it's eternal. This is very different to the Christian belief that the world had a beginning.
- Life is based on balance and sacrifice. So, the world of plants sacrifices itself to animals, animals to each other and humans, etc. There is a never-ending destruction and renewal of all life and matter.
- It's believed that in a previous universe, Brahma, the creator, prayed to Brahman, the ultimate reality, to create a new universe. So Brahma creates life but Shiva is the destroyer and recreator - when all is turned to dust then the cycle of life continues. Vishnu is responsible for the protection and sustenance of the world.

Christian:

- They believe that God created everything out of nothing - ex nihilo
- God created the heavens and the earth - light and dark, sun, moon and stars, humans beings, land, sea and sky, etc. It was all created in 'six days', and on the 7th day God rested
- God created everything for a purpose and the beginning of the world wasn't an accident.
- Humans are different from other creatures because they are created in the 'image of God'. But they share responsibility for caring for the world.
- Some Christians believe the creation story in Genesis in the Bible word for word. They have a literalist view.
- Other Christians do not and they believe it's a story with an important and true meaning - that God is the boss. They may believe that one day isn't 24 hours but a much longer period of time.

Science and religion:

- Some people believe that science and religion go against each other but other people say that they work together.
- Science and religion both ask questions about the world and life but they ask different kinds of questions.
- Science asks HOW? How did this begin? How can we explain this?
- Religion asks WHY? Why did this begin? Why are we here?

Care for the world

Hindu:

- Hindus believe that all living beings have an atman - the real self (like the soul), so they consider all life to be precious and sacred, and should not be harmed
- All animals are respected but special honour is given to the cow, who provides milk and butter. This respect reflects their thankfulness to the earth.
- They believe in non-violence - called Ahimsa. Many Hindus are vegetarian. They also believe that they should care for their environment.

Christian:

- Christians believe that they have a responsibility to care for the earth and the environment. They are partners with God in looking after the world. Christians use the term stewardship to explain this responsibility. Some Christians are vegetarian but others think God made humans in control of animals.
- They remind themselves in worship and celebrations of God's provision e.g. Harvest festival, saying grace/thanks before meals.