



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE



RE-framing education about beliefs and practices in schools

a lens and tools (concept based) approach

University of Cambridge/Woolf Institute

WOOLF
INSTITUTE studying
relations
between
 Jews
Christians
& Muslims

Acknowledgments

I want to express my profound gratitude to the many teachers who have contributed to sections of this book despite the intensity of their professional lives. They represent many more such scholar practitioners whose work is nothing short of heroic. I look forward to presenting more of their work in further editions of this book.

I am indebted to all those who have adopted the idea of a RE-framing toolkit and given their time, enthusiasm, creativity and commitment to ‘imagining’ a new way of approaching the teaching of beliefs and practices in schools – and trying to help me realize it. The materials here, in particular those produced by Sahra Ucar, Martin Lee, Paddy Winter, Penny Kite, Zach Beamish, Clare Jarmy, Charlotte Orrock and Hollie Gowan, are truly original and yet, because they are also tried and tested in classrooms, reliably useable. Their willingness to follow me into and through this venture has been humbling for me to witness. Their critical friendship is of singular importance to me, too.

Sometimes one just needs to talk in order to clarify ideas. In that respect I am lucky to belong to ‘the coffee club’ and to have received so much wise advice, largely in the early mornings, from my colleagues John Beck and John Finney. John Finney’s previous work has enabled me, in particular, to develop study booklet three, on cultural understanding. Other Faculty colleagues, including PhD students, have given generously of time and energy to help me explore these ideas – and some also helped with conference presentations.

There are many organisations which have played significant roles in supporting the development of this RE-framing toolkit. The project has been run under the auspices of the University of Cambridge’s Faculty of Education and the

Woolf Institute, also in Cambridge. I am extremely grateful to them both for supporting me over the three years of this project. Sue Ward, working for Cambridge County Council, contributed significantly by sharing her huge expertise as Cambridge’s RE advisor. Laurie Hogen, whose idea this project originally was, has never let me give up – and Mohammed Aziz has been both an enormously erudite and a wise project advisor throughout. I would also like to thank the many head teachers who allowed us to observe, in both sets of school contexts, teachers’ classroom practice and who released staff, in both the US and UK, to come to our ‘RE-framing’ conference at the University of Cambridge in March 2014.

We are most grateful to several US friends, Louise Garland, Olga Votis and Julia Bator Duggan for their financial support to print the Toolkit and to Marcia Beauchamp, Laleh Ispahani, Maha Elgenaidi and the Rt. Rev. William Swing for their encouragement.

It goes without saying that the twenty or so US and UK teachers who were part of our original study, who wrote case studies and questionnaire responses, allowed their lessons to be observed and then met face to face to share their own practice have been the real driving force of our work. Without them, and without their commitment to the project, this toolkit would never have been started.

Finally, I want to thank Sahra Ucar and Alice Thompson very much for their hours of proof reading and thank, too, Andy Harvey of H2 Associates who has been patience itself in making sure that the Toolkit made it into production.

Mary Earl
Author

First Published 2015
By University of Cambridge Faculty of Education
184 Hills Rd, Cambridge CB2 8PQ and by
The Woolf Institute
12–14 Grange Road, Cambridge CB3 9DU

© 2015 Mary Earl

Design and print management by H2 Associates (Cambridge) Limited
Typeset in Myriad Pro

Contents

Foreword	4
A word to teachers	5
Introduction: Teaching about Beliefs and Practices in School What are we RE-Framing? From theory to practice. Principles and aims.	7
Planner for Teachers	16
Study Booklet One: Cultural Understanding of Beliefs and Practices Part One: Ordinary Culture; Part Two: Finding Cultural Depth; Part Three: Liquid Culture; Part Four: Cultural engagement within contemporary schooling.	18
Study Booklet Two: Identity Formation Looking at how being nurtured in different beliefs and practices affects human behaviours – and at how studying practices which have grown up around ‘identity’ issues (e.g. rites of passage) can help school students to understand spirituality as relational consciousness.	29
Study Booklet Three: Issues of Evidence, Truth and Proof Making abstract ideas concrete. How students ‘make progress’ in learning; developing enquiry skills; lesson planning.	35
Using the Toolkit: Enquiring into meaning-making (beliefs and practices) What is the meaning-making focus about? Examples of ways of working with the three lenses. Examples of ways of working with the three tools.	52
Ten of the Best: Ways of working in the classroom (methodologies) Different ways of making it easier for children and adolescents to access theological and philosophical (including ethical) subject matter. Useful resources for beginner story-tellers. A short glossary of key Islamic terms.	77
Reader: Resources for teaching about beliefs and practices in schools (narratives) Narratives from Judaism, Islam, Christianity, World culture, Atheism, Humanism and Buddhism. Each narrative comes with ideas about how to involve children and adolescents in understanding the ‘big picture’ of a belief and practice by looking, first, at a small example of it.	100
Resources – and the US context Organizations which provide classroom resources; organizations that provide speakers on multiple religions; internet resources.	104
Afterword	146

Education Project

Foreword

It has been a privilege to be a member of the team steering this project, and a real honour to be asked to write this foreword on behalf of the team.

The work on this project, for me personally, started many years ago, when my eldest child was still just 8 years old. I went one day to pick him up from his Saturday Islamic School. He looked very upset. Previously, he had been bullied at the school and I assumed it must have been a repeat of the same. Initially, he did not want to speak about it. As we walked towards my mother's house, I squeezed his hand in mine and enquired again. He looked up almost in tears, hesitated and then explained that one of the teachers at the Islamic school had told him that only Muslims will go to heaven and everyone else will be 'dragged to hell'. 'I see', I said, encouraging him to go on. 'But that means grandpa will also go to hell', he cried back.

I pulled my son towards me and held him tight as we walked – to comfort him and to give myself a little time to think how I might respond. Grandpa, my wife's maternal grandfather, is a heritage Christian – though he still plays the organ for his small local church. But, importantly for my son, he is a scientist (a chemist), with bags of patience to sit on the phone endlessly answering all his questions, from the dinosaurs to the planets. My son loved his grandfather very much and was clearly very hurt by what had been said.

In the circumstances, I tried to explain as best I could that the god we believe in is a kind, merciful God; that all but one chapter of the Quran starts with this claim; and that He alone will judge who goes to heaven and who goes to hell. I remembered and quoted some words of advice from Ali, the fourth Caliph of Sunni Islam, and the first Imam of Shia Islam. Ali had advised one of his governors that his subjects were either his brothers and sisters in faith or his brothers and sisters in humanity. I explained to my son that God will judge people by their intention and deeds and not by the tribe to which they belong.

Since then, I have often wondered how we might teach children our own and others' religions or beliefs. The opportunity to do something concrete on this came when I started working at the Woolf Institute. It came through one of its former students, Laurie Hogen, who has throughout this project been its primary source of enthusiasm and energy. After almost three years of work on this project, we think what we have in our hands now, in the form of this toolkit, is unique in the way it suggests we teach about religions and beliefs. This unique approach would not have been possible without the contribution of one

person, Mary Earl, senior lecturer at the Faculty of Education, Cambridge, and the main author of the materials that have come out of this project, including this toolkit.

At the heart of this toolkit is the idea of reframing Religious Education (RE) so that we align it as closely as possible to other subject areas of the school curriculum. This includes rethinking why, what and how we teach young people about our own and others' religions, beliefs and practices. Our strong conviction is that doing this rethinking in a systematic way and presenting it in a toolkit such as this, will not only benefit individual RE teachers and their students, but may also change perceptions about the subject at the policy and the management levels, which may in turn help to reverse the present poor perception and investment the subject currently suffers.

This toolkit reframes RE through what we have called 'meaning-making' in the world we live in – this is our response to the 'why' question above. We pursue this concept of meaning-making through three lenses: culture, identity formation, and putting truth-claims to proof – this is our response to the 'what' question. We then consider the three tools we may use to explore these lenses: key enquiry questions, text and context, and difference and diversity – our response to the 'how' question. The toolkit also includes a section outlining ways of working in the classroom, a reader or resources section, and finally, a teachers' planner.

The aim of the toolkit is to provide a set of 'tools' that could be helpful for school departments, individual teachers or trainee teachers to teach about and from our own and others' beliefs and practices. The toolkit remains, however, at the start of a journey. We hope you will use it, benefit from it, but also that you will give us feedback on it so that we may improve it in the future.

I have already mentioned two of the key people involved in the team steering this project. In addition to them, this project would not have been possible without the help and advice of Sue Ward, an educational advisor in Cambridge, and the absolutely sterling work of Sahra Ucar and Alice Sandham, both research associates to this project. We also remain indebted to Porticus and Culham St Gabriel's, two wonderful charitable foundations, for making this project financially viable.

Mohammed Aziz
July 2015

Why write a toolkit which *reframes* teaching about beliefs and practices?

A WORD TO TEACHERS

Introduction

Researchers look for patterns. This helps them to identify things which maintain those patterns. Once they can identify these ‘maintaining cycles’ they can make predictions – and once they can make predictions they also hope they can begin to break unhelpful patterns*. This ‘lenses and tools’ structure for teaching and learning about beliefs and practices has not come into being just by chance, but as a result of researching what’s going on in schools today – and then thinking about that data in relation to contemporary professional practice in RE and in other subjects of the curriculum. We thought you might find it helpful, before you read the materials, to have a glimpse into that research – and into how completing the study has informed our decision making when we came to construct the Toolkit.

We are hoping that you will try this ‘reframing’ structure out in your own schools, tell us how that process works and so keep this discussion alive. Please enjoy using what you can. The Toolkit is not a complete course, but we know the teaching strategies work and we know that over time schools in both the US and the UK will find ways to use it to build new schemes of work, new departmental assessment criteria and new resources. Technology and social media should allow us, today, to share these globally – so stay in touch and tell us how this reframing adapts to different school contexts and teaching styles.

Three research based reasons for reframing the teaching of beliefs and practices in schools

The first reason we have chosen to reframe the subject is that our research shows that similar good teaching practices produce similar good learning outcomes in both the US and the UK and in all kinds of schools. What seems to be lacking is not good practice, but a sound rationale for how to make those practices ‘have meaning’ for every young person education today: in every kind of school and at all phases of education.

The second reason our research told us that reframing was needed is that *some* of the current practice observed *does* indicate that ‘unhelpful patterns’ of practice exist in both countries and, again, in all types of schools. A few are detailed below.

- Senior school managers – in many types of school and in both countries – seem unwilling or unable to invest heavily in continuing to educate teachers professionally, whilst in service, in this curriculum area.
- There is overall, as a result, a depressing lack of commitment to providing teachers with relevant, regular opportunities for realistic professional development.
- There is, in faith schools, still an underlying assumption that what really matters in classroom teachers of this subject is not professional teaching skill, but having particular personal beliefs.
- This, in turn, if you compare the situation with Senior Managers and Teaching Bodies representing *other* subjects, contributes to the fact that the subject is not always being taken seriously as a curriculum subject *in its own right*.
- Despite the very different *legislation* surrounding teaching ‘about and from’ religions in the US and the UK, the aims of outstanding teachers in both countries vary very little. What frustrates these outstanding teachers is that *their* voice is so rarely heard when it comes to carrying out these aims, because other, more powerful agencies (including faith communities and faith related inspection agencies), constantly change the discourse about classroom teaching to one which has meaning for *them*.
- In largely secularised societies the debate about whether a subject called ‘religious education’ should be on the curriculum at all is largely resulting in the subject being sidelined or even excluded from each country’s ‘national’ curriculum. Yet everyone agrees that teaching for ‘mutual understanding’ is essential. So, if the name – and the way the subject is currently framed – is the problem, doesn’t it make sense to rename and reframe it?
- Framing the subject under the title *religious* education (UK) excludes teaching about and from a whole range of beliefs and practices which school students ask about, are fascinated by and want to learn about. Changing the name of the subject, legislatively, may take time, but we can in the meantime help ourselves, as teachers, by making it clear to our students that we do believe that *everyone* should study the processes of meaning-making, because meaning-making is what everyone does – in *all* beliefs and practices, not just the religious ones.
- Ontology is not epistemology. If you believe, however firmly, that ‘your’ beliefs and practices are true, then you may well want them to be *taught* as true. But classrooms, especially in modern, globalised, often highly secularised, societies, don’t see knowledge in this way. So teaching

well about and from traditions which see knowledge as based on revelation, for instance, involves very different teaching skills now than it did twenty years ago, let alone fifty! Teaching this subject today, for instance, involves problematizing knowledge claims. This is, for outstanding teachers, an opportunity, not a threat. But for untrained teachers who lack specialist knowledge of others' beliefs and practices, it can be a huge challenge. There seems to be a fear that faith diminishes if knowledge premises are examined. Outstanding teachers – and many school students – will tell you that this is not true. What actually happens is that it becomes better understood, by larger numbers of people. Isn't that where 'mutual tolerance' springs from?

Our last reason for deciding to reframe teaching about beliefs and practices has emerged from a 'prediction' we have made, on the basis of what we have observed, about where making changes might be most effective, most rapidly. Given current developments in schooling, assessment, professional teacher education and research, teaching about beliefs and practices will sit better in any modern curriculum if it is reframed so that both school

teachers and their students know much more clearly what it is they are supposed to be learning *about*! This has led us to reframe all our materials around three key themes.

- a. the idea of culture (and how understanding it affects our understanding of beliefs and practices)
- b. the ways in which identity is formed by and reflected *in* different beliefs and practices
- c. the 'claims which require support' which different belief systems make – and upon which whole societies' response to and understanding of diverse beliefs and practices rests.

Conclusion

Our hope is that you will read these materials and then try the approach out. You may even want to organise a local 'hub' of interested teachers who can share practice, feedback their experiences – and develop new materials. In turn, this can lead to an enrichment of professional dialogue in the field, further conference meetings together and, of course, further reframing of these new teaching and learning structures. The journey has just begun. Please do join in – and tell us how things go.

Endnote

*Consider this example, taken from the world of retail.

A shop manager is aware that a department is losing money. She has three options:

- She can make random changes in that department, without reflecting on her experiences of that department, but then her chances of solving her problems are low.
- She can base changes on her recollections of the department, but some of the memories may be hazy and she might have overlooked important issues.
- She can record what is happening in the department, as it happens; then she can look at the figures and the patterns and base her decisions on these facts.

The most effective approach would be the third. The manager would have collected information which would allow her to see exactly what was going on in the department. Her 'data' would be reliable. That has been our approach here, too.

Introduction

**Teaching about beliefs and
practices in schools**

Before we begin

This toolkit will be best understood if you take time to look carefully at the structural ‘model’ on which it is based.

What we are providing, within the Toolkit, assumes no particular religious stance (or any religious stance) in its readers.

Our brief was to provide a set of ‘tools’ which could be helpful for individual teachers, school departments or trainee teachers teaching about and from other’s beliefs and practices.

The structure should give you a way to frame an enquiry with your school students, write suitable tasks and lesson plans and make choices about how you want to use the resources. It could also help you write whole schemes of work. The materials are designed to be suitable for ages 8–18 approximately and do not refer to schooling terms used in any one teaching setting (e.g. grades, key stages etc.)

You may like to know that the RE-framing Toolkit’s structure material is drawn from and responds to key issues identified during empirical research undertaken in the period September 2013 to September 2014.

This research, which involved teachers, academics and NGO policy makers, indicated that the following seven pointers need to be kept in mind if we are to bring teaching about beliefs and practices into line, professionally, with teaching standards in other subjects.

1. Bringing consistency into professional standards of teaching about beliefs and practices has to be seen as important for all. This is why we have adopted the idea of ‘meaning-making’ as the core idea students will be learning about rather than theism, atheism or spirituality.
2. Without knowing, or at least thinking about, the ‘ontos’ (fundamental nature) of their subject, schemes of work are difficult to plan, the aims of lessons are difficult to define, and teaching methods are often arbitrarily chosen. This does not lead others to take our claim to a place on the curriculum seriously.
3. In addition, pedagogy needs to rest on clear educational aims which apply to *all* school students, not just to those who come from a faith-based background or who are taught in a faith-based school. Key questions are therefore written in ways which do not refer to any one view point – though each one can be adapted to do so.
4. Dialogic teaching and learning has been shown, both from this research and from long-term teacher

experience, to be the most effective ‘tool’ for teachers in this field to use to help their students work with controversial issues. We therefore assume that teachers will want to understand more about dialogic teaching and learning, and we have gathered materials to help them develop their practice in this area.

5. We assume that controversial issues in the curriculum (e.g. contested historical narratives and issues of identity and difference) have to be addressed educationally in classrooms, not subsumed under other agendas, not ignored, and certainly *not* used as an excuse not to teach about the ‘other’ at all.
6. Many teachers in this field, however able, become isolated during their teaching careers. This toolkit aims to help those teachers enter into a focussed discussion, either virtually or really, with new thinking about pedagogy and about teaching beliefs and practices generally. In this way it is hoped that they will feel supported in consolidating and developing their skills, so that their work achieves the recognition it deserves in schools.
7. The assumption behind the toolkit is that many good resources already exist for teachers to access. What is not so easily accessible is a way of *framing* teaching and learning so that students have a clear idea about what it is we want them to learn. It is for that reason that the toolkit has the title *RE-framing Toolkit*.

A word to teachers

The materials you will find in this *RE-framing Toolkit* arose from and are designed for a wide variety of school teaching situations. Some of the materials came from secular foundation schools and some from faith schools. Teachers in both the US and the UK have provided exemplars, and materials are written, deliberately, without specific reference to any one country’s schooling system. The materials exemplify work which can be done with school students aged between around 8–18 but there is *no* attempt here to provide a complete course for any of those ages. Narratives provided in the reader come mainly from within Judaism, Islam and Christianity but also contain what we have called ‘no God option’ narratives. These include Humanist, Atheist and Buddhist narratives.

You may find, reading the self-study booklets, that the re-framing structure also provides a way of helping non-specialist staff understand what the focus of their teaching is – and what its outcomes should be. We have included

activities in these sections which a whole department could use to deepen their understanding of their work. If that means that they then want to revamp or rewrite their own schemes of work, and explore a wider range of methodologies, then they are encouraged to do so! This is why a basic structure for planning schemes of work – and the lessons within them – is included in the Toolkit.

No one should feel that RE-framing their departments' teaching about others' beliefs and practices is beyond them. Non-specialist teachers, teachers in training, school governors, senior managers and parents may well be grateful to find here a clear, understandable framework within which school students can learn.

What are we RE-framing?

To teach about and from beliefs and practices, particularly those we are not very familiar with, means every teacher thinking about what a school student, at any particular age, might be able to *understand*. What is the irreducible 'thing' (if indeed there is one) which all beliefs and practices do – and what makes the way we teach them different from the way a historian or a statistician might approach them?

Various suggestions have been made about this. One important suggestion concerns spirituality. Because that idea is so contentious within public education systems, and because it is still not clear (though it can be argued) that spirituality is something everyone actively develops (see Hay, D and Nye, R. 1998), that option is not developed here. Instead the principle upon which we have taken all beliefs and practices to rest is that human beings purposefully *make meaning* in the world. Both sides of that statement are equally important: we *make* meaning. It doesn't just happen. And we *make meaning* (even if at times we have to try to live with chaos) because we experience. Our school students are trying to make sense of the world they are growing up in. We live in increasingly multi-ethnic communities and have an increasingly globalised view of the world. So we can't, any longer, stay in our own little meaning-making worlds and hope nobody will disturb our world views. We have to interact. To do this well we need to understand 'the other's' beliefs and practices, encounter them and learn from those experiences.

But there are problems here, too, which we will all encounter, however much we attempt to re-frame teaching in this field. Biesta put it like this:

'to take difference seriously means that we have to give up the idea that we can and should understand and know... before we can adequately engage.' (Biesta, G. 2006 p 102–3)

Some people find this very hard to deal with. Others actually enjoy the attempt as a journey in itself. But wherever you are starting from, all of us have to encounter this dialectic face to face. How far – and in what ways – are we prepared to let the other *be* other, and still count as valid the attempt to understand and know something about beliefs and practices which might be quite unfamiliar or disagreeable to us?

This Toolkit frames teaching about beliefs and practices under three headings, which we refer to as LENSES. We all look through different lenses (interpretation) at our experiences, and that seeing is affected by the ordinary cultures in which we grow up. So school students, also affected by this process, are likely to understand others' beliefs and practices better if they are taught to understand the basics of debate about what culture, identity formation and proof, truth and evidence claims, are.

- 1. Cultural understanding** tells us about the effect of place, space, historical events and institutions on meaning-making. It helps us to understand how beliefs and practices form traditions and how there can be continuity and change within those traditions too.
- 2. Identity formation** tells us about how we develop personal values, beliefs and practices as we move into the adult world and seek to find our place there. It cherishes the 'I' at the centre by seeing it in relationship, always, with the other, with the environment, and with ideas about the existence (or not) of the divine.
- 3. Issues of proof, truth and evidence** tell us what has formed the creeds, texts, ethical practices and philosophies which believers of any kind adhere to. It also, as school students grow older, helps them to see how difference and diversity often arise around foundational truth, proof and evidence issues – and how scholars deal with this developing discourse.

A final note: Philosophical (including ethical) thinking is not an unnecessary intruder into this RE-framing process, but an essential contributor to it. Philosophical theology exists in all religions, and morality exists in beliefs and practices where there is no belief in God. Both need to be seen, in any educational theory, as being of *help* to school students who are so often struggling to understand

more about the complexity of their own values and about what different beliefs and practice mean. This struggle has been labelled by writers like Margaret Archer, (Archer, 2013), as ‘the reflexive imperative.’ You can find out more about this as you read on, but here we note simply that like many other writers she sees the voyage into adulthood and through adolescence in the 21st century as fraught with an anxiety about values that those of us born several decades earlier may never have experienced. As teachers, we should address this anxiety responsibly, and with some humility. Reflexive modernity gives them a difficult set of choices to make.

And in conclusion...

One RE-framing toolkit won’t provide enough materials to address everything needed to develop more professional teaching about beliefs and practices across our schools. As our research clearly shows, teachers need much more support, from their own school managers and from conferencing events held at local, national and international level, to help them become more professionally empowered to accomplish what they are trying so hard to do.

There is huge richness in the aspirations teachers in this field have, and considerable teaching wisdom. But without structure and support their efforts will always be difficult to sustain. An agreed framework of what we are trying to do might, at least, provide one small step towards achieving that goal.

References

- Archer, M. (2013) *The Reflexive Imperative in Late Modernity*. Cambridge University Press (Cambridge).
- Biesta, G.J.J. (2006) *Beyond Learning*. Paradigm Press (Colorado).
- Hay, D. and Nye, R. (2006) *The Spirit of the Child*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers (London).
- Sen, A. (2006) *Identity and Violence: the illusion of destiny*. Penguin (London).
- Wilkinson, M.L.N. (2014) *A Fresh Look at Islam in a Multi-Faith World: a philosophy for success through education*. Routledge (Abingdon and New York).

From theory to practice: principles and aims

Principle one: We are all ‘other’ to someone. We all learn how this affects us, personally, when we teach. This encounter can be *challenging*.

Principle two: The ‘other’ should never be addressed, in educational contexts, as *completely* other despite the fact that there will always be something we do not understand. Using ‘meaning-making’ as a way of establishing commonality is effective because it is immediately an *inclusive* aim.

Principle three: Professional pedagogic aims are not the same as having aims of conversion, nor those of systematic theological instruction.

Principle four: Age, culture and ability adaptations will be needed to make any pedagogic structure work for you. Enjoy that process – but ensure that *progress* is made across age groups (i.e. that students *develop* understanding). Just labelling things, remembering things or writing things down correctly will never achieve this aim, so teachers need to look for interactive pedagogies which interest and challenge – but which also ensure a development of analytic thinking.

Principle five: Mere *tolerance* of the other, whilst useful as a basic aim, needs to open out into an exploration which teaches school students to authentically *respect* the other and, in outstanding lessons, to *recognise* the other (Jackson, 2009). Without that ‘progress in learning’ in mind, teaching about beliefs and practices can become very superficial.

Principle six: Engagement with the other, both at whole school community and at classroom level, should be part of all adolescents’ schooling – not least because they are growing up within global modernity and need the skills to work alongside others, productively, in their everyday lives.

A table to show what the lenses focus on – and what focussing in these ways on beliefs and practices may help school students to understand.

LENSES	Cultural understanding	Identity formation	Issues of evidence, truth and proof
WHY?	We make meaning in culture so religious practice is enculturated. There is debate about what culture is and what transcends culture in all beliefs and practices.	Making meaning as we grow up involves interacting with the ordinary culture around us. This gives us, in part, both our individual and cultural identity. None of us escapes this process completely.	Adolescent school students need to begin to understand what the basis of any belief and practice is (e.g. understanding the concept of ‘revealed’ religions or words like authority and sacred).
WHAT?	Understanding cultural processes helps school students tolerate, respect and, eventually, recognise the ‘otherness’ of the other – and also where their own values come from.	In ‘late modernity’ identity needs to be seen as ‘plural’ (Sen, 2006) if we are to avoid doing violence to each other’s identity. This is something adolescents today have no option but to live with.	School students need to begin to understand what the ‘truth claims’ are behind different beliefs and practices and be able to interact reasonably with these meanings. Education, here, is deeply important since it affects a whole generation’s attitude to ‘the other.’
HOW?	School students need to learn about cultural understanding so that they can better evaluate, and work with, these values as they are expressed in the world around them (medical ethics, the media etc.).	Having time to reflect on one’s own feelings and empathise (or not) with others’ experiences, allows us to reflect on how far we are ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ different beliefs and practices. Are there universal aspects of human experience? We should offer opportunities for this exploration in our teaching.	School students need to begin to understand how beliefs and practices are built up over time. An understanding of historical events is important – but also an understanding of movements, like the Enlightenment (and Haskalah) in Europe, which deeply affect present day thinking such as: “Science is true and all religious belief is just opinion.”

TOOLS	KEY QUESTIONS	TEXT AND CON-TEXT	DIFFERENCE AND DIVERSITY
	WHY?	WHAT?	HOW?
LENSES			
Looking at culture	To get individual practices into the 'bigger picture.' (of history, time, space)	Why was this narrative produced? When? Who is/was it important for?	How has (and is now) believing this or practising that affecting other people in the world today?
Looking at identity formation	To explore how beliefs affect identities – and how practices reflect beliefs.	How is it read now? Can it be interpreted in different ways? Who says so?	How is global modernity affecting my own identity? (answering this question must be allowed to include both faith and non-faith based responses).
Looking at issues of evidence, truth and proof	To explore, compare and contrast different ways of making and supporting truth claims.	If you compare this narrative with others in/beyond the same community, what do you see?	Is it still possible to believe in a good God? Has secularisation 'won?' Do science and religion necessarily conflict?

Example 1: A scheme of work focussing on a variety of key questions.

Sample scheme of work 1 Students aged 12–13 years Lessons 1 hour long				
	Lens 2	Key question 8	Narrative 9	Difference and diversity
Lesson 1	Abraham in Judaism	Ask students what they think about the question: 'What's so important about the story of Abraham?'	Telling the story Narrative 9 Why is this story called the 'binding of Isaac'?	Look at the narrative from different perspectives (Abraham's, Isaac's, Sarah's)
Lesson 2	Jewish identity – and the Abrahamic covenant	The idea of covenant and the qualities of G-d it demonstrates (hesed, emunah)	Looking at the context. What changed in Judaism with this event?	What follows, in the story, from the fact that Isaac survives?
Lesson 3	Is Judaism always the same? (continuity and change in Jewish identity)	Does this covenant idea go all the way through Jewish identity? All the time? What does the Mosaic tradition add to Jewish identity? Or Talmudic Judaism? Or the Diaspora?	Narrative 6 When was this narrative written down? Why was this narrative recorded? Who by?	In Judaism, Christianity <i>and</i> Islam, Abraham's quality is that he <i>obeyed</i> G-d <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis 22: 1–4 • Romans 4: 3 • Qu'ran 37: 99–114
Lesson 4	Can Jewish identity alter – and if so, does the importance of Abraham change?	Diaspora Judaism – how have Jews kept the covenant alive in diaspora? How has diaspora formed Jewish identity?	Film about Ashkenazi and/or Sephardi Judaism in diaspora. What is Jewish about life in diaspora?	In Judaism, Christianity <i>and</i> Islam, Abraham's quality is that he <i>obeyed</i> G-d
Lesson 5	Abraham, the covenant – and Auschwitz	Can G-d break His covenant? What might be broken or challenged, in the Jewish idea of G-d, by the Holocaust?	Narrative 8 Is Abraham (the covenant, obedience, trust despite all) still important in the same or in a different way after the Holocaust?	Reading from Elie Wiesel, 'Night' Remembrances from Holocaust survivors. Visit to the Imperial war museum – or Camden Jewish museum (UK)
Lesson 6	Bringing things together. What's so important about the story?	Ask students again what they think – and help them trace what they've learned.	How have different kinds of Jewish identity been formed?	Students write their own answer to the key question.

Web based resources (available internationally)

What is RE? How does legislation affect it? (UK) how can I set up effective courses in my school? What is good assessment in RE?

www.learntogether.org.uk/Resources/Documents/RE%20in%20Cambridgeshire%20Agreed%20Syllabus.pdf

Online copy of one of the UK's Agreed syllabuses. If you have no idea where to start, start here.

www.natre.org.uk

Online resources for teachers of RE (UK based but you can join to gain access to all resources).

www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resources

Online resources (including lesson plans, new ideas, games and supplementary materials for exam related teaching) Site accessed through the Times Education Supplement, which is published weekly in the UK.

Working with sacred texts (text and interpretation)

www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/sacredtexts/map/map.html

This site should be better known. It provides **interactive resources** such as maps, 'talking heads' and copies of actual sacred texts which can be projected for whole classes to use, if you have web access. (Use iPads, smartphones or smart boards). It has an especially valuable section where students can 'turn the pages' (literally) of a Quran, a Bible, a Buddhist texts etc... and then ask (virtual) community representatives to explain why the books are important to them.

Learning about and from world religions

www.bbc.co.uk/religion

Explore BBC guides to the main religions and the world of faith. Helps students and teachers delve deeper into the key ethical issues of the day.

www.jewishmuseum.org.uk/journeys

Excellent on line resources, workshops and an excellent museum galleries (Judaism UK).

Learning about and from Humanism

www.humanismforschools.org.uk

This is an excellent site full of media clips, quizzes, worksheets and answers to questions which students often ask about Humanism. Invaluable.

Learning about and from philosophy (including ethics)

www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/philosophy/a-level/philosophy-2170/teaching-and-learning-resources

Exam Boards publish past papers, exam success criteria and resources for teaching. These are from the UK board called AQA.

Developing 'philosophical' thinking skills

www.philosophyforschools.co.uk

This site introduces teachers to the whole concept of philosophical thinking – and how it can be used to help both children and adolescents learn about ideas collaboratively.

Holocaust studies

www.yadvashem.org

(Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem)

www.iwm.org.uk/exhibitions/iwm-london

(Imperial War Museum in London: Holocaust exhibition and related school resources)

www.ushmm.org

(United States Holocaust Memorial Museum)

Media based resources (including YouTube)

www.truetube.co.uk

Excellent **short media clips** which pick up on '**religion in the news**'. All clips can be shown to classes on smart boards. They are of very good quality.

www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/sacredtexts/map/map.html

For details of site content see under '*working with sacred texts*.'

www.smsc.org.uk/directory-of-resources/listing/3

Damaris is a site which schools can join. In return you'll have access to lesson plans, resources and, above all, classroom based resources, including media clips, for working with the most recently released films. Another helpful site. Its basis is Christian but their remit is wider.

Resources to help you tell stories well – to any age group

www.storymuseum.org.uk/1001stories/tag/daniel+morden

This site is full of **stories, ready told and smart board ready**. They come from everywhere in the world. Some are culturally interesting, many contain ‘wisdom’ narratives from the world’s religions and from other worldviews. Just search to find a resource for your next lesson.

www.classictales.educ.cam.ac.uk

Part of the **Cambridge Schools Classics Project** website, this resource is a re-telling of some of Aesop’s fables, plus the Iliad and the Odyssey. All narratives can be played, via iPads, smartphones or smart boards, in classrooms.

Resources to help you get your students working with the arts

www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/spirited-arts/introduction

In the UK this **annual competition** gets students of all ages drawing, painting, making, modelling. Because the competition also involves students in explaining why they have ‘imagined’ the world in the way they have it promotes very effective literacy, too.

So, what is effective literacy?

In our subject literacy includes being able to handle text and con-text. That means studying how texts are interpreted, why some texts are seen as ‘sacred,’ what changes (and stays the same) when texts are translated and how far knowledge is ‘socially constructed.’ It also involves teachers in developing students’ oracy skills. (Good oracy (speaking and listening) precedes good literacy (reading and writing). For instance, in class, encouraging individuals, pairs or groups to talk, with the help of a focused ‘key question’, *about* a concept helps young people ‘crack into’ its deeper meaning – and so learn *from* it, too. Over time and with extended practice, this process, of moving between tasks which encourage reading, writing, speaking *and* listening, builds informed understanding.

Useful books (most with accompanying on line resources) include:

Stanley, S. (2012) *Why Think? Philosophical Play from 3–11* Continuum (London and New York)

Booth, T, and Ainscow, M. 3rd edtn (2011) *Index for inclusion: developing learning and participation in schools*. Buy direct from www.csie.org.uk/publication.

Roche, E. (2015) *Developing Children’s Critical Thinking through Picturebooks* Routledge (Abingdon).

The global dimension

www.globaldimension.org.uk

Support for you, your school and your students when you want to set up lessons which **get students out ‘into the world.’** Includes a partnering scheme across countries, time zones, cultural contexts and age groups. Resources include wall planners with ideas for charity and other ‘remembrance’ activities – and lots and lots of classroom resources.

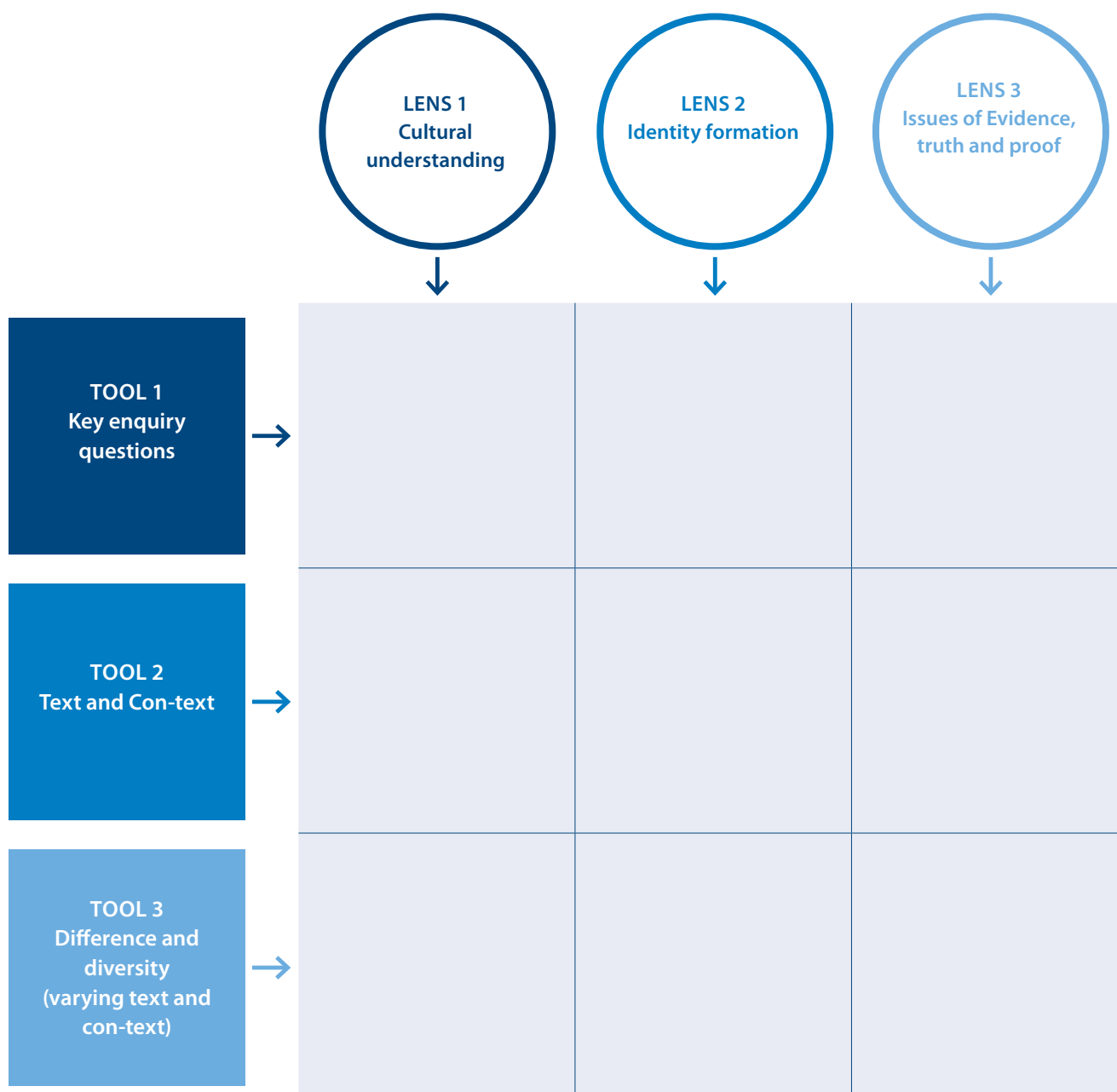
Resources to help students develop reflective practices

www.mindfulnessinschools.org/what-is-b

This particular site is accessible, informs, offers to run workshops in schools – and trains teachers in mindfulness practice too.

RE-framingToolkit

PLANNING PAGES FOR TEACHERS' USE



- **Decide which LENS you are going to ask students to work with.** Talk *with* students about the lenses – focussing their studies across the whole scheme of work by setting tasks (including assessment ones) which monitor their understanding about that lens and its impact on beliefs and practices.
- **Pick a key question** – and then one or more *narratives (texts)* to focus your students' learning even more closely. Use one or more narratives to **MODEL** the concept you are focussing on – and let students familiarise themselves with the ideas through one, two or three more dialogic tasks.
- **Introduce variation (e.g. scale switching) and de- familiarisation or cognitive dissonance to the dialogue,** so that enquiry is always engaging and inclusive – and points to difference and diversity in beliefs and practices.

Key enquiry questions

You can, of course, devise your own key questions, but check that they lead to enquiry about and from concepts, not just 'facts.' (The letter R in brackets refers you to the Reader).

1. *Do beliefs and practices differ in different parts of the world?* (R. 24, 3, 7, 18)
 2. *Can miracles happen?* (R. 1, 4, 20)
 3. *Why do beginnings matter?* (R. 6, 18, 12, 13)
 4. *Are religious narratives 'historical?'* (R. 6, 2, 1, 18)
 5. *Do people always agree about their beliefs and practices – how do they try to deal with any disagreements?* (R. 19, 8, 3, 20)
 6. *Are beliefs and practices affected by events in history?* (R. 20, 5, 3)
 7. *How should we treat each other?* (R. 16, 14, 22)
 8. *What's so important about the story of Abraham?* (R. 6, 9)
 9. *Can we know if there is God?* (R. 23, 19, 15)
 10. *Is faith always a good thing?* (R. 21, 23)
 11. *Why should we look after the planet?* (R. 24, 6, 11, 19)
 12. *Why should we be 'good?'* (R. 22, 19, 12, 3)
 13. *Why is knowledge sometimes said to be 'revealed?'* (R. 15, 6, 23, 9)
 14. *Why do we count some things as 'sacred?'* (R. 24, 18, 15, 6)
 15. *How do we become who we are?* (R. 19, 8, 5, 17)
 16. *How do we know if a belief is true?* (R. 23, 19, 12, 6, 1)
 17. *Is there one 'golden rule' we should all keep?* (R. 8, 3, 22, 12)
 18. *Is God fair?* (R. 8, 19, 22, 9)
 19. *Are we free?* (R. 21, 19, 3, 13)
 20. *Can people be held responsible for their decisions?* (R. 19, 17, 8, 4)
 21. *What should we celebrate?* (R. 11, 2, 1, 8)
-

Reader

1. *What happened to Jesus' body?* (Enquiry based on Luke chapter 24, Mark 16 and Matthew chapter 28)
2. *The journey of the wise men.* (For younger students: Matthew chapter 2).
3. *Social justice, belief and practice.* (Catholic teaching on social justice/ Liberation theology.)
4. *Is it rational to believe in miracles?* (C.S. Lewis: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe).
5. *Traversing Borders* (Migration histories – and diversity in Islam cp. David's Story in Study Booklet 1: Christian)
6. *Genesis: a book of beginnings* (text and interpretation: Judaism/Christianity)
7. *My name is Asher Lev.* (Potok, C: identity formation (Judaism) cultural clashes. Art and religions).
8. *Living the commandments. Does the Holocaust make a difference?*
9. *The Binding of Isaac.* (Akedah: Genesis 22. 1–24).
10. *Baal Shem Tov* (Judaism).
11. *Sukkot* (Judaism)
12. *The prophet Adam in Islam.*
13. *Bilal the slave becomes the first muezzin.*
14. *Hadith: the rights of neighbours*
15. *Cracking the Text : Surah Zalzalah (99: 1–8)*
16. *The Dinner of Smells* (Mullah Nasruddin)
17. *The conference of the birds* (Sufi)
18. *World stories about beginnings.* (ab-original)
19. *Humanism: an overview*
20. *Science and religion.* (the Abbasids, Buddhism and the Enlightenment in Europe)
21. *Good and bad faith?* (J.P. Sartre/existentialism)
22. *The Myth of Gyges ring.* (Plato)
23. *The gardener: a philosophical parable.* (Wisdom, J. adapted by Flew, A.)
24. *The Magic Pool* (a narrative and a reflective exercise to help students understand the idea of the 'sacred')

Study booklet one

**Cultural understanding of
beliefs and practices**

Study booklet one:

CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING OF BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Why should cultural understanding be made part of all teaching about beliefs and practices in schools?

We are going to look, in this booklet, at how seeing ourselves as part of both past and present, local and global culture can help school students understand themselves, and others, better. We will also explore ways of bringing issues of culture, belief and practice into the classroom. Understanding reduces fear – and schools need to pass on to their students an appreciation of this ‘educated fearlessness.’ How else can each generation hope to set its young up with enough self belief to both see and learn from the past, whilst living in – and, hopefully, not being entirely dominated by, the present?

By the end of this study booklet you should be able to:

- Understand what is meant by cultural understanding.
- Plan for teaching about religions, (and other beliefs and practices), in the context of culture.
- Know how cultural understanding is gained through practical engagement with the phenomena of belief and practice.
- Consider ways of avoiding school students’ alienation when introducing unfamiliar traditions to them.
- Understand the fluidity of culture in global modernity and how this affects and is affected by identity formation.

Part One: Ordinary Culture

Culture is a very difficult word to define. As a school teacher I have heard teachers explore it in terms of ‘biological culture’ (the structure we grow up in and which, partly at least, determines our growth) and in terms of history, politics, art and economics. One very interesting way to define it comes from Raymond Williams (1980). Williams maintains that culture is best thought of as ‘ordinary’. In this way we avoid paying too much attention to cultural objects, or to aspects of religion detached from time and space. We avoid reducing religions to a set of dogmas or rituals or, for that matter, truth claims, without thinking about the social conditions in which religion comes into being and continues to develop. Williams also writes about the ‘selective tradition’. This is the process over time whereby some aspects of beliefs and practices are preserved, given special attention and some not. The idea that what survives does so because of the ‘test of time’ is problematic. ‘Time’, by itself can’t do anything. It is people and groups of people who make selections to create patterns of culture.

The historian Simon Schama says this about change:

‘there are moments when history is unobtrusive; when change arrives in a violent rush, decisive, bloody, traumatic; as a truck-load of trouble, wiping out everything that gives a culture its bearings – custom, language, law, loyalty.’
(Schama, S. (2000) *A History of Britain: At the Edge of the World? 3500 BC – AD 1603*. Talk Miramax Books.

Through legislation and custom, law and loyalty, change and continuity are woven into the development of the world’s cultures. What children and adolescents need is not a framework which writes the whole of this process *out* of their understanding but one which writes it *in*. They are quite capable of understanding, for instance, at least some of the current international debate about whether beliefs and religions should be taught in state maintained schools at all – and they would find it interesting to study how this situation has arisen. We should *never* reply, in other words, to that insistent student’s cry: ‘Miss, why do we have to do this; I’m not religious,’ with the words: ‘because you just have to’ or, even worse: ‘I know you don’t understand now, but you’ll find it very useful when you grow up!’ No media savvy adolescent, aware of the fast changing world around them and aware, too, of the ‘shadow’ side of all religions, is going to swallow that line.

Difference and Diversity

Thinking of culture as ‘ordinary in its difference’ would help teachers challenge any student’s expectation that there is some ‘norm’ of practice to learn about and from. They could teach them, instead, through repeating tasks set around understanding ‘key’ concepts, how to manage, in their own thinking, ideas about the *processes* through which that diversity of beliefs and practices emerges. They can do this, in any classroom, if we focus them, with the help of key enquiry questions (see the teacher’s planner on page 16), on the ‘big questions’ which lie behind any study of theology and philosophy (including ethics). These include big questions about the *significance* of events (e.g. the Haskalah in Judaism), about *cause and effect* (e.g. what are the causes of contemporary migration across Europe...and what might be its effects on belief and practice?), about *spirituality seen as ‘relational consciousness*’ (see study booklet two) and about *change and continuity* (e.g. what has changed and what remains the same today in Christian understanding of the Bible as the ‘revealed word of God?’). Underlying all four of these concepts lie Kant’s primary concepts of time and space. (Kant 1771). Teachers who understand the relation between time, space and ‘big questions’ about change and continuity, cause and

effect, etc, can also encourage their students to bridge their studies across into an awareness of what geography, history and a whole range of other 'time and space' related disciplines also contribute to an understanding of difference and diversity.

What has the 'positivist' outlook on knowledge to do with the study of beliefs and practices?

Positivism, defined as 'a philosophical system recognising that which can be scientifically verified or which is capable of logical or mathematical proof,' also has this secondary meaning: 'the theory that laws and their operation derive validity from the fact of having been enacted by authority or of deriving logically from existing decisions, rather than from any moral considerations (e.g. that a rule is unjust).' According to the first definition (the one which most obviously affects young people's attitude to religion), theism and metaphysics might be excluded from the contemporary curriculum or reduced to simply arguing, interminably, that science and religion don't necessarily clash. According to the second definition it becomes a valid enterprise, even in a positivist's mind, to study the processes by which beliefs and practices arise within ordinary culture. This is how the third study booklet works. Since all religious - and secular - beliefs and practices do indeed have internal ideas of authority behind them young people will understand the place of religions and other meaning-making structures in culture much more authentically if they learn something about the 'chains of tradition' which represent the logic behind religions' (and other belief systems') decision making processes.

Why teach about and from beliefs and practices in relation to the rise of modern scientific thinking?

How many school students understand how crucial the Enlightenment has been in the evolution of European thought about truth, proof and evidence? How many recognise the challenge to religious thought which came from the work of Charles Darwin, Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud? Making meaning, theologically, in post-enlightenment Europe was very different from making meaning pre-enlightenment. The Jewish *Haskalah* in Europe emerged as a unique thing, but that evolution was affected by the same cultural factors as were affecting all other European thought, at the time, too. Understanding the *Haskalah*, in turn, has importance for understanding the Holocaust. Everything links.

If we, as teachers, have studied theology or religious studies in UK or US universities since the 1970's we have, in the West at least, studied religions in a way which means we understand colonial and post-colonial debate (e.g. about the positives and negatives involved in 19th century missionary activity), how sacred texts can be studied, in some but not all, religions, from a 'scientific' point of view and what effect post modernism and secularism may



be having on what school students will take from those texts. It follows that, having gone through this process of study, graduate teachers would want to pass these

insights on. In practice, we often find very 'traditional' schemes of work still in place, where none of these issues are questioned and where, as a result, students still feel that 'confessionalism' is dominating their classrooms.

Why this should be so is a matter of some debate, but the most likely reasons will be either that teachers don't take the university level debate into their classrooms (perhaps, erroneously, believing that it is too difficult for young people to understand) or that the subject is too often taught by non- specialist teachers.

Part Two: finding cultural depth

Coming to know about a practice or belief, how it came into being and why it is important to those who continue to practise or believe it, can engage us, as adults, with it's meaning. But can this be done in the classroom?

In the scenario below we see schools students, aged between 13 and 17, taken on a journey of discovery which helped them develop empathetic understanding with a time and place. They learned not only the difference between a historian's and a religious studies perspective on an event, but also started to appreciate the *process* of making a curriculum. In this way they became aware that selection and choice of curriculum materials makes the curriculum a *social* construction – which can be altered. The fact that this group of students were so young, but handled this essentially 'meta' task so well is important. We often *underestimate* the fact that thinking hard about difficult issues can be very empowering – and being trusted that they can handle difficult challenges like this is a very welcome challenge for able students.

TASK 1

Read the two scenarios below. How do they compare with your current ways of teaching about the cultural context of beliefs and practices?

SCENARIO 1 (UK)

Raising the bar when teaching and learning about and from the Holocaust

Thirty five school students aged between 13 and 17 had been identified, by either History or RE teachers, as 'gifted and talented'. It was the middle of the Summer Term and they were being taken out of lessons to come together for a day and work out an answer to the question '*What should we teach about the Holocaust at this school?*'

Working with them were two experienced teachers (one history and one RE) and a group of teacher trainees from the local university (initial teacher education) course. Everyone (including every school student, teacher trainee and serving teacher) had read and made a short summary of an article by *Nicholas Kinloch* on how *he* thinks the Holocaust should be taught (from a historian's point of view). Teacher trainees worked, all day, with small groups of pupils looking at seven sections of a specially produced booklet which engaged with different ways of answering that question by problematizing issues (e.g. should history and RE teachers teach different things? Is teaching about the holocaust through film or first hand accounts better for students than learning about it factually? Should all school students in the UK visit Auschwitz?). Short presentations on each topic (by teacher trainees, 17 year old school students who had recently been to Auschwitz and the two experienced teachers) led in and out of related small group activities. Two teacher trainees set up a diamond nine activity where they showed how teachers might approach teaching such contested narratives – and told them what guidance teachers in the UK have to follow when they are planning to teach controversial issues, such as this, in the classroom.

School student learning outcomes

1. By the time the day was over, six schemes of work had been prepared, largely by the students, through almost one to one dialogue with teacher trainees.
2. Some backed, in the end, a 'historical facts only' approach and others validated approaches such as reading narratives (poems from the *Children of Terezín* or holocaust novels such as Elie Wiesel's *Night*).
3. All of them (from age 13–17) could give cogent reasons for their choices.
4. Most evaluated the day as particularly 'mega' (or the like!) because they had felt trusted by being given such a challenging task.
5. The school students had hugely enjoyed working with newly qualified university graduates.
6. They also valued highly the opportunity to be taught in such small groups.

Initial teacher education learning outcomes

1. The teacher trainees needed to be prepared for the day's work, themselves, through visits to the Jewish Museum in Camden, London and the Imperial War Museum's Holocaust Exhibition (UK context).
2. It was important for the teacher trainers to note that trainees did not themselves, initially, know all the background to these historical events.
3. We introduced them to the works of Wiesel and Levi, to working with film (and to media discussion about whether in this context it is desirable). Also to post Holocaust Jewish theology (see Narrative 8 for an example). Again, most had no prior knowledge of these writers.
4. They learned just how ably school students can rise to a challenge, given the right challenge – and were humbled by it. Many of them had assumed that the whole task would be beyond school students' abilities.

Cultural understanding, belief and practice: what was learned?

1. **Context.** An ability to consider, from a variety of points of view, how the Holocaust might be taught.
2. **Advanced information processing.** Presented carefully (through a study booklet), students managed to digest an entire field of enquiry in four hours. Do we sometimes set the bar too low for high achievers?
3. **Collaboration.** Collaborating in learning across ages and stages of education – and feeling personally validated by it – was important to everybody there. We all learned.
4. **Presentating advanced information.** Presenting the six schemes of work to senior managers after this day gave students another layer of responsibility – and one which both they and senior management took very seriously.

SCENARIO 2 (US)

Experiential learning

A group of 75 students, aged between 12–14, came together, with teachers, parents, community dignitaries and the media, to explore the commonalities and diverse experiences of their faiths. They came from an Episcopal Christian, a Jewish, and a Muslim school. The students worked with a book called *Jerusalem Sky, Stars, Crosses and Crescents* (Paudwal, M. 2005) and, as they found their commonalities, celebrated them through art and poetry. Their projects were exhibited in a beautiful local community centre, for all to see. The schools each hosted the whole group once during the semester-long interfaith project and then all gathered together for a final meeting and to see an exhibition of art work. During the semester, Muslim students shared their traditions in respect of prayers, holidays and holy books; the Jewish students invited their new friends to Morning Prayer and explained the traditions and history of Judaism and at the Episcopal school students went through the 14 Stations of the Cross and heard about Christian theology from the school's vicar.

Learning outcomes

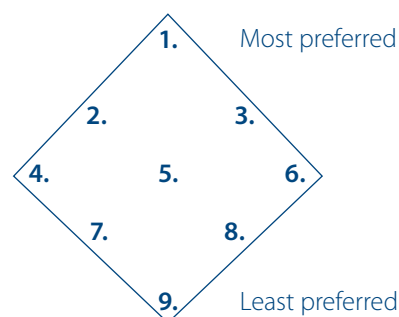
1. Peer teaching is often the key to opening up dialogue between different communities well. Why do we so often underestimate the significance of this fact?
2. Teachers are often reluctant to trust young people's intuitive ability to know how to make sense of what they hear – and have useful things to say in response to new experiences. Here they did – and the results were beneficial for three very diverse communities.
3. Students don't meet many people from other cultural contexts unless schools plan for them to do so. Networking matters.
4. Learning how to be and work collaboratively with others is important. Again, provide opportunities.
5. How much time are you spending in your school ensuring the e-safety of your school students? An ability to recognise *bias* in sources needs to be taught in all school programmes.
6. Experiencing how others think and act also helps students recognise the difference between what 'textbook' or other sources of information can teach – and what experience and encounter reveal.

TASK 2

Three tasks for you, your department or teacher trainees to complete

TASK 2.1 WHY TEACH CONTESTED HISTORIES?

Below are nine possible reasons for teaching about and from contested histories. Write each one out on a slip of paper and create a **diamond nine**. A diamond nine is a strategy for working out beliefs and values. You arrange the nine slips in a rank order, which looks like a diamond shape. So, place at the top of the diamond the reason you (or the group consensus) think is most important. Below that, put two important (but less so) reasons, then three you all agree with but find less important, then two even less important and finally the least significant reason. A good move is to see, as a group, if you want to reject one statement altogether and create a fresh one. Working with another person or in a group will lead to debate and clarification of values. (See also *Ten of the Best* for more examples of this technique).



Here are the nine reasons:

- It is impossible, today, to deal with controversy in any other way.
- Skills for thinking 'reasonably' can be developed.
- A sense of historical perspective can, should and must be developed by all school students. It's part of their educational entitlement.
- Students, if they learn in this way, will learn in a safe space. So they'll experience the fact that controversy need not be destructive of mutual understanding and collaboration.
- Students can clarify their own values about various aspects of the topic.
- It is useful as a way of helping students learn to write about contested histories – and so get better exam marks.
- It is useful preparation for living in 'liquid modernity' (see Part 3 of this section).
- It will lead students, from different faith backgrounds, within the school, to understand each other better.
- It will build students' confidence in the subject as having useful and relevant things to say about religion, culture and society.

You could create similar lists relating to other schemes of work you plan to teach. Choosing to debate your curriculum in this way is often very helpful. Historians call it 'professional wrestling' (and it can feel like that!). We do it because the wrestling creates a teacher to teacher dialogue. This usually results in students being exposed to much more consistent teaching across a whole department.

To think about when planning schemes of work which look at cultural understanding in relation to beliefs and practices:

1. What will be of interest to school students, both locally and globally?
2. What will support their learning most (given that the overall 'big idea' is to understand more about how beliefs and practices make and reflect on meaning in the world)?
3. What local resources (within the school community and beyond) can you call upon? How can you 'scale switch' between the local and the global to help school students understand difference and diversity?
4. What 'religious literacy' (or other cultural literacy) skills will be needed, if students are going to understand what beliefs and practices (including religious ones) are for?
5. How will you engage your students, empathetically, with each topic? How can you 'start where they are'?
6. What will challenge students' anticipated preconceptions and lead them most usefully into thoughtful reflection, exploratory talk and informed discussion of controversial issues?
7. How will each topic in each scheme of work need to be approached so that learning is inclusive of all students, all cultural backgrounds and all abilities?

TASK 2.2 FINDING CULTURAL DEPTH: A DEPARTMENTAL INITIATIVE

As a department, select a practice, from any religion which you all know about and which you find inspiring. Take the following steps:

1. Identify the most distinctive features of the practice.
2. In a group use some of these features as a starting point and create a new way of teaching about it.
3. Each teacher should try this way of teaching out and keep a journal noting their own and school students' responses.

4. Come together again and compare notes.
5. Again, pick the best features of each other's practice, noting which things did not involve the students much in the learning and which ones were clearly not understood well.
6. Refine and teach again.
7. Repeat the process until everyone is happy that you have maximised the 'cultural depth' of your scheme of work/lesson.

TASK 2.3 DEVELOPING DEPARTMENTAL TEACHING AND LEARNING. (PROCEDURAL NEUTRALITY).

Note: *procedurally neutral teaching involves using methodologies like community of enquiry, silent debate and corners debates. You will find explanations of how to use these methods in the methodologies section of this RE-framing toolkit.*

Think-pair-share

- a. do you know how to teach in a 'procedurally neutral' way? Why is procedurally neutral teaching different to 'neutral' teaching?
- b. do you think teachers *can* or *should* be 'procedurally neutral' when they teach, in professional contexts, about beliefs and practices?
- c. do you think it is a bad thing (for students' learning) if teachers don't share their views with everyone in lessons?
- d. do you think students want to know what *you* think about issues you discuss in class? Why? why not?
- e. do you think students need space and time to *develop their own ideas* without teachers telling them what *they* think?
- f. do you think lessons should be about *promoting* certain values? (not procedurally neutral) Why? why not?

Action research

Ask everyone in your department (specialist and non specialist) to use *one* of the 'neutral chairing' dialogic teaching methods mentioned in the *Ten of the Best* section during one lesson (same age group) in the next week. (Corners debates are the simplest to start with). Check that each teacher then asks their students, in pairs, to write down what they think about working this way – and what they think they've learned about the topic.

At your next department meeting

At your next department meeting look, together, both at each teacher's and at all the the students' responses.

What do you notice?

To think about:

Many teachers value these 'procedurally neutral' ways of chairing classroom activities because they think that they *do* allow more space for young people to reflect on their own values in their own time and at their own pace. Trusting young people's ability, at least some of the time, to think their values system out for themselves is a crucial part of supporting them as they go through schooling (particularly in adolescence).

Part Three: Liquid Culture

According to Zygmunt Bauman (2000) we live in the age of Liquid Modernity. Everything is fluid, changing and temporary, including our values systems (Bauman, Z. 2000). This may be another useful way of thinking about culture and cultural understanding. Bauman believes that it is ever more difficult to establish one stable identity as 'ours' or

'mine'. Amartya Sen, in fact goes on to extend this idea by suggesting that if we do not move quickly to a place of celebrating *plural identity* then identity related violence will ensue (Sen, A. 2006). It is not hard to see this happening as diversity within cultures threatens at times to overwhelm both individual and collective senses of identity. In the case of religious identities there seem to be two main responses to this fluidity. One is the move towards fundamentalism and the other is the move towards extreme epistemic relativism (e.g. There is no such thing as Hinduism there are only multiple Hinduisms).

You can see something of this fluidity in the flourishing of the 'religious kitsch market,' in the flourishing development of mindfulness courses in education and medicine and in the branding of goods 'religiously' (Buddha bath salts means 'relaxing' bath salts). Older students can find a way into belief and practice study through non conventional angles like this – and often find it very enlightening. It is, after all, where they live.

TASK 3

EXPLORING RELIGION – AND IDENTITY – IN LIQUID MODERNITY

Another example of teaching through observance of 'liquid culture' is to use narratives which tell the stories of people directly affected by it. (See Narrative 5)

Here is one to start you off.

1. Imagine this person walked into your classroom. What would you know about them from this description? How would you expect them to see religious beliefs and practices?

Influences	Examples
Religion	Plymouth Brethren, Anglicanism, Buddhism
Other world views	Humanism, Marxism, Feminism, Secularism, Freud
Time	Baby-boomer
Place	North and East England, Northern Ireland, India, Europe
Music	Plain chant, folk, jazz

2. Now read *Diversity – my story*. Which of these four factors do you think have formed David's identity most/least? (migrant histories, religious experience, family background, education).

job market, global warming fears.) Do you think this means that our students are emerging into a very different adulthood to previous generations? Why? Why not?

3. Are the students you teach now subject to the same factors? Name three other factors which you think are influencing them in culture? (clue: social media, global

4. What are the implications of these changes for teaching about and from beliefs and practices?

Diversity – my story

When we look back into our stories sometimes we find strange riches. My natural family (whom I have never met) were diverse and my family (whom I grew up with) were just as diverse. My natural family were Jewish, Lithuanian and Dutch, my adoptive family were Roman Catholic, Irish and English. I was brought up as a Roman Catholic and knew nothing about my Jewishness until I moved school at the age of 6. It was a surprise. Even though I was brought up as a Roman Catholic half of my family were Protestants, my mother being a convert to Catholicism. As I grew I started to explore my Jewish heritage and found that my father was a Sephardi Jew and my mother Ashkenazi. At first it didn't really mean much but I realised that somewhere in me there are Spanish/Portuguese roots and German/Polish roots. So I carry with me a diversity of heritage and culture.

As an adult this got me thinking about two things: firstly, where I belong; and secondly, what it has taught me about being human.

In terms of being human it has taught me not to generalise. I accept that there are traditions to which people belong, ethnic, cultural and religious; but I also accept that there are intersecting lines which cross through us. In this way we don't just receive traditions; we make traditions. Hence, when someone asks me about a religion I always pose some questions back in return: what tradition are you talking about? Which ethnic or cultural group did you mean? Were you talking about gender? All of these questions enable the discussion to be about real people who do real things as opposed to ideas and systems that exist in books or in the mind. I am not denying that there are big ideas and systems of thought and practice but I think we need to see how these work in practise. When we talk to someone about their religion and they don't recognise what we're talking about we're in real trouble.

In terms of where I belong that is probably more complex. I feel at home in church or synagogue. I understand what to do in these places and can usually speak the language. I do belong to a community though; I'm not just a wanderer. For a variety of reasons I left the Roman Catholic Church, although I retain a great affection for it. For a time I went to synagogue, where I was made to feel welcome and at home. In the end I became an Orthodox Christian; somehow it felt natural. I belong to a Greek Orthodox Church where I worship but I also visit other Orthodox churches and communities on my travels. I even spent some time at an Orthodox monastery in Egypt. By becoming Orthodox I was not rejecting any of my background – well not in my mind – but becoming something new. In this way I have added to my own diversity and the diversity of others.

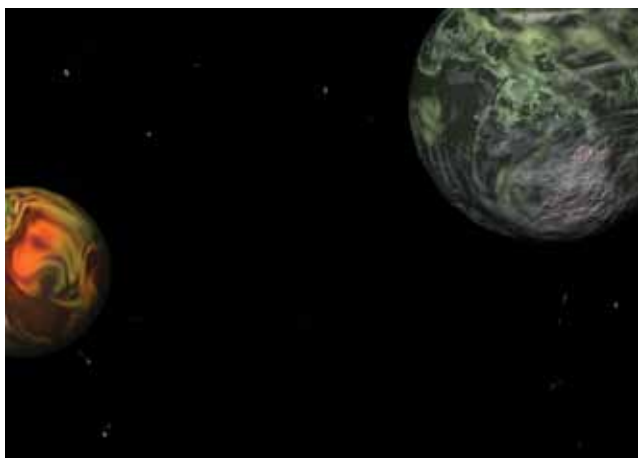


What I find funny is what other people make of my story. Some think I'm a wanderer looking for something that has always been missing. Others think I'm some sort of religious nutter looking for an answer to a question that isn't worth asking. For me there is only one story. Sometimes I read the story of my life and think how odd I am but at other times I see that it all makes sense. What I don't think, though, is that my story is unusual. Some psychologists think we are looking for a home which helps us to cope with our uncertain world, an anchor point. I'm not so sure. My Orthodoxy isn't about being safe although it is a source of deep spiritual strength – like the prophets of the Old Testament and the martyrs of the Church, or the Desert Fathers and Mothers.

So what? It is only when I reflect deeply on my own life that I can appreciate fully the lives of others. I don't judge others, God will do that, but I do appreciate that you can't simply put people into boxes and label them. For me Christ sees us as individuals, as can be seen in the story of the Samaritan woman in John 4: 1 – 42. He doesn't want the Samaritan woman to stop being a Samaritan he wants her to be only what she can be. I think Christ God sees us all in this way – celebrating our diversity. (See also Reader Narrative 5)

Part Four: Cultural engagement within contemporary schooling

Paul Willis (1990) asks, “how are the young already culturally energised?” This reminds us that young people come to school, or to any educating setting with both a culture of their own and the ability to learn. They will already, by the age of nine or ten, have explored a range of faith- and non-faith-based identities, reflected on these and been ready (or not!) to meet new experiences of this kind with critical minds. The challenge for teachers (particularly as they get older!) is that as individuals their own identity has also been formed by different cultural forces to those their students are experiencing. It’s hard, then to make the meanings of their past clear for students. (Green, L. 2002).



1. *as we grew up, associations have been rapidly made with what is seen and heard. These may have been positive or negative.*
2. *as we grew up we were involved all the time in inner deliberations. These meanings are ‘inherent’.*

Arguments have often raged, in the field of education in beliefs and values, about the unexplored territory described here. But those disputes have produced some very clear guidelines about what practice, in culturally very diverse situations, needs to be like, if it is to be inclusive.

1. teachers should use ‘inclusive’ rather than ‘exclusive’ language when teaching about and from religions (Sikhs believe, not I believe...)
2. teachers should encourage students to question beliefs and practices – with reason and empathy.
3. Teachers should consider, in their worksheets, using terms like C.E. (common era) and B.C.E. (before common era) rather than specifically religion contextualised terms like B.C. (before Christ) and A.D. (Anno Domini – in the year of [our] Lord)

4. ‘procedurally neutral’ teaching methods, such as community of enquiry, diamond nine and ‘corners debates’ need to be used by *all* teachers on occasion so that there are sometimes opportunities in lessons for students to clarify what they *think* not just ‘what tradition says.’

5. Commitment of a personal kind is just that (personal). It should not shape any one student’s experience of education too overtly or all the time. However commitment itself is not something any of us can teach without. So teaching good is building dialogic spaces where a variety of *different* commitments can be authentically explored.

And finally

Cultural identity, identity formation and issues of evidence, truth and proof need to be taken seriously when we study beliefs and practices. Recognising that these issues are very *difficult* to address does not indicate that we should not be doing it. But working out a *clear set of principles* for the venture is hard. The ideal, which we can point students to, even if, much of the time, we don’t achieve it, is to encourage proper *recognition* of the difference of what the other person or community is saying. Recognition involves both kinds of meaning. (Green, L. 2002). It challenges the associations which we all have, with beliefs and practices, from growing up within our own familial cultures. It interrupts our inner deliberations. Perhaps, then, like Biesta, (Biesta, G.J.J. 2013) we should call what we are trying to do a ‘pedagogy of interruption?’

This is part of what we are interrupting:

- experts differ in the ways they see beliefs and practices. (‘insider and outsider’ views can radically differ, for instance).
- the world is changing rapidly. Social networking is, for instance, almost replacing talk as a method of communication for some young people. It is deeply important, then, that, in school, students learn to carry their thinking into open dialogue with others.
- a study of certain ‘families’ of beliefs and practices (e.g. Islam, Judaism and Christianity) reveals interlinked concepts. Understanding the implications of these links helps students understand and recognise ‘family resemblances’ amongst these and other traditions. (as they are perceived to be) It also helps them understand how difference and diversity of belief and practice have come about within those traditions.
- ‘ordinary culture’ is where we all live – and understanding it helps everyone to live better *in* their own worlds.
- the underlying ideology on which many students now operate is that everything in belief and practice study is ‘just my opinion.’ This does not help them take the study of beliefs and practices seriously.

- it is a student entitlement to be taught well, by teachers who are up to date in debates within their own field of knowledge – and who maintain that ‘up to date-ness’ through attending relevant continuing professional development courses.
- many of our young people will enter the world of work in global contexts, not local ones. In all these settings they will encounter issues related to belief and practice. Being prepared to handle these is, again, part of any students’ entitlement.
- in ‘liquid modernity’ values can be perceived by students as ‘liquid’ too. They need to see clearly what changes and what remains largely continuous in different traditions or they will become ever more relativist in their thinking about them.
- teaching for and about citizenship in liberal democracies has to take account of the fact that family structures, students’ own upbringing and their personal ‘identity narratives’ are becoming ever more complex. (Narrative 5). This internal pluralism both helps many school students understand others’ beliefs and practices better – and encourages them to be interested in their identity as ‘plural.’ (e.g. Arab- Muslim- British; Chinese- Christian- American etc.) ‘Working this hyphen’ is therefore part of their ‘ordinary cultural instinct’ – and teachers who help them understand how this has come about are perceived by them as hugely valuable.
- religions differ in the ways they see themselves as ‘in culture’.
- many of us now live in societies which assume the triumph of positivism over religious thinking – and students need help to understand how this has come about.
- ‘symbolic language’, the dominant currency of religious thinking, is not thought by many, now, to have much currency in modern thought. Having a knowledge of how it works (an understanding of what metaphor, is, for example) gives students a greater grip on religious aspects of all cultural practices.
- practices centred on ‘tradition’ and ‘the holy’ are no longer taken for granted as being useful or useable ways of making meaning by all. The struggle to make sense of religion is difficult for many secularised students to ‘get’ if it is not explicitly explained.
- a lack of transparency on the part of teachers when it comes to discussing elements of ‘enculturation’ in beliefs and practices often confuses and angers school students – and worries teachers. Both are entitled to enter into critical debate about *how* and *why* some beliefs and practices (e.g. female genital mutilation) might now be considered bad even though they have, over long periods of time, been part of tradition.

Conclusion

Recognising that issues of cultural understanding can be very difficult to address does not prove that we should not teach young people about them. As teachers we all have, individually or collaboratively, to work out a clear set of principles for addressing contested narratives and controversial issues. Working tirelessly and consistently with these principles in class teaches students of all ages to develop *skills* for working with contested beliefs and practices and *deeper understanding* of culture itself. This process is valuable, educationally.

Bibliography

Advanced Learners Oxford English Dictionary. (8th edition) (2010). Oxford University Press. (Oxford).

Barnes, L.P. (ed.) (2012) *Debates in Religious Education*. Routledge (London and New York).

Bauman, Z. (2000) *Liquid Modernity*. Polity Press (Cambridge).

Biesta, G.J.J. (2013) *Good education in an age of measurement* (Paradigm).

Bhaskar, R.A. (2002) *Beyond east and west : spirituality and comparative religion in an age of global crisis*. Sage Publications (Thousand Oaks, CA).

Colledge, R. (1999) *Mastering World Religions* Palgrave Macmillan (Basingstoke and New York).

Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.) *The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues*. Sage (Thousand Oaks, CA), pp. 130–155.

Fine, M. (1998). 'Working the Hyphens: Reinventing Self and Other in Qualitative Research'. In N. K.

Gearon, L. (2013) *On Holy Ground: The Theory and Practice of Religious Education*. Routledge Research in Education (London).

Green, L. (2002) *How Popular Musicians Learn: A Way Ahead for Music Education*. Ashgate (Farnham).

Kant, I. (1998). *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by Paul Guyer and Allen Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kinloch, N. (1998) 'Learning about the Holocaust: Moral or Historical Question?' In *Teaching History*, 93, pp.44–6.

Mercer, N. & Littleton, K. *Interthinking: Putting talk to work*. Routledge (Abingdon).

Paudwal, M. (2005) *Jerusalem Sky, Stars, Crosses and Crescents*. Doubleday (New York).

Sen, A. (1991) *Inequality Reexamined*. Oxford University Press (Oxford).

Sen, A. (2006) *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*. Penguin (London).

Smart, N. (1989) *The World's Religions*. Cambridge University Press (Cambridge).

Volavkova, H. *I Never Saw Another Butterfly: Children's Drawings And Poems From Terezín Concentration Camp 1942 – 1944*. Schocken Books (New York).

Wiesel, E. (1982) *Night*. Bantam Books (New York).

Williams, R. (1980) *The Long Revolution*. Penguin (London).

Willis, P. (1990) *Symbolic Creativity*. Open University Press (Maidenhead).

Wright, A., Barnes, P. & Brandom, A.-M. (ed.) (2008) *Learning to Teach Religious Education in the Secondary School: A Companion to School Experience*. 2nd edition (revised) Routledge (London).

Further reading:

Thompson, E.P. (1993) *Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture*. The New Press (New York).

Williams, R. (1980) *The Long Revolution*. Penguin (London).

Study booklet two

Identity formation

Study booklet two: IDENTITY FORMATION



The idea of the Self in Hay and Nye relates to Jungian psychology which suggests there are two centres of the personality. The ego is the centre of consciousness, whereas the self is the centre of the total personality, which includes consciousness, the unconscious, and the ego. This idea is often represented by the symbol on p. 34 which indicates that whilst the ego looks like a self-contained little centre in the circle it is contained within the whole. The self, therefore can be understood as the greater circle which contains the ego.

Identity formation: what do we see through this lens?

The first thing we see is ourselves – or is it? Children's sense of *themselves* actually develops much later than their *sense* of the *other*. Their first 'other' is mother – and that mother (or primary care giver) they recognise through smell. Just as an art teacher teaches pupils, by observation, to look out at the world first, and then paint it, so young people learn most about self seeing themselves through others eyes. I know I am loved because my mother mirrors back love to me. I know I am abandoned or uncertain of my place in the world, because no one reflects love back. Sensation, and sensory experience matter.

An adolescent is not a tabula rasa (blank surface). He or she brings to adolescence certain psychological assets and also certain liabilities which have arisen from previous negotiations of life stages. These, according to Erikson, teach us from experience whether it's safe to trust the world and the other, whether it's safe to hold on to things or let go and whether it's ok to make (set out to find) and create (Erikson, 1984). In fact we've learned these things about ourselves in the world by the age of six, before schooling has really got going at all! Again, sensation, and sensory experience matter.

What, according to David Hay and Rebecca Nye, we have also learned by then is a very basic kind of 'relational consciousness' which, as the diagram above suggests, tells

us where we fit (or not) in the world of the other, what we 'think' about the world beyond us, how we relate to our physical environment and at a 'meta' level, how we relate to that 'something beyond' which is so difficult to describe. This 'meta' level includes fear of the dark, fear of the unknown and a sense of beauty; all seem to come to us well before any idea of God (or no God) in a specifically religious sense becomes *conscious*. What all this seems to suggest is that we understand relations with the other before we come anywhere near schools – and that our (often complex) relationship with 'the other' in late childhood and adolescence is affected by a relational consciousness (positive or negative) which we have previously developed.

For Hay and Nye, this means, basically, that the teacher has four major responsibilities:

1. Helping children to keep an open mind.
2. Exploring ways of seeing.
3. Encouraging personal awareness.
4. Helping them become personally aware of the social and political dimensions of spirituality.

Hay, D. and Nye, R. (2006.149)

It is from our understanding of these four responsibilities that the 'identity formation' element of this Toolkit emerges. It is also why we see learning to use the tool of narrative as key to meeting these responsibilities. Good story tellers, including the ones who gave us all the parables, wisdom stories, literature and poetry with which the world is filled,

know about other ways of seeing. Narrative supports learning because it addresses all four responsibilities. Telling stories draws students into their discourse of meaning.

In a lecture on the importance of poetry in education Michael Rosen makes the claim that reading poetry is almost the last place left on the curriculum where proper time and space is given to, among other things, reflection, imagining and appropriation of values. (Rosen, M. 2009). Imagine how impoverished education has become if this is true!

Working with children's psychological assets and liabilities

The psychological *assets* a child may bring to adolescence include:

1. A sense of knowing what it means to be 'listened to,' to feel one's views are being taken seriously (in little things, not only in big ones) and
2. A sense of not being pressurized to 'perform.' One writer puts it like this: 'a child needs to know that in the end there is no such thing as failure, only unreal expectations.' (Hutchison, *E. Gospel and Psyche*)

The psychological *liabilities* a child may bring to adolescence include:

1. Fear of being 'nobody,' with no experience of love, no sense of one's own substance, and no sense of one's own value.
2. Feelings of neurotic rather than 'true' guilt, which can develop through an individual receiving bad training (or no training) in values.
3. Fear of not being in the mainstream, for example being an introvert in a very extroverted society. Failure to handle this sort of fear can lead to an individual finding it hard to make friends, and sometimes to being bullied.
4. Fear of being unable to cope with the world: the world of 'them', of sex, of stress, of fighting for a job.
5. Failure to cope with any or all of these negative liabilities can lead an individual either to turn in on themselves or to become over-aggressive. (Earl, M. 2003.79)

Courses such as personal, social and health education, education for well-being, citizenship or 'every child matters' (UK 1990s) all try to help young people with this struggle, but just as sex education is too often just about the mechanics of contraception, and citizenship education is too often 'education *about* democracy not education *for*

democracy,' so religious education and social studies can both atomise an approach to teaching and learning about self, other, the environment and G-d (or the absence of G-d) and so miss the golden opportunity those courses give to address Hay and Nye's *four* teaching responsibilities.

Freedom's children – and values education

Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Gernsheim, in their book *Individuation* (2006), write about the effect on adolescents in Germany of what is variously called Late Modernity (Giddens, 1991), Liquid Modernity (Baumann, (2000) or Second Modernity (Beck). Traditional forms of religion are, at the very least, now strongly affected by the advent of late modernity, and at worst felt to be well past their sell-by date. For obvious reasons this Toolkit does not tend towards the latter understanding, but it does acknowledge, and even celebrate at times, the fact that teaching about and from others' beliefs and practices cannot be done in 2015 in the way it has been done in the past, simply because there is no 'access point' for many young people – not brought up with understanding or respect for religious values – to hang on to when there are now so few 'social and political' pointers to what *religious* belief and practice is.

"I grew up in a mining area. We were surrounded by families who voted a particular way because Dad told them to, women barely went out to work and contraception (the pill) had barely begun to impact on our ideas about loving and long term relationships. So I grew up in what Giddens would call a 'traditional' culture. It's all too easy for those brought up like this to think that young people today either have no values or are rejecting the values of traditional culture."

But Beck and Gernsheim say that the picture is actually rather different. Young people are not without a sense of values – they just relate differently to values and to value formation than I did fifty years ago. There is nothing wrong with that – but there is certainly something wrong with an education in this field which refuses to recognise it.

Let me leave you with their words. Do you think the students you teach fall into this picture?

[Young people today] find they face a world that no longer falls into two camps, but rather into a vast group of fracture lines, cracks and gaps among which no one any longer knows the way. The future has become multidimensional; the patterns of explanation offered by older people are no longer effective. . . There are many more riddles than solutions, and even the solutions, looked at more closely, prove to be sacks full of riddles.

Barbara Sichtermann in a commentary on North German Broadcasting (NDR), Hamburg, Sept. 1995

TASK

Looking at identity formation through understanding text

It is said that God asked the Angels to collect from earth all the different varieties of soil that existed – different colours, types, textures and origins, from valleys, mountains and every place. God then brought all these together in the creation of the first human, Adam.

Once his form was created, God brought Adam to life and drew him near. He then taught Adam knowledge of the types and names of things on Earth: *He taught Adam all the names of everything* (2:31), differentiating him from other creations by his knowledge and will. God asked the angels to honour this new creation: *Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: "I am about to create man from clay: When I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of My spirit, fall ye down in obeisance unto him* (38:71–72).

God then created Adam's partner, Eve (*Hawwa*), from Adam's own self: *O mankind! reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, his mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women; – reverence Allah, through whom ye demand your mutual (rights), and (reverence) the wombs (that bore you): for Allah ever watches over you* (4:1).



What themes would you connect to which parts of the story? Why?

There was a *jinn*, Iblis (Satan), who existed before Adam and had a lofty station with God, adoring Him with the angels. God presented Adam, the new creation, to Iblis and the angels, instructing them to prostrate to honour him. Satan however refused. *So the angels prostrated themselves, all of them together: Not so Iblis: he refused to be among those who prostrated themselves. (Allah) said: "O Iblis! what is your reason for not being among those who prostrate themselves?" (Iblis) said: "I am not one to prostrate myself to man, whom Thou didst create from sounding clay, from mud moulded into shape." (Allah) said: "Then get thee out from here; for thou art rejected, accursed, and the curse shall be on thee till the Day of Judgment." (Iblis) said: "O my Lord! give me then respite till the Day the (dead) are raised." (Allah) said: "Respite is granted thee till the Day of the Time appointed." (Iblis) said: "O my Lord! because Thou hast put me in the wrong, I will make (wrong) fair-seeming to them on the earth, and I will put them all in the wrong – except Thy servants among them, sincere and purified (by Thy Grace)." (Allah) said: "This (way of My sincere servants) is indeed a way that leads straight to Me. "For over My servants no authority shalt thou have, except such as put themselves in the wrong and follow thee" (15:30–42).*



See teacher's planning page: what question would you apply to this narrative?

WHERE WE HAVE COME FROM, WHO WE ARE,
WHERE WE ARE GOING

THE ADAMIC PRINCIPLE

PARADISIAL ORIGINS

THE PRIMORDIAL NATURE OF HUMANKIND

PRIMARY IDENTITY AS SPIRITUAL

PRIMARY IDENTITY AS DEFINED BY RELATIONSHIPS:
FIRST WITH GOD, THEN WITH OTHERS,
THEN WITH THE EARTH

THE GOAL OF THE JOURNEY

HUMANKIND'S DUTY

THE HUMAN AS COMPOSITE: OF EARTH,
SOUL, INTELLECT AND EGO

THE ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE

THE ENVIRONMENT AND ONENESS: ONENESS IN
ORIGIN OF ALL LIFE HERE, ONENESS AS THE GOAL
OF OUR TREATMENT OF EARTH

DIVERSITY

WHERE WE HAVE COME FROM, WHO WE ARE,
WHERE WE ARE GOING

THE ADAMIC PRINCIPLE

So the first sin – saying ‘I am better’, the arrogance it entailed and Satan’s lack of true knowledge and love for God’s unseen wisdom, began the battle humans face today daily between the ego and the spirit: the challenge of removing those veils that prevent real relationship with God.

Together Adam and Eve lived in Paradise, the Garden of Eden, enjoying each other’s company and immersed in the knowledge of God and His pleasure upon them. They were warned, however, not to eat of a particular tree: *We said: “O Adam! dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden; and eat of the bountiful things therein as (where and when) ye will; but approach not this tree, or ye run into harm and transgression”* (2:35).

Satan however had vowed: *“Because Thou hast thrown me out of the way, lo! I will lie in wait for them on thy straight way: then will I assault them from before them and behind them, from their right and their left: Nor wilt Thou find, in most of them, gratitude (for Thy mercies)”* (7:16–17).

Satan knew well the weakness of human beings and their lack of knowledge of their enemy. He influenced them and occupied their thoughts until they forgot God and succumbed to eating of the tree. After this, they were sent from the Garden to Earth. Adam and Eve, in deep regret and repentance, earnestly entreated God for forgiveness: *They said: “Our Lord! We have wronged our own souls: If thou forgive us not and bestow not upon us Thy Mercy, we shall certainly be lost”* (7:23).

(Allah) said: “Get ye down with enmity between yourselves. On earth will be your dwelling-place and your means of livelihood – for a time. He said: “Therein shall ye live, and therein shall ye die; but from it shall ye be taken out (at last).” (7:24–25).

Thus began Adam and Eve’s life on earth, where they tried their hardest to remember God (*dhikr*), live in consciousness of Him (*taqwa*) in all their affairs and interactions – seeking a return to their Paradisal relationship and state, and preparing for the final return.

PARADISIAL ORIGINS

THE PRIMORDIAL NATURE OF HUMANKIND

PRIMARY IDENTITY AS SPIRITUAL

PRIMARY IDENTITY AS DEFINED BY RELATIONSHIPS:
FIRST WITH GOD, THEN WITH OTHERS, THEN WITH
THE EARTH

THE GOAL OF THE JOURNEY

HUMANKIND’S DUTY

THE HUMAN AS COMPOSITE: OF EARTH, SOUL,
INTELLECT AND EGO

THE ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE

THE ENVIRONMENT AND ONENESS: ONENESS IN
ORIGIN OF ALL LIFE HERE, ONENESS AS THE GOAL OF
OUR TREATMENT OF EARTH

REMEMBRANCE

GENDER IDENTITY



Imagine, for example, you used the Identity Formation lens to focus your enquiry and picked the question: **‘Why do beginnings matter?’** to clarify that focus. You are using this narrative as a tool to develop skill in handling ideas about self and other which come from Islam. What learning outcomes do you think you could expect if you planned a lesson in this way? What tasks could you set to help your students understand both the narrative and identity formation better?

You might think about beginnings here as defining human identity – Adam is showing human beings how to be human, and that knowledge, relationship with God and with others are essential to our identity. Humans are also meant to slip up – and recover. This affects our perspective on life.

‘Why should we look after the planet?’ might lead you to consider tawhid and the extension of that into the essential oneness of the origin of all Creation. Is everything supposed to return to God in a paradisaal state, both earth and humans?

So why do we need to teach about and from examples of identity formation?

1. Because students need help to appreciate that having a comprehension of identity formation in religious belief and practices helps you understand why people behave in the way they do.
2. Because 'symbolic language,' the dominant currency of religious thinking, is not understood by many people as carrying much weight in modern thought. Having knowledge of how it works (an understanding of what metaphor, is, for example) is hugely important if we want students to understand religious experience – and theology (reasoning about G-d).
3. Because lack of transparency on the part of teachers about where society's 'contested narratives' come from confuses and often angers school students. They are at least entitled to a shared understanding of the debate about culture, religion and identity as it affects their understanding of the other.
4. Because 'outstanding' professional practice has to be repeatable to be valid. This is not possible to do if teachers will not allow an honest debate about the conflicts and controversies which they see happening around them everyday.

Endnote



1. The ego, in Jung's psychology is within the self (see symbol). The self is therefore the entire psyche (both conscious and unconscious).

References

- Beck, J. and Earl, M. (eds.) (2003) 'Pastoral Care and the Work of the Pastoral Tutor', in *Key Issues in Secondary Education*. Continuum (London).
- Erikson, E.H. (1984) 'Adolescence', in Conger, J.J. and Petersen, A.C. (eds.) *Adolescence and Youth*. Harper and Row (New York).
- Hay, D. and Nye, R. (2006) *The Spirit of the Child*. Jessica Kingsley (London).

Websites

www.michaelrosen.co.uk/apologie.html (accessed December 6th 2014)



Identity formation as relating to self, other, environment and G-d (or the absence of G-d)

Study booklet three

Issues of evidence, truth and proof

Study booklet three:

ISSUES OF EVIDENCE, TRUTH AND PROOF

Introduction

Schools are the places where students *should* be learning to handle issues of evidence, truth and proof. In whatever area of the curriculum they are studying.

When they *have* started to understand they will usually say something like: I 'know' something about this topic or (adults) 'I have a grasp of this subject' or 'I understand some of the key ideas' (concepts). But what young people are *not* likely to say, at any age, is: 'well, I understood it all first time, so I don't need to go back to that class again,' or 'that field of enquiry is so straightforward. It's just too easy.' They certainly *won't* be saying, either, that: 'all the different thinkers, professionals and communities involved in studying this subject agree about what is *true* for them, what counts as *evidence* in the subject and how *proof* is established!'

Because issues of truth, proof and evidence *are* particularly contentious in this area of study, certain basic educational principles should be adhered to by teachers when they set up and routinize the basic classroom ethos. These principles include insisting that:

1. I will listen to you when you speak – and you will listen to me when I speak.
2. Truth claims, in the classroom, are subject to testing. Always.
3. We are *studying* this subject, not assuming that every truth claim is unassailably true without examination.

4. This study is worthwhile. Understanding issues of truth, proof and evidence is very important for everyone to attempt. We all live in societies where conflicts have arisen and will continue to arise because of differing truth claims. We need to understand why this might be so.
5. Truth, proof and evidence claims are made in *all* fields of knowledge in distinctive ways. Your study should teach you how to manage each distinctive attitude to knowing and understanding.
6. Taught well, no concept is too hard for students to 'get'.
7. Teaching and learning in this subject must be 'at least rational'.
8. Students should develop effective literacy in the subject. This means they should leave schools able to understand how to speak, read, write and listen to different aspects of the evidence, truth, proof, debate in this subject – and respond reasonably to it (see also Using the Toolkit page 6).
9. Philosophy (including ethics) and theology speak in different ways about issues of evidence, truth and proof. School students will flourish in their studies if they are taught how to handle each 'language' *distinctly*.
10. This subject is multi- disciplinary. Teachers need to understand elements of literary criticism, philosophy, anthropology, social science, history, classics, languages and art history/practice to teach it well. They should be prepared for this task professionally.

TASK 1

No concept too hard?

Look at the two pages called 'No concept too hard'. One version is blank. The other has been filled in to show you how it can be used. Before you begin, photocopy enough copies of the *blank* sheet to ensure that everyone can have their own copy. Refer to the sheet which is filled in, during the meeting or training session, so that everyone has an example of how it could be used. Ask everyone coming to your departmental meeting or training session to bring with them an example of a topic they will be teaching in the next half term which contains difficult abstract concepts

which students will have to learn about or from. Then run your training session or departmental meeting as follows: the imagined session is around half an hour long.

1. Decide on an example of a belief or practice where key concepts are being acted out.

An example would be the Buddhist practice of making and then dispersing the 'perfection' of a sand mandala. You can find a short video at www.youtu.be/IYVcjFhpsHc

2. For the next part of the session you need to agree on a group age, ability range and concept.
So, for instance, you might agree to think about this scenario.
 - a. *I've got to teach Buddhism*
 - b. *I'm teaching it to a mixed ability group of 30 students aged 12–13 years old.*
 - c. *The key concept I want to pick out to teach is ANICCA (impermanence)*

In pairs, read the following passage and use it to help you brainstorm everything you can think of about this concept.

The Buddhist Concept of Impermanence

1. Early Buddhism dealt with the problem of impermanence. This concept is known as anicca in Buddhism. According to this idea, impermanence is an undeniable and inescapable fact of human existence from which nothing that belongs to this earth is ever free.
2. Buddhism declares that there are five processes on which no human being has control and which no-one can ever change. These five processes are the process of growing old, of not falling sick, of dying, of decay of things that are perishable and of the passing away of that which is liable to pass. Buddhism however suggests that escape from these is possible through stopping craving.
3. Hinduism also believes in the impermanent nature of life. But it deals with this problem differently. According to Hinduism, impermanence can be overcome by locating and uniting with the center of permanence that exists within oneself. This center is the Soul or the self that is immortal, permanent and ever stable.
4. According to Hinduism, Atman is the fundamental truth that exists in every being, while at the microcosmic level it is Brahman who is the fundamental and supreme truth of all existence. He who realizes Atman becomes Brahman and doesn't die again.
5. The Buddha differed radically with this most fundamental concept of Hinduism and in line with his preaching the early Buddhists did not believe in the existence of a permanent and fixed reality which could be referred to as either God or soul. According to them what was apparent and verifiable about our existence was the continuous change it undergoes.
6. Thus early Buddhism declares that in this world there is nothing that is fixed and permanent. Every thing is subject to change and alteration. "Decay is inherent in all component things," declared the Buddha and his followers accepted that existence was a flux, and a continuous becoming.
7. According to the teachings of the Buddha, life is comparable to a river. It is a progressive moment, a successive series of different moments, joining together to give the impression of one continuous flow. It moves from cause to cause, effect to effect, one point to another, one state of existence to another, giving an outward impression that it is one continuous and unified movement, whereas in reality it is not. The river of yesterday is not the same as the river of today. The river of this moment is not going to be the same as the river of the next moment. So is life. It changes continuously, becomes something or the other from moment to moment.
8. Take for example the life of an individual. It is a fallacy to believe that a person would remain the same person during his entire life time. He changes every moment. He actually lives and dies but for a moment, or lives and dies moment by moment, as each moment leads to the next. A person is what he is in the context of the time in which he exists. It is an illusion to believe that the person you have seen just now is the same as the person you are just now seeing or the person whom you are seeing now will be the same as the person you will see after a few moments.
9. Even from a scientific point of view this is true. We know cell divisions take place in each living being continuously. Old cells in our bodies die

and give place continuously to the new ones that are forming. Like the waves in a sea, every moment, many thoughts arise and die in each individual. Psychologically and physically he is never the same all the time. Technically speaking, no individual is ever composed of the same amount of energy, mental stuff and cellular material all the time. He is subject to change and the change is a continuous movement.

- 10.** Impermanence and change are thus the undeniable truths of our existence. What is real is the existing moment, the present that is a product of the past, or a result of the previous causes and actions. Because of ignorance, an ordinary mind conceives them all to be part of one continuous reality. But in truth they are not.

- 11.** The various stages in the life of a man; childhood, adulthood, old age are not the same at any given time. The child is not the same when he grows up and becomes a young man, nor when the latter turns into an old man. The seed is not the tree, though it produces the tree, and the fruit is also not the tree, though it is produced by the tree.

- 12.** The concept of impermanence and continuous becoming is central to early Buddhist teachings. It is by becoming aware of it, by observing it and by understanding it, that one can find a suitable remedy for the sorrow of human life and achieve liberation from the process of *anicca* or impermanence.

Now fill in the box at the top right hand corner of the blank sheet overleaf together. (Brainstorm box)

- 3.** Think again about what the key concept you are teaching is (ANICCA) and look at your brainstorm of ideas about what that concept means. Compare your ideas with others' too, if you want. Then think, together, about the group of students you are going to teach. What is it, *in their own experience*, which students in that class might find *easy* to understand about the idea that life isn't permanent? Making the ABSTRACT concept CONCRETE in this way is key.

Clue: paragraph 11 above.

- 4.** What might they find difficult?

When you've thought about this, too, fill in the box labelled 'what is it that the student is aware of (in their own experience) and might find useful in helping them understand?' Also the one labelled 'best thing in student's experience to crack the concept'. EXPERIENCE is the link you engage students with (of any age) to help them 'crack' a concept. It is key to teaching and learning about ABSTRACT things very CONCRETELY. Doing this makes sure that no concept *is* too hard.

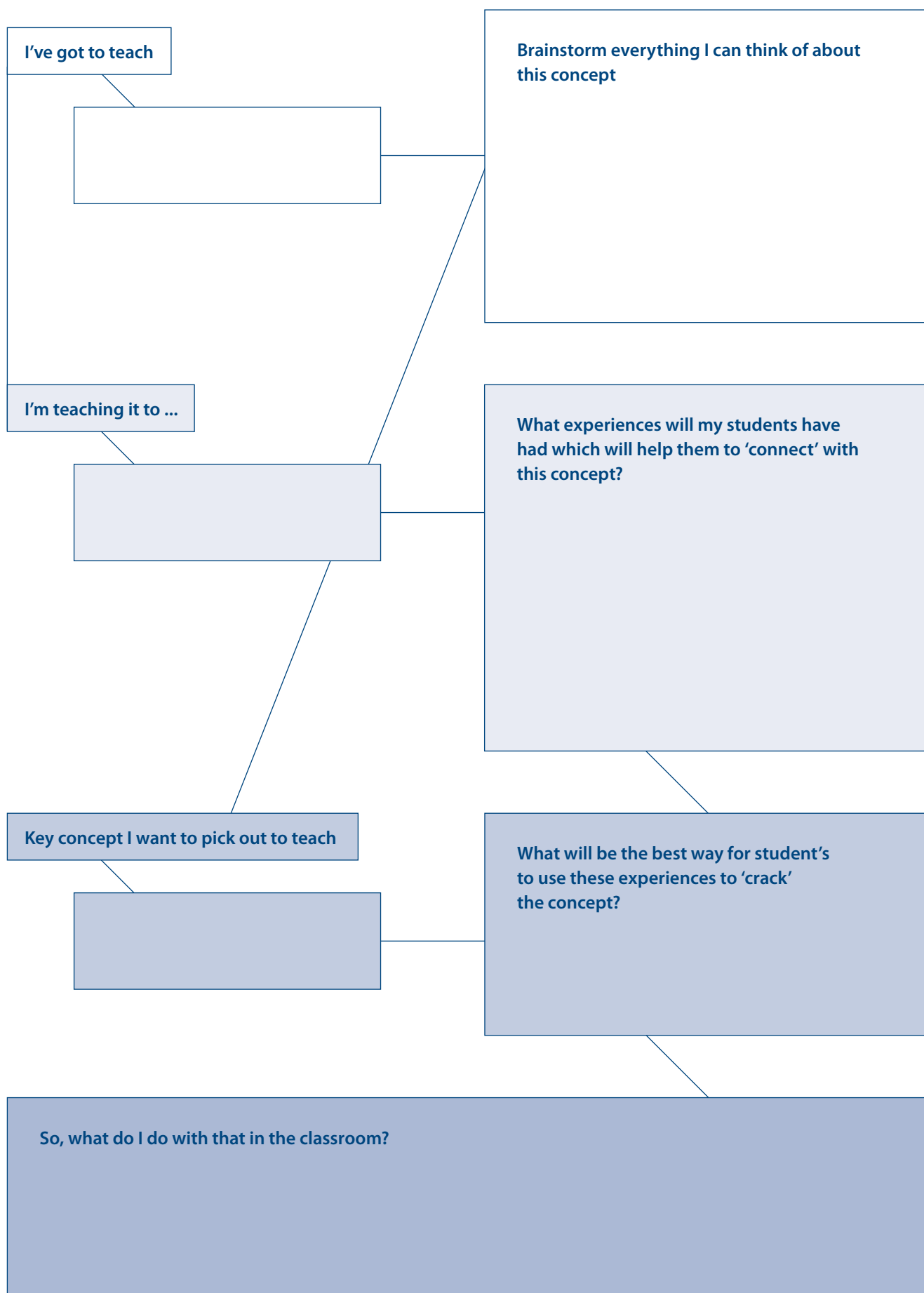
- 5.** Compare what you have written with the work of another pair. See if you have the same perceptions about what that particular group of students with that particular range of abilities, might find easy – and hard – to understand.

Now look at the last box. Given all that you now know – what are you going to do in the classroom?

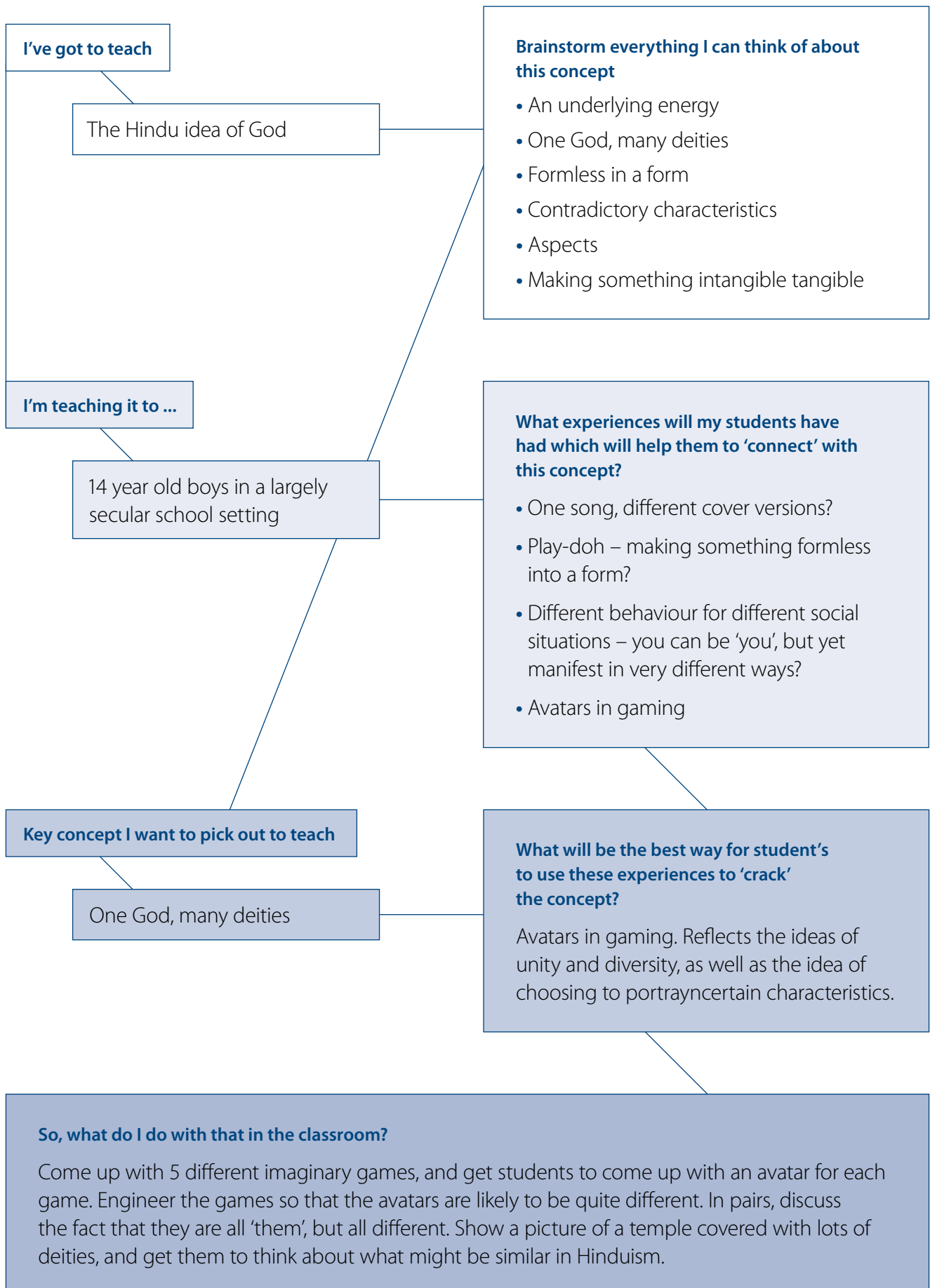
- 6.** Imagine a one hour lesson with this group. What will you teach? What will be your pupil learning OBJECTIVES? What will the lesson OUTCOMES be (for students)? How will you know whether students have understood what ANICCA, as a concept, means both within Buddhist tradition – and in their own experience? It's probably best for every pair to plan separately, but leave time at the end of the session, then, to agree how you will take this planning forward. Will you, now, devise *one* lesson which everyone will teach to that age group?

Useful resources: pictures of yourselves aged 1, 4, 12, 15, adult. (Students can bring their own photos in, too).

NO CONCEPT IS TOO HARD



NO CONCEPT IS TOO HARD



TASK 2

Look at the resources on the next page and then see if you can answer the following questions.

- If you look at the level of expectation (about learning subject knowledge) in these resources, does it match the level you would expect of your own 11–13 year old students? Why? Why not?
- What steps have been taken, here, to ensure that the knowledge is authentic to the tradition(s) of belief and practice it comes from? (e.g. the use of key terms, inclusion of 'insider' views, inclusion of authentic decoration and images, pictures and descriptions of contemporary situations). Do you think that any other steps could have taken to ensure that the resources inform students, reliably, about the topics they address? Why/why not?
- Where do you, normally, expect to get your subject knowledge from? Of the ten sources below, which do you most favour and which do you favour least? Why?
- If you are studying this booklet with others in your department, you might like to try this ranking activity together. To do this decide which of these ten ways of finding information are most *reliable*.
- Now use Sample Resource 2 to help you plan a way to show students what you expect them to do to show that they have understood a theme or topic.

From scholarly books	From reality TV	From children's books	From 'insider' sources	You should always work from primary sources
From news items (e.g. TV or newspaper)	From textbooks	From visits to places of worship (or similar)	From your own travels (or those of friends etc.)	From the local rabbi, priest, imam or other 'authority' within the tradition

Sample resource 1: working with primary and secondary sources



Muslims do not decorate the interior of a mosque with any human or animal designs. They use abstract patterns and calligraphy – decorative forms of Arabic writing.

Mosque walls may be decorated with patterns. Some are mosaics; others are drawn in plaster. There may be words as well: sentences taken from the Qur'an.

Often, only men go to the mosque. But, today, women attend services more than in the past. They stand separately from the men so that men and women don't distract each other. During prayers, Muslims are not allowed to touch someone of the opposite sex. In some countries, mosques have special areas for women.

This man came across a group of Muslims during his travels. Read what he says about that meeting and then answer questions 1–10.

As we walked along the hot, dusty road, we heard a strangely beautiful chant fill the air about us. Passing through a group of trees (we saw) on a high wooden tower, a blind Arab, in a white turban. The words, which we did not understand, fell upon our ears. Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar, La ilaha illa 'i-lah. (there is no god but God)

Now we noticed that a great number of people were beginning to assemble. They spread long mats upon the ground. The people took off their shoes and sandals and formed long lines, one line falling in behind the other.


We were amazed that no distinctions of any kind were to be found in the congregation. Here were white men, yellow men, black men, poor men, wealthy men, beggars and merchants, all standing side by side with no thought of race or social status in life. Not one person looked away from the mat in front of him.

1. In a mosque today, what is that 'wooden tower' called? (Reader narrative 13)
2. What is its *significance* in Islam? (why is it important?)
3. What job was the blind Arab doing – and why was he saying those words?
4. How did the people know when to assemble (meet together)?
5. Why do you think that the Muslims didn't look at other people when they prayed – but only at the mat?
6. What do you think a Muslim would do if no water was available to wash in before prayers?
7. What would they do if they were in an aeroplane at the time for Salah? (prayers).
8. How often do Muslims pray during the day?
9. What are Jumma prayers?
10. Why did the Muslims 'spread long mats on the ground' before they prayed?

Sample resource 2: helping students write about what they know. What task would you set?


PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER!

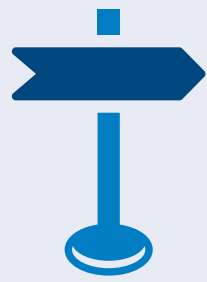
Create a picture which shows your understanding of the teleological argument.




Question

Based on your understanding, does the teleological argument provide a convincing rationale for the existence of God?






HOW WILL I SHOW WHAT I KNOW?



Talking Points

- Evolution explains how all living things have come to be 'designed'.
- Science reveals the Laws of Nature, which show evidence of design in the universe.
- Design may imply a designer, but not necessarily God.
- If there is a Telos, an end, then we are not truly free.



Our Aim

To demonstrate our understanding of the teleological argument and its criticisms, and to justify our reasons for our views.

Things to include:

- Key Terms: Telos, design, complexity.
- Show examples (maybe certain examples can provide evidence for either position?)
- Try to make connections between ideas.

Sample Resource 3: Thinking outside the box: creativity and self-expression

Read this poem. Then, on your own, with a friend or in a small group:

Imagine you have a box. It contains all the most precious things you've learned so far. You may have learned them in school, or by reading, or from social media or on holidays. Draw or make the box, decorate it any way you like – and then imagine, if you opened it, what would be in there. What are the most precious things you know? Why are they precious to you? Draw or make those things, too – and put them in your box. When you've finished, choose somebody you want to share your boxful of 'knowings' with – and show them what you have made.

Two Kinds of Intelligence

There are two kinds of intelligence: one acquired,
As a child in school memorizes facts and concepts
From books and from what the teacher says,
Collecting information from the traditional sciences
As well as from the new sciences.

With such intelligence you rise in the world.
You get ranked ahead or behind others
In regard to your competence in retaining
information. You stroll with this intelligence
In and out of fields of knowledge, getting always more
marks on your preserving tablets.

There is another kind of tablet, one
Already completed and preserved inside you.
A spring overflowing its spring-box. A freshness
In the centre of the chest. This other intelligence
Does not turn yellow or stagnate. It's fluid,
and it doesn't move from outside to inside
Through conduits of plumbing-learning.

This second knowing is a fountain head
From within you, moving out.

Rumi

TASK 3

Making progress in learning

Students want and need to know that they are making some kind of progress in learning – and that they are learning about and from something which matters. So monitoring (at least) and formally assessing (at most) their learning is important. In this section we are assuming that you are always teaching your students to evaluate truth claims, understand different ideas about proof and talk reasonably¹ with others. But how can you ensure that they *are*, in fact, learning?

a. Learning to think about....

One way you can build progress in *thinking* into your teaching is to help students, over time, to challenge the evidence base used by others in a 'ritualised' way. A first step might be learning to pass or hold a stone in order to express an opinion or make a statement, since this teaches very young children how to take turns in discussion. At the other end of the journey is the eighteen year old who is able to enter in to reasonable discussion²

about issues of evidence, truth and proof not only with their peers, but also with adults in their own communities and, if they wish to pursue their studies further, with academics in a particular field. Here are the steps you might encourage school students to take in order to manage their learning from age 8–18. Does this match your own understanding of what students should be able to do?

Age	Most school students
7–8	Learn to pass or hold (a stone; an object) in order to express an opinion/make a statement, or listen to a speaker. They learn, too, to respect what others say, how to say 'I agree (or disagree) because.... and that it's ok to say 'I'm not sure yet but I think....'
8–9	Learn to chain their remark(s) so that what they say reflects or builds on the previous speaker's comment(s).
9–10	Learn to devise meaningful (open) questions.
10–11	Learn to devise a variety of answers to an open question.
11–12	Learn to engage discursively with sources (primary; secondary) – and know the difference. Learn to understand that these sources are of different types e.g. history, poetry, scientific theory and that they lead to different understandings.
12–13	Learn to produce a critical response autonomously (reliably, without guidance, or in small groups), using evidence which progresses the argument.
13–14	Learn to devise group conclusions, which may be provisional (we agree to the extent that x, but not about y). Understand how difference and diversity arise in interpretation of sources.
15 +	Learn to work with interpretations of (hermeneutics) a variety of sources, e.g. handling contested narratives and negotiating thoughtful ways through controversy.

b. Learning to access and engage with

Key enquiry questions, as we have said elsewhere in this document, enable teachers to provide both an aim and a focus for students' learning. They allow teachers both to *inform* students (with accurate, up to date, subject knowledge) and also teach them the skills they then need to *process* and *communicate* that knowledge.

So 'key' means two things. Firstly, it means *authentic in the tradition and essentially part of its meaning making structure*. That means that the question should be genuinely valid in the discourse you are studying (theology, philosophy/ethics). A key is a device that opens doors so a 'key question' is also *strategically essential*. It is a practical way, with school students, of opening up avenues of enquiry which might not otherwise be accessible by them.

For example, imagine you are teaching 11–14 year olds about Jerusalem as a city of 'contested narratives'. Just

calling your scheme of work **Jerusalem: a city of contested narratives** would tell the students what they will be expected to know about the topic. A key question for your unit of work might then be: **Sacred Places – Jerusalem: coexistence or conflict?** and a key question for the *first lesson* in the series might be *'What makes Jerusalem a sacred place?'* Teaching your school students that they can always expect that their studies will begin with a key question and end with assessment of their ability to understand key concepts, helps raise expectations for study – and makes the learning experience much more productive. It also gives them, over time, the tools to work independently – and own what they learn for themselves.

Asking key questions unlocks all sorts of ideas. Look at the list of questions below and, fill in a 'no concept is too hard' chart (page 39) to show how you might teach one or more of them.

Age	Key questions
7–8	Why is prayer important to Muslims?
8–9	Is Easter a festival about new life?
9–10	What makes the lighting of the Havdalah candle important for Jews?
10–11	Can everyone be enlightened?
11–12	What happens when we die?
12–13	How do Sikhs express their belief in the oneness of God?
13–14	Is this world all there is?
14–15	Is there a single Jewish identity?
14–16	Is it correct to say that Hindus are polytheistic?

c. Learning to understand what learning is in this field.....

As young people grow they need to understand that they can study by themselves. The tools you give them, through dialogic teaching and from working with narratives and key questions, enables them to 'crack into' concepts. They do this, firstly, with support (often called scaffolding). But then they need to practice losing the scaffolds and going it alone. You help them do this by:

- Setting good enquiry questions.
- Attaching the criteria for success to the task itself (e.g. you must use two reasons...)

- Always marking or monitoring work according to those criteria (standardisation).
- Teaching school students to peer or self-assess work, at least some of the time, according to these same criteria (even though you will cross moderate the marking yourself, of course).
- Commenting on their work using the same criteria.
- Setting each student targets (related to the criteria) and setting up the expectation in every class that when they undertake their next enquiry the standard of their ability to handle various study skills will go up.

Age	Enquiry skills which can be systematically developed over time
7–8	Listening to a variety of stories (e.g. one per pair) and picking out the main ideas. Reading a variety of books or e-sources (in a group if necessary). Writing short notes, recognising symbols for religions and different types of religious literature (Qur'an, Hadith etc.). Using an index or finding places in 'sacred' books from a contents page.
8–9	Extending and where necessary revisiting the skills above and learning to write (pair drafting helps as a first stage) for different 'audiences' e.g. letter to a rabbi (virtual) about a problem or postcard to a friend about going on pilgrimage to Walsingham. Trying out P4C activities to start an enquiry off (i.e. teaching them to refine the enquiry question).
9–10	Extending and where necessary revisiting the skills above plus group study (jigsawing and envoying as a way of solving a big problem in small ways) e.g. why did science, many years ago, often conflict with Christian ideas about the world? Using talking points' to focus independent enquiry questions even further.
10–11	Extending and where necessary revisiting the skills above plus learning to <i>study for longer periods alone</i> . Homework, used well, can produce this skill, but teachers need to make the <i>homework purposeful</i> for it to be of any value. Try getting students to research something like 'what did your grandparents learn about religions when they were your age?' That way everyone has to bring something back to class – and the class can learn more because they have more <i>primary data</i> . Doing this sort of exercise with a class is fun but it is also <i>raising students' expectations of study</i> in this field.
11–12	Extending and where necessary revisiting the skills above. Asking students to understand 'bias' in e-(and other) sources. Teaching them to navigate the web safely (avoiding BNP or Islamist sites, for instance) giving them responsibility, in groups or individually, for 'original' research (e.g. who killed Tollund man? so that they start to understand how we know about the past. Finding out about the skills of scholars such as archaeologists and linguists in uncovering the dates of artefacts (carbon dating) and the significance of those findings for the development of understanding in the field.
12–13	Extending and exploring in more breadth and depth the skills above. Exploring a belief or practice via scale switching (macro and then micro study of the practice in two countries), by comparing two religions' view on the same topic or by looking for the 'big picture' (significance of) ideas (e.g. the teleological argument for the existence of G-d).
13–14	Extending and where necessary revisiting the skills above plus introducing more extensive 'cognitive dissonance' to the study e.g. is Buddhism a religion?
15 +	Extending and where necessary revisiting the skills above plus introducing more 'meta' elements to the study e.g. how should we teach about the Holocaust?


d. Planning lessons ...

Below is a sample lesson centred on the figure of the Dalai Lama. It is a lesson for students aged only 9–10 years old, but this teacher skilfully ensures, even at this age, that critical enquiry is going on throughout the lesson – and that there are ways of *monitoring* students' developing understanding built into the process. All the highlighted words indicate where the teacher expects

thinking to be happening – and thinking which is going somewhere. This thinking is related to the eventual end point of the lesson where students reflect on what they have learned (in relation to the stated learning objectives). 18 year olds would have all these skills in abundance if they'd been learning them, consistently, from age 9 or 10!³

Subject: Religious Education Topic: Buddhism		Ages: 9–10	
Learning Objectives:		Learning experiences:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learn about the Dalai Lama and his position in the Buddhist world• Understand that Buddhism places great emphasis upon peace, respect and compassion – and consider why.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hear and discuss a short video that illustrates key values in Buddhism. Learn about significant aspects of the life and teachings of the Dalai Lama.• Have an opportunity to discuss key values e.g. Whose teaching and example do you follow and why? What example would you like to set for others?	
Key Questions:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What does it mean to say that someone ‘practices what they preach’?• What key beliefs influence people’s faith and how do people of faith act on them?• How do you think that you might influence others by your actions?• What influence do you think the Dalai Lama has on Buddhists and non-Buddhists today?			
Teaching and learning activities:		Resources:	
<p>Introduction: (Whole group activity – don’t differentiate)</p> <p>‘Spot the leader’ Powerpoint. Use a series of photos of people who are leaders in different fields and ask children to identify them in their groups. Children answer in a short time using small white boards and pens and holding up their answer on your count of 3. Share info.</p>		<p>Interactive white board, small white boards & markers.</p> <p>Video factfiles and work sheets (see below).</p>	
<p>Whole group teaching: Introduce the Dalai Lama as the leader of the Tibetan Buddhists</p> <p>www.youtube.com/watch?v=20MnLcOL7Ks – a short part of a talk about compassion and respect.</p> <p>We find out what someone is like in 3 ways – by what they say, by what they do and by what others say about them (categorising). We are going to explore this in relation to the Dalai Lama [This is differentiated as the political views of the Dalai Lama are mixed. You may need to think about what kind of evidence we are studying.] Read Factfile together.</p>			

...Continued

Teaching and learning activities:	Resources:
<p>Activities for groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Group A should explore how what the Dalai Lama says shows the kind of person he is. b. Group B should explore how what the Dalai Lama does shows the kind of person he is – particularly in relation to his money. c. Group C should discuss the different views of the Dalai Lama that are shown in the Fact file. d. All groups should prepare a lotus flower for meditation, using one of the qualities of Buddhism that they admire in the Dalai Lama. 	<p>Lotus flowers (A3) and wax crayons, bowls of water.</p> 
<p>Plenary:</p> <p>Give time to share the work undertaken by the different groups.</p> <p>Allow time for the children to place their own flower on the water and watch it open slowly [use some gentle music] considering carefully their own position in relation to peace, respect and compassion. Children do not have to express their own views unless they would like to do so. Diversity is the key here – make sure that a range of opinions can be expressed using “I think ... because...” format.</p>	
<p>Extension challenge:</p> <p>How do we compare the value of different sources of evidence that do not agree? Compare and contrast the majority western and Chinese views relating to the Dalai Lama.</p>	
<p>Learning outcomes:</p> <p>All children will have learnt a little about the Dalai Lama and about how he is regarded in Tibetan Buddhism.</p> <p>Most children will be able to explain how the life of the Dalai Lama shows him to be a ‘man of faith’ and explain what evidence supports that view.</p> <p>Some children will be able to talk about the different views of the Dalai Lama held by different people.</p>	

e. Looking at outcomes

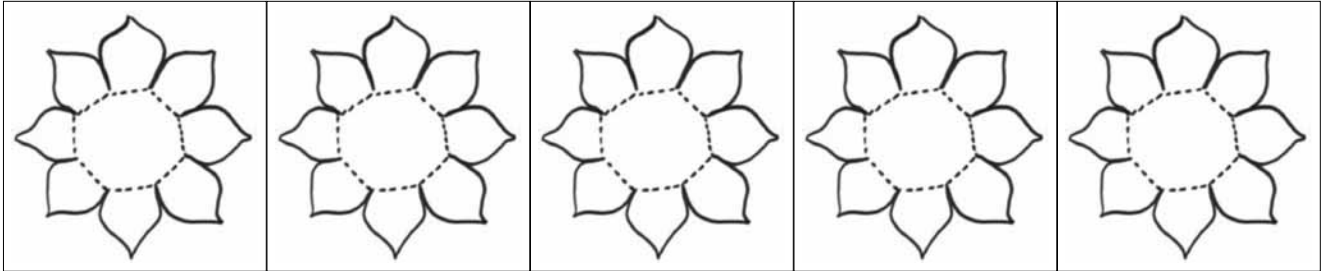
In this lesson there are not only activities which stimulate thinking but also one which stimulates *reflecting* on what the thinking has taught. These ‘learning from’ activities can lead into or out of critical thinking elements of a lesson. Since the nature of teaching in this field, at least in the mind of many of those who teach it, is to encourage the development of *both* sets of skills, such activities are appropriate. Be careful though, that you can distinguish, both for yourself and for those you teach, the difference between ‘being inclusive’ and ‘imposing ideas’ on those you teach – and so justify your choice of reflective activity both *professionally* and *educationally*.

Learning to set both authentically *and* strategically essential reflective activities can involve teachers in debating some tricky issues. For instance, you can’t call a role-play revolving round the elements of the Seder meal **The Seder meal** because by definition that can only take place in a very particular context and at a very particular time. But you *can* call it an educational activity (role play) strategically designed to help students understand an authentic tradition.

Lotus flowers lesson (a third lesson in a sequence of lessons about Buddhism)

Squares are cut out and distributed. Flowers should have a word added in the centre that names a desirable quality e.g. gentleness, kindness. Petals can be decorated if desired. The whole of the reverse side of each flower is then covered using a wax crayon. The flowers are then cut out and then cut down to the dotted line, and the petals are folded down in order over the writing. The flowers are then placed gently

in a bowl of water, with the petals upwards. The students should stand or sit around the bowl so that they can watch silently (or listen to gentle temple music). The flowers should float on the water, and after a couple of minutes, the petals will open to reveal the memorable words. You will need to adjust the size for younger children.



The Dalai Lama Factfile



- The name Dalai means Ocean, and Lama is perfect teacher.
- His name is Tenzin Gyatso.
- The Dalai Lama is the head monk of Tibetan Buddhism and traditionally was responsible for the governing of Tibet, China took control in 1950.
- During the 1959 Tibetan Rebellion the Dalai Lama fled from Tibet to India with thousands of followers.
- He is the first Dalai Lama to travel to the West, and has helped gain support for Buddhism and the Tibetan resistance movement.

What the Dalai Lama says:

- "Our prime purpose in this life is to help others. And if you can't help them, at least don't hurt them."
- "People think of animals as if they were vegetables, and that is not right. We have to change the way people think

about animals. I encourage the Tibetan people and all people to move toward a vegetarian diet that doesn't cause suffering."

- "We can never obtain peace in the outer world until we make peace with ourselves."

What the Dalai Lama does:

In 1989 he received the Nobel Peace Prize for Peace. What did he do with the money?

- a. He donated some for the many who are facing starvation.
- b. He donated some of it for some of the leprosy programs in India.
- c. He donated some of it to some programs working on peace.
- d. He donated the £1.1m Templeton Prize for his work affirming the spiritual dimension of life to Save the Children to support its work in India

What others say about the Dalai Lama (5m followers on Twitter):

- "Maybe the Dalai Lama is the only person who is totally honest." (Richard Gere)
- "His gospel of non-violence is the truly realistic one, with most promise for the future." (Nobel Prize Committee)
- "I don't think China will negotiate. I think they are waiting for the Dalai Lama to die." (Tenzin Choegyal, brother of Tenzin Gyatso)

f. What does it mean to *understand* what a religion is?

Whether you take religion to be a series of phenomena or a 'way of life' (or both) *understanding* one involves some ability to stand back from one's own experience and look directly at new possibilities.

These include:

1. The fact that for some, religion is a universal phenomenon – and a universally significant one – and for others it is not.
2. The fact that there are difficulties in defining some belief systems as religions (is Buddhism a religion?) – and there are some belief systems which do not wish to be described as religious (Humanism).
3. The fact that for some the only real way to understand a religion is to stand within it and, as a committed member of a faith community, to live it. The 'outsider' view of a religion is, therefore, always inadequate.
4. The fact that some people understand (some) religions as revealed truths and others do not.
5. The fact that some would argue that religions are responses to a universal aspect of humanity – which might be defined as meaning-making.

g. 'Truth claims' in public education

Whether you teach in a faith school or a state-maintained, secular based schooling system, your teaching has to be constructed – and delivered – in a way which ensures that every individual we teach is learning something, firstly, which is 'true'. So we assume that what we teach is based, as Plato would have it, on justified, true beliefs. When we come to teach about 'the other's' faiths it is not enough to try and find a way of doing so which makes them 'like' me (Christians are like Buddhists because...) nor to simply reconstruct them in a way which reduces their 'otherness', for social cohesion reasons, to nothing (we're all human so we should just get along together).

Take this 'conceptual map' of Christianity (see page 13) This was bravely drawn by a practising teacher – and could be used as a really useful classroom resource – but would every Christian agree that this represents Christianity? Probably not. That does not matter. Historians do not study all of history per se; they study historical ways of understanding the world. Similarly geography does not understand 'everything about'

geography but geographical ways of understanding the world. To *understand* beliefs and practices involves more than 'knowing about' them. In public education we have to ask questions which can be asked by all – and answered by all, too.

To think about: *The question 'does God exist' can be asked by anyone and everyone can understand how different religions might answer it. The question 'Is my view of who or what God is 'true' compared to another religions' view?' cannot, so, no matter how valid a question it may be in its own right, it cannot be a useful 'key question' to start an enquiry in a lesson with.*

To think about: *talking does not necessarily lead to learning taking place. Just getting a group of young people into a circle, giving them something to read and asking them to think how they might respond to it is never enough. Real dialogue involves extensive structuring. Our expertise as teachers in this field must lie in this territory. Such expertise has to be learned – not assumed.*

References

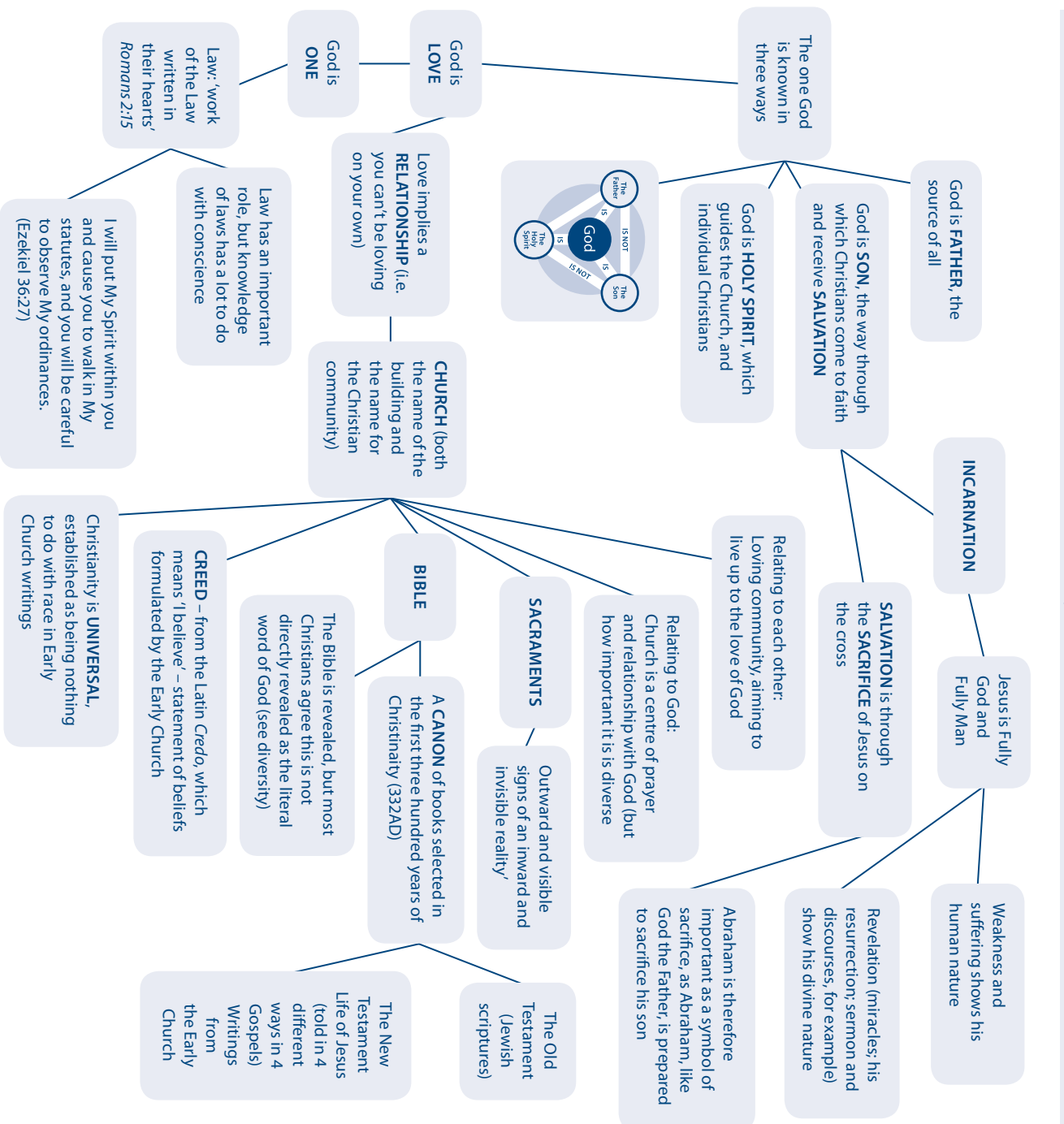
- Biesta, G. J.J. (2010) *Good Education in an Age of Measurement*. Paradigm (Colorado).
- Hay, D. and Nye, R (2006) *The Spirit of the Child*, Harper Collins. (London).
- Holm, J. (1975) *Teaching Religion in the Secondary School*. Oxford University Press. (London).
- Young, I. M. (2000) *Inclusion and Democracy*. Oxford University Press. (Oxford).
- Wilkinson, M. (2014) *A Fresh Look at Islam in a Multi-faith World: a philosophy for success through education*. Routledge. (Abingdon)

Endnotes

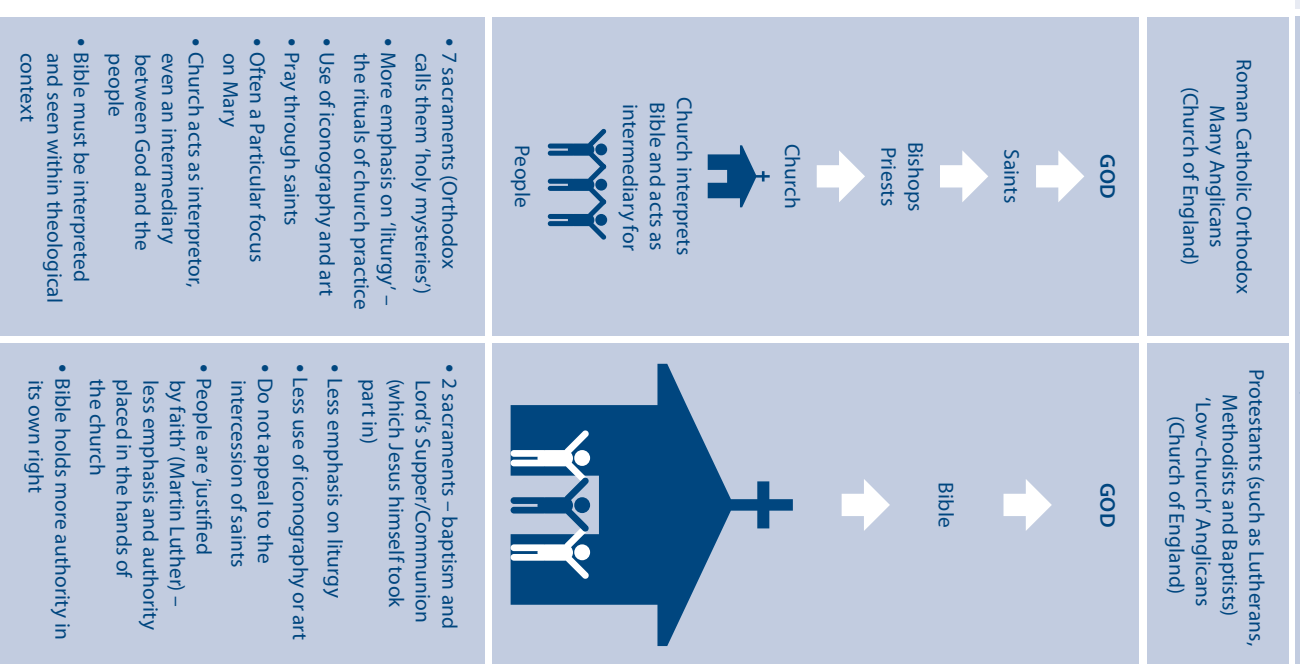
- 1 Reasonableness, as opposed to scholarly levels of *rationality* can be attained by everyone. In late modernity and particularly in the very diverse communities many of us now inhabit, good citizenship includes being able to work, within a framework of reasonableness, alongside others whose views of truth you do not agree with. The definition of reasonableness given here comes from the work of Young (Young, 2000, 26) who, says '**reasonableness refers to a set of dispositions participants have [rather] than to the substance of peoples' contribution to debate...**' '**what makes [people] reasonable is their willingness to listen to others who want to explain to them why their ideas are incorrect or inappropriate**' (quoted in Biesta, 2010, 115).
- 2 Lesson plan given by kind permission of Kite, P. 2015
- 3 For background information: www.primaryhomeworkhelp.co.uk/religion/buddhism.htm

A CONCEPTUAL MAP OF CHRISTIANITY

— Unity —



— Diversity —



Using the Toolkit

**Enquiring into meaning-making
(Beliefs and Practices)**

Using the Toolkit:

ENQUIRING INTO MEANING-MAKING (BELIEFS AND PRACTICES)

Introduction

Every schooling system has its differences as well as its similarities but in effect all of us who teach students aged between 8 and 18 share the following aims:

1. *We want our students to develop into young people who remain curious about the world and are still full of enthusiasm for learning when they leave school.*
2. *We want our students to flourish in the world (Aristotle's eudaemonia) and to find ways of 'being well' in the world. This includes, wherever possible, finding satisfying work, having, believing in and being allowed to express what they think and feel and developing relationships which support, sustain and nourish.*

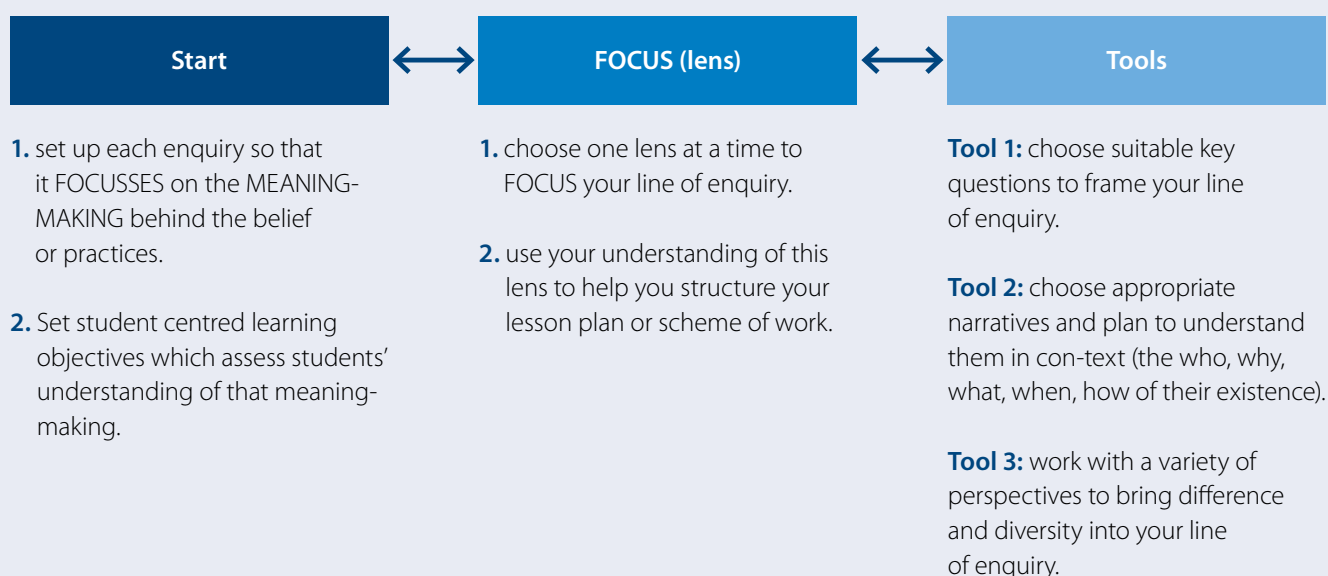
The RE-framing toolkit offers a way of *RE-framing* what you already teach so that these aims register more clearly with your students, other staff, senior managers and relevant inspection agencies (faith or state based). The frame itself is very simple. It consists of three LENSES (*three ways of looking*) which you can use to *focus* school students' learning on important aspects of the study of beliefs and practices. The three 'TOOLS' then help you, in any kind of school, to develop in your students what we have called 'effective literacy' (page 6).

Why Meaning-Making?

We have taken our theme as *Meaning-Making* because whether you work with school students who are strongly interested in beliefs and practices or not, whether they are academically able or not, what they are studying is the ways in which human beings make meaning out of the world they live in. We may differ in how we do this but we all do it – and people often become distressed, in fact, when they can't.

Religions are major examples of this meaning –making, but they aren't the only ways human beings make meaning. Some religions don't include a belief in God (Buddhism) and many other sets of beliefs and practices are founded on the belief that there *is* no God (e.g. Humanism). Characteristically, today, many people also mix and match their understanding of meaning so that it resonates more clearly personally. They do this whether or not doing so fits in with a traditional religious structure. For example someone may describe themselves as a Hindu Catholic or a Quaker universalist and not find either description anomalous. Traditional, largely religious, sets of beliefs and practices have constructed meaning in terms of dogma, creed and law. More fluid forms of belief and practice may deliberately avoid these. (See Bauman, on liquid modernity, in study booklet two).

Analysing meaning-making



How can each lens ‘frame’ your enquiry?

LENS ONE

Cultural understanding

However loosely or tightly constructed particular beliefs and practices are they develop within what we have called ‘ordinary culture’. (study booklet one).

Understanding what we mean by culture will therefore help young people understand those beliefs and practices. It will also help them see how **difference and diversity** of beliefs and practices arises – as well as helping them to notice **core similarities**.

LENS TWO

Identity formation

By seeking to bring young people to an understanding of ‘what it means to be Christian’ or ‘what full commitment to Sikhism involves,’ religions affect young people’s identity formation.

So, too, do those families who do *not* enculturate their children into religious belief. In liquid modernity (study booklet 2) the diversity of identity formation can be very complex. Students need to know that their teachers understand this complexity or they won’t be able to relate to what is said to them in class.

The toolkit includes two narratives which tell individual stories of identity formation in complex, not simple ways. Young people today know themselves, often, as having plural identity (Arab-Muslim-British or Chinese- American etc.). We wanted to reflect that in our narratives.

All teachers in this field should (and most do) value every chance they have to enter into dialogue with young people from all sorts of backgrounds about identity formation. Classes are a unique place, which many students uniquely value, to discuss their hopes, beliefs and emerging sense of their own values. But teachers must make this dialogic space with effort and care. They understand that whilst promoting values has it’s place, allowing classroom time and space for open dialogue, so that young people can clarify their *own* values, has quite another.

LENS THREE

Issues of evidence, truth and proof

Many religions think of their school’s teaching as being, still, about a form of instruction. They think about how enquiry about the nature of the world and reality should *end*, rather than understanding that a different form of enquiry might have *many* outcomes. Others, and all those who teach in state maintained (largely secularised) schooling systems are trained not to privilege any one view of truth over another, but simply to teach their school students well about the processes of history, geography, theology and philosophy which have led to truth claims being made – and individual or collective decisions being made about their validity. Expectations of teachers in faith schools may therefore differ from those of teachers in secularist schooling, but what we hold in common should include a concern that students ‘grow up’ in their understanding of what issues of evidence, truth and proof their beliefs raise. This is because not to do so leaves young people rudderless in the sea of global modernisation, liberal and post liberal multi-culturalism, cynicism, positivism and secularisation which they are growing *into*.

However well nurtured they are within a faith community, young people will always ask questions like ‘why should I believe what my parents believe’ or ‘what do I do if the culture I’m living in contests the ‘histories’ I was brought up with? Meeting the challenge of living with beliefs and practices encountered at home demands new skills as children get older. These are not entirely ‘intellectual.’ A Google search can inform you of the answer to a question like: ‘why can you buy a Qur’an interpreted but not a Qur’an translated?’ Google will not, however, help you learn what it’s actually like to encounter in the classroom others whose beliefs and practices are not the same as yours, understand why that is so, develop responses which are logical and based on evidence – and cope with the uncertainties this process engenders.

Which concepts might be 'key' to understanding beliefs and practices?

Cultural understanding	Identity formation	Issues of evidence, truth and proof
<p>Religio (from the Latin)</p> <p>'I bind back together.' What is being bound back together? Why did it fall apart? This is not the only way to explain what a religion is, but it's a very helpful one.</p> <p>Many of us know that for a lot of those we teach there is no assumption that it's <i>normal</i> to understand such concepts. It's not abnormal either.</p> <p>Using etymology to get back to the basics of what a word means often liberates students. Try, for instance, asking them what 'binds the world back together' in the great narratives of Judaism, Christianity and Islam – and why it fell apart.</p>	<p>Human nature</p> <p>Young people are endlessly interested in identity questions – and in questions about human being and human values.</p> <p>Switching discussion about ideas of human nature across different worldviews (e.g. Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, Agnostic), helps students clarify their own values, without privileging any one view over others or insisting that there is only one 'right' answer to questions of moral identity.</p> <p>Understanding ideas on human nature gives you access to discussions about the soul, conscience, the after-life (or lack of it) and sanctity of life issues. Precious debating ground.</p>	<p>Claims which require support</p> <p>The idea that studying this subject involves recognising and dealing reasonably with '<i>claims which require support</i>.' Setting up the expectation, with students, that answers to questions can't just be based on '<i>my own opinion</i>'.</p> <p>Study booklet 3, for instance, shows ways in which this skill can easily be developed from ages 8–18. But many teachers do not follow up this process consistently. The result is that many students leave our classrooms very confused about whether ours is a 'real subject' at all.</p>
<p>Contested histories</p> <p>Global migration, war and history make it too controversial to bring 'the history of' some places into the classroom casually. Shifting the emphasis, for school students, away from 'who is right?' to 'how did this situation arise?' gives students a valid way into studying controversial issues of cultural understanding.</p>	<p>Conscience</p> <p>Whether teachers themselves believe that conscience is the voice of G-d or, as Freud saw it, a projection of the superego (we believe things are right or wrong because of the way we were taught about right and wrong as children), young people growing up in the anxious world of conflicting values need to understand why there <i>are</i> alternative views about conscience. Otherwise every ethics-based discussion, for young people not brought up in faith community, conscience will seem to be irrelevant to at least one person in your class.</p>	<p>Anthropomorphism</p> <p>Seeing others, G-d, the world (only) through our own eyes.</p> <p>This may seem an odd concept to think about with students. The reason it matters is because many of them actually think (or are being told by friends) that religious people (all) believe that God is 'an old man sitting up in the sky.' Challenging this involves exploring with them the difference between a human tendency (anthropomorphism) and the ideas those anthropomorphic pictures represent.</p>

<p>Trad-itio (Latin)</p> <p>This is the root from which we form the word tradition. It means ‘I hand over’ – and that describes what most traditions do!</p> <p>If you’re unpacking this concept with younger students you need to start, as in all ‘concept cracking,’ with something they will all understand. For instance, talk about why people hand on stories about the family to their children or, in schools, have traditions about what goes on in assemblies or what teachers wear. It’s then quite easy to move them on to understand traditions like, for instance, Raksha Bandhan or the Seder Meal – or to consider why humanist funeral rites are different to Christian ones.</p>	<p>Plural identity</p> <p>Amartya Sen argues that in global modernity many people need to be allowed to identify <i>plurally</i> in order to feel at home with themselves. They might call themselves Arab-Christian British or an African American citizen of the US. These ways of talking about oneself are, he feels, essential for us to develop further, since not doing so will provoke violence and make it even more difficult, globally, to establish mutual tolerance.</p> <p>Understanding the world ‘the way it is’ relaxes young people. They know terms like ‘global modernity’ from other subjects and hear about them in the media. They trust teachers more when they ‘tell them how it is.’ They also tend to have more empathy with the subject itself.</p>	<p>Scholarship</p> <p>Introducing the idea that there are serious scholars in this field of study – and getting students interested in how they work. Theology, philosophy, but also art, history, social science, psychology and anthropology all contribute to ‘knowing’ in this subject.</p> <p>Proof, truth claims, evidence, fair testing, change and continuity, difference and diversity, criticality, liberal scholarship, hypothesis, fundamentalism, liberalism and reasonableness are all ideas which young people need to learn about and from.</p> <p>Once you show students where to look for the <i>reasoning</i> behind particular beliefs and practices they begin to see that scholars in any field, whether it’s science, history or theology, have to support their claims reasonably. Scholars in this field are no different.</p>
<p>Inculturation</p> <p>The idea that many aspects of belief and practice are culturally embedded and enriched but also at times distorted. Recognizing this helps young people understand difference and diversity better. It also helps them avoid the classic error of thinking ‘all Jews do this, all Muslims think that,’ etc.</p>	<p>Migration histories</p> <p>Talking about these alerts students to the global dimension of the subject. It’s also a way into discussing the difference and diversity of fellow students, their local community and global communities.</p>	<p>Revelation</p> <p>The Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) believe that G-d’s knowledge transcends any that humans might acquire. So <i>true</i> knowledge has had to be repeatedly revealed to human beings, through prophets. Human knowing is always flawed, finite and fallible.</p>
<p>Global modernity</p> <p>Religions are seen by some as having no place in the modern world. The world, it is felt, has outgrown (or been falsely seduced by) this kind of reasoning long enough.</p> <p>In the new global modernity, some believe, we have been de-traditionalized. Religions’ beliefs and practices will therefore have to renegotiate their place in societies if they want to be taken seriously.</p> <p>Students are very keen to debate this!</p>	<p>Psyche and spirituality</p> <p>Introducing young people to the debate about what spirituality is, for example, through the work of Hay and Nye (see Study booklet 2).</p>	<p>Truth as ‘justified belief’</p> <p>Plato said we can’t, humanly, say something is true unless we first believe it to be true and, second, we can <i>justify that belief</i>. So making truth claims requires us to support them.</p> <p>For example, I may want to believe that the Queen of England is a man but I’d certainly find it hard to justify that claim – and I’d find it pretty hard to believe, too. Similarly, circles are not squares and beliefs and practices do not spring up out of nowhere – and for no <i>reason</i>.</p>

Effective literacy and being ‘at least reasonable.’

Being ‘effectively literate’ in this field implies the development, in school students, of a critically real understanding (Bhaskar, R.) of logical thinking processes and of discernment in handling others’ points of view. These are not easy skills to develop. For the purposes of this RE-framing toolkit we are taking the line that, realistically, the expectation of students must be that they are ‘at least reasonable’ in their interactions with you in class, that they learn what ‘criticality’ means in theology and philosophy and that they work in classrooms where interaction with text and context is demanded. Developing empathy is also important.

If you used the RE-framing toolkit, in a spiral curriculum format, from ages 8–18, students should develop, at the very least, the ability to read, write, speak and listen, seriously, to the meaning-making patterns behind all beliefs and practices – and *understand* what they read, write, speak about and listen to as well. They would also develop, to some degree, what critical realists call ‘judgmental rationality.’ This means the ability to discern what ‘truth’ means in religion, in science, in the arts, in history. In turn they should be able to apply that criticality to their own understanding of the what, why and how of beliefs and practices with increasing independence.

Physical outcomes of this process could include essays, exam qualifications and transition to related university courses but will also include creative writing, art work, philosophical (including ethical) debate and the introduction of school students to experiences through which both serious (logical) and empathetic understanding can be brought to life and understood in their own lives (e.g. for those who become doctors, knowing how to debate medical ethical issues).

So what are our overall ‘student learning’ objectives?

What we are aiming to do, over time, is develop in students an understanding, which is ‘at least reasonable,’ of what beliefs and practices are and of what it would mean to take them seriously (Holm, 1975, 1. adapted).

How can using each Tool help students (and teachers) meet this objective?

Every teacher has their own ‘box of tricks’ which they work with in the classroom. But different subjects actually do require different teaching skills. Use these three tools to help you excavate (get the meat out

of, find the ‘thick description’ of) the key concepts, the key resources and the key ‘cognitive dissonances’ thrown into relief by each enquiry. Asking, for instance, the key question: ‘what does it mean to live the good life?’ in the context of Lens 2 (identity formation) will lead to a different, but equally valid kind of learning to asking it in the context of Lens 1 (cultural understanding). It is up to the school and its teachers to decide in detail how to work with the tools and the lenses.

TOOL ONE

Asking and answering questions

There are three effective rules to keep to when using this tool

- 1. Start from where your students are.** This is crucial to their ‘getting’ the idea from within their own worldview. This includes making age appropriate and culture specific references to music, gender, media and other interests they may have.
- 2. Don’t dumb the key concept down.** You won’t teach better by over simplifying core ideas. You’ll simply distort or misrepresent them. It’s better to work hard at finding a way in (for students) to understanding a key concept ‘as it is,’ than to change the concept, however subtly, by trying to make it easier to understand.
- 3. Start and end your lesson with activities which ‘hook’ students back into the key concept(s) you are addressing.**

All teachers know what it’s like to ask questions and receive blank looks, inaccurate answers or ‘silly’ responses. Most of the time, as they also know, such misconceptions can be put right, misinformation can be replaced and new examples found to ‘hook’ students in. But wise teachers anticipate these issues, too and write, in age appropriate language, lesson plans which engage the students properly through asking key questions. Once the main idea has been introduced through the key question, keep a ‘line of enquiry’ going, through further questioning, until most students are not only ‘hooked into’ the idea but have ‘got’ it. Preparing questions, directed at all abilities, to help you do this, makes it much less likely that teaching about and from each ‘line of enquiry’ will be disturbed by the minutiae of classroom management. There is an excellent example of teachers and school students following a line of enquiry in Task 2.

Using key questions and making time in your lesson to follow up on students' incomplete or inaccurate answers makes sure that the lesson is always productive and that pupils are always learning something valuable. You can build on this learning the next time you meet your students. Here are some examples of teaching based on asking key questions and listening, with attention, to answers.

Example 1: Using a think, pair, share activity as a lesson starter to exploring the key concept of *metaphor* (any age including adults).

Key questions: What is happening in the picture? How do you know? So what do you think the picture is saying?

TASK 1

Try these activities with your students

Using a think, pair, share activity as a lesson starter

The exercise below could be used as a 15 minute 'starter' for a whole variety of lessons. It help students understand what a metaphor is. Students may need lots of practice to understand this but when they do then huge possibilities open up for further teaching about beliefs and practices.

Give your students a copy of this image, with 'think bubbles' attached. Before they write anything down, or talk to their partner about their ideas, they must just look carefully at the picture for at least a minute. After a minute or so ask everyone to write down in their own thought bubbles the answer to the questions at the bottom of the sheet. Partners then share their ideas. You can then use feedback questions to put the ideas together. Use the exercise to help students understand that there is a narrative in (nearly) all art work – which you can read if you understand 'art's way of thinking.' Source: Tan, S. (2003) *The Red Tree*.



*What is happening in this picture? How do you know?
So what do you think the picture is saying?*

You can start a lesson which is actually going to be about Islamic art by helping students understand, through the exercise above, that we *all* 'read' simple things like colours, shapes, expressions and positions of objects in relation to each other 'metaphorically.' Whatever our cultural background, then, we can all understand art's way of 'writing'. We can use that to build up an idea of the different ways in which artists and whole cultures, whether they are secularist or religious, use metaphor to 'crack into' religious or other 'meta' ideas. Knowing this is empowering for students – as well as being interesting and fun. It can also lead to their feeling able to use these same principles to understand how to make art themselves. Here is an example of how a group of 12 year olds made, collaboratively, a piece of art based on 'Arabesque' principles.



Example 2: Developing a *line of enquiry* to maintain focussed attention on the key concept (until it is thoroughly understood).

Key question: what makes me, me and you, you? (Atman, Anatman)

TASK 2

Read the sequence of questions and answers given below, which is a real extract taken from a lesson in which school students, aged 14–15, were studying the concepts of atman and anatman (Hinduism and Buddhism). With a colleague, see if you can decide which of the eighteen teacher or student questions we recorded fit into the categories described. Do you think utilising a key question ('what makes me, me and you, you?') works here, as a way of helping students understand the lesson's key ideas (atman and anatman)? What sort of questions help *develop* understanding? Which ones help them to *process* information?

	Questions designed to <i>increase</i> knowledge and understanding	Questions designed to <i>check</i> understanding
'I want you to focus on <i>this</i> idea.'	e.g. question 14	e.g. question 4
'I want you to think about this idea more critically.'	e.g. question 15	e.g. question 13
'I want you to see how text is related to its con-text.'	e.g. question 9	e.g. question 16

Working from key questions: a lesson observed

- First, the key question is posed: 'What makes you, you, and me, me?'
- Student feedback then taken (great discussion ensues!).
- 'Hands up who thinks we're made from atoms?' Responses include 'whole universe made from atoms, we must be too', 'atoms are the most relevant part of the universe', 'atoms go together making something else, like a cake' (teacher elicited 'epiphenomenalism', where mind appears from matter).
- Then teacher asks: 'is the universe only matter?' Responses follow.
- Teacher then asks students to bridge the gap between two media clips and the ideas being explored (she doesn't tell them what the clips are yet, just shows two clips, one of a candle being blown out, one of water/ a river).
- Teacher then asks another question: 'Can any part of us live forever?' Responses from students include: 'Your impact lasts'. (e.g. Shakespeare has a kind of immortality). A girl responds: 'It's still not forever, eventually it'll fizzle out'.
- Teacher follows this up with a probing question and asks a student at one point: 'Why are you convinced there is no afterlife?' 'Is it about whether we survive as a person – or about what a person is?'
- 'We're going to move on to what Hinduism and Buddhism say about this.' She then explains what we're going to do: look at these ideas and summarise them in your textbooks.
- Information sheet is then provided on Atman/Anatman. Teacher gets students to read it out, a paragraph each. She then stops the students and says 'if you could underline 3 things that are important in this paragraph, what would they be?'
- One student offers: 'eternal self', 'spirit or soul' and 'true self/essence'. Another offers: 'God is in us', 'God is everything' and 'God is energy'. Teacher says, 'So, according to Hindus, we *are* God. Everyone has an aspect within us that is God.'
- A student asks: 'what does it mean for 'atman to become one with Brahman'? Another asks: 'How can you unite them if they're the same thing?' (so clearly thinking analytically about this). Anatman just means 'no soul', Teacher explains the linguistics of this: Atman/soul; An before the word makes it negative: An-atman: no-soul.

12. Other questions she asks are: *'What would you underline?'* responses being 'temporary creations of the mind.'

13. Teacher says, *'So, one thing does survive – what is it?'* Answer is: 'Consciousness'. Teacher responds: 'So for Buddhists, awareness is separable from being an individual. *'This is a really difficult idea, isn't it?'*

14. Then she asks: *'Can anyone think of another word for enlightenment?'* Students say 'Nirvana'. Teacher responds: *'Everything about you is an illusion, except that you are alive.'*

15. Teacher asks: *'Steve, tell me which clip relates to which one (atman/an atman) and why?'*

16. She then continues *'What did you see in that last clip?'* Response: A candle being blown out and relit. *'What's that most like, atman or anatman?'* She elicits 'Anatman'.

17. Students ask: *'Can you explain it to us?'* She responds: 'The flame is like consciousness, and it passes from one thing to another. So it's not another *candle* coming into existence, but just the *flame* that is passed one.'

18. She continues: *'So, the river/water example is atman. Why?'* Student (Anna) says: 'Water – it's all water... it doesn't have to change to become part of Brahman, it just has to join with it.'

We have been thinking about two issues here:

1. What is good practice when setting up a lesson based on a key question?

2. How do you follow a line of enquiry, with further questions, through your lesson?

The good practice of this teacher suggests these answers to those questions:

- *Not shying away from questioning makes the students aware that to think critically about beliefs and practices is expected. This in turn gives a message to the class that they need to really think about their responses and positions. Avoiding setting this expectation means that skills for dealing with cognitive dissonance (difference and diversity in beliefs and practices) and the 'justification of true beliefs' will never develop.*
- *Not being scared to question beliefs. The person-to-person questioning here isn't 'getting at' what pupils believe, it's helping them clarify and justify what they believe, or their opinions about what others believe. This is something we all have to do in adult life. Notice that these questions do not slow the lesson up or set up 'red herring' exploration. Every question and response is also directed to the key question: 'what makes me, me and you, you?' Notice, too, that the teacher also explains things when asked (which is probably one reason why the students are willing to answer her questions!).*
- *When a teacher asks authentic questions about beliefs and practices this automatically starts to produce authentic answers – and further questions – from students: (questions 11, 13, 17). So here, students are always being challenged to think harder or wider or deeper (question 18).*
- *Working from a good key question ('what makes me, me and you, you?') unlocks a whole range of key concepts. Focussing students on questions which help them understand those concepts unlocks their understanding.*

Example 3: Find a key question to interest your students. (age 16–18)

Key question: 'the only sensible way to live in the world is without rules.'

If you've ever taught 16–18 year old students you will know that this is one question which most of them long to discuss! Here is a way of doing so which switches

the scale and the focus of the debate from them (micro picture) to Batman (media picture) to ethical theorists of all kinds (big picture) and then back again to them. **Varying perspectives** like this, linked to a key question which interests your students, provides really interesting lessons – especially when you are faced with a 'revision lesson.'

The narrative below is the one used to start this enquiry off. Where would you go from here?

SCENE SCRIPT: *The Dark Knight*

Joker: Never start with the head...victim gets fuzzy. Can't feel the next...see?

Batman: You wanted me. Here I am.

Joker: I wanted to see what you'd *do*. And you didn't disappoint...you let five people *die*. Then you let Dent take your place. Even to a guy like me...that's *cold*

Batman: Where's Dent?

Joker: Those mob fools want you gone so they can get back to the way things were. But I know the truth – there's no going back. You've changed things. Forever.

Batman: Then why do you want to kill me?

Joker: Kill you? I don't want to kill you. What would I do without you? Go back to ripping off Mob dealers? No *you*... You. Complete. Me.

Batman: You're garbage who kills for money.

Joker: Don't talk like one of them – you're not, even if you'd like to be. To them you're a freak like me...they just *need* you right now. But as soon as they don't, they'll cast you out like a leper. Their morals, their code...it's a bad joke. Dropped at the first sign of trouble. They're only as good as the world *allows* them to be. You'll see, I'll show you...when the chips are down, these civilized people... they'll *eat each other*. See, I'm not a monster, I'm just ahead of the curve.

Gordon: He's in control.

Batman: Where's Dent?

Joker: You have these rules. And you think they'll save you.

Batman: I have one rule.

Joker: Then that's the one you'll have to break. To know the truth.

Batman: Which is?

Joker: The only sensible way to live in this world is *without* rules. Tonight you're going to break your one rule...

Batman: I'm considering it.

Joker: There are just minutes left – so, you'll *have* to play my little game if you want to save...one of them.

Batman: *Them?*

Joker: For a while I thought you really were Dent, the way you threw yourself after her... Look at you go...does Harvey *know* about you and his...?

Batman: WHERE ARE THEY?

Joker: Killing is making a choice...

Batman: WHERE ARE THEY?

Joker: ...you choose one life over the other. Your friend, the district attorney. Or his blushing bride-to-be. You have *nothing*. Nothing to threaten me with. Nothing to do with all your strength...but don't worry, I'm going to tell you where they are. Both of them, and that's the point – you'll have to *choose*...*He's* at 250 52nd Boulevard. And *she's* on avenue X at Cicero.

Example 4: Develop schemes of work through age and interest related questions

The age group 8–18 is usually divided into age groups around 8–11, 11–13, 14–16 and 16–18. Themes often emerge in our teaching in relation to different age groups and key ideas are often repeatedly addressed. So, for instance, concepts like religion, sacred, tradition, secular, authority, law, belief, opinion, evidence, truth, proof, need to be thoroughly understood by 11–13 year old students if they are going to grasp what a religion in the traditional sense is.

Similarly, the difference between belief and opinion *always* needs to be understood by students aged anywhere between 8 and 18 because the culture around them so often confuses the two. Changing student's dialogue so

that they learn to talk about *claims, arguments, narratives* and (in the later years of schooling), *discourse*, is part of every teacher's role in this community of practice.

Some teachers choose to develop whole schemes of work across different age groups which, like the three lenses, focus students' attention on particular ideas. Examples include a year's worth of work, in one school, on *symbolic thinking* (age 11–12) and schemes of work for 11–14 year olds based on themes like *remembrance, loving and giving or social justice*.

Working with themes can also be an easy way to introduce cross cultural and inter-faith teaching since the theme can be taught from a variety of different perspectives.

TOOL 2

Text and Con-text

'a critically literate person learns to look beyond the words on the page and into the province of how the text works – linguistically, politically, culturally and socially – to position the reader'. (Jewett and Smith, p.69)

The lenses we have talked about help the teacher 'frame' the subject knowledge they are bringing into the classroom. The tools are there to help both teacher and students work with that subject knowledge. The Reader contains twenty four narratives through which you can explore all the key ideas given on the teacher's planning pages. But before you do so, you will need to think about how narrative itself works.

1. Narrative, according to Jerome Bruner, is in itself one of two modes of human thought:

Paradigmatic – scientific thinking, description, explanation, verification

Narrative – thinking, feeling & willing of the human person, i.e. 'sense-making'

2. Narratives come from somewhere. Studying text and context (who, what, why, how, when they were

produced) teaches young people to break into codes, understand meanings, use text and critique them, too. These are crucial skills for school students to learn.

'effective literacy draws on a repertoire of practices that allows learners, as they engage in reading and writing activities, to act as code breakers, meaning makers, text users and text critics.' (Jewett and Smith, (2003), drawing on Luke and Freebody (1999), in Roche, M. (2015 p.18)

3. Narratives which are significant to different traditions represent key ideas without dumbing them down. They are therefore of fundamental importance, if selected carefully, in education.
4. Narrative bypasses 'paradigmatic' thinking (Bruner. J.) and so allows young people to understand far bigger ideas at a much younger age than we think they can.
5. According to Søren Kierkegaard story is a form of **indirect communication** that conveys truths which cannot be communicated directly.

Here are some examples of teachers working with narratives in their classrooms:

Example 1: working with narratives in ways which are age appropriate.

This teacher (Teacher 1) is looking at ideas of heaven and hell. She likes this story, but isn't sure that it's age appropriate. Teacher 2's answers help her to see how she can develop a line of enquiry, based on the narrative, within her lesson.

Heaven and Hell:

Rabbi Haim was a preacher. He travelled from town to town delivering religious sermons. He often began his talks with the following story:

"I first went to see Hell and the sight was horrifying. Row after row of tables with platters of delicious food, yet the people seated around the tables were pale and thin, moaning in hunger. As I came closer, I understood why:

"Every person was required to eat with two large wooden planks which they could not bend to bring the food to his mouth. It broke my heart to hear the tortured groans of these poor people as they held their food so near but could not eat it.

"Next I went to visit Heaven. I was surprised to see the same setting I had witnessed in Hell – row after row of long tables laden with food. But in contrast to Hell, the people here in Heaven were sitting happily talking with each other, obviously satisfied from their delicious meal.

"As I came closer, I was amazed to discover that here, too, each person was required to eat with two large wooden planks. How, then, did they manage to eat?

"As I watched, a man picked up his wooden plank and grabbed the food before him. Then he stretched across the table and fed the person across from him! The recipient of this kindness thanked him and returned the favour by leaning across the table to feed him.

I suddenly understood. Heaven and Hell offer the same circumstances and conditions. The difference is in the way the people treat each other.

I ran back to Hell to share this solution with the poor souls trapped there. I whispered in the ear of one starving man, "You do not have to go hungry. Use your wooden plank to feed your neighbour, and he will surely return the favour and feed you."

"You expect me to feed the horrible man sitting across the table?" said the man angrily. "I would rather starve than give him the pleasure of eating!"

"I then understood God's wisdom in choosing who is worthy to go to Heaven and who deserves to go to Hell."

See if you can work out, from the dialogue below, how and why Teacher 2 thinks that working with this story could help Teacher 1's students understand more about ideas of heaven and hell.

Teacher 1: I really want to help my group think a bit more about the whole idea of an after life. But I don't know how to do it without scaring them. They're still only 12 years old. Also, they might not understand 'metaphor.'

Teacher 2: That's no problem. I just get them involved in the ideas first, so that they understand those, illustrate them from children's picture books (because they are so good at getting complicated ideas into a simple form) and then set them talking. It works a treat!

Teacher 1: What works? Don't they just get stuck in the long words? (circumstances, conditions, solution, witnessed)

Teacher 2: It depends how you work with it, doesn't it? They might get stuck if they all just read it through on their own!

Teacher 1: So what do you do?

Teacher 2: I've got three ways of working. I use them all, but in different orders depending on who's in my class. I tell the story (or I get them to), I read them another story with a similar or contrasting idea* and I help them work through the ideas by doing a community of enquiry. (* try using Erlbruch, W. (2008). *Duck, Death and the Tulip*. Gecko press (Australia and New Zealand).

Teacher 1: Why does that work?

Teacher 2: It's like a chain. They start finding out what the ideas mean in one story, then they work out whether the next story is the same or different – and they use the community of enquiry to explore the similarities and differences. It starts them thinking!

Example 2: Working with story as artefact

Stories move us rationally and emotionally, and sometimes help us defer our feelings too, for example when we are making decisions or motivating ourselves to take action. Stories give us the context we need to discover this process. This in turn helps us own ideas for ourselves – and since our own (understood) ideas are the ones we cherish most and act on, stories help us decide. One of the most powerful ways to encounter stories is to have them *told* to us.

You can always hold a class' attention with a story – and, with practice, you can always find ways, through story-telling, of making the narrative 'speak' to your particular group of students. Artefacts, for instance, like the story-

telling doll pictured below, can be used to help you tell stories – and not only with the youngest students! One physics teacher colleague runs an entire 16–18 year old examination course on astronomy by telling stories based on a character he invented called Zog and many teachers of 11–16 year olds tell artefact led philosophical and ethical as well as religious stories, in class. Our advice is to find the original narrative (primary source) – or a good ('secondary source') version of it, learn it, adapt the language for the students you are telling the story to and then *tell* the story before you ever ask students to read it. If you *do* read a text, find a way of helping students understand it by giving them, at the same time, 'lead questions' to work with – or another framework to help them work out from your story-telling what the 'big ideas' within the narrative are. Artefacts draw out significance without requiring writing.



Buddhist Stories using the story-telling doll

Siddhartha and the Swan.

The story is on the *Monkey King* DVD (see below)



Siddhartha and the Four Sights

See also BBC Learning Zone Class Clip 3782



The Three Jewels

I go for refuge to the Buddha (focus)
I go for refuge to the Dharma (teaching)
I go for refuge to the Sangha (community)



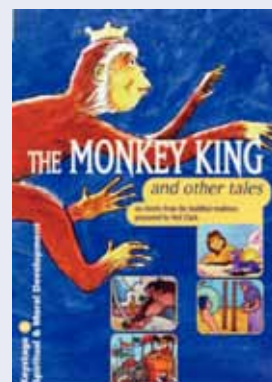
The Enlightenment of the Buddha

see online video



This is a helpful way to explore the cultural context of Buddhism. The lotus flower represents perfection; Enlightenment (to be enlightened is to be fully awake) is the ultimate goal of all Buddhists; Anicca (full understanding of impermanence); Anatta (full understanding that there is no permanent self); Dukkha (full understanding that life is unsatisfactory – is suffering).

Please use this resource in conjunction with *The Monkey King* DVD and the Buddha doll. All these resources are available from www.articlesoffaith.co.uk/buddhism



Example 3: Working with a whole class to decode the meaning in a story



This teacher uses a simple three part pattern with her class to help them work with a narrative.

1. **Get them involved in the ideas** (set them talking, act the story out for them, show them an animated version)
2. **Chunk the story into smaller sections** so they can familiarise themselves with it.
3. **Set activities which require *thinking*** about the story, not just recalling, recording or remembering it.

Here is the narrative is chunked, for use with 11–13 year old students. Notice how names of the characters are highlighted to make them more visible to students.

1. King Dasharatha decides it is time to give his throne to his eldest son **Rama** and retire. However, Rama's step-mother is not pleased – she wants her son Bharata to rule. Because of a promise Dasharatha had made to her years ago, she gets the king to banish **Rama** for 14 years, and to crown her son instead.
2. **Rama**, always obedient, goes into the forest. His wife **Sita** convinces him that she must stay by his side, and his brother **Lakshmana** also goes with them.
3. Years pass and the trio are happy in the forest. **Rama & Lakshmana** destroy the rakshasas (evil demons). One day, a rakshasa princess tries to seduce **Rama** but he refuses. **Lakshmana** also refuses and cuts off her nose and ears. She returns to her brother **Ravana**, the ten-headed evil ruler of Lanka.
4. **Ravana** is furious and devises a plan. He sends another demon disguised as a beautiful deer which **Rama** and **Lakshmana** go off to hunt, but not before they draw a protective circle around **Sita**, warning her that she will be safe as long as she does not step outside the circle. As they go off, **Ravana** disguises himself as a holy man, begging for some food. **Sita** feels sorry for him and steps outside the circle to help him. Immediately **Ravana** grabs her and carries her off to his kingdom in Lanka.
5. **Rama** is broken-hearted when he returns, so he sets off with his brother **Lakshmana** to try and find **Sita**. He meets an army of monkeys led by **Hanuman** who was given great powers by God to help **Rama** – he can fly and is very strong. **Hanuman** flies off and he finds **Sita** imprisoned in the gardens of Lanka. **Sita** keeps refusing to be **Ravana's** wife, she can only think of her dear **Rama**. She is overjoyed when **Hanuman** says that **Rama** is on his way.
6. **Rama** and the monkey army march to Lanka. With **Hanuman's** help, they build a causeway across the sea, and an almighty battle begins. The army kills most of the demons until only **Ravana** is left. Finally, after a long battle, **Rama** uses an arrow given to him by the gods to kill **Ravana**.
7. **Sita** and **Rama** are reunited and they return to the kingdom. The city is waiting for them and the streets are decorated with flowers and lamps to celebrate their return. There is happiness everywhere.

STAGE 1

Introduce story to students

- Show students **animated version** of the story
- Give **task whilst watching** – e.g. match names to characters

STAGE 2

Retell narrative using creative methods

- Give students **sections of the story** to retell using different **creative methods** – put together to recreate story
- E.g. giant story book, postcards, origami, masks, freeze frames, board game

For example, Group 4, looking at Section 4 of the chunked narrative were asked to 'Create a freeze frame version of your part of the story – you can do a maximum of 5 freeze frames and you are not allowed to make any sound!'

You could create masks to help you show the characters.

STAGE 3

Engage in conceptual development and extend critical thinking e.g.

- Give groups some **play dough** – ask them to model the **main theme** or lesson of the story.
- Different **perspectives**: whole story, section of story, individual characters etc.
- **Discussion**: pairs, groups, whole class – feedback ideas, similarities & differences, order or rank themes
- **Interacting with peers**: gallery of student models – go round and guess themes – competition?
- **Comparisons**: other stories (religious/non-religious), modern day situations / life
- **Oral traditions**: many Ramayanas e.g. Bengali version has Ravana as hero, interpretations, function of narratives – sources of authority, propaganda etc.
- **Stretch & Challenge**: Rama seen as either CONCRETE (avatar of Vishnu, deity in own right) or ABSTRACT (sign of patriarchy, dharma – right behaviour).

Example 4: Writing lesson plans so that each stage 'tells a story'

This teacher uses a particularly interesting framework (bridge, window, mirror, door, candle) for all her lessons with 5–11 year old students. Repetition of the framework gives the lessons a 'narrative' structure which helps younger students understand what 'studying' this subject normally means.

There should be **5 elements** to any lesson, although the proportion of time that is spent on any one of those elements will vary with the age of the child, the position of the lesson in the whole series, and the confidence of the teacher in responding to the children's own suggestions. The illustrations are from a lesson for reception children on the subject of Harvest Festival, but the pattern is generic.

1. Bridge ~ Start out; where do I begin?

We introduce the unit, to make a clear connection between the children's own experience and the topic to be taught. Ideally, the bridge is with the previous unit of teaching.

e.g. The children think about the foods that they eat and where those foods come from, matching fresh fruits to pictures of the relevant plant.

The children think about a Harvest Festival that they have seen and consider how such events came about historically in the community.

2. Window ~ Look out; what do I see?

We teach the material that is new to the children, often well outside their own experience.

e.g. The children hear the Christian belief that God created the world and provides for people to eat and share together. They are taught that these scriptures (from Genesis) are also special to Jews and Muslims, who consider that this reveals something of the nature of God too.

3. Mirror ~ Look in; what do I think?

We give opportunity for reflection upon taught material and explore faith perspectives, remembering that prejudice may result in distortions! How is this faith story/tradition/festival understood by the faith community?

e.g. The children watch a video clip that shows how a Christian family takes part in a harvest festival at their local church. Children are encouraged to think about what Christians learn from their beliefs about God from the Bible, and how they show those beliefs in practice.

4. Door ~ Go out; what shall I do?

Use activities to demonstrate and consolidate learning, allowing choices that will accommodate differences.

e.g. Children make fruit salad to share at reflection time. They plant mustard and cress seeds on kapok letters that spell 'harvest festival'. They spend time outside in the school garden.

Older children learning about the Jewish festival of Sukkot invite younger children to join their celebrations and talk about why this festival is important to the Jewish faith community, thus making cognitive links.

5. Candle ~ Be still; what do I understand?

Give time to reflection, allowing space for the children to explore their own thoughts, feelings and emotions.

e.g. Children sit in a circle with a candle in the centre, share out the fruit salad and eat together. They spend time considering their own thoughts and experiences of giving thanks and sharing.

Older children have space to consider their own thoughts in the light of learning about faith perspectives and other world views. They consider why food distribution is so inequitable in the world. They reflect upon the statement that 'What we do is a fundamental outcome of what we believe'.

Date: Lesson 5/6	Unit of work: Harvest and thanksgiving Class 2, Ages 5–6	Half Term: Year 1
Key Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What can we learn from different harvest festivals?• How and why do Christians show concern for others at Harvest time?• Why should I think about my food and where it comes from?		
Learning objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To hear some Bible verses about Creation and the gift of trees and plants• To discover that Christians celebrate special times• To think about how the way I act matters to other people• To be able to suggest ways of caring personally for the environment	
Teaching and learning activities		
Bridge: Links <p>Children match up fruit to the plant from which it comes, using plants that are either in the school grounds, or seen commonly in the area. This can be done using photographs, real fruit or seeds (blackberries, conkers etc.) or a mixture of the two. They discuss their findings. Use an art activity to encourage careful observation and create a display later.</p>		
Window: Information <p>Read a version of the Christian creation story, from an appropriate Bible (e.g. <i>My Very First Bible</i> by Lois Rock (Author) and Alex Ayliffe (Illustrator)) to show that Christians believe our planet is a gift from God. Add this verse from a complete version: <i>God said, "I am giving you all the grain-bearing plants and all the fruit trees. These trees make fruit with seeds in it. This grain and fruit will be your food."</i> Genesis 1:29*</p> <p>Explain that this story comes at the beginning of the Bible and is shared by lots of other people (Jews and Muslims); the idea of the planet as a gift is widely believed by people of faith and none.</p>		
Mirror: Thoughts <p>Use this clip www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone/clips/harvest-festival/4466.html to see how some children in the UK celebrate harvest festival in their church (BBC 'class clips'). What does this verse mean to Christians in practice? Does it mean the same thing to other people of faith? What might it say about the nature of God?</p>		

Door: Activities (select from...)

- Harvest is a time when many schools give produce to charity. Link up with a charity locally and ask a speaker to come to talk to the children about the importance of giving.
- Brainstorm ideas to present to the Head about how our school can give thanks at Harvest time by supporting others.
- Organize a Fair Trade coffee morning and invite carers and friends into school. The children can make fruit kebabs and little cookies for the occasion. They could then take photographs of the event using digital cameras (with permission for those of children) edit them in class, and use them to present an assembly.
- Children can plant seeds (e.g. spring bulbs) in pots and care for them, then harvest them to share. If you have a school garden, or find a visitor from the local allotment society, activities can be extended.
- Look at this link on the Christian Aid website, and raise money (from the coffee morning) to provide seeds and tools to help others to grow food. www.presentaid.org

Candle: Reflection

Sing this 'Harvest Samba' published by 'Out of the Ark' www.outoftheark.co.uk (chorus below) or another that the children know and enjoy.

It's another Harvest Festival
when we bring our fruit and vegetables
Cause we want to share the best of all
the good things that we've been given.
It's another opportunity
to be grateful for the food we eat
With a samba celebration to say
'thank you' to God the Father.

Finish in
a circle with a
candle and a time
of quiet. How do the
children think they
can care for the world
around them? Why
should they?



Extension activities: Children contribute further to a harvest display by contributing thoughts or questions for the callouts, by helping to caption photographs, by keeping seed diaries, by taking responsibility for part of the coffee morning activities, or by choosing items from Present Aid that would help other people

*This verse is from [Easy-to-Read Version \(ERV\)](http://www.biblegateway.com) © 2006 by World Bible Translation Center www.biblegateway.com

1. Thinking about difference and diversity means working with controversial issues not avoiding them.
2. Thinking about this can be planned into any lesson by *varying the perspectives* you bring into the classroom (through questioning, resource making and task setting).

Examples of variation include:

- *Tasks which move from micro examples (personal) to macro examples (universal). This is sometimes called 'scale –switching'.*
 - *Tasks which vary the cultural context given. (UK, US, etc.)*
 - *Tasks which vary examples from within any one belief system (Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews, Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims, Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Christianity).*
 - *Tasks which vary God perspective and No God perspective views (Buddhism and Judaism on rules to live by).*
 - *Tasks which vary place or time (geography and history) e.g. Judaism pre and post Holocaust, Islam in Turkey and in UK, Sikhism in US and in the UK etc.*
3. Thinking about difference and diversity means teaching students to work dialogically with 'the other.' This includes everything from the simplest 'hold a stone when you speak and then let others take their turn' to the most complex, rule bound, formal debate. Students need to have plenty of experience of working dialogically and teachers need to keep expanding their repertoire of ways to do it well (see Ten of the Best section).
 4. We cannot teach about beliefs and practices without getting into areas of study which are considered 'controversial'. Whether it's enquiring into the whole idea of a 'holy land', Northern Ireland's history or debates about the 'rightness or wrongness' of decisions about issues related to the right to life (e.g. abortion and euthanasia), teachers need to be able to handle – and teach their students how to handle, controversial issues.

Good practice here includes:

1. Making a definite choice of approach when you plan a lesson (stated commitment, balanced or neutrally chaired) and sticking to it. Mixing approaches always results in confusion for the students.
2. Using inclusive language, not exclusive. (Quakers believe, not I believe...)
3. Situating controversy *in* the debate, in key questions and in tasks, not outside them. So, as in many modern university history departments, talk about 'contested histories' not about 'our' history and then 'theirs.'
4. Explicitly or implicitly include the histories, cultural contexts and community affiliations of your students in your teaching (with permission from the students concerned).
5. Allow individuals to agree, disagree and, too, say they aren't sure about discussion points. But have a high expectation that they will give a reason for their position.
6. Take a lead. If you can handle controversy yourself, without pretending it doesn't exist, then your students will follow your example.
7. Work out which questions really are 'key' to understanding a particular topic. 'Key' means that asking this particular question unlocks the main theological, philosophical, historical or geographical beliefs on which a particular practice is founded. There may be many key questions in one scheme of work – but only work with one at a time if you want students to understand.

Example 1: varying cultural perspectives

What have the Toolkit's three lenses to do with developing effective cultural literacy?

Imagine you have just visited a church. It's a Catholic church and there's a stoup by the door. The students have drawn it, learned what it's called and watched someone use it. When you get back to school you want to build on that knowledge and you want them to be 'critical' about what they've learned so far. One way of doing this is to make sure that you make the focus of criticality obvious. Having a 'one point only' focus makes the learning more accessible – and gives students a clear way of demonstrating that they are 'making progress' in learning. When you ask questions, too, they will understand *why*. Gradually they will also start to understand what you mean by culture, or identity formation or issues of evidence, truth and proof – and see how each can affect different beliefs and practices. Without consistent direction students often fail to 'get' what each topic is being studied – or how all the topics fit together. Stating from the outset that the *whole subject is about* (how human beings make meaning) and that you're going to study this through three *lenses* and develop skills for working with three *tools* at least gives them somewhere to start! (Roche. M. (2015) *Developing Children's Critical Thinking through Picturebooks*. Routledge (Abingdon and New York).

You could ask students all sorts of questions, but if you wanted them to focus their thinking on cultural understanding, you could try these:

1. Why might a Catholic church have a stoup near the door when another church might not?
2. Do all Catholic churches share the same architecture? Why? Why not?
3. Have Catholic churches always had a stoup near the door?

Your students could then explore the questions using the clues below, present their answers in pairs or small groups and write the whole project up for homework.

Small experiences of effective literacy, done often, produce critical literacy much quicker than endless random questions with no 'thinking thread' to join them up in students' minds.

Question 1: Reformation, Counter-Reformation, Europe

Question 2: Culture, Local, History, Fashion

Question 3: History, Evidence, Trend

These questions may appear very simple but they engage students in figuring out where the 'trail' of knowledge has to go in order for them to understand what a *stoup* is. It is by constantly asking these questions through different lenses that students begin to understand what 'criticality' means.



An example: Looking at a church through the lens of cultural understanding

*If you go into a Catholic Church you will find a **stoup** (a stone bowl) next to the door. It contains **holy water**. This is used to make the **sign of the cross** with. After making the sign of the cross the person entering the church will then face the **altar** and kneel down on one knee and make the sign of the cross (**genuflect**). This is a way of saying that when you go into that place it is set apart (**sacred**) in certain ways from any other space. A church is set apart for **worship** of G-d through the figure of Jesus.*

Examples 2 and 3: varying theological, personal and cultural perspectives (working with the con-text and not just the text)

A teacher’s skill lies not just in *identifying* narratives which may help their students understand a particular idea but also in raising their students’ awareness of what can be learned by studying them in more and more *depth*. One way in which you can do this is by raising awareness of the language being used in a particular text – and of whether it is being used to persuade, answer a question, make an idea clear or provide evidence. In the example below, short though it is, there is food for thought.

Some of the questions it raises include: what makes a text ‘sacred’? Is translating sacred texts carried out in the same way by all communities? What are the rules, in each chain of tradition, about how this can be done? Answering any of those questions would facilitate an enquiry into why the different religions have different practices and different beliefs about translating, interpreting and reading texts (e.g. whether they can be touched, who can read them, where

and when). So this little ‘seed’ of a narrative, in a teacher’s hands, can lead into a large field of enquiry – and reinforce what focusing on our three lenses tells us, which is that:

- 1. Beliefs and practices are encultured (cultural understanding).
- 2. Beliefs and practices form identities (identity formation).
- 3. Beliefs and practices rest on a discourse about evidencing truth claims which is particular to different traditions (issues of evidence, truth and proof).

Here is this brief ‘snippet’ of narrative – and an idea of how awareness of language can lead to in-depth study of meaning-making.

The Bible is translated into many different languages. When it was translated into Inuit, Jesus, instead of being called ‘the lamb of God’ was called the ‘seal of God.’ Why?

Let’s briefly look at the question by focusing on it through each of the three lenses.

Awareness of language: Christian translations of the Bible	
Focusing a lens on the question	Possible issues this focus addresses
Cultural understanding (Study Booklet 1)	What makes ‘seal’ and ‘lamb’ equivalent metaphors for talking about who Jesus is a. within a middle eastern and an Inuit culture; and b. within Christianity?
Identity formation (Study Booklet 2)	If it helps people to identify with a narrative to use their own culture and language, does this justify changing the words? (lamb becomes seal.)
Issues of evidence, truth and proof (Study Booklet 3)	How can translating a ‘sacred text’ lead to different interpretations of its meaning? What different approaches to this issue have, in the past, been taken, within Christianity?



Using the Teacher's planning pages (page 16–17)

Try making multiple copies for members of your department – and photocopying the page to A3 size before you start planning. Then you can develop schemes of work as many times as you need. The general principles for making schemes of work are as follows:

- a. Decide which lens you want your students to focus on in this scheme of work.
- b. Decide on a key question which is *both* about developing an understanding of that lens *and* about that belief or practice (e.g. culture and Islam, identity formation and orthodox Christianity, issues of evidence, proof and truth and Judaism).
- c. On the planner write down, as a starting point, where the lens intersects with the key question.
- d. Then see if you can find a narrative (or narratives) which could produce in-depth understanding of that key question for your students.
- e. Write the number of the narrative(s) into the second blue box and then spend time learning it yourself, and researching its context.
- f. Next, think about your *sequence* of lessons. How many lessons are you going to need to explore this idea properly? (For example, 4–6 lessons per scheme of work is quite common in state maintained schooling in the UK but there may only be one lesson a week or one lesson a fortnight, so it's hard to ensure continuity!)

- g. What order are you going to address the different ideas in?
- h. How will you check that students have understood a range of different points of view about the topic?
- i. At this point you can fill in the third blue box with ideas taken from either the narratives section or the *Ten of the Best* (methodologies) section. Teach about how different religions, different traditions within religions (or non-religious points of view), see this question.
- j. Pretty soon you will have researched all the information you need to plan the lessons in your scheme of work.
- k. Go and teach.

Note 1: Always *plan* some way of checking students' understanding in, even if there will be no formal assessment involved. Without doing this you will have no idea what students have and haven't understood – and your ability to help them make progress in learning will be limited.

Note 2: if you are lucky enough to have colleagues to plan with, the process will probably be enriched. You could make time in a departmental meeting, for instance, to do some of the tasks in the self-study booklets, so that the way you look at lenses 1, 2 and 3 gradually becomes more focussed. Working with others will probably also help you sort out difficulties which arise, like 'from whose point of view am I telling this story/answering this key question?'

TASK 3

Imagine you are planning a series of lessons for a group of 12–13 year-old school students. You want them to be able to answer this key question: **what is the meaning (significance) of the Hajj for Muslims today?** Below are ten tasks which you might think of asking them to do. Which ones would you choose – and *how* do you think these tasks would help 12-year-old students, of all abilities, to understand the significance of the Hajj for Muslims?

Use a website to find out about the meaning of the key events in the Hajj.	Teacher's explanation and question/answer session (with PowerPoint or other visual aid) about the meaning of the Hajj.
Discuss ways in which you might explore the significance of the Hajj, without actually travelling to Mecca.	Evaluate the claim that pilgrimages are just 'extreme holidays.'
Explain the meaning of the Hajj (as you understand it now) to each other.	Write a 'structured enquiry' into Hajj.
Role-play a conversation between a Muslim Hajji and a Christian pilgrim who has just visited Walsingham.	Make a PowerPoint presentation to show how the meaning of the Hajj for Muslims might compare with the meaning-making in any other pilgrimage.
Evaluate the claim that all religious people should go on a pilgrimage at some point in their lives.	Match the pictures and descriptions to piece together a flow chart of the key events of the Hajj (use Lucidchart).

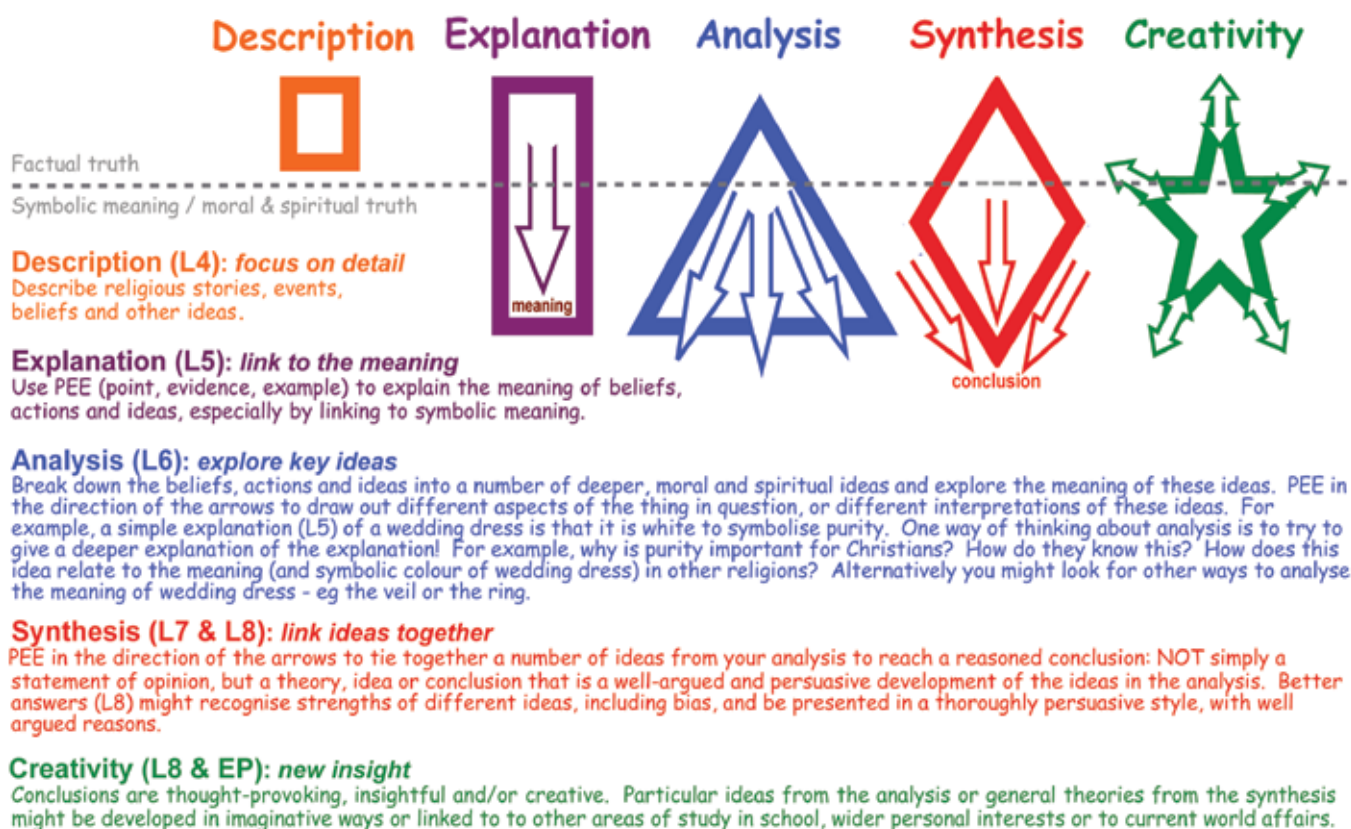
Your choices will probably be made according to these basic thoughts:

- a. I need to find tasks which my students can manage in the time available.
- b. I need to vary the tasks so that the lesson is interesting.
- c. There are some basic concepts (ideas) I need students to understand.
- d. I think some of my students could do the 'explain' tasks but not the 'evaluate' one, so do I plan so that everyone does the same tasks – or allocate tasks to students with different abilities/interests?
- e. I think they'll learn best if I teach the whole class at once/ I think they'll learn better if they work in pairs or small groups/ I think they need to work in a variety of ways.

Answering these questions will tell you how your lesson could be shaped. Deciding on a sequence of tasks in the light of the such principles makes your lesson 'objective-led.' This is why the planning sheet starts with a series of key questions. They help teachers to decide, quickly, what the objective (the point) of each lesson is. Professionals plan objective-led lessons because this focuses everything they do, in the most efficient way possible on one really useful, educative, outcome. So then the timing of tasks, the choice of resources and the content of your assessments will also help achieve that goal.

For an example of how to work with LENSES see Narrative 15 (Surah Zalzalah)

To check that students are understanding you need to give them a clear idea of what you're looking for. These two examples are particularly good. The coloured diagram has visual as well as verbal clues to help students understand what is being assessed. It can easily be displayed on classroom walls, too. The second chart has an eight level scale which distinguishes between two attainment targets. These are 'learning about' and 'learning from' religion.



L	AT1	AT2
1	Pupils use some religious words and phrases to recognise and name features of religious life and practice. They can recall religious stories and recognise symbols, and other verbal and visual forms of religious expression.	Pupils talk about their own experiences and feelings, what they find interesting or puzzling and what is of value and concern to themselves and to others.
2	Pupils use religious words and phrases to identify some features of religion and its importance for some people. They begin to show awareness of similarities in religions. Pupils retell religious stories and suggest meanings for religious actions and symbols. They identify how religion is expressed in different ways.	Pupils ask, and respond sensitively to, questions about their own and others' experiences and feelings. They recognise that some questions cause people to wonder and are difficult to answer. In relation to matters of right and wrong, they recognise their own values and those of others.
3	Pupils use a developing religious vocabulary to describe some key features of religions, recognising similarities and differences. They make links between beliefs and sources, including religious stories and sacred texts. They begin to identify the impact religion has on believers' lives. They describe some forms of religious expression.	Pupils identify what influences them, making links between aspects of their own and others' experiences. They ask important questions about religion and beliefs, making links between their own and others' responses. They make links between values and commitments, and their own attitudes and behaviour.
4	Pupils use a developing religious vocabulary to describe and show understanding of sources, practices, beliefs, ideas, feelings and experiences. They make links between them, and describe some similarities and differences both within and between religions. They describe the impact of religion on people's lives. They suggest meanings for a range of forms of religious expression.	Pupils raise, and suggest answers to, questions of identity, belonging, meaning, purpose, truth, values and commitments. They apply their ideas to their own and other people's lives. They describe what inspires and influences themselves and others.
5	Pupils use an increasingly wide religious vocabulary to explain the impact of beliefs on individuals and communities. They describe why people belong to religions. They understand that similarities and differences illustrate distinctive beliefs within and between religions and suggest possible reasons for this. They explain how religious sources are used to provide answers to ultimate questions and ethical issues, recognising diversity in forms of religious, spiritual and moral expression, within and between religions.	Pupils ask, and suggest answers to, questions of identity, belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, values and commitments, relating them to their own and others' lives. They explain what inspires and influences them, expressing their own and others' views on the challenges of belonging to a religion.

L	AT1	AT2
6	<p>Pupils use religious and philosophical vocabulary to give informed accounts of religions and beliefs, explaining the reasons for diversity within and between them. They explain why the impact of religions and beliefs on individuals, communities and societies varies. They interpret sources and arguments, explaining the reasons that are used in different ways by different traditions to provide answers to ultimate questions and ethical issues. They interpret the significance of different forms of religious, spiritual and moral expression.</p>	<p>Pupils use reasoning and examples to express insights into the relationship between beliefs, teachings and world issues. They express insights into their own and others' views on questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and truth. They consider the challenges of belonging to a religion in the contemporary world, focusing on values and commitments.</p>
7	<p>Pupils use a wide religious and philosophical vocabulary to show a coherent understanding of a range of religions and beliefs. They analyse issues, values and questions of meaning and truth. They account for the influence of history and culture on aspects of religious life and practice. They explain why the consequences of belonging to a faith are not the same for all people within the same religion or tradition. They use some of the principal methods by which religion, spirituality and ethics are studied, including the use of a variety of sources, evidence and forms of expression.</p>	<p>Pupils articulate personal and critical responses to questions of meaning, purpose and truth and ethical issues. They evaluate the significance of religious and other views for understanding questions of human relationships, belonging, identity, society, values and commitments, using appropriate evidence and examples.</p>
8	<p>Pupils use a comprehensive religious and philosophical vocabulary to analyse a range of religions and beliefs. They contextualise interpretations of religion with reference to historical, cultural, social and philosophical ideas. They critically evaluate the impact of religions and beliefs on differing communities and societies. They analyse differing interpretations of religious, spiritual and moral sources, using some of the principal methods by which religion, spirituality and ethics are studied. They interpret and evaluate varied forms of religious, spiritual and moral expression.</p>	<p>Pupils coherently analyse a wide range of viewpoints on questions of identity, belonging, meaning, purpose, truth, values and commitments. They synthesise a range of evidence, arguments, reflections and examples, fully justifying their own views and ideas and providing a detailed evaluation of the perspectives of others.</p>

L	AT1	AT2
EXCEPTIONAL PERFORMANCE	<p>Pupils use a complex religious, moral and philosophical vocabulary to provide a consistent and detailed analysis of religions and beliefs. They evaluate in depth the importance of religious diversity in a pluralistic society. They clearly recognise the extent to which the impact of religion and beliefs on different communities and societies has changed over time. They provide a detailed analysis of how religious, spiritual and moral sources are interpreted in different ways, evaluating the principal methods by which religion and spirituality are studied. They synthesise effectively their accounts of the varied forms of religious, spiritual and moral expression.</p>	<p>Pupils analyse in depth a wide range of perspectives on questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, and values and commitments. They give independent, well informed and highly reasoned insights into their own and others' perspectives on religious and spiritual issues, providing well-substantiated and balanced conclusions.</p>

Ten of the best

**Ways of working in the classroom
(methodologies)**

Ten of the best

WAYS OF WORKING IN THE CLASSROOM

(METHODOLOGIES)

Before we begin:

For this section of the RE-framing toolkit we have isolated ten types of dialogic methodology which work well in any classroom and with almost any age group when you are teaching about beliefs and practices. They all make it easier for teachers to ensure that every school student is interacting with the information they receive, not just listening to it. This in turn gives the skilled teacher a clear indication, hopefully, of what students have and haven't understood. We can then plan further lessons which develop that understanding over time. We do this by gradually extending the breadth and depth of each class' study – and by teaching students to use dialogic methods themselves.

Here is a list of the ten *types* of method explored in this section. What follows are examples of each method, with cross references, where relevant, to other examples within the toolkit. Remember that they are only *examples* of these ways of teaching and learning and that other examples can be found elsewhere.¹

1. Comparing and contrasting.
2. Switching (varying) perspectives on a text or situation.
3. Matching, ranking and sorting statements to help students understand key terms and concepts taught.
4. Modelling the *outcomes* expected of students – and therefore raising their expectations of what learning *is* in this subject.
5. Activities which are very *inclusive* of all abilities – or easily differentiated to accommodate a wide range of learning needs.
6. Activities which encourage creativity and self-expression.
7. Activities which stimulate analytical thinking.
8. Activities which encourage reflection.
9. Activities which help students to work analytically with texts of all kinds (including, but not only, texts known as sacred to different traditions).
10. Activities which work, in groups, to help students explore a range of different points of view.

What characterises these activities is that they are all examples of *dialogic*² teaching methods. They therefore assume, that, as dialogic research evidences, there are different types of talk going on in all our classrooms all the time – and that the most *productive* forms of talk, those which lead to exploring, analysing and *thinking* about different points of view, can be

quite difficult to sustain.

Dialogic teaching develops school students' ability to understand, by developing their ability, over time, to explore a wide range of diverse (and sometimes controversial) views *both collaboratively and, eventually, independently*. Educationally, this enables teachers to ensure that, to the best of their ability, all students are *making progress* in learning about others' beliefs and practices.

The teachers' stance

Many of the activities in this section use resources *mediated* by the teacher. All teachers select materials and make judgments about what should be taught and about what they want their students to learn, *before* they enter a classroom. These judgments could include deciding, for instance, how long they want to leave students to clarify their values on a topic before they teach them *about* it³. Once they've decided that then they can vary their teaching stance in the classroom appropriately. For example, in community of enquiry the teacher is 'procedurally neutral' (students don't find out about his or her values, but about their peers). So for this portion of the lesson, a teacher *facilitates*. Switching a teaching stance from facilitator to mediator and back again, takes practise, but skilful use of these two stances contributes greatly to the dialogue which takes place in classrooms and is a skill worth learning. Many good teachers teach their students to handle independent (internalised) dialogue in this way too, which is, of course, in the long run, essential, if school students are to learn to self-regulate.

Here is a description of *both* ways of 'authentic being' in the classroom. Which do you favour most? Could you bring more of the other into your teaching, so that your students develop the ability to internalise dialogue better?

1. **Mediator:** the teacher mediates (selects, simplifies, adapts) the language in order to ensure optimal learning. S/he may tend to teach from the front and to teach the whole class at one time, though s/he will also devolve tasks through group, pair or individual work.

2. Facilitator: provides access to the language and culture through supplying starter materials and key questions. Then she devises suitable activities and opportunities for the pupils to learn from on their own, in pairs or in small groups.

TEACHING METHODS

1. Comparing and contrasting.

This range of methodologies includes using *Venn diagrams* and using *phenomenological 'types'*⁴ to compare different aspects of beliefs and practices – and help students decide what the difference between a religion and any other kind of belief system might be. For example, you might usefully compare festivals across three religions, or why Abraham is a core figure in three world religions or whether Buddhism is a religion. Be careful, though. Evidence suggests that too much poorly structured comparison confuses younger students and can lead to an unhelpful 'pick and mix' attitude to beliefs and practices.

To think about: *Subject knowledge is very important when teaching about others' beliefs and practices. It's very easy to make snap judgements, based either on your own experiences or your own educational background, about what a concept new to you means – and then teach badly about it because you haven't really understood how different the 'other's concept actually was. For example Buddhism talks about our becoming more or less **skilful** in learning to act ethically (*kusala/akusala*) and not about being good or bad. Buddhists also refer to ethics (*sila*) as involving working with training guidelines, not commandments, so directly comparing the ten commandments with the Buddhist five precepts as if they were the same thing, is incorrect.*

2. Switching (varying) perspectives on a text or situation.

This range of methodologies includes inviting varying perspectives into the classroom so that a *variety of different 'voices'* are heard there. These could be, firstly, real speakers, speakers filmed by the media, visits from chaplains or visits to local places of worship, museums and art galleries. They could also be virtual voices, understood through skype interactions across the globe⁵. Secondly, switching perspectives can easily be done by introducing a *variety of resources* into your classroom (see tasks attached to narratives 1–24), so that students hear about a topic from a variety of perspectives and can then start to consider the resonances each perspective does or doesn't have either for them – or for an understanding of diversity and difference within the tradition itself. Thirdly, *scale-switching* of perspectives can be encouraged by setting tasks which literally switch scale, usually from micro to macro or vice

versa. So, you might facilitate a study of Islam in your local area and then of Islam in Turkey, or California, or the UK. You could also study a topic like racism in a very 'big scale' way (to give an overview of issues like prejudice and stereotyping) and then help students to understand it more deeply by looking in micro-detail at Martin Luther King's famous 'I have a dream' speech⁶.

3. Matching, ranking and sorting statements to help students understand key terms and concepts taught.

We know that putting things into rank order, matching words with definitions and, where appropriate, with pictures, helps younger students *categorise or schematise* ideas. It is a normal function of child development⁷ to learn what things are (e.g. religions) by putting ideas about them into different schema. Teachers know, too, that if they want to *challenge* an assumption about what something is, they can *challenge* this schema through activities like *Odd One Out* or by playing *Taboo*. There are endless ways of sorting through ideas. Here are a few:

- Sort a group of pictures to match definitions, or key terms.
- Sort a list of pilgrimage sites from different religions and put a label for each on the correct places on a world map (then use Google Earth to calculate how long it would take to get there).
- Sort a pile of vocabulary cards into six packs for six world religions – and encourage students to use them.
- Sort out which words would be useful to label a class display the group is making.
- Sort out a pile of cards with some deliberately 'odd one out' cards in the set.
- Sort out a pile of stories into different religions or belief systems – and say how you know which religion or belief system they come from – and what links the key concepts in one story (or not), to another.

4. Modelling the outcomes expected of students – and therefore raising their expectations of what learning is in this subject.

This is an essential aspect of all good teaching and learning⁸. If you want students to write, create, reflect or analyse well, you must show them how to do it well. Collaborative learning, based on sharing examples of peers' work, done well, also raises expectations – and motivation levels too. Imagine you want your 17 year old students (or teacher trainees) to 'mind map' the field of ethics. Before you start, map it yourself – and show this map to them. By doing this you both explain what the outcome of their own work should be – and encourage them to get started!

5. Activities which are very inclusive of all abilities – or which are easily differentiated to accommodate a wide range of learning needs.

The ideas here include '*corners' debates, community of enquiry, silent debate and junk modelling*. There is room for everyone to succeed in these activities, so they encourage

confidence and build self-esteem. This is, in the long run, empowering (*see rest of section for examples*).

6. Activities which encourage creativity and self-expression.

It's easy for the later years of schooling to centre on writing as a core activity. But *junk modelling* is a very good way of getting 16–18 year olds to understand different world views, and using *talking points* allows them to agree, disagree and say 'I don't know' which in turn helps them to think what they do or don't understand about a topic. Analysing different ethical theories through a *community of enquiry* and *mind-mapping* encourages better essay writing. Don't assume that drawing an idea or talking about it with a group is a waste of time! In fact we know that good oracy (speaking and listening), precedes and adds to good literacy (reading and writing). Don't underestimate this process. (*see rest of section for examples*).

7. Activities which stimulate analytical thinking.

Circles of inference, described below, are an excellent way of encouraging analytic thinking. So are many of the other methodologies attached to narratives 1–24 in the Reader. Scaffolding writing through the use of *writing-frames* ensures that students learn analytic skills and so, too, do mind-mapping, silent debate and, used carefully, community of enquiry (*see rest of section for examples*).

8. Activities which encourage reflection.

Mindfulness is big in schools these days – and rightly so⁹. But making *time and space for reflection* within schools seems to be getting harder and harder to manage. In our own research we saw that whilst many independent schools had built quiet reflective spaces into their structure, (from the explicitly religious oratory or chapel to the teaching of mindfulness practice as a part of daily schooling in some state maintained *and* independent schools) few other schools gave time to reflection.

Teaching about and from Buddhism, often encourages teachers to find opportunities to talk about meditation, reflection and mindfulness and some schools are starting to run mindfulness days for 16–18 year olds both to help them manage examination stress and also to allow them a forum to consider adapting, in adult life, to a busy world's expectations of them¹⁰. Most religions have mystical



traditions and reflection built into them, so resources about those are easy to access. But don't forget to include nature as a source, too. (see Study Booklet 5 and resources like the Cathedral of Trees in the UK)¹¹. Think, too, about building reflective events around occasions such as

International Holocaust Remembrance Day, Remembrance Sunday (UK), Thanksgiving (US) and individual students' birthdays etc. Remembering is a human activity, not a religious one – and we all mark the passage of time, and of our loved ones, when lives end. The phenomenal success, in 2014 in London, of an art installation where one clay, red, poppy was planted in remembrance of every soldier who died in the First World War, shows that, dealt with creatively, remembrance and reflection can be moving and relevant for everyone.

9. Activities which help students to work analytically with texts of all kinds (including, but not only, texts known as 'sacred' to different traditions).

The question of how to approach texts is a matter of concern for many teachers, anxious to avoid doing an injustice to traditions which they may lack understanding of at sufficiently deep levels for them to feel ready or able to work with them in the classroom¹².



There is amongst many teachers, our research shows, a great hesitancy to explore, with depth, the narratives and sacred texts of 'the other'. This is a mixture of fear about disrespecting the text or the community who holds to it (which may cause offence), and of not feeling equipped with the subject knowledge and tools to make the study of an 'other's' teachings meaningful, accurate or deep. This may result in the text being side-lined by an ethical agenda – so, the Christian parable of the mustard seed is assumed to be about 'being a good person' and 'doing good deeds', rather than about ontology (meaning-making about the establishment of the kingdom of God; the manner of God's intervention on earth) or eschatology. Or it may result in a fundamentally limited, approach such as, for instance, comparing this parable with the *Buddhist* parable of the mustard seed by saying both are parables and 'parables are stories with a meaning,' whilst *failing* to say that two instances of the same kind of text don't necessarily tell you what each *means*.

Those who teach from their own faith point of view are often further inhibited by concerns about confessionalism. Some of these concerns are justified. Whilst an 'insider' approach can mean greater subject knowledge being available to the students in their own schools, it doesn't

always follow that a teacher who is 'inside' one tradition knows much about any-one else's! Their approach to someone else's tradition may even at times be *hampered* by being an insider since they may find it harder than outsiders to avoid category mistakes¹³. Common mistakes in this respect, evidenced in research, include taking a Christian narrative, in a Muslim school and talking about it only in relation to Muslim commentary (and vice versa) and Christian schools referring to the Torah (Jewish term) as the Old Testament (Christian term.)¹⁴

10. Activities which work, in groups to explore a range of different points of view.

The dialogic aspect of this toolkit is obvious in that nearly all the methodologies involve talking, discussing, interacting with others. However a more technical definition of dialogic comes from Rupert Wegerif¹⁵ who states that to have an internal dialogue that seriously considers alternative viewpoints is dialogic. For Wegerif this is how dialogue can be differentiated from interaction (Wegerif, 2001:180).

The value of many activities in the classroom, when you are addressing beliefs and practices, lies in the dialogic space the pupils are given to create understanding. The students are not just given 'knowledge that'. Instead they are asked to consider for themselves first, an open, key, question. This opens out the process of teaching and learning because it is, first of all, inclusive (everyone can have something to say), whilst also setting an immediate challenge for the students. Thinking about the question they have to start processing and prioritising, internally, what they already think and know

about the topic. Realising the implications of what they think, when this individual process comes into dialogue with what others are thinking, develops into an exploration of ideas¹⁶. Their understanding, after this process, will be socially constructed, and it will have become deeper as the result of a three way dialogue, between themselves, the teacher and the thing being learned¹⁷. Internalised, this process gradually creates a 'persuasive or dialogic voice that speaks to the student from the inside' (Wegerif 2011 page 187). What evidences this in the classroom is that teachers start to see students take what we call 'logical' and 'empathetic' steps in thinking. By encountering difference dialogically and thereby learning the skills to handle disputes which arise in an exploratory way, students accumulate an awareness of what reasonableness means in the study of beliefs and practices. This, too, is an essential aspect of education about beliefs and practices in any multi-ethnic, multi-cultural or multi-faith setting. As Young says:

'what makes [people] reasonable is their willingness to listen to others who want to explain to them why their ideas are incorrect or inappropriate.' (Young, in Biesta, G. 2000. 24).

Dialogic' is derived from the Greek word 'dia' meaning 'through' or 'across'. So the term 'dialogic' could be described as 'logic across difference' (Wegerif, 2001: 180) It is engaging with this 'logic across difference' which distinguishes dialogic from monologic teaching and learning. Without enquiry and difference being put into perspective through dialogue in a classroom, meaning cannot be established – and deep learning will not take place.

Talking points

Talking points used with 11–13 year old students to raise awareness of some religious and ethical issues associated with the idea of marriage:

- a. Marriage is out of date
- b. Marriage is a woman's prison
- c. Marriage has nothing to do with religion
- d. Parents should help to select suitable marriage partners for their children
- e. Marriage is more about commitment than love
- f. It is better to live together before marriage
- g. Divorced people should not re-marry
- h. Same sex marriages are a good idea
- i. Sex before marriage is unwise
- j. Adultery is always wrong
- k. It is unrealistic to expect marriage vows to last for life
- l. Spending £10,000 on a wedding is a waste of money

Talking points used with 14–16 year old students to explore a range of views about the morality of abortion:

- a. Abortion is murder because it is deliberately ending a human life.
- b. A foetus is not really a human being.
- c. A foetus 6 months before birth should have the same rights as a 6-month-old baby.
- d. Every woman has the right to an abortion; to deny her this freedom is a form of sexism.
- e. When deciding about whether to terminate a pregnancy, a father should have equal rights with the mother.

- f. Abortion is just another form of birth control.
- g. Abortion is good because it stops the birth of unwanted children.
- h. It is better to give a child up for adoption, where it will have a chance of a life, and another couple might have a baby, rather than to have an abortion.
- i. You cannot have rights without responsibilities; a woman who has not made a responsible choice of contraception has no right to an abortion.
- j. You cannot have rights without responsibilities; a foetus can have no responsibilities and therefore can have no rights.
- k. Abortion might be morally wrong, but there are occasions when it might be acceptable as the lesser of two evils.
- l. Two wrongs don't make a right; if abortion is wrong, then there are never circumstances which makes it OK.

Talking points used with 16–18 year old students to develop depth of understanding of Henry Sidgwick's intuitionism* in 'The method of ethics' (1874):

- a. The amount of goodness is not dependent on whether an action happens now or in the future.
- b. Ethical principles are as certain as mathematical principles.
- c. Justice, Prudence and Benevolence are just another definition of good.
- d. Intuition cannot be a route to objective knowledge.
- e. Even if there are 'really clear and certain ethical intuitions', people intuit different principles.
- f. People intuit that we should put our own and our family's well-being ahead of others.

- g. Justice is a universal and objective truth: it's just the application of justice that people disagree about.
- h. Justice, Prudence and Benevolence might be necessary to recognise goodness, but they are not sufficient to define it.

*in this case students might discuss not only their own views but, based on the text, what Henry Sidgwick might have thought about the talking points.

See Dawes, L (2012) *Talking Points*
Routledge (Abingdon)

Debate and discussion techniques

1. Community of enquiry¹⁸

- **Establishing the community:** Students discuss the questions. Certain rules must be observed:
 - Refer to a previous speaker by name, and
 - comment on what was good about their ideas / reasons, and suggest ways to
 - build on the group's understanding

Students should be encouraged to be constructively and positively critical of all contributions. They should be encouraged to use the form of words such as "I disagree with the reason John has given because..." rather than "I disagree with John because".

- **The teacher's role:** the teacher should ideally say as little as possible: i.e. be an equal member of the community. However, this may be an ideal goal rather than a practical starting point. Nevertheless, the teacher might suggest constructive comments to help the process of communal enquiry and avoid being used as the "font of all wisdom".
- **Sharing a stimulus:** stories in particular are excellent vehicles for prompting discussion. Other stimuli such as a poem, song, artefact, experiment, demonstration or video sequence might also be suitable. There are a few examples at the end of this description.
- **Construction of the agenda:** once the material has been introduced students need time to consider what they think

is thought provoking, problematic or interesting about the stimulus. In pairs, or small groups, students share their initial thoughts and suggest questions about the stimulus.

- **Choosing questions:** the pairs or small groups offer the questions that they find most relevant, interesting and stimulating to the other members of the community. Questions are usually displayed and the community must decide a possible sequence in which they might be discussed.

Possible questions might include ones which:

- **Focus attention** e.g. "what do you think?"
- **Develop reasoning** e.g. "what are your reasons for saying...?"
- **Define and clarify** e.g. "what do you mean by?", "can you give an example of...?"
- **Generate alternatives** e.g. "has anyone got any other ideas/examples?"
- **Test for truth** e.g. "how can we tell if that was true?", "does this apply to all situations?"
- **Sustain dialogue** e.g. "who agrees/disagrees?"
- **Summarize** e.g. "what are the key points we have come up with so far?"

Closure:

- Review the process and ask students to think about how it works for them (meta-cognition). What is it like for them to choose their own question? Is it easy to listen to others? Were they surprised by any part of the process? Was anything uncomfortable?

- Then make connections between the groups' discussion questions (and the dialogue which followed it – and transfer those ideas into their homework task or next lesson task (bridging and transfer).

Sample statements

- a. 'An eye for an eye and soon we shall all be blind.' (Mahatma Gandhi)
- b. 'There's enough in the world for every man's need but not for every man's greed.' (Mahatma Gandhi)
- c. 'If you want peace prepare for war.' (Vegetius)
- d. 'The love of money is the root of all evil.' (Jesus)
- e. 'Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Feed a man a fish and you feed him for life' (trad).

2. Silent debate

Silent debate activities can be used with classes aged 8–18+. They are empowering, challenging – and fun.

What's the idea? The silent debate is based on the idea that students will feel more able to respond to disputed aspects of a debate if they write their responses down silently (rather than having to volunteer their points out loud in front of their peers).

What do you need? A3 or larger plain paper, disputed statements about a controversial topic, red, green, blue and black pens

How does it work?

- **Decide** how many groups or 'meeting points' you want to set up in the room (e.g. four tables, would give you four meeting points for four groups of students) and then print a copy of your disputed statement (see the example below). Make the copy easy to read (use a large, sans serif font) then place a copy of the 'controversial issue statement' onto the middle of each table.

Animals do not have souls, so if we've been told we 'have dominion' over them, we can treat them how we like.

- **Explain** any words or phrases which students may not understand (e.g. have dominion over...)
- **Set a time limit** for the activity (10 minutes may be enough) and ask each group to *silently* debate the topic using the four different pen colours to state their points of view and answer points raised by others.

Black Pen = Comment, Blue Pen = Ask a question, Red Pen = Disagree, Green Pen = Clarify point

Stretch and challenge (extending the task for the most able).

To differentiate the activity you can add another (role) level to the task by *making the activity into a market place*. Put your most able students in charge of each 'market stall' (sheet of paper) and direct those students to take charge of the information being written down, checking for accuracy or adding in extra ideas and references (e.g. to religious teachings – or to commentaries about what the text might mean). In turn this helps support the arguments made – so less able students benefit too.

A note about dealing with controversial issues in the classroom.

The definition of a controversial issue is that it is one for which there are *reasonable arguments which could be used to validate a variety of different points of view*. There is therefore no one 'right answer' to the question. In public schooling contexts it goes without saying that exploring ideas like 'racism is a good thing' do not count as controversial issues. The reason is that public schools must uphold common values enshrined in law – and since this opinion is generally held not to be controversial in law (i.e. the law says that racism is *not* right) then, as public servants, teachers cannot actively uphold a contrary view.

One reason for the effectiveness of the dialogic method when you are dealing with controversial issues is that students are 'directly involved' in discussion and subsequently have a 'sense of agency' (Ball & Wells, 2008: 170). They also learn how to evidence what they say in a way which makes sense and belongs to the discourse (e.g. theology, philosophy, ethics), which they are using. Whether material is initially presented in a balanced, stated commitment or procedurally neutral way²⁰ interaction with other people and with relevant texts or other resources ensures that students construct their *own* knowledge. This benefits them in the future, too, when they encounter difficult questions and want to engage with them as adults (Ball & Wells, 2008: 171)

3. Using Circles of Inference

Circles of inference enable students to access texts in a way which starts from the assumption that even if they know nothing about the tradition and even if they don't read particularly well, they *can* have a response to what a text says. By validating their initial response and introducing more layers (circles) of interpretation, students are encouraged to come closer to questions like 'where does this text sit in this particular tradition?' or 'what historical events have made this text key to the way a particular culture understands itself?'

It's often best, as with art, to introduce students to using circles of inference, first, through a *non*-theological text.

This sidesteps their insecurities about dealing with texts at all and also gives them permission to question the text authentically (i.e. with the real questions they really want to ask). It also makes the point that all texts *can* be analysed but that certain pre-formed principles may govern the way that analysis is carried through.

Narrative 22 is an example of a philosophic text used in this way. Students begin by looking at the text (Plato's Myth of Gyges) as text, noting words they feel are important and writing their first responses, either alone or with a partner, within the first circle. This process is then deepened in the second circle as we ask students questions of context and history. In the third circle questions of meaning (about human nature) arise and in the outer circle, with reflection on the process and making of the text itself, the process is complete. The student is being taken on a journey from the physical text, towards the ontology (the meaning-making principles) embedded within it. For instance in Plato's case (Narrative 22) we are looking at the possibility that people, given the opportunity, would choose to be selfish, not selfless.

The task is compelling enough to make most students understand the connection between text, context and meaning. This then prompts further enquiry from them, perhaps about who said this – and when. The whole process introduces them, at a micro-level, to the role of interpretive discourse in traditions of belief and practice. They start to learn to understand the idea of variant interpretations and contested narratives and to ask whether, if different lenses or principles are employed to analyse the text, the meanings derived would be different? The answer is, of course, yes. So, aged 16–18 they can understand why a feminist reading of the text, a traditionalist, a philosophical, a historical, or even a Disney version of a text might differ. They are learning, in other words, the real hermeneutic questions which lie behind most debate about the meaning of texts.

Applying Circles of Inference to Islamic Texts:

The process of using circles of inference is a process of collaborative scaffolding. However having enough subject knowledge to collaborate with students in meaning making presumes a fair amount of subject knowledge on the part of the teacher. Because dealing with Islamic texts in classrooms is still intimidating for many, we have quoted an example which works with a Qur'anic quote. This leads students into discussing the concept of *tawhid* (monotheism, the lynchpin of Islamic faith), the importance of the Prophetic example (*sunnah*), the primordial identity of human beings (*fitra*) and the testimony of faith (*shahadah*: *la ilaha illa Allah, Muhammadur rasulallah*; there is no god but God, Muhammad is the Messenger of God)²¹.

Analysis of texts enables teachers to address big questions in Islam (as in all belief systems) like: where and who is

God? What are human nature, relationships, eschatology and reality meant to be like? The student connects to the themes through teacher questions: 'what does this verse suggest about the relationship between human beings and Allah? Or, as we are all referred to here as the 'Children of Adam', are we all one family?

One last point:

In the final circle of each 'circle of inference' a space is offered for both students and teacher to consider what questions arise next. At this point, a *community of enquiry* could be initiated, or additional resources explored. This circle also asks students to look critically at questions of 'who' – where does the information they have used come from? Whose interpretations are they considering? Would it be different if we approached it with a different lens (say, that of modernist revivalism, that of traditional orthodoxy, that of feminist discourse, and so on?) Also how did they, the student, get to the questions they are asking, reflectively, in the outer circle? What interpretive decisions did they make, and on what basis? This task is, ultimately, encouraging students to see religious traditions as discourses and understand the degree to which each narrative is embedded within them – and arises out of interpretation of them. As Terence Copley suggests, theologizing *is* being 'hermeneutically literate'²² (Copley, 2005: 263). Why, then, would we not look for ways to enable this literacy to develop?

For more details of this see Reader: Narrative 12.

Starters and word games

1. 'Corners' debates

Should you have a classroom where it's easy to move desks out of the way then this is a really good way of starting or ending – a debate. You, as the teacher, read out a short statement which you know the group will be interested in, have opinions about – and which feeds into the lesson content. So, if your lesson is about abortion you could start with the statement 'is it ever right to kill?' This is just a starter to help clarify students' ideas, so you don't need to run the activity for more than ten minutes, nor fully explore all the possible answers. As soon as you ask the question students move to a designated *agree*, *disagree* or *neutral* area of the room (try using two corners of the room and the centre). Then, without asking questions directly yourself (there's plenty of time for that later in the lesson) you say 'talk to someone who's in the same place in the room as you. Why are you both there? Do you have the same reasons?' After about five minutes, everyone stops talking (ask them to watch for a clear signal to stop, like a raised arm. No need to shout!). Next, you say: 'now talk to someone who's in a very different part of the room. Ask them why *they* chose that position and explain why you

What's questions arise?



For further advice on working with this text see Endnote 21.

didn't'. Again, after 5–7 minutes, stop the conversation and ask for a few examples of responses. Don't push things too far at this stage as students may have very little knowledge about the subject so need more input at this point. Now move on next to a more dialogic 'acquiring information based' task. It's very helpful to run the corners activity, again at the end of the scheme of work, especially if there's an assessment coming up and they need to have 'for and against' arguments clear in their heads. See if students can explain to each other, as they move into corners, whether they've changed their minds – and what persuaded them. They (and we, as teachers!) are often surprised by how much they have indeed, learned.

2. Taboo

This is a well-known card game so some students may know it already. It can be played at different levels of difficulty but always helps students recognise how important it is to know the meanings behind words. They also learn how much fun it can be to learn both the words

and their meanings! The very competitive thrive on games of this type.

- **Step 1:** make some small cards (you can make six, at least, from a piece of A4 paper) and at the top each card write down *one per card, a piece of essential vocabulary* you want your students to demonstrate that they understand.
- **Step 2:** Give three or four cards to each pair of students and explain the rules of TABOO. These are as follows: they must write down three or four words (or short phrases) on each card which mean the same thing as the Taboo word (see example below). These words or phrases are *about* the taboo word, and should help someone else guess the word, but can't contain in any way, the word itself. Mimes and 'it's like this' comments aren't allowed.

If you're revising students should do the task unaided but if it's the start or middle of a topic you can suggest text books or their own notes to remind them what each word means.

• **Step 3:** everyone hands their Taboo cards to the teacher, who mixes them up in a hat or tin. S/he reads out the *clues* which the pairs have written – randomly – and everyone tries to guess what each Taboo word is. The pair who guesses most words wins the prize! The pair who you think wrote the best clues could also have another prize if you're feeling generous! This latter prize is important. The skill you are rewarding is *understanding* of the terms. Both writing the clues and guessing words from other people's clues show that skill.

• **Step 4:** you can easily add levels of difficulty to this game after the first round is over. For instance you can ask the class to write a paragraph linking any three Taboo words together. The selection you make could be random or, more likely, selections designed to check understanding of deeper meanings made in traditions or *compare* meanings across traditions.)

Here are some sample Taboo cards. Which word fits the definitions on card 3? Which other word could a group put onto card 2 (Eid) to help other students guess what their key word is?

Church	Eid	?
where Christians meet	Festival	Rule to live by
cross shaped (often)	Muslim	613
can be in a house	?	Time bound or not time bound
priest	Celebration	Judaism

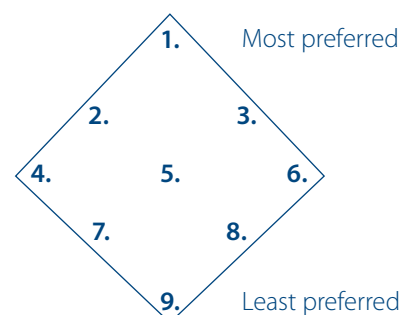
For example see Narrative 4

3. Diamond Nines

Putting choices in a rank order helps young people think about what's important to them. For example, saying 'which of these charities would you most like to give to – and why?' starts them thinking about the issue much better than a lesson which starts with a question like 'do you think the Sikh, Christian or Buddhist way of giving to charity is best?' would.

Putting things into a rank order as an individual, then as a pair and then in a small group (up to 4) also helps students work out how *consensus* is reached. It can also, used skilfully, help them see that it's almost impossible to reach consensus on some issues. Knowing this can be useful so teach them, too, to feedback in different formats, for instance: 'tell the group two things you agreed on, two you disagreed about and two things on which they couldn't agree'. Students soon pick up the idea that consensus is not the only basis on which decision making is carried out in social and political life.

For *diamond nine activities* either the teacher – or students if they're revising a topic – write down nine different statements about a controversial issue. Each group of four or five students has a copy of the set of statements (photocopy and cut up) and is given ten to fifteen minutes to arrange them in a diamond nine rank order. (See diagram below). They then explain to other groups how they came up their rank order and justify their choices. It's helpful to give each group a spare slip of paper too. Tell them that they can reject one statement and write their own substitute.



Open, guided and structured enquiry

Independent enquiry is very difficult for students to sustain for long below a certain age, and, if carried out without dialogic interaction, it isn't necessarily very profitable either. For that reason teachers prefer to talk about open, guided and structured enquiry. The diagram below shows you a set pattern for planning and running enquiry based learning – and indicates different starting points from which it can emerge.

Planning enquiry based learning which moves from a teacher mediated and structured to a student centred model



Example 1:

Narrative 17 (The Conference of the Birds) has been made into a structured enquiry for 11–12 year olds. The enquiry is structured so that students have to develop 'metacognition skills.' Learned well, these will then help them, later when they are set a more open or independent enquiry task (page 91).


Example 2:

Study booklet 1 (Cultural Understanding) contains an example of a guided enquiry into why (and whether?) we should teach about the Holocaust. The booklet which accompanies this enquiry can be acquired by e-mailing mme22@cam.ac.uk. This enquiry can be run with anyone

aged around 14 years old and is a good training and professional development exercise too, for teachers.

Example 3:

The pages which follow give an example of an enquiry which is quite open. It asks students aged 11–12 to look at their local area in terms of its geography, history, social and political background (SPS). It then asks them to look at beliefs and practices shared by the community and the relationship between all four elements (EBP). This would be a good enquiry to use before you scale switched to look at the same beliefs and practices in another part of the world/country.



SYMBOLS, SOURCES AND RESOURCES

A LOCAL PROJECT

Name: _____

Group: _____

Tutor: _____

DEADLINE: You need to hand in your completed project in by.....

HINTS AND TIPS

You have several weeks to do this project so you need to manage your time wisely. You will need to plan some of the tasks as they are 'out and about' activities.

If you encounter any problems you need to go and speak to one of your teachers as soon as possible. This means you do cannot leave this project to the last minute as you may have difficulties that we can then not help you with in time!



Homework Hub


Library

If you need time and help with your project then the new Homework Hub after school in the library is here for you!

Sources of Information

Use all the resources available to you – the internet (make sure to use trusted sites for information and don't just copy and paste information), books from the library and your parents/carers!







HELP!!

Remember your definitions:
Human features are anything that is **man-made** (e.g. house, road, bus stop).
Physical features are **naturally occurring** (e.g. trees, river, field).

Remember your Ordnance Survey map symbols:
 Here are some examples...



MAP TASK

You need to create an A3 map of your local area using the instructions from each subject. You will need to create a key for your different symbols.

GEOGRAPHY

Annotate the following features onto your map: at least 5 physical features, at least 5 human features, a compass with North arrow, at least 4 Ordnance Survey map symbols, 3 things that could be improved in your local area and why.

EBP

Find one location in your local area that is a place of worship. Add this to your map in green and include it on the key to your map.

HISTORY

What places are there in your local area that are historically significant? E.g. important buildings, a battle site, an abbey etc.

SPS

Find 5 places in your local area which provide a service to the community e.g. post office to the community or are places which the community can use for business or leisure e.g. leisure centre.

HISTORY

1066-1086: What story would a tree be able to tell about where you live?

In History lessons, you have been learning about the **changes** that affected Saxon England after the Norman invasion in 1066.

Your challenge is to write a story based upon what you have learnt in class and imagine what a tree in your town or village might have seen and heard. In your story you can:

- ❖ say how the Feudal System has changed your town
- ❖ discuss how the language has changed
- ❖ describe how a Motte and Bailey Castle has been built
- ❖ consider the effects of the Domesday Book

STRETCH YOURSELF FURTHER

You could research the place where you live to find out who the actual Norman Lord was in 1086 and how many people lived there. The Domesday Book is an excellent source for this. This will make your story more historically accurate.

GEOGRAPHY

What can you learn from getting 'out and about' locally?

Demographics are a set of numbers (statistics) of a given population that tell us what the area is like to live there. What are the demographics like in area you live in?

You will need access to the internet for this task.

Visit the following website:

<http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/HTMLDocs/dv147/index.html>

Type your **post code** into the box on the first page, then click on 'go'. If you don't know your post code, use 'PE6 8NF' which is the schools. As you work through each question, make a note of your guess, the actual answer and how far away from the correct value you were. On a separate piece of A4 lined paper you are to summarise what you found out. Use the following format if you like:

- Start off by stating where you live and what your local knowledge rating was (%).
- Write a paragraph that informs the reader about the demographics of your local area by writing sentences about each of the questions you had to answer.
- Which statistic was you most surprised about and why?
- What would you say about the overall quality of life in your area?

STRETCH YOURSELF

Could you compare the demographics of your local area with somewhere else? Why do you think the statistics are different?

EBP

How can we understand from the symbols of the past?

Either with an adult, or in a group with your friends, visit a local place of worship in your local community. As you explore this place of worship find and record either through photographs, drawings or other media, four religious symbols. Your task is to investigate what each symbol represents or means in the place of worship you have chosen. For example, you might visit a local church in your community and notice that it has a lectern with a flying eagle on the part that the Bible rests on. Why is this? You might find it helpful to speak with members of the faith community you visit to help you and this is why it might be a good idea to go in a group or with an adult to help you ask the questions.

When completing your activity consider the following:

- How will you record the findings of your investigation?
- Why are the symbols you have selected important to that faith community?
- What benefit do these symbols have to members of the faith community?
- What symbols do you think are important to you and your family and what do they mean?

STRETCH YOURSELF

In ancient Greco-Roman times, ICHTHUS was the Greek word for "fish." In early Christianity, sometime near the end of the first century, the word was made into an acronym or a word formed from the first letter of several words. As such, ichthus came to stand for "Jesus Christ, God's son, Saviour". Sometimes referred to as "the sign of the fish," it is reported that in early times it was used by Christians as a secret symbol that all would recognise, whether scratched on walls, rocks, or sand. Research the history and the importance of this symbol further.

SPS

How would you develop a sense of community?

The community you live in helps to develop your sense of identity and a sense of belonging. Different facilities offer a community opportunities to meet, learn, exercise or chill out together. Walking round your community what facilities are there to help bring different groups together? You have mapped 5 places which your community has but what else does it need or what else would improve that community feeling.

Consider the following:

- different age groups
- different types of families
- different interests
- bringing the community together

Choose 3 new buildings which would cover all the above points and explain your choices. You could amend existing facilities or create new multi-use ones. Describe who would use these buildings, what activities might take place there and what events would you organise to launch each building?

HOW WILL I BE MARKED?

Response	You have (In History):	You have (In Geography):	You have (In RPE):	You have (In PSHEE):
Beginner	Completed the task and listed the changes in your story, with simple examples.	Written a paragraph that includes at least 4 statistics to explain the quality of life in your local area.	Completed the task and included some reasons for your choice of symbols	Completed the task and included some reasons for choices
Competent	Completed the task and described in some detail how England changed after 1066, with clear examples.	Written at least one paragraph that includes at least 4 statistics to explain the quality of life in your local area. You have tried to explain the statistics.	Completed the task and explained the importance of the symbols in the place of worship	Completed the task and explained in some detail reasons for choices
Master	Completed the task and explained how the Normans changed England after 1066, using clear examples.	Written several paragraphs that include all the statistics to explain the quality of life in your local area. You have clearly explained the statistics. You have compared the demographics of your local area.	Completed the task and justified with clear examples how these symbols make a difference in the lives of people in the faith community.	Completed the task and justified with clear examples reasons for choices

Grade	Description	Evidence from your presentation	Action for teacher
1	Substandard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your work is incomplete (the reader knows what points you are trying to make). Work is presented to the best of your ability and you have used different/unusual presentation techniques. Your map has a title and is orientated in pairs. The writing is a jumble of words, you have written in full sentences and you have highlighted your sources. 	Highlight name and next awarded
2	Basic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buildings are used and more ideas to the work are shown. Work is presented to the best of your ability. The writing is a jumble of words and you have written in full sentences. 	Next awarded
3	Endorsing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your work has some structure but does not flow very well. Work is presented to a satisfactory level but it is not that you could have done better. Your map could have more detail on it. The writing is more than a jumble and you have written in full sentences. 	None
4	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work has linked all the structure. Work is not presented to the best of your ability and is a lack of time/effort is the reason for this. Information about the topic is many times or copied from sources (reference books) and not researched/understood. You have not followed instructions. 	Discuss with parents/next awarded

Pay attention to the mark scheme and the effort levels to help you achieve the best mark possible! Ask your teacher if you are not sure how to go about this.

Hints & Tips

Example 4

Narratives don't have to be written down to tell a story. They are often sung, painted, written or spoken for both private and public consumption. They take on many different forms, some of which are non-linguistic (in the ordinary sense of the word). So if we take (classical) arts- based narratives, or narratives from a variety of cultures, into a classroom, we need to work out how to introduce students, who weren't part of the cultures which made the narrative, to their way of thinking.

a. Thinking about metaphor

Metaphor is a key to understanding symbolic thinking. It is the idea that something, someone, some representation of an idea, can point, symbolically, to something else. It can point to an idea, to a concept, to a whole worldview. This 'big idea' tells us something about an idea e.g. of life, or growth, for instance. Do school students know this? Many people assume that everyone knows about poetry or history or art – and then get upset because their students don't seem to value things which come from 'high' or different cultures. But unless teachers guide school students through the steps which make that high or different culture intelligible to *them*, they just won't understand. One student in every class may have been brought up with regular visits to museums, regular reading of novels, regular access to theatre and regular global travel – but has everybody?

School students *can* understand the narratives in classical forms of literature, art and theatre, or narratives from different cultures, but in a world where symbolic language in particular is not always encountered or understood, we desperately need to leave them space and time to *reflect* on what they read too. They need this so that they can practice finding echoes, for them, in these different 'languages' and so reach a deeper understanding of what their own cultural narratives mean.

b. Cracking key concepts

Recently I was working with some teachers in training and thought I would work outwards from the idea of metaphor (which I foolishly assumed they understood), to an appreciation of the 'scapegoat' narrative in Holman's Hunt famous painting of that name. I stopped, getting nowhere, after twenty minutes. Everything they commented on suggested they thought of the picture only as a literal depiction of a shabby looking goat in a desert sort of place with a bit of red string on its horns. In fact, as anyone who really knows the narrative behind this picture will recognise, there is a whole world view and a considerable amount of theology tucked into that shabby goat. So where should I go to help my students understand the key *ideas* in the picture, without scaring them into thinking it's either 'meaningless' or too hard for anyone who isn't Jewish or Christian – or an artist – to fathom?

Here is the image (painting by Holman Hunt).



i. First things first: start where your students 'are.'

Every student has eyes or other sensory ways of understanding objects in the world. We are all to a greater or lesser extent, observers of the world around us. So start by asking students to say 'what do you see?' There are very ordinary things in the picture, so start with those. What sort of place is the goat in? Is the goat happy and healthy? Why do you think the goat is sinking into the ground? What do you think the colours represent? Ask questions which stimulate thinking, too. For example 'there is a red cord round the goat's horns. What does the colour red remind you of? The goat has been left alone. How do you think this might have happened?'

ii. Secondly, this 'text' has a context, so tell them what it is.

"In ancient Israel sins were transferred, every day, to sin offerings (Leviticus Chapter 16). Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest sacrificed a bull for a sin offering for his own sins. Then he took two goats and presented them at the door of the tabernacle (the holiest part of the temple) to make a symbolic offering to G-d for the sins of the whole nation (Israel). Two goats were chosen by lot; one to be "The Lord's Goat" and the other to be the "Azazel" or scapegoat. This second goat was to be sent away into the wilderness. The High Priest confessed the sins of the Israelites to Yahweh (G-d) and put them symbolically on the head of the other goat, the Azazel scapegoat. This goat was then driven out into the wilderness so that the people's sins would (metaphorically) be taken away.

Since the second goat (Leviticus 16) was sent away to die in the wilderness the word "scapegoat" has developed to indicate a person who is blamed and punished for what others have actually done.

iii. Thirdly, check that everyone understands the key words in the text (in colour) and then ask further questions. Keep those questions close to students' own experience.

Question 1: have you heard people use the word *scapegoat* before?

Question 2: do you think they mean the same thing, when they use the word, as this story does? Why? Why not?

Question 3: why do you think we sometimes 'scapegoat' other people?

iv. Fourthly, once you are sure everyone has understood the **concept of a scapegoat**, follow up the enquiry with one or more of the following tasks.

- Write a poem or create a poster which illustrates the idea of the 'scapegoat' figure in the 21st century.
- Explore Holman Hunt's picture further. On an iPad, or using an interactive white board, annotate the illustration to show how different aspects of the painting reflect the meaning of the story it represents.
- Research the Jewish festival of Yom Kippur. Find out what happens during the festival and make a presentation, using three PowerPoint slides and at least two of the key words we have studied, showing how celebrating the festival today connects Jewish people with this story.

Example 5: guiding enquiry so that outcomes are 'well-crafted'

Below is a guided enquiry-based learning approach which asks groups of students to decide, from two options, how they want to represent a story themselves – and then gives them a choice of things they can do in order to help them complete the task. Critical thinking is introduced to the task by asking pairs to select tasks from a range of options, and sequence them so that they gain as much understanding as they can about the narrative. They then justify their choices to their teacher. Giving them ownership, in this way, of the process of understanding, starts to make them aware of what learning *means*, in this subject. The story in this example is called 'the conference of the birds' and a version of it can be found in the Reader section of this RE-framing toolkit (Narrative 17).

Instructions for planning a guided enquiry sequence. (Scale switching between an individual narrative – and the 'big ideas' it points to.)

Materials needed (per pair): 1 set of cards, 1 piece sugar paper, 1 glue stick, felt tips

Timing: Depending on level of discussion and time taken to share, around 45 minutes.

Aim: To focus on selecting and sequencing activities in order to develop skills in constructing a rigorous and engaging enquiry sequence, designed around a set enquiry question and a 'big idea'.

1. Make sure you have already introduced and illustrated the idea of an enquiry sequence. That means explaining that it is a set of 4–5 lessons focussed around an enquiry question (which is both very simply directed at a key idea and resourced so that even the most able will be stretched by the challenge). The enquiry builds up in a structured way to an outcome activity which answers that question. The group will need some existing experience of common activities in studying beliefs and practices (e.g. How to work in groups, with talking points or mind mapping an idea). The enquiry

question is driven by a particular big idea which affects teaching and learning about beliefs and practices, (*significance* in this example); though of course you will bump into other ideas along the way. It is important to note that the outcome activity is not necessarily just something produced right at the end of the sequence; it could well be built up bit by bit over each lesson (e.g. adding parts to a display, building up notes on an essay planner). But the school students should be well aware of the outcome activity and enquiry question from the early stages of the sequence.

2. The aim of this activity is to work on the choice of learning strategies to build up school students' expertise in a certain topic step by step until they have understanding *and* the factual knowledge necessary to make a good job of the outcome activity. This will take time and carefully scaffolded input. Different classes and individuals will, of course, need different levels of support and challenge, depending on prior knowledge, experience etc.
3. Before the session, cut up the cards (note that the first one with the enquiry question on is larger) and check you have the other resources available.
4. Introduce the big idea (significance) and the enquiry question. Explain that there is a choice of two outcome activities for the enquiry sequence – each pair or small group should choose one (though they could always change their minds later!). Each group may also like to have a particular class (year group, prior knowledge and attainment etc.) in mind as they work.
5. Each pair then reads all activity cards and sorts them into three piles. The three piles will be yes, no and maybe:
 - a. **Yes** – relevant to this enquiry sequence and a strong activity – can see this being used.
 - b. **No** – *either* a good activity, but not relevant to this particular sequence (e.g. analysing what Sufism is, which would be more appropriate to a sequence based on a different enquiry question) *or* a rather weak 'busy' activity which you wouldn't want to use in any sequence (e.g. 'drawing lots of pictures of birds').
 - c. **Maybe** – these ideas don't directly emphasize *significance*, but might be necessary as a knowledge-builder to ensure children really know what they're talking about, especially if they haven't studied this topic before.
6. Now each group should order the activity cards to form the bulk of their enquiry sequence. This will involve more selection as they get a firmer idea about what will happen and how progression in understanding will be secured. Have a few blank cards for any additional activities which people think of. The entire enquiry sequence will probably be 4–5 x one-hour lessons in length, including production of the final outcome, but precise timing isn't a focus in this activity.
7. When each group is happy with their choices, ask them to glue their sequence down onto the sugar paper in chronological order, and, in felt tip, justify the choice and position of each activity. Photographs showing 'one I constructed earlier' can be downloaded to iPads or to the interactive white board as a guide to possible outcomes. What is the point of each activity within the whole? What aspect of factual knowledge, conceptual understanding or process/method of communication is being built up at each stage? When are new ideas being introduced, when are familiar ones being reinforced or recapped? Why would the sequence work? Whilst participants are annotating their sheets, circulate and push for more detailed explanations if necessary. If a group realises they've missed a stage or have a redundant activity, it is fine to make changes.
8. The dissemination and feedback stage – there are various ways of doing this depending on the nature of the group and the amount of time available – e.g. viewing the finished work as an exhibition, snowballing, or short presentations of a couple of contrasting examples to the whole group. You may wish to provide feedback on individual ideas (e.g. by peer comments on post-its in an agreed format) or discussion may be more general. Whatever you decide, the key is to give the whole group a chance to see and learn from others' work, to affirm what has been learned, and to pull out common themes/issues/good ideas, as well as to raise any points which concern you.

When each group has its three piles, bring everybody back together for a few minutes to compare thoughts. Which cards definitely belonged to a particular pile? Which were trickier? If there is a disagreement, ask for the dissenting group's justification – they may be interpreting the activity in a different, but useful way. Check the 'red herrings', e.g. a study of sacred rivers could have a connection with the 'journey' idea here and is an interesting activity, but is really more suited to bringing out the big idea of the sacred than the one here (significance). You'll find some groups want to include almost all the ideas because they are 'good' – this may be true, but we don't have to cram everything into one sequence – the class could always go on to a second sequence about the conference of the birds, driven by another 'big idea' (Time) if this was felt to be appropriate.

This activity works by controlling certain aspects of the medium-term planning process (the choice of enquiry question, the limited choice of outcome activity, the provision of possible learning activities) so that participants are free to focus fully on other aspects of the planning process (selecting and sequencing). Next time round, you will want to remove some of this scaffolding to build up other skills. A key skill may be how to write a good enquiry question (one which is both very simply directed at a key idea and resourced so that even the most able will be stretched by the challenge). Try giving a list of questions on a different topic for critical evaluation, then ask participants to write their own.

Enquiry questions:

- a. Why is it hard for the birds to complete the journey to the Simorgh?
- b. What do they find difficult to accept about the Simorgh's response to them?
- c. If you reflect on this story – what do you think it is saying about where we look for 'answers' to life's challenges?

Big idea: Significance (Having a 'big idea', helps students to learn how to answer a specific question about a topic, not just repeat or describe information without analysis of any kind).

Outcome activity option 1:

Display board illustrating the story and its links with the big idea. Illustrations evaluating the ways people (birds) work with or against others when they're trying to solve a problem (Title: 'Why is it hard for the birds to complete the journey to the Simorgh?').

Bird book activity – what do these birds look like? Where do they live?

Studying art work on a theme of 'life is a journey.' Are there common themes? (e.g. Mazes).

'Design a bird' activity (What qualities would you like your bird to have when s/he sets off on their journey?).

Constructing a display of bird habits – using the types of bird in the story.

Making *mobiles* which show a 'freeze frame' of each part of the journey.

Make your own journey of life maze (e.g. in Celtic art – why did people make mazes?).

CD clips: *Sacred Rivers*, BBC (Why are some journeys seen as 'sacred' How do we keep things which are sacred to us?).

Examining a range of different commentaries, on websites, about the story – what view are they giving of the Simorgh?

'What if?' activity – diagram with all the knock-on effects of setting off on a journey with a group of people (birds) you don't know all that well.

Essay planner – guidance and space for key-point notes to gradually build up material for writing the final essay.

Individual or class brainstorm – what do we know about the Simorgh? Why do the birds think they need to find him/her/it?

Outcome activity option 2:

Movie based on story (using Movie Maker). Why is it hard for the birds to complete the journey to the Simorgh?

'Journey to the Simorgh' – mind movie (with bird sounds in background).

Pin board activity to show what happens at each stage of the story.

Market place activity (or silent debate) to show how each group is interpreting the figure of the Simorgh.

Drawing your own versions of the birds which take part in the journey.

Card sort (paper or on Interactive white board) – bird qualities in the story....and the birds they go with.

Watch a YouTube animation of the story (presentation of the journey, main ideas, words used to tell the story). Then check if this is exactly the same story as the one in the Reader. Why do different versions of stories emerge? How do they get passed on?

Consider an example of a familiar 'journey' (e.g. a car trip or your last holiday journey). What are the parts involved? How do they fit together? How do you know if it's working well? What can make it go wrong?

Domino definitions – conference of the birds vocabulary.

QUADS grid (question, answer, details, source) to structure notes from textbook or library books on either Sufism or ideas for telling this story in different ways.

Brainstorm or card sort – ideas for solutions to issues of community life when it goes wrong

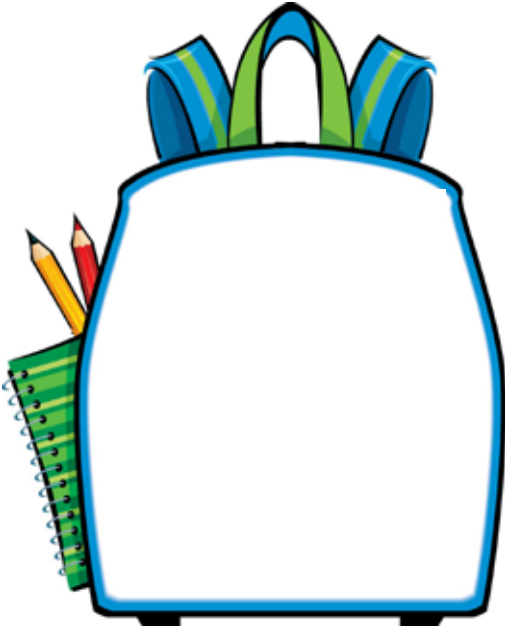
(Use the back of this card for your own idea if you would like to add one in)



Activity 2



What 3 values would you put into your backpack for your journey?



What challenges might you face on your journey?



What values do you see in yourself when you look in the mirror?

Which value are you going to choose to help you in your journey ahead?

How will this value help you?

These images form part of a class journal which teacher trainees developed in order to take Narrative 17 into a class of 9–11 year old students.

Familiarisation and de-familiarisation

Sometimes students understand an idea better if you give them examples of what something is *not* like. This de-familiarisation only really works if they are already familiar with the idea! Below are four examples of the 'cross' narrative. They all share some parts of the idea but they are different, too. Ask four different groups in your class to research one picture each and prepare a short presentation about each one. Everyone then shares the findings on a writing frame (see below).

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Picture 1				
Picture 2				
Picture 3				
Picture 4				

Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



Picture 4



Useful Resources for beginner storytellers

Why tell stories when teaching about and from beliefs and practices?

The quotations below all come from the Foreword to Helen Luke's book *The Inner Story*.¹ They form an interesting commentary on the importance of teaching through narrative, whether we are looking at beliefs and practices through the lens of cultural understanding, identity formation, or issues of evidence, truth and proof.

'There is but one history and that the soul's.' (W. B. Yeats, from introduction to the 1928 version of *A Vision* quoted in Luke, H. (1982).

'The essence of all religions, from the most primitive to the most highly developed, has always been expressed by the human soul in stories.'

We can say 'I believe in this or that,' and assert the truth of many doctrines, but these things will not affect the soul of any one of us unless in some way we experience their meaning through intense response to the images conveyed in story.'

'Innumerable tales in all ages have expressed the changing relationships of human beings to their gods and have told of their search for the divine meaning behind their lives.'

'Storytellers (keep) alive into our own day the imaginative response to the numinous, which alone gives life to conceptual dogma.'

'The destiny of the world is determined less by the battles that are lost and won than by the stories it loves and believes in.' (Harold Goddard, *The meaning of Shakespeare*, Vol. 2, p. 208) quoted in foreword to Luke, H. (1982).

'The experience of darkness, of evil, is essential to redemption and there is no inner story that does not contain this truth.'

'The inner story, though the same in essence for all, is always single and unique in each human being, never before lived and never to be repeated.'

'It is in part by our response to the great stories of the world that we too can begin to find, each of us, this individual story, expressing the symbolic meaning behind the facts of our fate and behind the motives that determine the day to day choices of our lives.'

'If we are not aware of the need for this imaginative search, and continue to base our attitudes purely on the kind of

thinking that is bound by materialistic cause and effect and statistical data, then sooner or later we shall be forced to see how the springs of life dry up, and how nature, physical as well as psychic, is gradually polluted and sterilized...'

'In a story the living confrontation of the opposites and the transcendent symbol that resolves conflict speak directly to the listener's mind, heart and imagination...'

How do we tell stories about beliefs and practices (in the classroom and beyond?)

Society for storytelling www.sfs.org.uk/

This website includes many resources, including a beginner's guide to telling stories, ways of working with storytellers in schools, and advice on cross-cultural story telling. All resources are freely available to download.

¹ Luke, H (1982). *The Inner Story*. Crossroad Publishing Company (New York)

A short glossary of key Islamic terms

Allah: the Greatest Name. The most used name of God, believed to encompass all 99. Often translated as 'God, in Arabic' – though beware of the differences between Muslim, Jewish and Christian conceptions of God. It is difficult or impossible to describe Allah fully. The Islamic understanding includes the suggestion that God is not simply a 'deity', but Reality itself. The declaration of faith: *la ilaha illa Allah* suggests that 'there is nothing: there is only Allah'. It precludes the possibility of anything having power or existence on its own – everything, rather, is derived from God; therefore, taking anything other than God for worship is essentially an act of untruth.

'Your incomprehension of Him is your comprehension of Him' (hadith, where the Prophet instructed his friend, Abu Bakr)

'Say: He is Allah, the One. The eternal, absolute. None of born of Him, nor is He born, and there is none like unto Him' (Surah 112, believed to equate to 'a third of the Qur'an').

'In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Kind. All praise is for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, the Most Merciful, the Most Kind. Master of the Day of Judgement.

You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help. Guide us along the straight path, the path of those whom You have favoured, not of those who've earned Your anger, nor those who've gone astray.' (Qur'an, Surah 1: the Muslim prayer and opening chapter of the Qur'an, said at least 17 times per day, within the units of the 5 daily prayers).

'And when Moses came to Our appointed time and his Lord had spoken unto him, he said: My Lord! Show me (Thy Self) that I may gaze upon Thee. He said: Thou wilt not see Me, but gaze upon the mountain! If it stand still in its place, then thou wilt see Me. And when his Lord revealed (His) glory to the mountain He sent it crashing down. And Moses fell down senseless. And when he woke he said: Glory unto Thee! I turn unto Thee repentant, and I am the first of (true) believers.' (Qur'an 7:143).

God is known variously in classical literature as 'The Friend' or 'The Lover' (whilst Muhammad is referred to as 'The Beloved'), and using 'The 99 Names', the various names of God are found in the Qur'an (see entry below), which add up to 99.

Ayah: taken typically to mean 'verse' of the Qur'an, though the meaning in Arabic is '*sign*' and can also refer more broadly to any sign of God in creation, or *symbol* of other levels of reality.

Hadith: A statement, or a record of the actions of, the Prophet Muhammad. This is the source of the *Sunnah*, a source of law in Islam. The best known hadith collections are those of *Bukhari* and *Muslim*, wherein approximately 7000 hadith were collated within the 200 years following the Prophet's death, selected from the over 300,000 that were memorized and circulating at the time. These collections are known as '*sahih*' ('truthful' or 'authentic'), for this reason. Selection was only on the basis of multiple verification, word-for-word, corroborated by numerous sources with independently sound chains of transmission, excluding those whose chains (*sanad*) were remotely dubious. The exactitude and rigour of this scholarly enterprise makes these collections known as being second only to the Qur'an in terms of their veracity. In physical form, the bulk of these collections actually constitute the chains of transmission (*isnad/sanad*), demonstrating the importance of this feature of Muslim scholarship.

Fitra: the primordial state of human beings – believed to be a state of natural submission to Allah. This belief is the origin of the idea that 'everyone is born Muslim', i.e. one who has submitted to/acknowledged Allah, necessarily as part of His creation.

Islam: Often translated as 'submission'. In fact, the connotations of this word can be misleading – the root word of 'Islam' and 'Muslim' is *salam*, meaning peace, which

points to the peace felt from acknowledging (in one's heart and outwardly) the truth, or reality. So submission means more acknowledgement and acceptance than servitude, although it naturally begets the latter.

Isnad: the 'chain of transmission' of traditions (whether text or practice, spiritual or outward) in Islam. It is also the qualifier of scholarship: one must have permission (*ijaza*) to pass on something in the chain authentically. Scholars can be classified according to their '*sanad*' (chain), and should be able to identify every person in that chain, all the way back to the Prophet himself, offering a biography of each person involved. This is a means of scholarly quality-assurance, a means of preserving the original message of the Prophet, and a manifestation of the Muslim belief that education is inward as well as outward: learning takes place as *relationships* between people, and their character and spirituality are as important as the content. This is a way of passing on something of the Prophetic spirituality and character, and therefore is traditionally undertaken with great respect and consciousness of the blessing of connection with him.

Muslim: 'one who has submitted/acknowledged' Allah, and the message of the Prophet Muhammad.

Qur'an: literally, 'the recitation'. Points to the way in which the Qur'an was revealed and taught, and also points to the oral culture of the time. The Qur'an is referred to as 'The Criterion', meaning the standard by which to determine the truth of all previous revelations, which are believed to have been lost or changed over time. It is believed to be the last in a line of revelations/prophecy beginning with Adam, through Abraham, David, Moses and Jesus, completing with Muhammad, the 'Seal of the Prophets'. It is believed to be the final revelation which will ever reach humanity, and because of this is under divine protection, preventing it from being lost or changed.

Sunnah: the example and practice (in words, action or approval) of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He is the interpreter of the Qur'an, and the Sunnah is the lens through which we interpret it. It is also one of the 4 central sources of law in Islam, which together are: The Qur'an, the Sunnah, *qiyas* (analogical reasoning in a juristic context), and *ijma'* (the consensus of scholars on a particular topic. The principle underlying the latter is found in the well-known hadith which states: 'My community will not agree on an error').

Tawhid: the oneness of God, a belief which permeates Muslim ontology and understanding of the universe: the multiplicity of everything we see points to, and derives its existence from, the unity of God, the One at the heart and origin of all that is.

The 99 Names of God: the names of God found in the Qur'an. These are believed to manifest in everything in creation in some way. They include The Most Merciful, The Compassionate, or Most Kind (names used most frequently in Muslim prayers and as an opener for Qur'an recitation and other activities in the formula '*In the name of God, the Most Merciful, The Most Kind*'). (Full lists of the Names are easily found online).

Lends to understanding of the '**Problem of Evil**', which has not classically been as much of a 'problem' for Muslims. Everything, good or evil, is believed to be under the will of God. But our challenge is understanding what good and evil actually are: how do temporal actions, embedded in time and space, have eternal realities and ramifications? Good and evil relate to Muslim ontology: the interrelation of different levels, or plains, of reality are mysterious. Evil is permitted on this earth, perhaps because this earth (*dunya*) is the 'lowest' (*dunya* literally meaning 'lowest') of all levels of reality, the presence of evil alluding to this, but all actions are reflected on a divine and eternal mirror that we shall finally see clearly on the Day of Judgement. We don't yet know what that will mean or look like, but the narrations regarding it are sobering.

References and further reading:

- Armstrong, J. (2012) *How to Worry Less about Money*. Pan Macmillan (London, Basingstoke and Oxford).
- Armstrong, K. (2010) *The Case for God*. Vintage (London).
- Bakhtin, M.M. (1986) (1986) *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Trans. Vern W. McGee. University of Texas Press (Austin, Tx).
- Bandura, A. (1997) *Self-Efficacy in Changing Societies*. Cambridge University Press (Cambridge).
- Barton, J. (2010) *The Bible (the basics)*. Routledge (London and New York).
- Biesta, G.J.J. (2010) *Good Education in an Age of Measurement*. Paradigm (Colorado).
- Botton A. (2012) *How to Think More about Sex*. Pan Macmillan (London, Basingstoke and Oxford).
- Capel, S. Leask, M. and Turner, T. (2013) *Learning to teach in the Secondary School*. Routledge (London and New York).
- Copley, T. (2005) Young People, Biblical Narrative and "Theologizing": A UK Perspective, *Religious Education, The Official Journal of the Religious Education Association*, 100:3, 254–265.
- Cotton, D.R.E. Teaching controversial environmental issues: neutrality and balance in the reality of the classroom in *Educational Research*, Vol. 48, No. 2, June 2006, pp. 223 – 241
- Dawkins, R. (1989) *The Selfish Gene*. Oxford University Press (Oxford).
- Erricker, C. and Erricker, J. (2001) *Meditation in Schools*. Continuum. (London and New York).
- Ginnis, P. (2002) *The Teacher's Toolkit*. Crown House (Camarthen).
- Hasson, G. (2013) *Mindfulness*. Capstone (Chichester)
- Foster, J. (1998) *Word Whirls and Other Shape Poems*. Oxford University Press (Oxford, New York, Toronto).

Smart, N. (1971) *Religious Experience of Mankind*. Fount. (London).

Volavkova, H. (ed) (1993) *I never saw another butterfly*. Schocken Books (New York)

Wegerif, R. (2011) Towards a dialogic theory of how children learn to think. *Thinking Skills and Creativity* 6, 179–190.

Wells, G. and Ball, T. (2008) Promoting exploratory talk through dialogic inquiry. In N. Mercer, & S. Hodgkinson, *Exploring Talk in School*, (pp. 130–143). Sage (London).

Wiesel, E. (1985) *Night*. Penguin (London).

Websites

www.humanismforschools.org.uk

www.globaldimension.org.uk

www.het.org.uk (Holocaust Education Trust)

www.mindfulnessinschools.org/courses
(Mindfulness training for teachers)

www.moralcapital.info/concept-scenarios

www.cambridgescp.com/Upage.php?p=mas%5Estories%5Eintro
(retellings of classic Greek stories which you can take direct into your classroom on smart-board platforms)

www.storymuseum.org.uk/1001stories/tag/daniel+morden
(retellings of classic world stories (some religious and philosophical) which can be taken direct into your classroom on smart-board platforms)

Endnotes

- 1 Ginnis, P. (2002) *The Teacher's Toolkit* Crown House (Camarthen).
Gamble, N. (2013) *Exploring Children's Literature*. Sage (London).
- 2 Dialogic is an evidence based teaching and learning practice associated with the work of Robin Alexander, Neil Mercer and Rupert Wegerif (inter alia). It is most researched in primary classrooms but has clear implications, too, for the secondary classroom.
- 3 It is extremely important that school students understand the basics of E-safety and are taught, consistently and regularly how to detect *bias in internet sources* when studying beliefs and practices. We take it as the responsibility of every teacher involved in this field of education to keep their students safe – and educate them into how to keep themselves safe too.
- 4 Ninian Smart established the (secular) field of Religious Studies in British universities in the 1970's. His influence was seminal in establishing world religions teaching in the UK, at that time, on a phenomenological basis which allowed it to be considered, for the first time, as a potential 'subject' on the curriculum, not just an implicit way of nurturing specific (Christian) values through schooling.
- 5 www.globaldimension.org.uk/
- 6 Martin Luther King's speech can be found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=V57lotnKGF8
- 7 See resource list above.
- 8 Bandura's idea of self-efficacy indicates why modelling is so important in learning. In a subject where motivation is often expected to be a problem, self-efficacy gives teachers and pupils the assurance that

progress in learning can and will be made if we teach with an eye to creating four conditions: awareness of students' previous mastery skills in a subject, the learning environment itself, (stress, heat, cold cramped etc.), peer persuasion (positive or negative) and the need for expectations to be *modelled* by the teacher (and by peers for each other).

9 See resources below.

10 www.mindfulnessinschools.org/courses

11 The Cathedral of Trees was built (grown) on the inspiration of one man's experience of the First World War. As a full grown 'cathedral of trees' it is now a beautiful and moving site, with strong 'remembrance' associations. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/whipsnade-tree-cathedral/things-to-see-and-do

12 Having an encyclopaedic understanding of how different religions interpret their sacred texts is difficult – but it is *really* important that all teachers working in this field keep updating their knowledge – and that good in service teacher training contributes to this aspect of teacher development. It is not enough to assume that different religions or different traditions within religions interpret texts in the same way nor to imply that everyone *should* interpret them in one particular way either (see Barton, J. (2010) pp. 84–90 for instance, for a perspective on Jesus in the Gospels or Cohn-Sherbok, D. (2003) p. 129–133 for a discussion of rabbinic scriptural interpretation).

13 Definition of *category mistake* in English: (Oxford English Dictionary) The error of assigning to something a quality or action which can only properly be assigned to things of another category, for example treating abstract concepts as though they had a physical location.

14 In press: Teaching about beliefs and practices in schools (April 2015) University of Cambridge/Woolf Institute.

15 Wegerif, R. (2011). *Towards a dialogic theory of how children learn to think. Thinking Skills and Creativity* 6, 179–190.

16 Exploratory talk is one of three kinds of talk identified by Neil Mercer as present in all classrooms. Whilst the others (cumulative and disputational talk) can have their uses in teaching, the ground where most fruitful debate takes place will usually be exploratory. In a subject where handling controversy is an essential skill, teachers do need to be aware of how to develop a resilience muscle in students which allows them to deal with views they disagree with in an exploratory way.

17 Bonnet, M. (1991). *Children's Thinking*. Bonnet's triadic or poetic view of teaching relates the child, always, not just to the teacher, but to the thing the child is learning about. This is partly what distinguishes teaching and learning in complementary schooling from teaching and learning in public schooling. In the first, even if the text being studied is the same, his or her different aims for schooling affect both the way the text is addressed and the outcome which is expected from the learning. Both types of teaching *can* be dialogic and exploratory but only if the teachers concerned are themselves aware of this triadic relationship. – and of how their own (faith community or state) authorised status as teachers will affect the discourse.

18 You can find a brief history of the movement known as P4c (philosophy for children) at www.p4c.com/history-p4c. Community of enquiry activities are part of this history. See also Stanley S. (2012). *Why Think?* Continuum (London and New York).

20 Cotton, D.R.E. Teaching controversial environmental issues: neutrality and balance in the reality of the classroom in *Educational Research*, Vol. 48, No. 2, June 2006, pp. 223–241

21 Further exemplification of textual analysis involved in a study of this text is included below.

In practice we start here from an analysis of the text, highlighting key words in the first circle (for example, 'remember', 'Adam', 'Am I not your Lord?', 'Day of Resurrection', 'of this we were unaware', and so on) and including first responses/impressions on the text. Those key words are then explored further in the next circle, adding subject knowledge relating to history, context, and Muslim tradition: here, for example, it might be noted that the word 'remember' suggests pre-knowledge of God, which ties in with Muslim belief about the primordial nature of human) – that we all are, essentially, those who have submitted to God (Muslim). It might also be attached to such Qur'anic quotes as 'And the Remembrance of Allah is greater' (29:45), and the idea of faith and practice (including especially the prayer itself) is an act of remembering: returning ourselves to our primordial nature, and bringing together all our constituent parts (physical, intellectual, spiritual) in remembrance, or connectedness, with Allah.

Then we could, further, explore the idea of judgement and the Day of Resurrection: how can one be judged on what one doesn't know? (it is part of Muslim belief that one who does not know about Allah and the Prophet Muhammad will not be judged on their acceptance/non-acceptance of them). Is this *ayah* (verse, or 'sign' – see Islamic Toolkit of Terms) pointing to a different plane of reality where things that one didn't feel they 'knew' in this life become crystal clear after death? Other questions come up, too. What is the relationship between earthly, temporal acts, and eternal realities/ramifications? And how would one square this verse on judgement with Imam al-Ghazali's (known as the 'Thomas Aquinas of Islam') view that, ultimately, all will achieve salvation? Much food for thought and exploration.

READER

**Resources for teaching about beliefs
and practices in schools (narratives)**

Introduction

In this section there are materials to help you think about how practising teachers work with narratives and other resources through basic observation, through enquiry (focussed through the use of key questions) and through using 'scale-switching' or other variation methods. All these methods help students understand *diversity and difference* in beliefs and practices as well as understanding the phenomena in and for themselves.

How do we help school students develop the skills they need to *understand* the beliefs and practices we ask them to study?

Introduction: starting with narrative

When Rabbi Israel Shem-Tov saw misfortune looming, it was his custom to go into a particular glade of the forest to meditate. But before he began his meditation he would always light a fire and offer up a prayer, and the disaster would be averted. Years passed, and his disciple Magid of Mexeritch, finding himself in a similar situation, went to the forest glade and said to the powers that be, "I do not know how to light a fire, but I can offer up the prayer," and again disaster was averted. Later still, Rabbi Moshe-Leib wandered into the forest, saying, "I do not know the whereabouts of the special glade or how to light the fire, but at least I can say the prayer," and once more, disaster was averted. Finally, it was the turn of Rabbi Israel of Rizhin to deal with impending doom. He sat in his study for long hours with his head in his hands. At last he said, "Listen, Lord. I cannot light the fire, or find the special glade in the forest and, forgive me, I am old and tired and failing in my wits and, to be frank, I have forgotten, if I ever knew, the words of the prayer. But I can tell the story."

Do you understand this story? In essence, probably, yes, but it may take you a while to understand what every word means or to recognize the context (especially if you are not used to hearing or reading stories like this in your everyday life). Perhaps you think someone would understand it best if they were part of a Jewish family of communities themselves. You will certainly have recognized it as being a story about stories. You may well, also, have recognized it as an *old* story, which belongs to a certain tradition. If you have more technical knowledge you may recognize, too, that it has things in common with another broader tradition (the mystic tradition). But truly understanding it will take time and effort – motivation too.

This section of the RE-framing toolkit asks you to consider how we develop understanding when we learn about and from narratives. Narratives are both the *way we think* (Bruner)¹ and what we think *about*. Teaching and learning about and from beliefs and practices, religious or not, inevitably involves using narrative of some kind because they 'tell the story' of who we are, where we believe we come from, what the point of living is (or isn't) and where we think we may be going. We can all 'read' them. More formal understanding tells us about when, why and how narratives have been transmitted, have had an effect on whole cultural histories and have helped to form individuals' identities. This 'meta' level of meaning has, over time, created a series of *discourses*². The passing on of these narratives to others, often in community, has formed chains of tradition.

Understanding *tradition*, chains of tradition and *discourse* is very important for school students trying to understand what different beliefs and practices mean. As adults we know that different discourses have arisen, over time, in different traditions because there are different *interpretations* of core narratives within those traditions. This is something young people can understand very well, too, if we give them the tools to do so. Those tools include:

1. Recognizing the 'big picture' behind a narrative (its key concepts – and the big ideas those concepts point to).
2. Recognizing that all texts make more sense when con-text is added (understanding of the different times, places and situations in which they were originally formed).
3. Recognizing that by asking key questions about a text (or other narrative source) school students develop understanding. They begin to understand not only that a belief or practice exists but also why there are *differences* between beliefs and practices, and how diversity emerges from those differences.

Contents

A narrative (or story) is any fictional or nonfictional report of connected events, presented in a sequence of written or spoken words, and/or in a sequence of (moving) pictures. The word derives from the Latin verb *narrare*, “to tell”, which is derived from the adjective *gnarus*, “knowing” or “skilled”.

Note 1: some of the narratives which follow are taken directly from writings regarded as sacred within their own traditions. Others include poetry, private writings, text book sources, philosophical dialogues and art work. All of them ‘tell a story’ about the world of meaning-making emerging from and relating to the world’s beliefs and practices.

Note 2: the age ranges indicated do not mean that narratives cannot be adapted for different ages. They simply indicate the level the text has been adapted for in this case.

1. What happened to Jesus body? A structured enquiry into the death and resurrection of Jesus – called the Christ. (These resources can be taken straight into the classroom and are written largely for use when working with students aged between 11 and 13 years old).

2. The journey of the wise men. A version of Matthew and Luke’s account of the journey of the magi. Written for younger students (aged 7–11).

3. Social justice, belief and practice. Narrative A: *Little Questions*. A song from South America about social justice – and whether G-d is on the side of the poor. (Folk, traditional). Narrative B: *Catholic teaching on social justice*. Narrative C: *The death of Oscar Romero*. Alongside the song ‘little questions’, here is an account of Archbishop Romero, honoured amongst many other ‘liberation theologians’ for his willingness to die for the poor he served in South America. His story has been adopted by the Catholic Aid agency CAFOD as a ‘foundational narrative.’ D: *Liberation Theology*.

4. Can miracles happen? This extract from the famous children’s books by C.S. Lewis (*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*) examines whether it is reasonable to believe that miracles can happen (Lewis, C. 1950 pp 46–50). Associated activities include a writing framework and three assessment ideas. Also included are ideas for developing an ‘assessment for learning’ practice too.

5. Traversing Borders. This story should be read in conjunction with **David’s story** (see Study Booklet One: Cultural Understanding). These two stories would find echoes in many students’ experience if they come from migrant families. They are included here as examples, important for *all* students to consider, of what Amartya

Sen calls the ‘plural identity’ we all live today (Sen, A. 2006).

6. Genesis: a book of beginnings. This source looks at how Jewish commentary might understand the book of Genesis and also addresses issues such as ‘who wrote the Hebrew Scriptures’, and ‘how might we set about finding answers to that question?’ It is therefore a good resource for teachers addressing issues of evidence, proof and truth in the study of beliefs and practices.

7. My name is Asher Lev. This is another narrative about cultural understanding and identity formation. It comes from a book by Chaim Potok and describes the experience of a young observant Jewish boy in New York (Potok, C. 1972 p.147 – 150). Questions raised here include the role of art in cultural understanding and its role, too, in making us question who we are.

8. Living the Mitzvot: Does the Holocaust make a difference? Source 1: Living the Mitzvot. Source 2: Fackenheim, E. the 614th Commandment. Source 3: Wiesel, E. (1985) *Night*, 1985 pp xvii – xxi). Source 4: Every person has a name.

9. The Binding of Isaac. (G-d’s strange command). This is a foundational narrative for both Judaism and Christianity. Abraham stands for the one quality which G-d desires (obedience), across three faiths (Judaism, Christianity, Islam). This story encapsulates the potential cost of that obedience.

10. What is religion for? This Hasidic story works out, as so many wisdom stories do, how far ‘just keeping the mitzvot’ is what G-d really desires (Source: Baal Shem Tov.) It can be linked with Narrative 24 to form

a reflective lesson on exploring why we regard some things, people, places and ideas as sacred (sacred meaning 'set apart').

11. The Festival of Sukkot. (3 narratives). Students often need a variety of sources based on one topic to help them expand and deepen their understanding. Here are 3 sources about the Jewish Festival of Sukkot (Tishrei 15–21) which aim to do just that. Source 1: What is Sukkot? Source 2: The festival of tabernacles (Leviticus 23). Source 3: A Sukkot thought (Rabbi Jonathan Sacks).

12. The First Human: Prophet Adam. (Quranic passages from Yusuf Ali's translation).

13. Bilal the slave becomes the first muezzin. This is another foundational narrative, this time from Islam. The fact that the first muezzin was a black slave tells students a considerable amount about the beliefs behind the practices of early Islam (written for ages 8–11).

14. The rights of neighbours (hadith). This account of the Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) understanding of how people should treat each other comes from the hadith, which in turn encapsulate the Sunnah (or practice) of the Prophet (pbuh). After the Qur'an, it the most important source of authority for determining practice in Islam. An example of the use of Talking Points is included here.

15. Cracking the Text: Surah Zalzalah (Qur'an 99: 1–8). This narrative is an example (probably for older students or teachers) of how to work with Qur'anic text by exploring, firstly, how it is understood within Islam's chain of tradition (*isnad*).

16. The Dinner of Smells. This story, which comes from the Sufi tradition, is one of the many wisdom stories of Mullah Nasruddin. It asks how we should treat others – by the *spirit* or the *letter* of the law. Justice, here, means something different from simply complying with legal demands. The famous speech about 'the quality of mercy' found in William Shakespeare's play *The Merchant of Venice* could also be used here (worksheet written for ages 6–8, other activities for ages 7–11).

17. The Conference of the Birds. This story, again from the Sufi tradition (Farid ud-Din Attar) was written in Persia in the twelfth century C.E. Working with it gives teachers a wonderful 'way in' to the idea of life as a journey – and to discussion about how and why we may all set out on it in different ways and with different values, and need to find resources to help us meet its challenges and opportunities. A structured enquiry working with this narrative can be found on page 91 (resources written for ages 7–11).

18. World stories. These stories are from ab-original (from the beginning) stories of Australian first peoples. These stories are 'sacred' to tradition, too and there are special rules about how they can be handled and who they can be spoken by. As such, there are interesting comparison and contrasts to be made with how sacred texts in other traditions are handled. These narratives, too, could be linked with Narrative 24 and the reflective exercise attached to it.

19. Humanism: A summary. This piece explains Humanism's key values, beliefs and Development. The website www.humanismforschools.org.uk is the best place to visit if you want to find further resources for teaching about and from humanist belief and practice.

20. Science and religion. Sometimes, school students assume that science and religion are of necessity always in conflict. This is not, of course, true. This worksheet could form the stimulus for students to enquire into and re-make their *own inner narrative* about how Islam, Judaism and Christianity (among other religions) address issues of evidence, truth and proof, where they sometimes go wrong – and how scientific discourse has come to be so polarised (some would believe totally split) from theological discourse.

21. Plato: the Myth of Gyges Ring. This famous philosophical parable illustrates how philosophical (ethical) as well as religious traditions use narratives, such as parables, to debate ideas. Here the idea is that if we were invisible – and so there was no chance of getting caught – most people would be tempted to behave badly. The exercise attached is a 'circles (here printed as a square!) of inference' activity which helps school students, firstly, to understand the text itself and then to see what the implications of the story might be.

22. EXISTENTIALISM (Good and Bad faith). This account of Jean Paul Sartre's existentialist idea of good and bad faith, similarly, provides an interesting foil for debate about what faith is – or should be – across different beliefs and practices. It is highly relevant to students aged 16–18 many of whom are living this debate through in their own thinking. Key ideas such as 'authenticity,' 'good faith and bad faith' and freewill/determinism are also really important clues for students of this age when they are trying to develop their own 'meta' (philosophical) worldview. J.P. Sartre lived from 1905–1980. There is a writing frame here which helps students understand (and later write about) these ideas in more depth.

23. A Philosophical parable (Flew: the Parable of the Gardener). This is another famous narrative often used (here in the philosopher Antony Flew's version) to raise

questions about whether religious believers can uphold the idea that G-d exists simply by drawing on religious experience. It forms the backbone of Flew's writing about the falsification principle (written for ages 16–18).

24. The Magic Pool. This narrative is the only one in the Reader which has been written especially for the classroom (though it does also draw on a much older folk tale). Its use here is to lead schools students (aged around 9–12) into an exploration of the idea of the sacred and, in particular, an exploration of what can be called 'sacred' about sacred buildings. Activities here include related Talking Points.

Resources – and the US context

Teaching in this field in the US as in the UK has to comply with current legislation. That legislation can be found in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution which reads as follows:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

As Charles C. Haynes and Oliver Thomas in their book, *Finding Common Ground; A Guide to Religious Liberty in Public Schools* state:

"The Challenge for 21st century America is not to sustain this extraordinary arrangement, but to expand the principles of religious liberty more fairly and justly to each and every citizen.... Nowhere is it more important – or more difficult – to address our growing ideological and religious diversity than in the public schools." (Haynes, C.C. and Thomas, O. 2002)

Charles Haynes is the senior scholar at the First Amendment Center and director of the Religious Freedom Education Project at the Newseum in Washington D.C. He tells us in another article 'Getting Religion Right in Public Schools', that:

"If we can't get it right in public schools, we have little hope of getting this right in the public square of what is now the most religiously diverse nation on Earth." (Haynes, C.C. 2012)

His point is that getting religion right in public schools matters because religion and religious liberty matters. He also adds that religious illiteracy may be a contributing factor to rising intolerance in the United States, including

acts of violence and hate crimes associated with anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. He adds that schools need to take religion seriously if we want to promote religious freedom as a fundamental, inalienable right for every person.

Given the challenge and confusion that surrounds the interpretation of the First Amendment, we strongly recommend that U.S. schools, public and private, faith- and non-faith schools, become familiar with the work of the First Amendment Center and the book, *Finding Common Ground: A Guide to Religious Liberty in Public Schools*. The following recommended resources were identified in this book.

Religion in American Life – Oxford University Press
This is a 17 volume series authored by some of the leading scholars in the field.
Resource for students and teachers.
www.oup-usa.org

On Common Ground: World Religions in America
CD-ROM – Columbia University Press. Resource for students and teachers.
www.columbia.edu/cu/cup/catalog/electronic/idx_cd.html

Taking Religion Seriously Across the Curriculum –
Warren A. Nord and Charles C. Haynes . For teachers.
www.ascd.org

The Bible and Public School: A First Amendment Guide –
First Amendment Center. This is a guideline for teachers.
www.biblecurriculum

America's Religions: An Educator's Guide to Beliefs and Practices – Teacher Ideas Press
www.lu.com/tip

Organizations that provide classroom resources

Council on Islamic Education (CIE) is a national, non-profit resource organization dedicated to providing information on Islam and Muslim history.
P.O. Box 20186, Fountain Valley, California 92728-0186
www.cie.org

Religion and Public Education Resource Center
California State University Chico
Chico, California 95929-0740
Dr. Bruce Grelle

Council for Spiritual and Ethical Education
Atlanta, Georgia 30318-4225
www.csee.org

Religious Studies in Secondary Schools
Portland, Oregon 97223
www.rsiss.org

Religion and Education
University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0604
www.uni.edu/jrae

Organizations that provide speakers on multiple religions

ING – Islamic Networks Group
3031 Tisch Way, Suite 950
San Jose, California 95128

Religious Freedom Center of the Newseum Institute
In addition to the works by Charles Haynes, the director of the Religious Freedom Center, there are content standards, guidelines and model programs for teaching about religion in schools within a First Amendment Framework. The Re-Framing Toolkit is compatible with these standards.
www.newseuminstitute.org/religion/resources/publications/

American Academy of Religion (AAR) Guidelines for Teaching About Religion in K-12 Public Schools in the United States
These guidelines not only illustrate that the study of religion is already present in the public schools but that there are no content and skill guidelines that are constructed by religious study scholars and there is widespread confusion of what is constitutionally sound and intellectually responsible. Therefore, these guidelines respond to the following methodological approaches: historical, literary, traditions based and cultural studies. They also convey three central premises of academic learning about religion: religions are internally diverse; religions are dynamic; and religions are embedded in culture. The RE-Framing Toolkit is compatible with these guidelines.
www.aarweb.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/Publications/epublications/AARK-12Curriculumguidelines.pdf

College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies Standards
Connections between the C3 Framework and the English Language Arts/Literacy Common Core Standards provide a rationale for the Framework's organization of: developing questions and planning enquiries; applying tools and concepts; providing sources of evidence; and communicating conclusions and taking informed action. The RE-Framing Toolkit addresses these four dimensions of the C3 Framework.
www.socialstudies.org/C3

Other resources:

US Conference of Catholic Bishops Standards
The RE-Framing Toolkit may be used alongside the US Catholic Bishops Standards for teaching in Catholic schools.
www.catholicschoolsstandards.org

Internet Resources

APS Guide to Resources in Theology
The University of Toronto site is actually a list of links to other sites, primarily those dealing with Christian resources. It is of interest because it links to sites that provide primary materials (papyri, manuscripts, etc.) Resource for teachers.

Interfaith Calendar by Mall Area Religious Council
www.interfaithcalendar.org

Teaching About Religion in Public Schools:
Worldview Education
For teachers of middle and secondary grades, history and social studies teachers. Provides resource materials, guidelines and lesson plans.
www.teachingaboutreligion.org

Academic Information on Religion
This site links art and literature of various belief systems. For teachers.
www.academicinfo.net/religindex.html

Pluralism Project
Harvard University
Links to various U.S. worship centers, other sites with content to related faiths, syllabi from college courses on religious pluralism.
www.fas.harvard.edu/_pluralism/

National Humanities Center
The National Humanities Center TeacherServ
Deeper understanding of religion's place in American History.
www.nhc.rtp.nc.us/tserve.htm

Education for Freedom
Offered by The Freedom Forum's First Amendment Center
Address constitutional principles and contemporary issues involving the First Amendment.
www.freedomforum.org/templates/documents.asp?documentID=13588

References

1. Haynes, Charles C. and Thomas, Oliver, Finding Common Ground: A Guide to Religious Liberty in Public Schools; First Amendment Center, TN., 2002, p.3.
2. Haynes, Charles C., "Getting Religion Right in Public Schools", Phi Delta Kappan, December 2011/January 2012, p. 8.

Narrative 1:

WHAT HAPPENED TO JESUS' BODY? (classroom investigation)

There is not much doubt that there was a man called Jesus, who was a religious teacher with many followers. He was crucified by the Romans at the request of the Jews. But what happened next...?

There are five theories – and a number of clues. Match the clues either FOR or AGAINST the five theories (there are two clues against each theory).

CLUES FOR	THEORY	CLUES AGAINST
	[A] Resurrection	
	[B] Disciples stole the body	
	[C] Jews / Romans stole the body	
	[D] Jesus fainted	
	[E] story – true in terms of meaning	

- Jesus is the Son of God so anything is possible.
- The Romans started killing people who believed in Jesus. If the disciples had stolen the body they would have owned up rather than be killed.
- If the Jews / Romans knew where Jesus body was, they would have produced it to stop the spread of Christianity.
- Women (and shepherds!) were sometimes regarded as unreliable and not allowed as witnesses. If the story is made up it would be unlikely for women to make the all-important discovery.
- If people saw Jesus after he had "died", then he could not really have been dead in the first place.
- A symbolic story is "true", if the beliefs expressed in it are true, even if the story is factually inaccurate.
- People do not rise from the dead: it is impossible.
- There is a rumour that there was a Roman guard on the tomb although the Roman sources do not confirm this.
- The disciples would have wanted to make it look as if Jesus had risen from the dead so that more people would believe in him (and buy copies of their forthcoming best seller – *The New Testament*).
- If it was a story, why did people start believing that it was factually true?
- Jesus performed many miracles, including raising people from the dead.
- The Roman and Jewish authorities wanted to make sure that there was no more fuss about Jesus.
- The Roman soldiers executed many people by crucifixion: a mistake is most unlikely.
- In those days people often made up stories to express their beliefs.
- People who thought that they saw Jesus after he was dead must have been imagining it.
- The disciples were worried after the crucifixion because they thought that they too might be executed. They would not want to draw attention to themselves.
- If Jesus fainted on the cross he would have been very weak. It is unlikely that he would have had enough strength to get out of the tomb.
- Most crucified corpses were burned. If this happened to Jesus then all the stories about a tomb are made up.

TO STRUCTURE A WORKSHEET FOR THIS TASK write out the five key theories (as below) and then put reasons for, reasons against, my views about this theory are and because...as a repeated 'frame' to help students structure what they want to say. This technique is a form of *scaffolding*.

There is little doubt that a religious teacher, called Jesus, was crucified by the Romans.

But what happened to his body? Write down what you think about each theory in the writing frame below.

The first theory is that **JESUS WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD**. This is what Christians believe.

The second idea is that **JESUS' DISCIPLES STOLE THE BODY**.

Another theory is that the **JEWS OR THE ROMANS STOLE THE BODY**.

A fourth theory is that **JESUS DID NOT ACTUALLY DIE ON THE CROSS IN THE FIRST PLACE. HE FAINTED, AND THEN RECOVERED THREE DAYS LATER AND RAN AWAY**.

Finally, some people believe that the whole **STORY OF THE EMPTY TOMB MIGHT BE 'JUST A STORY'**.

This means that the story is made up to express beliefs about Jesus and life after death. In this sense the story might still be 'true' (if the ideas that it expresses are true), even if the events in the story did not actually happen.

Writing frame questions:

Reasons for:

Reasons against:

My views about this theory are

Because

Narrative 2:

THE JOURNEY OF THE WISE MEN

Did I ever tell you the story about the journey of the Wise Men?

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a special star appeared in the sky, and that star could be seen from far, far away. It shone on the hills of the North and the deserts of the South. It shone on the cities of the East and the seas of the West. It shone on the owls out hunting and the children sleeping in their beds.

But someone is awake – look, who can it be? In a tall tower with graceful sides, in a land of great beauty and much learning, there lived a Wise Man.

His name was Shiraz, and he studied the stars each night, drawing their pattern of beauty in his special book, and reading long words each day. Beside him, high in the cold tower, was his small servant boy, Aktar. Aktar shivered and hoped that his master would not be long tonight – it was so cold and clear, he was sure he could see the other side of the world. But that night, Shiraz was a very long time, and Aktar dozed on his small stool. Then Shiraz shook him gently.

'Aktar, Aktar, wake up; I need you to go and find my friends, Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar. It's come at last.'

'What has come, Master?' asked Aktar. 'I have not seen anyone arrive.'

Nor have I, little servant, but I have seen the sign of his arrival in the sky; his star is here; now go.'

Aktar went to find his master's friends, who also studied the sky, and seemed to be waiting for something to happen. They came to Shiraz that very night, their rich furs wrapped around them to keep out the desert cold. They looked together at the wonderful new star as they made their plans.

'We shall set out tomorrow night,' declared Balthazar. 'Have you found the right gift yet?'

'Yes,' announced Caspar, 'but it has cost me all I had. I have brought gold for the baby king.' The others nodded their agreement, yet wondered at their friend's generosity.

'Who will take care of your family, Caspar?' asked Melchior.

'I do not know that,' he replied, 'but I do know that I must travel wherever the star leads.'

'I have brought frankincense,' said Melchior. 'I know that this baby king is also a priest, a holy person.'

'Have you brought all the provisions that you will need?' asked Shiraz.

'No,' admitted Melchior. 'I was so busy with my studies that I had no time.'

'What have you brought, Balthazar?' asked Caspar.

'I – don't know,' replied Balthazar reluctantly. 'I only know that I must come too.'

There was a long silence... Finally Shiraz spoke up.

'I am too old to make this long and difficult journey. The light of the star has made my part clear to me. I shall take care of Caspar's family, and I will provide you with all that you need for your journey. Balthazar's gift shall be the myrrh that I have saved for my own burial, for this baby king loves us all, but he has hard times ahead.'

Aktar's eyes filled with tears and he could contain himself no longer.

'But, Master, what about me?' he shouted. 'Why can't I see the baby king, who is a priest and loves us all?'

'Of course you will go too, Aktar,' whispered Shiraz. 'No-one should be prevented from making this journey. You will go with my blessing, and return with his.'

Narrative 3:

SOCIAL JUSTICE, BELIEF AND PRACTICE

Source 1: Little questions – A miner’s song from Argentina



1. One day I asked my grandfather:
“Grandfather, Where is God?”
He looked at me sadly
But never said a word.
My grandfather died in the fields
Without a priest or a doctor
And the Indians buried him
Playing bamboo flutes and drums.

2. Later, I asked my father:
“Father, what do you know of God?”
My Father became very serious
But never said a word.
My father died in the mines
Without a priest or a doctor
And the Indians buried him
Playing bamboo flutes and drums.

3. My brother lives in the hills
And he never sees a flower
Only sweat, malaria and snakes

And the life of a woodcutter.
Let no one ask him
If he knows where God is!
Such an important gentleman
Has not passed near his house!

4. I sing along the roads
And when I am in prison
I hear the voices of the people
Who sing better than I, saying that
God cares for the poor.
Well this may be true or not,
But I know for a fact that he dines
With the mine owner.

There is something on earth that is
more important than God
That no-one should spit blood just
to let others live better.

Atahualpa Yupanqui

Source 2: Statements on poverty (Catholic teaching on social justice)

It is not from your own possessions that you are bestowing alms on the poor, you are but restoring to them what is theirs by right. For what was given to everyone for the use of all, you have taken for your exclusive use. The earth belongs not to the rich, but to everyone. Thus, far from giving lavishly, you are but paying part of your debt.

St Ambrose

It is not wrong to want to live better; what is wrong is a style of life which is presumed to be better when it is directed towards ‘having’ rather than ‘being’.

Centesimus Annus, # 36

Its [the Church’s] desire is that the poor should rise above poverty and wretchedness, and should better their condition in life; and for this it strives.

Rerum Novarum, # 23

When there is a question of protecting the rights of individuals, the poor and helpless have a claim to special

consideration. The rich population has many ways of protecting itself, and stands less in need of help.

Rerum Novarum # 29

While an immense mass of people still lack the absolute necessities of life, some, even in less advanced countries, live sumptuously or squander wealth. Luxury and misery rub shoulders. While the few enjoy very great freedom of choice, the many are deprived of almost all possibility of acting on their own initiative and responsibility, and often subsist in living and working conditions unworthy of human beings.

Gaudium et Spes # 63

The principle of participation leads us to the conviction that the most appropriate and fundamental solutions to poverty will be those that enable people to take control of their own lives.

Economic Justice for All, # 188

For many more resources relating to the work of CAFOD and to Catholic teachings on poverty and social justice see www.cafod.org.uk/content/view/full/2812

Source 3: the Death of Archbishop Romero

Oscar Romero was a priest and bishop in El Salvador. He believed that the church is more than its hierarchy. *People* are the church. "God needs the people themselves," he said, "to save the world . . . The world of the poor teaches us that liberation will arrive only when the poor are not simply on the receiving end of hand-outs from governments or from the churches, but when they themselves are the masters and protagonists of their own struggle for liberation."

His love for his people who were suffering violence and oppression led him to take their side and to denounce their

oppressors. He was killed, whilst saying Mass, on 24th March 1980.

Romero's murder was seen as a savage warning to priests not to interfere in 'real life'. To this day no investigation has revealed Romero's killers. Days before his murder he had told a reporter: "You can tell these people that if they succeed in killing me, I forgive and bless those who do it. Hopefully, they will realize they are wasting their time. A bishop will die, but the church of God, which is the people, will never perish."

More information at:

www.uscatholic.org/culture/social-justice/2009/02/oscar-romero-bishop-poor#sthash.nkzK3p2J.dpu

Source 4: Liberation Theology

'But the poor person does not exist as an inescapable fact of destiny. His or her existence is not politically neutral, and it is not ethically innocent. The poor are a by-product of the system in which we live and for which we are responsible. They are marginalized by our social and cultural world. They are the oppressed, exploited proletariat, robbed of the fruit of their labor and despoiled of their humanity. Hence the poverty of the poor is not a call to generous relief action, but a demand that we go and build a different social order.' Gustavo Gutiérrez

Liberation theologians like Gustavo Gutierrez believe that being Christian *must* involve fighting for social justice. Think about this, read the quote above (and any others you can find) and then answer the following questions:

1. If you were asked 'what do you want freedom for?' what would you say?
2. If you were asked 'what do you want freedom from?' what would you say then?
3. Are your needs actually just wants?
4. Is it true to say that 'there's enough in the world for everyone's need but not for everyone's greed?'
5. Explore, through independent study, how living the principles of liberation theology affected the lives of liberation theologians. Does this surprise you?

Narrative 4:

CAN MIRACLES HAPPEN?

The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe

The youngest of the four children, Lucy, in C.S. Lewis' famous story, goes through a wardrobe she finds while exploring the house she and her siblings are staying in – and discovers another world, called Narnia. When she comes back into 'this' world and tells the others about it they don't believe her. They all look into the wardrobe together and find nothing odd about it. Edmund, the second youngest, is quite cruel in the way he teases Lucy about this.

During another game of hide-and-seek, Lucy hides in the wardrobe and Edmund follows her. Edmund and Lucy find themselves in Narnia together. Lucy is delighted that at last there is someone to support her. They return and Lucy excitedly tells the others that they will now have to believe her. But Edmund lies and says that he and Lucy had only been pretending to be in Narnia.

Lucy is very upset, but sticks to her story. The older children, Peter and Susan, are worried about Lucy. They decide to go and talk to the professor in whose house they are staying. Now read on!

"So they went and knocked at the study door, and the Professor said 'Come in,' and got up and found chairs for them and said he was quite at their disposal. Then he sat listening to them with the tips of his fingers pressed together and never interrupting, till they had finished the whole story. After that he said nothing for quite a long time. Then he cleared his throat and said the last thing either of them expected: 'How do you know,' he asked, 'that your sister's story is not true?' 'Oh, but –' began Susan, and then stopped. Anyone could see from the old man's face that he was perfectly serious. Then Susan pulled herself together and said, 'But Edmund said they had only been pretending.'

'That is a point,' said the Professor, 'which certainly deserves consideration; very careful consideration. For instance – if you will excuse me for asking the question – does your experience lead you to regard your brother or your sister as the more reliable? I mean, which is the more truthful?' 'That's just the funny thing about it, sir,' said Peter. 'Up till now, I'd have said Lucy every time.' 'And what do you think, my dear?' said the Professor, turning to Susan.

'Well,' said Susan, 'in general, I'd say the same as Peter, but this couldn't be true – all this about the wood and the Faun.' 'That is more than I know,' said the Professor, 'and a charge of lying against someone whom you have always



found truthful is a very serious thing; a very serious thing indeed.' 'We were afraid it mightn't even be lying,' said Susan; 'we thought there might be something wrong with Lucy.'

'Madness, you mean?' said the Professor quite coolly. 'Oh, you can make your minds easy about that. One has only to look at her and talk to her to see that she is not mad.'

'But then,' said Susan, and stopped. She had never dreamed that a grown-up would talk like the Professor and didn't know what to think.

'Logic!' said the Professor half to himself. 'Why don't they teach logic at these schools? There are only three possibilities. Either your sister is telling lies, or she is mad, or she is telling the truth. You know she doesn't tell lies and it is obvious that she is not mad. For the moment then and unless any further evidence turns up, we must assume that she is telling the truth.' Susan looked at him very hard and was quite sure from the expression on his face that he was not making fun of them.

'But how could it be true, sir?' said Peter.

'Why do you say that?' asked the Professor.

'Well, for one thing,' said Peter, 'if it was true why doesn't everyone find this country every time they go to the wardrobe? I mean, there was nothing there when we looked; even Lucy didn't pretend there was.'

'What has that to do with it?' said the Professor.

'Well, sir, if things are real, they're there all the time.'

'Are they?' said the Professor; and Peter didn't know quite what to say.

'But there was no time,' said Susan. 'Lucy had no time to have gone anywhere, even if there was such a place. She came running after us the very moment we were out of the room. It was less than minute, and she pretended to have been away for hours.'

'That is the very thing that makes her story so likely to be true,' said the Professor. 'If there was really a door in this house that leads to some other world (and I should warn you that this is a very strange house, and even I know very little about it) – if, I say, she had got into another world, I should not be at all surprised to find that the other world had a separate time of its own; so that however long you stay there it would never take up any of *our* time. On the other hand, I don't think many girls of her age would invent that idea for themselves. If she had been pretending, she would have hidden for a reasonable time before coming out and telling her story.'

'But do you really mean, sir,' said Peter, 'that there could be other worlds – all over the place, just round the corner – like that?'

'Nothing is more probable,' said the Professor, taking off his spectacles and beginning to polish them, while he muttered to himself, 'I wonder what they do teach them at these schools.'

'But what are we to do?' said Susan. She felt that the conversation was beginning to get off the point.

'My dear young lady,' said the Professor, suddenly looking up with a very sharp expression at both of them, 'there is one plan which no one has yet suggested and which is well worth trying.'

'What's that?' said Susan.

'We might all try minding our own business,' said he. And that was the end of that conversation.

After this things were a good deal better for Lucy. Peter saw to it that Edmund stopped jeering at her, and neither she nor anyone else felt inclined to talk about the wardrobe at all. It had become a rather alarming subject. And so for a time it looked as if all the adventures were coming to an end; but that was not to be."

From The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe
C.S. Lewis. 1950, published by Collins.



Now think about these points

When someone you know to be normally truthful claims that something fantastic, even miraculous, has happened, what do you do?

- Do you jeer and ridicule the idea (like Edmund)?
- Do you politely but firmly refuse to accept that such things are possible (like Susan and Peter)?
- Do you keep an open mind (like the Professor) and accept that if there is good evidence for some event, it may have happened – however fantastic?

What is the most sensible and logical of these reactions?

Notice that these are just like the reactions that people have been told about the miracles of Jesus, or about the resurrection, or any other 'supernatural' event.

COMPARE THE ARGUMENTS

Peter and Susan (against Lucy)	The Professor
Edmund said that they were just pretending	Who is more truthful, Edmund or Lucy?
It couldn't be true	We don't know what is impossible
Lucy might be mad	She doesn't look or sound mad
Why doesn't it happen every time?	Why should it?
We don't see how she could have done it	Other world, why not other time?

Notice the three possibilities about Lucy: lying, mad or telling the truth. The scientific rules which are being questioned here are the rules of probability. What are these rules? Are scientific rules infallible?

Other questions:

1. What is meant by a miracle?
2. How far can science investigate miracles?
(alternative understandings are possible)
3. What is meant by a scientific law?
(get students to write up examples)
4. How much can we rely on what **usually** happens to tell us what **will** happen?
5. Can we prove anything to be impossible?
How can we prove something **is** possible?

Possible assessment activity

To be explained, and set up at the start of a 6–8 week unit on Science and Religion as a focus and framework for subsequent activities within the course.

- a) Set small groups the task of preparing a short presentation on the theme of 'Science – is it against religion?' or 'Does believing in Scientific Truth mean you can't believe in religions' truths?' They must plan and carry it out together and use at least 3 and not more than 5 PowerPoint slides to illustrate their argument. They should also answer questions posed by the rest of the class at the end of their presentation.
- b) As each group presents, everyone makes notes about that group's answers by filling in the writing frame below.
- c) For the assessment (homework or in the next lesson) everyone must answer the question from their own point of view.

Narrative 5:

TRAVERSING BORDERS

'The idea of diaspora tends to homogenise the population referred to at the transnational level...[and] a diaspora is constituted as much in difference and division as it is in commonality and solidarity.' (Anthias 1998 564–569)

I am here because my parents came to work in the UK and settled as citizens. They did have hopes and dreams of returning to their country of origin but this became an impossibility following the geo-political turbulences that have increased over the past couple of decades.

Syria 1977

My father put his finger in a doorjamb and broke it.

This was to have cause for absence from work in order to spirit us out of the country. I remember being so upset that he was hurt, I thought it was an accident, but am hurt more now I know it wasn't. It could not have been easy, he was a doctor, a surgeon, who used his hands to help not harm. He used his British passport, which he had kept illegally, a sort of insurance policy for just such need, to leave the country to neighbouring Jordan. He went alone because he said if they did stop him at least they may make do with him, but if they saw us all travelling together they could hold us all and he wasn't willing to take that chance. We left the next day with my mother. I still remember her holding my hand so tight and I could feel her fear crossing the Syrian border. The questioning by the over officious guard and my mother's fear, is harsh in my memory. We made it to Jordan and were met by my maternal grandfather, with whom we stayed for a week, before leaving for England. We were stopped again leaving Amman but only because my mother did not know to slip a 'tip' in her passport to the border guard. My grandfather noticed and came over and fixed the problem and we came home.

We have never been back to Damascus. Nevertheless, we brought Damascus home with us.

"In Damascus continues the present tense, its Ummayyad works. We walk towards our tomorrow confident of the sun in our past. We and the eternity are the residents of this land." (Mahmoud Darwish)

Initially my father came to the UK to extend his postgraduate medical studies but found work also as a doctor and settled for eight years here in Britain. He stayed on this first journey here for six years. My brothers were both born here and we had started school. My father had finished his studies, thought we should return now to Damascus, so we packed up, and returned to live there.

We lasted three months.

When my parents first came to the UK they did not have many connections with other Arabs. The few they did meet they met either through work or through connections from 'back home'. *No, I met them here and know them from back home they studied together the men not the women I didn't know them from Syria except one of them.*

My grandfather [mother's father] moved from Syria to Jordan for his family's sake and settled there for the rest of his life. Thus half of my mum's family is born in Syria, her included, and the rest in Amman. Following her marriage she returned to Syria with my father, and, as is traditional, moved into the large family home. This she found overwhelming, living with her in laws and extended family. She describes her life as a girl as protected and happy and then she lived within the chaotic bubble of married family life in Damascus. Her transition from this to living alone in a foreign country must have been a major contrast for her. She was twenty years old.

She says she had no issues with living in Britain and felt minimal discomfort as part of wider society, either as an Arab or as a Muslim. She made friends at the local hairdressing college who were nice to her, she recalls. One lady became good friends with her and her mother and says the only time she was surprised is when after several years the mother found out they were buying a house. *'Oh she says, so you're staying here? You're not going back to your country?'*

Transnational ties at that time were more difficult for these migrants. This perhaps made the establishment of a 'home' here and the development of social ties with the local community more necessary.

My mother never worked outside of the home although she did take classes at the local college. She had been educated at a private catholic school for the first few years of her education in Jordan but states she felt ill at ease even as a young child having to reconcile the differing religious focus. When asked about education of her children here she says that there were never any issues she encountered in this arena. I can remember my mum being worried about

RE classes and assemblies at school though. At one point she did try to get us excused assembly but we told her we did not like being pulled out as it drew attention. So after that we would say our own little prayer whilst the Lord's Prayer was being recited. I still know the words to that prayer by heart.

The only thing she mentions was the early age of sex education in school. For Arabs, and particularly Muslims, sexuality is a very private matter and this is something not traditionally discussed in public. It is something usually discussed with the appropriate parent and also would include teaching about hygiene from a young age. There are specific bodily hygiene rituals that align symbolically with spiritual hygiene, and these are embedded gradually and in more detail over a child's development.

When asked both of my parents say they identify as British, which as their daughter surprised me. I thought my mum for sure would say 'Muslim' first as she has become more religious over the years. She says she feels British, *because I lived here all my life and I lived more than I lived in Jordan and I think I am British more than Arabic*. My father says the same, *I am Arabic but I'm British too. Here is home. What did we say when we came back again from Syria? We are going home*.

At home, my parents only spoke Arabic to us, saying we would learn English at school, which of course we did. As we grew more proficient in English and immersed in school, we veered away from speaking Arabic, although my father always insisted that if we started a sentence in one language we had to finish it the same language in order to make sure we maintained them both. My parents would often speak to us in Arabic and we would reply in English, much to their dismay. My mother improved her English by watching television and was befriended by an elderly neighbour who was lonely for company and would come and sit with my mother for tea and company and both benefitted from the interaction. She sent Christmas cards for many years to my parents.

Arabic was important to my parents because as well as being their mother tongue it is also the language of the Quran. They wanted us to be able to read it in the original. My mother taught us to read and write at home but we did not make it easy and rebelled against this constantly. At that time there were no other options for access to learning Arabic, or even any other Arabic children in our town with whom we could socialise, so the burden for this was all on my parents.

On reflection I can remember being aggravated at having to learn this language but later grateful for being able to understand and converse in the language as I met others like us and visited family, or they visited us. It is only as I became an adult that I appreciated the richness and expressiveness of the language, and that some forms of expression cannot be translated into English. They lose their essence. Is the true of people also? I particularly loved the expressive and succinct Arabic proverbs that I still collect.

At that time, there was no satellite television with international channels, so minimal linkages in everyday life to 'back home'. We only heard Arabic from our parents and some friends later on, and the tapes they had brought with them of the Quran and Arabic music. Singers like Um Khaltoum and Abd al Haleem Hafiz, the rhythm and beat so different to British music. At the time, I was more interested in Top of the Pops, Duran Duran and Spandau Ballet than ballads of love in Arabic. The poetry of the words was lost on me until I was older.

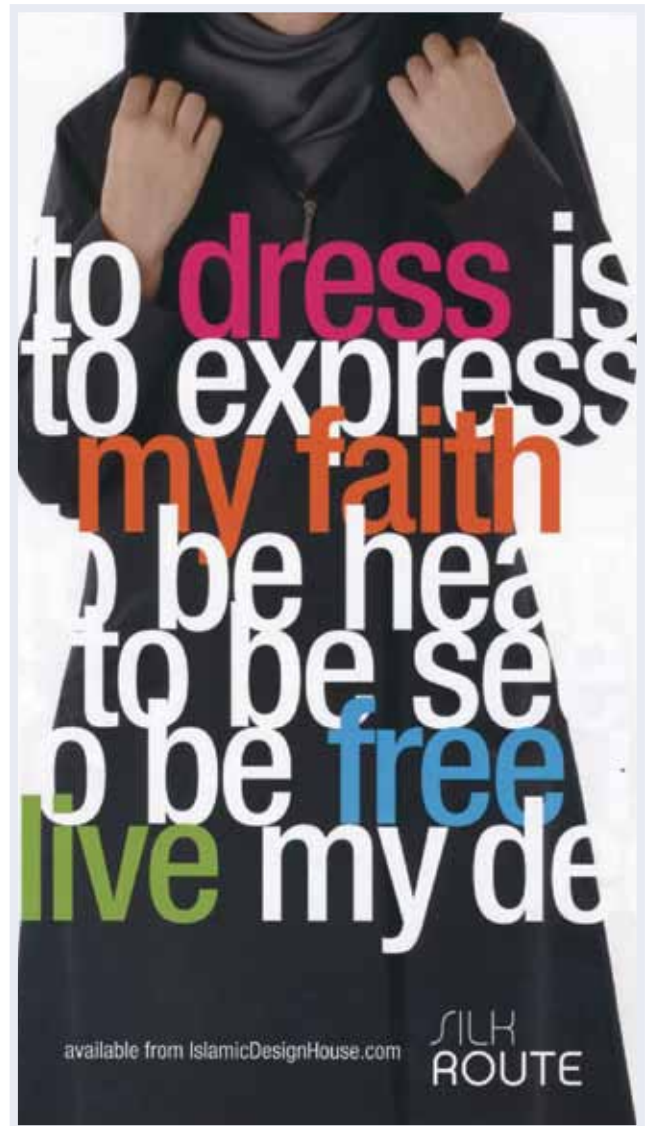
If there were enough of my mother's friends gathered they would put on the music and dance. My mother taught me before she became too ill to dance and I left home. I remember my friend at school after she had seen some programme asking me if I 'belly danced' and I told her yes but we don't show our belly! That at least she thought was a cool thing to be able to belly dance.



They taught us always about our religion, the ways of being and doing of right and wrong for us, and this of course impacted how we were in the world. This is contrasted and built against majority religion of the host country. This however was a private matter, the duty of parents to their children within the home. Being in a foreign country made this more of a priority rather than less. As such they were more protective and cautious perhaps than they would have been back home. The onus was on them to instil and inculcate in us their traditions and values. We however were more interested in being like those around us. I always therefore felt constrained by their fears and lived in a bubble of their making for my own protection. No make up, conservative clothes, no boys as friends. No parties or outings except with school. When I railed against these restrictions to my father, saying, don't you trust me? He would say, *it's not you I don't trust it's those around you*, so it was an argument I could not win.

The first generation participants from Iraq Syria Palestine and Libya all have a similar trajectory to the UK. The family immigrated to the UK either for continued postgraduate education of the father figure and or for his work. They worked in various parts of the UK dependent on work before coinciding in this community. As to be expected in this community the drivers of decision in the process of emigration are the father figures of the family rather than the mothers. This reflects the traditional patriarchal familial cultural of the majority of Arab Muslims from this community.

Extract (with permission and with very many thanks) from PhD thesis (Nisrin al Tabba)



Narrative 6:

GENESIS (a book of beginnings)

What is Genesis?

The first book in the Jewish scriptures is called 'Genesis'. The word means, 'in the beginning'. It really is a book of beginnings, because inside the book we find the beginning of:

1. The World (Ch.1 vs1–25)
2. Man (Ch.1 vs 26–2)
3. Sin (Ch.3 vs 1–7)
4. Redemption (Ch.3 vs 8–24)
5. Family Life (Ch.4 vs 1–15)
6. Civilisation (Ch.4 vs 16, Ch.9 vs 29)
7. Nations (10–11)
8. Hebrews (12–50)

Genesis is part of the Christian scriptures (the Bible) and also the Jewish scriptures, the **Torah**. It is also respected by the Muslim tradition. Scholars disagree (at least in the liberal Christian tradition) about when it was written, but one likely date – suggested by careful examination of the style, composition and content of the earliest scrolls in which Genesis appears – is around 357 BCE. That same scholarship also suggests that it was composed by priestly scholars who were writing out older material (like their Books of Law and Prophecy) into one book of instruction for the Jewish people, when they returned to Jerusalem after 70 years of exile in Babylon. At this time they had largely lost the knowledge of what being Jewish really meant. This is why Genesis was so important as a preface to the Book – it says that every beginning, including the beginning of civilisation and the Jewish nation, was preceded and promised in the creation of the world by God. So their new beginnings as a nation were all part of God's promise and Covenant (agreement).

Traditionally, Genesis is called one of the 'Five books of Moses'. If this were truly a book by Moses, or from his time, then its date would be much earlier, before about



The first chapter of Genesis written on an egg in the Israel Museum.

1250 BC. Writing had been invented by about 3000 BC and the Hebrews (Jews) were one of the first groups to develop what we call an alphabet, but it is not possible to know precisely whether the book did come from the period suggested by scholars or from this earlier time, which is a date suggested by tradition. As you read the Genesis story, remember that this story is part of a tradition sacred to three major world religions. It is a guide to understanding the world and the meaning of their own lives within it. Below is an example of a commentary of part of Genesis as it appears in the Torah (Jewish Scriptures). You may like to compare this interpretation with commentaries given by Christian or Muslim scholars.

Verse numbers
are given

The meaning of
words is explained

Other writings
are referred to, to
back up ideas

27. And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female created He them.

man. Heb. 'Adam'. The word is used here, as frequently in the Bible, in the sense of 'human being'. It is derived from *adamah*, 'earth', to signify that man is earth-born: see II, 7.

in our image, after our likeness. Man is made in the 'image' and 'likeness' of God: his character is potentially Divine. '**God created man to be immortal**, and made him to be an image of his own eternity' (Wisdom of Solomon II, 23). **Man alone among living creatures is gifted, like his Creator, with moral freedom and will.** He is capable of knowing and loving God, and of holding spiritual communion with Him; and man alone can guide his actions in accordance with Reason. 'On this account he is said to have been made in the form and **likeness of the Almighty**' (Maimonides). Because **man is endowed with Reason** he can subdue his impulses in the service of moral and religious ideals, and is born to **bear rule over Nature**. Psalm VIII says of man, 'O LORD... Thou has made him but little lower than the angels, and has crowned him with glory and honour. Thou has made him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands.'

27. male and female. A general statement; man and woman, both alike, are in their spiritual nature akin to God.

What do you think?

Is it true?

Activities

1. Read the 'first' Creation story in Genesis 1–2. Then, using a prepared 'story board' technique or a PC programme like Movie Maker, ask pairs (or small groups) of students to make a short film (or storyboard for a film) which answers the question: what is the significance of the Genesis story for Judaism?
2. Ask each pair/small group, when they present their film/storyboard, to explain why they have chosen the images and sounds they have used (if a film), as well as explaining what their answer to the 'key question' is.

A note about Genesis 2 (sometimes referred to as the 'second' creation story in Genesis).

There are three ways of looking at this. It is important that young people understand these three accounts of what

the narrative is, not just what it's about. In this way they can start to learn what the discourse of theological scholarship is about – and become familiar with ideas like scholarship, interpretation and discourse, too.

- a) A different story. Many scholars believe that the Jews were not a single tribe but a federation of several tribes. Hence there is more than one creation story, using different names for God.
- b) A different author. The special name of God in the second account is YHWH. A different word is used in the first account, which is EL or ELOHIM. Many scholars believe that this suggests that two different accounts have been put together, at some point (see paragraph 1 above).
- c) A different time (see paragraph 1 above).

Narrative 7:

MY NAME IS ASHER LEV

Read the extract below and answer the questions set. The extract comes from a book called 'My Name is Asher Lev' by Chaim Potok, a Jewish writer. It is about the conflict that a young artist in New York finds when, having been brought up as a strictly Orthodox Jew, he becomes fascinated by pictures of Jesus in an art gallery. (Source Potok, C. (1972) Penguin. (London) pp. 150–151).

"The next Monday, I went alone to the museum after school and spent an hour copying paintings of Jesus in my sketchbook. I noticed two guards watching me and whispering to each other. A short big-chested man looked at me, looked at my sketchbook, then scowled and walked stiffly away. I worked slowly and carefully, copying with a pencil into the sketchbook. It was only later, on my way home that it occurred to me how strange it must have been to see a red-haired boy in a black skull-cap and dangling ear-locks standing in a Museum and copying paintings of Jesus.

I showed the drawings to my mother. 'I'm teaching myself to draw better this way, Mama.' She was horrified. 'Do you know how much Jewish blood has been spilled because of him, Asher? How could you spend your precious time doing this?'

'But I needed to, Mama.'

'There are other paintings you can copy, Asher.'
'But I needed the expression, Mama. I couldn't find that expression anywhere else.'

She stared intently at the drawings. Then she sighed and shook her head. She seemed not to know what to say.

Two days later, I went back to the Museum and copied paintings of women without clothes. I drew them slowly, following their contours with care. I found it difficult to do. I returned the next day and the day after. I did not show any of those drawings to my mother.

For the rest of March and through the first week of April, I was able to draw many of the figures in the paintings from memory. My mother was busy preparing the apartment for Passover and at the same time writing a dissertation for her master's degree. She knew I was going regularly to the Museum. But she said nothing more to me about it."



Questions:

1. Find out why Asher was wearing a "black skull-cap with dangling ear-locks" (1.8). Why did dressing like this make his presence in the museum so strange?
2. What reasons might Asher's mother have for being horrified about his drawing pictures of Jesus?
3. Picasso said 'Art is a lie which makes us realize the truth.' What do you think he meant?

Narrative 8:

LIVING THE MITZVOT: DOES THE HOLOCAUST MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Source one: Living the Mitzvot

A mitzvah is a commandment from G-d. Since Judaism is more of an action-based than faith-based religion, performing mitzvot, or G-d's commandments, is central to leading a Jewish life. Judaism believes that all moral laws are derived from these divine commandments. And today the term mitzvah is often used to refer to any good deed.

Kinds of Mitzvot

Jewish tradition holds that the Torah contains 613 mitzvot – 248 positive commandments (mitzvot aseh or commands to perform certain actions) and 365 negative commandments (mitzvot lo ta'aseh or commands to abstain from certain actions). An example of a positive mitzvah is to give charity. An example of a negative mitzvah is not to steal.

Some mitzvot are ethical, and others are ritual. Ethical mitzvot guide our interaction with others, and ritual mitzvot guide our interaction with God. An example of an ethical mitzvah is not taking revenge. An example of a ritual mitzvah is building a sukkah.

Furthermore, the 613 mitzvot in the Bible are called mitzvot d'oraita or commandments of the law. In addition, there are seven rabbinical mitzvot. These are called mitzvot d'rabbanan or commandments from the rabbis. An example of a commandment from the Bible is to keep the Sabbath day holy. An example of a commandment from the rabbis is to light Shabbat candles.

B'nai Mitzvah

According to Jewish law, Jewish children should follow G-d's commandments when they reach maturity. A boy becomes a bar mitzvah (son of the commandment) at age 13. A girl becomes a bat mitzvah (daughter of the commandment) at age 12 in orthodox Judaism and age 13 in more liberal branches of Judaism. After one becomes a bar or bat mitzvah, G-d's commandments apply to them and they are considered responsible for their actions.



How To Do a Mitzvah

Jewish Law, called Halakha, deals with the application of G-d's commandments.

MAKING MEANINGS THROUGH LANGUAGE (ETYMOLOGY)

Trad-it-io (Latin). I hand over.

Question: In Jewish practice, what is being *handed over* when the youngest child asks the questions (from the Haggadah) at the Seder meal?

Re-lig-io (Latin). I bind back together.

Question: In Jewish practice, what is *being bound back together* when a Jewish man (or, sometimes, a woman) puts on tefilin for prayer?

Source two

Jewish philosopher Emil Fackenheim wrote many books but he is best known for a single phrase, a new commandment. Fackenheim taught that, in addition to the 613 commandments of tradition, Jews should observe a 614th – not to grant Hitler a posthumous victory:

“We are commanded, first, to survive as Jews, lest the Jewish people perish. We are commanded, second, to remember in our very guts and bones the martyrs of the holocaust, lest their memory perish. We are forbidden, thirdly, to deny or despair of God, however much we may have to contend with him or with belief in him, lest Judaism perish. We are forbidden, finally, to despair of the world as the place which is to become the kingdom of God, lest we help make it a meaningless place in which God is dead or irrelevant and everything is permitted.”

Although some have criticized Fackenheim for offering a negative reason to be Jewish, Fackenheim did not intend it to be negative. Rather, he saw the education of each Jewish child as a victory over forgetting, and over darkness. Service to the ideal of one God, realizing the promise of a triumph over despair, hatred, and indifference – this is the 614th commandment the Jewish people seeks to teach the world.

Source three

Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, that turned my life into one long night seven times sealed.

Never shall I forget that smoke.

Never shall I forget the small faces of the children whose bodies I saw transformed into smoke under a silent sky.

Never shall I forget those flames that consumes my faith forever.

Never shall I forget the nocturnal silence that deprived me for all eternity of the desire to live.

Never shall I forget those moments that murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to ashes.

Never shall I forget those things, even were I condemned to live as long as God himself.

Never.

Wiesel, E. 2008) Night Penguin Books (London) page .xix

Source 4: “Every Person Has a Name”

Many people who perished in the Holocaust wanted their names and existence to be remembered. Anne Frank writes in her diary:

“Margot and I started packing our most important belongings into a schoolbag. The first thing I stuck in was this diary, and then... schoolbooks, a comb and some old letters... I stuck the craziest things in the bag, but I’m not sorry. Memories mean more to me than dresses.” (Anne Frank, *The Diary of A Young Girl*, Wednesday July 8th 1942, pp. 19 –20).

Nachum Gazivach writes: “I see them running. I rush down to the street... I quickly ask: ‘What’s going on?’ And they tell me that that street is also blocked off. I don’t know what has happened to my parents, and I’m waiting for a chance to reach them as soon as possible. What about my parents? – I hear a shout. The sound of steps. I’ve reached the yard... I am gripped with fear. Look, I’m already inside the building, and now I’m going to my parents, to see how they are. And I don’t know what will become of me or if I will be able to tell you of the events of the coming days. Remember: my name is Nachum Gazivach, 30th July, 1942.” (Shlomo Derech, ed. pages of Holocaust and Rebellion Research, 2nd Series, Vol. I. Ghetto Fighters’ House: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1970 [Hebrew]).

When we come to teach the story of the Holocaust, we need to present students with real people who have faces and identities: people whose unique humanity others tried to wipe out. From out of the ashes, there is a felt need to retrieve their individual features, their families and communities. By restoring victims’ names and faces, archivists like those at the Yad Vashem centre in Jerusalem aim to frustrate the ‘other’s’ goal of wiping out their memory, and also to come to know what has been lost so that they can better remember.



Narrative 9:

THE BINDING OF ISAAC (AKEDAH)

G-d's strange command

G-d said to Abraham, "take your son, Isaac, your only son, whom you love and go away to the land of Moriah. You are to take him up there for a burnt offering on one of the mountains. I'll tell you what to do."

Abraham did not plead with G-d for his son. He did not ask how this command could be reconciled with the promise that Isaac was to become the father of a large nation that was to bear G-d's name. G-d commanded, and Abraham immediately obeyed.

Father and Son Together

Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his ass with his own hands and prepared wood for the fire; then he took two servants and his son Isaac and started on the trip to Moriah. Isaac, then already a fully grown man of thirty-seven, soon realized why he was being taken on this trip.

But father and son were firm in their decision to fulfil G-d's command. Many an obstacle was put in their way to make it difficult for them to go through with the test. However they continued on their way until they reached Mount Moriah on the third day. Here G-d showed Abraham the place where he was to build the altar and bind Isaac on it. Abraham and Isaac ascended to the place G-d had designated.

The Akedah Altar

Having prepared the altar, upon which he bound his beloved son, Abraham lifted the knife to sacrifice Isaac. At that moment an angel called unto him to halt and do no harm to his son, for this was a test and Abraham had proved his loyalty to G-d. Full of gratitude, Abraham looked around and saw a ram that had been caught in a thicket by his horns. Abraham took the ram and offered it, instead of Isaac, to G-d.

Abraham's Reward

Then the angel of G-d called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, "By Myself have I sworn, says the L-rd, that because you have done this thing and you did not withhold your son, your only one, I will surely bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand that is on the seashore, and your descendants will inherit the cities of their enemies."

Abraham and Isaac Return

Full of happiness and solemn joy at the marvellous ending of their journey, Abraham and Isaac descended from the mountain and returned home to Sarah.

Narrative 10:

WHAT IS RELIGION FOR?

When Rabbi Israel Shem-Tov saw misfortune looming, it was his custom to go into a particular glade of the forest to meditate. But before he began his meditation he would always light a fire and offer up a prayer and the disaster would be averted. Years passed, and his disciple Magid of Mexeritch, finding himself in a similar situation, went to the forest glade and said to the powers that be: "I do not know how to light a fire, but I can offer up the prayer," and again disaster was averted. Later still, Rabbi Moshe-

Leib wandered into the forest, saying, "I do not know the whereabouts of the special glade or how to light the fire, but at least I can say the prayer," and once more, disaster was averted. Finally, it was the turn of Rabbi Israel of Rizhin to deal with impending doom. He sat in his study for long hours with his head in his hands. At last he said, "Listen, Lord. I cannot light the fire, or find the special glade in the forest and, forgive me, I am old and tired and failing in my wits and, to be frank, I have forgotten, if I ever knew, the words of the prayer. But I can tell the story."

Where does this story come from?

Jewish tradition is peppered with stories of this kind. They act as a complement (or antidote!) to its more formal, mitzvot (law) centred teachings. In mystical traditions the ritual practices of a religion are often questioned – and stories are told which suggest that what's really important, in religious belief and practice, is to live in a way which encapsulates, as best as you can, the *meaning* of a ritual or a particular practice, not worrying too much if you don't know how to carry out all the processes. Different traditions may disagree with what mystical traditions suggest, so studying them can also easily lead to studying *difference* in belief and practice.

What could you do to help *all* your students 'see the point' of the story?

1. *Tell* the story, don't just read it out. It focuses everyone and engages them with meaning. (See No. 25)
2. Ask insightful questions, not just comprehension ones e.g. is this a story about why we tell stories? Why do you think we do? Or ask questions which help students work out the meaning of the story, e.g. in pairs discuss what 'lighting the fire', finding the special glade' and

'offering up prayer' mean to you, then share your ideas with another pair. Do you agree? N.B. comprehension questions like 'on line 4, who was Magid of Mexeritch?' are no use in helping students understand, so leave them out!

3. For students who are not working in their first language or who struggle to read text, have a visual version of the story prepared for the smart board (or on specially prepared work sheets) so that *everyone* can be included in the story telling – and in finding the meaning of the story.

How could you use this story in your classroom?

1. As a stimulus for a community of enquiry discussion. (See methodology)
2. As the 'reflection' part of a lesson. Have you ever prayed? Do you think G-d answers prayer?
3. As a way into a 'bigger picture' question (e.g. what's the significance of sacred places in religions?). Use the Magic Pool narrative to set the scene, then use their written or drawn responses to that story to help them answer the question (Narrative 24).

Narrative 11:

THE FESTIVAL OF SUKKOT (Tishrei 15–21)

Source 1: What is Sukkot?

Sukkot commemorates the years that the Jews spent in the desert on their way to the Promised Land, and celebrates the way in which God protected them under difficult desert conditions. Sukkot is also known as the Feast of Tabernacles, or the Feast of Booths.

'You shall dwell in sukkot seven days ... in order that future generations may know that I made the Israelite people live in sukkot when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I the Lord your God.' Leviticus 23:42

The word sukkot means huts (some translations of the Bible use the word booths), and building a hut is the most obvious way in which Jews celebrate the festival.

Every Jewish family will build an open-air structure in which to live during the holiday. The essential thing about the hut is that it should have a roof of branches and leaves, through which those inside can see the sky, and that it should be a temporary and flimsy thing.

The Sukkot ritual is to take four types of plant material: an etrog (a citron fruit), a palm branch, a myrtle branch, and a willow branch, and rejoice with them. (Leviticus 23: 39–40.) People rejoice with them by waving them or shaking them about.

Meanings

Most people nowadays live in houses or apartments with strong walls and a decent roof. Spending time in a fragile hut in the garden, or under a roof of leaves rigged up on a balcony gives them the experience of living exposed to the world, without a nice comfy shell around them. It reminds them that there is only one real source of security and protection, and that is God.

Similarly, the holes in the roof reveal the sky, and metaphorically, God's heaven, the only source of security.

Another meaning goes along with this: a Jew can be in God's presence anywhere. The idea here is that the person, having abandoned all the non-natural protections from the elements, has only God to protect them – and since God does protect them this shows that God is there.

A sukkah must also have at least two walls and part of a third wall. The roof must be made of plant materials (but they must have been cut from the plant, so you can't use a tree as the roof).

Source 2: The Festival of Tabernacles: Leviticus Chapter 23

³³ The LORD said to Moses, ³⁴ "Say to the Israelites: 'On the fifteenth day of the seventh month the LORD's Festival of Tabernacles begins, and it lasts for seven days. ³⁵ The first day is a sacred assembly; do no regular work. ³⁶ For seven days present food offerings to the LORD, and on the eighth day hold a sacred assembly and present a food offering to the LORD. It is the closing special assembly; do no regular work.

³⁷ (These are the LORD's appointed festivals, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies for bringing food offerings to the LORD – the burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings required for each day. ³⁸ These offerings are in addition to those for the LORD's Sabbaths and in addition to your gifts and whatever you have vowed and all the freewill offerings you give to the LORD).

³⁹ So beginning with the fifteenth day of the seventh month, after you have gathered the crops of the land, celebrate the festival to the LORD for seven days; the first day is a day of sabbath rest, and the eighth day also is a day of sabbath rest. ⁴⁰ On the first day you are to take branches from luxuriant trees – from palms, willows and other leafy trees – and rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. ⁴¹ Celebrate this as a festival to the LORD for seven days each year. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come; celebrate it in the seventh month. ⁴² Live in temporary shelters for seven days: All native-born Israelites are to live in such shelters ⁴³ so your descendants will know that I had the Israelites live in temporary shelters when I brought them out of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

⁴⁴ So Moses announced to the Israelites the appointed festivals of the LORD.

Source 3: A Sukkot thought by a Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Sacks

October 1, 2001

This evening, we begin the Jewish festival of Sukkot, known in English as Tabernacles.

It's a simple festival. We take a palm branch, a citron, and some leaves of myrtle and willow, to remind ourselves of nature's powers of survival during the coming dark days of winter.

And we sit in a sukkah, the tabernacle itself, which is just a shed, a shack, open to the sky, with just a covering of leaves for a roof. It's our annual reminder of how vulnerable life is, how exposed to the elements.

And yet we call Sukkot our festival of joy, because sitting there in the cold and the wind, we remember that above us and around us are the sheltering arms of the divine presence.

If I were to summarise the message of Sukkot I'd say it's a tutorial in how to live with insecurity and still celebrate life.

Faith doesn't mean living with certainty. Faith is the courage to live with uncertainty, knowing that God is with us on that tough but necessary journey to a world that honours life and treasures peace.

Why teach school students to work with multiple sources?

1. It teaches school students to read carefully and notice the different types and meanings (including interpretations) of different kinds of sources.
2. It helps them to learn to think, with a degree of criticality, about the relationships between belief, practice and meaning.
3. It teaches school students the difference between primary and secondary sources – and how to quote from them when describing and analyzing answers to questions they have been set.
4. It helps the teacher stretch and challenge the most able students whilst at the same time being completely inclusive of those who have learning needs which make it difficult for them to follow text.



Narrative 12:

THE FIRST HUMAN: PROPHET ADAM

1. It is said that God asked the angels to collect from earth all the different varieties of soil that existed – different colours, types, textures and origins, from valleys, mountains and every place. God then brought all these together in the creation of the first human, Adam.

Once his form was created, God brought Adam to life and drew him near. He then taught Adam knowledge of the types and names of things on Earth: *He taught Adam all the names of everything* (2:31), differentiating him from other creations by his knowledge and will. God asked the angels to honour this new creation: *Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: "I am about to create man from clay: When I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of My spirit, fall ye down in obeisance unto him* (38:71–72).

God then created Adam's partner, Eve (*Hawwa*), from Adam's own self: *O mankind! reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, his mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women; – reverence Allah, through whom ye demand your mutual (rights), and (reverence) the wombs (That bore you): for Allah ever watches over you* (4:1).

2. There was a *jinn*, Iblis (Satan), who existed before Adam and had a lofty station with God, adoring Him with the angels. God presented Adam, the new creation, to Iblis and the angels, instructing them to prostrate to honour him. Satan however refused.

So the angels prostrated themselves, all of them together: Not so Iblis: he refused to be among those who prostrated themselves. (Allah) said: "O Iblis! what is your reason for not being among those who prostrated themselves?" (Iblis) said: "I am not one to prostrate myself to man, whom Thou didst create from sounding clay, from mud moulded into shape." (Allah) said: "Then get thee out from here; for thou art rejected, accursed, and the curse shall be on thee till the Day of Judgment." (Iblis) said: "O my Lord! give me then respite till the Day the (dead) are raised." (Allah) said: "Respite is granted thee till the Day of the Time appointed." (Iblis) said: "O my Lord! because Thou hast put me in the wrong, I will make (wrong) fair-seeming to them on the earth, and I will put them all in the

wrong – except Thy servants among them, sincere and purified (by Thy Grace)." (Allah) said: "This (way of My sincere servants) is indeed a way that leads straight to Me. For over My servants no authority shalt thou have, except such as put themselves in the wrong and follow thee" (15:30–42).

3. Together Adam and Eve lived in Paradise, the Garden of Eden, enjoying each other's company and immersed in the knowledge of God and His pleasure upon them. They were warned, however, not eat of a particular tree: *We said: "O Adam! dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden; and eat of the bountiful things therein as (where and when) ye will; but approach not this tree, or ye run into harm and transgression" (2:35).*

Satan however had vowed: *"Because Thou hast thrown me out of the way, lo! I will lie in wait for them on thy straight way: then will I assault them from before them and behind them, from their right and their left: Nor wilt Thou find, in most of them, gratitude (for Thy mercies)" (7:16–17).*

Satan knew well the weakness of human beings and their lack of knowledge of their enemy. He influenced them and occupied their thoughts until they forgot God and succumbed to eating of the tree. After this, they were sent from the Garden to Earth. Adam and Eve, in deep regret and repentance, earnestly entreated God for forgiveness: *They said: "Our Lord! We have wronged our own souls: If thou forgive us not and bestow not upon us Thy Mercy, we shall certainly be lost" (7:23).*

(Allah) said: "Get ye down with enmity between yourselves. On earth will be your dwelling-place and your means of livelihood – for a time. He said: "Therein shall ye live, and therein shall ye die; but from it shall ye be taken out (at last)." (7:24–25).

Thus began Adam and Eve's life on earth, where they tried their hardest to remember God (*dhikr*), live in consciousness of Him (*taqwa*) in all their affairs and interactions – seeking a return to their Paradisal relationship and state, and preparing for the final return.

(Qur'anic passages from Yusuf Ali's translation)

Narrative 13:

BILAL THE SLAVE BECOMES THE FIRST MUEZZIN



If you live in a Muslim country, you hear the muezzin sounding the call to prayer five times a day. This is a tradition that extends back to the time of the Prophet Muhammad. The very first muezzin was a slave named Bilal ibn Rabah, the son of an Arab father and an Ethiopian mother (slave) who was born in Mecca in the late 6th century. Bilal was one of the earliest converts to Islam, but his owner tried to get him to renounce Islam by subjecting him to a series of torturous punishments. When his story became known, one of the Prophet's followers, Abu Bakr, who later became the first caliph, bought him and set him free.

At about the same time, the number of people accepting Islam was growing. The number of prayers during a day seems at first to have been three, but later became five. However without clocks as we know them, the duty of

praying together as a community was becoming difficult. One suggestion seen in a dream was to use a wooden clapper, a device found among the Christians; however, the man in the dream suggested the Muslims have someone vocalize the call to prayer (*adhan* in Arabic). This proposal found favour with the Prophet and he suggested Bilal, who was known for his beautiful voice. In the dream, the words to be recited were given as follows but here in English:

"God is most great! God is most great!
I testify that there is no god, but God.
I testify that Muhammad is the apostle of God.
Come to prayer! Come to prayer!
Come to salvation! Come to salvation!
God is most great! God is most great!
There is no god but God."

Narrative 14:

THE RIGHTS OF NEIGHBOURS (Hadith)

'Do you know what the rights of neighbours are?' asked the noble prophet. And he went on to give a list:

- Help them if they ask your help
- Give them relief if they seek your relief
- Lend to them if they need a loan
- Show them concern if they are distressed
- Nurse them when they are ill
- Attend their funeral if they die
- Congratulate them if they meet any good
- Sympathize with them if any calamity befalls them
- Do not block their air by raising your building high without their permission
- Harass them not
- Give them a share when you buy fruits. If you do not give to them, bring what you buy quietly, and do not let your children take them out to excite the jealousy of their children.

(Hamid, A. W. (1989 and slightly edited here), *Islam the Natural Way*. Muslim Education and Literary Services, for Muslim World League, Makkah Mukarramah. (London).

Talking points

(instructions about working, in class, with talking points, are in Activities Two /Three (Narrative 24)

1. Does everyone have neighbours?
2. Why should we take care of them?
3. Do we have to like a neighbour to want to look after their needs?
4. When does a neighbour become a friend?
5. Why don't we all just lock our doors and take care of only our own needs?
6. These rules were written a long time ago. Why should we take any notice now?
7. Do we need a religion to tell us how to behave?
8. Do you think that following these rules might help people live together more happily today?
9. Do all religions say the same thing about helping neighbours?
10. Would a Humanist agree?

Where does this narrative come from?

This narrative comes from the *hadith*, which contains the Sunnah (the practice) of the prophet Muhammad (pbuh). These writings were collected, later than the Qur'an was, over the many years in which Islam first spread outwards from Makkah and Madinah through what was then a major part of the (Christian based) Roman Empire. Its teachings form the second authority in Islam's *isnad* or chain of tradition. The Qur'an is, of course, the first. To take one example of how they relate, the Qur'an tells Muslims to pray. The hadith tells them how, when and where, following the example of the Prophet himself, they should pray.

What could you do to help *all* your students 'see the point' of the story? (inclusion and differentiation)

1. Frame the story, as you tell it, with the help of pictures projected on the interactive white board. This helps students understand the various ideas in the texts.
2. 'Translate' the text into more informal language in places. (e.g. 'harass them not' could become 'don't push other people around')
3. Ask *volunteers* to read each instruction out, in turn. Then ask them to give an example of how they might put the instruction into practice – and of what could happen if they don't.

How can you work with this story in your classroom?

1. In groups of three, students produce role plays in which they show a situation where someone acts on the hadith's precepts. They perform them – and the rest of the class have to guess which group is modelling which of the statements in the list.
2. Write a set of 'talking points' to help students get into a dialogue about why helping neighbours is always part of what a religion teaches its followers to do – and why it's hard to do it well.

Narrative 15:

CRACKING THE TEXT: SURAH ZALZALAH

Guidance: This page acts as an interpretive guide for investigating a primary Qur'anic source, as a basis for building an enquiry in lesson. Key cross-reference points are provided around the text, with possible enquiry questions within the outlying boxes for building on this further in the classroom.



Narrative 16:

THE DINNER OF SMELLS

Once, long ago, a very fine and expensive restaurant stood on a busy street in a bustling market town. One day, a poor man passed by this restaurant. He was tired and hungry, for he had had nothing to eat all day. His nostrils caught the smell of the delicious food being cooked inside. He stopped and sniffed, smiled sadly, and began to walk away.

But he did not get far. The owner of the restaurant came storming out into the street.

"Come here!" he bellowed. "I saw that! You took the smell of my food, and you'll have to pay for it!"

The poor man did not know what to do.

"I cannot pay!" he stammered. "I have no money!"

"No money!" shouted the restaurant owner. "We'll see about that! You're coming with me to the Qadi!" A Qadi is a judge in a Muslim court. Naturally, he is very powerful, and the poor man was frightened.

"Hmm," said the Qadi, when he had heard the story. "Well, this is an unusual case. Let me think. Come back tomorrow, and I'll pronounce the sentence."

What could the poor man do? He knew whatever sum the Qadi demanded, payment would be impossible. All night long he tossed and turned, unable to sleep for worry. When dawn came he said his prayers and, tired and dejected, made his way to the Qadi's court. As he passed the mosque he spotted a familiar figure – Nasrudin the mullah. Suddenly, his heart lifted, for he

knew that Nasrudin was a clever man, who was sure to be able to think of a way around the problem. He poured out his story, and Nasrudin agreed to come to the court and speak for him. The rich restaurant owner was already at the court, chatting with the Qadi. The poor man saw that they were friends, and feared the judgment would go against him.

He was right. The Qadi began heaping insults upon the poor man as soon as he saw him, and ordered him to pay a very large sum of money.

At once, Nasrudin stepped forward.

"My lord," he said to the Qadi. "This man is my brother. Allow me to pay in his place."

Then the mullah took a small bag of coins from his belt and held it next to the rich man's ear. He shook the bag, so that the coins jingled.

"Can you hear that?" asked Nasrudin.

"Of course," the man replied, impatiently.

"Well, that is your payment," said the mullah. "My brother has smelled your food, and you have heard his money. The debt is paid."

And, in the face of such argument, the case was settled and the poor man went free.

(Adapted from www.rethinking.co.uk/images/general/reth07_smells.pdf)

Where does this story come from? (background and context)

Stories about Nasrudin the mullah come from the Sufi tradition and are widely known by other Muslim children. Humour helps understanding, and Nasrudin is concerned always to support the poorer and weaker members of the community. Narrative 10 (Baal Shem Tov) is Jewish and this one is Muslim, but both come from mystical traditions; ones where stories are used to question religious ideas.

Key question (a clue to the bigger picture, which here is about morality)

Either: Is obeying rules the only way we learn to treat other people well?

Or: What matters most when you decide to do something 'good'? What you do – or the good *idea* behind what you do?

(This questions hints at a *really* big ethical issue which belief systems all over the world and in every culture argue about: is it our *intentions* which decide the goodness or badness of our actions?)

What could you do to help *all* your students 'see the point' of the story? (inclusion and differentiation)

Start the children off by working as a class, and teasing out the practical steps that Nasrudin made –

- a. He noticed the poor man and talked to him
- b. He offered to go along with him
- c. He stood up for him by calling him 'my brother' and offering to pay his fine
- d. He used his cleverness to defend the poor man, and set him free



How could you use this story in your classroom?

Discussion: In groups of three, students use the set sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and pick out the one that the group considers to be the most important.

- a. to Muslims (because it is an Islamic tale)
- b. to those who are not Muslims (maybe representing an idea from another religion/universal truth)
- c. to the individual student

Students must be able to explain their thinking and be prepared to talk both in their group and in front of the class. Ground rules are important here so that students are able to agree/disagree/be unsure/change their minds. Formalising the response pattern enables the students to discuss meaningfully and dispassionately.

Artwork: Children use a little box, turn it inside-out, stick it back together and then decorate the new outside with 'jewels'. They add a small piece of tissue paper and a silver 'coin' made from silver-painted card. The front of the card is decorated and on the back they need to write the quality of life exemplified by this story that they would most like to have for themselves.

Outcomes: All children will be able to understand that there is a religion called Islam that uses stories from different traditions to help children to understand principles of the faith.

Most children will be able to say why the Mullah stood up for the poor man and how this may be seen as an important principle that is important to them too.

Some children will be able to perceive a connection between the actions of Nasrudin in the story, and some stories from other faiths.

Narrative 16:

The dinner of smells: worksheet questions for younger school students



What is your favourite story?

Do you know where it comes from?

Why do you think that Nasrudin called Haziz, **my brother**?

Here are some sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh):

- ☐ *Do not turn away a poor man... even if all you can give is half a date. If you love the poor and bring them near you, Allah will bring you near to Him.*
- ☐ *There is reward for kindness to every living thing.*
- ☐ *Every Muslim must seek knowledge.*



Tick the **one** that your group is discussing and write down why you all think it is important for Muslims. Is it important for other people too – for everyone?

What *kind* of person would you like to be? Write down one word on your little coin and put it in your treasure box.

Narrative 17:

THE CONFERENCE OF THE BIRDS (Farid ud – Din Attar 12th century C.E. Persia).

Many people, religious or not, have an image of life which equates to its being a journey. It stops and starts, it's interrupted by significant others and by significant life events and we like to imagine it's 'going somewhere' (or we hope it is!)

So when someone is facing a significant point of transition (birth, adulthood, marriage, having a child, death), we mark that spot on the journey. We gather friends and family, we eat, we drink, we give and receive presents, we tell people how we feel about them. We locate ourselves and our own journey by taking part in these celebrations and commemorations too. I went to my niece's wedding the other day; first one in the family to marry, (though not the first to be in a long term partnership or to have children). She is very aware that her grandfather is 102 years old and that the youngest in the family is only 4 years old. She wanted to say something in her wedding about all the changes and the continuities in her family's journey. So she wore, hand stitched into her brand new, very modern, wedding dress, a pair of chiffon and lace sleeves I'd saved, all these years, from her great grandmother's wedding dress. In this way the new life she has ahead of her is marked, now, by that small piece of meaning-making ... whilst in making that meaning connection happen, she also makes herself ready to move on. Handing things over from generation to generation makes stories, memories and meaning. And these stories, in turn, as we tell them over and over again, mark the way ahead for the next generation, and allow us to talk about the opportunities and challenges which the journey of life presents.

Around the ages of 11 and 12, continuity and change can be an issue as friends change and schooling changes too. Children may be facing a big move, to much larger schools or to schools away from home. They will be much more aware of the implications of those changes for themselves, and for adult life, than they were at the age of 5, and much more able to talk about that developing awareness. Thinking, with them, about what makes them anxious in this sort of situation, as well as about what the

opportunities ahead might be, helps them reflect on and resolve some of these issues. Bringing the issues up through a narrative such as the Conference of the Birds embeds their ideas and grounds their thinking. So, too, does giving them a theme to work with (e.g. change and continuity). You will help them into dialogue if you give them questions to work with, for example 'why is it difficult for the birds to complete their journey? What is it which the Simorgh shows the birds about their journey which they hadn't understood before – and how does this finally help them to see what their journey was about?'

I know we are no longer a 'traditional' society, but our longing for stories hasn't diminished. When our young ones are moving through stages in their lives of all kinds, they still need to enter into dialogue both with their peers and with others about where they've been, where they're going, and how they feel about it. In the process they will write poems, tell you about dreams and make images or artefacts to mark their way along the journey. Above all, they will tell you their stories, and need to hear yours in return. Here is one you can meet them with at that point.

Further resources

www.youtube.com/watch?v=F0e0_I7zMS0

Animation of the story. Please make sure that students read the full version and compare the video with this, during the lesson, as the animation is in places not an accurate account of the full poem.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=F0e0_I7zMS0

The author Farah K. Behbehani talks here about how she developed her calligraphic re-telling of the story of the Conference of the Birds. This resource could easily be brought, in whole or part, into the classroom.

Behbehani, F.K. (2009) *The conference of the Birds: A Study of Farid ud-Din Attars poem using Jali Diwani calligraphy*. Thames and Hudson (London).

Davis, D and Darbandi, A. (1984). *Attar, F. The Conference of the Birds*. Penguin Classics (London).

The Conference of the Birds

One day the birds of the world gathered in conference together. The Hoopoe led the discussion by saying that she was disappointed in the state into which the birds of the world had fallen. 'We fight, quarrel, and start wars over nothing,' she said. The Hoopoe was wise and had traveled far, and she told the birds of the world that they had a Great Leader. They had to find this leader or otherwise they would be lost. The Great Leader's name, she said, was the Simorgh, but the way to find him was unknown. All that anyone knew was that only those of strong heart and dedication could reach him. The Hoopoe said, straight away, that she couldn't make the journey alone, because if she failed, she would die of shame.

The Sparrow was the first to volunteer, but the Falcon quickly scoffed at the idea. The Falcon said that he had always been at home with Great Leaders. After all, he sat on the hands of kings. That was honour enough for him. The Hoopoe then told the Falcon and the other birds three stories about Great Leaders who were tyrants. As each bird debated whether or not they would undertake the journey, the Hoopoe continued to tell them stories. Because of her stories, the Falcon changed his mind and decided to join her. The Dove, the Sparrow, the Exotic Birds, the Heron, and a number of other birds joined as well. However, the Duck, the Peacock, the Nightingale, the Parrot, the Partridge, and the Owl all rejected the challenge. Wrapped up in their own obsessions, vanities, and fears, they were unable to leave their homes.

The Hoopoe and her followers first flew through a scorching, endless desert. Many of the birds tired and wanted to give up, but the Hoopoe continued to challenge and encourage them and tell them more stories. The birds reached the end of the desert and learned that it was only the beginning of their journey. They must still cross the Seven Valleys. Each valley had a different name and a secret they must understand.

The birds journeyed through the Valleys of the Quest, Love, Understanding, Annihilation, Unity, Amazement, and Death. Finally, the birds were out of the valleys and expected to see the Simorgh. However, they were in the same place they were before they entered the valleys. Some of the birds died of despair, but the others took off and continued to search. They travelled for years and many of them died of thirst and sunstroke, or were eaten by wild beasts. Others gave up or forgot the object of their search and were lost. Only thirty broken, tired, old birds reached their goal.

The Chamberlain to the Simorgh initially rejected the birds and slammed the door in their faces. Even the Hoopoe fell down in despair, but the birds did not leave. The Chamberlain returned and told them that they had passed the final test of devotion. He opened the door to them and hundreds of curtains were opened. The sun of the Simorgh's majesty was, it seemed, a mirror. The birds saw themselves reflected in the Simorgh and then they saw that they *were* the Simorgh, and the Simorgh was them. The birds lost themselves forever in the Simorgh, and they and the Simorgh become one.



Narrative 18:

WORLD STORIES (ab –original tradition)



Narrative can also be found in many other oral-storytelling processes, as seen in many Indigenous American communities. Narrative storytelling is used to guide children on proper behavior, cultural history, formation of a communal identity, and values. Narratives also act as living entities because, as cultural stories, they are passed on (trad-ition) from generation to generation. Because the narrative storytelling is often left without explicit meanings, children act as participants in the storytelling process by delving deeper into the open-ended story and making their own interpretations. Oral forms lie, as well, behind the Gospels, the Torah and the Qur'an. It's hard for school students to imagine a world where such narratives were the only, or the most commonly used, means of transmitting ideas. In their world of smartphones, televisions and facebook, it is helpful for them to begin to understand, through world stories, that technology only actually serves the same needs people have always had – to communicate, with meaning, their inter-connectedness.

1. MUNDIBA and the HONEY

A long time ago there was a great drought and food became very scarce. All were hungry and worried, for the water of the river was very low and few fish could be caught. If hunting and food gathering were successful the meal was shared and enjoyed by all.

Mundiba was a young hunter who spent most of his time looking for wild bees. He went out every morning soon after sunrise and did not return until sunset, and each time he was empty-handed but greedily ate his share of the food collected by the others. He kept saying that the honey was as scarce as the food they collected, however the *gubi* [Clever Man] of the tribe had his suspicions of Mundiba and instructed his spirit servant to follow Mundiba next morning on one of his hunting expeditions.

The small invisible spirit followed Mundiba the very next day and saw him find a nest and, making a hole in the trunk with his tomahawk, remove the nest and eat with relish a considerable amount of this rare sweetness of the bush. The invisible spirit of the *gubi* followed Mundiba from tree to tree and saw him eating greedily each time. This act of greed outraged the spirit servant and so he began to sing to the tree to persuade it to make the hole smaller and smaller. Soon Mundiba's arm was stuck in the tree. That is where Mundiba remained, and he was found dead hanging by his arm from the tree.

The suffering and death of Mundiba was an example for later generations. His greediness, selfishness and refusal to obey the laws deserved severe punishment. Those who behaved in a similar manner could expect strict discipline which might come in unexpected ways: thus you were warned!

2. Koobor the Koala [The Drought Maker]

Long ago in the Dreamtime lived an orphaned Koala-boy called Koobor who was constantly ill-treated and neglected by his relatives. Consequently he had learnt to live on the leaves of the gum tree but was never given sufficient water to quench his thirst.

One morning when his relatives set out to gather food, they forgot to hide their water buckets, so for once in his life Koobor had enough water to drink. Koobor realised that he must store some water for himself so he collected all the water buckets and hung them on a low branch. He then climbed into the branches and chanted a special song that caused the tree to grow quickly to be the tallest tree in the forest.

That evening when Koobor's people returned from their hunt, they were tired and thirsty and soon became very angry when they saw their water buckets hanging from the highest tree next to Koobor. They demanded that Koobor return the stolen water but he refused. This angered

Koobor's people no end. Two clever medicine men climbed the tree and harshly beat Koobor and threw him to the ground, shattering his little body.

As the people watched, they witnessed the shattered body of Koobor change into a Koala, climb into a nearby tree, and sit in the top branches, where today he does not need water to keep him alive. Koobor then made a law that, although the aborigines may kill him for food, his skin may not be removed or his bones broken until after he is cooked. Should anyone disobey, the spirit of the dead Koala will cause such a severe drought that everyone except the Koalas will die of thirst.

3. Tiddalik the Frog [The Flood-Maker]

Long ago in the Dreamtime, Tiddalik, the largest frog ever known, awoke one morning with a huge thirst. He started to drink and drank until there was no fresh water left in the world. Soon creatures everywhere were dying and trees were wilting because of the lack of moisture.

All the animals pondered about their terrible plight until a wise old wombat suggested that if Tiddalik could be made to laugh then maybe all the water would flow out of his mouth. This was a good idea, the animals agreed.

The animals gathered by Tiddalik's resting place and tried for a long time to make him laugh, but it was in vain. The kookaburra told his funniest story, the kangaroo jumped over the emu and the lizard waddled up and down on two legs making his stomach stick out, but Tiddalik was not amused.

Then when the animals were in despair, Nabunum the eel, who had been driven from his favourite creek by the drought, slid up to the unresponsive frog and began to dance. As the dance got faster Nabunum wriggled and twisted himself into all sorts of knots and shapes to the amusement of Tiddalik. Tiddalik's eyes lit up and he burst out laughing. As he laughed the water gushed from his mouth and flowed away to replenish the lakes, swamps and rivers.

4. The Dreamtime

Long ago in the Dreamtime, when the animals were first on the earth, and were very much bigger than they are today, there was a time when there was no sun, only a moon and stars.

One day, Dinewan the emu and Brolga the beautiful dancing bird, were out on a large plain arguing and fighting. Brolga got so angry that she ran over to Dinewan's nest and grabbed one of her large eggs and threw it up into the sky with all her might. It landed on a heap of firewood and broke, spilling the yellow yolk which burst into flames. This lit up the whole world below to the astonishment of all the creatures, as they had only been used to the semi-darkness and were dazzled by such brightness.

A good spirit who lived in the sky saw how beautiful the earth looked when it was lit up by this blaze. He thought it would be a good thing to make a fire every day; which he has done ever since. All night the good spirit and his helpers collect wood and stack it up. When the stack is nearly big enough, the good spirit sends out the morning star to let them know on earth that the fire will soon be lit.

However, the spirits found that sending out the morning star was not enough because those who slept did not see it. The spirits decided they must have a noise made at the dawn of each new day to announce the arrival of the sun that would wake the sleepers – but what noise?

Then one day the spirits heard the laughter of Goo-goor-gaga the kookaburra ringing through the air. This was the noise the spirits were looking for! They asked Goo-goor-gaga if he would, as the morning star faded and the day dawned each morning, laugh his loudest to awaken all the sleepers before sunrise. Goo-goor-gaga agreed and has done so ever since, making the air ring with his early morning laughter.

goo-goor-gaga - goo-goor-gaga - goo-goor-gaga

Narrative 19:

HUMANISM – A SUMMARY FOR TEACHERS

Humanists hope that the average school leaver will have some understanding of humanist beliefs and values. By age 11, children should know that many reasonable people do not base their values on religious faith or a revelation. All children should be aware of the humanist option for ceremonies. Teachers may find it interesting and relevant to explore humanist history and key figures as a parallel to their teaching about beliefs and practices.

Values

Humanists believe that morality is based on human nature, human society and human experience; it has not come from a god.

Humanists believe that moral values stem from the human need for happiness and the fact that we must live co-operatively together.

There is no evidence for life after death, and so humanists place a special value on this life and on making the best of it. They do not expect justice in another life, and so work for justice in this one.

Humanists try to follow the Golden Rule: treat other people as you would like them to treat you, avoid harming others.

Humanists value all human beings, celebrating both our common humanity and shared values, and the diversity of human culture. Prejudices based on race, gender, nation or belief should not be allowed to separate us.

Humanists believe that humans alone are responsible for sustaining and improving our quality of life on this planet.

Beliefs

Humanism is based on reason, not faith.

The humanist view of the universe does not depend on a belief in God or gods. Humanists are agnostic (agnostic = without knowledge) because they think that we cannot know whether God exists or not. Because there is no evidence for the existence of God or for an after-life, humanists live their lives as atheists (a-theist = without god), and find other reasons for living good lives.

Humanists do not have sacred texts, traditions, dogma, prophets, or any source of authority other than human

experience. Humanists look for evidence before they believe things and like to think for themselves.

Humanists believe that knowledge best advances through openness and cooperation, through experiment and observation, and through free enquiry and discussion.

Humanists accept that science provides the best available explanations for the existence of the universe and life on earth. Humanists do not believe that the universe or earth were created.

Activities and ceremonies

There are no compulsory prescribed rituals for humanists. There are humanist ceremonies for weddings, baby-namings and funerals, for those who wish to mark these in a personal, appropriate and non-religious way.

Humanists do not pray or worship.

Because there is no dogma, ritual, or tradition in Humanism, humanists are free of the obligation to use particular objects or artefacts, or to practise unnecessary self-denial.



International Humanism has a symbol, "The Happy Human".

Humanists put their values into practice by actively supporting human rights campaigns and a range of charities.

"My country is the world and my religion is to do good."
Thomas Paine, 18th century

"Happiness is the only good...the time to be happy is now, and the way to be happy is to make others so."
Robert Ingersoll, 19th century

Development

Humanism has its roots over 2,500 years ago, when thinkers in Greece, China and India formulated the idea that humankind alone is responsible for its own welfare and development.

In the European Renaissance and Enlightenment, these ideas were revived and developed. The growth of knowledge about science, geology and evolution in the 18th and 19th centuries showed that there was no need for religion to explain the processes of nature.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, humanists have campaigned for the rights of nonreligious people, and developed organisations and ceremonies which provide for their values and beliefs.

Some influences

Many people have influenced the ideas and development of Humanism and had a humanist approach to life. They include:

In the Ancient World

Aristotle, Confucius, Democritus, Epicurus, Protagoras, Socrates.

The Enlightenment

Descartes, Diderot, David Hume, Thomas Paine, Voltaire, Mary Wollstonecraft.

The 19th century

Jeremy Bentham, Marie and Pierre Curie, Charles Darwin, George Eliot, Sigmund Freud, Thomas Hardy, T H Huxley, Robert G Ingersoll, John Stuart Mill, P B Shelley.

The 20th century

A J Ayer, Richard Dawkins, E M Forster, Julian Huxley, Nehru, Claire Rayner, Gene Roddenberry, Bertrand Russell.



Five humanist thinkers. Can you name them all? Which one might be considered an 'odd one out' – and why?

Narrative 20:

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

Sometimes people think that science and religion have always been in conflict

Debates about reason's place in religious thinking have of course had a huge effect on the way different cultures, beliefs and practices have evolved, but as the example below shows, they haven't always been in conflict.

Key question: why do you think science and religion sometimes conflict? Is it inevitable that they do?



Is scientific discovery always best made away from religious influence?

Many new developments in science were developed and practised in the medieval Islamic world during the Islamic Golden Age (8th century C.E. – c.1258). During this time, Indian, Assyrian, Iranian and Greek knowledge was translated into Arabic. These translations were fundamental for the way scientific advances, by scientists from the Muslim-ruled areas, occurred during the Middle Ages. Muslim scholars did not think that they had, somehow, to turn Greek, Indian and other knowledge into Islamic knowledge before they could study it. It was studied in its own right, by great scholars of the day.

Scientists within the Muslim-ruled areas were of diverse ethnicities, including Persians, Arabs, Assyrians, Kurds and Egyptians. They were also from diverse religious backgrounds. Most were Muslims, but there were also some Christians, Jews and people of no faith.

Developments in medicine, optics, astronomy and many other fields were enriched by scientific study during this period. In fact, many believe that these scholars preserved countless precious documents which in Europe at the time would have been destroyed.

Is religion inevitably, always, *against* science?

The Buddha, like Abbassid scholars, didn't think that being religious meant throwing away his rational faculties. He said: 'believe nothing, no matter where you read it or who has said it, not even if I have said it, unless it agrees with your own common sense.'

But sometimes, and in some cultures, there *have* been major clashes between scientific discovery and religious belief. These have affected the way we think about science and religion very deeply.

Open enquiry task

Choose *one* of the following figures and research, by yourself, the impact of their scientific studies on a) their own belief and b) the beliefs of the cultures in which they lived. Present your findings as 'scientifically' as you can (back up your ideas with evidence from a variety of primary and secondary sources) and explain to your audience what you think the answer is to this key question: 'why do you think science and religion sometimes conflict? Is it inevitable that they do?'

Charles Darwin 1809–1882

Resources include: www.darwin-online.org.uk/, www.cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/darwinhooker

Galileo Galilei 1564 –1642

Resources include: Sobel, D. (2000) *Galileo's Daughter*. Fourth Estate Ltd. (London)

Sigmund Freud 1856–1939

Resources include: www.freud.org.uk/education/

Ibn Sina (Avicenna) c. 980 C.E. to 1037 C.E.

Resources include: www.shininghistory.com/2009/09/ibn-sina-avicenna.html

Narrative 21:

THE MYTH OF GYGES RING

[Gyges] was a shepherd in the service of the then king of Lydia. One day there was a great storm and an earthquake in the district where he was pasturing his flock, and a chasm opened in the earth. He was amazed at the sight, and descended into the chasm where he saw many astonishing things. Among them, so the story goes, was a bronze horse, which was hollow and fitted with doors, through which he peeped and saw a corpse which seemed to be more than human size. He took nothing from it save a gold ring it had on its finger, and then made his way out. He was wearing this ring when he attended the usual meeting of shepherds which reported monthly to the king on the state of his flock. As he was sitting there with the others he happened to twist the bezel of the ring towards the inside of his hand.

Thereupon he became invisible to his companions and they began to refer to him as if he had left them. He was astonished and began fingering the ring again, and turned the bezel outwards; whereupon he became visible once more. When he saw this he started experimenting with the ring to see if it really had this power, and found that every time he turned the bezel inwards he became invisible, and when he turned it outwards he became visible. Having made his discovery he managed to get himself included in the party that was to report to the king, and when he arrived he seduced the queen, and with her help attacked and murdered the king and seized the throne.’
Plato The Republic, II:359d–360b

What’s Plato saying about human nature? Would we all steal, or kill, if we thought we could get away with it?

What’s the context? Who was Plato? When did he live? Where?

First responses?

Gyges the shepherd took a gold ring from a corpse. Later, he was sitting with others and he happened to twist the stone in the centre of the ring – and became invisible. He was astonished and *started experimenting with the ring to see if it always worked. It did.* Having made his discovery he managed to get himself included in the party that was to report to the king, and when he arrived he seduced the queen, and with her help attacked and murdered the king and seized the throne.’

What questions does the story leave you asking?

Narrative 22:

J.P SARTRE (1905–1980) – EXISTENTIALISM (Extract from Being and Nothingness)

Let us consider this waiter in the café. His movement is quick and forward, a little too precise, a little too rapid. He comes toward the customers with a step a little too quick. He bends forward a little too eagerly; his voice, his eyes express an interest a little too solicitous for the order of the client. Finally there he returns, trying to imitate in his walk the inflexible stiffness of some kind of automaton, while carrying his tray with the recklessness of a tightrope-walker by putting it in a perpetually unstable, perpetually broken equilibrium which he perpetually re-establishes by a light movement of the arm and hand. All his behaviour seems to us a game. He applies himself to linking his movements as if they were mechanisms; he

gives himself the quickness and pitiless rapidity of things. He is playing, he is amusing himself. But what is he playing? We need not watch for long before we can explain it: he is playing at being a waiter in a café... the public demands this of them [tradesmen]. Their condition is wholly one of ceremony. The public demands of them that they realise it as a ceremony; there is the dance of the grocer, of the tailor, of the auctioneer, by which they endeavour to persuade their clientele that they are nothing but a grocer, an auctioneer, a tailor. A grocer who dreams is offensive to the buyer, because such a grocer is not wholly a grocer. Society demands that he limit himself to his function as a grocer...

Sartre's terminology

Bad Faith – a lie to oneself. Through bad faith a person seeks to escape the responsible freedom of Being-for-itself. Refusing to recognise things as they really are.

Being-for-itself (etre-pour-soi) – a thinking being that makes choices for itself, not determined by external factors.

Being-in-itself (etre-en-soi) – non-conscious Being. A thing, something which serves our purposes.

Essence – the way that we define our experiences of the world – i.e. the essence of a hammer is that it is hard, made of metal, and hurts when it hits my thumb. I can only ever really know things in the world from a subjective point of view (from my existence).

Existence – Existence comes before essence. This means I think before I experience or act in the world – my existence is definite and will inform how I then go on to experience the world.

Freedom – we are 'condemned to be free' according to Sartre because we have to make ourselves who we are through our choices. This is a tremendous responsibility, and we often retreat into bad faith to avoid confronting the big decisions and reflections that will make us truly ourselves. Sartre notes that it is not important for people to actually have success in 'acting' freely (i.e. doing what they want) but they have to be conscious of their decisions and accept that what they are doing is what they want to be doing.

Talking Points

What are your conclusions as a group about this text and Sartre's existentialism?

Remember you need to come to some kind of consensus (agreement) so see if you can reach a decision using the talking points to guide your discussion:

1. We don't have freewill when we just do what is expected of us.
2. The waiter was only doing what was natural.
3. It would be easier to be determined than to be free.
4. The waiter is being authentic – he has chosen to do this job after all.
5. There are other examples like the "dance of the green grocer" in our society today.
6. We always know when we are being inauthentic.
7. We don't always know when we are being inauthentic.
8. Our relationships with other people around us might make it difficult to become authentic.
9. People need guidance on how to behave – they shouldn't try to work it out for themselves.
10. When we talk about being determined we are 'running away' from making a free choice.

11. People should be held responsible for their decisions.
12. The self is a lie – ‘we’ are made by external factors.
13. Hard determinism does in some ways treat people like objects.
14. Thinking we have a choice could be an illusion.
15. The story of the waiter reveals to us ways in which we might avoid being free.

General Vocabulary

Perpetually – never ending or changing

Equilibrium – balancing

Sollicitous – showing interest or concern

Further reading on Existentialism if you're interested

Beginner level: www.philosophynow.org/issues/61/Sartre_and_the_Waiter
Philosophy Now issue 61 Sartre and the Waiter

Competent level: www.iep.utm.edu/sartre-ex/ Internet encyclopedia

Master level: J.P Sartre (2003) *Being and Nothingness*, Routledge

Statements we definitely agreed with	Statements that some of us agreed with	Statements we definitely disagreed with
Reasons why we agreed...	Reasons why there was partial agreement...	Reasons why we all thought these statements were false...

Narrative 23:

A PHILOSOPHICAL PARABLE

Once upon a time two explorers came upon a clearing in the jungle. In the clearing were growing many flowers and many weeds. One explorer says: 'Some gardener must tend this plot'. The other disagrees: 'There is no gardener'. So they pitch their tents and set a watch. No gardener is ever seen. 'But perhaps he is an invisible gardener.' So they set up a barbed-wire fence. They electrify it. They patrol with bloodhounds. (For they remember how H. G. Wells' *The Invisible Man* could be both smelt and touched even though he could not be seen.) But no shrieks ever suggest that some intruder has received a shock. No movements of the wire ever betray an invisible climber. The bloodhounds never give cry. Yet still the Believer is not convinced. 'But there is a gardener, invisible, intangible, insensible to electric shocks, a gardener who has no scent and makes no sound, a gardener who comes secretly to look after the garden which he loves.' At last the Sceptic despairs: 'But what remains of our original assertion? Just how does what you call an invisible, intangible, eternally elusive gardener differ from an imaginary gardener or even from no gardener at all?'

In this parable we can see how what starts as an assertion, that something exists or that there is some analogy between certain complexes of phenomena, may be reduced step by step to an altogether different status, to an expression perhaps of a 'picture preference.' The Sceptic says there is no gardener; the Believer says there is a gardener (but invisible, etc.). Someone may dissipate his assertion completely without noticing that he has done so. A fine hypothesis may thus be killed by inches, the death by a thousand qualifications. And in this, it seems to me, lies the peculiar danger, the endemic evil, of theological utterance.

For ideas about how to discuss this issue with 16–18 year olds see websites such as www.tutor2u.net/blog/index.php/site/favorite_add/2453



Narrative 24:

THE MAGIC POOL

There was a magic pool, which gave those who knew about it everything they could ever want or need. All they had to do, when they went to the pool, was ask. So there was no sickness or hunger or want of any kind there. It was like living in paradise.

In return the people were asked to do just one thing. Without doing that, they were told, all this perfection would end. So they learned that every time they asked for something from the pool they had to be sure to put something back into it. It didn't have to be big (a stone or a flower would do), but it did have to happen. So the ritual carried on for hundreds of years and all was happy and peaceful. But one day some strangers came to that place. They watched the people and they decided that they should benefit from the pool, too.

They waited until it was dark, one day and went to the pool. They took and took and took from the pool. They put nothing back.

Next morning, the villagers woke up and found the pool empty. Everyone tried hard to bring the water back, but they failed. Nothing remained but a few drops of water. Peace and happiness had come to an end.

No-one wanted to forget the magic pool, though, so they made a plan. The people were given a task. See what you would do, in their position:

Activity One

- Draw or make a model of a suitable CONTAINER which the village can keep the last drops of water in. The container has to be water tight and reflect the importance and history of those drops.
- Draw or make a model of a BUILDING you could use to house the container. The design should remind people about the days when the pool was full as well as how it became empty. They must use the building, too, to educate young people so that if the pool ever filled up again, they, too, would understand the importance of giving back to it and not just taking what they wanted.

Note:

Unlike the other narratives this one is made up to suit a teaching context (though folk versions of it do appear all round Europe). Telling the story and then following it up with Activity One straight away (with plenty of time

allowed for exploring the ideas students come up with), is a creative way of helping school students 'crack into' the concept of the sacred. Students are then working outwards from personal reflection into a dialogue about sacred buildings in different traditions. Once the basic principles are established in Activity One, students will engage much more seriously with Activities Two and Three.

Activity Two

Tell the story using Power Point slides or one of the methods used by traditional storytellers (narrators, taking on roles or splitting the story into different 'scenes' and asking different groups to act them out).

These two activities both address one or other of the following key questions:

Either: 'Why do religions have 'sacred' buildings?'

Or: 'We all set some places apart (in our minds) because they mean something special to us. Where are your own 'set apart' places? What sets them apart from other places?'

For example: a space which sets me into a different 'space' in myself is a particular beach where I can stand and look out on to a very distant horizon, at low tide – and see nobody! In a very crowded, busy life, that is a very important place for me to be able to return.

Or: What does the layout of a sacred building tell you about a. what its function is, and b. what those who use it believe in?

Activity Three

Once the group is sure that they understand the key concept (*sacred = set apart*), move them onto to making connections with the same idea in different religious (or other) traditions. The example below takes the class from talking about something they can all understand (why do we talk?) into having an opinion about something they might not otherwise understand so well. The confidence gained from completing the first task gives the foundation, then, for students to tackle the second.

This first exercise just gets the class started. In small groups (2–3 people), talk about all of these statements together and see whether you agree, disagree or aren't

sure about your answers. Work in a limited time (5–7 minutes) and decide, as you go, whether to address all the questions or just focus on a few. Then sum up as a group, your responses. Do you think, on the whole, that talking together does help you think better – or do you find it easier to develop ideas in other ways? (There are, of course, no right or wrong answers to that question.)

1. You are naturally good at talking, or not, and nothing can be done about it
2. Writing is more important than talk
3. Two heads are usually better than one for solving problems
4. It is easier to talk well than it is to write well
5. You can think without words
6. You can never tell what anyone else thinks
7. If you think someone is wrong, it is important to tell them
8. It is rude not to join in a group discussion
9. It is rude to disagree with other people
10. When other people talk, you can be thinking what you will say next
11. It's impossible to tell if other people are listening
12. If you ask questions it shows that you don't know anything
13. People make fun of you if you let them know what you really think
14. Quiet people are thinking interesting things, but don't want us to know
15. Learning to talk and work with other people is important

Talking points Set B: (following a visit to a Greek Orthodox church).

What does knowing about the way a building is designed tell you about the beliefs of those who use it?

1. The icons, layout and features of the church show that tradition is important
2. It's important that some parts of the church are out of bounds to the community
3. The icons are showing people what Jesus might have looked like – they are portraits
4. People couldn't worship without the church being there
5. People should be able to go where they want in a religious building
6. The iconostasis is the most important part of an Orthodox church
7. The Gospel is the most important part of an Orthodox church
8. The images might help someone to reflect on God
9. If you're not Orthodox you wouldn't understand the church
10. Buildings aren't important, the actions and rituals that take place are though

Leading into assessment:

In your books complete the following tasks:

1. Explain the importance of each feature of the church.
2. Why do some denominations (groups) of Christianity ban the use of images?
3. If you were going to design a reflection space in school would you include images in it? Give one reason for and one reason against.

Stretch and Challenge

Give one example of decoration or architecture, found in any sacred building, which is built to reflect the idea that God is One. How do you know?

If you want to follow up the use of – and devise your own – talking points see:

Dawes, L. (2013). *Talking Points for Shakespeare Plays*. Routledge. (Abingdon).

Dawes, L. and Warwick, P. (2012). *Talking Points: Discussion activities in the primary classroom*. Routledge. (Abingdon).

Afterword

We had just concluded the first day of School Parent Coffee Morning and parents were leaving the school building in New York City. It was a beautiful day in September, 2001. As I passed my assistant's desk on my way back to the office, the soft classical music on the office radio suddenly stopped and a voice was shouting that there had been an explosion at the Twin Towers, a place of work for many of our departing parents. These parents were late for work that day and were spared. Others were not so fortunate.

The next year at the Parent Potluck Dinner I heard a Christian dad say to a Muslim mother, whose children often played together, "I did not know you were a Muslim...why don't you moderate Muslims do something about the violence in your religion?" She answered, "We are, you just can't hear us."

As the anger and division over building a Muslim educational centre ("Mosque") near Ground Zero became front page news, some parental friendships were becoming frayed, calling into question families' cultural backgrounds, personal and collective identities and the school's emphasis on ethnic and religious diversity and perspectives. As Head of an Episcopal school, I knew I had to do something! Ignorance, fear and anger had to give way to knowledge, recognition and understanding of the 'other', those who are not like me. The idea for *A RE-framing Toolkit: Teaching About Beliefs and Practices in Schools* was born, for me, from these experiences – and comes to fruition here.

The project originated with the idea of a model for 'best practice' in religious education across two different cultural settings, the UK and US. By bringing teachers from both countries and from different schooling types (independent, state, faith-based: Jewish, Christian, Muslim) face to face with each other and with professionals in the field, and using data collected from these schools, we believed that we could focus the resource on an evidence base, which would in turn, strengthen it. So research (questionnaires, classroom observations and case studies from 20 schools) produced a list of key areas and challenges which all the teachers faced. This in turn fed into face to face discussions during a conference and, ultimately, to a toolkit which aims not to reinvent the way we teach about beliefs and practices in schools but *re-frame* that teaching so that it's easier for non specialist teachers and those new to the field to build up their own 'best practice'. The aim is to promote wider knowledge and understanding of (and respect for) others' beliefs and practices, too.

American teachers will find here resources regarding the First Amendment and both subject

knowledge and 'academic' readings, web sites and examples which are described without reference to particular schooling situations.

It is our hope that through the use of this RE- framing toolkit, teachers will not only be inspired to develop new ways of challenging their students' perceptions of beliefs and practices (religious or not) but will also seek out opportunities to engage with teachers across departments, schools, faiths and cultures.

In Gratitude

I am most grateful to the Woolf Institute, not only for taking this project on, but for the excellent courses that I took there in order to increase my own knowledge of relations among Jews, Christians and Muslims. The guidance of Mohammed Aziz, the Woolf's Director of the Centre for Policy and Public Education exemplified wisdom and teamwork. Thank you for all your support. Overwhelming thanks to Mary Earl who is the master mind behind the academic design, the gathering of resources and the research of this entire project. Her knowledge of narratives and their use in understanding beliefs and practices is pure gold. Special thanks to RE advisors, Sue Ward, David Hampshire and Penny Kite all of whom, as teachers, trainers and advisers in their own right have contributed significantly to the project. Thanks especially to Sue for tireless support of us all during the first two phases of the project. Alice Thompson-Sandham and Sahra Ucar worked tirelessly collecting data, researching and writing materials and formatting information: thank you! Special thanks to all the teachers and advisors who contributed lessons, resources and methods – Zach Beamish Cook, Hollie Gowan, Rachel Gleeson, Clare Jarmy, Martin Lee, Sophie Hussey, Charlotte Orrock and John Finney.

On behalf of the team, thank you to the schools and teachers who participated in the conference. Your openness and enthusiasm paved the way for this Toolkit to emerge.

Given that expanding religious diversity presents great challenges throughout the world (and certainly in the UK and US), I hope that this Toolkit can inspire those who teach and those who learn to bring greater understanding and recognition of and respect for the other to their teaching – and their students' learning.

Laurie Boone Hogen, Project Overseer
February, 2015

Image acknowledgements

All photos on the following pages courtesy of www.shutterstock.com

Pages: front, 25, 26, 41, 47, 48, 65, 71, 80, 87, 111, 112, 115, 121, 127, 131, 138 (no. 2)

Pages: 34 (no.3), 68, 70, 119, 143

Photos courtesy of Mary Earl

Page 20

Photo courtesy of www.treerom.blogspot.co.uk/2010/04/urbi-et-orbi-universum.html

Page 34

Photography supplied courtesy of www.shutterstock.com, www.mymarriagewebsite.com, Mary Earl, www.shutterstock.com

Page 49

Photo courtesy of www.todayifoundout.com

Page 58

Illustration by Shaun Tan from The Red Tree (Lothian Children's Books) reproduced by permission of Hachette Australia. (1) Photo courtesy of Carrie Webb (2)

Page 64

Photos courtesy of www.articlesoffaith.co.uk

Page 71

Photos courtesy of www.shutterstock.com, www.foundtheworld.com

Page 80

Photos courtesy of www.shutterstock.com, www.snipview.com

Page 90

Photo courtesy of www.commonswikimedia.org/wiki/File:William_Holman_Hunt_-_The_Scapegoat.jpg#filelinks

Page 95

Photos courtesy of: www.shutterstock.com, (1,3) <https://en.m.wikipedia.org> (2) www.wikiart.org (3).

Page 109

Photo courtesy of: www.brooklynquarterly.org

Page 115

Photo courtesy of: <https://gb.islamicdesignhouse.com>

Page 117, 120, 135, 139

Photos courtesy of: <https://commons.m.wikimedia.org>

Page 125

Photos courtesy of: www.flickr.com (Creative Commons).

Page 132

Photos courtesy of: www.getlatestwallpapers.com/download, <https://commons.m.wikimedia.org>

Page 134

Photo courtesy of: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Upupa_epops_1873.jpg

Page 139

Photos courtesy of www.wallpapervortex.com (1), <https://en.m.wikipedia.org>, (3, 4,) <https://commons.m.wikimedia.org> (5)

Further copies of this RE-framing
Toolkit can be obtained, on request,
from mme22@cam.ac.uk (UK) or from
lauriehogen@gmail.com (US)