

How can beliefs and values serve as a guide for moral decision making? Part A: Individuals – Year 6

About the unit

This unit suggests activities that can be used in teaching and learning about how beliefs and values can guide individuals in making moral decisions. It can be adapted to local circumstances and for different age groups. It illustrates the provision of the non-statutory national framework for religious education (RE) and can be used or adapted to deliver an agreed syllabus or other guidelines.

This rolling unit is about the impact of beliefs and comprises two parts. This first part – about the impact of beliefs on individuals – is designed to be taught in the last half-term of year 6, and focuses on the way in which having different beliefs affects the lives of individuals (specifically, Christians, Hindus and Muslims). The second part – about the impact of beliefs on communities – is designed to be taught in the first half-term of year 7, and focuses on the way in which beliefs affect communities (specifically, the Christian, Jewish and Sikh communities).

This first part explores beliefs and questions, teachings and authority and symbols and religious expression. Children have the opportunity to discuss religious and philosophical questions, consider a range of human experiences and feelings and reflect on their own and others' insights into life.

This first part can be adapted for other religions and communities.

This first part should take six hours.

Prior learning

It is helpful if children have:

- encountered a range of stories from Christianity, Hinduism and Islam
- learnt about sacred texts in Christianity, Hinduism and Islam and their importance for believers
- encountered and discussed some religious and other statements about values, *eg love your neighbour, forgiveness*
- some experience of applying religious ideas to situations in daily life.

Future learning

Children could go on to:

- consider the impact of beliefs and values on communities
- reflect on tensions between competing values, *eg truth and compassion*.

Where the unit fits in

This unit links with the following key stage 2 guidelines in the non-statutory national framework for RE:

- Learning about religion: 1a, 1b, 1c, 1e, 1f, 1g, 1h
- Learning from religion: 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e
- Religions and beliefs: 3a, 3b
- Themes: 3e, 3f, 3k
- Experiences and opportunities: 3o, 3p, 3q.

This unit could build on what children might have already learnt about the importance of religion and beliefs. It could draw on pupils' knowledge of stories from the lives of Jesus¹, Moses or Muhammad². The ideas explored in this unit form the foundation for Part B, which is designed to be taught in year 7, and for other material about moral decision making in year 8 and beyond.

Attitudes in the unit

This unit helps children develop the following three attitudes outlined in the non-statutory national framework for RE.

Self-awareness

- becoming increasingly sensitive to the impact of their ideas and behaviour on other people, *eg when discussing challenging situations in their own lives*

Respect for all

- developing skills of listening and willingness to learn from others, *eg by listening to the suggestions of others in discussion of moral dilemmas*

Open-mindedness

- being willing to go beyond surface impressions, *eg when responding to stories from religious traditions*.

¹ Christians refer to Jesus as 'Lord', and believe he is the Son of God.

² Muslims refer to Muhammad as 'the Prophet', and use the phrase 'Peace be upon him' after his name.

Differentiated outcomes

During this unit children have opportunities to show their knowledge, understanding and skills.

When working at the differentiated levels, children could give the following evidence.

Children working at level 3 could:

- ask important questions about beliefs, values and commitments
- make links between religious stories and the beliefs they contain
- begin to identify the impact religious beliefs have on believers' lives
- identify what influences them, making links between aspects of their own and others' experiences.

Children working at level 4 could:

- raise and suggest answers to questions about beliefs, values and commitments
- suggest meanings for the stories encountered in this unit
- describe the impact of the stories on the lives of believers
- describe what inspires and influences them and others in moral decision making.

Children working at level 5 could:

- ask and suggest answers to questions about beliefs, values and commitments
- explain how religious stories are used to provide answers to moral questions
- explain the impact of beliefs on individuals
- explain what inspires and influences them, expressing their own and others' views on the challenges of belonging to a religion.

Vocabulary

In this unit children will have an opportunity to use words and phrases related to:

- religion in general, *eg parable*
- Christianity, *eg Bible, Jesus*
- Hinduism, *eg Lakshmi, Divali, Hanuman*
- Islam, *eg Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)*
- religious and human experience, *eg authority, consequences, dilemma, forgiveness, laws, moral intuition, prodigal, rules.*

Resources

Biblos – the guide to the Bible for RE – this website includes four parables.

Love all creatures – published by the Islamic Foundation, this book includes the stories ‘The Little Ants’, ‘A Thirsty Dog’, ‘The Crying Camel’ and ‘A Sparrow and her Young Ones’.

‘Pathways of belief: Islam’ – produced by the BBC, programme one includes the stories ‘The Prophet and the Old Woman’ and ‘The Crying Camel Prophet Muhammad and the Kitten’.

Peterchurch Primary School – this school’s website provides a useful model for the assessment task.

Primary resources – this website includes information on the reciprocal reading technique.

Raising the standard, flying the flag – by J Orchard (2001), this book includes worksheets.

Staffordshire learning net – the RE storyboard pages includes many stories that can be used in this unit.

Teacher’s notes – by M Cooling (1997) these notes provide background information and teaching ideas for all the stories in ‘Testament: Animated Bible stories from the Old Testament’.

‘Testament: animated Bible stories from the Old Testament’ – by S Humble-Jackson (2000), this series of story books include the stories of the creation and the flood, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David and Saul, Jonah, Ruth, Elijah and Daniel.

‘Testament: the Bible in animation – Creation and the Flood’ – this series of videos use a variety of animation techniques to retell Jewish Bible stories.

That’s not fair!: a resource for exploring moral issues in primary and middle school – by Barry and Trish Miller (1995), this spiral bound edition includes stories.

Winscombe Woodborough Primary School – this school’s website provides a useful model for the assessment task.

Complete website addresses are available from the RE pages on the QCA website (www.qca.org.uk/re/). QCA monitors and updates these website addresses, but accepts no responsibility for their content.

Syllabus writers and teachers have responsibility for checking the relevance, accessibility and suitability of any web-based material that they or their pupils access.

Teaching and learning activities

| 1. Who or what helps us in challenging situations or in making difficult decisions? | | | |
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| Learning objectives | Teaching and learning | Learning outcomes | Points to note |
| <p>Children should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> know that there are different responses to moral questions understand that responses to moral questions might be shaped by different sources of authority including religious sources of authority reflect on any sources of authority that influence them their own lives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read a fictional story or an excerpt, pausing at the point when a character has to make a moral decision. Ask the children to say what they think is the right thing to do and why. Ask them to predict which decision the character will make and what the consequences will be. Finish reading the story or excerpt and discuss the outcome with the class. Ask the children to consider if they have changed their mind about what was the right thing to do and why. Ask the children to brainstorm challenging situations and difficult decisions they have encountered or expect to encounter, eg telling a lie, telling on a friend, choosing to ignore a bully, stealing. More able children might consider controversial moral decisions in society that have recently been in the news, eg choosing between spending public funds on keeping alive premature babies and improving treatment for cancer patients. Ask the children to select two or three examples of the above for small-group and then whole-class discussion. They should identify at least two different responses to each situation/decision and identify what or who influences these alternative responses, eg a friend, parent or relative, or the law, their conscience, moral intuition, religious belief, religious or community leader. Ask the children to role-play their scenario, either as themselves or as an involved party, eg a doctor, mother or politician, identifying the response made and the | <p>Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe a range of responses to a challenging situation make links between sources of authority, and moral decision making describe what sources of authority inspire and influence them in moral decision making. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are various stories that can be used in this activity (see ‘Resources’). Consider explaining ‘moral intuition’ in terms of how you sometimes just ‘know’ or ‘feel’ something is right or wrong without being able to explain why. |

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| | <p>reason for the chosen response.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask the children to compare and classify the sources of authority, including religious beliefs, identified in discussions and role plays.• Together with the children, record the challenging situations, decisions and classifications on an interactive whiteboard or chart, to be used in lesson 6. | | |
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| 2. How can religious stories help us to consider moral questions? | | | |
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| Learning objectives | Teaching and learning | Learning outcomes | Points to note |
| <p>Children should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> know that religious stories address moral questions understand that people choose how to respond to moral questions reflect on the importance of taking responsibility for their own actions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask the children to read or watch a video/DVD about the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, as told in the book of Genesis in the Christian Bible. Discuss the following questions as a class. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>What promises do God and Adam make to each other?</i> <i>What rules did Adam and Eve break?</i> <i>Why do you think God gave Adam and Eve the free will to keep or break the rules?</i> <i>What were the consequences of breaking the rules?</i> <i>Do you think Adam and Eve realised the consequences of breaking the rules?</i> <i>How did the ‘rule maker’ react?</i> <i>How did the relationship between God and Adam and Eve change after they broke the rules?</i> <i>Do you think that the ‘rule breakers’ were treated unfairly?</i> Explain to the children that the story of Adam and Eve is often called ‘The Fall’. Ask if they can guess why Christians believe that, by disobeying God, Adam brought sin into the perfect world that God had created. Organise the class into groups and ask each group to complete a chart showing who they think should be blamed for what Adam did. <i>What arguments might be offered in support of the view that the blame rested with: Adam, Eve, God, the snake or someone else? Did anyone take responsibility for their actions in the story? If so, how? If not, why not?</i> For homework, ask the children to write a story, real or | <p>Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe and show understanding of the moral issues in the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden describe the impact of free will on moral decision making raise questions and suggest answers to questions about the application of these ideas to their own lives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are various videos and other resources that can be used in this activity (see ‘Resources’). Note that although stories of Adam and Eve can be found in several religious traditions, eg Islam and Judaism, there are significant differences between them. The interpretation that is the focus of this lesson is specifically Christian. Other stories can also help to consider moral questions, eg Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:3-13) raises issues on envy and truth telling. In using Biblical stories, be aware that for some Christians |

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| | imagined, in which they took responsibility for their actions. | | the stories are literal historical truth, while for other they are myths with moral meaning. Encourage children to read the stories in more than one way. |
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| 3. How can religious stories be a guide to Christians? | | | |
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| Learning objectives | Teaching and learning | Learning outcomes | Points to note |
| <p>Children should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> know that Christians use the Christian Bible and biblical stories as a source of guidance and as a source of authority understand that the guidance found in biblical stories might provide challenges for Christians when applied to their daily lives reflect on the possible meanings of the stories to Christians and consider whether the stories might have any application in their own lives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise the children into groups of four. Using a version of the Christian Bible, eg a children’s Christian Bible, or a book that retells the biblical story, give each small group one of the following stories with a brief explanation of its background: The Widow’s Offering (Mark 12:41-44); The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37); The Lost Son (Luke 15:11-32). Explain to the children that these stories are parables. The word ‘parable’ comes from a Greek word that means ‘to place side by side’ and a parable uses events from everyday life to explain difficult religious or moral ideas. Jesus told parables to help people understand his teaching. Discuss why Jesus might have chosen to use parables in this way. In small groups or as a class, ask the children to use the ‘reciprocal reading’ approach to analyse the stories, raise questions and suggest answers. The children should record their answers to the following questions. <i>What might be the message/teaching in the story, eg helping others, forgiveness, giving what you have to offer? Would you find this message/teaching easy/difficult to put into practice? Why? Why would these stories be important for Christians, eg told by Jesus / recorded in the Christian Bible? How could/do Christians put this message/teaching into practice in their daily lives?</i> Consider inviting a Christian visitor to work with each group and answer questions about the impact these | <p>Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe how biblical stories might have an impact on the lives of Christians express their own and others’ views on the challenges of belonging to a religion raise questions and suggest answers to questions about the application of these ideas to their own lives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If time allows, one or more Christian stories could be used for this activity. ‘Reciprocal reading’ is a technique that invites the children to take on different roles when reading a text together, ie the roles of summariser, clarifier, questioner and predictor (see ‘Resources’). |

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| | <p>stories have on his or her life, and in what sense they might be a source of authority for him or her.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask the children to devise short role plays illustrating how these teachings could be put into practice in daily life.• For homework, ask the children to make a caption for a sticker, which a Christian group might use to display/advertise the teachings above to others. | | |
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| 4. How can religious stories be a guide for Hindus? | | | |
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| Learning objectives | Teaching and learning | Learning outcomes | Points to note |
| <p>Children should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> know that Hindus use stories from sacred texts as a source of guidance and as a source of authority understand that the guidance found in stories from the Hindu traditions might provide challenges for Hindus when applied to their daily lives reflect on the possible meanings of the stories to Hindus and whether they might apply to their own lives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise the children into pairs or groups of four. Using a book or audiotape retelling, give each pair or small group, class one of the following stories: Rama and Sita – a version with a focus on the courage and faithfulness of Hanuman and if possible, Jatayu; The Poor Washerwoman and the Pearl Necklace – the honest washerwoman returns the pearl necklace to the Queen and in return, Lakshmi visits her home at Divali; Krishna and Sudhama – Sudhama shows devotion towards Krishna, and Krishna shows love and responsibility towards Sudhama, and both show friendship towards each other. Ask the children to represent one of the stories, expressing its meaning(s) in cartoon form, through puppet plays or through ‘hot seating’ one or more of the characters. Having read or listened to the stories, in small groups, ask the children to record their answers to the following questions. <i>What might be the message/teaching in the story?</i> <i>Would you find this message/teaching easy/difficult to put into practice? Why?</i> <i>Why would these stories be important for Hindus?</i> <i>How could/do Hindus put this message/teaching into practice in their daily lives?</i> Consider inviting a Hindu visitor to work with each group and to answer questions about the impact these stories have on his or her life, and in what sense they might be a | <p>Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe how stories from the Hindu tradition might have an impact on the lives of Hindus express their own and others’ views on the challenges of belonging to a religion raise questions and suggest answers to questions about the application of these ideas to their own lives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If time allows, one or more Hindu stories could be used for this activity. |

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| | <p>source of authority for him or her.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask the children to design a symbol to represent the teachings or values identified in the story/stories, eg friendship/faithfulness could be represented by clasped hands.• For homework, ask the children to make a poster that a Hindu group might use to display/advertise the teachings or values above to others. | | |
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| 5. How can religious stories be a guide to Muslims? | | | |
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| Learning objectives | Teaching and learning | Learning outcomes | Points to note |
| <p>Children should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> know that Muslims use stories told about Prophet Muhammad’s (peace be upon him) life and actions as a source of guidance and as a source of authority understand that the guidance found in stories from the Muslim traditions might provide challenges for Muslims when applied to their daily lives reflect on the possible meanings of the stories to Muslims and consider whether they might have any application in their own lives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise the children into pairs or groups of four. Give each pair or small group one of the following stories with a brief explanation of its background, as a sequencing activity: Prophet Muhammad and the Old Woman – a story about Muhammad (peace be upon him) caring for a woman who has thrown rubbish over him each day as he walked to the mosque; Prophet Muhammad and the Crying Camel – a story about Muhammad (peace be upon him) teaching the camel drivers to care for their animals, Allah’s creation, before their own needs; Prophet Muhammad: Friend of Animals – a story demonstrating his care for animals by cutting part of his cloak on which the kitten is sleeping. Give the children a brief explanation about the background for each story so that they have enough information to help them to appreciate each story, eg the value of a cloak in a poor society, the tension between getting your camel to work harder and being kind to it. Explain to the children that these stories help Muslims to follow the example of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The stories are part of the Sunnah, which is a source of authority for Muslims. Discuss this idea. Having sequenced the story, in small groups, ask the children to record their answers to the following questions. <i>What might be the message or teaching in the story? Would you find this message/teaching easy/difficult to put into practice? Why?</i> | <p>Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe how stories from the Islamic tradition might have an impact on the lives of Muslims express their own and others’ views on the challenges of belonging to a religion raise questions and suggest answers to questions about the application of these ideas to their own lives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If time allows, one or more Muslim stories could be used for this activity. There are various videos and resource packs that can be used in this activity (see ‘Resources’). ‘Sunnah’ means model practices, customs and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Be aware that Muslims consider it unacceptable to portray the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), or other prophets. Some Muslims believe that any artistic attempt to create a likeness of a person or a living creature is unacceptable. |

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| | <p><i>Why would these stories be important for Muslims, eg part of the Sunnah, recorded in the hadith? How could/do Muslims put this message/teaching into practice in their daily lives?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider inviting a Muslim visitor to work with each group and to answer questions about the impact these stories have on his or her life, and in what sense they might be a source of authority for him or her. • Ask the children to work individually or in pairs to write their own mini drama in the style of Islamic stories above, illustrating how people might care for others and for the natural world in daily life. • For homework, ask the children to make a banner that a Muslim group might use to display/advertise the teaching above to others. | | |
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Assessment activity

| 6. How can beliefs and values serve as a guide for moral decision making? | | | |
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| <p>There are opportunities for assessment for learning throughout this unit. However, in this activity, there are particular opportunities to collect evidence of what children know, understand and can do, using the learning objectives and outcomes and relating them to the level descriptions as appropriate.</p> | | | |
| Learning objectives | Teaching and learning | Learning outcomes | Points to note |
| <p>Children should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> know that there are different responses to moral questions and values understand that responses to moral questions might be shaped by different factors including sources of authority, including religious sources authority reflect on any sources of authority in their own and others' lives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask the children to create a 'charter', poem, song or 'rap', about how beliefs and values influence individuals in difficult situations and in decision making. The children should draw upon religious and non-religious teachings/values encountered and their personal reflections in the unit, eg on helping others, forgiveness, caring for living things, courage, faithfulness, friendship. Ask the children to share their work in class or with the school or during a Leavers' Assembly. Transfer the charters, poems, songs and 'raps' to the children's secondary schools as evidence of their achievement. Begin with a recap of the religious stories, teachings and values covered in this part of the transition unit, eg generosity, forgiveness, compassion, courage, faithfulness, friendship, ask the children to work in small groups or as a whole class to create a 'mind map' of the difficult situations and decisions encountered in the religious stories covered. | <p>Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> suggest a range of responses to moral questions and values describe the impact of sources of authority, including religious sources of authority on making moral decision describe and show understanding of things that guide them and others when making difficult decisions say how easy/difficult it is to | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the children to compare the situations and values/decisions from religious stories with their personal responses from Lesson 1, recorded on the whiteboard or chart. • Recall and review the teachings/values recorded on captions/banners/stickers. • Ask the children to reflect on ways in which these teachings and values could be expressed in a relevant way and used as a guide in the future. Possible forms of expression could include a charter, a poem, a song or a rap. Kipling's poem, 'If' and similar poems, songs and raps could provide models for children's work. | <p>put values into practice.</p> | |
| <p>Differentiated outcomes</p> | | | |
| <p>Note that the following level descriptions relate to this assessment activity only. For level descriptions relating to the unit as a whole, see 'Differentiated outcomes'.</p> <p>Children working at level 3 can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make links between religious stories and the beliefs they contain • identify what influences them, making links between aspects of their own and others' experiences. <p>Children working at level 4 can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe and show understanding of religious stories and the beliefs they contain • describe what inspires and influences themselves and others in making moral decisions. | | | |

Children working at level 5 can:

- explain how religious stories are used to provide answers to moral questions
- explain what inspires and influences themselves and others in making moral decisions
- express their own views on the challenges of following a set of values.