



Religious Studies Knowledge Organiser

Year Group: 9
Topic: Animal Rights
Half Term: Autumn Two

Key Terms

Dominion	A belief held traditionally by Christians. It is the idea that humans were given the earth by God to use it to their advantage and that humans have the right to use animals as they see fit.
Stewardship	A belief often held by more modern Christians. It is the idea that humans were given the earth by God to care for and that humans have a responsibility to protect the earth and the animals in it.
Captivity	Animals not being free - this could include zoos, circuses and safari parks.
Vivisection	Surgery carried out on a living being for scientific or experimental purposes.
Ethical	This is the same as being morally right.
Religious Slaughter	This is where an animal is killed in a particular way for religious reasons.
Halal meat	Meat which has been slaughtered by the animal's throat being cut and the blood being drained from the carcass. This must be done in the name of God whilst special prayers are being said. Most halal meat in the UK is stunned before slaughter.

Different religions have different beliefs about the status and value of animals. Some Christians believe in dominion, whereas others believe in stewardship. Animal welfare is important to Muslims, and Muslims are against practices such as factory farming. They believe that they will be held accountable for their treatment of animals by Allah. Buddhists believe that animals are further from enlightenment than humans, and therefore humans are superior..



Animals in captivity is a controversial issue. Some people believe that organisations such as zoos benefit animals, as they do conservation work to protect endangered species and many zoos now prioritise animal welfare over human entertainment. Other organisations, such as circuses, have been heavily criticised by animal charities. This is because animals are often kept in very small, unsuitable cages and violent training methods are sometimes used.

Animal testing divides opinion. Christians generally accept animal testing because they believe that it is acceptable for animals to be used for human benefit. Hindus are completely against animal testing for cosmetic purposes, but believe that it is acceptable to test on animals for medications which may save a lot of human lives. Buddhists believe that all beings have a right to live without unnecessary suffering, so alternatives should be used if possible.



The UK consumes a large amount of meat products every year. There are laws governing how the animals are slaughtered, to minimise animal suffering. For example, all animals, with the exception of those killed for religious slaughter, are stunned before being killed. Some religions, such as Judaism and Islam, require animals to be slaughtered in a certain way. Others, such as Hinduism, do not eat certain animals. Hindus believe the cow to be sacred.

"No person should kill animals helpful to all. Rather, by serving them, one should attain happiness."
Bhagavad Gita

Religious Teachings

"He has created horses, mules and donkeys for you to ride and show."
Qur'an

"Fill the earth and subdue it"
Genesis 1:28, Bible

Suggested Reading

- Amanda the Teen Activist** by Catherine Kelaher
- The Lorax** by Dr. Seuss