



Y6 Spring

Key Question: U2.3 What do religions say to us when life gets hard?



THE INVESTIGATION

This investigation enables pupils to learn in depth from different religious and spiritual ways of life about teaching about hard times, focussing on exploring death. We have exemplified the unit in this way as we are aware that this is a difficult but essential topic for teachers to explore with children. By the age of 10 many children will have experienced grief and death. This unit allows them to talk about these ideas when emotions are less raw than after a bereavement. The activities enable pupils to share their ideas but do not force children to do so. The use of story acts as a distancing device within the unit.

Ensure that you have considered any pupils who have experienced a difficult or traumatic family event, or have experienced loss within their family. As well as the preparation letter, contact particular families and seek their advice if in any doubt.

This unit is designed as an enquiry based unit which may be taught over a series of weeks or in a shorter, more concentrated period such as during an RE week. It is impossible to write a pure child led enquiry this way and so the unit assumes some questions your pupils might choose to investigate and suggests ways to investigate them. What you do in this unit will depend on the questions generated by the children in your class.

Trips: St. Dunstons Church, Stepney
Hindu Temple Neasden <https://londonmandir.baps.org/>

Web Links: Introduction to Christianity: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zdykjxs>
Introduction to Hinduism: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zh86n39/resources/1>
Introduction to Humanism: <https://humanism.org.uk/humanism/>

STEP 1: THE KEY QUESTION Key Question: U2.3 What do religions say to us when life gets hard?

STEP 2: SELECT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Being clear about these outcomes will help you to decide what and how to teach.

EMERGING	EXPECTED	EXCEEDING
<p>Raise thoughtful questions and suggest some answers about life, death, suffering, and what matters most in life (B1).</p> <p>Give simple definitions of some key terms to do with life after death, e.g. Salvation, heaven, reincarnation (A3).</p>	<p>Express ideas about how and why religion can help believers when times are hard, giving examples (B2).</p> <p>Outline Christian, Hindu and/or nonreligious beliefs about life after death (A1).</p> <p>Explain some similarities and differences between beliefs about life after death (B2).</p> <p>Explain some reasons why Christians and Humanists have different ideas about an after-life (B3).</p>	<p>Explain what difference belief in judgement/heaven/karma/ reincarnation might make to how someone lives, giving examples (B1).</p> <p>Interpret a range of artistic expressions of afterlife, offering and explaining different ways of understanding (B3).</p>



Christianity and the Stairway to Heaven



A Donor card with a Humanist logo



A body awaiting cremation on the River Ganges



STEP 3: SUGGESTED CONTENT FOR LEARNING

This plan has selected the following content to exemplify the learning outcomes.

- Pupils will:**

Use stimulus material to encourage pupils to ask questions about life, death, suffering, and what matters most in life.
- Analyse and evaluate pupils' questions, to recognise and reflect on how some 'big questions' do not have easy answers, and how people offer different answers to some of the big questions about life, death, suffering etc.
- Explore ways in which religions help people to live, even when times are tough, e.g. through prayer, giving a sense of purpose, a guide to deciding what is right and wrong, membership of a community who care for each other, opportunities to celebrate together. Ask some religious believers to explain how their faith has helped them in difficult times, and how it encourages them to enjoy life too.
- Introduce the idea that most religious traditions teach about some form of life after death, which can bring comfort to people as they face suffering, or if they are bereaved. Teach pupils that some people believe that death is the end of life, and that there is no afterlife.
- Learn some key concepts about life after death in Christianity (such as judgement, heaven, salvation through Jesus); and Hinduism (karma, soul, samsara, reincarnation and moksha); also one non-religious view about what happens after death, e.g. Humanism.
- Consider similarities and differences in ceremonies that mark the end of life on Earth and how these express different beliefs.
- Read and respond to prayers, liturgies, meditation texts and songs/hymns used when someone has died, and think about the questions and beliefs they address.
- Reflect on and express clearly their own ideas, concerns and possibly worries about death and the idea of life beyond.

EMERGING	EXPECTED	EXCEEDING
<p>I can...You can...Can you...? Talk about what is special and of value about belonging to a group that is important to them (B2) Show an awareness that some people belong to different religions (B1).</p>	<p>I can...You can...Can you...? Recognise symbols of belonging from their own experience (A3) Recognize symbols of belonging for Christians (A3) Recognize symbols of belonging for Jews or Muslims (A3) Think about why symbols of belonging matter to believers (A3) Give an account of what happens at a traditional Christian infant baptism / dedication and suggest what the actions and symbols mean (A1). Identify two ways people show they belong to each other when they get married (A1).</p>	<p>I can...You can...Can you...? Give examples of ways in which believers express their identity and belonging within faith communities Responding sensitively to differences in the way believers express their identify and belonging (B2). Identify some similarities and differences between the ceremonies studied (B3).</p>



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What does Christianity say about life after death?

Christian beliefs about life after death are based on the **resurrection** of Jesus Christ. Christians believe that Jesus' death and resurrection are part of God's divine plan for humankind. Through his death on the cross, Jesus pays the penalty for humankind's sin and humankind's relationship with God is restored. This is called atonement. Christians believe that three days after the crucifixion, God raised Jesus from the dead and he once again appeared to his disciples. This is taken to mean that Jesus' sacrifice was a victory over sin and death. Although physical death still happens, those who believe in Christ and live good lives will be given eternal life in **Heaven**.

Why do Hindus believe in life after death?

Ancient Hindu scriptures refer to the atman (soul) being reborn many times. The **Bhagavad Gita** states the following:

As a person casts off worn-out clothes and puts on new ones, so does the atman cast off worn out bodies and enter new ones. **Bhagavad Gita 2:22 (Smriti text)**

The Bhagavad Gita also explains that death is something that we can neither stop nor grieve about: For certain is the death of all that comes to birth, certain is the birth of all that dies. So in a matter that no one can prevent do not grieve. **Bhagavad Gita 2:27**

Most Hindus believe that good merit is achieved by following your **dharmā**. The Bhagavad Gita details four different ways that **moksha** can be achieved:

karma yoga - a type of Hindu religious practice that involves selfless service to others

bhakti yoga - the path of loving devotion, aimed at developing pure love of god

jnana yoga - a type of Hindu meditation, the path of knowledge that aims at liberation

meditation - thinking quietly as a spiritual or religious exercise

What happens after moksha?

There are two main beliefs about what happens after moksha.

Some Hindus believe that the atman is absorbed into **Brahman**. This is because the atman and Brahman are the same.

Other Hindus believe that the atman and Brahman are different and that after moksha they remain separate. They believe that the atman will be in the presence of Brahman, as a personal god, but will remain unique and individual.

Humanism

What does a humanist believe?

Humanists reject the idea or belief in a supernatural being such as God. This means that humanists class themselves as agnostic or atheist.

Humanists have no belief in an afterlife, and so they focus on seeking happiness in this life. They rely on science for the answers to questions such as creation, and base their moral and ethical decision-making on reason, empathy and compassion for others.

Humanists are concerned with **human welfare** and **happiness** and believe that this is **the one and only life and world** they have.

As a result, they believe that people should make the most of their lives while on Earth. However, they also believe that they have a duty to support others to live fulfilling lives too – this includes people who are alive today as well as future generations.

Because humanists do not believe in any kind of god or supernatural force that will solve their problems, they believe that human beings must take sole responsibility for solving the world's environmental problems. Only humans are capable of finding the solutions that can lead to a sustainable existence.