



# The Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Northamptonshire

## Non-Statutory Exemplification (School Selected Unit)



**God in the Volcano, by Amy, age 10.**

“My picture shows people searching for God. He is in the volcano, and when it erupts it is his huge love. He loves every one of us. The black is to show what we are like and the light and colours are for his forgiveness”.

**Celebrating Patterns, by Anna, age 8.**

“My picture is based on the theme of Divali lights. I am very proud of this picture because I like the way the colours blend into the background and the start of the pattern, where the orange starts and the white fits into the spaces. I like the eye, because it looks as if it is staring at you. It's like the Rangoli patterns of Divali. God's eyes see everything.”



**Title:** Light and Dark: *What do these symbols mean?*

**Year group:** 3/4



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### About this unit:

This unit explores the symbolism of Light and Darkness, asking: How do religious people use these symbols? Pupils will enquire into the ways different religions use the symbols of light and darkness in their celebrations, rituals and worship, and their ways of talking about God and ideas about good and evil. Using art and story, pupils learn about the nature of symbolism. They have opportunities to examine some abstract concepts simply and to respond for themselves with creative work.

The focus is on common ground between religions and their symbols, as well as on the distinctiveness of different faiths. Pupils are asked to enquire and think for themselves about questions to do with light, darkness, goodness, evil and symbolism. Pupils are encouraged to consider what can be learned from a range of symbolic uses of light and to think about examples from different faiths, linking these 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 symbolism with focus on different religions and links to children's own experiences.

By engaging with the concept of symbolism, and by expressing experiences and ideas, pupils will clarify their own thinking.

This unit contributes to the continuity and progression of pupils' learning by furthering their understanding of specific aspects of Christianity and Judaism that they will have encountered in Key Stage One. The focus on understanding symbolism and making links from symbols to beliefs also anticipates a further study during Key Stages Two and Three.

**Estimated teaching time for this unit: 7-10 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 covering everything, and linking with other areas of the curriculum where appropriate to maximise learning opportunities and experiences.

### Key Fields of Enquiry addressed in this unit:

#### AT1: Learning about Religion and Belief

- Religious Practices and Ways of Life
- 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:**

**Belief** – (Celebration of festivals reminds people of important beliefs);

**Tradition** – (Participation in festivals and celebration reinforces religious traditions and customs);

**Identity** – (Taking part in a festival/celebration can give people a sense of belonging).

### **Attitudes Focus**

Pupils will explore attitudes of:

- **Self awareness** by becoming increasingly tuned in to the meanings and importance of their own ideas and beliefs;
- **Respect for all** by developing a willingness to learn from the religions they study and to reflect on ideas about symbolism and good and evil from religions they do not follow;
- **Appreciation and wonder** by developing their capacity to respond to symbol, and the sense of occasion that festivals bring.

### **The unit will provide these opportunities for pupils:**

- To consider the concept of symbolism through numerous examples;
- To consider a diverse range of views about questions of good and evil;
- From the study of different faiths, pupils will be able to think about their own experiences, symbols and understanding of light and dark, good and evil;
- Experiences and opportunities include reflection, creative activities, thinking skills, a range of literacy styles and ICT.

### **Background information for the teacher:**

Many religious traditions use the symbolism of light and darkness to explore and express ideas about good and evil, truth and falsehood and spiritual awakening.

- In Christian thinking, Jesus is 'the light of the world' and it is God who says 'let there be light' to create the Earth. Light symbolises goodness in many festivals, acts of worship and rituals, from the candles of baptism and advent to tree lights at Christmas or the star of Bethlehem.
- Hindu practice celebrates light over darkness, good over evil, especially at the festival of Diwali, which is a festival of lights. The Diwali lamps that light the road as Sita and Rama return safe at the end of the Diwali story show the symbolism of light as guidance.
- In Judaism, the festival of Hanukkah retells the story of miraculous light from the time of the Maccabees. God gives a miracle of light to his people. In the synagogue, the Ner Tamid, eternal light, symbolises the presence of the Almighty and the value of the Torah
- Among people who are spiritual, but not religious, the symbolism of light is often found in the seasons of the year, the turn of the earth every 24 hours and the metaphors we use to describe learning.

Vocabulary & concepts	Resources
<p>In this unit, pupils will have an opportunity to use words and phrases related to:</p> <p><b>Christianity</b> Easter Light of the World Resurrection</p> <p><b>Judaism</b> Hanukkah Maccabees</p> <p><b>Hinduism</b> Divali Lakshmi Rama Rangoli Sita</p> <p><b>Religious Studies</b> Celebration Festival Miracle Symbolism</p>	<p><b>Teachers might use:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BBC Broadcasts and videos: Watch (faith stories on Judaism), Pathways of Belief (two programmes on Judaism, two on Hinduism from Summer 2001)</li> <li>• Channel 4 Learning videos and books include: 'Quest – Animated World Faiths: The Ramayana' (storybook and video, useful for teaching about Divali)</li> <li>• Art uses light in many ways in the Christian tradition. Good resources which include traditional and contemporary pictures are: The Art of Faith, The Story of the Bible Through the Eyes of Great Artists by Keith White (Paternoster Publishing, ISBN 1 85608 309 8), Picturing Jesus: A Picture Pack (RE Today, ISBN RE Today, ISBN 1 85100 142 5), and Jesus Through Art (RMEP, ISBN 1 85175 119 X), The Bible Through Art (RMEP, ISBN 1 85175 215 3) both by Margaret Cooling</li> <li>• 'Exploring Celebrations: how and why are religious festivals important?' (RE Today 2008)</li> <li>• 'Special Times: learning about and learning from religious festivals' (RE Today 2004)</li> <li>• 'How &amp; Why Do Hindus and Sikhs Celebrate Divali?' J Mead (Step-up Religion series; Evans 2008)</li> <li>• World of Festivals series (Evans 2002)</li> <li>• A Year of Religious Festivals series (Hodder Wayland. The RE Today catalogue contains a variety of publications relevant to this unit including 'Developing Primary RE: Christmas' which has a section on William Holman Hunt's painting 'Light of the World')</li> <li>• PCET, Folens and Nelson publish some useful photo / picture packs on particular religions. Look for photos that show light being used in worship and celebration</li> </ul> <p><b>Web</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RE Quest - <a href="http://www.request.org.uk">www.request.org.uk</a> is a good site for KS2 pupils to explore Christianity</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.mandirnet.org">www.mandirnet.org</a> – Hindu temples</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.jewish.co.uk">www.jewish.co.uk</a> – A gateway site for Judaism</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.gallery.euroweb.hu">www.gallery.euroweb.hu</a> is an online database of thousands of paintings (over 11, 600 painted between 1150 and 1800), all digitally reproduced</li> <li>• The National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) has two 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 topics like vision, spiritual life and celebration</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>Contributions to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for <b>spiritual development</b> come from thinking about spiritual stories, ultimate questions and beliefs about life after death;</li> <li>• Opportunities for <b>moral development</b> come from considering the consequences of actions in the stories of Easter, and from exploring the concepts of commitment and sacrifice;</li> <li>• Opportunities for <b>cultural development</b> come from engaging with the art, music and dance of festivities from different cultures.</li> </ul>	

<b>EXPECTATIONS: At the end of this unit....</b>		
<p>Pupils working at level 2 will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retell religious stories and identify some religious beliefs. (AT1)</li> <li>• Suggest meanings in religious symbol, especially those associated with light and darkness. (AT1)</li> <li>• Identify some simple similarities between the use of the symbol of light in different faiths. (AT1)</li> <li>• Respond sensitively to the symbols other people use and treasure. (AT2)</li> </ul>	<p>Pupils working at level 3 will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the teaching of two different religions about light and dark, good and evil (AT1)</li> <li>• Use religious or spiritual vocabulary about symbolism to describe the meanings of light in different festivals. (AT1)</li> <li>• <i>Make links between symbols and stories with reference to two different festivals or celebrations. (AT2)</i></li> <li>• <i>Make links between religious symbols, language and stories and the beliefs or ideas which underlie them. (AT2;</i></li> <li>• <i>Compare their own and others' experiences and feelings. (AT2)</i></li> </ul>	<p>Pupils working at level 4 will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a widening religious vocabulary to show that they understand how symbols of light and dark carry meaning in different festivals. (AT1)</li> <li>• Use the vocabulary learned in RE to show their understanding of links between light and dark, good and evil. (AT1)</li> <li>• <i>Apply ideas from different religions for themselves to make sense of symbolism. (AT2)</i></li> <li>• <i>Show how religious beliefs, ideas and feelings can be expressed in various ways and give meanings for some symbols, language and stories. (AT2)</i></li> </ul>

### **ASSESSMENT SUGGESTIONS**

*A formal assessment of each pupil 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.*

#### **Example Task A:**

Ask pupils to write acrostic poems using the letters of the words 'LIGHT' and 'DARKNESS' about their own feelings connected with these states, and about the feelings religious believers might associate with each of the states. Ask them to create acrostics that use the names of festivals of light as well: EASTER / DIVALI / HANUKKAH are good examples, but RESURRECTION / RAMA and SITA and CANDLE LAMPS can be used for flexibility as well.

#### **Example Task B:**

Use a structured reflection, giving pupils clip art outlines of a candle, a light bulb, a searchlight and / or a lighthouse. Ask pupils to show in the words and symbols by which they decorate and complete these outlines 4 things that 'light up' their life. Look for description, links to religious ideas and understanding to assess this work.

## Unit Title: Light and Dark: *What do these symbols mean?*

**Key Question:** *Why is light so often used as a symbol for goodness and truth?*

Learning Objectives	Suggested Teaching and Learning	Learning Outcomes	Points to note
<p>To understand how the symbols of light and dark are used, with examples from worship, sacred texts, festivals and art work.</p> <p>To express their own ideas about darkness and light in varied ways.</p>	<p><b>What does light mean to us?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Class discussion on the significance of light in everyday life - Why do we have lights in our houses? Why do we have lights in the streets? Arrange an atmospheric display of light, for example, use fairy lights in a darkened room, or an optic fibre lamp. How do the children feel 1) in the dark 2) in the light? Why are some people afraid of the dark?</li> <li>Broaden the use of lights by talking about lighthouses, and the concept of light being not only a comfort, but also a safety factor. Lights can also be used for celebrations e.g. at Christmas time, at Divali, and for parties. Compare electric light and candlelight, and discuss shadows. Refer to Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole, who were familiar and welcome nurses, usually pictured holding lamps. Notice that we sometimes put celebrities 'in the spotlight' and we think that our heroes 'light up our lives'. Get children to play around with this kind of imagery and language.</li> </ul> <p><b>What can we express about light and darkness in a class collage?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide large sheets of paper, scissors, glue and newspapers and magazines. Encourage pupils in groups to create or contribute to a collage on the contrasting theme of light and dark: imagine that the top left corner of the paper represents the negative, and the bottom right corner represents the positive. How will they show the continuum? Do light and darkness merge?</li> <li>Pupils could also draw on the words and images from the religions they have studied. Use the collages as a basis for discussion: We all have tensions in our own lives which arise either from the situations we find ourselves in, or</li> </ul>	<p>I can retell a story about a time when being afraid of the dark was not so bad. (AT1 L2)</p> <p><i>I can respond sensitively to symbolic ideas of light and darkness.</i> (AT2 L2)</p> <p>I can describe the emotions connected with light and dark. (AT1 L3)</p> <p>I can connect what I know about festivals with the symbols of light and dark. (AT1 L3)</p> <p><i>I can give diverse</i></p>	<p><i>Catalogues from the mail order firms are often very useful for the collage work here: they may have a whole section selling different kinds of lights!</i></p> <p><i>Literacy links are strong in this opening session, and can be formalised. Words and phrases that make metaphors from light are at the heart of the intention to develop symbolic understanding of</i></p>

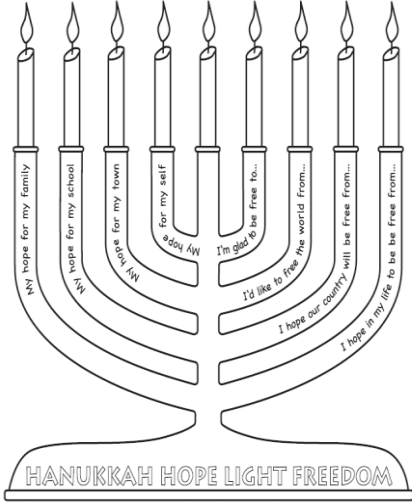
	<p>from our own conflicting thoughts. These tensions influence our choices and behaviour: what helps us to choose the positive rather than the negative, the light rather than the dark? At what point on the continuum would pupils place their feelings in certain situations, or at certain times in the day?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link this work to Literacy and consider words like 'enlightened' 'illuminated' and phrases like 'the light went on', 'the light at the end of the tunnel' 'light up your life' and others, including some in songs. What does light stand for, mean or symbolise in these examples?</li> </ul>	<p><i>ideas about what "lights up our lives" showing understanding. (AT2 L4)</i></p>	<p><i>the concepts of light and dark.</i></p>
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**Key Question: How and why do Hindu people use light as a symbol when they celebrate Divali?**

Learning Objectives	Suggested Teaching and Learning	Learning Outcomes	Points to note
<p>To develop understanding of symbolism in Divali lights.</p> <p>To develop skills in linking stories, religious celebrations and meanings so that pupils can describe festive practices and give a widening range of meanings for symbols.</p>	<p><b>What does light mean for Hindus?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give each pupil an outline of a Diva lamp, with a flame burning. Ask them to choose three emotional words that describe how light in darkness makes people feel.</li> <li>• Read or watch a video of the Ramayana story of Rama and Sita and plot a feelings graph on the continuum picture: When might Rama and Sita have felt 'light'? When might they have felt 'dark'? Talk about the use of light and dark imagery in stories to represent good and evil. Pupils could draw a cartoon strip of the story, using appropriate symbolic colours to represent light / good and dark / evil.</li> <li>• Teach the class about the use of lights, divas and fireworks in Divali celebrations. Local examples of 'Divali nights' are best. Ask them to think about Divali as a time when light wins over darkness and goodness wins over evil. Do these ideas link up to the story of Rama and Sita? Do they link up to pupils' own ideas, or to other stories they know?</li> <li>• Give pupils an outline of a string or row of lights ('Divali' means 'row of lights') Ask them to think of all the different meanings that the symbol of light has for them, and write in one word to go with each of the lights in their row. Then ask them to tell a partner about the words they chose, and give experiences of their own: when did light win over darkness for them?</li> <li>• You could collect all the 'row of lights' images and words and make a class display of them around the walls. As Divali lights are often used to mark a pathway along the ground, why not make the display along the corridor in school, with the lights at low level? Mounting them on yellow, orange and red cards or paper will make them stand out. This activity can be run by 7-9s for pupils who are 4-5 years old to enjoy.</li> </ul>	<p>I can retell a story about Divali. (AT1 L2)</p> <p><i>I can respond with good thinking to incidents and characters in the story. (AT2 L2)</i></p> <p>I can describe the festivities and stories of Divali. (AT1 L3)</p> <p><i>I can connect the 'big days' of the Hindu year with some 'big days' in my own life. (AT2 L3)</i></p> <p>I can give diverse concepts and ideas to show my understanding of ideas about Divali and its significance.(AT1 L4)</p>	<p><i>Local celebrations are always more vibrant: there are plenty in Wellingborough and Northampton (and Leicester) to make this learning experience close to home.</i></p> <p><i>The thinking skills in the 'feelings graph' activity are very important in this work: it makes pupils into interpreters of the story rather than mere re-tellers. Give some time to this.</i></p>



**Key Questions: How and why do Jewish people celebrate the festival of Hanukkah?  
What part do candles play in the festivities?**

Learning Objectives	Suggested Teaching and Learning	Learning Outcomes	Points to note
<p>To learn to describe and understand the festival of Hanukkah and make links from the festival to the symbolism of light.</p> <p>To express ideas of their own about the symbolism of hope, freedom and light.</p>	<p><b>What does light mean for Jews?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tell the story of Hanukkah, “The Festival of Lights”, a winter festival, which usually falls in December and which lasts for 8 days. Using a Hanukkah, explain how the festival is celebrated with each candle being lit on each day of the festival. Explain the role of the servant candle, to light all the others. Who lights up our lives?</li> <li>▪ Children can act the story and present it. What do the children think the story tells us about God and his concern for the Jews? Make Hanukkah shapes from sugar paper and cut out flame shapes to go on the top of each branch: in the flame shapes pupils could write the names of things or people which are ‘the light of my life...’ Hopes or freedoms for which they are grateful could be articulated and explored in a similar way.</li> <li>▪ The outline drawing (from RE Today’s book ‘Exploring Celebrations’) enables pupils to think about their own hopes and their own sense of freedom allowed or denied, and encourages them to make links to the story from their own experiences. It can be used to conclude the teaching sequence.</li> <li>▪ Encourage the pupils to use the vocabulary of the festival to show their understanding of a range of the meanings of Hanukkah and apply ideas like remembrance, celebration or liberation to their own lives and thoughts.</li> <li>▪ Pupils could also create a dance, a movement pattern based on the theme of light, making flame shapes.</li> <li>▪ Look at the Genesis creation story and its use of light and dark imagery: pupils could put the story to music, deciding how they will create sounds to represent light and dark.</li> </ul>	<p>I can retell a story of Hanukkah. (AT1 L2)</p> <p><i>I can respond to the characters in the story simply. (AT2 L2)</i></p> <p>I can describe the use of light and its meaning in celebrating Hanukkah. (AT1 L3)</p> <p>I can make links between ideas about hope and freedom and the symbols of light (AT1 L3)</p> <p><i>I can give a range of different examples of the meanings of the festival. (AT2 L4)</i></p>	 <p><i>This outline asks pupils to think about four things that they hope for and four freedoms they value – it is not a Hanukkah, but rather enables learning from Hanukkah</i></p>

**Key Questions: *In what ways do Christians use light as a symbol? How and why?***

Learning Objectives	Suggested Teaching and Learning	Learning Outcomes	Points to note
<p>To further develop the ability to make links between stories, sayings and religious beliefs and festive practices.</p> <p>To consider the links between their own ideas about light and darkness and those held by Christians.</p> <p>To deepen their understanding of why and how symbols of light are full of meaning in Christianity, making links to Christian belief about Jesus.</p>	<p><b>What does light mean for Christians?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin by using some candles to create an atmosphere: When have pupils enjoyed candle light? What kinds of emotion and feeling go with the lights? When people want to think deeply, what kinds of lighting are helpful? Why do we use different kinds of lights for different occasions and moods?</li> <li>• Look at images of Jesus in art which use light to show that Christians believe he was special e.g. nativity scenes, those where people are depicted with halos, the star as a guiding light.</li> <li>• Look at 'The Light of the World', a famous painting by William Holman Hunt and discuss the symbolism in the painting. In what ways do Christians think Jesus is the light of the world? (Beliefs include: The light of Jesus' goodness banishes the darkness of sin or wrong-doing; He brings 'light' to people's lives e.g. hope, love, faith. He brings 'light' to the world e.g. peace, forgiveness. He brings 'light' to the Church e.g. showing people the way, the right path to follow).</li> <li>• Teach pupils about the celebration of Easter, for example in the Orthodox Church. (Some Orthodox congregations of Christians meet in Northamptonshire.) At midnight on the Saturday before Easter Sunday, with all lights extinguished, a service to remember Jesus' death paves the way for the celebration of his resurrection, when candle lamps are lit. Some other Christians plan a sunrise service for Easter morning – there is often one at 5.30 am in a local park. Why? Discuss with pupils the importance</li> </ul>	<p>I can retell a story about Christmas, picking out the parts to do with light and darkness. (AT1 L2)</p> <p>I can respond to the symbolism in designing a Christmas card. (AT1 L2)</p> <p>I can describe the meaning of light for Christians in relation to belief about Jesus. (AT1 L3)</p> <p><i>I can give diverse ideas about the significance of light in the celebrations of Christmas and the metaphor of light in my own identity. (AT2 L4)</i></p>	<p><i>SEAL programmes develop emotional literacy by widening the range of vocabulary children can use to talk about and describe feelings. There is an obvious and powerful link to this lesson.</i></p> <p><i>Try to let this work be fun: at one level, metaphors in RE are about 'playing around' with language</i></p>

	<p>of light as a symbol for resurrection, and compare the beliefs about life after death that Christians hold with some other ideas.</p> <p><b>Guiding lights: Jesus for the Christians, and who for us?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explore the idea that Jesus is like a light to his followers.</li><li>• Who are our guiding lights? Make a display: give each pupil a star shape, with five points. Ask them to choose the names of five people who have been guiding lights to them, or who have 'lit up their lives'. Decorate the stars in illuminating ways, and create a mobile from the learning from Christianity activity. Ask them for reasons why they chose these five people.</li></ul>		
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**Key Question: What have we learned from Hindus, Christians and Jews about the symbolism of light?**

Learning Objectives	Suggested Teaching and Learning	Learning Outcomes	Points to note
<p>To express their own ideas about light and darkness and associated concepts (e.g. truth, fear, ignorance, warmth).</p> <p>To reflect on their own experience of light and darkness, expressing their ideas creatively.</p>	<p><b>What lights are good symbols for me in my life?</b>            Ask pupils to create a list of ten lights that mean something to them – Christmas tree lights, torches when you are camping, a bedside light, Divali candles, the floodlights at the Sixfields Stadium. Each list is to be personal. Call these lists '10 lights that have lit up my life so far' and ask pupils to give a reason for their choice in each case.</p> <p><b>What can we learn from the ways religious people use light as a symbol?</b>            Review carefully the work done from different religious communities and their use of symbolic light above. Ask children to pick out their favourite uses of light from the different traditions. Why is darkness sometimes scary and light comforting? Why is darkness sometimes like ignorance and light like the truth? Why is darkness sometimes to do with pain and light to do with comfort? What other symbols can the children remember or develop?</p> <p><b>Acrostic poetry:</b>            Ask pupils to write acrostic poems using the letters of the words 'LIGHT' and 'DARKNESS' about their own feelings connected with these states, and about the feelings religious believers might associate with each of the states. Ask them to create acrostics that use the names of festivals of light as well: EASTER / DIVALI / HANUKKAH are good examples, but RESURRECTION / RAMA and SITA and CANDLE LAMPS can be used for flexibility as well.</p>	<p>I can suggest meanings in religious symbols associated with light and darkness. (AT1 L2)</p> <p><i>I can make links between religious symbols of light and darkness and my own experiences. (AT2 L3)</i></p> <p>I can show how religious beliefs, ideas and feelings associated with light and darkness can be expressed in various ways. (AT1 L4)</p>	<p><i>An assessment need not be formal, but this last lesson provides an excellent opportunity to collect some evidence of achievement. It also makes a good focus for some whole class display work. Both of these focuses can be good motivators.</i></p>

	<p><b>Is it true that light conquers darkness?</b> Go to the darkest place in the school with the class, and sit quietly to experience the dark for a few seconds. Light a match, then a candle, and then use torches or bigger lights to illuminate everything. Consider together the value of light in our lives. Give each pupil an outline of a candle, with a large flame shape above it. Ask them to choose words, or write a poem to go in the flame shape.</p>		
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