

Five-year-old
Bethan made this
picture. Do you
agree with her?

God is everywhere
He makes things and
helps them grow and
be lovely.



What do people believe about God? (Christianity)

Year Group:1/2



*This unit of work for
Religious Education
provides non-statutory
exemplification of some
good teaching and
learning for any
Wolverhampton school
to use.*

What do people believe about God? (Christianity)

Year Group: 3 or 4

About this unit

This unit enables pupils to explore ideas about God simply for themselves and to consider what this concept might mean for Christians. Asking questions and thinking about stories are the main methods by which the enquiry begins.

The focus is on pupils exploring the concept of God for themselves through asking questions and using metaphors to help understand characteristics of God. There is also an element that enables pupils to explore what Christians believe about God and how they respond to God. Different ideas about God are positively welcomed in this unit: it is thoughtfulness, not any particular stance that makes good RE here.

Pupils are encouraged to consider what can be learned from beliefs about God by listening to stories and referring to their own experiences, beliefs and values.

Where this unit fits in

This unit will help teachers to implement the requirements for RE by providing them with well-worked examples of teaching and learning about the theme of Talking about God, by using the concepts of belief, story and prayer, and examples of how believers express their feelings about God through images in the Bible and through prayer.

This unit contributes to the continuity and progression of pupils' learning by developing pupils' awareness of what it means for believers to talk about God – in this case in a Christian context, but this could be widened to other faiths – and how Christian believers understand God. It will also provide opportunity to explore how religious people might respond to God.

The unit anticipates a further study of what it means for believers from different religions to talk about God in study of later units in Key Stage 2.

Estimated teaching time for this unit: 10+ hours

It is recognised that this unit may provide more teaching ideas than a class will cover in 10 hours. Teachers are invited to plan their own use of some of the learning ideas below, ensuring depth of learning rather than covering everything.

Key strands addressed by this unit

AT 1: Learning about Religion

- Beliefs, teachings and sources
- Expressing meaning

AT 2: Learning from Religion

- Questions of meaning, purpose and truth

Attitudes focus

Pupils will explore attitudes of:

- **Self-awareness** by becoming increasingly aware of their own beliefs
- **Open-mindedness** by engaging in positive discussion and debate, considering the beliefs of others

The unit will provide these opportunities

- Pupils have opportunities to consider the concept of God
- Pupils have opportunities to consider a diverse range of views about the characteristics of God from their study of Christianity with some reference to other faith traditions.

Background information for the teacher	
<p>This is an area of RE which adults often shy away from. However, children are often more than willing to discuss their ideas about God! A useful resource for teachers to get ideas about some of the topics which children might tackle in this area is <i>A Child Sees God: Children Talk About Bible Stories</i> by Howard Worsley and John M Hull, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2009, ISBN 978-1-843109-72-3. Various ideas and approaches are suggested to allow for individual teachers to use those with which they feel most comfortable. The aspect of sights, sounds, and so on, could be explored through other world faiths and through varied Christian traditions, e.g. High Anglican, Greek Orthodox. This unit could be linked to multicultural enrichment days.</p>	
Vocabulary and concepts	Resources
<p>In this unit, pupils will have an opportunity to use words and phrases related to:</p> <p>Specific religions: Christianity God Reflection Prayer Trinity</p> <p>General RE: Thinking for myself Having an open mind</p>	<p>Websites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> REonline is a good gateway to RE resources: www.reonline.org.uk TopMarks has a story book of the story of the Angel Gabriel's visit to Mary, suitable for use with a whiteboard: www.topmarks.co.uk/christianity/nativity/index.htm Ishwar is an online searchable database of sacred texts from different religions: www.ishwar.com Art in Heaven is a web gallery of pupils' entries to the National Association of Teachers of RE's annual Spirited Arts competition. This resource enables pupils to view and judge numerous works of pupil art on key biblical stories: www.natre.org.uk/spiritedarts People of Faith has resources containing text, audio and video about being a member of one of the six principal religions in the UK: http://pof.reonline.org.uk The RE Today website (subscribers' section) has many suitable downloads for this work: www.retoday.org.uk Godly Play provides details of this pedagogical approach: www.godlyplay.org.uk <p>Books</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Exploring Religion Around Me</i>, ed. Joyce Mackley, RE Today, ISBN 978-1-904024-96-5 <i>Stories about God</i> (Developing Primary RE series), ed. Joyce Mackley, RE Today, ISBN 978-1-904024-68-2 <i>Faith Stories</i> (Developing Primary RE series), ed. Joyce Mackley, RE Today, ISBN 978-1-904024-23-1 <i>Spirited Poetry</i>, ed. Lat Blaylock, RMEP, ISBN 978-1-851753-49-9 <i>God Made Me: Touch, Feel and See!</i>, Priddy Bicknell, Scripture Union, ISBN 978-1-859997-35-2 <i>Best Loved Parables: Stories Jesus Told</i>, Lois Rock, Lion Hudson, ISBN 978-0-745946-38-2 'In the Beginning', Steve Turner: a poem about creation in <i>The Day I Fell Down the Toilet and Other Poems</i>, Steve Turner, Lion, ISBN 978-0-745936-40-6 <i>The World that God Made</i>, Jan Godfrey and Peter Adderley, Scripture Union, ISBN 978-1-873824-81-8 <i>Colours of God: A Wondering Book for Children</i>, Diana Murrie, Barnabas, ISBN 978-1-841012-40-7 <i>Learn about Prayer</i>, Lois Rock and Maureen Galvani, Candle Books, ISBN 978-1-859857-19-9 <i>Learn about God</i>, Lois Rock and Maureen Galvani, Candle Books, ISBN 978-1-859857-17-5 <i>Picturing Creation</i>, Pamela Draycott and Rachel Barker, RE Today, ISBN 978-1-904024-58-3 <p>Video, CD/DVD, Audio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Cracking Christianity –God</i>, CD-Rom, The Stapleford Centre, ISBN 506-0-0245-4004-8 <i>Gift to the Child</i>, CD-Rom, Series 1 & 2 available from Articles of Faith:

www.articlesoffaith.co.uk

Contributions to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- Opportunities for **spiritual development** come from the opportunity to reflect on their understanding of God and to hear and think about stories of God
- Opportunities for **social development** come from listening to the ideas and thoughts of others.

Expectations: at the end of this unit

All pupils will be able to:

- use their senses to explore and ask questions about religious stories, pictures, artefacts
- identify simply some of the ways in which Christians describe the characteristics of God
- express in simple terms their own thoughts about God

Many pupils will be able to:

- retell a story from the Bible that helps Christians understand a characteristic of God
- ask some good questions of their own about God and suggest some answers
- describe what messages and meanings are expressed through some religious symbols
- express some reasons for their current thinking about God

Some pupils will be able to:

- make connections between a religious story and some religious beliefs
- make links between religious symbols or stories and beliefs that underlie them
- compare their own ideas about questions of belief in God with those of other people

Assessment suggestions

A formal assessment of each pupils is neither required nor desirable for every RE unit. Continuing use of Assessment for Learning methods is best.

Teachers can assess this work by setting a learning task towards the end of the unit. The task aims to elicit engaged and reflective responses to the material studied throughout the unit across the ability range.

The most likely form of assessment for this unit will be done verbally in discussion and through the way pupils are enabled to express their ideas about God. Assessment towards the end of the unit could be in the form of question and answer, art, or choosing some words from a list/simple written work.

G&T: To extend this work, ask pupils to consider **why** Christians might attribute various characteristics to God and how they express their beliefs about God.

Learning objectives	Teaching and learning	Learning outcomes	<i>Points to note</i>
What do I think about God?			
Pupils will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> show awareness of the possibility of 'seeing' with an inner eye. be aware that not everyone sees things in the same way. begin to express their own reactions and ideas about 'God'. 	Discovering children's own ideas about God <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play a game of 'I-spy' in the imagination, in which children close their eyes and try to 'see' what they think is being described by the teacher. This helps to get across the idea: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> That sometimes we can 'see' things in our heads which we can't always see with our eyes That sometimes, drawing on the same information, people 'see' different things. Play some peaceful background music. Begin by getting children to 'take a line for a walk' on a piece of paper, and ask them to make the line angry, then peaceful, then excited, then wild, then calm. Next ask pupils to draw (or write describing words depending on age/ability of group) their idea of who God is or what they think God might look like. They could be helped with the starter sentence: 'I think God . . .' You could also give pupils a list of simple words that others use about God and ask them to choose some: loving/puzzling/mysterious/great/kind/not real/everywhere/kind/scary/ interesting. Note that Muslim children are not to be invited to draw God, so they need instructions that ask for their thoughts, not a picture of God. <p>Pupils could then be encouraged to talk about their picture or writing.</p>	Most pupils can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Join in by actively participating in the 'I spy' game. be able to express in words or pictures something of what they think God might look like or characteristics God might have. 	<i>A creative approach to the use of language is good here.</i> <i>Note that good teaching does not ask children to 'draw God'. It's an image, an idea, that is best. Many examples are available.</i>
What characteristics do I think God has?			
Pupils will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> thoughtfully express adjectives to describe characteristics of God. begin to show awareness that different people 'see' God in different ways. 	'If God were a . . . What would God be?' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If God were a flower/food/colour/plant/animal what sort of flower (etc) would God be? Give pupils suggestions using a bank of words of types of flowers or clothes (etc) and some colour and texture words. Give some examples, and see if children can come up with some of their own. Ask them to complete the sentences: e.g. If God were an item of clothing (a food, a building, an animal, a colour) what would God be? Pupils could draw the item of clothing/building/food and write two adjectives to describe God, e.g. 'God is like a soft, red, jumper'. This doesn't have to be a written activity, it could be a discussion using circle games. Encourage pupils to say why they have used their chosen adjectives (this enables pupils working at levels 2/3 to show their understanding): e.g. 'If God were an item of clothing, God would be a woolly jumper because God is all around you keeping you warm.' 	Most pupils can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use vocabulary provided to express their ideas about the characteristic of God. show increasing confidence in expressing their ideas to others. 	<i>Cross-curricular links to literacy – use of adjectives</i>

What do we mean by 'God'?

<p>Pupils will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider for themselves what they know and understand about God. show understanding of belief in things that cannot be seen. 	<p>Many different ideas and beliefs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask the pupils for their ideas, descriptions and beliefs about God. Talk about everyday examples of belief in things that cannot be seen, and the grounds for such beliefs. Explore air in balloons – talk about the air being there but not being able to see it. If it is a windy day go outside and fly a kite, or watch the trees moving in the wind. Blowing bubbles – what are they? Explore electricity by making simple circuits, switching on lights and electrical equipment. Use a hair dryer to make something warm or to make it move. Help the pupils understand that we believe in the existence of lots of things we cannot see. Emphasise the point that because we can't see things doesn't mean they are not there – we know they are there because their effects can be seen. 	<p>Most pupils can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> talk confidently about their understanding of God. show simple understanding of 'believing without seeing'. 	<p><i>Cross-curricular links to science</i></p> <p><i>Some teachers may like to start the whole unit with this lesson.</i></p>
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What do Christians say God is like?

<p>Pupils will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider what Christians think about God. explore some features of a religious life. 	<p>Explore these as separate themes relating to Christian beliefs about God.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> God as love. Talk with the pupils about the people in their lives who love them. What evidence do they have that someone loves them? How does it make them feel? How do they act and what do they do? Can we see love? How do we know it is there? Read the book <i>Guess How Much I Love You</i> and discuss if love can be measured. Use the story of the lost sheep to look at how Jesus explained the love and care of God. God as father. Show the pupils a bag with a collection of items a parent would use with a baby. Take the items out of the bag and discuss each in turn. How do parents care for their babies? Make a list of things that a baby needs. As well as the practical items, move pupils on to talking about babies needing love and care. Talk about Christians believing that God looks after them like a loving father (or parent). Use the story of the prodigal son to illustrate that God never gives up on people. The story can be sequenced, retold in drama – freeze framed or hot seated – or artwork. God as light. Show the pupils a collection of different sorts of candles. Talk about when candles are used – birthday cakes, power cuts, and so on. Light the candles and talk about them shining in the dark. Fear of the dark might be introduced at this point and pupils encouraged to reflect on their fears and how important it is to have something happy and positive when you are or have been afraid. Explain that people going to church often light candles and candles are used in church services. Show pictures of candles being used in church. Reflect by looking at candles and listening to music, thinking peaceful thoughts, saying prayers (if appropriate) and letting go of our fears. God as creator. Read or retell one of the many versions of the Genesis creation story now available for KS1. Use the pictures from RE Today's <i>Picturing Creation</i> pack. Reflect on the pictures – encourage pupils to ask questions about what they see – write questions on 'sticky notes' and attach them to the posters. Explore the pupils' questions. If possible explore some of the wonders of the world outside. Collect some items together and bring them into the classroom. Each pupil could produce a 'Reflective Palette' (A shape like an artist's palette on a sheet of A3 and then pupils place the items they have brought from outside onto their palette). Play some music and reflect on their items. Pupils may want to talk about environmental concerns. Talk about Christian belief that God has given people the job of stewards (carers) of the earth. 	<p>Most pupils can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify one or more characteristics of God as Christians understand them. identify aspects of their own experience and what they think is important in the material. 	<p><i>It would be inappropriate and impossible to explore all of these – the suggestion is that teachers consider one or two of these images of God.</i></p> <p><i>The concept of dealing with God as a loving father might be particularly difficult in some schools, so it might be more appropriate to use the term 'parent' or 'carer'.</i></p>
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What do Christians mean by 'Trinity'? How can God be three and one?

<p>Pupils will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand the Christian belief of God as three in one. reflect on their lives and the relationships they have. 	<p>Knowing in different ways: what does it mean?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher brings in photographs or objects that illustrate how she or he is known in three different ways – maybe aunt, mum and sister. Pupils could draw themselves and say how they are known in three different ways: sibling / friend / son or daughter. Footballer / reader / cook. Explain that the person is only one person even though they are known in different ways to different people. Illustrate this concept with water, steam and ice – one and the same but seen in three different ways. Link this simply to the idea of ice/water/steam – three different ways of being the same thing. Other examples: acorn, tree, wood. Seed / tree / fruit. 	<p>Most pupils can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> show awareness of Trinity by expressing some images of '3 in 1' and showing understanding of the concept through discussion. 	<p><i>Although the Trinity is a difficult concept to grasp, pupils at KS1 can easily be introduced to the idea of one entity being seen in three different ways.</i></p>
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How do Christians believe they can talk with God?

<p>Pupils will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • know some of the artefacts religious people might use when they to talk to God. • understand that prayer is a way religious believers believe they can communicate with God. 	<p>What is praying? Why do Christians like to pray?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore all the ways people communicate with others and have as many examples as possible to show pupils, e.g. talk, sign language, telephone, letters, postcards, email, videos, text messages, and so on. • Talk about why people want to communicate with others, e.g. when they have good or bad news to share, to tell people what they are doing or where they are going, and so on. • Explain that Christians and other religious people want to talk to their God. Have a collection of artefacts available, e.g. rosary, candles, prayer mat, prayer books, incense, and so on. These could include items from other faiths too: e.g. Muslim prayer mat, as this is a useful lesson to show that prayer is an important activity for people of many religions. • Place three or four artefacts on different tables around the room and allow pupils in small groups to visit each table. Allow them to explore the artefact using all their senses. As they move around, ask them to think of questions to ask about the artefact. Bring pupils together along with the artefacts. Answer their questions where possible or explore the answers together. Talk about how each one is used to help people pray. How might they be helpful? What do they do for people? • Arrange a visit to a religious building to explore the way believers worship God and the artefacts used, or arrange a visit from a religious leader to talk about their worship and artefacts used. 	<p>Most pupils can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • through discussion activities, show awareness of prayer as being a means of religious believers communicating with God. • through exploring artefacts, know some of the artefacts religious believers might use when they pray and how these artefacts might assist some believers in their prayers. 	<p><i>Have a range of prayer artefacts available – even from religions other than Christianity. Make it clear in the plenary activity which religion the different artefacts come from and how/why they might be used. This provides pupils with opportunity to explore a range of prayer artefacts. Good for Thinking Skills as pupils explore artefacts and decide how they think they might be used.</i></p>
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What have we learned in this unit of RE?

<p>Pupils will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> express ideas and questions more deeply as a result of thinking about God and prayer. respond sensitively to Christian ideas about God and prayer. 	<p>Candles and meanings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set the classroom out so that pupils can sit in a circle around a low table with some candles on it. Put one large candle in the middle and lots of smaller ones around it, unlit (some reusable adhesive or plasticine is good to hold them). Get an assistant (or do this yourself) to have a lighter ready. Recap with the children the highlights of the unit of work on talking about God, reminding them of the puzzling questions, the stories and the discussions they have had. Remind the class of the first thing God says in the Jewish and Christian creation story – ‘let there be light’ – and talk about how light helps us. Good ideas are like light: why is that? You might tell the children that different people have different ideas about light. Some say light comes from God. Some say light comes from love. Some say light comes from the human mind. All these ideas are helpful. Ask the children to think quietly for one minute, and try to think of their best ideas about God. After the minute’s silence, receive the ideas one by one, without comment, and light a candle for each one. Finish the activity with a short silent time for pupils to look at the candles and be thoughtful. 	<p>Most pupils can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> talk about some questions about God and prayer that they have thought of. respond sensitively to other children’s questions. 	<p><i>Gathering evidence of achievement in RE should be professional, but not burdensome. Some units will include a formal task assessing pupils’ work, but not all.</i></p> <p><i>Unseen learning can be profound. Teachers in RE should welcome the possibility.</i></p>
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