



Catholic Sustainable
Schools Network NSW



Studies of Religion Environmental Ethics Unit, Christian NSW Catholic Sustainable Schools Project November 2015

*Stage 6 Studies of Religion Environmental Ethics Unit, Christian
developed and supported by*



Catholic Sustainable
Schools Network



Introduction

To assist teachers undertaking the Environmental Ethics unit within the Stage 6 Studies of Religion. This Unit has been developed with assistance from the Office of Environment & Heritage (OEH), and the Association of the Studies of Religion (ASR). A small writing team was formed.

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Project Background

This resource provides up-to-date material for students and teachers wanting to engage with the Environmental Ethics component of the Studies of Religion Course. The nature of Christian Environmental Ethics is evolving in the context of the signs of the times. With the publication by Pope Francis on 24th May, 2015 of the first Encyclical on the environment, “Laudato Si”, official Catholic Teaching on Environmental Ethics is taking a new direction. Catholic environmental teaching is moving from an anthropocentric position to a perspective of universal communion. As with Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Protestant variants are continuing to develop and provide guidance to their adherence in the forms of teachings and official documents. There is greater ecumenical dialogue between the Christian variants than ever before. An example of this is the Serafino Declaration which resulted from a conference held in South Australia in April 2015. This document aims at providing the tools for teachers and students to explore the ethical Christian principles underpinning different variants’ approaches to living out a Christian perspective in regard to the natural environment.

Studies of Religion Syllabus

Outcomes

A student:

- H1 explains aspects of religion and belief systems
- H2 describes and analyses the influence of religion and belief systems on individuals and society
- H4 describes and analyses how aspects of religious traditions are expressed by their adherents
- H5 evaluates the influence of religious traditions in the life of adherents
- H6 organises, analyses and synthesises relevant information about religion from a variety of sources, considering usefulness, validity and bias
- H7 conducts effective research about religion and evaluates the findings from the research
- H8 applies appropriate terminology and concepts related to religion and belief systems
- H9 coherently and effectively communicates complex information, ideas and issues using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms.

Suggested Unit Overview

The focus of this study is the contribution of significant people, ideas, practices and ethical teachings to an understanding of Christianity as a living dynamic religious tradition, in particular the area of environmental ethics.

- Ethical principles – Preliminary course (Year 11)
- Values
- Spectrum of Variants
- Teachings
 - The Christian teachings provided are suggestion of how the Principal Beliefs... *The Trinity, The Humanity and Divinity of Christ, Revelation, Salvation and Resurrection*, inform the teachings in relation to environmental ethics. These environmental teachings could include Stewardship, Co-Creation, Justice and Mission, These teachings are informed by:
 - Scripture
 - Traditional doctrine, Current doctrine– Catholic – Catholic Social Teachings, Orthodox Teachings, Anglican Synods,
 - Theologians from a range of variants

- The following themes/paradigms within Christianity are highlighted:
 - God as Creator
 - Incarnation
 - The relationship between God, the human and all creation
 - Agape Love
 - Discipleship
 - Mission from Jesus
 - Reign of God.

Suggested Unit Introduction to Ethics

Christian ethics are largely based on the principles found in the Bible for example Jesus' Commandment of Love (Mt. 22:38), love of God, love of neighbour and love of self. In addition to this central ethical teaching the Beatitudes (Mt. 5) and the Sermon on the Mount provide further ethical guidance for Christian living. Parables of Jesus are also significant tools that teach about discipleship. All the teachings of Jesus develop the Ten Commandments of the Mosaic Law. The Christian Bible is particularly concerned about relationships; relationships that go wrong, the role of human behaviour, the impact of behaviour on others, and how relationships can be restored.

Scripture is the primary sacred text and therefore where God reveals what was first revealed in nature, God's love of creation. There are also sacred writings from various teaching authorities, such as The Church Fathers, The Magisterium of the Catholic Church, The Anglican Synods of Bishops, Uniting Church Synods, The Patriarchs and theologians from several variants.

Some suggested **quotes** from scripture that are significant in a Christian ethical worldview include:

- *"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – God's eternal power and divine nature – have clearly been seen, being understood from what has been made" **Romans 1:20***
- *"God saw everything that he had made and indeed it was very good" **Genesis 1:31***
- *"O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; The earth is full of your creatures" **Psalms 104:24***

- In **John 3:16**, Jesus' incarnation is seen as an outpouring of God's love for the world - 'for God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life'. Christ's life of service involved a radical stance on the side of life
- "And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God. **Micah 6:8**
- "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? **Job 38:4**
- "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." **Amos 5:24**
- "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' **Matthew 25: 40**
- And any other commandment (is) summed up in this word 'love your neighbour as yourself'. Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. **Romans 13:9, 10**

Suggested Unit Matrix

Christian Environmental ethics are an evolving area of Christian religious teaching, highlighting that God is the creator of all things and that humans need to work in partnership not only with God and the land, but with each other to ensure that the fragile environment of the world today is nurtured and protected.

Teaching	Stewardship	Justice	Co-Creation	Mission
Terminology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability • Responsibility • Partnership with God • Respect • Care and Reverence • Integrity of Creation • Interconnectedness of Creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Justice and equity • intergenerational justice and equity • Justice for the Earth/Sustainability • Solidarity to the Poor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interdependence and interconnectedness of all life • Diversity • Evolution • Create the Reign of God on Earth • Incarnational Nature of the Trinity Father Creator • Son – Redeemer • Spirit - Sanctifier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To bring about the reign of God • To be a disciple
Definition/ Explanation	<p>Christians are taught to appreciate creation as God’s gift and to look on it with wonder and awe. Christians are taught they have a fundamental responsibility to care for</p>	<p>The core teaching is that the goods of the earth are to be shared by all with justice and equality. Creation belongs not to the few, but to the entire human family.</p>	<p>Reign of God Jesus’ teaching on the reign of God extols the virtues of respect, consideration, harmony and balance which are at the heart of modern</p>	<p>Reign of God Christians are called to create the Kingdom of God “on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6.10). Jesus’ teaching on the reign of God extols the</p>

	<p>creation. In this sense they are God's partners in creation and are responsible for ensuring that it is nurtured and cared for in a sustainable manner. The Christian understanding of stewardship guards against selfish or careless exploitation of the world's resources. The Bible clarifies this responsibility: calls upon Christians to act as stewards/carers of the environment. Christians are called to create the Reign of God. Jesus' teaching on the reign of God extols the virtues of respect, consideration, harmony and balance which are at the heart of modern environmental ethics. This requires just and equitable sharing in the</p>	<p>Extend idea of Justice - not just creation belongs to few and to the entire human family but for creation to exist in itself to all species. Earth Resources are for the good of all not just a few. This call to justice has a number of dimensions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Global justice and equity: environmental degradation is falling disproportionately on the poorer nations of the world. There is inherent injustice, particularly as such countries are less responsible for causing environmental destruction than wealthy nations ● Intergenerational justice and equity: 	<p>environmental ethics. This requires just and equitable share of the Created world's resources, but also includes inherent respect for and harmony with Creation.</p> <p>Nature of Trinity God the creator is revealed through the environment – that which is created reveals the creator: <i>'Our very contact with nature has a deep restorative power; contemplation of its magnificence imparts peace and serenity,'</i> Pope John Paul II, Homily in Val Visdene, Italy, 1990</p> <p>The true biblical hope at the heart of Christianity is a hope for this world, based</p>	<p>virtues of respect, consideration, harmony and balance which are at the heart of modern environmental ethics. This requires just and equitable share of the Created world's resources, but also includes inherent respect for and harmony with Creation.</p> <p>Human beings are appointed by God as stewards of the earth to cultivate and protect it. From this fact there comes what we might call their 'ecological vocation', which in our time has become more urgent than ever - Angelus Address, Castel Gandolfo 2002)</p> <p>We can see through Jesus' words that through the creation of right</p>
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	Created world's resources, but also includes inherent respect for and harmony with Creation.	<p>the concept of justice for future generations is also very central – what legacy will be left for future generations?</p> <p>Solidarity with the poor - looking out for others</p> <p>We can see through Jesus' words that through the creation of right relationships with others, we bring about the Reign of God but also will be judged worthy of salvation.</p>	on divine promise that this world will be transformed in Christ, when all things reach their own fulfilment.	<p>relationships with others, we bring about the Reign of God but also will be judged worthy of salvation.</p> <p>Mission as disciples is to follow the words and actions of Jesus</p>
Scripture/ Evidence	<p><i>"The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it"</i> Genesis 2.15</p> <p>St Francis of Assisi – <i>The Canticle of Creation</i> <i>"The earth is the Lord's"</i> Ps 24:1</p>	<p>"Love your neighbour as yourself" Matthew 22.39 <i>'For to commit a crime against the natural world is a sin against ourselves and a sin against God.'</i> Patriarch Bartholomew in Laudato Si' No. 8 The Gospel</p>	<p>Job 38-39 "Creation and incarnation are interconnected in one great movement of God's self-giving love" Denis Edwards, 2012, <i>Jesus and the Natural World</i> Pope Francis Laudato Si', No.80 "God is intimately present to each being</p>	<p>The Lord's Prayer <i>"For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross."</i> Col. 1:19-20</p>

	<p>Pope Francis, <i>Laudato Si'</i> No.67:</p> <p>'We are not God, the earth was here before us and it has been given to us. This allows us to respond to the charge that Judeo-Christian thinking, on the basis of the Genesis account which grants man "dominion" over the earth (Gen 1:28) has encouraged the unbridled exploitation of nature by painting him as domineering and destructive by nature. This is not a correct interpretation of the bible as understood by the Church.'</p> <p>"God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue</p>	<p>commandments of Jesus for his disciples to demonstrate agape love - <i>"by this shall all know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another"</i> John 13.35</p> <p>Jesus also explicitly called upon those who want God's blessings to work for justice <i>"blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness"</i> Matthew 5.6</p> <p>Matthew 25:31-40</p> <p>Pope Francis, <i>Laudato Si'</i> No.91 <i>'A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings.'</i></p> <p>Pope Francis, <i>Laudato Si'</i> No.90 <i>"We should be particularly indignant at the enormous inequalities in our midst, whereby we continue to tolerate some</i></p>	<p><i>without impinging on the autonomy of the creature"</i></p> <p>Pope Francis, <i>Laudato Si'</i>, No. 7 and No 62.</p> <p><i>" ...science and religion with their distinctive approaches to understanding reality, can enter into an intense dialogue fruitful for both."</i></p> <p>Christians are called to create the Kingdom of God <i>"on earth as it is in heaven"</i> Matthew 6.10</p> <p>There are several things we can say about creation, about God, about God's priorities, God is always <i>"acting"</i> as Creator, not just <i>"in the beginning"</i>, but throughout cosmic history, right now and into the future. God as Creator is always enabling, empowering</p>	<p>Ref World Council of Churches</p> <p>The Five Marks of Mission,</p> <p>Anglican Uniting Justice Uniting Church.</p> <p>Baptist Statements on the Environment.</p> <p>http://goo.gl/NTqYZT</p> <p><i>Laudato Si'</i>, Pope Francis <i>"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me."</i></p> <p>(Matthew 25:34-36)</p>
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	<p>it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”</p> <p>Genesis 1:28 Pope Francis, Laudato Si’ No 67</p> <p><i>“The biblical texts are to be read in their context with the appropriate hermeneutic. Matthew 6:10 “on earth as it is in heaven” Matthew 6:10</i></p> <p>“Human beings are appointed by God as stewards of the earth to cultivate and protect it. From this fact there comes what we might call their ‘ecological vocation’, which in our time has become more urgent than ever” – Pope John Paul II, Angelus Address, Castel Gandolfo</p>	<p>considering themselves more worth than <i>others.</i>”</p> <p><i>‘This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live’</i> Deut 30:19</p> <p>“...not only a real receptivity and respect for the natural world, but a deep sense of global solidarity, and a radical, lifelong commitment to act for the good of the whole Earth Community” Pope St John Paul II - Conference on the Environment Pope John Paul II, Address to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Alice Springs, 1986 Pope John Paul II, World Day of Peace Message 1990 Gaudium et Spes, Vatican</p>	<p>and calling - but not controlling - us and all the things around us into being . . . Creation is unfinished - it is only being completed, moving towards full communion with God as it unfolds . . .” - “ we human beings have extraordinary responsibilities towards one another and towards our environment. We are in fact deeply and irretrievably embedded in Nature - not separated from it, or above it.” Fr Bill Stoeger SJ. Liberal Protestant Sally McFague argues that the world is a physical expression of God, not a separate product of God. “The World is God’s Body”. http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=56</p>	<p>Declaration on the Environment Signed by Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople June 10 2002</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● "We Are Still Betraying the Mandate God Has Given Us" ● “What is required is an act of repentance on our part and a renewed attempt to view ourselves, one another, and the world around us within the perspective of the divine design for creation. The problem is not simply economic and technological; it is moral and spiritual. A solution at the economic and technological level can be found only if we undergo, in the most radical way, an inner change of heart, which can lead to a change in lifestyle and of
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	2002	II Archbishop Desmond Tutu - Climate Change - moral Choices	<i>"Sin brings alienation from God, from other human beings and from the Natural World"</i> (Denis Edwards, 2012, Jesus and the Natural World)	unsustainable patterns of consumption and production. A genuine conversion in Christ will enable us to change the way we think and act."
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Suggested Unit Christian Figures/Theologians

Person	Variant	Country of Origin	Date	Introduction
Hildegard von Bingen [k2]	Catholic	Germany	1908	Blessed Hildegard von Bingen (1098 - 1179) was a woman of extraordinary talents. She was Benedictine abbess, who was a Christian mystic, visionary, theologian, composer, and poet. Her teachings were considered so important for the Catholic Church, that she was named a Doctor of the Church by Pope Benedict in October 2012.
Francis of Assisi	Christian/Catholic	Italy	1226	Saint Francis of Assisi was a 12th century monk who showed another way to approach the world. Francis was a wandering preacher of the gospel.
Tielhard de Chardin	Catholic	France	1955	Teilhard was a French philosopher, geologist and Jesuit Catholic priest. Teilhard actually experienced the universe as animated by God and was able to feel divine energy in all the material things

				around him.
Thomas Berry	Catholic	USA	2009	Priest, Eco-theologian, Thomas Berry has suggested that our focus shift from human (anthropocentric) to the earth as the centre (Biocentric).
Sean McDonagh	Catholic	Ireland	Current	Is an Irish Columban Missionary Priest whose experience with the T’Boli people in Mindanao, Philippines lead him on a journey of ecological conversion. He has been writing on greening the Church for over 30 years.
Sallie McFague	Liberal Protestant	USA	Current	Over the past 20 years, Sally McFague has produced a series of articles and books on ecological matters she is currently without doubt one of the most influential popular theologians in North America.
Patriarch Bartholomew I	Greek Orthodox	Greek	Current	He has long placed the environment at the head of his church's agenda, earning him numerous awards and the title 'Green Patriarch'.
Paul Santamire	Lutheran	USA	Current	He is an ecological theologian, pastoral and liturgical scholar, specialist in historic Christian attitudes toward nature and spirituality.
Ernst Conradie	Dutch Reformed	South Africa	Current	He explores the place and vocation of human beings in the earth community.
Denis Edwards	Catholic	Australian	Current	Denis Edwards is Senior Lecturer in theology. He is a theologian who sees ecology at the heart of Mission.
Pope Francis	Catholic	Argentina	Current	In Pope Francis’ inaugural homily, Pope Francis stressed that people should safeguard the Earth. "Let us be 'protectors' of creation, protectors of God's plan inscribed in nature, protectors of one another and of the environment."

Suggested Unit Christian Organisations that respond to Environmental Issues

Organisation Name	Organisations role or responsibility	Web address
Catholic Earthcare Australia	The ecological agency of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference.	http://catholicearthcare.org.au
Uniting Earthweb	Uniting Church network in NSW and ACT	http://www.unitingearthweb.org.au
Uniting Justice	Uniting Church Statements on sustainability	http://www.unitingjustice.org.au/just-and-sustainable-economy/uca-statements
Eco Mission Network NSW	Ecumenical Network on ecology	http://eco-missionnsw.org/
Columban Mission Institute Centre for Peace, Ecology and Justice	Catholic Centre connecting peace, ecology and justice.	http://www.columban.org.au/our-works/peace-ecology-and-justice/peace-ecology-and-justice
Anglican Diocese Canberra-Goulburn Commission for the Environment	Gives leadership on the environment.	http://www.anglicanregistry.org.au/About-Us/Environment/Environment-Commission.asp
The Anglican Communion	The Five Marks of Mission	http://www.anglicancommunion.org
Anglican Diocese of Perth Eco-Care	Pursues the Fifth Mark of Mission	http://ecocare.perth.anglican.org/
Anglican Communion Environmental Network	Network for those who care about God's creation.	http://acen.anglicancommunion.org/
Edmund Rice Centre for Justice	Pacific Calling Partnership	www.erc.org.au
Hope For Creation	A movement of Australian Evangelical Christians committed to prayer and action on climate change.	http://hopeforcreation.com.au/

Suggested Unit Environmental Issues matrix

Environmental Issue	Case Study	Effect	Organisation	Resources
Climate Change Refugees	Kiribati	Environmental Refugees - Kiribati has a population of 112,000 people. The Kiribati people will likely need to migrate from Kiribati because the recent changes to their environment (including - lack of rain, rising sea levels, salinity of water supply, stronger storm surges etc) means the country is becoming less sustainable and viable for living.	Edmund Rice Centre - Pacific Calling Partners, headed by a Kiribati born Maria Tiimon as part of the Edmund Rice Centre advocates on behalf of the Kiribati people. Raising awareness in local groups such as with Christian parishes and schools. On an international level speaking at UN Copenhagen Conference in 2009. Here, many of the world leaders choose to ignore this message.	<p>Youtube - Climate Change Pacific Calling</p> <p>Youtube - CDKN speaks with Claire Anterea / Phil Glendenning, Pacific Calling Partnership - Kiribati</p> <p>Edmund Centre Web site - Pacific Calling Partners</p> <p>President Tong http://www.climate.gov.ki/tag/kiribati-president-anote-tong/</p>
Mining deforestation and loss of biodiversity and human identity	The Subanen People from Southern Philippines Their 'home' is being cut down	<p>For development - logging tropical forests, for western use (wood, paper, minerals, other products'</p> <p>Rainforests are being destroyed - soil is eroding, no tree cover to absorb the rains and fossil fuel gasses produced</p>	<p>Columban Mission Institute</p> <p>GRASSROOTS:</p> <p>Hope - generosity of people, all encouraged to enhance and protect the integrity of creation - we must change our lifestyles</p>	http://www.columban.org.au/about-us/columban-videos/stations-of-the-forests/

	<p>around them, the timber slated for export and vacant land for cropping</p>	<p>those living in the communities - for minimum coin - they have to carry the logs, they need to do this to provide for their families - human rights issue and they can be killed</p> <p>during the dry season, there will be barren land and this will create hunger and famine due to floods and destruction</p> <p>wood - burned, destroyed and forest fires</p> <p>human and community impact - homes destroyed, cannot gather foods or crops, medicine from leaves and plants destroyed, cannot experience the 'cathedral' nor chant to the glory of God as culture, language, meaning, spirituality and traditions is gone.</p>	<p>and take action now we should live simply so that others may simply live we must live sustainably”</p> <p>The Subanen Crafts project initiated by Columban Fr Vincent Busch is an endeavor to support the Subanens. Subanen Christmas Cards made by the Subanen crafters are now available.</p>	
<p>Biodiversity</p>	<p>Animal extinction</p>	<p>Animal Extinction - Globally there are 21,000 species facing extinction. Many of these species have lost habits because of land clearing.</p> <p>Land Clearing - This land is often</p>	<p>Australian Religious Response to Climate Change</p> <p>Eat Less Meat</p>	<p>ARRCC Web site - Eat Less Meat Campaign</p> <p>http://www.arrcc.org.au/climate-action-kit</p> <p>ARRCC is a multi-faith, member-based organisation of people from around Australia</p>

<p>Climate Change</p>	<p>Climate Change</p>	<p>used for farming. The CSIRO estimates that animal farming uses 50% of the Australian continent and is responsible for over 90% of land degradation.</p> <p>Over the last 30-40 years, climatologists have been noting changes in the earth's climate that they believe are the result of unprecedented increases in the levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, mainly linked to the processes of industrialisation, and associated increases in production and consumption over the last 50-100 years</p>	<p>Greener by the day</p> <p>www.greenerbytheday.com.au</p>	<p>who are committed to taking action on climate change. Our members represent a variety of religious tradition - See more at: http://www.arrcc.org.au/who-we-are#sthash.v1rO1gSG.dpuf</p>
<p>Unsustainable consumption of the world's resources</p>	<p>Over Consumption</p>	<p>Over Fishing - According to a Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimate, over 70% of the world's fish species are either fully exploited or depleted. The dramatic increase of destructive fishing techniques worldwide destroys marine mammals and entire ecosystems (Source - http://www.un.org/events/tenstories/06/story.asp?storyID=800).</p>	<p>Our Lady of Fatima Kingsgrove</p> <p>Our Lady of Fatima, in Kingsgrove Sydney, is a wonderful example of a parish embracing sustainability and the need to care for God's Creation.</p>	<p>http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3720e.pdf</p> <p>http://catholicearthcare.org.au/community/parishes/</p>

Anthropogenic Climate Change	Investment in Fossil Fuels	Intergovernmental Report on Climate Change (IPCC) - November 2014 - There is a scientific consensus that the release of fossil fuels by human activities is linked to an increase in the earth's temperature - IPCC United Nations Report	Uniting Justice Australia - UCA Statement - Divestment away from companies that support the production of fossil fuels.	UCA Statement - Divestment from Fossil Fuels - 16 October 2014 Vatican Report - Fate of Mountain Glaciers in the Anthropocene http://www.casinapioiv.va/content/accademia/en/publications/scriptavaria/glaciers.html
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Suggested Unit Church Teachings on the Environment

Laudato Si' Summary – Australian Catholic Bishops Catholic Church Teachings on the Environment

<http://catholicearthcare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Encyclical-Summary-EN.pdf>

From the Catholic Catechism

The seventh commandment enjoins respect for the integrity of creation. Animals, like plants and inanimate beings, are by nature destined for the common good of past, present and future humanity. Use of the mineral, vegetable and animal resources of the universe cannot be divorced from respect for moral imperatives. Man's (sic) dominion over inanimate and other living beings granted by the Creator is not absolute; it is limited by concern for the quality of life of his neighbour, including generations to come; it requires a religious respect for the integrity of creation. (No. 2415)

God wills the interdependence of creatures. The sun and the moon, the cedar and the little flower, the eagle and the sparrows: the spectacle of their countless diversities and the inequalities tells us that no creature is self-sufficient. Creatures exist only in dependence on each other, to complete each other, in the service of each other. The beauty of the universe: the order and harmony of the created world results from the diversity of beings and from the relationships which exist among them. Man discovers them progressively as the laws of nature. They call forth

the admiration of scholars. The beauty of creation reflects the infinite beauty of the Creator and ought to inspire the respect and submission of man's intellect and will. (Nos. 340-341)

From Pope John Paul II

(Humanity), especially in our time, has without hesitation devastated wooded plains and valleys, polluted waters, disfigured the earth's habitat, made the air unbreathable, disturbed the hydrogeological and atmospheric systems, turned luxuriant areas into deserts and undertaken forms of unrestrained industrialization.

We must therefore encourage and support the "ecological conversion" which in recent decades has made humanity more sensitive to the catastrophe to which it has been heading. (Humanity) is no longer the Creator's "steward", but an autonomous despot, who is finally beginning to understand that (it) must stop at the edge of the abyss... At stake, then, is not only a "physical" ecology that is concerned to safeguard the habitat of the various living beings, but also a "human" ecology which makes the existence of creatures more dignified, by protecting the fundamental good of life in all its manifestations and by preparing for future generations an environment more in conformity with the Creator's plan. (Call to the Faithful, 2001)

The ecological crisis is a moral issue ... respect for life and for the dignity of the human person extends also to the rest of creation... We cannot interfere in one area of the ecosystem without paying due attention both to the consequences of such interference in other areas and to the well-being of future generations. (World Day of Peace Message, 1990).

It was the Creator's will that (we) should communicate with nature as an intelligent and noble master and guardian and not as a heedless exploiter and destroyer. (Redemptor Hominis - The Redeemer of Man, 1979, No. 15).

Man (sic) thinks he can make arbitrary use of the Earth, subjecting it without restraint to his will, as though it did not have its own requisites and a prior God-given purpose, which man can indeed develop but must not betray. Instead of carrying out his role as a cooperator with God in the work of creation, man sets himself up in place of god and thus ends up provoking a rebellion on the part of nature. (Centesimus Annus - On the Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum, 1991, No. 37)

Archbishop Renato Martino, the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations (UN)

The activities of twenty-five percent of the world's population are responsible for almost seventy-five percent of the global emission of greenhouse gases. Global warming, as it is popularly called, is global in scale. It recognizes no boundaries, no nationalities, no cultural divides. It is the great equalizer with unpleasant consequences. (Address to the UN, 28 November 2001)

http://sao.clriq.org.au/ecojustice/church_teaching.html

The Greek Orthodox Patriarch – The Green Patriarch

<https://www.patriarchate.org/the-green-patriarch>

The Anglican Statements on the Environment

http://www.anglican.org.au/home/about/social-issues/Pages/energy_environment_and_climate_change.aspx

The Uniting Church of Australia

<http://www.unitingjustice.org.au/environment/uca-statements>

Baptist Statements on the Environment

<http://www.greenfaith.org/religious-teachings/christian-statements-on-the-environment/baptist-statements-on-the-environment>

Earth Stewardship: Linking Ecology and Ethics in Theory and Practice, a publication launched on 11 August 2015, provides collected reflections on this topic, including a chapter by Dr Guillermo Kerber, programme executive for Care for Creation and Climate Justice at the World Council of Churches (WCC). <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/inspirations-for-earth-stewardship>

Suggested Sample tasks

1. **Dot point:** “Describe and explain the Christian ethical teachings on the Environment”

Describe the ethical teachings – What are they? Give detail about these ethics.

Explain the Christian ethical teachings – How and why do Christians follow these ethical teachings?

KEY ETHICAL TEACHING	DETAIL	SCRIPTURE/EVIDENCE
<p>The earth ultimately belongs to God alone.</p> <p>Creation is good, and it is valued and care for by God.</p> <p>Human beings are to care for the earth, using it to meet human needs without degrading it.</p> <p>Caring for people requires caring for creation.</p> <p>The poor and vulnerable, especially children, suffer most from environmental degradation.</p> <p>Religious communities have the responsibility of teaching and practicing the message of creation care and integrating it into the whole of religious life.</p>		

2. Essay

Eg Based on this research students are asked to write an extended response that:
Evaluates how Christianity provides ethical guidance in environmental ethics.
Students will need to provide THREE issues of ethical guidance within their response.

Marking Criteria

YEAR 12 STUDIES OF RELIGION [k3] - MARKING CRITERIA

Christianity – ETHICS

STUDENT NAME:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Extensive evaluation of the guidance provided by Christianity to THREE issues concerning the environment [H5] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Extensive use of the ethical teachings of Christianity in relation to the environment [H4] · Extensive and effective research as evidenced in a correct and appropriate bibliography [H7] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Extensive and integrated use of correct subject specific terminology [H8] · Extensive and well-articulated response that incorporates [H9] 	[17-20]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Thorough evaluation of the guidance provided by Christianity to AT LEAST TWO issues concerning the environment [H5] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Thorough use of the ethical teachings of Christianity in relation to the environment [H4] · Thorough and effective research as evidenced in a correct and appropriate bibliography [H7] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Integrated use of correct subject specific terminology [H8] · Well-articulated response [H9] 	[13-16]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Sound evaluation of the guidance provided by Christianity to AT LEAST ONE issues concerning the environment [H5] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Sound use of the ethical teachings of Christianity in relation to the environment [H4] · Sound research and selection of information as evidenced in an appropriate bibliography [H7] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Sound use of correct subject specific terminology [H8] · Sound response [H9] 	[9-12]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · A basic description of ethical teachings within Christianity that may reference environmental issues [H4, H5] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Limited research evident [H7] · Some use of subject specific terminology [H8] 	[5-8]

· Limited response [H9]	
· An outline of Christianity ethical teachings [H4] · Evidence of research may be present [H7] · Use of a subject specific term [H8] · A response may be outlined [H9]	[1-4]
· No relevant information presented · Assessment NOT PRESENTED	0
OVERALL COMMENT:	

3. Short answer

Belief – Theology Activities 104

You are to complete the following activities in your **exercise book** as you read:

1. Who was **Hildegard von Bingen**? What did she do?
2. How is **greenness** a part of Hildegard's work?
3. What is **St Francis of Assisi**' unique contribution to environmental ethics?
4. Quote the "**Canticle of the Sun**".
5. Who was **Fr Pierre Teilhard de Chardin**?
6. How did Fr Pierre Teilhard de Chardin see **God in the universe**?
7. What is a **Biocentric** view?
8. What is a **Theocentric** view?
9. What has **Sallie McFague** produced?

10. What does Sally McFague **advocate**?
11. Describe Sally's **motherly** view.
12. What did Pope Francis say in his **inaugural homily**?

12th Century AD - Blessed Hildegard von Bingen

Blessed Hildegard von Bingen (1098 - 1179) was a woman of extraordinary talents. She was Benedictine abbess, who was a Christian mystic, visionary, theologian, composer, and poet. In one of her hymns to the Holy Spirit, she speaks of the Spirit as a creative power permeating the whole universe, as a source of communion between the people, and as the one from whom come clouds, winds, rains and the springs of freshwater:

*Occurrence of power permeating all
in the Heights upon the earth
in all deeps;
you bind and gather
all people together;
out of you clouds
came streaming, winds
take wing from you, dashing
grain against stone;
and ever fresh springs
well from you, washing
the evergreen globe*

Hildegard constantly uses the word greenness to express the fruit fullness of the spirit. She sees the spirit as the source of life in a greenness of nature and in a greenness of our spiritual lives. Greenness and the Creator spirit go together. It is because of this association that Eastern Christians celebrate Pentecost with green investments and green foliage. Hildegard did not know what we know about the evolution of the universe, and the life of the earth. Berks Hildegard wrote botanical and medical texts, and there is no doubt that, where she alive today in, she would be most interested in what contemporary science says that the emergence of our world and she would certainly have seen this as the work of the creator spirit.

(Edwards, 2012, p 43)

12th century AD – St Francis of Assisi

Saint Francis of Assisi was a 12th century monk who showed another way to approach the world. Francis was a wandering preacher of the gospel. Francis, perhaps more than any there came to understand the human Jesus. He knew Jesus as the song of a loving and caring Abba or Father , who was deeply within all things. Francis accepted every person, down to the most repulsive leper, and everything in creation as his family. The sun, the birds, even the wind spoke to Francis of the Spirit of God. The world was filled with poetry that praised and thanked Abba for creation.

Francis writes liked as though he were a medieval psalmist, praising God for the gifts of creation:

*Praised be You my Lord with all Your creatures,
especially Brother Sun,
Who is the day through whom You give us light.
And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendour,
Of You Most High, he bears the likeness.
Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars, with
In the heavens you have made them bright, precious and fair.*

Canticle of Brother Sun and Sister Moon – St Francis

(Hill, 1998, p 254)

1881 - 1951 – Fr Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

Teilhard was a French philosopher, geologist and Jesuit Catholic priest. Teilhard actually experienced the universe as animated by God and was able to feel divine energy in all the material things around him. He said it was his calling “to feel with the earth” and to come to union with his God through the same earth. Through the structures of the earth Teilhard seemed to be able to learn of the personality of God. In his scientific work he could be in touch with the love that charged the world.

“Nothing here below is profane for those who know how to see”

- Teilhard

(Hill, 1998, p 255)

1914 – 2009 – Fr Thomas Berry - Priest, Eco-theologian

Thomas Berry has suggested that our focus shift from human (anthropocentric) to the earth as the centre (Biocentric). He points out that environmental devastation has brought the human community to a crisis, perhaps the most momentous in the planet’s history. Today’s generation of humans is experiencing profound changes in the very structure and chemistry of the planet. These changes of a magnitude that is unparalleled in human history; many of the developments of the past sixty-five million years of the planet’s history are being extinguished. It is Berry’s conviction that to face the challenges of this new age a new revelation is needed and that this new revelation must come from the universe itself.

(Hill, 1998, p 280)

Sallie McFague

Over the past 20 years, Sally McFague has produced a series of articles and books on ecological matters she is currently without doubt one of the most influential popular theologians in North America. Sally McFague takes a seemingly more radical critical standard. She challenges some of the basic formulations of the Christian faith, regarding them as inappropriate to current societal needs. She does not hesitate to advocate guarding them in favour of symbols and metaphors more in tune with the ecological needs of our time.

McFague advocates the radical step of abandoning all vocabulary that associates God with triumphalism, monarchy and patriarchies. Such imagery has, she believes, been relatively constant throughout Christian history. In our day, however, it is clearly harmful, since it has been

used to justify and condone harsh, unloving attitude is not only to what other human beings as in parts of the old Testament, but also towards other forms of animals and vegetative life. To replace these socially harmful use of God, McFague proposes that we conceive of God's mother, a lover and friend, The second reason that McFague gives for her advocacy of new images of God is the importance that such images will metaphors have in our thinking and our lives. For her they are of extreme importance since they always have the potential to determine our concepts and our patterns of living. She writes:

The metaphors, the constructions we accept and live by may well control the future - may help to determine whether we have one and what it may be.

Given the social importance of theological imagery, McFague choice of terms to think about God is determined by a current social need. She sees contemporary views of reality as being dominated by ideas of 'relationship and interdependence, change and transformation' and consequently nominates these as the categories in which contemporary theology needs to function. In her view, 'mother', 'lover', and 'friend' admirably satisfies this criterion. In particular they encourage responsible attitudes towards environment. Another of McFague's radical ways of envisaging God is to conceive of the world as God's body. She recognises that this idea may appear shocking to many people, but she points out that it is in fact an old idea with roots in stoicism. She points out that such a way of thinking about God would bring God much close to us. God would become an immediately perceived presence, a far cry from the distant monarch remains invisible and intervenes only in dramatic ways. Such a God would more easily be seen to have a direct unmediated contact with earthly realities, a God who challenges the traditional ecologically destructive dualism between spirit and the matter. Moreover if we were conscious of dealing with chords body when we interact with the world we will be very hesitant to do it harm. In this way a sense of ecological responsibility would be enhanced.

(Leal, 2004, p 34)

Pope Francis

Father Denis Edwards' Summary of Laudato Si' given at the Australian Catholic University Webinar, Integral Ecology, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L-4Jz6hImz0>

Read, Laudato Si' pp14-15 No.8

Bibliography

Australian Catholic Bishops *Laudato Si' Summary* – Catholic Church Teachings on the Environment

Caritas Australia, Climate Change, Accessed on July 1 2013 from <http://www.caritas.org.au/learn/global-poverty-issues/climate-justice>

Catholic Earth Care Australia, About Us, Accessed on July 1 2013 from <http://www.catholicearthcare.org.au/AboutUsJuly09.html>

Doyle, A. (2013), Pope Francis has chance to inspire world religions to 'go green', Accessed on July 1 from

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/313729/pinoyabroad/worldfeatures/pope-francis-has-chance-to-inspire-world-religions-to-go-green>

Earth Song, Accessed on July 1 on 2013 from <http://earthsong.org.au/>

Edmund Rice Centre, ECO Justice Unit, Accessed on July 1 2013 from

http://www.erc.org.au/index.php?module=pagemaster&PAGE_user_op=view_page&PAGE_id=63&MMN_position=67:67

Hill, B. (1998), Christian Faith and the Environment, Orbis Books, Eugene OR.

Horrell, D. (2010), The Bible and the environment: towards a critical ecological biblical theology, J. W. Rogerson, University of Sheffield, Equinox Publishing Ltd, London.

Leal, R. (2004), The environment and Christian faith, St Pauls Publications, Strathfield, NSW.

Our Lady of Mercy College, (2010), Studies of Religion I and II, Accessed on July 1 from

http://studiesofreligion.org.au/members/resource/08_christianity_depth/ethics01.html

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, (2005), Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching, Accessed on June 29 2013 from

<http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/seven-themes-of-catholic-social-teaching.cfm>

4. Web quest

CATHOLIC EARTH CARE AUSTRALIA - Go <http://catholicearthcare.org.au/>

a) What is the core business of Catholic Earth Care Australia?

b) What message is Catholic Earth Care Australia responding to?

c) List the FOUR things this includes:

d) Outline TWO initiatives Catholic Earth Care is involved in?

Initiative 1

Initiative 2

UNITING JUSTICE AUSTRALIA - Go to <http://www.unitingjustice.org.au/environment/about>

e) What is Uniting Justice Concerned about?

f) Where does the Uniting Church's commitment to the environment arise from?

g) How does the Uniting Church regard Climate Change? Give an example.

h) Summarise ONE UCA Statement, regarding the environment

EDMUND RICE CENTRE - Go to <http://www.erc.org.au/> Click on "Pacific Calling Partnership

i) What is the Pacific Calling Partnership unit?

j) What is happening in Kiribati?

k) How is ERC responding?

CARITAS AUSTRALIA - Go to <http://www.caritas.org.au/act/a-just-climate/about>

l) How does Caritas suggest a response to climate change must go beyond a scientific and political agenda?

m) What evidence exists for climate change? Give 2 examples.

CARDINAL GEORGE PELL – **Google** “SMH Pell row with climate scientist heats up” and click on the first link.

n) Outline Cardinal Pell’s view on human induced climate change?

o) Outline Cardinal Pell’s view on human induced climate change?

Google “Australian Be prudent with climate claims” and click on the first link.

p) What evidence does Cardinal Pell quote to argue against human induced Climate Change?

Google “ABC Godless greens” and click on the first link.

q) How have Pentecostal churches, like Hillsong, traditionally been anthropocentric?

r) How have Pentecostal views been changing? Refer to Aaron Swoboda Armos Yong work.

Google “Katharine Schori Climate Change Denial is Immoral” and click on the first link.

- s) What is Episcopal Bishop Katharine Schori view on climate deniers? Explain reasons for this position

Suggested Resource list

Environmental Ethics Resources

This is an introductory list. Many more environmental ethical resources are available. If you have an interesting one please share with us.

General Sustainability

www.environment.nsw.gov.au/sustainableschools/

Teaching 7-10

Stewards of Creation Sydney Diocese Year Seven Unit

St Patrick’s College, Campbelltown Unit

The Serafino Declaration <http://seminaryalliance.org/rediscovering-the-spiritual-in-gods-creation-australian-seminary-creation-care-conference-march-2015/>

Environmental ethic teaching units:

Marist College, Woolwich www.tinyurl.com/remscw

Our Lady of Mercy College, Parramatta resource http://portal.waverley.nsw.edu.au/library/sor/08_christianity_depth/ethics_summary.html

http://www.slideshare.net/old_roofrat/christian-environmental-ethics

<http://www.slideshare.net/tristanforsyth/yr-12-christian-intro-ethics>

<http://www.slideshare.net/sjdoyle/1-hsc-christianity-env-ethics-sor1-1>
<http://www.ncls.org.au/default.aspx?sitemapid=6988> environment question

Statements by Christian Denominations

<http://www.greenfaith.org/religious-teachings/christian-statements-on-the-environment>

National Church Life Survey Occasional papers on attitudes to the environment. <http://www.ncls.org.au/default.aspx?sitemapid=7164>
<http://www.ncls.org.au/default.aspx?sitemapid=7162>

UNESCO Environmental Ethics resources

www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/comest/environmental-ethics/

General Ethics

<http://www.resourcemelb.catholic.edu.au/>

Teachings

Source documents

Laudato Si': Earth Our Common Home, Pope Francis, 2015

World Day of Peace Message 1990, Pope John Paul II

World Day of Peace Message 2010, Pope Benedict XVI

Liturgy – songs & prayers

Sparks of the Cosmos, Margie Abbott RSM, 2001, MediaCom Education Inc

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GGHWiAGpIP0>

Books

The Francis Effect II – Catholic Mission. Catholic Religious Australia, Catholic Earthcare Australia <http://www.thefranciseffectii.com>
 Jesus and the Natural World: Exploring a Christian Approach to the Natural World, Denis Edwards, 2010, Garratt Publishing
 Common Belief, Australia’s Faith Communities on Climate Change, 2006, The Climate Institute

Organisations Australia

Rahamim <http://www.rahamim.org.au/>

Pacific Calling Partnership

http://www.erc.org.au/index.php?module=pagemaster&PAGE_user_op=view_page&PAGE_id=63&MMN_position=67:67

Forum on Religion and Ecology <http://artsonline.monash.edu.au/fore/>

Faith Ecology Network <http://faithecolony.net.au/>

Erin Earth <http://www.erinearth.org.au/>

Ecology and Spirituality Centre, Glenburn <http://www.edmundrice.org/glenburn.html>

Eco Mission Network NSW <http://eco-missionnsw.org/>

Earthsong <http://earthsong.org.au/>

Earthlink, A work of the Sisters of Mercy, Queensland <http://www.earth-link.org.au/index.html>

Earthkin, A Ministry of the Parramatta Mercy Sisters <http://www.parramattamercy.org.au/ministry/sponsored-works/earthkin>

Columban Mission Institute Centre for Peace, Ecology and Justice <http://www.columban.org.au/our-works/peace-ecology-and-justice/peace-ecology-and-justice>

Christian Brothers’ Wonderful World Weekends, Winbourne, Mulgoa

Catholic Earthcare Australia <http://catholicearthcare.org.au/>

Canisius Centre for Spirituality, <http://canisiusspirituality.org.au/>

Australian Religious Response to Climate Change <http://www.arrcc.org.au/>

Organisations Overseas

Our Voices <http://ourvoices.net/>

Negros Nine Farm www.negrosnine.com/demo-farm

Greenfaith, USA <http://www.greenfaith.org/>

Global Catholic Climate Movement <http://catholicclimatemovement.global/>

Forum on Religion and Ecology <http://fore.yale.edu/>

CELL, Philippines <http://cellsilang.awardspace.com/>

Catholic Climate Covenant <http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/>

Videos:

Uniting Church <http://greenchurch.victas.uca.org.au/resources/>

The Girl who Stopped the World in 5 minutes <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQmz6Rbpnu0>

The Garden Planet <http://catholicearthcare.org.au/project/garden-planet/>

FEE - <https://secondary.understandingfaith.edu.au/religious-traditions-depth-studies-christianity/11/01/>

God is Green - Mark Dowd,'s Channel 4 documentary challenging the world's faiths over climate change. <https://vimeo.com/8200014>

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Anglican https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UdpW6lo7_co