

# Effective curriculum planning

Top Tips !

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# Some general introductory points...

- RE should focus on the **IMPACT** of religion and belief on the lives of believers
- The enquiry process should be embedded in learning- not an 'add on'
- Each enquiry must enable the pupils to know more about 'what does it really mean to be a XXXX?' i.e. about beliefs, values and purpose. 'Not about the pews!'
- Where possible, RE should be making links with other curriculum areas
- We should be working hard to ensure learning is sustained and challenging

# Keep it simple

- Focus on one religion and one concept for each enquiry ( there may be some exceptions, I'll come to this!)
- Keep the key question in mind at all times. Are the activities you are planning enabling the children to develop an in depth understanding of the question and different answers to it?

# The enquiry question

- The enquiry question is the **key** to successful planning

Check:

- is the question focused on a concept/big idea
- is the question phrased at an appropriate level?

Use the level descriptors to help you ensure the question is phrased appropriately, and use the exemplars in the agreed syllabus guidance material.

Occasionally you may explore a big idea across different religions. Try not to focus on more than two religions/beliefs at one time to avoid confusion.

# The enquiry process- engage

- this is really important as this enables the children to engage with the 'big idea' in the enquiry
- think carefully about whether you introduce this using materials from religion or belief, or if you make reference to the children's experience. If you choose the latter, you will need to bring in a religious/belief stimulus before you move on to the next stage.

Remember the phrase 'its a bit like'.... so for example 'covenant' is a bit like an agreement or promise between two people. If your enquiry is about covenant you might introduce it by referring to promises.

# The enquiry process- enquire



In order to generate questions the children must have had a stimulus in the engage stage that relates to the key enquiry question- this might be a story, picture, film...

The development of questions can take time and practice. The idea is one of co- construction with the children. The teacher should have the assessment criteria in mind and any tasks planned for the express stage.

Why was Jesus born in Bethlehem?

How long was Jesus in Mary's tummy?

If Mary and Joseph were ordinary people how come Jesus just appeared to be the Son of God?

Was Jesus a good person?

If it took the wise men years to find the baby, would Mary and Joseph still be living in the stable for years and years?

How was God born?

Why were Mary and Joseph chosen to have baby Jesus?

Here are some questions from children in Year 2 and Year 3 from two different schools. The stimulus was the nativity story. Notice the concepts and big ideas that lie behind these questions... incarnation, prophecy, Son of God, being chosen, biblical interpretation, word of God...this means the stimulus was chosen well...

# The enquiry process- explore

The main aim here is to explore the questions the children have come up with, to help you answer the overall key enquiry question. This may include:

- independent research
- teacher led activities that unpack one or more the questions
- active learning

Good resources to use include the 'Opening Up' series from RE Today.

The primary focus here is on learning about religion and belief. **ALWAYS** refer back to the big idea/concept...



# The enquiry process- evaluate

Think about the sorts of questions you can ask to ensure the children have understood the big idea/ concept.

We might say this is about analysing and evaluating the 'meaning behind' or the 'back story' ( see the work of Dilwyn Hunt from our RE Conference).

The questions you ask here and the activities the children do should enable them to be able to give reasons, analyse and evaluate the religion and belief.

# The enquiry process- express

The aim is for the children to show an understanding of the big idea/concept.

Most likely this will be their answer to the key enquiry question shown through writing, drama, art, music, dance, discussion, presentation and so on...



## **God is dashing down**

Charlotte Aged 5

God is dashing down to the city to get the spirit of a dead person to take them to heaven so they are safe.

[www.natre.org.uk/spiritedarts](http://www.natre.org.uk/spiritedarts)

# Reviewing and evaluating...

- Ensure your enquiry questions for each enquiry / scheme of learning are based on the assessment criteria at the appropriate level.
- Is enquiry embedded in our plans? How can we ensure that an enquiry approach takes the lead?
- Ask yourself whether your long term plan and individual enquires makes sense!! Is there continuity, depth and progression / challenge? BE HONEST!!
- Highlight areas where you could link with other curriculum areas and where RE could take the lead in the creative curriculum
- Ask yourself... by the end of Year 6, will pupils understand that religion and belief has an impact in the world?