

SACRE & RIFF Event

Religion and the Environment Debate



COVENTRY SACRE
Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Warwickshire SACRE
Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education



“Religion is an essential factor in motivating individuals to protect the environment and address climate change”

Participants and preparation:

Pupils should be organised into pairs. Half the pairs should prepare the argument ‘*for*’ the debate statement and the other half of the pairs should prepare the argument ‘*against*’. It would do the pairs good to have a reasonable understanding of what the opposite side might say so that they can be suitably prepared for the final ‘countering’ stage of the debate.

Pre-Debate

Start the debate session with some warm ups:

[In a circle] Alphabet pass (back and forth around the circle)

[In a circle] One word story (each pupil says one word to further a story)

[At the tables] ‘Just a minute’ (talk for one minute on a topic without pausing).

The debate aspect of this project follows the ‘School Mace’ model of debate. Each speaker begins by stating “This house believes that...” preceded by a position for or against the debated statement: **“Religion is an essential factor in motivating individuals to protect the environment and address climate change”**

The Debate structure:

Each stage can last as long as you think will work for your pupils:

Pair 1 (for)		Pair 2 (against)	
1	Pupil 1 makes up to 3 points to back up their position	2	Pupil 1 makes up to 3 points to back up their position
3	Pupil 2 makes up to 3 points to back up their position	4	Pupil 2 makes up to 3 points to back up their position
5	The pair returns to points made by Pair 2 and counters these	6	The pair returns to points made by Pair 1 and counters these

Process Observing

At the end of the debate session the four pupils will ask themselves 3 questions to reflect on their debate practice:

- Who spoke best?
- Did we all listen to each other's points?
- If we had to vote for one side based on our debate performance, who would be choose 'for' or 'against'?



Whole Room Summary

Everybody involved in the debate will be invited to cast a vote 'for' or 'against' the debate statement.

Some Helpful Advice for Pupils on Debating



- Find the 6 points you think give you the strongest argument and share these equally between your pair so that you both get to present a strong case.
- Decide before hand which one of your pair will do the countering (stage 5 and 6 in the debate structure). The other person can feed notes to the speaker if they struggle.
- Speak clearly and audibly so the whole table and the invigilator can hear you.
- Try and memorise the points you want to make (but not word-for-word) so that your speaking time flows.
- Use gestures to emphasise points (but don't overdo it) if you want to.
- Try to maintain good eye-contact with the opposing pair.
- Keep your eye on the clock. Keep to the time allocated to each stage, trying to close with a whole thought and not mid-idea.
- Make sure that you address the debate topic and don't go off topic.
- Make sure that you have the evidence to back up your reasons, and reasons to back up your conclusion (you can make notes while the opposite pair are speaking).
- Plan your speech with this question in mind alongside your content: what will it *sound* like? (tone, speed, volume, vocabulary; variation)