

Drama resources for young people

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Other drama ideas can be found in section 11 of the additional resources for use in worship services/liturgies on the CTBI website. See:

<http://www.ctbi.org.uk/344#drama>

The Bright People

(Origin: Veritas Publications - used with permission)

Read and act out the following short play.

Character: Three readers; the other students in class are the audience

Reader One: We know so much!

Reader Two: For example, we know all about lighting.

Reader Three: We also know what causes floods, earthquakes and plagues of locusts.

Trio: Oh, we are a bright people!

One: Since taking dominion over all things, we know that lightning bolt is not a spear thrown by the Almighty.

Two: We RESPECT lightning, mind you, but we are not TERRIFIED by it.

One: And so it is with many of the so-called dark things of nature..

Three: We have conquered the fear.

One: We have eliminated the terror of the unknown darkness of nature.....
By devastating nature herself.

Trio: Oh. We are bright people!

Pause for two counts; with new energy.....

One: Yes, we are a bright people!

Two: We have changed the very chemistry of the planet;

Three: We have altered the bio systems;

Two: We have changed the topography.....

Three:Even the geological structures of the planet.

One: Such structures and such functions, I might add, have taken hundreds of millions, even billions of years to bring into existence. We changed them all!

Two: That certainly shows great intelligence.

One: Within a historical snap of the fingers we changed it all.

Trio: We could not have done that if we were not a bright people.

Pause with a fresh start.....

Trio: Oh, we are a bright people!

Three: We know ENOUGH, you can be sure of that.

One: We know enough to know that we are playing for high stakes.

Three: The beauty.....

Two:the grandeur.....

One:even the survival of the earth is in our power. But we are also an honest people.....

Two & Three: A bright and honest people.....

One: And we could be the first to admit that a few minor compromises have been made along the way.

In quick succession, overlapping slightly:

Yes, it is true that we have contaminated the air, water, soil.....

Two: we have dammed the rivers, cut down rain forests.....

One: destroyed animal habitat on an extensive scale.

Three: We have driven the great blue whale and a multitude of animals almost to extinction.

Two: We have caused the land to be eroded, the rain to be acid.

Three: We have killed then thousand lakes as habitat for fish.

One: But that is what we call playing for high stakes

Trio: *Suddenly very bright and exuberant*

We are moving into a new technological wonderland!

Pause for one count; very loud

CAN YOU HELP US FIND IT?

One: *Reassuringly calm*

We ARE a bright people. We MUST be moving towards something magnificent that is worth the necessary destruction of the natural world.

Three: We must survive----- you know that!

Two: We must provide food and shelter for our children.....

Three: and of course, consider the energy we will need to work all our machinery.....

Trio: WE THINK IT IS WORTH IT.

Towards audience

Do YOU THINK IT IS WORTH IT?

Audience 1: I may not be very bright, but I ask you: what benefit is worth giving up the purity of the air we breathe?

Audience 2: I may not be very bright either, but I challenge you: what benefit is worth giving up the purity of the water we drink?

Audience 3: Come, Come, bright people. Ask yourselves again. Is it worth it? Is it worth it?

Audience 4: Dear bright people: did we hear you correctly? Did you say future 'wonderland'? Is any future 'wonderland' worth giving up the air we breathe, the water we drink; the life-giving soil in which our food is grown?

Trio: *Facing each other* Will we find the answers?

Facing the audience Will we find the answer?

Judge and Jury for Humankind

(Origin: Fully Alive 2, Veritas Publications - with permission)

List of characters:

Bailiff, Judge Rose Garden, Prosecutor Nigella Naturelle, Defence Harry Progress, Dr Mark Warmer, Dr Sonny Rays, Professor Anna Thirst, Dr Davina Diversity, Court Clerk, The Jury.

Drama: Humankind Brought to Law

Note: During this drama, the classroom becomes a 'courtroom'. You might arrange it as follows: The 'courtroom' has two major areas: one for the officials, and one for the public. At the front of the court there is a bench (table) and chair on a raised area reserved for the Judge. Before the Judge, on ground level, sits the Bailiff and the Court Clerk, who records what is said. The members of the Jury sit in an area to the left of the Judge. The 'Defendant', in this case 'Humankind', is represented in some suitable way, perhaps by an image, on the other side of the court. The Prosecutor and the Defence Counsel sit on either side of the court, facing the Judge. A witness stand is placed between the Judge and the Jury. The remaining area is for the public. Each witness brings a folder.

Bailiff: All rise for the Honourable Judge Rose Garden.

(Everyone stands; Judge Garden enters, looking a little flustered, and takes her seat. Then the Bailiff continues as the Judge sits and strikes the bench with the gavel.)

All sit.

(Everyone sits)

Day One of case number 000999: The Natural World versus Humankind.

This court is now in session.

Judge: Bailiff, swear in the Jury.

(The members of the jury stand, raise their right hands and repeat the Bailiff's words.)

Bailiff: I promise to do my best *(Jury repeats)* to judge this case fairly *(Jury repeats)* and to decide it according to the evidence *(Jury repeats)*. So help me God. *(Jury repeats)*

Judge: Counsel for the Prosecution and Counsel for the Defence: make yourselves known to the court.

Prosecutor *(rising eagerly)*: With pleasure, Your Honour! I am Miss Nigella Naturelle and I am a senior partner with the Environmental Protection Agency, Legal Division, and I will present the case for the Prosecution.

Judge: Yes. Very good, Miss Naturelle.

Defence *(seriously)*: Your Honour, I am Mr Harry Progress, Senior Partner with Progress Technologies, Legal Division, and I will present the defence in this case.

Judge: Right. Very good, Mr Progress. Now, the Bailiff will inform the court of the charges in this case and then we can begin to hear witnesses.

(Lots of whispering and gasps as the charges are read out. Judge Garden has to intervene once or twice with phrases such as 'Silence' or 'Silence in the Court'.)

Bailiff: May it please Your Honour:

In the case of the Natural World versus Humankind, there are six charges in total. They are as follows:

- Humankind has changed climate patterns and caused the earth's temperature to rise by overusing fossil fuels and by wiping out forests.
- Through destruction and neglect, Humankind has polluted the earth's atmosphere and damaged its protective ozone layer.
- Through destruction and neglect, Humankind has polluted and wasted water so much that it will soon become a source of global conflict.
- Through destruction and neglect, Humankind has damaged trees, plants, sea creatures, animals and birds of many places, killing off many species that will never appear again.
- Humankind is greedy and only cares about what it can get for itself, to such an extent that it has brought disaster to the environment.
- And finally, humankind is smug and lazy and does not bother to learn about these problems.

Judge: (*shaking head*) Goodness, goodness! Very serious charges indeed. And how does the defendant plead?

Defence: The defendant pleads NOT GUILTY, Your Honour.
(*Further gasps and loud muttering from around the courtroom.*)

Judge: Order! Order in the court! This is a very serious case indeed. Is the Prosecution ready to present its first witness?

Prosecutor: Yes, Your Honour. The Prosecution would like to call Dr Mark Warmer as the first witness.

Bailiff: Calling Dr Mark Warmer. Dr Mark Warmer to the witness stand.

(*Dr Warmer enters and takes his place at the witness stand.*)

FIRST WITNESS

Prosecutor (*smiling*): State your name and occupation for the record.

Dr Warmer: My name is Dr Mark Warmer and I am a senior Climate Officer with the Global Research Centre.

Prosecutor: Dr Warmer, is climate change a problem?

Dr Warmer: Yes, the average earth temperature is rising.

Defence: Your Honour, I object. The temperature of the earth has been rising for over one hundred years now. This has no relevance.

Judge: Miss Naturelle, you'd better get to the point or I shall have to sustain this objection.

Prosecutor: Yes, Your Honour. It will soon become clear. Dr Warmer, please continue.

Dr Warmer: Yes, but the temperature is rising more rapidly and it is causing ever-greater extremes of weather.

Prosecutor: What sort of extremes?

Dr Warmer: The signs are already in the News. Rising temperatures bring more heat waves, more severe droughts, more water shortages, more violent storms, more tornadoes, large-scale flooding, rising sea-levels, melting polar ice-caps, and more severe winters.

Prosecutor: In your opinion, what is the main cause of this climate change?

Dr Warmer: *(Pointing)* I blame the defendant, Humankind. *(Gasps and muttering around courtroom.)* Humankind is producing too much carbon dioxide.

Defence: Your Honour, I object. The Prosecution is leading the witness.

Judge: Objection sustained. Miss Naturelle, your witness must present the evidence, not the conclusions.

Prosecutor: Yes, Your Honour. Dr Warmer, how does Humankind produce such high carbon dioxide levels?

Dr Warmer: Every time Humankind drives a car, or uses electricity from a coal-fired power plant, or heats their home with oil or natural gas, carbon dioxide is produced.

Prosecutor: And is this a problem?

Dr Warmer: Yes, high carbon dioxide levels make the atmosphere act like a blanket, trapping heat and warming the earth even more. And worse! Forests are the one thing that can cut carbon dioxide levels. And what is happening to them? Humankind is cutting them down.

Prosecutor: Would you say that we are heading for a disaster?

Dr Warmer: Yes, I would. Here is my report. *(Offers folder of documents)*

Prosecutor: Thank you, Dr Warmer. Your Honour, I want to present Dr Warmer's report into evidence as 'Exhibit A'. *(Hands folder of evidence to Judge)*

Judge: Clerk, take the report into evidence and mark it 'Exhibit A'. *(Hands folder to Clerk, who attaches a large capital A to it)*

Prosecutor: I have no further questions for this witness.

Judge: You may step down. *(Dr Warmer leaves the witness stand.)*

SECOND WITNESS

Prosecutor: Your Honour, the Prosecution calls Dr Sonny Rays.

Bailiff: Dr Sonny Rays, Dr Sonny Rays to the witness stand.
(*Dr Rays enters and takes his place at the witness stand.*)

Prosecutor (*smiling*): Please state your name and occupation.

Dr Rays: I am Dr Sonny Rays and I am an expert with the Department of Environmental Health.

Prosecutor: Dr Rays, please explain the term 'ozone' to the court.

Dr Rays: Ozone is a gas in the earth's atmosphere. It soaks up the sun's most harmful rays. If you have ever had sunburn, you will know the power of those rays. Without a layer of ozone above you, you would get sunburnt just walking down the street, even on a cold, grey day.

Prosecutor: Is this likely to be a problem for us?

Dr Rays: Unfortunately, yes. The ozone layer above us is getting thinner. It has even disappeared over the South Pole (Antarctic). The gap there is huge, about three times the size of Australia!

Prosecutor: In your opinion, what is making this gap in the ozone layer?

Dr Rays: CFC gases; the full name is Chlorofluorocarbons. They were in widespread use in fridges and spray cans up to recently.

Defence: Objection! Your Honour, this evidence is not relevant. Most countries have stopped using CFC gases.

Judge (*to Witness*): Is this true?

Dr Rays: Definitely not. Some ruthless and greedy companies still use CFCs because they're cheaper; in some places they don't have laws for getting rid of old fridges safely.
(*Loud muttering around courtroom*)

Judge: (*Strikes the bench with the gavel*) Silence in the court! Let the record show that the objection is overruled.

Prosecutor: Thank you, Your Honour. Dr Rays, in your expert opinion, what will be the effects of damage to the ozone layer?

Dr Rays: Skin cancer. Less ozone means more dangerous rays get through. And CFCs don't disappear once they get into the air. They hang around for years. They are a major part of city smog, which kills three million people a year at present around the world.
(*Gasps around the courtroom*) Crops, trees and plants are at risk too. Here is my report on the matter. (*Offers folder of documents*)

Prosecutor: Thank you, Dr Rays. Your Honour, I want to present Dr Rays' report into evidence as 'Exhibit B'. *(Hands folder of evidence to Judge)*

Judge: Clerk, take the report into evidence and mark it 'Exhibit B'. *(Hands folder to Clerk, who attaches a large capital B to it)*

Prosecutor: After preparing your report, Dr Rays, are you clear about who is to blame?

Defence *(interrupting)*: Objection! Your Honour, once again the Prosecution is leading the witness.

Judge: Indeed, so. Miss Naturelle, leave the conclusions for the Jury. They are well equipped for the job. *(Jury members nod in agreement.)*

Prosecutor: Thank you, Dr Rays. Your Honour, I have no further questions for this witness.

Judge: You may step down. *(Dr Rays leaves the stand.)* Next witness!

THIRD WITNESS

Prosecutor: The Prosecution calls Professor Anna Thirst, a water specialist.

Defence: Your Honour, I object. I don't see the relevance of this witness. There is plenty of water in the world: look at the oceans. Rivers have not dried up.

Judge: Well, Miss Naturelle?

Prosecutor: Once again, Mr Progress is trying to ignore the truth. This witness will agree that there is enough water for everybody's needs; but there is not enough water for Humankind's greed.

Judge: Go ahead, then. Call the next witness.

Bailiff: Calling Professor Anna Thirst! Professor Anna Thirst to the witness stand. *(Professor Thirst enters and takes her place at the witness stand.)*

Prosecutor: *(smiling)*: State your name and occupation for the record.

Professor Thirst: I am Professor Anna Thirst and I am a Water Specialist with the United Nations.

Prosecutor: Professor Thirst, the UN World Water Forum recently said: 'Water shortage is one of the major problems facing the world today.' Please explain to the court what this means.

Professor Thirst: Yes, certainly. Over one billion people, one in six of the world's population, have no access to clean water. Some six thousand children die every day as a

result. (*Gasps of shock around the courtroom*) If something doesn't change, the number of people without enough clean water will double over the next thirty years.

Prosecutor: But, Professor, why is this happening?

Professor Thirst: Modern industry and agriculture use huge amounts of water. In some places, rich people use fifty per cent of the clean water for their sewers. Many poor people get only dirty water. As many as twelve million of them die every year. (*Gasps of shock and horror from around the courtroom.*) More and more rich people are using more and more of the clean water. It won't be long before it causes a war. Here is my report on the matter. (*Offers folder of evidence to Prosecutor*)

Prosecutor: Thank you, Professor Thirst. Your Honour, I want to present the professor's report into evidence as 'Exhibit C'. (*Hands folder of evidence to Judge*)

Judge: Clerk, take the report into evidence and mark it 'Exhibit C'. (*Hands folder to Clerk, who attaches a large capital C to it*)

Prosecutor: One final question: would you say that the planet Earth is at risk?

Professor Thirst: People today fight over oil, but I predict that people will soon fight over water. There are already tensions between Israel and Palestine, between India and Bangladesh, and between Egypt and countries further up the Nile.

Prosecutor: And who will be to blame? (*Some members of the public point at the defendant and shout 'murderer'. The Judge intervenes.*)

Judge: Order! Order in the court! Members of the public, you must control yourselves. Any further outbursts of that nature and I will clear the public gallery. Miss Naturelle, I ask you once again, do not lead the witness.

Prosecutor: My apologies, Your Honour. I have no further questions for this witness.

Judge: You may step down. (*Professor Thirst steps down.*) Next witness!

FOURTH WITNESS

Prosecutor: The Prosecution calls Dr Davina Diversity.

Bailiff: Dr Davina Diversity. Dr Davina Diversity to the witness stand. (*Dr Diversity enters and takes her place at the witness stand.*)

Prosecutor: (*smiling*): Please state your name and occupation.

Dr Diversity: My name is Dr Davina Diversity and I am World Expert on endangered plants, insects and animals.

Prosecutor: Dr Diversity, tell the court what you mean by 'endangered'.

Dr Diversity: Certainly. It means that there are so few of them left that they will soon die off and never be replaced.

Prosecutor: Is this a big problem?

Dr Diversity: Yes. Between six hundred and one thousand kinds of plants or animals or insects are disappearing every week... *(Gasps of surprise from the courtroom)*

Judge: Excuse me, Dr Diversity, surely you mean every year?

Dr Diversity: No, Your Honour. I mean every week.
(Judge shakes her head in disbelief)

Prosecutor: Will you tell the court what you believe to be the cause of this?

Dr Diversity: *(Points)* There! That's who's to blame! Humankind!

Defence: Objection! Your Honour, I ask that the last remark of the witness be struck from the record.

Judge: Objection sustained. The witness will account for what has happened without looking for someone to blame.

Prosecutor: Dr Diversity, let me rephrase the question for you: what is happening to endanger the existence of so many forms of life?

Dr Diversity: The building of cities, roads, mines and dams. Cutting down or burning forests. Farming the land and fishing the seas too much. The places where these plants, animals and insects live are being destroyed.

Prosecutor: And what is the answer to this problem?

Dr Diversity: It is already too late for many types of plants, animals and insects. Humankind needs to change. Here is my report. *(Offers folder of evidence)*

Prosecutor: Thank you, Dr Diversity. Your Honour, I want to present Dr Diversity's report into evidence as 'Exhibit D'. *(Hands folder of evidence to Judge)*

Judge: Clerk, take the report into evidence and mark it 'Exhibit D'. *(Hands folder to Clerk, who attaches a large capital D to it)*

Prosecutor: Thank you, Dr Diversity. Your Honour, I have no further questions for this witness.

Judge: *(to Dr Diversity):* You may step down.

Defence: Your Honour, may I be allowed to speak.

Judge: Yes, Mr Progress, so long as it is relevant to the case.

Defence: The Prosecution wants to reject all the progress of the last century. She seeks to blame my client, Humankind. She exaggerates. Things are not as serious as she suggests. May I remind the Jury that Humankind invented technology! It is this very technology that discovered the problems of the world today. It is this very technology that will fix them. Humankind cares for the earth. It has introduced many laws to protect it.

Judge: Mr Progress, this may all be true. You will have the chance to bring your witnesses at another time. However, we must finish for today. This court is now in recess. (*Judge strikes the bench with the gavel.*)

Bailiff: All rise! (*All rise as Judge Garden exits.*)

* * * * *

A time to pray

Note: You might read this prayer quietly first and then pray it together

God our Creator,
You have given us the gift of life.
Open our eyes to the beauty of the world.
Help us to respect what you have given us.

God our Creator,
You are the maker of life.
You have made us in your own image and likeness.
You ask us to care for the world.

God our Creator,
You keep all life in your care.
May we show that care to the earth
and to all that lives on it with us.

Amen.

Let's Talk

- 1 Were you surprised by anything in the evidence? What surprised you?
- 2 What are the four main areas covered in the Prosecution's case?
- 3 List the main changes that Humankind needs to make.
- 4 Do you agree with everything that the Defence Counsel says at the end? Do you think the Defence Counsel answers the charges fully? Give reasons for your answers.
- 5 If you were to continue the Defence's arguments, what else would you say?
- 6 Why do you think you are learning about these things in Religion class?
- 7 Why might these issues be important in your home, in your school, in your local community?

Why Don't You?

- Make an image or model of the 'defendant' in this trial. Use what you read in the play to give you ideas as to how the 'defendant' might appear.
- Debate the following statements:
 - Plastic-bags are unnecessary
 - There should be more depots for recycling'.

Creation Rap

Other **Churches**, you **may** remember,
Celebrate **Harvest** in **October** or **September**;
But **this** is **Hillfarrance** branch, **C of E**,
And we **sometimes do** things **differently**.
We **offer** with our **first-fruits** this **creation rap**
(We're **musically challenged** and our **singing's** – not **brilliant**)

We believe in **God**, the **Maker**
Of **Heaven**, the **sun** and moon **and** the **shaker**
Of **stars** like **pepper across** the **skies**;
Who **formed** – dry **land** and the **water** that **lies**
Around it, filled with **fishes**, and the **bird** that **wings**
Through the **air above** it, and all **growing things**;
Fruit trees and **flowers**, according to **plan**,
And **then**, to **tend** them he created **Man**.

Think about it; imagine in your **heart**;
Picture the scene at the **very start**.

Out of chaos the **watery birth**
In an **empty Heaven** of a **lifeless Earth**,
But the **Spirit soared** while the **torrents roared**
And **God said**, '**Let there be light**'
And there was light!
The **very first day** and night **met** above the **flood**,
And **God said**, '**Yes!That's good!**'

Day **Two**; God **said**, '**It's not finished yet**.
With **all** that **water** it's a **bit too wet**.
Over the seas and **lifted high**
We'll **make** a dome of **air** and we'll **call** it '**Sky**.'
There was a **second day** and a **second night**
And **God said**, '**Yes!That's right.**'

'**Still too damp**,' said **God** on day **Three**
And he **made** dry **land** rise up **out** of the **sea**
Green plants **growing** to the **glory** of **God**
With **leaf** and scented **flower** and **seed** and **pod**
The **third day** **passed** and the **third night** **fell**
And **God said**, '**Yes! All's well!**'

On Day Four, God **said**, '**Let us raise**
Lights in the **sky** to **mark** the **days**
And **nights** and **seasons** and **months** and **years**.'
So – the **moon** and the **stars** and the **sun** appears.
The **first sunrise** and the **first sunset**
And **God said**, '**Yes! The best day yet!**'

The **Fifth** Day, God got **up** and said, 'Today it is our **will**
That **fish** swim in the **seas** and flying **birds** the heavens **fill.**'
So **wrens** and sparrows **fluttered** and **albatrosses soared**
And **cod** and plaice and **octopuses praised** the **Lord**
The **sun** rose **early** and it **went** down **late**
And **God** said, '**Yes!**That's **great!**'

The **sixth** Day **dawned** and **God** turned his **hand**
To creating all the **animals** that **live** upon the **land**'
The **rabbit** and the **elephant**, the **cat** and kangaroo
And **lastly**, in his **image**, he created me and **you.**
The **sun** rose in the **East** and it **sank** into the **West**,
And **God** said, '**Yes!** This has **got** to be the **best!**'

Day **Seven** God **rested**, to **contemplate** the **worth**
Of **all** he'd **made** in **Heaven** and **Earth.**
Let **us** with **hand** and **heart** and **voice**
Praise **God** in **whom** our **souls** rejoice,
And **with** each rising and **setting sun**
Say, '**Yes!** Praise the **Lord** for **all** he's **done!**'
Amen, alleluia, alleluia, **amen!**

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