



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 we do)
3. The earth – Spenta Armaiti (‘holy devotion’ – to be hardworking, passionate, and devoted to all that we do)
4. The plant kingdom – Ameretat (‘immortality’ - always doing our best so that the good lives on)
5. The animal kingdom - Vohu Manah (the ‘good mind’ - teaches us to use our good mind/ wisdom/ knowledge)
6. Human beings - Spenta Mainyu (the ‘holy spirit’ – teaches us to be a good Zoroastrian)
7. Fire - Asha Vehishta (‘truth’- teaches us 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 also 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.

Suggested Material:

1. Teacher made materials/ visual aids (pictorial representation of 7 Amesha Spentas and their symbols – handmade/ power point slides)
2. Amesha Spentas masks

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;

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. Recognition and Recollection: Teach children the names of the Amesha Spentas (use pictures)
4. Introduce Avestan names (Khshathra Vairya, Haurvatat, Spenta Armaiti, Ameretat, Vohu Manah, Spenta Mainyu, Asha Vahishta) and meanings (see above in Introduction)
5. Link Amesha Spentas to the first 7 days of calendar (Hormuz, Bahman, Ardibehsht, Shehrevard, Aspandarmad, Khordad, Amardad)
6. Connect to Ecology – taking care of environment and creations (Earth Day/ Recycling)
7. Link Amesha Spentas to Jashan ceremony – fruits, flowers, water, nuts,

Activity for Students:

1. Matching Activity 1 – identification of Amesha Spentas (names/representation)
2. Make masks of 7 creations;
3. Make Amesha Spentas toran (banner for door);
4. 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)
5. Dramatic play - pretend to be an Amesha Spenta



6. Games: Charades
7. My Amesha Spenta Pop Up Card
 - a. Use the images from the “Matching Activity”
 - b. Instructions for making a Pop-Up Card can be found on YouTube or the internet
Example: <https://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Pop-Up-Card>

Source:

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

Prepared by: Vehishta Kaikobad; Arnavaz Sethna, Tashan Mistree Byramji, Persis Driver

Edited by: Vehishta Kaikobad

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