



# RE Newsletter

Spring Term 2021

# HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Welcome to 2021. I hope you have managed a break over the Christmas period and feel ready to face whatever this new year may bring. We had hoped to be able to get out into schools during the course of this coming term, but with the latest lockdown this seems even less likely. The team will keep you informed of developments so do keep an eye on emails and on the Board of Education pages of the diocesan [website](#). Please note that Church House Oxford, Kidlington, will be closed for a refit during the whole of the spring term, so our major training programmes will continue to be offered online only.

In this edition of RE news, you will find links to the training courses on offer across the diocese and some national initiatives. There are also links to new resources, a review of the autumn term's RE Network meetings and a conversation starter on RE and the climate emergency.

We do hope that you will stay safe during this challenging time. Please be assured of our regular prayers for all who work in our schools.

To comment on anything in this publication, to submit an article for next term or to request support from the diocesan RE adviser please contact:

Anne Andrews: [anne.andrews@oxford.anglican.org](mailto:anne.andrews@oxford.anglican.org) or 07884 655097



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# SPRING 2021 CPD OPPORTUNITIES



## RE Central Spring Conference *Online*

Wednesday 10 March 2021 1.30 – 6 pm

Topic: Developing a Coherent, Balanced RE Curriculum.

Curriculum development has become a much more important issue in recent years. With Local RE syllabuses giving less detail, and schools creating curricula in other subjects to meet their curriculum intent, each school needs to make more choices about how they will deliver RE. This year's speakers are experts on curriculum design and among the leading thinkers about coherence, intent, and balance. Each speaker will give a keynote address, facilitate a workshop session and lead a plenary. The conference will end with a question and answer session involving both speakers.

### Speakers:

**Gillian Georgiou** works as a Diocesan RE adviser alongside RE subject leaders and teachers across greater Lincolnshire. She has previously worked as a secondary teacher of Religious Studies and Philosophy, and she sits on the RE working group at the Church of England Education Office, the Education Committee of the Faith and Belief Forum, and the RE Council of England and Wales. She has contributed to various publications, including *Reforming Religious Education* (2020), *We Need to Talk about RE* (2018) and *Impact*, the journal of the Chartered College of Teaching. She has also written a Grove Booklet on Religious Literacy and Schools (eD40).

Gillian's session will explore recent conversations in the educational world about religion and worldviews, with a particular focus on the disciplinary nature of RE. She will consider how a disciplinary approach might help frame learning in RE and support children and young people to handle the knowledge they encounter through the RE curriculum.

**Dr Kate Christopher** is a part-time secondary RE teacher in East London and also works as an independent RE adviser. She recently earned her PhD in Philosophy of Education. Kate's interest is in curriculum design and CPD for teachers. As well as developing the curriculum for her own students, she works with teachers, exploring what a Religion and Worldviews curriculum could look like in practical terms. Kate directs Teach: RE for the Culham St Gabriel's Trust and in this role supports teachers in all stages of their careers.

Kate's session will focus on how curriculum design can reflect the thinking about disciplinarity and what Religion and Worldviews thinking could mean in practice. This second session will explore where worldviews thinking fits into wider conversations about curriculum design and the new Ofsted framework. It will consider progression in the curriculum and look at practical examples for teaching.

*ODBE is very grateful for the contribution to this conference provided by Bayne Benefaction*

Cost: £55 per school in the S4S agreement; Non-S4S: £75 per school

Book here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/odbe-re-conference-tickets-126405565449>

## DIOCESAN RE NETWORK MEETINGS - ONLINE

**Spring 1:** Subject knowledge building session on Hinduism

Tuesday 26 January 4.15 – 5.30

Book here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/odbe-online-re-networks-tickets-126404833259>



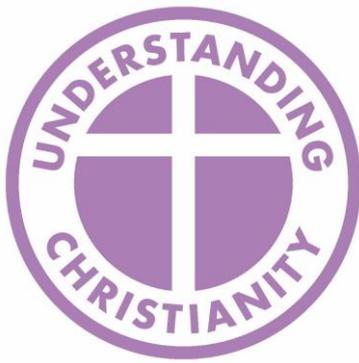
**Spring 2:** Workshop on teaching Hinduism, sharing, and creating resources

Tuesday 2 March 4.15 – 5.30

Book here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/odbe-online-re-networks-tickets-126405067961>

Please book all events through Eventbrite, even when there is no cost. The Zoom link is only sent to those who have booked.

## UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIANITY – NEW COURSE – ONLINE



Now in its fifth year, this accredited training course provides schools with access to the essential **Understanding Christianity** resource alongside opportunity to explore effective RE teaching. Using the “Text, Impact, Connections” approach, **Understanding Christianity** offers teachers a way to explore Christianity as a living faith focusing on eight core theological concepts. There are units from F2 to Year 9 with lesson ideas and resources. The cost includes the resource pack which will be sent to your school prior to the course start date and access to the resources on the **Understanding Christianity** website.

The course is taught over several sessions and it is important that the same member of staff attends every session as there are gap tasks to complete, that will help to embed the training. All sessions will be held through Zoom and delegates will need access to their own laptop or PC.

Dates: 11 February and 18 March 1.30 - 4.45pm and 6 one-hour twilight sessions: 22 April, 29 April, 13 May, 27 May, 10 June, and 24 June 4.15-5.15pm.

Cost: £395 for all sessions & resources for schools signed up to S4S  
£460 for all sessions & resources for schools not in S4S

Book here:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/odbe-understanding-christianity-day-1-tickets-121339982153>

**Please book by 27 January if you want to receive the resource pack before the course start date. Late bookings will receive the pack in time for the second session.**

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## EXTERNALLY PROVIDED TRAINING

### Strictly RE @Home 2021

NATRE will be hosting its national annual conference online to keep you safe, whilst still giving you all the things you love about Strictly RE without having to leave the comfort of your home.

With 24 seminars, 4 Keynotes, networking and discussion opportunities, Saturday night entertainment, we have something for everyone. There is a lot to choose from, and you can pick and mix from across the month and weekend to create a programme that works for you. You do not have to attend a seminar at every time slot.



NATRE will be running twilight sessions throughout January, culminating in a weekend of keynotes, seminars, and networking. These will be announced soon.

**Date:** 30 & 31 January 2021 (PLUS additional seminars leading up to Strictly)

**Location:** Online **Full price:** £100\* (includes downloadable handouts and all presentations)

Book your place here: [www.natre.org.uk/strictlyRE-2021](http://www.natre.org.uk/strictlyRE-2021)

### Leadership Programme

The new Culham St Gabriel's Leadership Programme, **Finding Your Voice as a Leader of Religion and Worldviews**, is inviting applicants to be part of Leaders for Change Programme. This is a funded programme and further details can be found here: <https://www.reonline.org.uk/leading-re/leadership/leadership-programme/>

## SUMMER TERM CPD

**RE Network meetings:** The topic for these meetings is yet to be decided. It may be possible to invite members of a Mosque and a Mandir to talk about their beliefs and give us a virtual tour of their building. Other suggestions are welcome.

### Summer 1:

18 May 4.15 – 5.30pm

Book here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/odbe-online-re-networks-tickets-126533592381>

### Summer 2:

1 July 4.15 – 5.30pm

Book here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/odbe-online-re-networks-tickets-126533831095>

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**NATRE Inspiring RE conference, postponed from March 2020**



# INSPIRING RE Conference

**£60 per person, including lunch and refreshments**

with guest speakers including **RE Today's Angela Hill**

Join teachers across the South Central region as we explore RE curriculum conversations. Gain practical ideas on how to ensure your RE curriculum is coherent and creative (and Ofsted ready!)

**WEDNESDAY 21ST APRIL 2021**  
**9.30AM-3.15PM**

**Milton Keynes Christian Centre,  
Strudwick Drive, Oldbrook, Milton Keynes MK6 2TG**

Further details at [www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/inspiring-re-conference-tickets-82946508239](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/inspiring-re-conference-tickets-82946508239)

**Date change**

Email [finance@woodlandacademy.co.uk](mailto:finance@woodlandacademy.co.uk) to be invoiced for a place

Contact Sarah Payne for more details [sarah@natre.org.uk](mailto:sarah@natre.org.uk)

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# INSPIRING RE Conference

Wednesday 21st April 2021



## Speakers



### NAOMI ANSTICE

National RE ambassador  
Hear Naomi share her heart for connecting teachers.



### ANGELA HILL

RE Today National Adviser  
Key note speaker- Inspiring your Curriculum. Angela will also lead a secondary workshop on breathing life into RE.



### RYAN PARKER

Diocesan RE Adviser.  
Ryan shares about Curriculum design for primary and middle school teachers



### BILL MOORE

RE Adviser for Bucks and Oxford  
Secondary workshop on creativity and inspiration for your curriculum



### ANNE ANDREWS

RE adviser for Oxford  
Her primary workshop will be about powerful knowledge organisers



### SUZANNE NEWCOMBE AND PAUL TREMLETT

Senior lecturers at the Open University share about Perspectives on Religious Studies



### JULIET LYAL

Our NATRE local groups officer will talk about the power of local groups

## Timings

- 9.-9.30am Registration
- 9.40-10.40am Key note speech- Angela Hill, RE Today
- 10.40-11am Break
- 11am-12.30pm Sessions 1 and 2 (2 x 45 min workshops)
- 12.30-1.30pm Lunch and browsing materials
- 1.30-2.15pm Session 3
- 2.15-2.45pm Session with Naomi Anstice: Connections
- 2.45-3.15pm Small group leaders encouragement with Juliet

## To book

Email [finance@woodlandacademy.co.uk](mailto:finance@woodlandacademy.co.uk) to be invoiced for a place

Contact Sarah Payne for more details [sarah@natre.org.uk](mailto:sarah@natre.org.uk)

Further details at [www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/inspiring-re-conference-tickets-52946508239](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/inspiring-re-conference-tickets-52946508239)

## TEACHING ISLAM: THE RE NETWORK MEETINGS



In last term's RE network meetings delegates had the opportunity to explore three key concepts in Islam: Tawhid, Prophethood and Judgement Day. Verses from the Qur'an allowed an insight into Muslim majority beliefs. The concept of Tawhid, the oneness of God, is fundamental to Islam. This belief is stated in the Shahadah, the prayer of commitment a person needs to make when becoming a Muslim and recited during the five daily prayers.

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The Shahadah also mentions the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and therefore links to the second core concept – that of Muhammad as the final prophet of Allah, otherwise known as the Seal of the Prophets. This is one of the key reasons that the Ahmadiyya community is not accepted by all Muslims, as they believe that a further Prophet, Ahmad should also be revered.

The concept of Judgement Day has some similarities with the Christian view of judgement at the end of time. The Qur'an teaches that both the good and bad deeds committed during a person's life, will be weighed and paradise awaits those whose good deeds outweigh the bad. However, Allah has the final word as He may choose to show mercy.

In the second session, delegates were able to view some of the new films in the Real People, Real Faith series (see RE News Autumn 2020) and worked in breakout rooms to discuss knowledge organisers, concept maps, think about planning a unit and designing an assessment task. The films gave people the chance to see and hear from some Shia Muslims, and they valued the way that they spoke about what was important to them.

Listed below are some of the core concepts that could be covered in teaching Islam:

- Allah is the one and only God
- Allah is not the name of God, but the Arabic word for God
- Allah created and rules everything
- Allah has no children, partner or equal (Tawheed/Tawhid)
- Muhammad (pbuh) is the final prophet (Seal of the Prophets)
- The Holy Qur'an is the final revelation from Allah given by the Angel Jibril (Gabriel) through Muhammad (pbuh)
- The Qur'an refers to many of the stories and characters from the Old Testament
- Jesus and his mother Mary have many verses in the Qur'an dedicated to them. Jesus is viewed as a prophet not as the son of God
- Shariah is the straight path that Muslims should follow and is established by the Qur'an and the example and teaching of the prophets
- There are two ways to follow Shariah – right belief (the six pillars) and right living (the five pillars)
- The Six pillars of Iman are to believe in the oneness of God, angels, the holy books, the messengers of God and Muhammad as the last prophet, the day of judgement and predestination (Qadhaa' & Qadr)
- The five active pillars are the declaration (Shahadah), five daily prayers (Salat), charity (Zakat), fasting in Ramadan (Sawm), and pilgrimage to Makkah (Hajj)
- Muslims believe in submission to the will of Allah and in peace
- Jihad means to struggle or strive. There are two types of Jihad – the lesser and the greater. The greater Jihad is about defeating the evil desires within themselves, striving to learn and act according to teachings. The lesser Jihad is to be fought only in self-defence not as a means of conversion
- Muslims believe that after death comes judgment – heaven or hell. Judgment is dependent on a person's deeds, whether good or bad, but may be subject to God's mercy
- While the crescent moon is seen on many Islamic items, it is not really a symbol of the faith, and for many Muslims no symbols are needed

Have a think about which ones are more appropriate at which key stages. Look at the outcomes or age-related expectations in your locally agreed syllabus. Which of these concepts will help to meet those outcomes?

If you want to find out more about Islam, RE Online has an excellent essay covering a lot of information, as well as some resources that can be used in the classroom.

## RE AND THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Mainstream teaching across many of the world's largest religious groups includes the idea of God as the creative force behind the universe.

For many Hindus and Sikhs, the belief is that there have been many creations, and that there will be more, but in the meantime the power of the Creator God resides in all of the created world, including humans. Hence the usual greeting "Namaste" recognises the presence of God (Brahman) in each individual. This, alongside the belief in reincarnation, is a reason why many Hindus and Sikhs choose to be vegetarian. Guru Nanak told his followers that the Earth is the Great Mother and so should be treated with respect.



The three Abrahamic faiths share the same creation story, in its basic outline. In the Qur'an, the creation is referenced many times, rather than told as a narrative (7:54; 38:71-72). As the Qur'an was addressed largely to the "people of the book" (Jews and Christians), knowledge of the Biblical creation story is assumed.

In Islam nature is seen as a sign of God's power, and a gift to mankind for which humans should be grateful. People have been appointed by God as Khalifah (vice-regents or representatives) over the Earth, to care for it and not abuse it (Qur'an 2:30). Everything belongs to God, so humans do not have the right to damage or abuse the earth. Muhammad is reported to have eaten very little, and in the Hadith are stories of him caring for animals and the environment, encouraging his followers to use water sparingly even when they were able to wash by a river.

Within Jewish tradition, there is a phrase "Tikkun Olam", part of a prayer from the Mishnah, which is a prayer for the repair of the world. There is a festival, Tu B'Shvat, for tree planting and injunctions against uprooting fruit trees, even in a time of war. The instruction in Deuteronomy 20: 19 – 20 not to cut down fruit trees in a time of war, is often extended to the removal of fruit trees when moving into a new home. Mitzvah day is often dedicated to doing good deeds for the environment, as well as for people. The festivals of Sukkot and Passover (Pesach) are also about issues of justice and fairness, often linked to the environment, and thankfulness for God's provision should be a characteristic of both festivals.



In the same way, the tradition of thankfulness is present in the celebration of harvest in many churches. Although not a longstanding Christian festival, it harnesses care for creation and for those less fortunate and centres it in a Biblical view of creation. The church has declared a Climate Emergency, and there are several Christian based environmental action groups such as Christian Climate Action ([www.christianclimateaction.org](http://www.christianclimateaction.org)) that are involved

in direct action to save the climate and promote sustainable living. The diocese of Oxford has declared a climate emergency, and the Bishop of Reading has created four short films on Care for Creation and they are available to watch here: <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/mission-ministry/making-a-difference/environment/theology-and-liturgical-resources/>

There are many other resources that you can refer to for help with teaching climate and environmental issues in RE. Ruth Valerio is a Christian writer on the environment and there is an Eco Church project, overseen by A Rocha UK (<https://arocha.org.uk/>). Many of the big Christian charities, such as Tearfund and Oxfam, are also campaigners for the environment. There is also an Eco Synagogue (<https://ecosynagogue.org/>) movement and the first Eco Mosque opened in Cambridge in 2019.

This topic will feature in future editions; please send in examples of any RE work that engages with environmental issues, or other resource suggestions that you find helpful.

## RESOURCES FOR RE

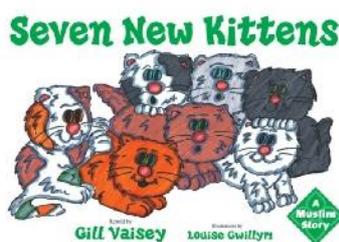
### EYFS

Books at Press specialises in resources for the Early Years. Many of you teaching this age group will be familiar with Puddles the Cat series of books, featuring Freddie the vicar too.

There are many other resources that you may find helpful this spring. If you are looking for a way to link RE to the annual RSPB's Big Schools' Bird Watch in January and is taking place between 29th - 31st in 2021, then have a look at the work of Pembroke Nursery School [here](#), as they use [The Baby Birds book, CD and delightful Puppet Set](#) to appropriately and meaningfully add RE/People and Communities to this lovely cross-curricular topic. There are also free downloadable resources for [Early Years](#) and Primary on the RSPB website, so do take advantage of these.

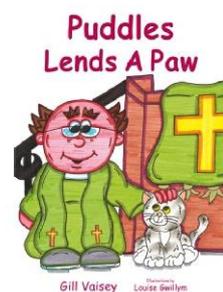
If you are looking for a free copy of the cross-curricular planning which gives great ideas for RE alongside all the other areas of learning email [gill@booksatpress.co.uk](mailto:gill@booksatpress.co.uk) to request a copy for either the existing 2017 EYFS Framework or the new 2020/21 Early Adopter Schools' Framework.

You may also be thinking ahead to February and Valentine's Day on Sunday 14th February. [A Wedding Day Wish for Puddles](#) is a perfect big book to help explore the topic of celebration, family, friendship and weddings. Longtown Primary School had a wonderful wedding role play day, [captured here and available as a resource to share with your children.](#)



As March approaches, Spring brings new life and new beginnings – a wonderful topic for Early Years children. The [Seven New Kittens](#) story book and cross curricular resource pack encourages children to reflect on the beauty and the wonder of new life. Children delight in counting the arrival of the seven different coloured kittens. 'What will the Prophet Muhammad do when they all snuggle down on his soft and cosy red cloak?!

As well as offering planning, books, soft toys, and activities to purchase, the website also has a variety of free teachers' resources to help with planning and teaching.



## Primary

### [A Story of Compassion - Bandi Chhor - Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji](#)

The sixth guru of the Sikhs, Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji, stood up, spoke out, and acted with compassion for the human rights of the unjust imprisonment of 52 Indian Princes. Learn why Guru Ji acted with such love and kindness and what does this teach us about our minds..

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=34NHT-m1G4Q>

From RE Today:

Big World, Big Ideas is a book for teachers and pupils, allowing opportunities to investigate the links between science and religion. It also picks up on environmental issues, explores the possibilities of miracles and complements the upper KS2 Understanding Christianity Unit about science and Christianity. Available for £25 this can be ordered through the RE Today website ([www.retoday.org.uk](http://www.retoday.org.uk)) where there are also many other resources available to purchase.



## Secondary

From RE Today

### [God and the Big Bang](#)

This curriculum book for ages 11-18 explores current questions at the heart of contemporary science and Christian faith through the work of scientists, philosophers, and thinkers, who are also Christians. Students will consider what is meaningful in both science and Christianity, and what both reveal about the human condition.

The title features five units covering KS3 - KS5:

Unit 1 - Genesis: the beginning

Unit 2 - The Rise of Humanity

Unit 3 - Earthquakes and Evil

Unit 4 - Religion and Science: what are their purposes?

Unit 5 - Religion and Science: a problem of language?

Each of these are supported by nine videos provided on DVD.

Currently the resource is on sale at the reduced price of £16.50

<https://shop.retoday.org.uk/9781910261088>



**Holocaust Memorial Day** – each year the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust provide high quality educational resources to help commemorate historical and modern examples of genocide – the website banner is ‘Learning from genocide – for a better future’. This year’s theme is ‘Be the light in the darkness’.

As the website says ‘Be the light in the darkness is an affirmation and a call to action for everyone marking HMD. This theme asks us to consider different kinds of ‘darkness’, for example, identity-based persecution, misinformation, denial of justice; and different ways of ‘being the light’, for example, resistance, acts of solidarity, rescue and illuminating mistruths. Please check the website for more details on educational resources and events being planned.’

<https://www.hmd.org.uk/>

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### **General resources and CPD websites**

Ensure that you regularly check out all the usual websites as many of them are being updated at the moment.

Culham St Gabriel's has a new vision and is offering a lot more continuing professional development events (<https://www.cstg.org.uk/activities/events/>)

RE Online (<https://www.reonline.org.uk/>) has launched a new series of blogs, covering a wide range of topics. RE Online are looking for more writers for the website. A new project has been launched to explore and produce knowledge organisers for teachers. The subject knowledge essays, a valuable source of information, are being updated to reflect current thinking in RE

NATRE ([www.natre.org.uk](http://www.natre.org.uk)) continues to update their free teaching resources, and the diocesan website (<https://www.oxford.anglican.org/schools/religious-education/religious-education-resources/>) has links to a further range of resources.

If you find other useful resources that you want to share, do send an email to [anne.andrews@oxford.anglican.org](mailto:anne.andrews@oxford.anglican.org) for inclusion on the website and in the next newsletter.