Introduction

There are 30 assemblies for children aged 7-11 in this book, all with Global Issues themes. Each assembly begins with an introduction and then a main presentation, usually given by the teacher. There are both interactive and non-interactive follow-up ideas and every assembly concludes with an optional reflection or prayer.

The assemblies use a wide range of stimulus material:

- Original stories
- 'True life' stories: factual accounts of people's lives
- Factual accounts of events
- Information, e.g. about charities, pressure groups and voluntary organisations
- Mini drama sketches for children to perform, with play scripts

There is a link to the most relevant RE, Citizenship and Geography unit from the QCA Scheme of Work and Programmes of Study in each assembly.

Follow-up

Each assembly presentation is followed by suggestions for interaction to involve the audience in the assembly and to reinforce learning.

Interactive follow-up activities include:

- Closed and open questions
- Active response, e.g. vote, hands up, thumbs up or down, giving scores
- Quizzes
- Use of volunteers to assist at the front
- Discussion

Non-interactive follow-up suggestions include: a summary of the story; points to think about; reflection and prayer.

Using the material

The assemblies in the book are designed to be used flexibly: it is intended that teachers select the most appropriate follow-up activities and questions from the range provided in order to meet the needs of the children present. The basic core presentation of each assembly may also be adapted to suit the school, of course, and may be used, for example, in circle time as the basis for role-play or other drama or for classroom discussion.

Questions to stimulate response from the children might include:

- What might it feel like to be in this situation?
- Have you experienced a situation like this in real life?
- Why did the characters do what they did?
- Were they right/wrong?
- What do you think you could do about this?

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What makes a successful assembly?

Good preparation is essential, particularly if drama is involved.

Other key pointers:

- Use of props or a visual focus (suggestions are included in the book; don't forget an OHP or data projector can be used if you can't find the object suggested).
- Relate the contents of the assembly to activities going on in the school or community.
- Interactivity: music, songs, drama or any kind of audience participation generates interest.
- Use the story or presentation to make a single clear learning point, which can be reinforced in the reflection or prayer at the end of the assembly.

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1 Global Warming

Objective

To help children reflect on the issue of global warming and to give them information to enable them to make informed choices about how they can help improve the environment.

Links

Geography

5a: recognise how people can improve the environment

6e: an environmental issue caused by change in an environment

Citizenship

2j: that resources can be allocated in different ways and that these economic choices affect individuals, communities and the sustainability of the environment.

Props

(Not essential but useful to illustrate.)

Pictures of domestic appliances (e.g. fridge, dishwasher, washing machine, microwave, TV, computer, lights).

Pictures of cars.

Picture of recycling symbol.

Sign showing ELECTRICITY.

Introduction

The Earth is warming up. Why? And how? Scientists don't know for sure – the Earth could be getting warmer on its own but lots of scientists think that the things we do are helping to make the planet hotter.

Global Warming: are we changing the climate?

Are the things that you and I are doing helping to make the Earth warmer? Some scientists think that they are because they know that the climate is changing around the world. More of that later, let's think first about the difference between climate and weather so that we can understand what global warming means.

Weather is what is happening outdoors from minute to minute – it can change a lot in a very short time and there are many different types of weather – rain, snow, sun, mist, hail, cloud – we've all seen it rain for half an hour and then become bright and sunny. It changes all the time and I bet your mums and dads check the weather most days on the television – maybe because it's snowing and they're worried about getting to work; or perhaps you're going on holiday and you want to see if it's going to be sunny. That's weather.

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Climate is how we describe what the weather has been doing over a long period of time – that can include regular weather patterns like spring, summer, autumn, winter; average rainfall in the seasons and special weather events like floods and tornadoes. England has got a 'moderate' climate – in other words, we get a bit of everything but not too much. Somewhere like Iceland has an extreme snowy climate and Africa has a very hot climate. Those words describe what is happening with the weather most of the time.

BUT the Earth has got warmer by about 1 degree Fahrenheit (that's a measure of temperature) over the past 100 years, which might not sound much, but scientists think that the temperature will increase even more over the next 100 years by another 2 to 6 degrees Fahrenheit. Again, that doesn't sound like much but it could change the Earth's climate as never before. Scientists are calling this global warming.

So what might happen? Well, we don't know for sure and some of the changes might be a good thing – particularly if you live in a cool climate. A bit of warmth would be very welcome for some people as they might be able to grow crops that they haven't been able to grow before. But it might also bring droughts to other parts and people won't be able to grow the food they need because it would be too hot and there would not be enough water. Other extreme types of weather such as hurricanes, floods and tornadoes might happen more frequently.

Melting ice from glaciers in the north and south poles would make the sea levels rise and that would cause flooding which would affect human settlements, plants and wildlife.

In the past, natural climate changes happened slowly, which allowed the plants and wildlife to adapt gradually. Lots of the world's habitats and ecosystems on land and in the oceans depend on a delicate balance of rainfall and temperature. Any rapid change might upset that balance and endanger many living things.

So what's this got to do with you and me? How have we affected the world's climate?

Let's have a look at some of the things most of us use everyday: lights, dishwashers, washing machines, TV, computers and PlayStations, hair dryers, microwaves. What do we need to use all these things?

ELECTRICITY: Electricity comes from power plants and we use coal and oil to make electricity. Burning these fuels sends out **greenhouse gases** into the air and these gases are what scientists think might be causing global warming. It's called **'the greenhouse effect'**. The gases behave like a glass pane in a greenhouse and trap heat from the sun. We need some of these gases to help keep our planet warm but we are producing too many because of the way we live our lives, which is why scientists think temperatures are rising.

What other things in our lifestyles produce these gases?

- Every time we use a car, we send out greenhouse gases.
- Every time trees are cut down, we lose a valuable natural way of reducing these gases as trees absorb them.
- We use too much packaging, which takes a lot of energy to produce.
- We have too much waste – the landfill sites where rubbish is sent to produce these gases as well.

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Sometimes small things turn into big things – if you don't clean your teeth for a day, that probably won't cause any problems, but if you don't clean them for, say, a month – you're very likely to develop a cavity which will need to be treated. It's the same with the Earth's temperature – if it rises above normal for a few days then that's no big deal BUT if temperatures stay above the normal level for a longer period of time, then problems may start to occur.

Interactive Follow-up

Questions

1) What's the difference between climate and weather? *(weather is the changing, minute-to-minute, conditions; climate is weather over a prolonged period)*
2) What changes might happen on Earth if temperatures continue to rise? *(rise in sea levels, threat to humans, plants and animals, droughts and other extreme weather conditions)*
3) What are greenhouse gases? *(gases produced from burning fossil fuels, cars and using too much energy generally)*

Getting the message – so what can I do about it?

The good news is that there is a great deal you can do about it! Let's have a think about the things that scientists say cause greenhouse gases – how do they relate to you?

- **Do you use electricity?** Of course you do and **you** can save it! How? *(Turn off lights, turn off computer, turn off stand-by button on TV and monitors.)*
- **Do you come to school by car?** Do you take unnecessary journeys by car? How can you change that? *(Ride a bike, take the bus or train, WALK!)*
- **Do you like gardening?** How is that going to help? *(Plant more trees – they absorb carbon dioxide - which is a greenhouse gas.)*

Learning more

What do you do with all the packaging that comes into you house – can you do something with it other than throw it away? YES! But what? *(Recycle cans, bottles, plastic bags, papers, magazines – when you recycle, you send less to the landfill sites and help save natural resources like trees and oil. Encourage your mums and dads to buy products that can be recycled.)*

Have you learnt something today about global warming? Telling your friends and family will help make a difference!

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Non-interactive Follow-up

Summary

- The Earth has warmed up by 1°F over the past 100 years and is predicted to rise between 2° and 6°F over the next 100 years.
- Effects of global warming could be droughts and other extreme climate changes, melting of glaciers causing sea levels to rise, upset of ecosystem balance.
- Scientists believe global warming is caused by greenhouse gases from:
  1. *Burning fossil fuel for energy*
  2. *Cars*
  3. *Methane (another greenhouse gas) from landfill sites*
  4. *Deforestation*
- We can all help to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases by burning less energy, walking, biking and recycling our waste.

Reflection

We are all important in helping the environment and we can all make a difference. Even though the things we can do might seem small and insignificant, if everyone did the same, the impact would be enormous.

Prayer

Dear Lord,
Thank you for the world you have created. Help us all to take responsibility for looking after it and to appreciate its beauty.
Amen.

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