

Worcestershire Agreed Syllabus 2025 sample long-term plan: Model 1

	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	Unit 6
FS2	F4 Being special: where do we belong?	F2 Why is Christmas special for Christians?	F1 Why is the word 'God' so important to Christians?	F3 Why is Easter special to Christians?	F5 What places are special and why?	F6 What times/stories are special and why?
Year 1	1.10 What does it mean to belong to a faith community?	1.1 What do Christians believe God is like?	1.7 Who is Jewish and how do they live?		1.2 Who do Christians say made the world?	1.9 How should we care for the world and for others, and why does it matter? (C, J, NR)
Year 2	1.6 Who is a Muslim and how do they live?	1.3 Why does Christmas matter to Christians?	1.6 Who is a Muslim and how do they live? Part 2.	1.5 Why does Easter matter to Christians?	1.4 What is the 'good news' Christians believe Jesus brings?	1.8 What makes some places sacred to believers? (C,M)
Year 3	L2.1 What do Christians learn from the Creation story? L2.2 What is it like for someone to follow God?		L2.9 How do festivals and worship show what matters to a Muslim?	L2.10 How do festivals and family life show what matters to Jewish people?	L2.4 What kind of world did Jesus want?	L2.12 How and why do people try to make the world a better place? (C, M/J, NR)
Year 4	L2.3 What is the 'Trinity' and why is it important for Christians?	L2.7 What do Hindus believe God is like?	L2.8 What does it mean to be Hindu in Britain today?	L2.5 Why do Christians call the day Jesus died 'Good Friday'?	L2.6 For Christians, when Jesus left, what was the impact of Pentecost?	L2.11 How and why do people mark the significant events of life? (C, H, NR)
Year 5	U2.1 What does it mean if Christians believe God is holy and loving?	U2.8 What does it mean to be a Muslim in Britain today?	U2.3 Why do Christians believe Jesus was the Messiah?	U2.9 Why is the Torah so important to Jewish people?	U2.4 Christians and how to live: 'What would Jesus do?'	U2.10 What matters most to Humanists and Christians? (C, M/J, NR)
Year 6	U2.2 Creation and science: conflicting or complementary?	U2.11 What does it mean to be a Humanist in Britain today? (NR)	U2.7 Why do Hindus want to be good?	U2.5 What do Christians believe Jesus did to 'save' people?	U2.6 For Christians, what kind of king is Jesus?	U2.12 How does faith help people when life gets hard?

Note: this model allows systematic religion units to lead into the thematic units, where pupils can make some comparisons between beliefs, at the end of each year. This model keeps the study of Christmas and Easter close to the appropriate time of year.

Programme of Study

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) describes the phase of a child's education from birth to the end of the Reception year at the age of 5. Religious education is statutory for all pupils registered on the school roll. The statutory requirement for religious education does not extend to nursery classes in maintained schools. RE forms a valuable part of the educational experience of children throughout the key stage. In the EYFS curriculum learning does not fit into boxes: play-based and child-centred approaches will encourage the learning to follow where the child's interest and curiosity leads.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)		Key Stage 1
Nursery	Reception	Year 1 and upwards
RE is non-statutory, but teachers may choose to incorporate RE material into children's activities.	RE is a compulsory part of the basic curriculum for all Reception-age pupils, and should be taught according to this agreed syllabus for RE.	RE is a compulsory part of the basic curriculum for all Key Stage 1 pupils, and should be taught according to this agreed syllabus for RE.
Early Learning Goals outline what pupils should achieve by the end of Reception year. The national curriculum is not taught.		The national curriculum is taught alongside religious education.
Some settings have children from both nursery and Reception in an EYFS Unit. Planning will need to take account of the needs and expectations of both age groups.		

The agreed syllabus for RE sets out experiences, opportunities and appropriate topics for children in the Foundation Stage. The suggestions made for the EYFS RE are good learning in themselves. These also connect to the EYFS seven areas of learning.

Planned teaching experiences will support children's learning and development needs, as identified through holistic assessment. Good Early Years teaching stems from children's own experience. Many practitioners will find ways to draw on the wealth of religious or spiritual experiences that some families may bring with them.

The EYFS statutory framework also outlines an expectation that practitioners reflect on the different ways in which children learn and the characteristics of effective learning:

- Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- Active learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.
- Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

What do children gain from of RE in this age group?

RE sits very firmly within the areas of personal, social and emotional development and understanding the world. This framework enables children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others, and to learn how to form positive and respectful relationships. They will do this through a balance of guided, planned teaching and pursuing their own learning within an enabling environment. They will begin to understand and value the differences of individuals and groups within their own immediate community. Children will have the opportunity to develop their emerging moral and cultural awareness.

RE in the Reception year

Non-statutory guidance for RE for all 4–5s in the Reception year

The approach outlined for nursery will also serve Reception class teachers, especially in the earlier months of the Reception year. In addition to this, the following pages are suggestions of questions, outcomes and content that will ensure good provision for RE in Reception.

The questions, outcomes and content below are non-statutory but should be read by all schools and settings to ensure that their provision is effective. For teaching to be high quality the questions, learning outcomes and content need to be taught together. It is not sufficient simply to use the questions suggested.

Religions and worldviews

In Reception class, children should encounter Christianity and other religious and non-religious worldviews as part of their growing sense of self, their own community and their place within it.

Three units below focus on Christianity, and the others include opportunities to encounter Christians, Hindus, Jews and Muslims, as well as non-religious responses and ways of living.

Six units are provided. Schools should teach **at least four** of these.

F1 Why is the word 'God' so important to Christians?

F2 Why is Christmas special for Christians?

F3 Why is Easter special for Christians?

F4 Being special: where do we belong?

F5 Which places are special and why?

F6 Which stories are special and why?

Staggered entry: Clearly, for most children, entry to school will be staggered. This means that there needs to be flexibility about when units are done; so, for example, a unit supports around six hours of RE and can be fitted in to suit the needs of the children, rather than timetabled rigidly into each half-term.

Note: Unit F4 (*Being special: where do we belong?*) is suggested as a good introductory section to use in the first term or two. For all schools, this is a time of integrating the children into the new school environment. The themes of belonging and community are likely to be important elements of provision at this time, and practitioners should take the opportunity to include RE where appropriate. (See Guidance p. 147 for a sample long-term plan to see where these units might fit during a school year.)

Unit F1: Why is the word 'God' special to Christians?

The principal aim of religious education is to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion and worldviews, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living.

Suggested questions you could explore:	Learning outcomes: Plan learning experiences that enable children to ...	Suggested content: Teachers can select content from this column to help pupils achieve the learning outcomes in column 2. Teachers can use different content as appropriate. <i>'Making connections' is woven through this unit: as you explore the ideas and stories with children, talk about how they affect the way people live, making connections with the children's own experiences.</i>
What does the word 'God' mean? Which people believe in God? Which people believe God is the Creator of everything? What is amazing about the world? What do Christians say about God as Creator? What is the story that Christians and Jews use to think about the Creator? What do Christians and other people (including non-religious) think about the world and how we should treat it?	• Talk about things they find interesting, puzzling or wonderful and also about their own experiences and feelings about the world • Retell stories, talking about what they say about the world, God, human beings • Think about the wonders of the natural world, expressing ideas and feelings • Say how and when Christians like to thank their Creator • Talk about what people do to mess up the world and what they do to look after it. Colour key: Making sense Understanding impact Making connections	One way into this unit might be to spend some time in the outside play area in various weathers, to experience the world as a way into talking about it. • Display a large picture of the globe and show some pictures of animals from around the world (e.g. elephant, camel, kangaroo, sheep, blue whale, tuna, albatross). Help children learn the names and talk about where they can be found in the world. Talk about beautiful things in nature. Add the sun and moon to the display. Draw/paint/collage some pictures of their favourite creatures. Talk about things they find interesting, puzzling and wonderful about the world. • Introduce the idea that quite a few people around the world think that the whole world was created by God. Read the creation story from a children's version of the Bible. Get children to point out which parts of the world were made on which day in the story, including animals and humans. Give children a chance to put some of the display pictures in the order of the story as they talk. Talk about the idea of a Creator. Talk about what is different about the creations they made (their paintings, etc.) and the idea Christians, Jews and Muslims have about God as Creator: they believe God created life. Talk about how special the word 'God' is for Christians (and others) – because they believe he is the Creator. • Christians like to praise the Creator: talk about why they might like to do this. See if children have any ideas about what Christians might say to God in their prayers – thanking God for the world and for life. Show some clips of Christians singing praising songs (e.g. www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p044h89p) in church and outside. Talk about why they do it, and what they are saying. • Connect with idea of harvest celebrations as a way Christians thank their Creator. Find out what happens at a harvest service or take part in one, if the timing of this unit is right. Sing some harvest songs (e.g. Out of the Ark Music's 'Combined Harvest' songs, Fischy Music, iSingPOP). Talk about how Christians like to bring food to the service, and then to share it with people who need it. • Make links between how Christians think God is amazing, and so are careful with how they use his name; and how they think the world is amazing, so try to treat it well, and all creatures too. Decide as a class if children also think the world is amazing, whether or not they believe in God. Decide some things that children could do to treat the world and other people well. Try and do those things!

These outcomes and activities are abridged from *Understanding Christianity*, published by RE Today © 2016. Used by permission.

Unit F2: Why is Christmas special for Christians?

The principal aim of religious education is to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion and worldviews, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living.

Suggested questions you could explore:	Learning outcomes: Plan learning experiences that enable children to ...	Suggested content: Teachers can select content from this column to help pupils achieve the learning outcomes in column 2. Teachers can use different content as appropriate. <i>'Making connections' is woven through this unit: as you explore the ideas and stories with children, talk about how they affect the way people live, making connections with the children's own experiences.</i>
What special stories about Jesus are in the Bible? Why do Christians perform Nativity plays at Christmas? Why do Christians celebrate Jesus' birthday? What special things do Christians do at Christmas to share God's love? What makes every single person unique and precious? How does the Christmas story tell Christians they are precious to God?	• Talk about people who are special to them • Say what makes their family and friends special to them • Recall simply what happens at a traditional Christian festival (Christmas) • Begin to recognise the word 'incarnation' as describing the belief that God came to Earth as Jesus • Retell religious stories, making connections with personal experiences. Colour key: Making sense Understanding impact Making connections	A way into this section could be to ask children to use special bits and pieces to make a lovely picture for a special person, talk about the person they have created it for and why they are special; then take it and give it to them. • Show baby photos of known adults to the children. Can they match them to the adult photo? • Use a story sack to introduce a crib scene, beginning with the three figures, Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus, and including shepherds, wise men, donkey, angels, etc. Discuss the children's knowledge about the role of each key figure as it appears, as the crib scene grows. Place the figures in a line of value, starting with the figure that the children think is the most important to the least important. Read the story of Christmas from a children's Bible, matching the figures as you read. Redo the value line, including what Christians might say – most would say Jesus is the most important: that God came to Earth as Jesus (the term for this is incarnation). Act out the story. Set up a Bethlehem stable filled with costumes and/or props for the children to re-enact the story. • A parcel arrives in the classroom. Discover the contents with the children: birthday party props such as cake, candles, a banner, etc. Talk about children's own experiences of birthdays. Link to Jesus' birthday and Christmas celebrations with the next suggestion: • Bring out a Christmas box containing traditional Christmas artefacts, such as Nativity scene, cards, decorations, Father Christmas, special food, etc. Share some traditional carols with the children and discuss where and why Christians sing carols. • Talk about Christmas gifts and what the children would like. Connect with the story of the wise men who gave gifts to Jesus. Reinforce the most important gift to Christians would be Jesus. Mime passing a precious gift around a circle; discuss what children think it is. Link to how precious the Bible is to Christians. Christians believe God demonstrated his love for all people by sending Jesus to Earth – they say that shows how precious people are to God. • Provide follow-up activities to respond to the story as part of your continuous provision, e.g. playdough, Nativity figures, Christmas cards and songs, etc. • Talk about how it is not only Christians who celebrate Christmas! Many people from non-religious homes also celebrate. Talk about how many children in your class put up decorations, have a Christmas tree, give presents. The Christian celebration is much wider now, and thinking of other people, being kind, giving gifts – clearly these are values that are not limited to Christian homes and families.

These outcomes and activities are abridged from *Understanding Christianity (Unit F2: Why do Christians perform nativity plays at Christmas?)*, published by RE Today © 2016. Used by permission.

Unit F3: Why is Easter special for Christians?

The principal aim of religious education is to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion and worldviews, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living.

Suggested questions you could explore:	Learning outcomes: Plan learning experiences that enable children to ...	Suggested content: Teachers can select content from this column to help pupils achieve the learning outcomes in column 2. Teachers can use different content as appropriate. <i>'Making connections' is woven through this unit: as you explore the ideas and stories with children, talk about how they affect the way people live, making connections with the children's own experiences.</i>
What happens at the end of winter and the beginning of spring? How do 'dead' plants and trees come alive again? What do Christians believe happened to Jesus? Why do Christians think this is such an important story? What do Christians do at Easter? Why do we have Easter eggs?	- Recognise and retell stories connected with celebration of Easter - Say why Easter is a special time for Christians - Talk about ideas of new life in nature - Recognise some symbols Christians use during Holy Week, e.g. palm leaves, cross, eggs, etc., and make connections with signs of new life in nature - Talk about some ways Christians remember these stories at Easter. Colour key: Making sense Understanding impact Making connections	A way into this unit could be to bring some crocus or daffodil bulbs and tree buds into the classroom early in the term and keep an eye on how they grow over the weeks. - Recall any stories children have heard about Jesus in collective worship/assembly or in RE lessons. - Unpack a bag containing items related to Palm Sunday (e.g. Bible or storybook of Palm Sunday, donkey mask, white cloth or robe, cut-out palm leaves, flags, ribbons, percussion, the word 'Hosanna'). Ask children what they think they are for. - Tell the story of Palm Sunday. You could act it out, laying palm leaf cut-outs on the floor, etc., helping children to remember the story. Point out that people thought Jesus was going to come as a king and rescue them from the Romans – they wanted to be saved. Show some pictures of Palm Sunday celebrations (search 'Palm Sunday church'), and find out about how Christians celebrate it today. - Look at a palm cross – compare with the palm leaves from Palm Sunday. Compare with cross on hot cross buns. Talk about how the cross reminds Christians that the Bible says Jesus died on a cross, and then was buried in a cave tomb. Use a Story Bible or video clip (e.g. Channel 4's animated Bible stories) to tell the story. Use images and story cubes to get children to remember what happens in the story. (Note that with young children it is better not to focus too much on the death of Jesus, but to move on to Christian belief in resurrection.) - Create an Easter garden in the classroom (there are plenty of examples online) asking children what needs to be included – don't forget the cross. Help children to learn that most Christians believe Jesus did not stay dead, but came to life again. That's why Easter is a happy festival for Christians. It is also why eggs are linked to Easter – symbols of new life. Connect with the idea of new life by looking at the buds and bulbs growing in your classroom and outside. Why not do an Easter egg hunt and get children to tell each other why eggs are part of Easter celebrations? - Take photos of children's faces showing how Jesus' followers might feel at different stages of the story, and get them to put the faces alongside a timeline of photos from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday. Watch the CBeebies 'Let's Celebrate Easter' clips and make a collage cross. - Talk to someone who celebrates Easter to find out what parts of the celebration are most special to them. - Talk about how Easter is not only celebrated by Christians. Schools have Easter holidays, of course. Find out how many children will have Easter eggs, or play Easter egg hunts, or eat hot cross buns, or have a special meal with their family, getting together with relatives; or how many have seen images like eggs, rabbits, flowers etc to indicate ideas of spring and new life. You might see if children think Christmas is more important for non-religious people than Easter is.

These outcomes and activities are abridged from *Understanding Christianity (Unit F3: Why do Christians put a cross in an Easter garden?)*, published by RE Today © 2016. Used by permission.

Unit F4: Being special: where do we belong?

The principal aim of religious education is to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion and worldviews, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living.

Suggested questions you could explore:	Learning outcomes: Plan learning experiences that enable children to ...	Suggested content: Teachers can select content from this column to help pupils achieve the learning outcomes in column 2. Teachers can use different content as appropriate. <i>'Making connections' is woven through this unit: as you explore the ideas and stories with children, talk about how they affect the way people live, making connections with the children's own experiences.</i>
How do we show respect for one another? How do we show love/how do I know I am loved? Who do you care about? How do we show care/how do I know I am cared for? How do you know what people are feeling? How do we show people they are welcome? What things can we do better together rather than on our own? Where do you belong? How do you know you belong? What makes us feel special about being welcomed into a group of people?	• Retell religious stories making connections with personal experiences • Share and record occasions when things have happened in their lives that made them feel special • Recall simply what happens at a traditional Christian infant baptism and dedication • Recall simply what happens when a baby is welcomed into a religion other than Christianity. <i>Colour key:</i> Making sense Understanding impact Making connections	One way of introducing this question is to ask a new mum to bring a baby into the class and talk about how the baby was welcomed into their family. • Talk about the idea that each person is unique and valuable. Talk about occasions when things have happened in their lives that made them feel special, from everyday events (a hug from mum/dad/carer/friend) and special events (birthdays). • Introduce the idea that religions teach that each person is unique and valuable too, for example by considering religious beliefs about God loving each person. Explore the Jewish and Christian ideas that God loves people even from before they are born (Psalm 139), and their names are written on the palm of God's hand (Isaiah 49:16). Children could draw around their hands, write their names on the palm and decorate. Also reflect on Christian beliefs about Jesus believing children to be very special. Tell the story of Jesus wanting to see the children even though the disciples tried stopping them (Mark 10:13–16). • Explain how this belief that God loves children is shown in Christianity through infant baptism and dedication. • Consider signs and symbols used in the welcoming of children into the faith community e.g. water (pure and clean), baptismal candle. Look at photos, handle artefacts (robes, cards, etc.); use role play. • Talk about how children are welcomed into another faith or belief community e.g. the Islamic <i>Aqiqah</i> ceremony, whispering of <i>adhan</i> and cutting of hair; compare how non-religious families welcome new babies; some non-religious people might hold a Humanist naming ceremony. • Consider ways of showing that people are special from other religions e.g. Hinduism: stories about Hindus celebrating Raksha Bandhan – which celebrates the special bond between brothers and sisters. A sister ties a band (or <i>rakhi</i>) of gold and red threads around the right hand of her brother.

Unit F5: Which places are special and why?

The principal aim of religious education is to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion and worldviews, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living.

Suggested questions you could explore:	Learning outcomes: Plan learning experiences that enable children to ...	Suggested content: Teachers can select content from this column to help pupils achieve the learning outcomes in column 2. Teachers can use different content as appropriate. <i>'Making connections' is woven through this unit: as you explore the ideas and stories with children, talk about how they affect the way people live, making connections with the children's own experiences.</i>
Where do you feel safe? Why? Where do you feel happy? Why? Where is special to me? Where is a special place for believers to go? What makes this place special?	• Talk about somewhere that is special to themselves, saying why • Recognise that some religious people have places which have special meaning for them • Talk about the things that are special and valued in a place of worship • Begin to recognise that for Christians, Muslims or Jews, these special things link to beliefs about God • Get to know and use appropriate words to talk about their thoughts and feelings when visiting a church • Express a personal response to the natural world. <i>Colour key:</i> Making sense Understanding impact Making connections	One way of introducing this question is to discuss places that are important to children, for example places to be happy, to have fun, to be quiet or to feel safe. When do they go to these places and what is it like being there? Use models to help children engage in small world play, to talk about what happens in a library, hospital, football ground etc., and why. • Invite visitors to talk about/show pictures of places that are spiritually significant to them and say why they are special (e.g. special holiday destinations, or a childhood home, or a place where something memorable happened such as a concert, or the local park where they take children to meet together and play. This should build learning towards understanding special places for religious people). Children share and record their own special places in a variety of ways, drawing on all their senses, in a way that is meaningful to them. • Use some pictures (e.g. a beach, a trampoline, a bedroom) to help children talk about why some places are special, what makes them significant and to whom. Talk about when people like to go there and what they like to do there. • Consider a church building as a special place for Christians and/or a mosque as a special place for Muslims, where they worship God. Look at some pictures of the features (e.g. church: font, cross, candle, Bible; mosque: washing area, prayer hall, prayer mats, minaret). Talk about what makes this a place of worship. Imagine what it would be like to be there. Find out what people do there. Ask children to choose the most interesting picture(s) and collect children's questions about the image(s). You might get them to create a small world model of something they find in a place of worship, such as a cross or a pulpit. • Consider a place of worship for members of another faith e.g. synagogue or temple. Find out what happens there. Show some pictures of all these different special places and help children to sort them into the right faiths/beliefs: a simple matching exercise using symbols of each faith, and putting two or three photos under each. • Visit a local church or other place of worship. Prepare lots of questions to ask; think about which parts of the building make them feel safe, happy, sad, special. Find out which parts are important for Christians/believers and why. • Create a special place in the inside/outside area or wider school grounds: a space for quiet reflection. Talk about how to use this well, so that everyone can enjoy it. • Go for a nature walk, handle and explore natural objects that inspire awe and wonder; talk about how special our world is, and about looking after it. Put some of their ideas into practice, e.g. planting flowers, recycling, etc. <i>Note how appreciating the world is important in the lives of people with religious and non-religious worldviews, for example, the Malvern Hills.</i>

Unit F6: Which stories are special and why?

The principal aim of religious education is to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion and worldviews, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living.

Suggested questions you could explore:	Learning outcomes: Plan learning experiences that enable pupils to ...	Suggested content: Teachers can select content from this column to help pupils achieve the learning outcomes in column 2. Teachers can use different content as appropriate. <i>'Making sense' and 'Understanding the impact' are woven through this unit: as you explore the stories with children, talk about what they teach people about how to live:</i>
What is your favourite story? What do you like about it, and why? What stories do you know about Jesus? What do you think Jesus was (is) like? Do you know any Bible stories? What stories do you know that are special to Christians (or other faiths)? Who are the stories about? What happens in the story? Does the story tell you about God? What do you learn? What stories do you know that tell you how you should behave towards other people? What are the similarities and differences between different people's special stories?	• Talk about some religious stories • Recognise some religious words, e.g. about God • Identify some of their own feelings in the stories they hear • Identify a sacred text e.g. Bible, Torah • Talk about some of the things these stories teach believers (for example, what Jesus teaches about being friends with the friendless in the story of Zacchaeus; what Jesus' story about the ten lepers teaches about saying 'thank you', and why it is good to thank and be thanked; what the Chanukah story teaches Jews about standing up for what is right), etc. Colour key: Making sense Understanding impact Making connections	One way of introducing this question is to ask children to bring favourite books and stories from home, choose the favourite story in the class, or the teacher could share her favourite childhood story and explain why she liked it so much. • Explore stories pupils like, retelling stories to others and sharing features of the story they like. Explore stories suggested below through play, role play, freeze-framing, model-making, puppets and shadow puppets, art, dance, music, etc. • Talk about the Bible being the holy book for Christians that helps them to understand more about God and people. Look at a range of children's Bibles to see how they are similar/different. Share a Bible story from a suitable children's Bible, e.g. Butterworth and Inkpen series; SPCK's <i>The Big Bible Storybook</i>; Archbishop Desmond Tutu's <i>Children of God Storybook Bible</i>. Hear and explore some stories from different religious and non-religious worldviews: choose from the following: • Jews and Christians share these stories (the Jewish scriptures are included in what Christians call the 'Old Testament'): e.g. David the Shepherd Boy (1 Samuel 17) and the story of Ruth (book of Ruth in the Bible). • Jews read the story of <i>Chanukah</i> (found in the books of Maccabees, not included in the Christian Old Testament) not included in the Protestant Bible but Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christians include these in their scriptures) • Christians use stories Jesus told and stories from the life of Jesus: e.g. Jesus as friend to the friendless (Zacchaeus, Luke 19); saying 'thank you' (Ten Lepers, Luke 17:11–19); etc. • Muslims use stories about the Prophet Muhammad* e.g. Prophet Muhammad and the night of power, Muhammad and the cats, Muhammad and the boy who threw stones at trees, Bilal the first muezzin. • Hindus enjoy the story of Rama and Sita; the story of Ganesha; stories about Krishna; • Non-religious people might use lots of different stories that have a moral or a lesson, or that help them appreciate the world and other people, e.g. Loren Eiseley's <i>The Starfish</i>; the story of the hummingbird in Wangari Maathai's re-telling; the fables of Pablo Pedro Sacristan. Reinforce this learning through follow-up activities: • Read and share the books in own time, on own or with friends. • Role-play some of the stories using costumes and props.

*Note: Many Muslims say the words 'peace be upon him' after saying the name of the Prophet Muhammad. This is sometimes abbreviated to 'pbuh' when written down.

excellent progress or falling behind. Summative assessment is important, but it should take second place to what is going on in the classroom between pupil and teacher.

Teachers and pupils should not assume that summative assessment will always indicate upward progress, e.g., showing that a pupil has moved up a grade or step, etc. Consider the effect of pupils encountering a completely new unit, encountering knowledge about Hindu ways of living for the first time, at the age of 8 or 9. It would be inappropriate to expect the same depth of learning in this as we do in an aspect of Christianity, where learning may have been built up over several years. At the very least, unfamiliar vocabulary may mean learning is slower. Conversely, it may also be the case that a pupil studying their own religion or worldview can demonstrate learning that exceeds expectations, and which is not typical of what they know, understand or can do in relation to other elements of the syllabus.

It is clear, therefore, that when creating a summative assessment system, careful thought needs to be given as to what is being assessed and how often. One important point to consider when planning summative assessment is to have a realistic expectation of how much time is being spent on assessment. In most schools, RE will have no more than one fifth of the curriculum time of, say, English, and should only require a commensurate amount of time for summative assessment.

When planning for assessment in RE, key questions to consider are:

- How often is summative assessment really required?
- How will the resulting information be used?
- With whom is it shared? Is it meaningful to them?
- Is it worth the time?

Assessment in primary RE

The purpose of assessment in primary RE is to ensure that pupils improve what they know, understand and can do regarding the different aspects of RE they are studying. There are different ways of achieving this depending on whether you are teaching 5- or 9-year-olds. Whatever strategies are being employed it is the formative strategies, those that go on in the classroom, that are of most importance.

There is a danger that when making a judgement on a pupil's progress in RE, teachers may be unsure how to judge pupils and have ended up making judgements based on a pupil's ability in, say, English or history. In order to prevent this, teachers need to be confident in what needs to be learnt in a unit. They need to be informally and continually using lots of formative assessment

strategies as part of everyday teaching and learning. Putting information into a summative assessment system should not then be an issue. The teacher can use their knowledge of the pupils and their professional judgement to record how pupils are achieving, as in the example below.

An example of a summative model in primary RE

In this example, the teacher has produced a useful document that succinctly and effectively conveys summative information about how their class has responded to a unit from this syllabus. This will be a useful starting point for discussion with the subject leader, perhaps making comparisons with other groups of learners undertaking the same unit.

With this overview, groups of learners within the class can be identified, e.g. by gender, pupil premium, and so on, and strategies can be put in place to deal with attainment gaps. Review notes could include reflection on what specific areas of learning need to be targeted in the next unit, and how learners who have not met the expected outcomes might be supported.

Year 1 Unit 1.5	Term Spring 2 Strand: Salvation	
Key question: Why does Easter matter to Christians? Pupils can: • Recognise that Incarnation and Salvation are part of a 'big story' of the Bible. • Retell stories connected with Easter and Holy week with links to Salvation (Jesus rescuing people). • Ask questions about whether the story of Easter has anything to say to them about sadness, hope or heaven, exploring different ideas. • Give examples how Christians show their beliefs about Jesus' death and resurrection in church worship at Easter.		
Children: ☒	SEN	
Emerging	Expected	Exceeding
Jonta	Oliver Dylan Nehayah Seb Morgan Marley Arian Aanya Frankie Maisie Noah Iraaya Anni Saarah Kemaya Garcia	Farrah Faslean G Olivia Anaya Beatrice Hasan Harrison Kia Neha
43%	62%	35%
Unit review notes:		

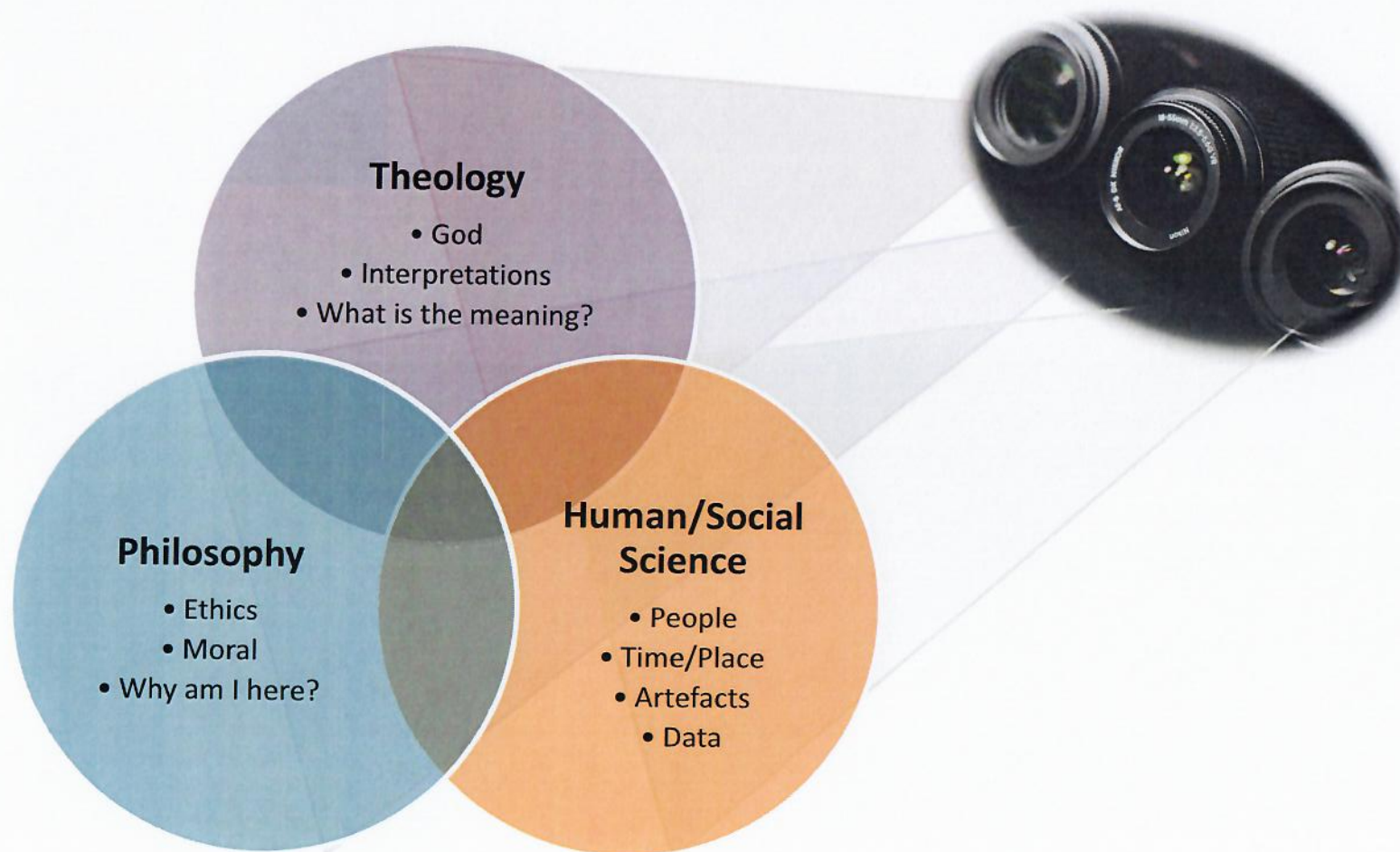


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Multi-Disciplinary Approach

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WORCESTER



Wisdom, Hope, Community, Dignity



Questions in Theology

There are questions we can ask that help us understand that stories, texts and sources of authority...

are important to a group or individual.	have particular meanings and significance.	are written in context which might affect its meaning.	are interpreted differently due to a readers own worldview and personal experience.
- Where does this story come from? - Is this story important to me? (If not, why not?) - Is this story or text important to people? If so, to whom? - Why is it important to them? - Is this text a source of authority for anyone? If so, how is it used? - Is its authority widely acknowledged (within and beyond the worldview)? - Do some people question its authority? If so, why?	- What is the story about? - Who is this story about? - What happens in this story? - Why is this important? - How can it help us understand the 'hidden meaning' of the story? - What is this text / source of authority about? - Who is it significant to? Why is it significant to them? - How is this source of authority used? - Has the way in which it is used or interpreted changed over time? - Is it used differently in differently contexts and if so, why? - How (if at all) does it relate to other sources of authority within this worldview?	- Who told this story? - Who wrote this text? - When did they tell/write it? - Who did they tell it to/write it for? - Why did they tell/write it – what difference did they think it would make? - What type of text is this? - Is it a particular genre of writing? - Where/when/why was this written? - Who was/is the intended audience? - What can we say about the origin of this source of authority? - Who was/is the intended audience? - Does it matter whether we know this or not?	- What does this story tell me? - Does everyone draw the same meaning from this text? If not, why not? - How might context affect how someone understands the meaning of the text? - What genre is this source of authority? - How might this affect the way in which it is read/interpreted?



Questions in Human/Social Science

There are questions we can ask that help us to understand how people live...

when looking at objects, places, photographs, videos, surveys, case studies, etc.

- What is this?
- How is this used?
- Who uses this?
- Where might I find this?
- When is this used?
- What is happening here?
- When is this? How do I know

through examining their context, including time, place, culture and gender.

- Who does this? How do they do it?
- Why do they do it like this?
- Is this done the same way today as it was in the past?
- Is it done the same way in one place as in another?
- Is this done the same way by one person as another?
- What does this tell me about how context affects this activity? Who uses this thing?
- Do different people use this same thing? How is this thing used?
- Does everyone use this thing in the same way? If not, why not?
- Is this thing used the same way today as it was in the past?
- Is this thing used the same way in one place as in another?
- Is this thing used the same way by one person as another?
- What does this tell me about how context affects this thing?
- What happens here?
- Would it happen the same or differently somewhere else? Why?

by examining the origin of sources.

- Where is this information from?
- Does this matter?
- How might this make a difference to the way I understand it?
- How else can we find out about this?

by examining how our own worldviews and personal experiences affect the way we interpret sources.

- How might someone's worldview affect the way in which they analyse this information?
- How might my worldview affect the way in which I analyse this information?



Questions in Philosophy

There are questions we can ask that help us understand more about how people think or reason...

about themselves, others and the world around them, including their understanding of 'good' and 'bad' or 'right' and 'wrong'.

- What questions do I have about this thing?
- What do I think about this?
- What questions could I ask about this?
- What are good questions to ask?
- What are bad questions to ask? How do we know?
- How might asking questions help us to know more and to think more deeply?
- How does this way of thinking about [x] tell us more about this person's understanding of 'right' and 'wrong'?

in different ways about themselves, others and the world in different ways, including their understanding of 'good' and 'bad' or 'right' and 'wrong'.

- What questions do I have about this?
- What questions do others ask about this?
- Do we all have the same questions? Why do I think this?
- Do I think the same thing as others? (If not, why not?)
- How does this person think about what it means to live a 'good' life?
- Why do they think this? What does this tell us about what they understand 'good' (and 'bad') to be?
- How might my/someone's worldview impact on the way I/they think about this?
- Based on what we have learned about [x], how might this person justify that doing this is the right / wrong thing to do?

about moral and ethical issues in reliable.

- How do we know what we know?
- What evidence do we / I have?
- Can I give a reason why I think what I think?
- Is this/your argument/position coherent/reliable?
- Does this make sense? How do we know? Is this a well-structured argument?

and the importance of considering how different people articulate their understanding of 'validity'.

- Is this a valid argument/position?
- How do you know?
- What evidence is there to support this?
- What different types of evidence might there be?
- Are all types of evidence equally valid? Why/why not?



F1 Why is the word 'God' special to Christians?

The Creation Story...

Being Theologians

What is Faith/RE?
 What is the creation story about?
 Where does this story come from?
 What is The Bible and who is it important to?
 Who is this story about?
 What happens in this story?
 Who is this story important to?
 How does the story help Christians understand God?

What/Who is God?
 What does the word 'God' mean?
 Which people believe in God?

What do Christians and other people, including those that are non-religious, think about the world and how we should treat it?

Do you know any songs about God?
 Why do people like to sing to their God/gods?
 How do Christians talk to God?
 Why is prayer important to Christians and people of other faiths?

Being Human / Social Scientists

How does the creation story help promote respect for the environment?
 How can I help look after the planet?
 What is amazing/special about the world?
 What questions can I ask a visitor about the creation story / the world?

Being Philosophers

Who do you think made the world and everything in it?
 What do I think about the story of creation?
 Does everyone believe the creation story? (God vs science)
 What questions could I ask about the creation / the world?
 Why do you think people say "thank you" to God?
 What makes the world special?

F2 Why is Christmas special to Christians?

Being Theologians

Who is Jesus?
 What special stories about Jesus are in The Bible?
 Where is the Christmas story in The Bible?
 What happened in the Christmas story?
 Why do Christians perform nativity plays at Christmas?
 Why do Christians celebrate Jesus's birthday?
 What special things do Christians do at Christmas to share God's love?
 Which Christmas decorations represent Christian belief?
 What are symbols of Christmas and why do we have them?
 Do all faiths, and those of no-faith celebrate Christmas?

Being Human / Social Scientists

What special things do you do at Christmas and why?
 Does everyone celebrate Christmas?
 Does everyone have Christmas decorations?
 How does the story make me feel?
 Where are babies born today? Are they all born in hospital?
 What is a king?

Being Philosophers

How would you feel if you did not receive presents this year?
 What would be the best present that you could give or be given?
 What do you think makes a place special, like the stable where Jesus was born?

F3 Why is Easter special to Christians?

Being Theologians

What special stories about Jesus are in The Bible?
 What do Christians believe happened to Jesus at Easter?
 Why do Christians think that this is such an important story?
 Where is the Easter story in The Bible?
 What happened on Palm Sunday?
 What happened on Good Friday? Why was it good?
 What happened on Easter Sunday?
 What do Christians do at Easter?
 What are symbols of Easter and why do we have them?
 Do all faiths and those of no faith celebrate Easter?

Being Human / Social Scientists

What happens in Spring? (New life – Spring walk)
 What special things do you do at Easter?
 Do you have Easter decorations?
 Does everyone celebrate Easter?
 What other celebrations might happen in Spring?
 How does the story make me feel?

Being Philosophers

Why doesn't everyone come back to life?
 Why do you think Jesus wanted to help people?
 Should we always help people?

F4 Being Special: where do we belong?

Being Theologians

What is baptism?
 Why is baptism important to Christians?
 How do different faith groups welcome children into their faith?
 What signs and symbols are used to welcome children into faith communities?

Being Human / Social Scientists

What is respect?
 What is friendship?
 How does being a good friend make you feel?
 How do we show respect for one another?
 How do we show love?
 How do I know that I am loved?
 How do we show our friends and family that we care for and love them?
 How do we show people they are welcome?
 What things can we do better as a team rather than on our own?
 Where do you belong?
 How do you know you belong?
 What makes us feel special about being welcomed into a group of people?

Being Philosophers

What is love?
 Should we love everyone?
 Are we all unique? What makes you, you?
 Why do people need friends?

F5 Which places are special and why?

Being Theologians

Where is the special place for Christians to go?

Why is this place special?

Where is the special place for Muslims to go?

What makes this place special?

Where is the special place for Jewish people to go?

What makes this place special?

What questions would you like to ask about the (insert special place name)?

What signs and symbols are used in (insert special place name)? (links with F2,3&4)

What does sacred mean?

What makes these places sacred?

Being Human / Social Scientists

Where is special for you?

What makes this place special to you?

Do you go to any special places?

Where do you feel safe and why?

Where do you feel happy and why?

Can you make a place that is special to you? (Links with F1)

What would you put in it and why?

Being Philosophers

Is it the place or the people that makes a place special?

Can we make anywhere special?

F6 Which stories are special and why?

Being Theologians

What stories do you know about Jesus?
 What was Jesus like?
 Which book has the special stories about Jesus in it?
 Do you know any Bible stories?
 What stories are special to Christians?
 Can you remember a Bible story that made you feel... happy, sad, excited, scared?

What stories are special to people of other faiths? (Who were they about? What happened to them? and What do they tell you about their faith/god?)
 Are these special stories written down in a special place?
 What can we learn from the stories?
 Are there any similarities and differences between the faith stories we have shared?

Being Human / Social Scientists

What is your favourite story?
 What do you like about your favourite story? Why is it special to you? (links to F5)
 How did your special story make you feel?

Can stories mean different things to different people?
 Can you remember a story that made you feel... happy, sad, excited, scared?
 What stories do you know that tell us how we should behave towards other people?

Being Philosophers

What makes a story special?
 Why do people like stories?
 Does everyone like stories?

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The Old Testament

Genesis 1 – Creation Story

Genesis is attributed to the author Moses, who would have written down the text many years after the events took place. Many stories in the Old Testament, including the Creation Story, were told around campfires. Telling stories was a way to keep traditions alive. Although opinions vary, the most widely held belief is that Genesis was formally written down somewhere between 1500-1290 BCE.

Looking at the structure of Genesis 1, we can see repeated words and phrases in particular places, such as, the beginnings of paragraphs. This, along with a feeling of rhythm and metre, suggests that Genesis was written in a poetic style and therefore many scholars argue that Genesis 1 is not meant to be a literal account of 7 days of creation, but rather a metaphor explaining what God did. However, some Christians dispute this and maintain that Genesis is a literal retelling of God creating the heavens and the Earth.

Whether we want to explore an understanding of 7 actual days, or 7 periods of time, one key thing to understand is that there were 7 creation 'activities' or 'events'. In Hebrew writing, 7 is important as it is a number that signifies completeness. Throughout Hebrew writing, 7, and multiples of 7, is used to show a perfect order or that something is complete.

Another important aspect to notice in Genesis 1 is that everything that is created is considered 'good'. Through this, Christians understand that everything that God has created is good, and he is only capable of creating good things. Notice how humans are said to be 'very good', demonstrating an important relationship between man and God. Interestingly, when God creates man in Genesis 1:26, we see the phrase 'Let us make mankind in our own image'. Many Christians understand the use of the plural to mean a few things. Firstly, it demonstrates an importance of relationship; God wants to be in relationship with man. Secondly, if man is created in the image of God, then when they look at people it's like looking at God. This should inspire Christians to treat people well. And thirdly, we see the first glimpse of the Trinity. When God says 'let us' and 'our image' he is referring to the three parts of the Trinity and all parts were involved at creation.

There may be something else to consider with the story of Creation. Some Christians have argued that the point of the story is not that God has created 'heaven and earth' as such. The Hebrew word for 'heaven' literally means skies, and the Hebrew word of 'earth' literally means 'land'. So, this is not about creating the universe but rather organising the skies and the land. Remember Genesis 1:2 states that the world was 'without form', and what follows is an explanation of how God 'formed' everything. This idea supports many Christians in having a view that science and religion can be two sides of the same coin rather than opposing views.

Genesis 2:1-3 – God Rests

In the beginning of Genesis 2, we see God resting on the final day of creation. By resting on the 7th day, God is again creating a perfect order to life - 6 days of labour, 1 day of rest. This is something that continues as part of the 10 Commandments - "Keep the Sabbath day holy".

As part of Genesis 2 we also see God saying that the 7th day is holy. In other words, it is 'set apart', made separate from all the other days. God makes it holy or 'separate' in order for the time to be spent with him. Again, this is made clear in the 10 Commandments.

For many Christians this story is the starting point of the important road to Easter. It is significant because it helps Christians to understand what kind of king Jesus was: one who brought peace to a troubled world. Palm Sunday is often celebrated by people processing in the streets and waving palm branches. In some cultures, this is accompanied by drums, and loud music.

The Gospel of Mark

Mark's gospel tells the events surrounding Jesus' life on earth and his ministry. It is thought to have been written between 50-70 CE, a few years after Jesus' death. Traditionally, Mark is thought to be one of Jesus' followers, but he wasn't one of the first 12 disciples. While other gospel writers write through a Jewish lens, Mark tends to write more through a Roman lens. Throughout his writing Mark is trying to emphasise the fact that Jesus is the Son of God.

Mark 1:40-44 – Man with Leprosy

There are a number of layers to this story, as there often are with stories about Jesus healing people. Lepers were social outcasts. They were deemed as being unclean, both physically and spiritually, which meant that nobody wanted to go near them due to risks, under Jewish purity laws, of becoming unclean themselves (See Leviticus 14:46). Therefore, lepers were cast out of society and required to live solitary lives, not seeing any members of the public. They were not able to make a living and often begged for money. Leprosy was something that stole people's sense of self-worth and their identity – they are not a person they are now just a leper.

Jesus heals the man. He then requests that he go and see the priest to comment on his cleanliness. This was important as, under the purity laws, it was the priest that had to confirm whether someone was clean or unclean. It is not unusual for Jesus to ask people not to tell others about what had happened. This could be because he wanted people to come to him in faith rather than for what they could get out of him.

For Christians this story shows the power of God as Jesus has the power to heal people from illness. But this is about more than the illness it is about Jesus bringing people back in from the outsides of society. This is not just a physical healing, but for Christians it also represents how they were once far away from God, and now through Jesus they are brought back.

Mark 10:13-16 – Let the Little Children

See discussion on Matthew 19:13-15

Mark 12:28-34 – Greatest Commandment

These verses in Mark are the same verses that structure part of the story of The Good Samaritan in Luke (See Luke 10:25-37). However, whilst Luke focuses on Jesus and the religious leader arguing, which then leads Jesus to tell the Good Samaritan parable, Mark focuses on Jesus and the religious leader in agreement with one another.

It is possible that the religious leader asked his question to catch Jesus out, as within Jewish tradition there are 613 commandments that Moses received when he went up Mount Sinai. It would be

The Psalms

The Psalms are a beautiful piece of Hebrew literature. Generally believed to be written over a period of a thousand years, they cover themes throughout Israel's history. Most of the Psalms are credited to the author David. They are songs and hymns written in a poetic form and should be read as poems enjoying the figurative and metaphorical language that is contained within them. Like all songs and poems, the Psalms can be categorised as either Psalms of thanksgiving and praise or Psalms of lament. Many of the Psalms had a specific function within Jewish festivals and worship.

Psalm 8 – Psalm of Creation

This psalm is David's great psalm of praise. Through the psalm, he acknowledges God's greatness through his creation of the Heavens and the Earth. He also shows awareness that part of creation is about God's care for mankind (v4). This psalm is also David reflecting on the wonder of mankind. Namely, God creating mankind to be in charge of the land and tending to it carefully. David finishes with praising God – this is a psalm of David being in awe of what God has done.

Original hearers of this psalm would have been able to reflect on everything that they can see in creation and attribute it back to God, using the Psalm to praise God for everything he has made.

Psalm 103

Another psalm of David. It is unclear exactly when this psalm was written. The psalm is set as a psalm of praise, focussing on all the good things God has done for his people. Original hearers would have listened to the psalm as a reminder of God's faithfulness to them. This would have been a comfort when the Israelites were going through challenging times.

Through the psalm, David talks about his own personal experiences of God. He then moves on to how God has dealt with the Israelite nation as a whole and finally encouraging all creation to praise God.

For modern hearers, this psalm provides a comfort to those who are experiencing difficulties, recounting the blessings and promises that God has given. It also serves as a reminder of how precious life is.

Psalm 139 – Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

Psalm 139 is the grandest of all the psalms and one of the most well-known; second only to Psalm 23. In this psalm readers are brought face to face with the majesty of God. The psalm makes clear several aspects of God's character, which are important to Christians.

1) **God's omniscience (all-knowing)**

Verses 1-6 speak of God's knowledge. God knows words before they have even been spoken. This may bring up questions about predestination vs free-will, as if God knows everything then do humans really have free-will. (See Christian Theological Dictionary for a discussion about free-will and predestination).

Many Christians debate what Heaven looks like and there is no general consensus. However, it is possible in this passage that when Isaiah refers to the temple, he is referring to the temple in Jerusalem.

Isaiah 7:14 - Immanuel

In this one verse of Isaiah, we see a prophecy of the birth of Jesus. There are a number of interesting things to point out here:

- 1) The verse starts with a 'Therefore'. In the preceding verses, Isaiah addresses the people who were feeling afraid of an impending invasion. They wanted to know that everything was going to be OK, and that the Israelite nation would remain in the land. Isaiah enables them to see that everything is OK, because God has a plan, which will be worked out.
- 2) It explores in some detail what we know about Jesus' birth. He will be born of a virgin and even as a baby will understand right from wrong (knowing all that God knows).
- 3) The name given 'Immanuel' means 'God with us'. This demonstrates clearly that Jesus was God incarnate, God in human flesh.

For many Christians this key text is an important insight as to what God promises in the life of Jesus. There would have been some confusion for original hearers of this text as their view of a saviour would have been someone with power and strength, coming from noble birth rather than someone coming from humble settings. This reading is often used to frame Advent services in the run up to Christmas.

Isaiah 9:6-7 – A New Type of King

Another key prophecy about Jesus, and another one that is often used during Advent/Christmas. This prophecy is ultimately one of hope. Isaiah speaks to the people who feel that they are walking in darkness. They feel rejected, isolated and alone. They have been defeated in battle and are longing for some relief to their struggle. Isaiah brings a prophecy to declare that something new is coming; something better, something to take them out of darkness and bring them into light.

However, the promise is not what is expected. People are expecting a warrior, but Isaiah predicts something different. This is about subverting people's expectations, they want power, but God is bringing peace.

A few key points to note. There are a series of names used in this piece, which are significant:

- 1) **Wonderful Counsellor** – Beyond all human understanding, guiding and supporting with the mind of God.
- 2) **Mighty God** – He is God, the Almighty. Here are allusions to the Trinity.
- 3) **Everlasting Father** – Not a reference to Jesus being the 'Father' as in the Trinity but rather that he is the source of all things. He is the creator, the creator of time and ages.
- 4) **Prince of Peace** – He is one to bring peace. This may be tricky to think about especially when we see war etc. However, it is more accurate to think about peace between man and God – undoing the separation caused by The Fall.

For Christians this passage is a clear expectation of hope, not only in the fact that Jesus was born but that one-day Jesus will return and bring peace to the world once more.

punishment that sin brings. Therefore, if God can forgive really big things, humans should forgive one another.

Jesus often uses the phrase, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is like...'. What he is trying to say, is not that there is a place called Heaven that will be like x or y, but rather that the Kingdom of Heaven is here on earth, now, and it is rooted in how people mirror God's actions, share love with one another and treat each other.

Matthew 19:13-15 – Jesus and the Little Children

Many of the conversations that Jesus had were about addressing misconceptions that many people had, about the law. Those conversations were also about challenging the religious leaders' understanding of the law.

In Jewish culture, children were a vital means of legacy and passing on inheritance. However, children were also thought of in terms of being seen and not heard. In a world that was very dangerous to children, some argue that people brought children to Jesus as they thought if he blessed them, it would protect them. In earlier chapters, Jesus talked about how important children are. Children are very trusting of their parents, and they need them for sustenance. Furthermore, children have great value in the Kingdom of God. Jesus wanted to make the parallel that people should be trusting of God and look to him for sustenance, because they have value too.

When the disciples became annoyed with the parents for bringing their children to Jesus, Jesus rebukes them. In this moment he is annoyed that the disciples have not taken on board what he said earlier about children being of great value in the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 21:7-11 - Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday is a vital part of the Christian calendar and the understanding of Easter. This is a multi-layered story that has much symbolism and a wealth of importance to Christians. It marks the end of Lent, a time of preparation for Easter.

Historically and culturally, Palm Sunday happens just before the festival of Passover. When Jesus and his disciples entered Jerusalem on what is now known as Palm Sunday, they entered to celebrate the Passover, an important Jewish festival. This is now at the end of his 3 years of ministry.

The disciples took a donkey for Jesus to enter the city on. Historically, how kings approached cities or other leaders, showed what their intentions would be. If kings entered or approached on horseback, then their intention was war. However, if they approached on the back of a donkey, then their intention was peace. As Jesus entered on a donkey, he is setting out that his intentions are for peace. In this instance we often refer to the peace being about the tensions between the Jews and the gentiles. In a world which was full of racial tension, this understanding of peace was important. Jesus was bringing everyone under God's umbrella.

The crowd wave palm branches as he enters. The waving of palm branches was part of the Jewish celebrations happening at the time. Just before this text, in verse 5, the Bible mentions that Jesus coming on a donkey was done to fulfil the prophecy set out in Zechariah 9:9. People at the time would have known what the prophecies had said and when they saw Jesus coming, they would have related what they saw to Zechariah's prophecy. The only suitable response would have been to wave branches and shout as their saviour entered the city.

practiced an unorthodox religion. And the Samaritans felt similarly about the Jews. Therefore, at its very core, we have a story about racial and cultural tensions; there was no love lost between the Jewish people and the Samaritans.

The two people who do not help, were both religious leaders. They were people who knew the law and knew what they should do, but they walk on by. They talk the talk but are unable to walk the walk. One of the reasons that they didn't help was because Jewish custom stated that if they touched blood then they would become unclean. If they were unclean, then they would not be able to go into the temple to offer sacrifices. The keeping of the custom was more important to them than helping a someone in need, even if that person was a fellow Jew.

It is no coincidence that in Jesus' story it is the Samaritan that helps. This is not just about helping people and being kind. Rather for those who first hear the story, it subverts their understanding of who people were, and who their neighbour was. Jesus' narrative suggests that all people need to be loved and cared for, not just those we consider our own.

This story has much to say about breaking down racial and cultural barriers that stop people from getting along. For Christians, it is about how they treat all people, and about how they might stand up for those who are oppressed and pushed to the edge of society. It may be interesting to look at what might be a modern reiteration of this story, e.g. where is there tension between different groups? Or perhaps to look more closely at the response of those who passed by.

Luke 14:12-24 – Feast

This is a parable all about what the Kingdom of Heaven is like. Here Jesus talks about a banquet which everyone is invited to. Those invited make excuses not to come so he invites the poor, the lame, the crippled and the blind.

In a culture where the poor, crippled, lame and blind were deemed to be social outcasts and not allowed to participate in worship, being invited to a banquet would have seemed like a strange thing to do.

One of the main themes is about rejecting the message that God gives. Those who gave excuses not to come to the party, are used as a metaphor to talk about those who reject hearing the gospel. It also follows the same idea as the Beatitudes - those who are poor etc are really the ones who are blessed.

For many Christians this is another parable of hope. It is a reminder that even those who have been rejected by society are part of God's kingdom. It also shows Christians how to not always look at the outward appearance, as what God thinks is important, is different.

Luke 15:1-10 – The Lost Sheep and The Lost Coin

Here is another example of Jesus using everyday examples that people would understand. The Lost Sheep and The Lost Coin are the same story but told essentially to two different audiences. Farming was a common occupation so telling a story about looking after sheep would have been something that many would have understood.

Sheep had great value. Even losing just one sheep would have cost the shepherd a great deal of money. They would have lost money on wool, and even on selling the sheep at market for food. For the woman and the coin, this was not just about having money to buy food, but also about

Deuteronomy 5:1-22 – 10 Commandments (Again!)

Unit L2.12 refers to looking at the 10 Commandments in 2 different places. It is not unusual for the Bible to have two versions of the same event, there are two creation stories in Genesis for example (Genesis 1:1-2:4, and Genesis 2:4-25). Furthermore, the gospel writers cover the same stories between them but tell them from a different point of view or try to make a slightly different point.

It is understood that the 10 Commandments in Exodus are a retelling of how Moses received them from God at the top of Mt Siani. In Deuteronomy, the 10 Commandments form part of a larger discourse. The people are on the edge of the Promised Land; however, Moses will not enter it, as he is about to die. As he passes the baton on to Joshua, his successor, he uses this time to address the people to remind them of everything that God has told them about how to live. It may be seen as understandable then that there are a few minor differences between the Exodus account and Deuteronomy account, as one is written and the other spoken.

The major difference is in the command about the Sabbath. In Exodus we see, "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy." However, in Deuteronomy we see, "Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you." It is argued that the difference was to encourage people to actually keep the Sabbath holy, rather than just having a memorial to celebrate that there was a Sabbath. In other words, Moses was clarifying its use rather than changing the understanding of it.

Leviticus 19:18 – Love your neighbour as yourself

'Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people; but love your neighbour as yourself. I am the Lord.'

On the surface this is a very simple command from God. However, Leviticus 19:18 sits in a much wider context of laws given to Moses by God on how people should behave – supporting living a good life. These laws were primarily about how people should treat one another as they looked to enter the Promised Land.

At this time, there were many tensions between the Israelites as they wandered on the path to freedom. Many felt that the journey was taking too long, and many were wanting to turn back to Egypt. Because of this, they grumbled and fought with one another. This added to the need for God to bring in new rules on how to treat one another.

Here, the word 'love' (*ahab*) means to be an ally with, or to love as a friend. In other words, God was stating that people should support one another. Another way of looking at this was to say that when we do something wrong, we can be hard on ourselves, but then we get over it and move on. People should do the same thing when others do things to them.

Ruth 1-4 - The Story of Ruth and Naomi

This is a long story to go through, and it is suggested that an abridged version should be used. It is recommended that you use the Lion's Storyteller Bible as there are several adult themes, such as prostitution, that are inappropriate for children.

The author of the book of Ruth is unclear. Due to the style of writing and general themes of the book, many commentators suggest that the author was a woman. The book was written for the Israelites and was written during a time of peace between Israel and Moab. It is generally believed that it was written after David became King, around 1010BC, during a time of 'The Judges'. This