

KS3



Environmental Issues



A resource from
The Archbishop of
York Youth trust

abyyt.com

Teacher Information

This pack provides a range of activities to introduce pupils to the topic of **Environmental Issues** in the community. There are 3 sections:

Ignite

Sparking discussion about environmental issues and asking the big questions

Inspire

Providing real life examples of community matters in action and ways to make a difference to social issues

Empower

Offering opportunities for pupils to find out more and become agents of change through their actions

The activities can be used and adapted to best suit your students' learning and curriculum needs.



Teacher Information

Where can you use activities in this resource?



As part of an assembly or collective worship session



Within PSHE session as part of Core Theme 3: Living in the Wider World



As part of Citizenship provision learning to be an active citizen



Within RE sessions that explore religious teaching on social issues



As part of a unit of work to develop pupils' understanding of social, moral and cultural issues in society



In preparing pupils to take part in a social action project that engages and reconnects with the community



To supplement the KS3 Young Leaders Award materials



Environmental Issues

What are the environmental issues that affect our communities and how can we play our part in solving them?

Definition

Environmental issues are defined as problems with the Earth's systems (air, water, soil, etc.) that have developed, because of human interference or mistreatment of the planet.



Environmental Issues Activities List

IGNITE ACTIVITIES

1. The Big Questions (ppt slide 6, page 9)
2. Environmental Issues Mind-Map (ppt slides 7-8, page 10)
3. Who's Responsible? (ppt slide 9, pages 11-14)
4. IGNITE Collective Worship Activity (ppt slides 10-11, page 15)

INSPIRE ACTIVITIES

5. Taking Action to Help Environmental Issues Video (ppt slide 12)
6. Environmental Issues: Inspirational People (ppt slide 13, pages 18-19)
7. INSPIRE Collective Worship Activity (ppt slide 14, page 20)

EMPOWER ACTIVITIES

8. Find Out More (ppt slide 17, pages 23-24)
9. Young Leaders in Action (ppt slide 18)
10. Challenge Time (ppt slide 19, page 25)
11. EMPOWER Collective Worship Activity (ppt slide 20)







IGNITE Activities Teacher Guidance

1. THE BIG QUESTIONS (ppt slide 6, page 9)

There are 3 Big questions to help students start to think about and discuss **environmental issues**. You can look at all 3 big questions or just one as a whole class. Alternatively, you can divide the class into pairs/groups giving students a different question to consider. Take feedback from students.

You might display the definition- Environmental issues are problems with the Earth's systems (air, water, soil, etc.) caused by human actions that damage the planet.

You can cut out the questions on the handout to give to students.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES MIND-MAP (ppt slides 7-8, page 10)

This activity helps get students thinking about all the different environmental issues that matter in community.

Task: Ask students Individually or in pairs to create a mind-map with as many environmental issues or causes of pollution they can think of under the headings: Water Pollution, Air Pollution, Land Pollution, Climate Change and Loss of habitat & Biodiversity (Loss of the natural home & plant, insect and animal species).

The handout provides some of the ideas students might identify for teachers to refer to.

Important Note: Share ideas from the mind-map as is appropriate for your students. There may be some terms and ideas that need more explanation for students.

3. WHO'S RESPONSIBLE? DISCUSSION TOPICS (ppt slide 9, pages 11-14)

In this activity there are 4 different discussion topics based on facts looking at the topics of Plastic Pollution, Air Pollution, Food Waste & Loss of biodiversity. Teacher notes are provided to help guide you through the topic. You may want to do additional research to support the discussion.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Many of the issues explored in this activity may elicit a range of different viewpoints. It is essential, as with all PSHE & Citizenship lessons, that you ensure a safe and supportive classroom environment before initiating and facilitating these discussions with clear ground rules in place, that all students understand and agree to.

4. IGNITE Collective Worship Activity (ppt slide 10, page 15)

This activity can be used in isolation or as part of a collective worship session, or series of sessions, looking at environmental issues from a Christian Perspective.

In this activity you might look at all 4 Bible quotes as a class or divide the class into pairs/groups, giving students a different quote to look at and discuss. Take feedback from students on what each verse says to Christians about environmental issues. Cut out the questions on the handout and give to students to discuss.

Bible verses context

1. You appointed them (humans) rulers over everything you made; you placed them over all creation: sheep and cattle, and the wild animals too; the birds and the fish and the creatures in the seas. Psalm 8: 6-8

- These verses come from the book of Psalms, where King David is reflecting on the role that God gave to humankind in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2), to rule over everything he had made.

2. For six years plant your land and gather in what it produces. But in the seventh year let it rest, and do not harvest anything that grows on it. The poor may eat what grows there, and the wild animals can have what is left. Do the same with your vineyards and your olive tree. Exodus 23: 10-11

- These verses come from the second book in the Bible where God is teaching the people how best to live on the earth. He tells them to let their fields have a year of rest so the ground is not over-worked, can recover, and the wild animals can enjoy what is left. Many farmers still do this today, it is called 'fallowing'.

3. "If you come across a bird's nest in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs and the mother sitting on the young or on the eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young. You may take the young but be sure to let the mother go. Deuteronomy 22:6

- Here, God provides his people with another law that is for the protection of nature. Rather than the people taking both the bird and the eggs, God instructs them to leave the mother bird that she may continue to thrive in the wild.

4. I brought them into a fertile land to enjoy its harvests and its other good things. But instead, they ruined my land; they defiled the country I had given them. Jeremiah 2:7

- In this passage, we learn that after being given a new and fertile land to enjoy, God's people choose to ruin the land instead and do not take care of it.

1. THE BIG QUESTIONS HANDOUT

Which environmental issue should people be most concerned about? Why?

Who is responsible for the environment and damage to our planet?

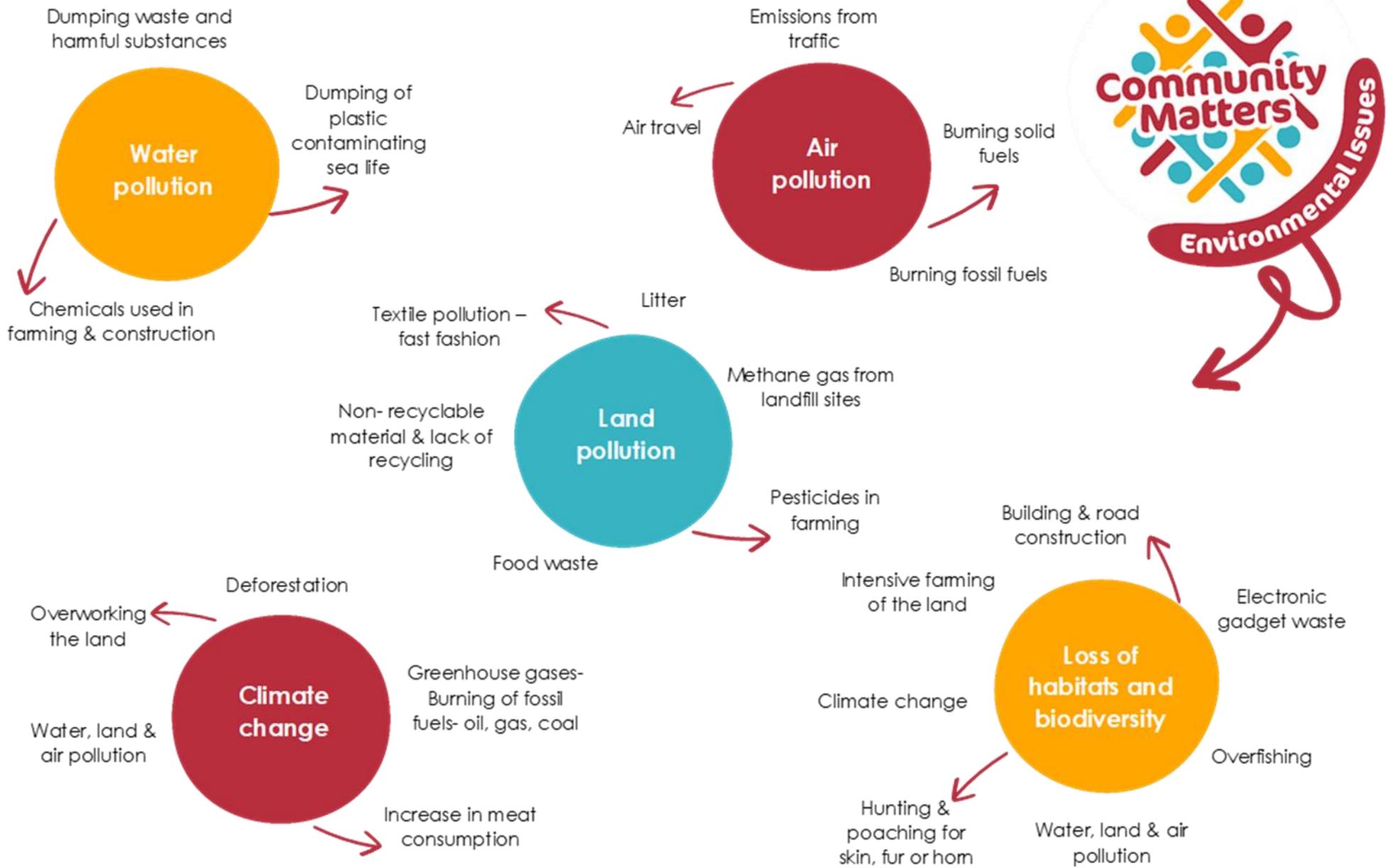
What can people do to help solve environmental issues?

Which environmental issue should people be most concerned about? Why?

Who is responsible for the environment and damage to our planet?

What can people do to help solve environmental issues?

2. MIND-MAP TEACHER GUIDANCE



3. WHO'S RESPONSIBLE? WATER POLLUTION- PLASTICS DISCUSSION TOPIC TEACHER NOTES



FACT 1

Up to 12 million tonnes of plastic ends up in the ocean every year – that's the equivalent of a rubbish truck every single minute.

Who is responsible for plastic ending up in the ocean?

Notes/further questions to guide discussion

Greenpeace estimate that around 20% of plastic in the ocean comes from human activities at sea – mostly fishing but most of the plastic pollution in the ocean starts out on land. It mainly comes from household and commercial waste, which blows from waste bins and landfill sites into rivers or sewers, then flows out into the sea.

Individuals/families (consumers)?

- Buying items that will only be used once, or for a very short period of time, that are made out of plastic e.g. cheap children's toys, Christmas cracker presents or 'novelty' items
- Buying synthetic clothing that shed microplastics when washed
- Purchasing items with excessive plastic packaging
- Drinking bottled water instead of re-filling a re-usable bottle

Companies that use plastic packaging or single use plastic items

- Supermarkets using unnecessary plastic packaging for fruit and vegetables
- Restaurants, bars and take-aways using single-use plastic straws, food containers that can't be re-recycled, single-use condiments
- Many smaller shops still give out free single-use plastic bags

Companies that make the plastic packaging or single use plastic items (producers)?

- Should they ensure all plastic they produce can be re-cycled?

Students might also consider how the Covid pandemic has increased the use of disposable plastic items, like masks, gloves and aprons, for hygiene reasons and for Covid tests. Does this make it even more necessary to reduce our plastic use elsewhere or make them feel like it is a lost cause? What other innovative solutions might there be?

Is there anything governments could/should do?

- Since 5 October 2015, large retailers in England have been required by law to charge 5p for all single use plastic carrier bags
- In 2018, the UK government banned the manufacture of products containing microbeads

Fact 1 Source: www.greenpeace.org.uk/news/why-is-there-so-much-plastic-in-the-ocean/

3. WHO'S RESPONSIBLE? AIR POLLUTION DISCUSSION TOPIC TEACHER NOTES



FACT 2

One in four UK homes are surrounded by air pollution exceeding safety limits set by the World Health Organization. Dirty air is estimated to cause 40,000 early deaths a year in the UK.

Who is responsible for air pollution?

Notes/further questions to guide discussion

Who is responsible for air pollution?

Ask students to start by thinking about what causes air pollution. Students might mention things like:

- Road traffic, especially diesel vehicles
- Heat and power generation (e.g. oil and coal power plants)
- Manufacturing factories
- Waste incineration/burning
- Cooking, heating, and lighting our homes with polluting fuels

Is there anything individuals can do to reduce air pollution? Students might mention things like:

- Walking, cycling or using public transport instead of using the car (Is this possible for everyone? What if you live in the countryside? What about how much longer it might take you to complete your journey? Is public transport, walking or cycling suitable for people with mobility problems?)
- Not using wood burners or open fires (What if you don't have another way to heat your home?)
- Trying to reduce waste that will end up being burnt or in land-fill

Is there anything the government could do to reduce air pollution? Students might mention things like:

- Laws related to car ownership e.g. conventional petrol and diesel cars and vans will be banned from sale in the UK from 2030 and owners of cars with the highest emissions currently pay the most road tax, owners of electric cars don't need to pay road tax at all
- Clean Air Act 1993 - laws related to the height of chimneys, types of fuel people are allowed to burn, creation of clean air zones and smoke control areas
- Creating more green spaces and things like 'living walls' to help remove some pollutants from the air

What about big companies/businesses? Should they be held responsible?

Fact 2 Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/mar/17/air-pollution-breaking-who-limits-surrounds-25-of-uk-homes-study-finds>

3. WHO'S RESPONSIBLE? LAND POLLUTION- FOOD WASTE DISCUSSION TOPIC TEACHER NOTES



FACT 3

We waste about a third of all food produced for human consumption. Over 10 million tonnes of food are binned each year in the UK.

Who is responsible for food waste?

Notes/further questions to guide discussion

Who is responsible for food waste?

Families?

- Not planning meals and over-buying can lead to food going out of date/rotten and having to be thrown away
- Not knowing how to use up/cook with left-overs
- Confusion over 'best before' dates and 'use by' dates, might throw food away that is still perfectly edible
- Not storing food correctly

Supermarkets?

- "Buy one, get one free" and other offers designed to make us buy more than we need
- Pre-packaged fruit and vegetables also mean you often buy more than you can use before it goes rotten/bad

Restaurants and take-aways?

- Not planning menus carefully and stocking up on ingredients dishes don't often use
- Last minute table cancellations can mean more food is prepared than will be eaten
- Over-generous portions so customers leave most of it on their plate and it has to be thrown away

Farmers and food producers?

- A lot of fruit and vegetables are rejected and thrown away as they don't fit cosmetic specifications about size and shape, even when they are perfectly good to eat
- If shops suddenly stop ordering unpopular food products, farmers or manufacturers can't sell what they've produced so it gets thrown away

Government?

- Are there any laws that help tackle the issue of food waste?
- Should/could there be new laws?

In 2016, France became the first country to ban supermarkets from throwing away unsold food. Large supermarkets are no longer even allowed to throw away good quality food approaching its "best-before" date. Instead, they are forced to donate surplus food to charities and food banks.

Fact 3 Source: [friendsoftheearth.uk/food-waste](https://www.friendsoftheearth.uk/food-waste)

3. WHO'S RESPONSIBLE? LOSS OF HABITATS & BIODIVERSITY DISCUSSION TOPIC TEACHER NOTES



FACT 4

More than a million species are believed to be on the verge of extinction, with an average 60% decline in animal populations since 1970.

Who is responsible for the decline in animal populations?

- Hunting animals to eat (this would include fishing – some students may have seen the controversial Netflix documentary Seaspiracy)
- Use of chemicals on plants that can harm insect populations
- Destruction of marine environments due to pollution and rising sea temperatures (caused by climate change)

Notes/further questions to guide discussion

Who is responsible for the decline in animal populations?

Consider the causes of animals becoming extinct (remind students that 'animals' aren't just mammals but also insects like bees who are essential for putting food on our plates) Students may mention things like:

- Deforestation that destroys woodland habitats
- Hunting animals for their skin, fur or horn (this may be used for clothing, decoration or in traditional medicines in some cultures)

Who is responsible for causing these environmental issues?

Individuals (consumers)?

- Buying things that are not sustainably sourced (e.g. not buying FSC certified wood)
- Eating fish that is not sustainably caught (fish that has been sustainably caught is certified with a blue MSC label from the Marine Stewardship Council)
- Using garden chemicals such as weed-killers that are harmful to insects

Companies?

- Huge international companies like Cargill that supply other big companies such as McDonald's and Unilever with products like beef, cocoa, soy and palm oil are responsible for a lot of deforestation and destruction of habitats as large areas of land are needed to grow crops and farm cattle on such a big scale.
- Fast food companies such as Starbucks and McDonald's require vast amounts of pulp and paper for their packaging (in addition to beef, palm oil, soy for their food) and this makes a big contribution to deforestation

Governments?

- Building new roads and other big infrastructure projects (e.g. HS2 High Speed Rail) can cause damage to habitats and displace wildlife

Fact 4 Source www.imperial.ac.uk/news/219933/biodiversity-your-life-depends/



Time to Discuss

What does this Bible Verse say to Christians about the environment?

“You appointed them (humans) rulers over everything you made; you placed them over all creation: sheep and cattle, and the wild animals too; the birds and the fish and the creatures in the seas.”

Psalms 8: 6-8

Making Community Matter

- How well do you think humans have ruled over and guarded planet earth?
- Can you think of one way where people have helped to guard planet earth and one way where they have damaged it?
- How do you watch over and guard the planet?

Time to Discuss

What does this Bible Verse say to Christians about the environment?

“For six years plant your land and gather in what it produces. But in the seventh year let it rest, and do not harvest anything that grows on it. The poor may eat what grows there, and the wild animals can have what is left. Do the same with your vineyards and your olive tree.”

Exodus 23: 10-11

Making Community Matter

- How well do communities & individuals look after the land?
- What are the consequences of not looking after the land?
- Is there anything you could do to help?

Time to Discuss

What does this Bible Verse say to Christians about the environment?

“If you come across a bird's nest in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs and the mother sitting on the young or on the eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young. You may take the young but be sure to let the mother go.”

Deuteronomy 22:6

Making Community Matter

- Why should people care for wildlife?
- In what ways do people harm wildlife?
- How could you help protect wildlife?

Time to Discuss

What does this Bible Verse say to Christians about the environment?

“I brought them into a fertile land to enjoy its harvests and its other good things. But instead, they ruined my land; they defiled the country I had given them.”

Jeremiah 2:7

Making Community Matter

- Can you think of 'good things' in your community environment, which have been damaged or ruined?
- How have they been damaged?
- What could you do to change this?



INSPIRE Activities Teacher Guidance

5. TAKING ACTION TO HELP SOCIAL ISSUES VIDEO (ppt slide 12)

The video contains stories from two charities: **Hope For The Future** and **A Rocha UK** who are working to address environmental issues in their communities.

As students watch the video, ask them to consider these questions:

- What positive actions are these charities taking to help solve environmental issues in their communities?
- What actions could you take to help solve an issue in your community?

There is the opportunity to discuss as a class and take feedback from students.

6. SOCIAL ISSUES: INSPIRATIONAL PEOPLE (ppt slide 13, pages 18-19)

This activity focuses on the personal stories of Hugo Taco (CEO of the charity Surfers Against Sewerage) and Amy and Ella Meek (Founders of Kids Against Plastic) and their work to address environmental issues in their communities. Before looking at the case studies with students, you may want to explore what students already know about them or their work.

After reading their stories, there is space on the handout for students to identify how Hugo, Amy and Ella Meek are making a difference to their communities and what leadership skills they have shown.

7. INSPIRE COLLECTIVE WORSHIP ACTIVITY (ppt slides 14-15, page 20)

This activity focuses on extracts from Psalm 102 verses **1-28**. The version used is the Good News Bible Translation.

The questions encourage students to think about God's creation and the environment and what people can do to protect it.

Context

The writer of this Psalm describes all the wonderful things that he sees in the natural world.



Inspirational People

HUGO TAGHOLM

What do you know about Surfers Against Sewerage?

Concerns:

- That science suggests there are only 10 years left to save the Earth's oceans.
- The impact of human behaviour on the environment and natural habitats.



How has he made a difference to his community?

“One single action won’t solve the problem, but a lot of single actions joined together makes a significant impact.”

He has always had a passion for nature and the environment and loves to surf. He became CEO of the charity Surfers Against Sewerage in 2008, which focuses on caring for the oceans, fighting to preserve them and their inhabitants, and creating better, cleaner and safer surfing habitats.

What leadership skills has he shown?

He regularly campaigns and lobbies MPs in Parliament on climate change, plastic pollution, water quality and marine protected areas. He encourages charities, businesses, researchers & scientists to explore ways to protect the ocean.

Through the charity, 100,000 volunteers have been encouraged to become active citizens, carrying out beach clean-ups and becoming plastic free communities. In 2021 he was awarded Environmentalist of the year by Save the Waves.



Archie's Inspirational People

AMIKA GEORGE



What do you know about Kids Against Plastic?

Concerns:

- That although plastic is a magnificent invention, it is also an enormous environmental monster in waiting.
- That people had a lack of knowledge about plastic and its impact.

“Plastic is having a catastrophic effect on the planet, and it's only going to get worse in the coming years.”

How have they made a difference to their community?

When researching the UN Global Goals and number 14: Life Below Water, they found out about the disastrous impact that plastic pollution was having on the environment and decided to do something about it.

What leadership skills have they shown?

They set up a campaign, Kids Against Plastic, with the goal of getting UK supermarkets to stock non-plastic packaged water alternatives on their shelves instead of single use.

They have picked up over 90,000 pieces of single-use plastic litter (and developed an app to log it), done their own TEDx talk and gathered a team of incredible kids around the UK who are tackling plastic pollution.



7. INSPIRE COLLECTIVE WORSHIP ACTIVITY



What does this Bible story teach people about God's creation and the environment?



Extracts from Psalm 104: 1-28

Praise the Lord, my soul! O Lord, my God, how great you are!

You have set the earth firmly on its foundations, and it will never be moved. You placed the ocean over it like a robe, and the water covered the mountains. You make springs flow in the valleys, and rivers run between the hills. They provide water for the wild animals; there the wild donkeys quench their thirst. In the trees near by, the birds make their nests and sing. From the sky you send rain on the hills, and the earth is filled with your blessings. You make grass grow for the cattle and plants for us to use so that we can grow our crops...

You created the moon to mark the months; the sun knows the time to set. You made the night, and in the darkness all the wild animals come out. The young lions roar while they hunt, looking for the food that God provides. When the sun rises, they go back and lie down in their dens. Then people go out to do their work and keep working until evening.

Lord, you have made so many things! How wisely you made them all! The earth is filled with your creatures. There is the ocean, large and wide, where countless creatures live, large and small alike....All of them depend on you to give them food when they need it. You give it to them, and they eat it; you provide food, and they are satisfied.

- Which parts of the natural world amaze you or fill you with awe and wonder?
- How could you work to protect them, so that people for generations to come can enjoy the beauty of the natural world?

Empower Activities



EMPOWER Activities Teacher Guidance



8. FIND OUT MORE (ppt slide 17, pages 23-24)

For this activity we have provided teachers with some suggestions for student friendly websites and videos that explore different environmental issues. **Please make sure these websites are suitable for students in your school context.**

You may focus students on a particular issue you want them to explore or ask them to research an issue they are passionate about. How you want them to present their findings is up to you. Perhaps get them to be creative in their response or deliver a mini-presentation. You might want to provide a research framework handout to help focus students on the key information they are looking for.

9. YOUNG LEADERS IN ACTION (ppt slide 18)

Through our Young Leaders Award, students are involved in helping solve lots of environmental issues in their communities. Using the pictures for inspiration, ask students what environmental issue matters to them and why? What ideas have they got for taking action to solve these environmental issues in their community? There is no handout for this activity.

10. CHALLENGE TIME (ppt slide 19, page 25)

We've provided a challenge grid with 6 practical actions that students could take to explore and act upon environmental issues in their community.

11. EMPOWER COLLECTIVE WORSHIP ACTIVITY (ppt slide 20)

If you have been using the resources as part of Collective Worship, a prayer finishes off this session and is just on the ppt slide.



8. FIND OUT MORE

Below are some suggestions for student friendly websites and videos that explore different Environmental Issues.

Please make sure these websites and videos are suitable for students in your school context. We cannot be responsible for links to external content.

WATER POLLUTION

www.sas.org.uk Surfers Against Sewage, charity set up by Hugo Tagholm

www.mcsuk.org Marine Conservation Society, a UK charity fighting for a cleaner, better-protected, healthier ocean

www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/science-ks2-blue-planet-live/zd9y7nb Series of short films taken from Blue Planet Live

www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/55678801 Story explaining how scientists have discovered a "natural mechanism" for catching and removing plastics from the water.

AIR POLLUTION & CLIMATE CHANGE

<https://climatekids.nasa.gov/air-pollution> Launched in 2010, NASA's Climate Kids website tells the story of our changing planet through the eyes of the NASA missions studying Earth.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/geography-ks3-gcse-climate-change-ade-on-the-frontline/zp64g7h> Series of films with Ade Adepitan looking at the effects of climate change and how we can fight it

<https://ypte.org.uk> Young People's Trust for the Environment: short videos explaining 'how electricity is made', 'renewable energy' and 'the Greenhouse Effect'

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/geography-ks3-ks4-gcse-save-your-energy/z688rj6> Six families are challenged to cut their energy usage by 30% in 3 weeks

LAND POLLUTION

www.kidsagainstoplastic.co.uk Charity set up by Amy and Ella Meek

www.keepbritaintidy.org A charity working to eliminate litter and waste in public spaces and the environment

www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/56210735 Is the drinks industry doing enough to reduce single-use plastics?



LOSS OF HABITATS & BIODIVERSITY

www.wwf.org.uk World Wide Fund for Nature, an international organisation focused on wilderness preservation and the reduction of human impact on the environment.

www.wildlifetrusts.org a UK charity saving wildlife and wild places through looking after nature reserves and running conservation programmes.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/science-ks2--ks3-human-impact-on-the-environment/zf9nvk7> Short film showing the impact of humans on penguin habitats in the wider impact this has on the environment

www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/54729728 Story about re-wilding Britain

www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/geography-ks3-deadly-dilemmas/zv4pmfr UK teenagers witness first-hand the major issues Madagascan wildlife is facing

10. CHALLENGE TIME

Challenge Time

How can you start to take action in your community?

Choose at least one of the action ideas below or create your own.



Write to your MP explaining your concerns about the environment and giving ideas for taking action.

Write to your local supermarket explaining your concerns about excessive plastic packaging.

Build a 'bug hotel' to provide safe shelter for insects and small mammals.

Carry out a survey of all of the single-use plastics currently used in your school. Research and introduce alternatives.

Create a recipe book with ideas for using up leftover food, sharing this with the wider community to help reduce food waste.

Create a community campaign raising awareness of sustainability logos to look for when shopping e.g. FSC, MSC and Rainforest Alliance.