



What Religions Teach About Protecting Our Planet

KS4 RELIGIOUS STUDIES

ETHICS

Ages 13-16 ⌚ 3 min read

Why Do Religions Care About the Environment?

Most of the world's major religions teach that nature is precious and worth protecting. For many believers, this comes from religious texts and teachings that tell us to be **stewards** (caretakers) of the Earth. The idea is that we're responsible for looking after the planet, not just using it up for ourselves.

Think of it like borrowing your friend's favourite toy — you need to take care of it and return it in good condition, not break it or leave it damaged for them.

Christianity and Creation

In **Christianity**, the Bible says that God gave humans **dominion** over nature. However, many modern Christian leaders say this means **responsible stewardship**, not unlimited use. **Pope Francis**, the leader of the **Roman Catholic Church**, has written extensively about environmental protection, calling it a moral duty to care for creation.

Islam's Environmental Teachings

Islam teaches that all living creatures are **communities like yours**. The **Qur'an** (Islam's holy book) mentions protecting forests and animals. Islamic scholars have said that wasting water, cutting down trees unnecessarily, and polluting the environment are sins. Many Muslim communities are leading environmental projects today.

Buddhism, Hinduism, and Eastern Religions

Buddhism teaches **compassion for all living things**. Buddhists believe in **karma** — the idea that harmful actions have consequences. Harming the environment creates negative karma. **Hinduism** also sees nature as sacred, with many gods representing natural forces like rivers and mountains. **Jainism**, another Eastern religion, has one of the strictest environmental ethics, teaching minimal harm to any living being.

Think of it like a school ecosystem — if one part gets damaged (the trees, the water, the air), everything in the system suffers, including us.

Judaism and Stewardship

Judaism teaches **tikkun olam**, which means **repairing the world**. This includes environmental protection. Jewish law includes rules about not wasting water or damaging forests, showing that caring for nature is a religious obligation.

What This Means Today

Many religious people worldwide are putting these teachings into action. They're supporting **renewable energy**, protecting endangered species, and fighting **climate change**. For believers, protecting the environment isn't just politics — it's a **spiritual responsibility**.