

Examples of quality RE for the coming 5 years

Introducing Muhammad

This unit offers two stories about Muhammad which show his love of Allah's creation and his wisdom. These activities seek to engage pupil's interest and participation through storytelling and the use of everyday objects.

The story of Muhammad and the cat (suitable for younger pupils)

You will need: a toy cat, a piece of material and some scissors.

Place the cat on the cloth.

Tell the story, pausing for pupils to consider what Muhammad might do, and cut the material at the appropriate time.

Talk about:

What do you think about caring for animals?

- If there is a class pet, the pet can be held and questions asked about how it is cared for. Why do people look after animals? Have you ever had to move out of the way because an animal was blocking your way? Did you mind? What did you do? Why?
- Do you think Muhammad was right to cut the cloth? Why do you think he cut it?
For Early Years children, soft toys can be introduced into a play corner along with feeding utensils, packets of food, combs, brushes, and so on. In the corner a sign can ask 'How would Allah want people to care for these animals?'

A class collage can be created of the mother cat with her kittens sitting upon a piece of material. (Remember Muhammad must not be depicted.) The words, 'Allah cares for all animals' can be written around the cat.

Muhammad and the cat

It was a very hot day. Muhammad sat down in the shade of a date-palm tree and began talking to his friends. He was wearing a long cloak which covered the ground when he sat down. When he went to stand up he noticed that a mother cat had brought her kittens and placed them on the corner of his cloak. The mother started to feed her kittens. Muhammad looked at them and gave thanks to Allah who created all living creatures. Then he . . .

Pause . . . ask 'What do you think he did?'

He asked for a knife. Carefully he cut around his cloak where the cat and her kittens were lying and then without disturbing them he walked quietly away.



Story: Spiritual and Moral Development in RE:

Practical ways for RE to make a difference to pupils' lives.

Session 2: Mark Stroman, Rais Bhuiyan and New York's Twin Towers

When Islamist terrorists flew two planes into New York's World Trade Centre towers on September 11th 2001, people across America and the world were appalled, and many people turned to prayer, keeping candle lit vigils to honour the nearly 3000 people who died. But Mark Stroman did not pray. He was murderously angry. He got his gun.

Determined to take revenge, he went on a random rampage on a Friday lunchtime just after the attacks to find people he called 'Arabs' and kill them. He shot two store workers dead as they stood at their cash tills. One was Vasudev Patel (a Hindu). The second was Waqar Hasan, an American Muslim born in Pakistan. Then Stroman went to a petrol station, where he saw Rais Bhuiyan. He pointed his double barrelled shotgun at Rais.

Rais had been robbed before, and offered Stroman the money in his cash till, but "He asked me 'where are you from?' I thought that's a strange question to ask in a robbery. As soon as I said 'excuse me?' I heard an explosion and felt the sensation of a million bees stinging my face." He had been shot, and fell to the floor, pretending he was dead. Stroman left, but was arrested and convicted of his two murders and the attack on Rais, who is a Bangladeshi-born US citizen. He was so badly injured that he had to have numerous operations. He was blinded in his right eye. He still has some shotgun pellets in his face.

Mark Stroman was given the death sentence in Texas. As often happens, there was a long process of appeals against this sentence. How do you think Rais Bhuiyan felt about this?

His reaction was remarkable. As he lay on what he feared was his deathbed, he promised Allah that if he recovered he would make a pilgrimage to the Hajj in Makkah. He went, and while there he thought more deeply about what had happened and what he wanted to do. He decided he wanted to forgive Mark Stroman. He campaigned hard to prevent his attacker from being put to death. Why?

"What Mark Stroman did was a hate crime, and hate crimes come from ignorance. His execution will not eradicate hate crimes from this world, we will just simply lose another human life. This campaign is all about passion, forgiveness, tolerance and healing. We should not stay in the past, we must move forward," he said. If I can forgive my offender who tried to take my life, we can all work together to forgive each other and move forward and take a new narrative on the 10th anniversary of 11 September." Rais got in touch with Stroman, and told him that he could become "a spokesperson, an educator, teaching a lot of people as ignorant as him what is wrong".

Stroman responded. He said "I asked myself the question a thousand times: Would I be able to forgive a man who shot me in the face? I would find it very hard." Mark Stroman changed. "I was an uneducated idiot back then and now I'm a more understanding human being," Stroman said in 2011. "At that time here in America everybody was saying 'let's get them' - we didn't know who to get, we were just stereotyping. I stereotyped all Muslims as terrorists and that was wrong. I had some poor upbringing and I grabbed a hold of some ideas which was ignorance, you know, and hate is pure ignorance. "I tried to kill this man, and this man is now trying to save my life. This man is inspiring to me."

Despite Rais' campaign to save his attacker, Stroman was executed by lethal injection in July 2011. His last words were: "Even though I lay on this gurney, seconds away from my death, I am at total peace. God bless America. God bless everyone. Let's do this damn thing."

Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad: "Allah the Almighty has said: "O son of Adam, so long as you call upon Me and ask of Me, I shall forgive you for what you have done, and I shall not mind. O son of Adam, were your sins to reach the clouds of the sky and were you then to ask forgiveness of Me, I would forgive you." Source: Hadith of Anas

In this story, what were the values of each of the 2 men at the start? How did they change? Why?



Rais's injuries threatened his life and blinded him in one eye.

Pupil Voice in RE: “What matters for you about RE?”

Many RE subject leaders need to know more about how their RE is going. A pupil voice survey is often revealing. Here is our example, to copy and use with your pupils aged 7-12.

Here are nine reasons why people say it is good to study RE. Please discuss them one by one with your partner, then choose and circle your own top 4

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| A. You need RE to help you understand all the different religions in Britain | B. RE helps me learn more about my own religion / beliefs | C. I like RE because it is about big ideas and big questions. |
| D. RE is good because it makes you think harder about your own ideas beliefs | E. RE teaches you about values like peace, love, forgiveness or compassion. We all need these. | F. RE is there to make you think and discuss things. |
| G. Whatever job you do, you meet people with different beliefs, so you need to know | H. If there was no RE, our society might be less respectful and tolerant. | I. The law says RE should be given to every child, so don't break the law! |

Which two reasons, A-I are most important for you? Explain why.

| | | | |
|--|---|---|-----------------------|
| Which letter? | My explanation of why it matters is... | | |
| | | | |
| In my school, the best RE lesson ever was... | I'd love it if, in RE, we learned more about... | If we went on an RE trip, the best ever, I'd like to go to... | |
| | | Because... | |
| Is our school's RE: Brilliant? | Good? | OK? | Disappointing? |

Write your advert for RE on the back of this sheet with your logo for this lesson



My Life, My Religion: Hinduism

Lat Blaylock, RE Today

Clip title

4. Birth and death in Hindu teaching (duration)

Suitable for KS2, 7–11s

Themes

Reincarnation, the soul, life after death, big questions

Link

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02n5v2q>

Description

The Cycle of Birth and Rebirth

This clip is about the complexities of belief in reincarnation. Teachers will, of course, be aware that this is a sensitive topic, and children with experience of bereavement often value the chance to speak about it in safe ways. Hindus believe life is a cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. Actions in this life, our 'karma' has an effect on our future. We get good karma if we're kind, but bad karma if we're selfish. This good or bad karma makes a difference to how the soul is



reincarnated. The cycle of life is not a simple idea: karma works in many ways and the soul might be reincarnated thousands of times. Vraj shows his understanding of karma in a picture of a cycle of life. There is an end to the cycle: it's called Moksha. It's reached by always trying to be the best we can be. Moksha sets you free from ever having to be born on this Earth again: "You will be one with god and you feel really good!"

These ideas about the cycle of rebirth affect how Hindus think about death. After death the body is burned. This symbolises the quick release of the soul to begin its next life. Ashes are scattered in a river, like the River Soar in Leicester, shown in the clip.

Simran interviews Hemang, a Hindu Priest. He shows how he likes to help families after the death of a loved one. He explains that a river is like the life source, that the majority of our bodies are made of water, and so it is the custom to give the ashes of a person who has died to the water. The priest's job is to help people at a time of sadness towards understanding that those who die, in Hindu belief, will get a new life: "We believe that death is a new beginning." In India Hindus traditionally scattered ashes in the River Ganges, but there are many rivers outside of India that can be used as well. Hemang says that all rivers are created equal in the eyes of god, and they all merge eventually into the oceans. River Soar, or River Ganges, the symbol is for the way life flows on.

Hindu scripture says "Just as a person puts on new clothes and gets rid of the old ones, so the soul also takes on new bodies according to its karma".

Keywords

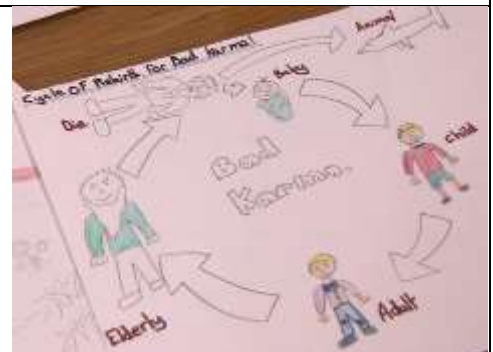
Hindu, soul, karma, moksha, priest, reincarnation, cremation

Using this clip in class

Key stage 2 - Idea 1: Cycles of life – good karma

Ask children to draw a circle to represent a human life, and make 5 pictures to show what they think are 5 key moments in life to go around the edges (examples: birth, learning to walk, going to school, moving up a school, getting a job, learning to drive, being married, having a baby, retiring, dying). Ask the children: what would it mean for the person, at each stage of life, to be gathering good karma?

Give them a larger piece of paper to stick this one onto, and ask them to draw another circle, following on from the first. If the person they drew in the first cycle of life had 'good karma' what might their next life be like? Ask them draw 5 more moments, in which the person's life was better than the 'last time around' Not that good karma is not about being rich, but living well. Ask children to compare notes about what they think good karma means and what they like or dislike, agree with and disagree with, about Hindu ideas on life after this life.



Idea 2: Learning ideas: life after this life, expressions in art

After pupils have seen the clip and talked learning idea 1 above, ask them to share all the other ideas they know of about life after this life. Muslim Paradise, Christian Heaven, ideas about ghosts and the atheist view that this life is the only life can be explored in discussion. Give pupils a choice of titles for a work of art: either 'Life after this life' or 'A window into heaven' make good starting points. Review together the NATRE website's gallery of pupil art on this topic, Art in Heaven:

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

Pupils might select, copy and comment on three of their favourites from this gallery of over 40 pupil responses.

Looking for the deeper meanings of the festivals: what is Christmas mostly all about?



"I think that the real meaning of Christmas is... a time for family to come together and celebrate, this doesn't mean you have to be a Christian as most religions can but some can't. As well as presents, we gift to people, it is about bringing people together. Christians celebrate it for the birth of Jesus. But also, very fun!

"I think that the real meaning of Christmas is... to spend time with your family to help them and yourself find that hope, peace, love and joy. We use it as a time to find and celebrate new life within us and with Jesus. We remember how we should behave as people and Christmas is a time to start again. Jesus is being for us again and giving us forgiveness and a fresh start.

A checklist for excellent RE...

1. Discuss implementing the syllabus with SLT, governors and all staff
2. Plan the process of change in a wise timescale
3. Agree resources for improving RE
4. Argue for the curriculum time needed to teach well
5. Use pupil-voice interests and ideas to shape the curriculum
6. Use all the SACRE resources available to you
7. NATRE membership will give you lots to use
8. Innovate, monitor, review, celebrate