

Religion and life – Key words

Universe:	all of time and space and its contents; includes planets, stars, galaxies, the contents of the intergalactic space, the smallest subatomic particles, and all matter and energy.
Fundamentalist Christian:	Christians who believe that the statements in the Bible are literally true and believe there are certain basic beliefs that are essential to the Christian faith.
Liberals:	Christians who believe that the Bible's authors were guided by God, but that not everything they wrote is a literal account of what actually happens.
Wonder:	marvelling at the complexity and beauty of the universe.
Awe:	a feeling of a devout respect, mixed with fear or wonder.
Responsibility:	a duty to care for, or having control over, something or someone
Stewardship:	the idea that believers have a duty to look after the environment on behalf of God.
Dominion:	dominance or power over something; having charge of something a routine over it.
Environments:	the natural world; the surroundings in which someone lives.
Natural resources:	materials found in nature-such as oil and trees-that can be used by people.
Abuse:	misuse; of the world and the environment.
Sustainable development:	building and progress to try to reduce the impact on the natural world for future generations.
Non-renewable resources:	Things the Earth provides that will eventually run out as there is a limited amount of them; for example oil coal gas and other minerals.
Deforestation:	the cutting down of large amounts of forest, usually because of business needs.
Renewable energy:	energy that comes from a source that does not run out, such as wind all the sun.
Pollution:	making something dirty and contaminated, especially the environment.
Vegetarian:	a person who does not eat meat or fish.
Vegan:	a person who does not eat animals of food produced by animals; vegan tries not to use any products that cause harm to animals.
Evolution:	the process by which living organisms are thought to have developed diversified from earlier forms of life during the history of the Earth.

Adaptation:	a process of change where an organism or species becomes better suited to its environment.
Sanctity of life:	life is holy as it is created and loved by God; Christians believe human life should not be misused or abused.
Quality of life:	the general well-being of a person, in relation to their health and happiness; also, the theory that the value of life depends on how good or how satisfying it is.
Euthanasia:	the painless killing of a patient suffering from an incurable and painful disease or irreversible coma.
Eternity:	a state that comes after death and never ends.

Religion and life – Core Knowledge

1. What does ex nihilo mean?
2. Explain what scientists believe about the Big Bang theory.
3. How old do scientists believe the universe is?
4. Where in the Bible is the Christian creation story found?
5. What does stewardship mean?
6. According to Genesis, what did God tell humans about their role on the planet?
7. Why do many Christians believe that animals do not have souls?
8. What do Christians say about how animals should be treated? Give 2 different points of view.
9. Why do many Christians believe it is wrong to be cruel to animals?
10. Why might some Christians be vegetarians?
11. What is 'the sanctity of life'?
12. When do Catholics believe life begins?
13. In what circumstances does the Church of England teach that abortion is acceptable?
14. What is the maximum number of weeks pregnant a woman can be in the UK in order to have a legal abortion?
15. Why do Christians disagree about abortion?
16. What is 'active euthanasia'?
17. What is 'passive euthanasia'?
18. Which kind of euthanasia is legal in the UK?
19. Why are most Christians opposed to euthanasia?

Answers

1. A Latin term relating to the creation story meaning the universe was created “out of nothing”.
2. A cosmic explosion 15 billion years ago caused matter and gases to fly out in all directions. All the universes were formed from this. As the gases cooled, the stars and planets, including earth, took shape.
3. 15 billion years old.
4. First book in the Bible – Genesis.
5. The God-given right or responsibility to care for and manage the world.
6. “rule over” all creatures in the sea, air and on the earth and make them obedient.
7. Unlike humans, they were not given the “breath of life” when they were created.
8. Some Christians would say that it is acceptable to use animals for human gain (eg food) as long as they are killed humanely and not caused unnecessary pain; Some would say we have been given dominion so can do what we like to animals; Some would say we have a responsibility to care for and protect animals; Some would say that using animals for medical testing for humans is acceptable as this may help human survival, but that cosmetic testing is not acceptable.
9. They feel they were given the role of looking after and caring for animals.
10. Their duty of stewardship involves respecting God’s creation.
11. The idea that life is given by God and is therefore sacred.
12. At conception.
13. When the mother’s life would be endangered by continuing the pregnancy, if the baby is as a result of rape or if the baby is likely to be born severely disabled.
14. 24
15. There is no specific Bible teaching about abortion, so Christians have to apply Christian principles in the way they see fit as individuals. Many will say it is important to do the “loving thing”.
16. When deliberate action is taken to end life, such as a lethal injection or administering a fatal dose of a drug.
17. Withdrawal of treatment/switching off a life-support machine.
18. Passive euthanasia.
19. Most Christians believe that euthanasia conflicts with the idea of the sanctity of life and only God should decide when life should end.

Religion and life Bible references:

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Genesis 1:1

“When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?” Psalm 8:3-4

“God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.’” Genesis 1:28

“The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it.” Psalm 24:1

“Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you.” Genesis 9:3

“The righteous care for the needs of their animals.” Proverbs 12:10

“The one who eats everything [meat] must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them.” Romans 14:3

“Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God.” Luke 12:16

“So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” Genesis 1:27

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart.” Jeremiah 1:5

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” Psalm 139

“As God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, gentleness and patience.” Colossians 3:12

“You shall not murder.” Exodus 20:13

“Blessed are the merciful.” Matthew 5:7

“...all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.” Psalm 139

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

“Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.” John 11: 25-26