

Creation Stories: Exploring Beliefs and Origins

Learning objective: To understand, compare, and analyse various creation stories from different religious traditions, recognising the importance of stewardship and symbolic meaning.

Read the front of each card to identify the term or question. Flip to the back (after the pipe symbol) to check your understanding of the concept. Use these cards to discuss how different cultures interpret the origins of the universe.

What is meant by the term 'Creation Story' in a religious context?

A narrative, often found in sacred texts, that explains how the universe, the earth, and life came into existence through divine power or intentional action.

Define 'Stewardship' in relation to creation stories.

The belief held by many religious groups that humans have a duty to look after and protect the natural world, as it is a gift from the creator.

In the Genesis creation narrative, what is the significance of the seventh day?

It represents the day of rest, establishing the concept of the Sabbath and highlighting that creation was a purposeful and completed act.

Explain the difference between a literal and a symbolic interpretation of a creation myth.

A literal interpretation views the story as a factual historical record, whereas a symbolic interpretation views the story as a way to express deeper truths about the relationship between humanity and the creator.

What does the term 'Cosmogony' mean?

A branch of science or philosophy that deals with the origin of the universe, especially the solar system.

Why might different cultures have such diverse stories about how the world began?

These stories often reflect the environment, values, and experiences of the people who created them, helping them to make sense of the world around them.

Compare and contrast the idea of a creator god with the scientific theory of the Big Bang.

A creator god implies intentional design and purpose, whereas the Big Bang explains the physical expansion of the universe from a singularity. Many people believe both can coexist as different ways of answering 'how' versus 'why' the universe began.

Justify why it is important for historians and theologians to study creation stories from various religions.

It fosters cross-cultural empathy, helps us understand the foundations of different moral codes, and highlights shared human curiosity about our origins.

What might happen if a society ignored the concept of stewardship?

It could lead to the exploitation of natural resources, environmental degradation, and a lack of responsibility towards future generations and the planet's biodiversity.

Explain why many creation stories involve light emerging from darkness.

Light is a universal symbol for knowledge, truth, life, and clarity, while darkness often represents the unknown, chaos, or non-existence.

Nova the Owl asks: If creation stories are symbolic, does that make them less 'true'?

Not necessarily, many believe that symbolic truths, such as the value of life or the beauty of nature, are just as important as scientific facts.

Max the Monkey asks: If you were to write a story about how the world began today, what key values would you include?

Answers will vary, but should focus on values such as harmony, sustainability, curiosity, and the interconnectedness of all living things.