



RE Newsletter

Summer Term 2023

SUMMER SUN?

Welcome to the final newsletter of the academic year. Although some of the challenges of Covid have lessened, there has been plenty to keep schools busy and staff stretched. That has been true at the adviser level too, so if this newsletter is a little shorter than usual I'm sure you will understand.

Do look at the resources section for a fabulous looking EYFS tool and read the reports on the RE network meetings, especially if you were unable to attend them.

The scheme of work is nearing its public release, but watch out for a separate email with all the details. It will remain freely available to schools in the SLA, but at the moment there are no plans to make it more widely available until it has been tried and tested. The old scheme will remain available to schools in the SLA and those that have already purchased it, but no further sales will be made at the moment.

I have been in a lot of schools this term and seen some great RE teaching. Thank you to those who have welcomed me to your schools. I already know I'm seeing quite a lot of you this coming term, so if you are wanting support and have not yet booked me, don't delay.

I look forward to hearing from you. Have a great term.

Anne Andrews by [email](#) or phone 07884 655097
Diocesan RE Adviser



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TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES THIS TERM

All RE training events and booking links can be found on the new [RE Central Webpage](#) but here is some additional information to help you decide which courses will best meet your needs.

RE NETWORK MEETINGS

[Tuesday 16 May](#) 4.00pm – 5.30pm

Microsoft Teams

Concepts in Judaism: including virtual synagogue and visitors from the Jewish community and the Jewish Museum in London

[Tuesday 4 July](#) 4.00pm – 5.30pm

Microsoft Teams

Sharing Session: Bring electronic or scanned in resources and ideas to share, as well as questions.

It would be good to have some face-to-face meetings as Teach Meet alternatives or additions for those of you who prefer to be in person. If you would be happy to host towards the end of the summer term please let anne.andrews@oxford.anglican.org know as soon as possible.

Booking links are available on the [website](#) along with costs. Details of the sessions for the spring and summer terms are also on the [website](#).

These sessions are free to schools that have signed up to the Service Level Agreement. For other schools there is an annual charge to join the Network.

If you teach in Milton Keynes, Bracknell Forest or Windsor and Maidenhead look out for fliers about the additional SACRE funded networks taking place in those areas.

REPORTS FROM SPRING TERM RE NETWORKS

ASSESSING THROUGH A CONCEPT: EASTER AND SALVATION

How would you define the concept of Salvation for the year group you teach?

Can you only teach Salvation through the Easter story?

These were some of the questions that the first RE network of 2023 tried to tackle, thinking about the texts and enquiry questions that might be explored. This included a sneak preview of some of the big questions on Salvation from the new Scheme of Work.

We also looked at the other concepts that pupils need to encounter in a study of Salvation. Sin, law, grace and spirit are the key allied ideas. If Salvation means rescue, what do people need rescuing from? It's very important when teaching these ideas not to stray into proselytising. It is essential that teaching about ideas such as Salvation, sin and grace is

clearly presented as ‘most Christians believe...’ Forgiveness and repentance are similarly ideas that need to be handled carefully.

This is a concept that needs to be built up over time, and it is often through the Easter narrative that these ideas are best presented, as it can be easier to see a progression in content as well as depth. With young children, limit the number of Holy Week events you want them to know, but remember that Easter Sunday makes no sense without knowing that Jesus died on the cross on Good Friday. Don’t try to avoid the subject but always ensure that pupils know that for Christians the story doesn’t end there.

There are many texts that you can use to explore these ideas:

Salvation texts

- **John 3:16**
- **Luke 1:69, 77, 2:30, 3:6**
- **Romans 1:16**
- **Ephesians 1:13**
- **Titus 2:11**
- **Hebrews 5:9**
- **Isaiah 53**

Easter texts

- **John: 12:12-15, 13: 4-7; 20:11-23**
- **Matthew 21:7-11, 26: 17-75**
- **Mark 11**
- **Luke 22: 47-53; 23:13-56, 24:1-12**

Which of these are suitable for the classes that you teach?

Understanding Christianity gave us a framework for the knowledge progression and here are the big questions from the new scheme of work that provide a context to explore this topic:

What do most Christians celebrate?

Why do many Christians gather regularly and what do they do?

Who do different Christians believe God is?

Who do Christians believe Jesus is?

What do Christians believe about the death of Jesus?

How far is the resurrection important to Christians today?

The knowledge building blocks in this new scheme of work move pupils from knowing that: ‘God came to earth as Jesus and that most Christians believe that God loves people and cares for them’ (reception) ‘Christians believe that they can be forgiven for bad thoughts

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and actions' (year 3) 'Christians believe that the Bible points to the need for humans to be saved from sin and restored to a good relationship with God' (year 5) and 'This belief gives Christians hope for the future but also makes some prepared to die for their beliefs' (year 6).

If you want to improve your subject knowledge on a Christian understanding of Jesus as the Messiah, this 5-minute film may help you.

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/messiah/>

Please note, that this film is not suitable for using in class as it is produced from a faith perspective and aimed at adults. It is deeply theological though, as are all the films on the site and you may find their resources helpful in understanding some of the core concepts of Christianity.

It would be good to have examples of the ways in which you have successfully taught Salvation, either through Easter or another focus so that we can share what works well.

INTRODUCTION TO CONCEPTS IN SIKHI

Five members of the Sikh community across the Diocese joined us online for the second session of the term. A virtual tour of a Gurdwara as well as an opportunity to ask questions of these knowledgeable Sikhs gave delegates an insight into the lived and diverse reality of Sikhi.

The core concept in Sikhi is best represented by the opening prayer from the sacred scriptures, the Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Called the Mool Manter (alternative spellings exist!) it begins not with a word, but with the Punjabi number one:

There is one God

Ik Onkar

Whose name is truth

Sat Nam

Creator of all things

Karta Purkh

Without fear, without hatred

Nir Bhau, Nir Vair

Timeless and formless,

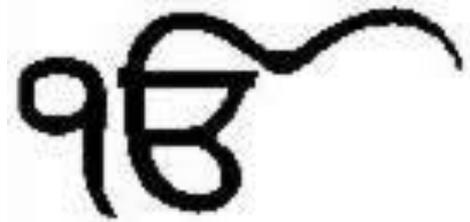
Arkaal Moorat

Beyond birth and beyond death

Ajoooni Sahang

Understood through God's grace

Gur Parshad



This prayer establishes the core unity of Sikhi, which is expressed in so much Sikh practice. The equality of men and women, rich and poor, people of all beliefs and none runs through the faith. This is clearly seen in the design of purpose built Gurdwaras, where there are many doors facing in all directions and the near continuous provision of free food for all who visit. The Langar, as it is called, is provided out of the donations of the community, who also serve as volunteers to cook, serve and wash up.

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Sikh meditation on the name and character of God (Waheguru), a practice called Simran (remembering), or Nam Japna (meditation) aims to draw participants into unity with God. In common with other Dharmic traditions, Sikhi believes that the goal of life is reunification with God and that reincarnation is how believers are refined and prepared for this.

There are some things to note for teachers when teaching about Sikhi. Although there is often a focus on Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhi; the fifth Guru, Arjan who compiled the scriptures and the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh who formed the Khalsa all ten Gurus contributed to the development of Sikhi between 1469 and 1699. The Guru Granth Sahib Ji, the sacred scriptures are the final living Guru and are treated as a human being. Most Sikhs do not have their own copy of the scriptures, but a shortened version called the Adi Granth. The requirement to have a separate room for the Guru Granth Sahib Ji (which should not be referred to as a book – use text or scripture instead), as well as needing to follow the prescribed morning and evening routines, makes it difficult to keep in a home. In the Gurdwara the text is kept covered on a raised platform during the day and returned to a bedroom each evening.

As in most religious traditions, different people follow in their own way. There are five daily prayers, but many people will observe three of them. Some people will have artistic representations of the Gurus in their home; others will not. Some will be committed to one Gurdwara in particular, others will visit different ones. Some will wear all five K's (kesh, kara, kangha, Kirpan and ka'achera), others will not. Sikhi is a Punjabi word meaning learner or disciple so for most members of the community the focus is on finding their way to live in unity and harmony with each other and the world.

Across the diocese there are several Gurdwaras that will welcome visits. Among them are those represented at the network meeting:

The Singh Sabha in Slough: [Singh Sabha Slough – Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh](#)

The Guru Maneyo Granth, also in Slough: [GMG Gurdwara – Learn about the purpose of your life at the UK's largest Gurdwara](#)

Ramgarhia Sabha, Kiln Farm, Milton Keynes: [Ramgarhia Sabha Gurudwara - MK \(ramgarhiamk.org.uk\)](#)

Guru Nanak Satsang Sabha. Maidenhead: [Maidenhead Gurdwara - Guru Nanak Satsang Sabha \(maidenhead-gurdwara.org\)](#)

If you have any questions about Sikhi, do get in touch with anne.andrews@oxford.anglican.org, who will pass you details of contacts at these Gurdwaras.

If you take a school visit to any of these venues, please also send a report so that it can be included in the autumn edition of this newsletter.

The RE conference was held in person for the first time since 2019 and we welcomed Peter Tate, a cultural awareness trainer to lead the session.

It began with the Biblical view of culture, which runs from Genesis to Revelation. In Genesis chapter 11, the Tower of Babel marks the beginnings of real cultural diversity, as people were scattered across the world and different languages came into being. The view presented to delegates was that racial and cultural differences are part of God's plan for humanity, as at Pentecost (Acts chapter 2) the disciples were able to speak in different languages, rather than the hearers being able to understand the same language. In the final book of the Bible, Revelation chapter 7, there is 'a great multitude... from every nation, every tribe, people and language' praising God together. So cultural diversity is something to be welcomed not feared or avoided.

There are of course different cultural expressions within the church. And discussions about how the early Church was to be often centred on whether the church should be culturally Jewish or culturally Greek. This of course would influence choices of food, behaviour and dress at the very least.

Peter used the image of an iceberg to help delegates explore the way that some elements of culture are not as easily visible as dress codes and behaviour. How do we find out what is beneath the iceberg? How do we discover the hidden cultural influences, in ourselves let alone in others? This is what links so well with the worldviews approach to RE.

One activity that delegates did was to imagine a map of the world laid out on the floor and to go and stand in the country that they thought most influenced them. It was interesting to see how our views of geography differed too! People then had to explain the dominant influences and from a relatively homogeneous looking group of people, all engaged in a similar walk of life, there was a huge range with many people identifying with multiple places and cultures. Some of those influences were faith-based, others to do with food, music, dance and family.

To appreciate the differences in culture within Christianity, Peter then interviewed Fr Ian Graham from the Greek Orthodox community in Oxford. As his name suggests, you can be Greek Orthodox without being Greek. Peter asked a series of questions that could form the basis of understanding someone's culture and faith, and the answers to which often reveal an intertwining of the religious and the cultural.

Here are some of the questions:

How did faith help during the pandemic? How does faith help you in everyday life? What do you celebrate and how do you show sorrow? What would you see in an Orthodox home?

Think about which of those questions help you to see below the surface of the iceberg, to the hidden nature of faith and culture.

What do you know about the culture of your students? Or your colleagues for that matter? How could you find out?

RESOURCES

If you use any of the resources mentioned below, it would be great to have a review.

Please note that the Diocese of Oxford does not offer an endorsement of any of the resources listed. Please use your professional judgement to decide whether these materials are suitable for your school.

Springs Dance Company



Adventurous and imaginative ways to boost children's engagement with R.E. and P.S.H.E from Springs Dance Company!

"Thank you for doing that amazing lesson with us. I loved it!" - Pupil, Seabrook school

Springs provides an exciting way for children to interact with the R.E. curriculum through physical movement and creativity.

Now booking:

- ***The Good Samaritan*** – Based on one of the Parables that Jesus told, these workshops provide opportunities for children to explore the importance of helping others and standing up for them, even if they are not like you. The workshops touch on themes of living in a multi-racial / multi-religious society.
- ***Creation*** – The Creation Project introduces the Genesis narrative of creation in a fun, inclusive and engaging way through dance. Children will have the opportunity to explore some key concepts such as who made the world, what God is like and the relationship between creator and created.

Other popular workshops include ***The Selfish Giant, Get Fit Go Green, You Are Special and The Christmas Story: Refugee***. Further details on all of our work for schools can be found at <https://springsdancecompany.org.uk/index.php/join-in/schools-workshops>

To book and to find out more please email touring@springsdancecompany.org.uk or call **07775 628 442**.



Part of registered charity Saltmine Trust, Saltmine Theatre Company is a theatre company with a Christian ethos that creates and tours faith motivated productions and workshops throughout the UK. Saltmine's production *Rhyming Bible* (based on Bob Hartman's popular book) is a creative resource for KS1 and KS2 to support the RE curriculum in schools.

This production is an all-age musical extravaganza which journeys from the creation of the earth to its redemption. On its premiere tour in October 2022, it was performed to over 3,600 young people and *Rhyming Bible* is just completing its second tour. This hour-long production works well for pupils in school years 1-6 as a resource to support teaching of the Bible story. It can be accompanied by an interactive workshop for KS2 pupils which highlights Creation and the Fall, Moses receiving the Ten Commandments and the coming of Jesus to earth.

For a taste of *Rhyming Bible*, please watch our promotional trailer: [HERE](#)

Rhyming Bible has been received well in all types of schools. Many churches have funded visits into their local primaries to develop and strengthen links between church and school. A third tour is being booked for 15th – 26th May with plans to tour again in Spring 2024.

For more information please check here: [Saltmine Trust - All Age](#)

Please note that there is a cost of £750 +VAT and a donation towards travel costs.

For more information about Saltmine Theatre Company's work please visit our website www.saltminetrust.org.uk or contact me for more information.

Humanism for EYFS

A new online tool has been launched to help EYFS pupils explore a Humanist family and their approach to the concept of kindness. It is linked to the Books at Press Series 'Belonging and Believing' which explores 8 families, each from a different faith, but as it has been produced with funding from Culham St Gabriel's and with support from Humanists UK, this interactive web tool is available free of charge.

Follow this link: www.thevatofbandb.co.uk for access to the tool. Do make sure that you read the teachers handbook first for information about how to get the most out of this.

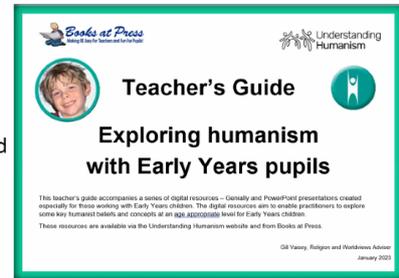
Additional resources:



A range of PowerPoint presentations, video clips and resources to use in the classroom.

6 x PowerPoint slide shows, 2 x Flash Card sets,
1 x drag and drop PPT activity, and Teacher's Guide:
£29.99 from [Video files Belonging and Believing \(booksatpress.co.uk\)](http://www.booksatpress.co.uk)
Or free to download from Understanding Humanism website
[Teaching about humanism in Early Years » Understanding Humanism](http://www.understandinghumanism.org/teaching-about-humanism-in-early-years)

- ❖ Wilf and this one life - be happy PPT
Happy Human flash cards (PDF)
- ❖ Wilf and the importance of family and friendship PPT
- ❖ Wilf and a humanist baby naming ceremony PPT
- ❖ Wilf and how the world began PPT
PPT interactive slide for drag and drop
- ❖ Wilf and how humans came to be part of the natural world PPT
Mini creatures flash cards (PDF)
- ❖ Wilf and the natural world PPT



Further Teachers' Support Notes and Guidance



These additional resources are free to download from the resource section of the Understanding Humanism website, but an additional film is available from www.booksatpress.co.uk for £7.99. There are also films featuring the Baha'i family and the Christian family, also £7.99.

If you have feedback on the interactive resource, they would love to receive it.

If you come across any other resources that you think teachers should know about, do please send you suggestions to anne.andrews@oxford.anglican.org.

Articles for the next edition of the newsletter, planned for early September 2024 should also be sent to the above address.

This newsletter is for you. As with lessons, the more you put in, the more you get out!

Enjoy the summer term!