



KS3 resources answers and examples

The Environment and Stewardship

You can use these answers and examples to get help if you are stuck and to check your answers when you have finished them, and to improve your work if you can.

For many of the questions, there could be more than one way of writing a good answer – in these cases, we've given some examples of what a good answer might say, but there are also other things that you could correctly use in your answer.

The questions are in bold, and the answers and examples are in italics.

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Working in pairs or small groups, discuss the ways in which people can misuse planet earth. Use the following suggestions and the pictures above to help you:

Think about what we do with our rubbish

Unless materials which have been finished with are recycled, they end up in landfills. Large amounts of rubbish get into the oceans and threaten sea life.

Think about how we get from one place to another, especially if it is a long distance

Transport powered by engines which emit fumes, such as cars and planes, has a carbon footprint and makes the air quality worse.

Think about what we do in our homes with our televisions, our phones and other things

When a new piece of technology is updated the old version is sometimes thrown away even though it still works. The technology we use in our homes has a carbon footprint, and some devices might be left on standby unnecessarily for long periods of time.

Think about what we do when we need to build more homes

When we need to build new homes, sometimes green spaces and trees are destroyed so that there is land to build on, damaging ecosystems and wildlife habitats. As more and more land is built on, houses are sometimes built in areas which aren't very suitable for housing, such as areas which flood easily.

Think about how we create energy to heat our homes, cook our food etc.

Some of the energy which we use in our homes is generated in environmentally friendly ways, such as solar panels, but much still comes from coal, oil and gas. As well as releasing pollution into the air, there are limited amounts left of these fossil fuels.

Which of the misuses you have identified are the most serious? Why do you think that is?

What you choose here is up to you and will depend on your own view.

How might these cause problems for: people, animals and plants?

You might have found that they all cause problems for people and animals and plants, because of the interconnected nature of life on earth and the way that people, animals and plants often share the same space on the same planet. Poor air quality, for example, might make the health of all living things in the area worse.

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What does the Old Testament say about the environment and stewardship?

What do you think is the significance for a Christian of saying that the world belongs to God?

In saying this, a Christian acknowledges that the world doesn't belong to us and that people do not have ultimate authority over it. This puts humans in the role of being stewards of the earth, caring for what God has given us to use rather than being the outright owners of it. Christians also believe that God sustains the world (i.e. it is by his will that the earth stays in existence).

What do you think it means when it says God's creation was 'very good'?

In the story of creation in Genesis chapter 1, God repeatedly looks at what he has made and says that it is 'good'. It doesn't say why, and you can have your own ideas about that. Perhaps it was because everything on the earth functioned and worked together well and that there was balance and beauty, or it may be because God simply liked the existence of the world and life on it as a good thing for its own sake.

What significance do you think this has for the way in which Christians should treat the gift of the world that God has given them?

Some Christians believe that the world was given to humans by God for them to use up as they wish. This view used to be commonly held. However, today the vast majority of Christians in the UK believe that the earth is a gift from God to its inhabitants and that humans need to be good stewards of it, i.e. to take care of it and live in it responsibly and sustainably, to make sure that it stays 'very good'.

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Which of the following do you think best describe the Christian view of dominion as 'responsible stewardship'? You can choose more than one.

You can choose which of the answers you think is best. Good choices include 'taking care', 'respect', 'looking after', 'protector' and 'responsibility'. You might also think that being a good steward involves 'enjoying' the earth.

The following pictures could all express the idea of responsible stewardship. Which of them do you think best demonstrates this idea?

Which of the pictures you choose will depend on your view and how you want to explain what stewardship is.

How do you think a Christian might show responsible stewardship today? You could use the picture and the quotations below to help you.

The picture and the quotes are about recycling, sustainability and responsibility. The things that Christians might try to do to protect the environment are usually no different from the things that followers of other religions and people without religious beliefs might do, but they might have a different, or perhaps additional, motivation for doing them. They might be things like using less plastic, buying a less-polluting car

and driving less often, eating locally grown food in season or using re-usable straw. One thing which religious people might do which non-religious people wouldn't is to pray for the environment and about environmental issues, which might include asking God to help them to develop better attitudes and practices about how they treat the planet.

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The Parable of the Three Servants

The first two servants invested their master's money, and the third buried it. What do you think that says about them?

How you answer, before you know the rest of the story, depends on your view of the servants. The third servant didn't use what he had been given to good effect or to make things better. Perhaps he was more cautious than the other two, or less imaginative, or maybe he was just unwilling to take any risks with his master's money.

Without reading any further ahead, how do you think the master will react to the news that the last servant hasn't done anything useful with the one thousand coins he was trusted with?

The master was very happy with the first two servants who invested the money he entrusted to them and gave him back more than he had left with them. It seems unlikely that he will be as pleased with the last servant, who hid the money away and did nothing with it.

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Why do you think the master calls the servant 'lazy' and 'good-for-nothing'?

The servant had done nothing with the coins he had been entrusted with other than wait for the master to return and give the money back to him.

How could a Christian understand this story when they consider how they should use their talents or abilities to look after God's world, i.e. to be responsible stewards?

Many of Jesus' parables have multiple levels of meaning and can have different meanings in different situations. One way in which Christians can understand this parable is to mean that they should see everything about them as a talent or gift from God which is to be used wisely rather than left unused. If they were thinking about the environment and stewardship, they might say it means they should use the talents they have to help to protect it. This parable might suggest to them that being neutral and doing nothing is not a good way to be a steward of what they believe to be God's creation, but that those who use their talents will please God.

Try to summarise the meaning of this passage and how it might relate to responsible stewardship in no more than 80 words.

Here's one way this could be done:

In the same way as the first two servants used what they had been given to good effect, Christians reading this parable today and thinking of the environment might feel that they also have talents and abilities and should use them well, and that doing nothing is not a good course of action.

Do you agree with this Bible scholar's interpretation of the parable of the three servants?

You can either agree or disagree, but for a good answer try to give your reasons.

If you had to rename this parable what would you call it? Why would you call it this?

There are lots and lots of possible ways you could answer this question. Some ideas are: The parable of the angry master, the parable of the un-used talents and the parable of the two wise servants.

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What other things might a Christians learn about God by looking at the natural world? You could think about things like beautiful sunsets, the complex design of the eye or heart or the variety of species in the world.

Christians often believe that the world is somehow a reflection of what God is like, and that one of the ways that they can learn more about him is by looking at what, they believe, he has created. From seeing a sunset they might think that God likes beauty, and from the complex design of things like an eye they might think that God cares about the smallest detail. They might perceive that God loves variety and adaptability by looking at the wide variety of different species in the world.

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How have Christians responded to what the Bible says about the environment and responsible stewardship?

Looking at the list above, which three do you think would have the most effect on helping to protect the environment?

This is another question where there is no right or wrong answer – each of the actions listed can be used. Which you choose will depend on your own view.

Can you think of some more actions to add to the list?

Some suggestions for the sort of things you could add are: using public transport more, flying less often, and planting gardens which support biodiversity.

Again, there is probably nothing on your list which non-Christians couldn't do – the teachings of the Bible simply give Christians an additional reason to be a good steward.

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These ideas from the Bible inform how Christians think about the environment. Write a short summary of these in your own words.

There are lots of different ways you could have done this question. Here's one example:

Christians believe that the world is good and that it and everything in it was created by God. They believe that the world is God's gift to the creatures which live there, and that humans have the special responsibility to have dominion over it. Most Christians believe that this comes with the obligation to look after it as responsible stewards, meaning that the environment is something which they should take care of and try to preserve. They also believe that the world reveals something of God's nature.

Use all that you have learned on this topic to explain how Christians might respond to this. You could think about how they might feel, what they might do and why they would do it.

This is another question where there are many different ways of answering it. Here is an example answer:

The idea that the earth is 'beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth' is a situation which most, but not all, Christians in the UK would find very troubling. Apart from thoughts like 'if the earth becomes uninhabitable, what will become of us' and sadness at the loss of species and habitats, most Christians will also be troubled by the fact that what is falling into ruin is, they believe, God's creation. Most forms of Christianity teaches that the planet was given to humans by God and that it is the humans' job to take care of it as stewards. Some Christians will have many resources to help care for the earth globally because of their position in the government or in their job or in the influence they hold. Others may be able to make an impact closer to home in their country, city or town, or maybe just in their own home. However, for most Christians it is not OK to just despair and do nothing, which would be like being like the servant who buried the coins in the Parable of the Three Servants. They see it as their responsibility to steward and contribute to caring for the planet, and they believe that God rejoices in those who try to take care of the gift they have been entrusted with.

However, as we have said above, some Christians think about their relationship with the planet in a different way, and see it more as a resource which is God's gift to them, but which they can use up if they want to. This view used to be widely held among Christians, but it is less common today in the UK. There are also those who would disagree with what the Pope says.