

The Islamic Society of Britain would like to thank **REEP (The Religious Education and Environment Programme www.reep.org)** for allowing us to adapt some of their schools material for use in this section.

Islam & The World We Live In

This is a good subject for one class to present to the whole school. You could make a shorter session by using just the story or just the play.

Begin by asking the audience: "Every time you watch television you are helping to destroy a tropical island - TRUE OR FALSE?"

Well. It's TRUE!

*Because every time you use a TV you use electricity
Electricity is made by power stations that (mostly) burn coal or gas
Power stations produce carbon dioxide
Carbon dioxide helps to trap heat and warm the earth up
The hotter the earth gets, the more the ice at the poles melts
More water means the sea level rises
Some tropical islands are only a few feet above sea level so soon...*

They are going to disappear!

Because, everything we do has a consequence; Everything is connected!

Aim: To explore human greed and how it affects the environment.

Preparation: Pin up a large cloth or piece of paper, with a large map of an island cut out on it. Attach about 50 paper trees to the cloth. Five children come onto the scene :

First inhabitant: *Great! A new home. Let's move in!*

Second inhabitant: *Yes, we can use these trees to make houses.*

Each child of the five children takes a tree and moves to the side, standing near the 'island'.

Narrator: *Fifty years pass...children have been born on the island, the people are happy, they are building houses and are even making great stone statues for the island.*

More children come onto the scene in pairs. Each takes a tree.

Child: *Our families have had to build new houses for us.*

Child: *And we need more fish to feed us.*

Everyone takes another tree. The island is beginning to look bare.

Narrator: *Another fifty years passes..*

Everyone: *More houses... more boats.*

Continue until the island is bare.

Everyone: (looking around, horrified) WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

Another voice: *Yes, what do they do now? Some will fight and some will die of hunger and some will move out. Just look at that Island, it's no place to live.*

Narrator: *Why did it happen? It's got a lot to do with ignorance - and greed. You see, they never put anything **back** for what they took.*

What do the children think?

- Are there any parallels with our own society?
- We have an abundance of things - but is this because we only plan short-term and don't think about whether our consumption can be sustained?
- Or are we going to make a better job of it

What does Islam say?

In Islam Muslims are thought to think and reflect about things that we often take for granted around us. In the Qur'an God asks us:

'Do you see the seeds you sow in the ground? Is it you who make them grow or We?'

'Do you see the water you drink ? Was it you who brought it down from the rain-cloud or We? If We wanted, We could make it bitter: will you not be thankful?'

Muslims believe God has made all 'living' things in the world; our parents, our brothers and sisters, our friends, our teachers, the trees, the sun, the moon, the stars....are all there because he made them...for us.

The sun and the moon follow a course; the plants and the trees submit to Him; He has lifted the sky. He has set the balance in order for you not to exceed it – weigh with justice – and not fall short in it. He laid down the Earth for His creatures, with its fruits, its palm-trees with sheathed clusters, its husked grain, its fragrant plants. Which, then, of your Lord's gifts do you deny? Qur'an (55:5-13)

Muslims believe God is very kind, and cares about all of us. If it wasn't for Him, we would have nothing, so we should always be grateful to Him, thank him for everything. We should not be greedy and we should not waste what he had given us.

"O children of Adam! Eat and drink; but do not waste by being greedy. For God does not love wasters." (7.31)

Muslims are encouraged to try and replace the resources we use of the earth, so our children, and then their can continue to benefit from them, as we are today:

“The one who plants a tree, or sows a seed, and then a bird, or a person, or an animal eats from it, they will be regarded as having given charity to them all and God will be pleased with them.” (*saying of the Prophet Muhammad(pbuh)*)

Reflection

In a moment of quiet, let us think of what is important in our lives. What do we need to take care of? There are so many things we would like. What things are we greedy about? What do we do that creates problems for other people, especially our neighbours, and the place where we live? What is really important? It's a big question. Help to know the answer. [pause]

And now let's finish by reflecting on living a life that does not harm others and where our happiness comes from who we are, not what we have.

Song: Dawud Wharnsby's – 'Give a Little'

*Give a little of yourself.
Cure your greed, purify your wealth.*

*Look around at where you live,
look at all the good you have to give.
Give a little of yourself.*

There is a hand somewhere to hold, a mouth to feed.
There's so much that we can do for so many who are in need.
Give our time, give our wealth,
Give our love, give ourselves.
Know Allah sees each and every hidden deed.

*Give a little of yourself.
Cure your greed, purify your wealth.
Look around at where you live,
look at all the good you have to give.
Give a little of yourself.*

Take a look at all the people everywhere
Who give with open hands and hearts that do what's fair.
Can you see the blessings fall,
On people one and all
Who take the time to give, and know it's right to care?

*Give a little of yourself.
Cure your greed, purify your wealth.
Look around at where you live
Look at all the good you have to give*

Give a little of yourself.