
My Place in the World

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INTRODUCING

My Place in the World

My Place in the World is meant to help you answer the question of your role in the world. Specifically, this book asks you to think about morality and ethics, about what is right and wrong, and to consider the choices available to you about how to act and live in this world, among people who may or may not agree with you on important questions.

How *My Place in the World* Works

A number of features in *My Place in the World* will help you complete your journey through this resource successfully.

We begin each chapter with an opening page that contains the title of the chapter; the major headings within the chapter; a photograph(s) or illustration(s) representative of the content of the chapter; and a list of the major concepts you will have

had an opportunity to consider by the end of the chapter.

As you read through *My Place in the World*, you will find related figures and captions, notes on pronunciation, and helpful definitions of challenging words and concepts. The first time that a hard-to-say word appears you will find the pronunciation in parentheses right after the word. Similarly, the first time that a challenging word or concept is used, it appears in **boldface** type in the text and is defined in the margin. In case you later need to remind yourself how to pronounce a word or what a word means, check the Pronunciation Guide or Glossary at the end of this resource. An Index, which will help you find information within the resource quickly, also appears at the end of the resource.

The Pronunciation Key used in *My Place in the World* appears below. When you see the pronunciation of a challenging word in

Pronunciation Key

ay as in day
a as in cat
ah as in far
e as in met
ee as in feet

g as in golf
i or ih as in fit
(e)ye or _i_e or igh as
in bite
o as in hot

oh as in slow
ow as in cow
u or uh as in shut
oo as in boot

a chapter, the syllable to be emphasized is given in capitals (e.g., TOHR-ah).

Questions and activities appear throughout each chapter.



Checkpoints help you confirm your grasp of key facts and ideas.

Reflections

Activities

Reflections are individual activities, while Activities may involve several people. Both Activities and Reflections require that you go into more depth than the Checkpoints do. A few will send you back into parts of the chapter for detail. Others can be answered only by doing research and thinking beyond the content of the chapter.



Brain Freezes are designed to make you stop and pause for a moment to consider a question or a perspective that you might not have encountered before.

There are also questions or activities in a number of captions that accompany the photographs or illustrations.



For your interest, we have provided a number of Quick Bytes throughout the resource. In these sections, we sometimes direct you to the Nelson Web site—www.myplaceintheworld.nelson.com—where we have provided links that you can follow to find additional informa-

tion on the subject you are considering. At other times, we suggest you use a search engine to find more information about a person or a topic.

What You Will Explore in *My Place in the World*

Chapter 1, “What Are Ethics? What Is Fair?” asks you to think about what those terms—“ethics” and “fair”—mean, and how they apply to your life. In this chapter, you will consider what influences other individuals and the media have on our decisions and perceptions. You will encounter scenarios that ask you to decide what you think is ethical and fair in particular situations.

The second chapter, “Social Justice and Me,” moves from personal ethics to social justice, or how to live ethically in society. It asks about our responsibility to the people around us, whether they are in our own communities in Newfoundland and Labrador, or halfway around the world. This chapter also notes the role of sacred writings and religious communities as influences on our understandings of social justice.

In chapter 3, “Belonging and Me,” you are asked to reflect on where you belong. Most of us started in some kind of family. But to varying degrees, we also belong to communities, to teams, to groups of friends, to schools, and often to faith communities. “Belonging and Me” encourages you to think about how the communities to

which we belong are all connected—from the family most of us are born into, to the school, faith community, province, and nation we find ourselves in, and to the world itself.

Chapter 4 of *My Place in the World*, “Science and Religion: Friends or Enemies?,” asks us to think about how science and religion relate. Sometimes they have seemed to be working in opposition to each other. Other times, they seem to be answering the same questions in the same

way. We suggest here that they are not the enemies that some people sometimes think they are.

The last chapter, “Faith and Responsibility in the Global Village,” leads you back to questions of social justice. Specifically, it asks how the world today has become what some call a global village. It then asks what, if anything, needs to be improved in that village, and what role religion and spiritual beliefs might have in doing so.

Ideas to Keep in Mind as You Explore *My Place in the World*

You will find it helpful to keep the following ideas in mind as you work with this resource.

1. Whether you are part of a family that has strong religious or spiritual beliefs or not, you are influenced by religious and spiritual teachings and traditions. Religions and spiritual beliefs affect the cultures of the countries in which they are practised. In Canada, for example, many of our laws and customs have grown out of the teachings and traditions of the Jewish and Christian faiths. As well, religious and spiritual thought and belief have always had a huge impact on art, music, and literature—whether religious, classical, or popular—around the world.
2. When you read about the beliefs and teachings of the living faiths featured in this resource, you may think that all people of the same faith agree on all teachings and follow all traditions in the same way. That is not the case. No matter what their religion or spiritual tradition, people vary in the way that they understand and express their faith. Indeed, on occasion, differences of interpretation and practice within a religion or set of spiritual beliefs can almost seem greater than differences between religions or spiritual beliefs. The beliefs and traditions

of Aboriginal peoples, for example, are often different. Many of these beliefs and traditions are based on specific geography of an Aboriginal group, which is reflected in a dependence on the animal life key to their existence. The Caribou Spirit is more important for a migratory hunting band than it is for a band that depends largely upon the sea and its life. Given the reality of differences of belief within a single faith or spiritual tradition, when you read something like “Christians believe,” “Hindus believe,” or “Aboriginal peoples believe,” remember that some Christians and some Hindus, and some Aboriginal peoples may understand their faith or spiritual traditions differently.

3. The living faiths featured in *My Place in the World* are generally presented in terms of how they ought to be followed, not as they are necessarily actually practised by believers. You probably know without being told that human behaviour often falls short of the ideal. For example, it is easier to hear that you should love your neighbour than to do it. Followers of any faith or set of spiritual beliefs may behave in ways that do not live up to the standards set by their faith teachings.

Some people recite Qur'an, but it does not go down beyond their collarbones. It is beneficial only when it settles in the heart, and is rooted deeply in it.

ISLAM, HADITH

4. In *My Place in the World*, you will be introduced to writings of special importance and power to various living faiths. Bear in mind that all the sacred writings presented here were written first in languages other than English. The Bible, for example, was written originally in Hebrew (Hebrew Bible and Christian Old Testament) and Greek (Christian New Testament; some people believe that portions of the New Testament may have been written in Aramaic). The original languages cannot be translated exactly into any other language. When you read passages from sacred writings in English, remember that different translators may interpret the same passages in slightly different ways. Sometimes, these differences depend, in part, on when the translation was written. For example, the King James Version of the Christian Bible is hard for many people to understand. First published in 1611, in much the same period as William Shakespeare's work, it is partly a product of its time. In *My Place in the World*, all biblical

excerpts are taken from the New Revised Standard Version. All sacred writings are taken from respected translations.

5. *My Place in the World* uses a more neutral dating system than that based on recognizing Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, or promised saviour. Instead of B.C., which means “before Christ,” and A.D., which means *anno Domini*—“in the year of our Lord”—you will see B.C.E. and C.E. B.C.E. means “Before the Common Era” and C.E. means the “Common Era.” B.C.E. is equivalent to B.C., and C.E. is equivalent to A.D.
6. Depending on the translator, names and words translated from other languages into English may differ in spelling. Also, spellings sometimes change as people try to make the sound of the name or word match more closely that of the original. In *My Place in the World*, you will see these spellings: the Prophet Muhammad, Makkah (not Mecca), Qur’an (not Koran), Hanukah (not Hanukkah or Chanukah), Ka’ba, and Tanakh. We have used a capital letter when we refer to a specific god (God). We use a lower-cased “g” in general or plural references to gods, for example, gods and goddesses.

These “Ideas to Keep in Mind” are largely derived from *Worldviews: The Challenge of Choice* by Ken Badley (©1996 by Irwin Publishing Ltd.). Used with permission.

Our hope is that *My Place in the World* will help you understand your role in the world—and how you might live in that world.