



## FEZANA Age-Appropriate Lesson Plan

**Subject Category** (circle one): **Parsi Religion**/Ceremony History Prayer Gathas  
Comparative Religion Shahnameh

**Age Group** (circle one): PreK-K Grades 1-3 Grades 4-5 Grades 6-8 **Grades 9-12**

**Subject of the Lesson:** Amesha Spentas

### Background Knowledge for the Teacher:

The Amesha Spentas are theological concepts of Zoroastrianism and mean 'Bountiful Immortal'. The Amesha Spentas are considered to be the attributes of Ahura Mazda that form the principles or the ethical structure that every Zoroastrian should live their life by.

According to the creation story, Ahura Mazda made the 7 creations/ Amesha Spentas. He created:

1. The sky - Khshathra Vairya ('best power and strength/ good dominion' - teaches us to use our power the right way with courage and strength)
2. The waters - Haurvatat ('perfection' - the pursuit of excellence in all that you do)
3. The earth – Spenta Armaiti ('holy devotion' – to be hardworking, passionate and devoted to all that you do)
4. The plant kingdom – Ameretat ('immortality' - always doing your best so that the good lives on)
5. The animal kingdom - Vohu Manah (the 'good mind' - teaches us to use our good mind/ wisdom/ use of knowledge)
6. Human beings - Spenta Mainyu (the 'holy spirit' - to be a good Zoroastrian)
7. Fire - Asha Vehishta ('truth'- to live with truth and order)

As per the Creation Story, the Bundahishn, the first 6 creations were static, until Fire gave life to them all.

The importance of the Amesha Spentas is recognized in the Gathas, in specific prayers in the Khordeh Avesta and in all our ceremonies and festivals such as the Jashan ceremony, Gahambars, Muktdas and others. The first 7 days of the calendar are dedicated to the 7 Amesha Spentas.

Taking care of the environment or the 7 creations (Amesha Spentas) is what is known as 'Ecology' in present times.

And these seven Amesha Spentas can be used and internalized in our present everyday lives in the following way:

1. Spenta Mainyu – You are a human being
2. You have Vohu Manah – good mind to think – have a vision, or a project



3. Using Asha Vehishta – truth and order. You research, get facts and organize your findings
4. With Spenta Armaiti – devotion. You have passion and work with devotion
5. Khshathra Vairya – Power and strength. Enables you to fight and have courage to defend your work
6. With Haurvatat – perfection. You work till you reach perfection.
7. Ameretat – immortal. Once the work/project is perfect it becomes immortal. Libraries are full of books and work of people long gone, but their names remain alive even today.

#### **Material for the teacher:**

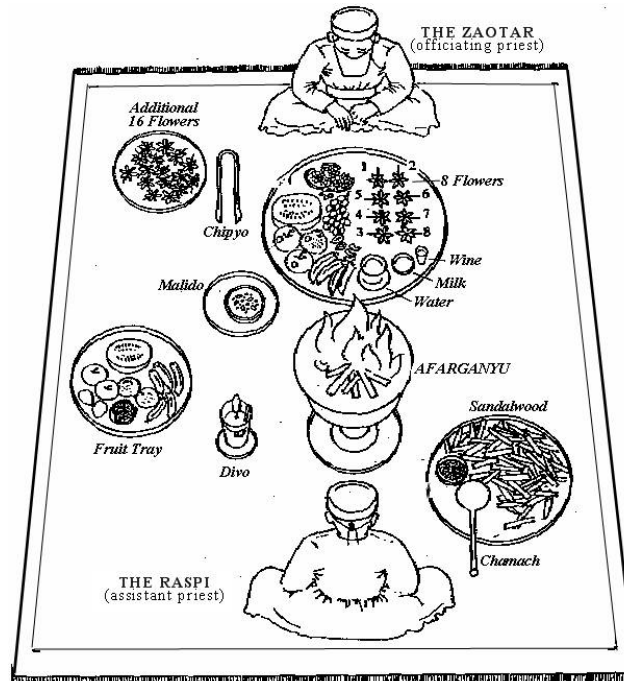
1. Teacher made materials/ visual aids (pictorial representation of 7 Amesha Spentas and their symbols – handmade/ power point slides) (Also see Attachments #1 to #7)

#### **Vocabulary:**

Amesha Spenta (Holy Immortals); sky, water, earth, plant, animal, human beings, fire; Names of 7 Amesha Spentas (Khshathra Vairya, Haurvatat, Spenta Armaiti, Ameretat, Vohu Manah, Spenta Mainyu, Asha Vahishta); Attributes; Ecology; Ethics/ Morals; Hormazd, Bahman, Ardibehsht, Shehrevan, Aspandarmad, Khordad, Amardad

#### **Lesson for students:**

1. Introduction (Amesha Spentas means holy immortals; helpers of Ahura Mazda/ Ahura Mazda's army)
2. Physical representation of Amesha Spentas (sky, water, earth, plant, animal, man, fire)
3. Introduce Avestan names (Khshathra Vairya, Haurvatat, Spenta Armaiti, Ameretat, Vohu Manah, Spenta Mainyu, Asha Vahishta) and attributes/ meanings (see above in Introduction)
4. Link of Amesha Spentas to the first 7 days of calendar (Hormuz, Bahman, Ardibehsht, Shehrevan, Aspandarmad, Khordad, Amardad)
5. Connect to Ecology – taking care of environment and creations (Earth Day/ Recycling)
6. Link Amesha Spentas to Jashan ceremony – explain all the implements that are used in the ceremony and all the items representing the elements of nature – fruits, flowers, water, lemon juice (sherbet) nuts, sukhad and loban.



7. Link Amesha Spentas to Gathas (verses connected to Gathas) Ahura Mazda as the “Creator” of Vohu Manah (Y. 44.4) and of Ašha (Y. 31.8) and the “father” of Vohu Manah (Y. 31.8, 45.4), Ašha (Y. 44.3; 47.2), and Ārmaiti (Y. 45.4).
8. Zarathushtra's revelation aided by 2 Amesha Spentas (Vohu Manah and Spenta Mainyu)
9. Discuss the Amesha Spentas as male or female

### Activity for Students:

1. What is your favorite Amesha Spenta and why
2. Conflict Resolution: How do you use the Amesha Spentas to resolve challenges in your life
3. Hold a debate on ethical and moral values; how do you connect them with the Amesha Spentas? (Refer to The Good Life Book, ZAGNY)
4. Create your own presentation of the Amesha Spentas and their use in daily life
5. Connect Amesha Spentas with Earth Day (ex: planting trees, seeds, flowers; clean up park/streams; conservation of water; save planet; don't pollute; care of animals)
6. Connect to Ava roj/ Ava Mah; Adar roj/ Adar Mah; Spendarmad Roj/ Spendarmad Mah
7. Tie in prayers to Amesha Spentas (Ardibehst Yasht/ Atash Niyaesh, Tir Yasht, Avan Yasht, Khorshed Niyaesh, Meher Niyaesh, Sarosh Baj, Mah Bokhtar Niyaesh, Ardvi Sura Niyaesh, Diva no Namaskar, Nirang of Home Yasht venerating Plants)
8. Games: Charades; create their own games; Jeopardy



**Source:**

The Good Life Book, ZAGNY: <https://zagny.org/shop/books/the-good-life-book-4th-ed/>

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