

The Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Northamptonshire

Support Materials



Concepts in Religious Education



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Concepts are important in Religious Education because they are the central ideas which help pupils and teachers make sense of, and interpret, the knowledge they encounter.

Without a developing understanding of key concepts, children's experience of Religious Education will be little more than collecting unrelated bits of information.

Focusing on concepts furthers the aims of Religious Education by enabling pupils to:

- comprehend what it means to be a member of a religion by understanding the significance for the believer of their beliefs and practices;
- appreciate how the study of religion highlights key similarities and differences, which can form the basis of dialogue between religions;
- reflect on how the experience of being human is responded to and interpreted in the religions being studied.

By combining these three areas of conceptual study, pupils will be encouraged to:

- reflect on their own beliefs and attitudes;
- understand those who hold beliefs different from their own;
- find ways of working and living alongside those with different beliefs.

In Religious Education there are three types of concept pupils should encounter:

1. Concepts about the study of religion

There are some concepts which are common to most or all religions, though with different interpretation and application in each, e.g. Worship. These concepts can be found below.

2. Concepts central to human development

Some concepts represent the shared experience of human beings as spiritual and moral beings. They often lie at the heart of ultimate questions, e.g. Destiny. These concepts can also be found below.

3. Concepts distinctive of particular religions

Each religion has specific concepts which are central to any understanding of that religion, e.g. "Incarnation," in Christianity. "The Beginner's Guide to the Religions of the Agreed Syllabus" and the "Glossary of Religious Terms" found in the Support Materials, as well as text books related to particular religions, will be of help with religion-specific concepts.

Concept Clusters

1.) Concepts central to understanding religion

Key Concept: Transcendence	Including: god(s)	deity	providence
	supernatural	mystery	creation
	destiny	purposes	revelation
Belief	faith	knowledge	experience
	trust	doubt	quest
	searching	orthodox	liberal
	soul	spirit	morality
	wonder	awe	imminence
	sacred	reverence	respect
Worship	meditation	prayer	ceremony
	festival	praise	communication
	worth	reverence	priesthood
	ministry	ritual	commitment
Tradition	scripture	orthodox	liberal
	festival	symbol	language
	law	custom	responsibility
	congregation	sharing	belonging
	inclusion	exclusion	community
	identity	discipleship	authority
	accountability	inspiration	enlightenment
Morality	ethics	law	rules
	respect	tolerance	right
	wrong	good	evil

2.) Concepts central to human experience and questions about meaning and purpose

Key Concept:	Including:		
Commitment	purpose	dedication	discipleship
	motivation	guidance	authority
Suffering	evil	purpose	revelation
	martyrdom		
Identity	origin	purpose	destiny
	freedom	spirituality	
Interdependence	justice	friendship	family
	love	value	belonging
	participation	sharing	

NB Where some words appear in more than one cluster it is because the difference between concepts is sometimes not clear cut or because the words mean different things in different contexts.