



# The Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Northamptonshire

## Non-Statutory Exemplification (School Selected Unit)



**Title:** Questions about God: *How do a Christian's ideas about God compare with my own?*

**Year Group:** 1/2



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### **About this unit:**

This unit enables pupils to explore the concept of God for themselves and to consider what this concept might mean for Christians.

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 should also be 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, which 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 is a unit that can be selected by schools in addition to the mandatory units.**

This unit will help teachers to implement the Northamptonshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education by providing them with well worked examples of teaching and learning about the theme of Questions 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 builds upon the learning in the Foundation Stage and other Key Stage One units in which children are encouraged to talk about things that puzzle or interest them and links with the unit on "The Family in Judaism", where Jewish beliefs about God are introduced.

The unit anticipates a further study of what it means for believers to talk about God in other units in Key Stage Two and beyond.

**Estimated teaching time for this unit: 7 hours.** It is recognised that this unit may provide more teaching ideas than a class will cover in 7 hours. Teachers are invited to plan their own use of some of the learning ideas below, ensuring depth of learning rather than trying to cover everything, and to link with other curriculum areas as appropriate to maximise learning opportunities and experience.

## Key Fields of Enquiry addressed in this unit:

### AT 1: Learning about Religion and Belief

- Beliefs, Values and Teaching
- Ways of Expressing Meaning

### AT 2: Learning from Religion and Belief

- Questions of Meaning, Purpose and Truth

### The core RE concepts that the unit develops are:

- **Beliefs** (a belief in God is central to Christianity and other religions);
- **Prayer** (Christians talk to God through prayer, as do many other faiths);
- **Spirituality** (exploring children's own beliefs about the existence of a 'higher being').

### Attitudes Focus

This unit will help pupils to 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 for pupils:

- To consider the concept of God;
- To consider a diverse range of views about the characteristics of God from the study of Christianity, with some reference to other faith traditions;
- To engage in a range of learning activities including using artefacts, ICT, circle time and reflection.

### Background information for the teacher:

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 that children might tackle in this area is 'A Child Sees God' (Worsley 2009, published by Jessica Kingsley). 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 etc. 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.

Vocabulary & Concepts	Resources
<p><b>In this unit, pupils will have an opportunity to use words and phrases related to:</b></p> <p><b>Christianity</b> God Heaven Prayer Reflection Spirit Trinity</p>	<p><b>Teachers might use:</b></p> <p><b>Web</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) has excellent web starting points for these issues: <a href="http://www.natre.org.uk/spiritedarts">www.natre.org.uk/spiritedarts</a> enables pupils to view and judge numerous works of pupil art on key Biblical stories and spiritual ideas from young people.</li><li>• Online searchable sacred texts from different religions at: <a href="http://www.ishwar.com">www.ishwar.com</a></li><li>• Try <a href="http://www.reonline.org.uk">www.reonline.org.uk</a> for a good general gateway to RE materials.</li></ul> <p><b>Books</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Step into Story</i> by Margaret Spivey and Anna Jean pub. Barnabas ISBN 9 781841 010021</li><li>• <i>God made me – touch, feel and see!</i> by Priddy Bicknell pub Scripture Union ISBN 1 85999 735 X</li></ul>

- *Teaching RE: God 5 – 11* CEM 1-85100-088-7
- *Teaching RE: Christianity 5 – 11* CEM 1-85100-113-1
- *Postcards from the classroom* RE Today, Spring 2001, p.41
- *God made us – touch, feel and see!* by Priddy Bicknell pub Scripture Union ISBN 1 85999 736 8
- *Best Loved Parables: Stories Jesus Told* by Lois Rock pub Lion Children's Books ISBN 0 7459 4638 0
- PCET, Folens and Nelson publish some useful photo/picture packs on particular religions
- *Praying Their Faith* pub. RE Today: contains examples of prayers from the major world faiths
- The Solihull Handbooks of RE (Foundation Stage or Key Stage 1) are an excellent practical source for much of this work: from Solihull SACRE, 0121 303 1986, £25 each
- *In the beginning* Steve Turner (Poem about creation)
- *Reflective Story Telling: A manual for teachers* by Helen Matter
- *The World that God Made* – Jan Godfrey and Peter Adderley – A.D. Publishing
- *Colours of God* Diana Murrie, pub. BRF ISBN841012408
- *Learning about God & Learning about Prayer* Lois Rock & Maureen Galvani pub LION ISBN 0745947328 & 0745947352
- Godly Play is a creative way of telling Bible stories. For more information see [www.godlyplay.org.uk](http://www.godlyplay.org.uk)
- *Spirituality in Children* – Rebecca Nye
- *RE Today –Picturing Creation* – Pictures for IWB on CD and posters showing each day of creation. ISBN 1904024580
- CD Rom –*Cracking Christianity – God* – The Stapleford Centre
- *Gift to the Child* CD Rom – Series 1 & 2 available from Articles of Faith

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

- Opportunities for **spiritual development** come from reflecting on their understanding of God;
- Opportunities for **social development** come from listening to the ideas and thoughts of others.

<p><b>EXPECTATIONS:</b>  <b>At the end of this unit....</b></p>		
<p><b>Pupils working at level 1 will be able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use their senses to explore and ask questions about religious stories, pictures and artefacts. (AT1)</li> <li>• Identify simply some of the ways in which Christians describe the characteristics of God. (AT1)</li> <li>• <i>Express in simple terms their own thoughts about God. (AT2)</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Pupils working at level 2 will be able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retell a story from the Bible that helps Christians understand a characteristic of God. (AT1)</li> <li>• Describe what messages and meanings are expressed through some religious symbols. (AT1)</li> <li>• <i>Express some reasons for their current thinking about God. (AT2)</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Pupils working at level 3 will be able to</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make connections between a religious story and some religious beliefs. (AT1)</li> <li>• Make links between religious symbols or stories and beliefs that underlie them. (AT1)</li> <li>• <i>Compare their own ideas about questions of belief in God with those of other people. (AT2)</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>ASSESSMENT SUGGESTIONS</b></p> <p>A formal assessment of each pupil is neither required nor desirable for every RE unit. Continuing use of Assessment for Learning methods is best.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 answers, art or choosing some words from a list / simple written work.</p> <p><i>Higher attaining pupils: To extend this work, ask pupils to consider <b>why</b> Christians might attribute various characteristics to God and how they express their beliefs about God.</i></p>		

## UNIT TITLE: Questions about God: How do my ideas about God compare with my friend's?

**Key Question: *What do I think about God?***

Learning Objectives	Suggested Teaching and Learning	Learning Outcomes	Points to note
<p>To show awareness of the possibility of 'seeing' something that isn't there.</p> <p>To be aware that not everyone sees things in the same way.</p> <p>To begin to express their own reactions and ideas about 'God'.</p>	<p>Play a game of 'I-spy' - the pupils close their eyes and try to 'see' what they think is being described by the teacher. This helps to get across the idea that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sometimes we can 'see' things in our heads which we can't always see with our eyes;</li> <li>• sometimes using the same information people 'see' different things.</li> </ul> <p>Demonstrate with sugar/water. We can taste but can't see the sugar.</p> <p>Play some peaceful background music. Ask pupils to draw (or write adjectives, depending on the age/ability of the group) their idea of who God is or what they think he might look like. This could be helped with the starter sentence: "<i>I think God...</i>" You could also give pupils a list of words that others use about God and ask them to choose some: loving, puzzling, mysterious, great, kind, not real, everywhere, scary, interesting.</p> <p>Share ideas, reflect and create lists of questions about God. Explore the difficulty we have answering questions about God.</p> <p><b><i>(Link with Family in Judaism unit to avoid repetition of same task).</i></b></p>	<p><i>I can talk about my ideas of what God looks like. (AT2 L1)</i></p> <p><i>I can suggest three words to describe God. (AT2 L2)</i></p>	<p><i>A creative approach to the use of language is good here.</i></p> <p><i>Be aware that Muslim pupils are not allowed to draw Allah or Allah's creations. Ask pupils to represent their ideas with pattern and words.</i></p>

**Key Question: *What characteristics do I think God has?***

Learning Objectives	Suggested Teaching and Learning	Learning Outcomes	Points to note
<p>To thoughtfully express adjectives to describe characteristics of God.</p> <p>To begin to show awareness that different people 'see' God in different ways.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seat the pupils in a circle and play a game: <i>If God was a flower / food / colour / plant / animal, what sort of flower (etc) would God be?</i> Give pupils suggestions using a bank of words of types of flowers or clothes (etc) and some colour and texture words.</li> <li>• Using talk partners, ask pupils to complete the sentences e.g. <i>If God were an item of clothing (a food, a building, an animal, a colour), what would he be?</i></li> <li>• Pupils could draw the item of clothing/building/ food and write 2 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.</li> <li>• 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 was an item of clothing, God would be a woolly jumper because God is all around you keeping you warm.")</li> <li>• Give the pupils the chance to compare their answers with each other to reinforce that different people have different ideas and reasons.</li> </ul>	<p><i>I can talk about my ideas of God's characteristics (AT2 L1)</i></p> <p><i>I can suggest reasons why I think God has certain characteristics (AT2 L2)</i></p> <p><i>I can make comparisons between my ideas about God and my friend's ideas (AT2 L3)</i></p>	<p><i>Cross-curricular links to Literacy – use of adjectives.</i></p>

**Key Question: *What do we mean by 'God'?***

Learning Objectives	Suggested Teaching and Learning	Learning Outcomes	Points to note
<p>To consider for themselves what they know and understand about God.</p> <p>To show understanding of belief in things that cannot be seen.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask the pupils for their ideas, descriptions and beliefs about God.</li> <li>• Talk about everyday examples of belief in things which cannot be seen, and the grounds for such beliefs.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Explore 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.</li> <li>– Blowing bubbles – what are they?</li> <li>– Explore electricity by making simple circuits, switching on lights and electrical equipment.</li> <li>– Use a hair dryer to make something warm or to make it move.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 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 effect can be seen.</li> </ul>	<p><i>I can talk about what I believe about God (AT2 L1)</i></p> <p><i>I can identify what my beliefs about God are, and suggest why I hold this view (AT2 L3)</i></p>	<p><i>Cross-curricular links to science.</i></p>

**Key Question: *What do Christians say God is like?***

Learning Objectives	Suggested Teaching and Learning	Learning Outcomes	Points to note
<p>To consider what Christians think about God.</p> <p>To consider some features of a religious life.</p>	<p>Explore these as separate themes relating to Christian beliefs about God:</p> <p><b>i. God as Love.</b> 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 ‘Guess how much I love you?’ 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. (Link with “Books and Stories in Christianity” unit).</p> <p><b>ii. God as Father.</b> 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.</p> <p><b>iii. God as Light.</b> Show the pupils a collection of different sorts of candles. Talk about when candles are used – birthday cakes, power cuts etc. 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 having something happy and positive is 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, perhaps, if appropriate, saying prayers and letting go of our fears.</p>	<p>I can tell someone the ways that Christians view God (from the ways studied). (AT1 L1)</p> <p>I can identify two ways that Christians view God. (AT1 L2)</p> <p><i>I can respond sensitively to Christian stories about God, noticing what makes God so special to them.</i> (AT2 L2)</p> <p>I can describe and link up Christian beliefs with Christian behaviour e.g. God created the world, so they must look after it to show respect to God. (AT1 L3)</p>	<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 difficult in some schools, so it might be more appropriate to use the term ‘parent’ or ‘carer’</i></p> <p><i>If other faiths are represented in the class, the teacher might want to encourage children to compare that Christian view with their faith’s view – this would help them</i></p>

	<p><b>iv. God as Creator.</b> Read one of the many versions of the creation story now available for KS1. Use the pictures from RE Today – <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> <p>Share the book ‘<i>Thinking about God</i>’ with pupils. This summarises Christian views about the nature of God in a way Key Stage One pupils can appreciate. Different people seeing God in different ways can be explored through the story: ‘The telly and the elephant story’ (see Resource list).</p>		<p><i>work towards a level 3.</i></p>
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**Key Question: *What do Christians mean by 'Trinity'? How can God be three and one?***

Learning Objectives	Suggested Teaching and Learning	Learning Outcomes	Points to note
<p>To know about the Christian belief of God as three in one.</p> <p>To reflect on their lives and the relationships they have.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher brings in photographs or objects that illustrate how they are known in 3 different ways – maybe Aunt, Mum and Sister.</li> <li>• Prepare a number of cards with words on, such as pupil, friend, boy, girl, sister, brother, son, daughter, Beaver, Rainbow and so on. Talk to the children about the cards. Which ones apply to them? The children then, with help if necessary, select the cards or words that apply to them; prepare an outline of a human shape with spaces for the cards or with spaces that the children could copy the words onto. The children could then draw their face onto the image.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This could be extended by talking about the different ways they feel, sometimes happy, sometimes sad, tired, enthusiastic, bored, frightened etc. No matter how they feel they are still the same person.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Explain that even though Christians say God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, they believe that God is one. Illustrate this concept further with water, steam and ice - one and the same but seen in 3 different ways.</li> <li>• Make a sorting game by drawing a large circle, divided into thirds, with the words 'Christians believe in one God' at the top of it. Have a selection of symbols used by Christians to represent God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. In small groups, the pupils sort the cards into the three sections, talking about why they think they should go into that particular section.</li> </ul>	<p>I can recognise some symbols that Christians use. (AT1 L1)</p> <p><i>I can talk about the different ways that people see me. (AT2 L1)</i></p> <p>I can suggest the beliefs that some Christians symbols represent. (AT1 L2)</p> <p>I can describe what the Trinity means for Christians. (AT1 L3)</p>	<p><i>Although the Trinity is a difficult concept to grasp, pupils at KS1 can easily be introduced to the idea of something being one yet seen in three different ways.</i></p> <p><i>Suitable symbols</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>God the Father: caring hand</i></li> <li>• <i>God the Son: cross, crucifix, lamb, candle</i></li> <li>• <i>God the Holy Spirit: dove, flames</i></li> </ul>

**Key Question: How do Christians believe they can talk with God?**

Learning Objectives	Suggested Teaching and Learning	Learning Outcomes	Points to note
<p>To know some of the artefacts religious people might use when they talk to God.</p> <p>To recognise that prayer is a way religious believers can communicate with God.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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, e-mail, videos, text messages etc.</li> <li>• 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 etc</li> <li>• Explain that Christians and other religious people want to talk to their God. <b>What is praying? Why do Christians like to pray?</b></li> <li>• Have a collection of artefacts available – e.g. rosary, candles, prayer mat, prayer books, incense etc. 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.</li> <li>• Place 3 or 4 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?</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<p>I can talk about a rosary/candle/prayer book/incense stick saying where I might find this and how a Christian might use it. (AT1 L1)</p> <p>I can give a reason why a Christian might use a rosary/candle/prayer book/incense stick when they pray. (AT1 L2)</p> <p>I can suggest the difference praying makes to a Christian's life. (AT1 L3)</p>	<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.</i></p> <p><i>Good for Thinking Skills as pupils explore artefacts and decide how they think they might be used.</i></p>

**Key Question: *What have we learned in this unit?***

Learning Objectives	Suggested Teaching and Learning	Learning Outcomes	Points to note
<p>To express ideas and questions more deeply as a result of thinking about God and prayer.</p> <p>To be able to respond sensitively to Christian ideas about God and prayer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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 blu tac or plasticine is good to hold them). Get an assistant (or do this yourself) to have a lighter ready.</li> <li>• Recap with the pupils 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.</li> <li>• 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?</li> <li>• Ask the pupils 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.</li> <li>• Finish the activity with a short time of silence for pupils to look at the candles and be thoughtful.</li> </ul>	<p><i>I can talk about what I believe about God. (AT2 L1)</i></p> <p><i>I can identify what my beliefs about God are, and suggest why I hold this view. (AT2 L3)</i></p>	<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>