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| **Strands** | Philosophy of Religion; Christian Ethics and Ethical Theory; The Bible and Christian Belief | | | |
| **Stage of Development** | Lower Secondary (Year 9-10) | **Created** May 2021 | | **Review** 2025 |
| **Aim** | The United Nations has declared we have less than 11 years to prevent catastrophic climate change. The American Psychological Association first defined eco-anxiety in 2017 as “a chronic fear of environmental doom.” Eco-anxiety has exploded across the world. Survey data collected in 2019 by the Australian mental health organisation ReachOut suggested four in five Australian students report being somewhat or very anxious about climate change, with close to half of those experiencing these emotions on a weekly basis. This course explores the theological question “should Christian communities respond to the threat of climate change?” The answer has significant implications for the students and staff in Anglican schools and their engagement and response to climate change.  The course is developed for 14-18-year-old secondary school students attending Anglican schools in Australia. It is designed as a 10-week course that will sit as an option within each school’s existing religious studies curriculum. This course employs an approach to teaching and learning that seeks to encourage learning that is self-authoring whilst respecting the framing (and constraining) authority of theology and science. It does this by presenting students with a guided student-centred enquiry-based learning tasks that draw on both theological insight and empirical research. | | | |
| **Content Descriptions** | **Knowledge and Understanding**   * The definition of climate change, eco-anxiety, climate justice, ecological footprint, intergenerational equity, and sustainable development * Christian hope * Possible responses to climate change * The relationship between Christian hope and possible responses to climate change | | **Religious Studies Skills & Virtues**   * Justice * Service * Stewardship | |
| **Resources** | IPCC, 2013: Summary for Policymakers. In: Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Stocker, T.F., D. Qin, G.-K. Plattner, M. Tignor, S.K. Allen, J. Boschung, A. Nauels, Y. Xia, V. Bex and P.M. Midgley (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA. <https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/02/WG1AR5_all_final.pdf> | | Looks at the Science behind climate change. | | |
|  | [Harrison, P.](http://espace.library.uq.edu.au/records/search?searchQueryParams%5Brek_author_id%5D%5Bvalue%5D=72353&searchQueryParams%5Brek_author_id%5D%5Blabel%5D=Harrison%2C+Peter&searchMode=advanced) (2016).[What was Historical? About Natural History? Contingency and explanation in the science of living things](http://espace.library.uq.edu.au/view/UQ:378237). Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part C: *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, 58, 8-16. doi: 10.1016/j.shpsc.2015.12.012 | | Considers the history of science and the historical relationship between science and religion. | | |
|  | Mulherin, C. (2018) Climate Science and Christian Faith Share Much in Common in A Reckless God? Currents and Challenges in the Christian Conversation with Science, Ed Ashby, R et al, Morning Star Publishing: Victoria, Australia. | | Considers the foundations of Climate Science and the assumptions behind it. | | |
|  | Oliver O’Donovan (1994) *Resurrection and Moral Order*, Inter-Varsity Press: Illinois. | | Theory of moral order grounded in the resurrection of Jesus. Provides one theological argument for why Christians should care for the earth now and not just wait for Christ’s return. | | |
|  | Lennox, J. (accessed 2020) *On Environmental Stewardship* <https://www.publicchristianity.org/on-environmental-stewardship/?_sf_s=stewardship> | | Looks at a Christian motivation for environmental stewardship. | | |
|  | <https://ourworldindata.org/co2-and-other-greenhouse-gas-emissions> | | Presents data on the CO2 emissions of different countries. | | |

| **Lesson** | | **Key Questions** | **Lesson Activity Ideas** | | **Resources** |
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| **1** | Climate Change | What is climate change?  What is eco-anxiety? | 5min  10min  25min | PowerPoint: Australia’s Climate Projections at a Glance. View and discuss.  Watch: BBC student film titled What is climate change? <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-24021772> (3:16min) or if your after something with more complex information watch Al Gore’s TED talk What comes after the Inconvenient Truth? <https://www.ted.com/talks/al_gore_what_comes_after_an_inconvenient_truth?language=en> (watch the first 5min). Ask What is climate change? What is the impact of climate change? Discuss how this clip makes the students’ feel.  Activity: Break the students into small groups. Give each group an orange (sun), a ball (earth), coloured markers and a large piece of paper or cardboard. Ask each group to construct a diorama/display that explains the greenhouse effect. They will need to use Google to research the Greenhouse effect. | PowerPoint: Australia’s Climate Projections at a Glance  Teacher resource: <https://www.climatechangeinaustralia.gov.au/media/ccia/2.1.6/cms_page_media/176/AUSTRALIAS_CHANGING_CLIMATE_1.pdf>  If you have time you could watch Fight for Our Plant, Series 1, Episode 2 (first 5 minutes). ABC series.  Materials for diorama. |
| **2** | Eco-anxiety | What is eco-anxiety?  Is eco-anxiety justified?  What does God think about the environment? | 10min  10min  20min | Brainstorm: Put four headings (anxiety, fear, worry, eco-anxiety) on the board and brainstorm the meaning of each concept.  Activity: Draw a line on the ground with chalk. At one end write ‘agree’ and at the other end write ‘disagree’. Ask students to physically place themselves along the line based on how strongly they agree with the statement “Eco-anxiety is justified”. Explain eco-anxiety has been defined as “a chronic fear of environmental doom”. Ask students to comment on their choice. Allow students to move along the line as they listen to each other’s arguments.  Research: Should we care about the environment? Break the students into small groups and ask each group to find at least four different answers to why we should or shouldn’t care about the environment. Discuss as a class group | The Reachout Website provides a helpful summary for students on anxiety. <https://au.reachout.com/articles/what-is-anxiety>.  Internet |
| 3 | God, People and the Environment | How does God relate to creation?  How do people relate to creation? | 10min  10min  10min  10min | Read: Genesis 2 and Romans 8:18-25 and discuss what the verses tell us about the Christian understanding of God and his relationship with the environment/creation. Define Christian stewardship.  Watch: Vishal Mangalwadi on the source of the Scientific Revolution (it’s a summary of the article in resources written by sociologist Peter Harrison from the University of Queensland). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m4sjG7cqix0> (5:42min). Discuss.  Activity: Explain that Science has a number of foundational assumptions or underlying beliefs. But that doesn’t mean these beliefs are proven; science can’t justify its assumptions scientifically; they come first before science even beings its work.   1. Scientists assume we live in an ordered world 2. Scientists assume that the world could be different 3. Scientists assume that we can understand the world 4. Scientists assume that inductive reasoning is effective   Break the students into small groups and ask them to come up with a list of underlying assumptions for Christian theology e.g. God exists, humans can know and understand God etc. Discuss if it’s possible for the underlying assumptions of science and theology to sit alongside each other i.e. can we use both Science and theology to answer the question how should Christian communities respond to climate change?  Activity: Draw a table on the board with two columns in the first column (theology) ask students to list dot points that describe what we know about the relationship between humans and creation from the Bible. In the second column (science) ask students to list things we know about the relationship between humans and the environment from Science. Circle concepts that appear in both lists. Identify any conflicts. Discuss how students think they should approach a conflict between science and theology (observation and logic). | Bible |
| **4-7** | Group Work  Awakening Hope | What is hope?  Should we have hope for humanity?  How should Christian communities respond to climate change? | 10min  5min | Watch: Hope word study from Bible Project <https://bibleproject.com/videos/yakhal-hope/> (4:33min). Discuss why Christians have hope and what Christians hope for. Ask students to consider how belief in the resurrected Jesus might influence a person’s response to climate change and ‘awaken hope’.  Explanation of task: Explain that the students are going to spend the next 3 lessons (and the rest of this lesson) working in small groups “awakening hope”. It would be good to have 6 groups with each topic below being covered by two groups.  Topic 1: Sustainable living  Topic 2: Innovation and Development  Topic 3: Advocacy (spiritual, political, social)  At the end of the four lessons each group will be required to present a 20min PowerPoint. The PowerPoint must include a Kahoot, a 2-3min video/clip, 2 open ended questions for discussion, a short activity for their classmates to complete and possible action that could be taken at your school in response to the students research. Any notes included on the PowerPoint must be in dot points.  Break the students into groups and allocate the topics. | “Christian hope embraces both the object hoped for and also the hope inspired by it…for Christian faith lives from the rising of the crucified Christ, and strains after the promises of the universal future of Christ…hope’s statements of promise anticipate the future. In the promises, the hidden future already announces itself and exerts its influence on the present through the hope it awakens” Theology of Hope by Jurgen Moltmann. |
| **Group 1** | Sustainable Living |  |  | * Read Luke 12:13-34. What is this parable trying to teach us? How does this message relate to sustainable living? Do Christians have to live sustainably? * What is Christian stewardship? How could it relate to sustainable living? * Science can help us better understand how to live sustainably.   + One thing we can do to live more sustainably and reduce our emissions is move from petrol cars to electric cars. Research the advantages and disadvantages of electric cars.   + Research the carbon footprints of 5 different foods we eat. Consider how transport of food impacts on its cardan footprint. Discuss what we can do to make our food choices more sustainable. * Watch some clips from the ABC series Fight for our Planet A: Climate Challenge. A write down some ways we can live more sustainably. * Find some examples of what Christians are doing to live more sustainably (at a local, national, and global level). e.g. https://www.commongrace.org.au/climate\_change * Apply what you have learnt to your school. What should our response as an Anglican school be? Why should this be our response? * Develop a flow chart that proposes a course of action for a school response. * Prepare presentation. |  |
| **Group 2** | Innovation and Development |  |  | * What motivates people to be innovative? Watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GcN_D4AEMhw> (6min). The Woman Behind the West’s Economic Success by Vishal Mangalwadi. Can you think of some other reasons people might be motivated to innovate? * Read Luke 12:13-34. What motivates the man in the parable to innovate? Why does Jesus say the problem with the man’s innovation is caused by our heart? * Science can help us innovate and better care for creation. Research some ways innovation is/could help us better care for creation. e.g. <https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/2020/07/09/australia-export-fossil-fuels/> (What if we could refreeze the artic?), Green Chemistry and biodiesel. * Find some examples of Christian organisations seeking to tackle climate change in an innovative way e.g. https://www.commongrace.org.au/climate\_change * Apply what you have learnt to your school. What should our response as an Anglican school be? Why should this be our response? * Develop a flow chart that proposes a course of action for a school response. * Prepare presentation. |  |
| **Group 3** | Advocacy |  |  | * Define advocacy. * Read Luke 12:13-34.   + Who is in control of all things?   + How could belief in God’s control shape someone’s response to climate change? * Read Proverbs 31:8-9 and Philippians 4:6-7.   + Describe what each verse is saying in your own words   + What do these verses say about advocacy?   + How could Christians engage on advocacy based on these verses? * Do some research on Greta Thunberg. What made her advocacy for climate change so successful? * Watch: <https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_ariely_how_to_change_your_behavior_for_the_better?language=en>.   + How do some of the insights from the Social Sciences help us understand what it takes to change peoples’ behaviour?   + How could Christian’s use these insights to guide their approach to leading change for climate justice? * Find some examples of Christian organisations seeking to advocate against climate change in an innovative way. List the name and a description of each organisation and how they are advocating for climate justice. * Apply what you have learnt to your school.   + What should our response as an Anglican school be?   + Why should this be our response? * Develop a flow chart that proposes a course of action for a school response. * Prepare presentation. |  |
| **8-10** | Presentations |  |  | Each group presents a 20min presentation. |  |
| **11** | Summary |  | 15min  5min  25min | Watch: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/tree-of-life/> (4:30min) and listen to a Hard Rains a-Gonna Fall by Bod Dylan. Ask the students to compare the two. How is hope expressed differently?  Discuss:   * How does Christian hope of a renewed earth awaken hope now? * How can science help Christians work to awaken this hope now? * Can science fix the problem of climate change? * How much should Christian communities care about climate change?   Watch: Mick Pope’s Video and/or Jess Morphorpe’s video (available on the website) and discuss how Jess and Mick’s faith has influenced their response.  \*\*\*\* You could provide an additional lesson to allow students to develop their own response/action plan \*\*\* | Bible Project Tree of Life word study and a recording of A Hard Rains a-Gonna Fall. |