

Hinduism

Explore Hindu notions of 'science' and 'spirit'

Aim: To know how civilisation and material desires, together with failure to see the inner meaning of life, has contributed to current environmental problems.

Activity

Read the Hindu story of "Narada Muni, the Cobbler and Banyan seed".



Earth Stories Banyan Seed

Hindu scriptures advise that science ("the how") must be coupled with knowledge of the spirit ("the why").

Pupils collect an acorn, conker or other large tree seed to examine.

Discuss the meaning of the story, and the sense of wonder that the cobbler had for the environment.

Consider the notion of reincarnation as a principle espousing equality of all life forms and their transience, challenging human centeredness and destruction of nature.

Discuss and note some of the human desires that have had a detrimental effect on plant life in the school grounds, for example using weedkiller around boundaries to 'tidy up' or not leaving mowing margins around playing fields, and thereby destroying insect habitats and food sources. Is this harm caused by lack of understanding of the 'how' and /or the 'why'?

How can we use our knowledge of science (the how) and the 'wonder' of the natural world (the why) to plan an intervention?

- Write a letter to grounds maintenance to ask them to alter the ways in which they manage the school property and suggest alternative to support nature.
- Research the 'festival of rain flowers' – an annual festival
- Watch the Bee movie or extracts from it and investigate which flowers to plant/ structures/ bug hotels will encourage more bee and insects
- Make Rangoli patterns from rice, grains, seeds, flowers (instead of inorganic materials that may pollute the environment)– to provide food for wildlife (the how) as well as creating an artistic feature (the why)

Success Criteria

- ✓ I can explain how my and others' desires and actions impact on the natural world
- ✓ I know what I can do to make a difference to my local environment / the world

Buddhism

Discussion, reflection and games

Aim: Pupils understand the Buddhist view of the "wholeness of life".

Activity:

Read this quote, from the Dalai Lama:

"Today more than ever before, life must be characterised by a sense of universal responsibility, not only nation to nation and human to human, but also human to other forms of life"

The Dalai Lama made this comment in 1998. Ask pupils to consider what he might have been referring to in 1998, and how the comment applies today. They should also consider the following points about Buddhism.

- Buddhism has been described as an 'ecological tradition'
- The principal philosophy of Buddhism is love, compassion and respect for all life, nature and ourselves, intertwined.
- The world follows a cycle of decay, death and rebirth.
- The notion of 'enlightenment' is a key feature, and that there is no 'self' or separate entity. Instead, humans should acknowledge the wholeness of the natural world and the impact of our decisions on the environment that sustains all life.
- Meditation and mindfulness are used to reflect on ourselves, our responsibility for the world, and practical responses to the crisis facing our planet.
- The open air, trees and natural habitats are seen as symbols of spiritual freedom.

More springboards:

- Literacy Learning Springboards: Musical Hedgerow Game – this physically active outdoor game emphasises the interconnectedness of all living things.

Success Criteria

- ✓ I can explain how my and other's desires and actions impact on the natural world

