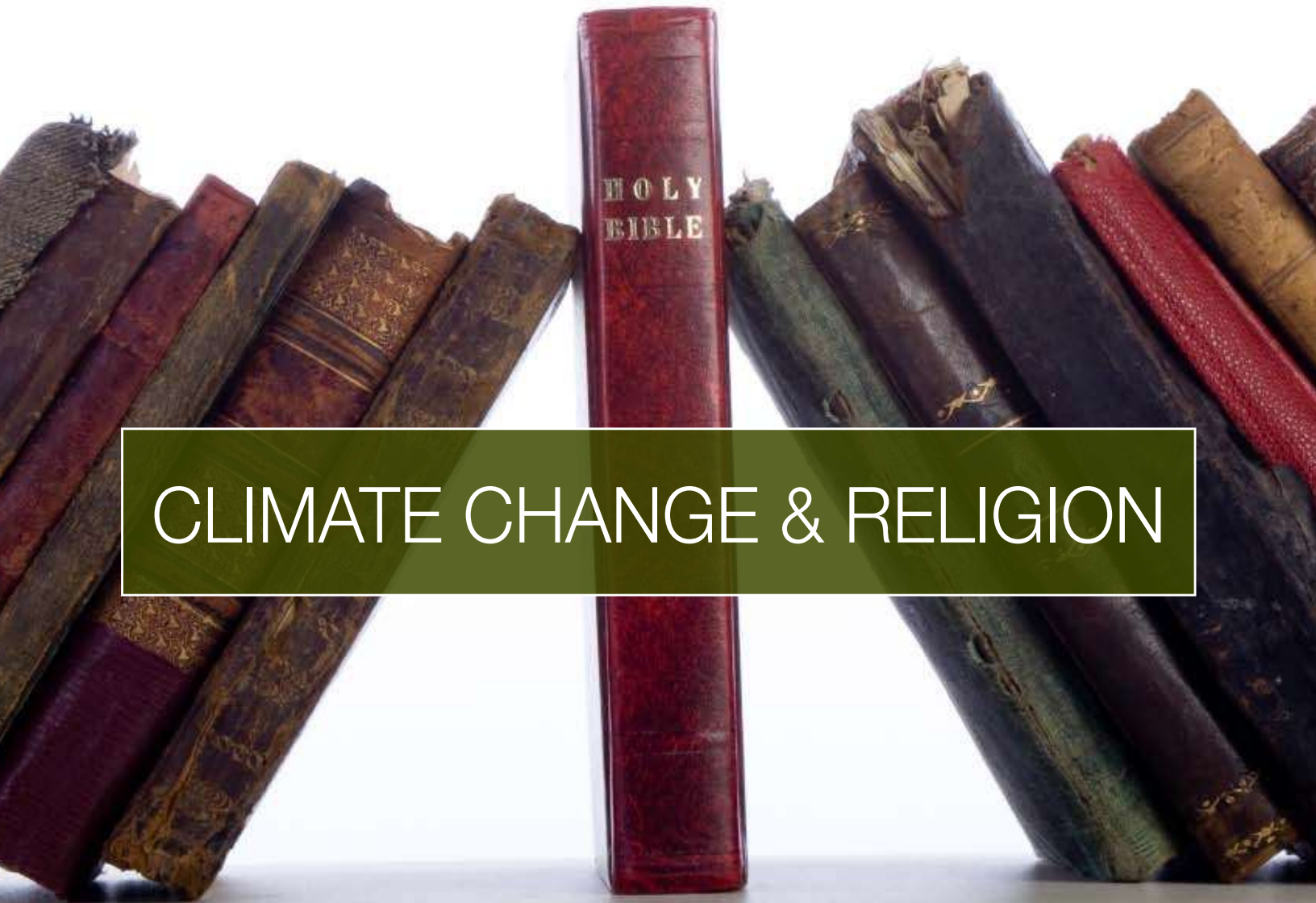


PARENT / TEACHER LESSON PLANS



CLIMATE CHANGE & RELIGION



Summary

In this lesson, students will watch a short video produced by National Geographic about climate change. The purpose of the lesson is to get students to think critically about what they see and to recognize the humanistic worldview behind the movies. This worldview will then be compared with our Christian belief about the world.

Essential Question

Are Christians able to effectively challenge the basis of public opinion and consensus around climate change?

With this question, students are challenged to take a topic that our culture and media pushes as ‘accepted’ and ‘beyond dispute’. This question gets beyond the scientific detail and looks at the philosophical underpinnings of what this argument is based upon.

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Engage the Students

- It will be necessary to set the context for the students. This lesson is not intended to dispute whether climate change as presented by mainstream media and culture is accurately presented. What it is intended to do is to help us understand what worldview that representation comes from. It is a secular one and not a Christian one.
- We will explore an eight minute long video clip looking for ways in which it gives us clues about its motivation.
- The video is located at <http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/way-forward-climate>

Explore Propaganda

- Distribute *Handout 1 – Detecting Techniques to Make You Believe the Message*. Discuss the variety of techniques with students.
- Put a large, visible timer at the front of class so students can indicate the time code at which they detect persuasive techniques.
- Watch the National Geographic video and instruct students to focus on the video and if there are any obvious techniques that are obvious, to write them down including the time code.
- Discuss with students a few of the obvious techniques that they picked up.
- Watch the video a second time with instructions to pay closer attention to the words and techniques that are used.
- Review with students any additional techniques they observed.
- A few that they likely picked up are:
 - Global warming “threatens every species on earth”

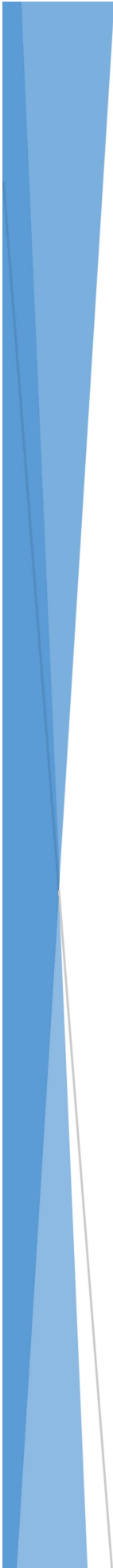
- “The world’s top scientists...have issued urgent warnings.”
- “The IPCC reports leave no room for doubt. Global warming is a fact.”
- “Humans are the main cause of climate change and its dangerous side effects.”
- Global warming will intensify drought...aggravate flooding...lead to disappearing glaciers and rising oceans, disturb biodiversity, kill off some species, lead to starvation, make third world countries suffer the most
- “We can shape a different future.” We must stabilize greenhouse gas emissions so that the temperature can drop two degrees. All of us must change our consumption patterns. But it is largely up to governments. IPCC suggests we change the way we think about energy. Help developing countries choose a more environmentally friendly course.

Extend the Learning to the Worldview

- Distribute *Handout 2 – Who is Your Authority?* Lead a class discussion on what students think the answers to are in the first column about the source of authority that the climate change video appeals to.
- Together complete both columns of the organizer.
- Various responses have been included as source of discussion.

Extension

- Dependent on the grade and classroom, consider distributing a copy of ARPA’s *Respectfully Submitted* policy report on Climate Change.
- Students need to paraphrase this research for a non-political audience.
- Consider watching a well-known film like *An Inconvenient Truth* and completing this same activity to look for a foundational worldview and claim to authority.



Teacher Overview – Religion and Climate Change

Turn on the radio or TV, look through a newspaper or magazine, and you will undoubtedly come across something about “climate change.” How did this one issue consume the West so quickly? Why has the media and our governments bought into it with religious zeal? Why do we hear it referred to as “climate change” rather than “global warming” now?

Christians have a God-given mandate to care for this world. Being “green” is usually a good thing. But there is something about this whole climate change hype that seems wrong. What is the problem? Is it just bad science? Or is there more to it than that?

The purpose of this lesson is to get students to understand that there is more to the climate change hype than bad science. It is being promoted with religious zeal because there is religious motivation behind it. Secular humanism believes that we are all there is. Without an all-powerful and loving God, we have to be responsible for Mother Earth ourselves. Humans are to blame for changes in climate and humans are responsible to fix it. Mixed in through all of the climate change rhetoric is the call to a form of international socialism. International bodies (such as the United Nations) are supposed to govern the redistribution of resources from richer nations to developing nations. National governments are not to be trusted because they will likely consider only their own well-being. These unaccountable transnational bodies are given more and more power as they work towards promoting their humanistic worldview.