



## Appendix 5 Improving learning in RE

## How to make learning more enjoyable in RE: Excellence and Enjoyment

<b>Excellence and Enjoyment: Applying the DFES/DCFS Primary Strategy to Religious Education</b>	<b>Implications for RE in Wakefield: This will mean:</b>
Provides a framework for learning and teaching: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Skills,</li> <li>■ Knowledge,</li> <li>■ Understanding.</li> </ul>	Teachers will apply the skills, knowledge and understanding of the RE programme of study to enable pupils to show what they can do, know and understand about religions, and their learning from religion.
What? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Curriculum purpose – meeting the varied needs of all pupils – outcome focused – raising standards</li> <li>■ Curriculum content – rich and wide-ranging – flexibility, freedom and fun!</li> <li>■ Curriculum outcome – assessment for learning – how do we know we are making a difference?</li> </ul>	The syllabus describes purposes, content and outcomes in depth, and is supported by the guidance schemes of work in detail.
Who? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Pupil focused</li> <li>■ Staff enabling</li> <li>■ Parental involvement</li> <li>■ Collaborative group learning</li> <li>■ Organisational learning</li> <li>■ Learning networks</li> </ul>	RE teaching and learning will take these six principles into account, especially in building links with local religious communities, and making use of parental involvement where possible.
What? Creating a Curriculum that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Motivates and challenges – encourages learning by discovery</li> <li>■ Embraces imagination and creativity</li> <li>■ Involves children in practical experiences</li> <li>■ Provides a range of worthwhile opportunities</li> </ul>	Learning in RE will be matched carefully to pupils' needs and prior experience.  Teachers will confidently handle religious materials so that pupils learn in engaging and enriched ways.  Assessment in RE will have a light touch, and a strong emphasis on developing shared (pupils and teacher) understanding of progress and 'next steps'.
Makes the best use of all resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Teaching in RE will use the widest possible range of stimulus materials, including artefacts, visits, visitors, visual materials and thinking skills strategies to engage and inspire learners.</li> </ul>	Tasks set for pupils will include opportunities for their own creative use of artistic skills, poetry, language and expressive arts. This range of tasks will clearly draw their learning purposes from the heart of the curriculum for RE.  The inherent interest of the questions religions address and the answers they offer will be harnessed.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Excellence and Enjoyment: Applying the DFES/DCFS Primary Strategy to Religious Education</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Implications for RE in Wakefield: This will mean:</b></p>
<p>Creating a curriculum that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Addresses continuity and progression as a 'tool' for improving learning</li> <li>■ Celebrates pupils' contributions and experiences</li> </ul>	<p>Teaching in RE will use some common themes across key stages 1 and 2, but will plan progression using the level descriptors of the RE syllabus. Pupils will be enabled to move from recognition, exploration and naming to description, connection, linking and explaining aspects of religion.</p> <p>RE will often centre upon the questions of pupils and their experiences, and make links to the teachings and practices of the religions selected for study.</p> <p>Teaching will be explicitly sensitive to the religious (and non-religious) backgrounds of pupils in the class, and seek to set the kind of environment in which learners share freely from their own experience and enter into dialogue for learning.</p>
<p>Creating a curriculum that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Reflects the values, ethos, nature and context of the school community</li> <li>■ Equips pupils for life and living (e.g. by providing many opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development)</li> </ul>	<p>Schools will be able to locate their approaches to RE in relation to their overall aims. Themes such as inclusion, experiential learning, challenge and standards will be applied to RE as to other subjects.</p> <p>RE practice will lead the school with regard to spiritual development, and will link into other curriculum areas with regard to moral, social and cultural development. RE will make a key contribution to multi cultural awareness among pupils and the development of positive and respectful attitudes to a plural society.</p>
<p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Children learn better when they are excited and engaged</li> <li>■ Appropriate challenge stimulates children to high standards (achievement and attainment)</li> <li>■ Children don't learn in 'boxes' – cross-curricular skills and application (e.g. literacy, numeracy and ICT)</li> <li>■ Develop independent learning – ownership</li> </ul>	<p>Monitoring of RE provision will take particular note of the activities and learning activities that motivate, engage and challenge. These will be enhanced each year.</p> <p>The best skills of pupils in literacy, or other areas, will be harnessed in well-set RE activities which give pupils a chance to show and extend their competence with regard to RE.</p> <p>Links between RE and PSHE, Citizenship, the humanities, expressive arts and other curriculum areas will be developed and open.</p> <p>Pupils will have many opportunities for good RE homework and other independent learning strategies.</p>

Excellence and Enjoyment: Applying the DFES/DCFS Primary Strategy to Religious Education	Implications for RE in Wakefield: This will mean:
<p>When?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Now</li> <li>■ Need to plan for change – focus on learning and teaching</li> <li>■ Empowering (pupils and teachers)</li> <li>■ Supportive (pupils and teachers)</li> <li>■ Encouraging (pupils and teachers)</li> </ul>	<p>As the new Agreed Syllabus is planned and delivered in each school, the linking to the Primary Strategy can be made simply and clearly. A ‘tandem’ approach to developing RE with the Primary Strategy is recommended.</p> <p>Some schools may wish to use their subject-development in RE to trial aspects of the primary strategy.</p>
<p>Where?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Everywhere – whole school environment</li> <li>■ Making the best of the inside and the outside – learning space, display, resources, placing of computers, whiteboards, etc.</li> <li>■ Making links with the community</li> </ul>	<p>RE will not be the only focus for the development of challenging and creative whole school environments, but does play a part. Through ICT, artefacts, creative and artistic activities, in school worship / assembly, and with music, dance, drama and literacy, RE can lead or participate in establishing a high quality environment for learning.</p>
<p>How?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Whole school approach</li> <li>■ Subject contribution</li> <li>■ Cross curricular approaches and considerations – especially literacy, numeracy and ICT</li> <li>■ Values development – ‘whole person’ development – academic and personal (values – spiritual, moral, social and cultural development – Ofsted link to ‘standards’)</li> </ul>	<p>It is chiefly in regard to values development that RE plays a key role here. Teachers can use stories of faith, codes for behaviour and numerous active learning and ‘consequences’ approaches to learning in RE that will impact upon the sense pupils have that valuing relationships, learning, each other, diversity and the environment in school and beyond.</p>
<p>How?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Subject contribution</li> <li>■ Identify specific skills and attitudes subject areas develop – study and personal</li> <li>■ Build creativity, variety and rigour into all subject areas</li> <li>■ Encourage pupils to see the wider picture – cross-curricular links</li> </ul>	<p>Skills and attitudes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Empathy</li> <li>■ Respect for all</li> <li>■ Interpretation/making sense</li> </ul> <p>Creativity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Expressive arts and literacy activities in RE that encourage imagination, speculation and open mindedness.</li> </ul>
<p>Focus on RE We need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ a well planned curriculum (from the Agreed Syllabus for RE) focusing on the learning needs of all pupils</li> <li>■ a range of approaches and strategies – active and engaging; creative and enjoyable</li> </ul>	<p>The Schemes of work schools develop from the RE Syllabus should ask the question in every unit: what is creative here? What is enjoyable? What is challenging?</p>

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<p>Focus on RE We need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To give consideration to different and varied learning styles and preferences</li> <li>■ To encourage learning by discovery and experience</li> </ul>	<p>Religious Education benefits in the classroom from activities designed to appeal to the visual, auditory or kinaesthetic learner. Elements of the 'multiple intelligences' can all be built into RE: what is there for the learner whose abilities are firstly linguistic, logical, visual/spatial, bodily, musical, interpersonal or intrapersonal?</p>
<p>Focus on RE We need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A thought out 'assessment for learning' strategy – knowledge of child informs how they are taught and the way they learn</li> </ul>	<p>RE assessment needs to be lightweight and efficient, and to inform teaching and learning. Comparison is not the purpose of assessment in RE: helping children learn is at the heart. This involves using the levels for clarity in task setting and in the teachers' planning. It involves careful questioning to see what children can do, and well planned 'next steps'.</p>
<p>Focus on RE We need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To establish/maintain rigour in our thinking, planning and delivery of RE</li> <li>■ To enjoy our excellent RE (pupils and staff)</li> </ul>	<p>RE is a challenging subject area to teach. Continuing improvement is achievable if staff are able to energise their practice. It is the intention of the SACRE to enable this through the Agreed Syllabus, and beyond.</p>

## How to make learning more thoughtful in RE: thinking skills and effective learning

### Some introductory materials and three classroom examples

RE has the potential to be a thinking centre of the curriculum, and to make use of the very best strategies for thoughtful education, applying such strategies precisely to RE content and objectives. The Wakefield Agreed Syllabus is organised around questions, and intends to promote best practice in thoughtful RE. Teachers of RE will find much in the 'thinking skills' movement to energise their practice, and to interest pupils. In this short article, some basic ideas about thinking skills and RE are illustrated with three classroom examples that relate to particular units of the Wakefield Agreed Syllabus. Further reading and exemplification will assist teachers in applying these methods more widely in the classroom.

The Agreed Syllabus states:

"RE is an academic subject, based on learning about and understanding Christianity and the other principal religions of the UK. Skills of research, selection, analysis, interpretation, reflection, empathy, discernment, synthesis, application, expression, communication and evaluation are promoted for pupils from an early age. RE is in some ways a natural thinking centre for the curriculum, and the tools of critical thinking and analysis are increasingly useful to the teacher of RE. The study of religion is a rigorous activity involving a variety of intellectual disciplines and skills. These include learning about the sacred texts of the world; understanding the development, history and contemporary forms of religious belief and practice; studying philosophy and ethics; and undertaking studies into the phenomena, psychology, sociology and theology of religion."

*Wakefield Agreed Syllabus, 2007*

Ofsted report on needs in KS3 RE:

"In spite of...improvements, the quality of RE teaching and pupils' learning in RE still falls below that in other subjects. The key stage three curriculum, although good in relation to breadth and balance, too often lacks continuity, moving from the Gurdwara through Mother Teresa to religion and science with no apparent logic or supporting framework. This makes it difficult for pupils to establish a firm basis of knowledge, let alone to develop

### Comments by Ofsted

Ofsted also report on good teaching and effectiveness in RE across a whole school:

**"The key challenge facing secondary Religious Education teachers is to create from their agreed syllabus a curriculum that is thought provoking and meets the interests and concerns of young people, most of whom have no allegiance to formal religion.**

**"Teaching is most successful where (it)... develops their analytical and evaluative skills as well as their knowledge of religions."**

**"(The best teaching)...exploits challenging and provocative stimulus material by demonstrating its relevance in the wider subject context. In particular, teachers help students develop the necessary skills to;**

**Identify, investigate and analyse questions and issues arising from the course of study**

**Use appropriate language and terminology in context**

**Interpret and evaluate religious concepts, issues, ideas, the relevance of arguments and the views of (others)..."**

*Good Teaching, Effective Departments, HMI 337, 2001, pages 44-47*

## Quality Stimulus

(this could be a video, visit, discussion, art, game, reading, teacher-talk, artefacts, designs, quotations, shared experience or many more types of learning stimulus)

## Well set tasks

(clear and realistic objectives, carefully fitted to pupils' learning needs, challenging, open ended, fresh, thoughtful, with helpful levels of structure – these are many of the elements of some thinking skills strategies)

## Weighing up evidence of achievement

(this doesn't just mean marking tests, but also looking at individual evidence of skills, achievements or insights, and using the eight-level scale as a reference point for pupils' progress in relation to RE's key objectives)

their conceptual understanding of religions or religious ideas.”

*Secondary Subject Report, RE, 2001, Ofsted website, February 2002*

The emphasis on the ways in which learning is promoted through specific skills and tasks in these judgements is supported by the national Key Stage Three strategy's emphasis on thinking skills in the foundation subject strand, which particularly includes RE along with the foundation subjects of the National Curriculum. The Agreed Syllabus uses a model for planning which identifies the stimulus for learning, the quality of task setting and the evidence pupils give of their achievement as key factors in quality RE provision:

### Thinking in RE: performance examples

It is never possible to exhaustively list thinking skills, because they are by nature diverse and interconnected. But the National Key Stage Three Strategy offers a helpful list (overleaf) of some indicators of performance, which can also be used as a source for monitoring the tasks we design and use for pupils. The list is not confined to 11-14s, but suggests ways of teaching thinking to any group of pupils, and while not specific to RE it can be applied to RE at every level.

(Source: DfES Training Materials, Foundation Subject Strand, National Key Stage Three Strategy, page 265: Crown Copyright 2002)

National Key Stage Three Strategy list of performance indicators for 'good thinking'	Examples of what this might imply for planning thinking skills for high standards in RE. Do pupils have planned opportunities to...
<b>Seeing patterns in data</b>	...notice that data about religion has patterns in it? ...explain how different religious communities have grown in particular parts of the world and in the UK?
<b>Making links with other topics or areas</b>	...make links between what they learn in RE and in literacy, or History ...see that religious expression and artistic expression link and explain each other?
<b>Thinking laterally</b>	...make links between one religion and another, or between a story and a festival, or an argument and an experience of spirituality?
<b>Being creative</b>	... make up some metaphors of their own about life, questions or God? ...'make meaning from experience' or show how a symbol carries a weight of meaning in a religious context?
<b>Generalising</b>	...draw general ideas from two or more examples from different faiths, for example about beliefs to do with life after death, or marriage vows and promises, or ways in which communities reinforce identities?
<b>Solving problems</b>	...use evidence and examples to move towards a solution to a practical or thoughtful problem: where should a new Mosque be sited? Why might it be difficult for believers from different traditions to share a hospital chapel?
<b>Checking and refining solutions</b>	...move more closely towards accuracy in stages, for example refining the idea 'light is more powerful than darkness' or 'most Christians use the Lord's Prayer' in steps towards accuracy?
<b>Seeing different viewpoints</b>	...account for the diversity in a religion – for example in Hindu practice? Can they accommodate their won views alongside respect for the views of others in a diverse setting?
<b>Using existing knowledge</b>	...build increasingly comprehensive pictures of religion by linking up their understanding in a progression of learning, for example using general concepts learned when studying texts and belief among Muslims to make sense of their learning about texts and beliefs among Sikhs and Buddhists?
<b>Knowing a lot</b>	...continuously gather information and understand it with regard to the religions studied, for example using the religious terminology of Christianity and Judaism with increasing fluency and accuracy?
<b>Having a good memory</b>	...make gains in learning through applying what they remember well from previous lessons or units of study, for example using puzzling questions about belief and value from one unit to develop skills of answering in a later unit of work?
<b>Fast processing of information</b>	...collect information and ideas quickly so that their understanding of religion moves as fast as their powers of analysis will allow, for example by looking at census data on religions and comparing it with numbers of religious buildings in the UK?
<b>Working with others</b>	...challenge and be challenged, support and be supported in their exploration of religious and spiritual questions, for example working together on a question about the value of a person or the significance of a festival in making a community work?

## Why might RE need thinking skills?

'RE is an academic subject... a rigorous activity involving a variety of intellectual disciplines... thinking skills of research, selection, analysis, interpretation, reflection, empathy, synthesis, application, expression and communication are promoted'

*QCA Non Statutory RE Guidance, 2000*

'Teachers can enable pupils to think better, more deeply, more productively and with insight, clarity, wide awareness and reasoned judgement. In RE these kinds of thinking are essential, and our interest in general 'thinking about thinking' strategies from every source is keen because we need to make our subject a 'thinking centre' within the whole curriculum'

*Professional Council for RE Action Group on thinking skills in RE, 2001*

## Thinking skills introduced and examined for the RE teacher

### Thinking skills for RE: Some key elements across the 5-16 age range.

Thinking skills activities are about thoughtful RE, and also about the process of thinking things through. They encourage and enable pupils to think about thinking as well as about religious and spiritual questions. They enable pupils to learn how to learn, as well as to learn about religions. The six elements offered in the chart overleaf are in some ways just characteristics of good RE, but the thinking skills strategies provide a sharp focus: how does a particular teaching activity help pupils to develop their skills thoughtfully?

Element of thinking skills practice:	What does this mean for RE?	Examples: What is the implication for the classroom?
<b>Clear objectives</b>	RE needs activities which don't just add to the sum of facts a pupil encounters about religion, but also make pupils able to see what gains in their intellectual skills are on offer. Be precise about the gains in learning and the skills being practiced.	Not 'know six terms about Sikh worship' but 'be able to apply three general terms about worship to Sikh practice.'
<b>Articulation</b>	RE needs learning opportunities which don't just get pupils to say what others have thought, but to say what they think, with increasing clarity, precision and awareness of the implications of religious and spiritual questions. Get pupils to express their thoughts in their words. 'What do you think?' – the most important RE question .	Not take the information given and 'return to sender' but put together arguments, issues, experiences of your own. Key role of language in learning.
<b>Mediation</b>	RE needs the connection between teaching and learning in which the teacher provokes new thinking by learners, as well as providing information. The teacher's role is to mediate between the learner and the content, extending understanding through questions, tasks, stimulation, etc.	Not 'I'm telling you what I know' but 'you're in a process: I can help you make it work better, try this.'
<b>Connecting learning</b>	RE needs to help pupils to see not just little pieces of religious information, but also the ways in which belief systems function in trying to make sense of human life and questions. Pupils may be seeing increasingly what it means to widen and deepen the picture of religion and life which the learner works with.	Teacher doesn't do the connecting, but opens the channels, seeks holistic connection all the time.
<b>Evaluation</b>	RE needs to be able to help pupils to weigh up religious ideas, practices and beliefs thoughtfully and in balanced and increasingly sophisticated ways. Pupils can be enabled to judge, weigh up, see strengths and weaknesses, and be alert to the tentative and provisional nature of some religious thinking.	Not a formulaic 'three – all score draw' but a deepening recognition that 'all the colours exist between black and white.'
<b>Metacognition</b>	RE needs pupils to be more aware of what's going on in their learning, so that they can 'think about thinking and learn how to learn' in RE. So process-questions and tasks which make it possible to 'do better', to philosophise, to be a more self aware and critically engaged learner about and from religion have a part to play.	So teachers don't rush on to the next bit of content, but pause to examine how we did that, and what did that contribute to our skills in theology, philosophy or RS.

## Towards increasingly thoughtful RE classrooms

Thinking skills prompts: the list of prompts can be used generally, or made specific to an RE topic. They are the kind of prompts that might be useful for promoting thinking skills in RE.

What I thought about was...	I got some new ideas from...
This made me wonder...	I felt strongly...
We argued about...	The big question is...
We agreed about...	I'm curious to know more about...
I don't think...	My deepest thought was...
The way I see it...	It's irrational that...
One example that proves my point is...	There's no evidence for...
My argument about this is...	There's some evidence for...
What I'd like to ask next is...	There's good evidence for...
The really important thing in this story is...	I don't think...
What I don't understand about this topic is...	What I disagree with here is...
My experience suggests...	One puzzling thing is...

### Metacognition in RE: thinking about thinking and learning how to learn.

Teachers who wish to promote metacognition, thinking about thinking and learning how to learn in their RE classrooms will often use questions like these with classes in discussion:

General Questions:

- How did you do that?
- Who helped you understand these values?
- Which ideas became more significant to you?
- What steps were there in your thinking?
- How did you clarify your ideas?

- What influenced your thinking?
- Did writing help you to express yourself here?
- Did you do this step by step, or did your ideas leap forward?
- Did visualising help you to say what you meant here?
- Describe how you reached this conclusion.
- How would you do that better next time?
- What advice would you give to someone starting this work next lesson? Why?

Religiously specific questions:

- What would a (Muslim, Christian, Atheist) think about this?
- Are you thinking rationally here?
- What evidence is there for this religious idea – and what do you think of it?
- Are you thinking spiritually here?
- What arguments support this belief? And what do you think of them?
- Are you thinking intuitively here?
- What experiences of yours – or of others – support this belief? And what do you think of them?
- Are you thinking emotionally here?
- Is this evidence, argument or experience good? Why? What makes it valid?
- Is your idea influenced by your experience/background/environment/perspective?

These kinds of questions, in this brief format, may seem most suited to secondary age pupils – but younger pupils may surprise us by their ability to handle these higher order skills, when they are broken down into concrete items for discussion.

### **Example 1: Using a spiritual story as a stimulus for pupils' thinking about questions of wealth and purpose in life**

Using a story as stimulus, this activity goes beyond the basic classroom practice of 'telling a religious story and asking pupils to re-present the story in another form'. Such activities have a 'ceiling' at level two on the eight level scale in terms of achievement, and don't enable good practice in literacy work to feed RE objectives where making links, and explaining what's going on are the higher order skills in view.

Anthony de Mello, Jesuit and writer on the spiritual life, tells this story:

### **Dreaming of wealth, dreaming of true riches**

The richest man in the village dreams one night. He sees himself walking out on the road to the south of his village, the very next day at sundown, and meeting a traveller, a nun. He stops the traveller, and asks her 'do you have something for me?' She smiles: 'Yes! I knew someone would ask me that this afternoon. God told me to give you this rock.' From her backpack, she draws a huge diamond, hands it to the man, and walks lightly by. He stares at the 'rock'. It is a huge, flawless, perfect diamond. Stunned, he carries it home, unable to believe his fortune, knowing that it is worth a million.

When he wakes up next morning, he can't forget his dream. He wonders if it was sent to him by God to make him richer. He thinks about it all day. At sundown, he takes the road south, feeling a bit foolish. But unbelievably he sees the nun, stops her, they talk and she gives him a rock: the dream comes true. It is a huge, flawless, perfect diamond. The nun walks on.

The rich man goes home bursting with delight at his acquisition, thrilled at the massive wealth effortlessly acquired. But that night he can't sleep at all. He turns and tosses, but spends all night awake. His troubling sense of unease deepens as the darkness gives way to dawn. Next morning, he takes the road north, and hurries for many miles all day, looking ahead to see if he can find the nun again. At last he sees the wandering nun. He catches up, stops her and falls on his knees. 'I'm the man you gave the diamond to yesterday' he explains. 'I can't believe you are so free from greed – I'm feeling like a slave to greed. Please' he asks 'give me whatever it is that you've found that made you able to hand over that diamond so easily.'

Teachers might use this story for its spiritual impact, and the themes it addresses which include wealth and poverty, change and conversion, selfishness and generosity, or belief and behaviour. It could fit – in different ways - into units on temptation, sharing fairly, inspiring leaders or big questions.

#### **Thinking skills activities:**

For discussion by learners:

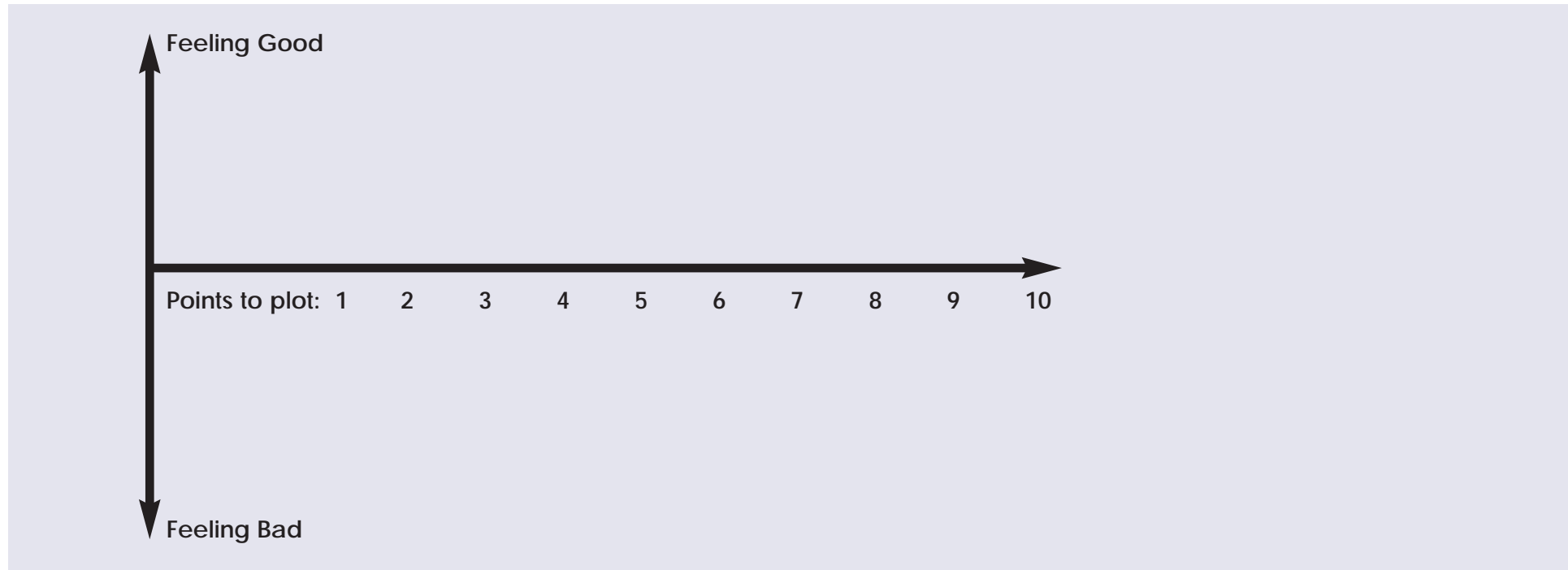
- What's this story all about?
- Write 'chapter 2' of the story. What happens next? Use the rich man and the nun as key characters, and encourage pupils to be creative and imaginative in their thinking.
- Arrange to read and discuss several other 'chapter 2s' in the class.
- How, if at all, does the story relate to your own experience of life? Is there a lesson for you here?
- What would the Buddha, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Guru Nanak or Jesus say about this story? Did they tell any similar stories?

For classroom activity:

- Make a 'feelings graph' or 'fortune line' out of this story – show how the rich man's feelings went up and down on a graph. Include

your 'chapter 2' in the graph.

- Analyse what made the man happy, dissatisfied, and so on in discussion of the graphs.



Using 'feeling good' and 'feeling bad' is a simple way of doing this, but a more sophisticated analysis might come from using 'satisfied' or 'contented' as the criterion for the fortune line.

### Metacognition

Questions such as these may assist pupils to think about their thinking:

- Did the task use imagination or logic most?
- Were you thinking in straight lines, or in leaps in this work?
- Can you explain where the ideas you had came from?
- How would you go about this work if you started over again?

## Example 2: Using quotations about prayer as stimulus to thinking about interpretation of ideas.

### Where on the axis? Prayer

This example of a thinking skills RE lesson seeks to get pupils to work with religious material, having an authentic flavour. The lesson aims to enable pupils to think together about the topic of prayer in Islam and Christianity. It may be best suited to 9-11 year olds. Pupils will need to work in groups of 3 or 4, and to have a set of these cards and a bit of blu-tac. Some prior knowledge of Islamic and Christian prayer may be helpful, but is not essential.

Tasks:

- Arrange the nine statements on a horizontal axis which goes from 'very committed to prayer' through to 'not committed to prayer'.
- Discuss difficulties – teacher to draw out the meaning of the sayings, and attend to the idea that prayer may show in good deeds, not only ritual observance.
- Add a vertical axis: Muslim above the line, Christian below the line. Move all nine up or down to reflect their likely placing. What points for discussion, or questions for Christians and Muslims arise?

I try to do what God wants by helping other people. This can be a kind of worship.	I think God hears all our prayers even if we only speak them in our minds.	I pray 5 times every day. It gives me strength.
I don't go to worship very often, but I do try to treat other people as God would want me to.	To me, praying is like breathing. I do it all the time.	In my Church, we pray together on Sunday for the whole world, and for each other.
My favourite prayer says that God is all-powerful and guides us on the straight path.	It's not good to admit it, but I only pray if I'm in big trouble.	Friday prayers is a special time in my family.

Pupils to write some comments about their own idea of prayer, or a story about 'The prayer that was answered' or 'The prayer that wasn't answered' or an information piece: How do Muslims pray? How do Christians pray?

Metacognition questions – pupils' thinking may be assisted by the discussion of questions like these following the 'prayer axis' activity.

- What was hard about this task? What made it difficult?
- People think in different ways if they are insiders or outsiders to a religion. How did you think through what the place of each statement on the axis should contain?
- Organising ideas in ranks or in order helps to clarify your thinking. Are you good at clear thinking? Did this help you? How?
- Logical thinking is not sufficient when we ask questions about religion or prayer. What other kinds of thinking do we need? And are you good at logic, emotional thinking, visual learning, or lateral (sideways) thinking? Reflecting? Spiritual thinking? Personal thinking?

### Example 3: Using temptations stories and a dramatic technique as a stimulus to thinking about moral decisions.

Temptation is a theme for RE full of interest and potential, being rooted in the experience of the pupils and in the traditions of living faith which they will study. Pupils can find the theme personally relevant and challenging, and there are lots of related stories and teaching in different faith traditions.

Begin by getting pupils to discuss definitions and examples of temptations:

- Give a 20 word definition and six examples of temptations.

A class of 11 year olds with whom we tried out these ideas came up with:

“Temptation is the feeling you have when you want to do something which you think is wrong. Examples included: hitting your friend in the face, nicking cars, overspending when you’re shopping, eating when you’re fasting or dieting, being lazy, shoplifting, and misusing drugs.”

To enable pupils to think through some religious ideas about temptation, teaching might use stories. In the Islamic tradition, Ibrahim is tempted by the Shaytan to rebel against God’s command to sacrifice his son. Three times the Prophet refuses the tempter’s voice. Muslims on pilgrimage today have a ritual of ‘stoning the devil’ which recalls the story, and symbolises rejection of evil within themselves. Show pupils photos of this ritual, blown up on a colour photocopier so that they are accessible to the whole class. Ask them to note what feelings the worshippers were experiencing on a ‘post it’ and stick up their comment next to the picture.

Tell the story of Jesus’ temptations, explaining that all three can be understood as choices between love and power. Show them some of the visual art that has been inspired by the story; Stanley Spencer’s series of Christ in the Wilderness, and some older pictures showing the devil in ‘traditional’ form. Ask them to note what Jesus might be thinking.

Again, in trying out this work we found that pupils liked the stories, and the pictures, and their insights were impressive: the Muslims stoning the devil were thinking: ‘I feel so great and happy to get rid of the bad I have done,’ or ‘feeling sad and angry that they did these sins.’ Jesus may be thinking ‘I’m not going to do it. I must follow God’ or ‘I’m so hungry, but I’m not going to do it’ or ‘these desert foxes are so beautiful.’ The exercise seemed to help the pupils to think more carefully about the emotions and feeling involved in being tempted.

The next lesson takes this on to a more personal stage. In a group, pupils make a flow chart of the process of temptation, from having an idea, through feeling in two minds about it, to deciding what to do, and then feeling guilty, or sorry, strong or pleased afterwards. The pupils are encouraged to think about moral choice for themselves, not just about rules, consequences or getting caught. It is provocative to concentrate on the emotions of temptation, rather than on defining what is wrong. Ask the pupils to pair up, and take the roles of ‘sculptor’ and ‘clay.’ The sculptors make figures out of their ‘clay’ which expressed the emotions they have been considering.

On another ‘post it’ and for homework, give the pupils a chance to put their learning into writing. Many of our group trying out the activities had personal learning to report: they felt they had learned in a personal sphere; ‘I found it very interesting to learn about my

feelings when I am tempted.' 'I learned how people experience temptation and how to resist it.' 'When you're tempted you feel excited, but then the feeling in the end is guilty.' Lots commented on the lack of writing, but they felt they had worked hard: thinking skills RE work is often focused on classroom talk rather than writing down information.

Lessons around this theme arise from religious teaching, but enable personal learning; they tackle big questions of good and evil, but they are close to the experience of 8-12 year olds. Extension ideas might include:

- Improvise dramas in three scenes which show before / during / after a temptation;
- Consider whether the devil in the Biblical story is symbolic or actual: could you take a photo of the devil?
- Explore Biblical or Qur'anic teaching on temptation;
- What would a devil say to me? What would an angel say?
- What would devils and angels say to some celebs, politicians or movie characters?
- Discuss the idea of conscience, and religious ideas of the guidance of God.
- Use the 'metacognition' prompts (on a previous page in this article) to analyse the kinds of thinking involved in these lessons.

#### **Discussion points:**

- What do you like and dislike about these approaches and examples?
- What strategies work well for you in creating thoughtful classrooms?
- RE has little time, and much pressure: is it wise to spend time on general thinking skills in RE?
- What would you like to try from your own ideas about thinking skills in RE?

#### **Metacognition**

- Pupils' thinking about thinking may be helped by asking questions such as these:
- What did you think about for yourself from this work about temptation?
- Does drama help you to think? In what ways?
- Can you plot the lines of your thinking? What helped you most to learn here?
- Sometimes thinking is sharpened by comparing. Comparing your own ideas to those of Muslims or Christians is not easy, but did you do this? Did it lead to new thoughts?
- How would you describe the thinking you've done here – was it creative or in straight lines, moral or personal, logical or emotional? And are these categories helpful or not?

## How to make learning more active in RE: active learning

### What are the characteristics of active learning?

Active learning:

- the opposite of passive
- places the learner's concerns in the centre of the learning processes
- engages the interest of the learner
- generates its own momentum
- is participative and co-operative
- is experiential
- places responsibility on the learner

Examples of active learning strategies:

- role play
- exploratory, open questioning
- simulation
- creative activities (written, artistic, productive)
- chosen activities - choice improves motivation
- investigations/assignments

### Checklist for teachers of RE: 40 varieties of task to prompt active and responsive learning in RE

Responsive activities	An example of this strategy for RE classrooms. Many of these promote 'learning from religion'	Useful to you?
Exploratory, open questioning	Ask pupils to note down three questions on a topic you want to tackle that they would like to ask the Omniscient. Topics: animals, death, sex, evil, love, angels, human nature, creation, the future etc.	
Simulation	Set up a simulated meeting, e.g. an agreed syllabus conference or a 'Moral Maze' panel for pupils. Try simulating a 'Peace Process', or an interfaith group, or planning a menu for a conference of religions.	
Creative written activities	Work on the Beatitudes as a vision of human happiness. Get pupils to write their own eight couplets to prescribe human happiness, and compare. See also Buddhist, Sikh visions of what makes humanity happy.	

Responsive activities	An example of this strategy for RE classrooms. Many of these promote 'learning from religion'	Useful to you?
Creative artistic activities	Design the new stained glass windows for the place of worship yet to be built in your town, on a given theme, spiritual or whatever.	
Creative productive activities	Produce a leaflet at the end of a key stage to send to new pupils, explaining what is good about RE. Include quotes, examples etc.	
Chosen activities	Pupils sign up at the end of one session for the moral issue, theological question or the religion they would like to study next. Six groups of five. You work harder at what you choose, so this motivates.	
Investigations	Set small groups to investigate worship, or attitudes to divorce, or calendars, or initiations in a particular tradition / religion.	
Poetry writing	Ask pupils to write acrostic poems on different festivals studied, e.g. Easter, Raksha Bandhan, Channukah. Look for emotion, empathy and feeling as well as factual stuff.	
Story writing	Give pupils a character such as a young Muslim girl, and a situation in life to write a story about. Build in a scene at the Mosque, or a prayer.	
Composing prayer/meditation	Pupils are given a topic (illness? hope?), or an occasion (new baby?) or a situation (homelessness?) and invited to write a suitable prayer, from their own POV or a religious perspective. Give an 'opt out' to this.	
Composing a song	Ask pupils to collaborate (in music?) to write a song for a theme (e.g. celebration, peace, Millennium, Martin Luther King Day).	
Creating a game	Give pupils in groups opportunities to develop a card game or a board game that uses understanding about religion in the play – for example, a 'steps through life' game that illustrates Hindu samsaras (life cycle rituals) or a card game that classifies quotations about the five pillars of Islam.	
Ranking	Give pupils twenty values, or a dozen reasons for happiness, or 15 evil things and ask them to rank them for themselves, or from the viewpoint of a particular religion / leader. What would Moses say? The Buddha?	
Ordering	Pupils are required to put six steps of an argument in the right order, or sequencing the action of a ritual like a marriage ceremony or a Eucharist. Good for flow charting.	

Responsive activities	An example of this strategy for RE classrooms. Many of these promote 'learning from religion'	Useful to you?
Comparing	What can you do with a pound? Compare lottery tickets with other action, like charitable giving etc. (I never 'compare religions')	
Selecting	Pupils choose readings, stories, music or prayers from different sources for school assembly, a wedding or a funeral aiming for inclusiveness.	
Diagrammatic modeling	Pupils make a flow chart to show what happens at a Muslim funeral, or in a Passover Seder, or to explore ideas about life after death, using a text as a starting point.	
ICT applications	Make a database of interviews with local believers, or a graphic presentation of religious survey opinions, or after studying the life of Muhammad (PBUH), devise 'his' Internet home page, summarising his message.	
Research activities	Pupils tackle specific research tasks: find out three things Sikhs do at Vaisakhi, and the stories told to explain these practices.	
Problem centered or problem solving activities	What would be the best range of cards for a news agent to stock in April and May, in Birmingham, Edinburgh and Lincoln? Why? Design the cards, choose the quotes and greetings. (This is a problem centered approach to religious festivals in multi faith Britain)	
Negotiated learning	Pupils can choose a topic within a religion, or are given the topic and can choose which faith they study.	
Model making	As homework over several weeks pupils make samples of religious artefacts for local contexts, and describe symbolic and ritual significance. Not the 'real thing', but often more memorable, and cheap!	
Rewriting and retelling activities	Rewrite prayers, creeds, key texts, moral teaching, for simplicity and younger audiences. Try Lord's Prayer, or Surah 1 of the Holy Qur'an	
Contemporary contexts	What if Jesus came to Birmingham? What if Moses read the Ten Commandments to our school? What would Mother Teresa say if she took assembly here?	
Giving pupils an audience	Write or speak as if for a committee of inquiry, a group of tourists, a class of six year olds etc.	

Responsive activities	An example of this strategy for RE classrooms. Many of these promote 'learning from religion'	Useful to you?
Working with younger pupils	Enable 11 year olds to interview younger children about their experience of, or understanding of some key idea like kindness, God, evil. Make a picture book of a parable for six year olds.	
Collaborating to explore concepts	Take a key idea like prayer, symbol or celebration. Whole class, in twos or threes, to approach a range of differentiated tasks and make presentations to each other or a class book about the concept.	
Collaborating to revise	Children set quiz questions for each other/their teacher on aspects of the work under review. A useful assessment task? Mostly 'learn about'.	
Collaborating to make a presentation	Class learning over a module is presented to the whole school in assembly. Could this include poetry, chosen readings, music, sacred text, stories or drama? A week of assemblies? Colleagues will love you!	
Collaborating to research	Groups or pairs of pupils work together on internet, CD Rom, library or book search to prepare a set of definitions of key words, or three examples, or a glossary of Judaism, or whatever.	
Prepared discussions	Class or group discussion is based on library work, collection of examples from the papers, reading of different texts etc, rather than on 'pool your ignorance'.	
Brainstorming	All the ideas that the group has, scribbled up, as a starting point for work on anything. Variations give privacy, or use a range of concepts.	
Role plays	Take the role of reporter, judge, time traveler, peasant, witness, and explore the events and emotions of faith.	
Situational applications	If you were distributing the £9m raised in Christian Aid Week, what would you support? Why?	
Voucher discussions	In which all participants have three vouchers, and can speak three times: excellent for shutting up the garrulous and opening up the timid. Usually needs groups less than ten. Any topic will do!	
Opinion lines, values continuum	Chalk line and name labels, teacher reads out some strong statements on the topics for consideration, and pupils place their label on a line between 'strongly agree' and 'totally reject'.	

Responsive activities	An example of this strategy for RE classrooms. Many of these promote 'learning from religion'	Useful to you?
Whispering groups and shouting pairs	Groups of four or five prepare a member for an argument with a member of another group over (e.g.) 'When you're dead, that's it'. Preparation to be done quietly, but no holds barred in the argument. Play several 'rounds' of argument.	
'Round robin' or 'circle time' conversations	Round the circle, each one can speak or be quiet on the subject for the day. Should non-Christians give up Christmas? How can we reduce racism? Will religion decline or expand?	
Topical chosen discussion	Pupils submit topics, questions, issues or examples for a discussion, and groups tackle them. Each one finishes with 'what should s/he do?'	
Formal debates	Does religion tie you up, or set you free? Can God be found in any place of worship? Should animals be given rights?	
Task orientated discussion	Discuss: how will we go about the task of designing a Vihara, producing an agreed syllabus cover or planning an interfaith celebration?	

## How to make learning more reflective in RE: promoting reflection and responses

### Frameworks for reflection: tears, question marks, leaves and light bulbs

In this paper we suggest a dozen simple and flexible ways of helping pupils to reflect on issues and spiritual questions in RE classes across the age range. Promoting and structuring reflection in ways that enable pupils to develop and record their insights are an important part of the planning of quality RE. Good teachers frame reflective RE learning for spiritual development.

#### Helping pupils share an insight

Teachers of RE love to find approaches to self-expression and learning that enable spiritual insights from the pupils to be expressed. It's a key skill – levelled scales of achievement or examination grade descriptions across the UK require pupils to express their own ideas clearly, empathically, reflectively and spiritually. One thing that really helps pupils to do this is the careful use of images and symbols into which the pupils can pour their discernment or insight. This paper offers many simple structures for this reflective process.

'Answer the questions at the bottom of page 42' is rarely the best way to help a class to reflect. These simple structures can be used in many different ways to give structure to reflection: the teacher gives out stars and pupils fill in each point of the star with an example of what makes them a star, or what makes a chosen leader worth following, or what illuminates their mind, or what Muslims love about the Holy Qur'an. The teacher asks pupils to draw round their hand, and write one word into each finger: the name of someone who cares for me, five things I do for others, examples of reasons why I love my mum, five ways Jesus showed kindness to others.

#### Building up spiritual and reflective skills

In Maths, key skills are practiced time and again. Too often in RE, we ask pupils to reflect suddenly, for ten minutes, and we don't show them how. These simple frameworks can be used over time to build up pupils' understanding of what it is to express an insight, to think about how to symbolise a belief, or to explore a thought and share a bit of vision. The following pages may find a place in teachers' planning files. Pupils given one of these to do every unit through the year may build their reflective skills and ability to express insights. Teachers will of course make up some other reflective structures of their own. The intention to help pupils be spiritually insightful isn't easy, but this a little set of tools to help you do it.

#### Showing off the work in a display

These ideas are all bursting with possibilities for displays. A small tree, made of a fallen branch, in the school entrance hall, for which everyone is invited to write a hope for the future on a leaf, and hang it on the branch, is great for inspections to show how spiritual you are – give the inspectors a leaf too, to make sure they notice. But a classroom rainbow of 'thoughts about a new world' on the wall, or a 'wonderwall' full of questions to God written into question marks, or a rain cloud with 150 personalised raindrops containing our prayers or meditations for the victims of disaster are all great ways of getting everyone involved in the shared spiritual life of the school or the

RE curriculum. There's no space here to elucidate the reflective possibilities of waves, feet, the sun, pillows, muscles, clouds, exclamation marks, windows, doorways, bread, jack-in-the-boxes, or a score more. But once you start thinking about structuring reflection with these kinds of frameworks, then a whole lot of lesson energisers start to pop up.

What's the image?	Connections resonances and symbolism in this image include:	One example of the spiritual use of this image for reflection for good learning in RE
<b>Rainbows</b>	Colours and diversity Promises Hope through trials Natural beauty	7-8 year olds working on the Noah story finish their study by writing '7 Hopes for a better world' in pairs, onto a small card rainbow outline, and collaging the colours. The rainbows are hung from the classroom ceiling as mobiles.
<b>Leaves</b>	Growth The beauty of the small Spring and autumn Green and brown	As a school project, all children reflect on Pablo Cassal's saying: 'we are all leaves on a tree, and the tree is called humanity' Each child takes a green cut-out of a leaf, and chooses five words to say what sort of person they want to be (no names). Leaves are stuck to a huge 'tree mural' in the hall.
<b>Stars</b>	Small lights, big darkness Mystery and distance Being a star Wonder and curiosity	After RE work on the Muslim way of life, including the idea of 'the moon to light the way and the star to guide', pupils write 5 people who are their 'guiding lights' on to a display star, and talk in circle time about who they chose and why.
<b>Tear drops</b>	Sadness Suffering Bitterness 'A good cry'	At the end of a unit on why people suffer, 11 year olds take a big blue cut-out tear drop, and write a meditation or reflection on the theme 'who helps the suffering?' Pre-print onto it a quote from Jesus ('Come to me all you weary...') or the Buddha ('Compassion to every living being...')
<b>Question marks</b>	Arguments Disagreements Controversy Mystery	11 year olds working on 'Is God?' have been looking at whether God is real, and what God is like. They use cut-out question marks in dynamic colours, and write onto them the questions they would like to ask God if they could. Philosophy unfolds through the display.
<b>Light bulbs</b>	Inspiration Illumination Inventiveness Energy	A unit on 'Expressing faith through the arts in Christianity and Sikhism' has been assessed mostly with pupils' own spirited arts creative work. At the end, the teacher gives all pupils three 'light bulbs' to write into. What lit up Jesus? What lit up Guru Nanak? What lights you up? Pupils are encouraged to write 60 words into each bulb.

What's the image?	Connections resonances and symbolism in this image include:	One example of the spiritual use of this image for reflection for good learning in RE
<b>Rocks</b>	Solidity/strength God Being stubborn/standing firm	In literacy, pupils studied metaphor. In RE, the origins of two religions (Buddhism, Christianity). The teacher shows how 'rock' is used as a metaphor by Christian scripture and as a meditative focus in Zen gardens. Pupils get a black and white rocky outline and complete it with their own ideas about what 'life's foundations' might be, using metaphors and symbolism.
<b>A mobile phone</b>	Messengers and messages Angels Prayer Communication	Roles of angels in the first revelation of the Holy Qur'an and the Christmas story have been explored in stories and thinking. Pupils take a mobile phone illustration, and create 5 messages to the human race, from the angel of mercy, the angel of good news, the angel of death, the angel of hope and the fallen angel – this expresses visions of life in a reflective and interesting way
<b>The world</b>	Interdependence The fragility of life Beauty Creation	In work on environment and creation, pupils take a 'world' image, and colour it showing its beauty from space. From a class, all are asked to choose three words to describe the world – they become a 'mobile' for display. This launches poetry in which reflections on our dependence on one, fragile, beautiful, sacred world is expressed.
<b>Hands</b>	Touching Connecting with others Caring and helping Work	Use a 'drawn round' hand to write five words that show care, mutuality, work: What sums up Mother Teresa's work for others? What five things would Muslims say Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did best? What five things can people in conflict do to build peace?
<b>Tree</b>	Slow, steady growth Continuity in change Shade and shelter	Great for 'all contribute' to a leaf, or a branch. Tree of faiths with 6 branches, and pupil's positive thoughts about each one is a nice sum up for the end of a key stage/phase. 'Leaves on the tree of hope' is a future oriented look at what the world will be like next.
<b>Candle</b>	Standing alone Good defeating evil Hope against despair Illumination	Amnesty International stories use the 'candle and barbed wire'. Get pupils to fill the flames with images of resistance to evil or ideas about how we combat despair, or with the names of those for whom they pray, or to whom they wish compassion.

## How to make learning more challenging in RE

### A classroom environment that is stimulating

Stimulating RE environments come in many forms. Teachers who seek to improve the RE learning environment will find this checklist of questions may generate good ideas.

#### Authentic religion

- Does the classroom display religious artefacts, posters, images?
- Are these displays used for learning, rather than just to look at?
- Are religious insiders' experiences and viewpoints available to see?
- Does the selection of images for classroom display reflect the diversity between religions? The diversity within religions?
- Are environments beyond the classroom (e.g. visiting places of worship) well used?

#### Pupils' views

- Are the ideas and insights of children used for learning?
- Do children know that their work contributes to the environment in RE?
- Are children keen to express their own ideas and share their own experience? How can they be encouraged more?

#### Creativity and RE

- Does the selection of materials and stimuli in the RE curriculum enlarge creative possibilities?
- Is the creativity of each religious community available to pupils to stimulate learning?
- Are the skills of pupils in the expressive arts used with regard to religious topics?
- Does this work stimulate more and better than the same?
- Can RE use art, dance, drama, music, literature and other forms of art to link spiritual development and creativity?
- Do pupils have regular opportunities to express their ideas and insights creatively?
- Are pupils able to collaborate creatively in RE?

#### ICT and RE

- Can pupils use ICT to display and present the results of their work in RE?
- Can ICT modelling, analysis and be used better to challenge pupils' thinking?
- Does ICT-based research improve pupils' skills?
- Is RE using the web effectively to make authentic contemporary religion available in the classroom?
- Are pupils learning to interpret and criticise religious material found on the web, and to sort the well founded from the unfounded?

## Learning styles

- Does RE make thoughtful and balanced use of a wide range of learning styles?
- Do individual pupils have opportunities to learn in RE with their preferred learning styles, at a high level?
- Are individual pupils challenged to use the learning styles in which they are less skilled as well? Are they supported in this?

## Challenges and religious diversity

Good religious education clarifies confusion. The religious diversity of the UK is manifold, and pupils deserve to learn progressively about religious difference as well as about the similarities and common ground between religions. Through the primary years, and increasingly in the secondary years, each religion should be taught in ways that enable pupils to be clear about its key beliefs, teachings, practices and lifestyles.

All members of any one religion are not the same. Good RE will increasingly enable pupils to observe and understand the internal diversity of each faith. The many branches of Christianity, the main groups within the Muslim community, the several traditions of Judaism and so on are an appropriate focus for study and for challenge.

Good, challenging RE teaching will often use these general questions to challenge learners:

- What are the similarities between...?
- What links can you see between...?
- What are the differences between...?
- What do you know that is like...?
- What is this similar to in your own experience?
- How can you explain the differences between...?

Every person is unique, so with regard to AT2, learning from religion and human experience, the shades of meaning and expression that pupils choose with regard to the spiritual and religious questions and issues explored in RE are all significant. Asking about shared experience, common understanding and agreement matter very much. It is also significant to study the varieties of religious experience, different understandings and interpretations and disagreements.

## High quality learning tasks

The key difference that the teacher makes in determining the quality of pupils' RE experience is in the tasks set. The following table illustrates seven features of quality task setting in RE.

A good stimulus built in to the task: not merely asking for information to be recycled	This can be video, discussion, visit, visitor, photos, artworks, information or many other stimuli. Interesting issues and some authentic religious perspectives are the raw materials of good tasks. Discussing the issues and relevant textbook work are also always useful.
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A clear focus on one main skill	Sometimes this will be information gathering, but often the best task provides pupils with the information they need and asks them to use it to describe, explain, analyse or interpret. Can the student apply what they know to develop their RE skills?
A simple structured starting point	When work is well matched to pupils' learning needs, any pupil who is trying should be able to make a start to a well set task. They may often find it easy to draft and redraft their final answer after discussion.
Complex and open ended possibilities built in	Any high achieving pupil should be able to go a long way with the task: RE is often about stretching concepts and complex perspectives. Good tasks give pupils every chance to show what they can do. Further reading or other extension work might deepen their responses.
Differentiation, in the mixed ability classroom	Good tasks match work to pupils' different learning needs, enabling each to show progress. Pupils who are struggling need to be able to begin, but high achieving pupils may be set a target to reach level 2, 4, 6 or 8 from the 'I can...' statements from the syllabus.
Clarity about objectives: then pupils know what the teacher is looking for	Share the 'I can...' statements with learners, so that they can see what they are achieving, and how to make the next step. Use clear, shared objective when tasks are set and in marking. This good practice raises standards.
Effective assessment criteria: use the skill-words of Wakefield's QCA - based eight-level scale	The flexibility of the well set task will produce a wide range of outcomes: assessment criteria may be adapted to your particular classroom needs. The eight level scale is intended to show how the challenge of RE can be set for each age group.

## Challenging expectations from the teacher

Inspection evidence often shows that where standards in RE are high and pupils are making good progress, it is because the teaching sets challenging expectations. Asking 10 year olds to do simple cloze exercises that name the parts of a sacred building, or asking 14 year olds to retell a story will not promote good progress. This chart illustrates some of the ways RE might increase its challenge as pupils grow older. It is, of course, only one illustration.

Teachers may find it useful to create similar grids to this one with regard to other key recurrent topics. The Wakefield eight-level scale provides raw material for this development of progression in learning.

	Pupils might study.....	So that they might be able to.....
<b>Key Stage 1</b> <b>5-6 year olds</b>	What use Christians make of symbols like light, the cross, the chicken and the egg on Good Friday and Easter Sunday; children's versions of the stories of Easter.	Talk about celebrating Easter and celebrating festivals in their own family or faith community; draw and write simply about eggs, new life and Easter as they make Easter cards.
<b>Key Stage 2</b> <b>7-10 year olds</b>	Some biblical stories of Jesus' trial, death and resurrection, through the art and music of Christians in today's church.	Design and make a symbolic 'resurrection' sculpture, window or painting, showing their learning about Christian understandings of hopes for the future. Identify similarities and differences between Easter and a festival from another tradition.
<b>Key Stage 3</b> <b>11-14 year olds</b>	The place of the eucharist and the celebration of Easter in two different Christian denominations from different countries, and the roots of these aspects of worship in the gospels; the beliefs (for example about forgiveness) which are expressed at Eucharist and Easter.	Explain some ways in which the Eucharist relates to Jesus' last supper, and the Easter festival to his resurrection; consider the significance of the Easter events for Christians, relating this to their own thinking about forgiveness, remembrance and hope. Compare the festival to another festival thoughtfully.
<b>Key Stage 4</b> <b>15-16 year olds</b>	Christian doctrines of salvation from sin, and their relationship to the death and resurrection of Jesus; the teaching of another religion about the human condition.	Develop answers to questions about what Christians believe about life after death, and how this relates to the gospel accounts of the resurrection of Jesus; describe what is distinctive and what is common in Christian and other accounts of the human condition, hope and belief about life after death
<b>Key Stage 5</b> <b>16-19 year olds</b>	Debates within Christianity about the historicity and theology of Easter. Inter faith understandings of life after death.	Develop their own understanding of the place of Easter within the Christian faith. Analyse Christian and other beliefs about life after death

## Curriculum connections

RE is a curriculum subject in its own right, and teaching RE in small amounts of curriculum time means that cross-curricular connections are sometimes hard to make. Nonetheless, many teachers enhance the quality and challenge of RE learning through thoughtful connections between RE and other subjects across the whole 5-16 age range. The Agreed Syllabus asserts that holistic learning which includes RE is one of the challenges to be met by schools for pupils. The table below makes some selective starting point suggestions for challenging curricular connections.

Subject links to RE:	Points of contact
<b>Literacy / Language</b>	Using the skills of the literacy strategy, especially at text level, in approaching religious story, law, or other sacred texts enables pupils to set good standards of text level RE work. The language of religion and spirituality is rich, evocative and diverse. It is suitable to get pupils at any age to extend their language skills in RE RE is centrally concerned with expressing viewpoints and thus an ideal area for developing many speaking and listening activities.
<b>PSHE / Citizenship</b>	Personal development, particularly with regard to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is a shared aim in RE and PSHE. RE's contribution to understanding religious identity in a plural society is central to the relationship between RE and PSHE/Citizenship
<b>Expressive arts subjects</b>	Each religious tradition has expressions in the arts, symbolism, architecture and music. The study of these brings authentic religion close to pupils. The expression through the arts of pupils' own responses to religious and spiritual questions is a continuous part of good RE
<b>Geography</b>	The geography of religion examines how and why religious communities are spread in the UK and worldwide. RE and geography share the intention to develop pupils skills in (e.g.) data handling or exploring issues of community. With regard to inequality, wealth and poverty, RE and geography share a concern to deepen pupils understanding and challenge their attitudes.
<b>History</b>	The history of religions uses and develops similar skills to the history curriculum generally, particularly with regard to source analysis and empathic skills. RE and history share a concern for pupils' developing ability to make links between motives, character and events, and to interpret for themselves.
<b>Science</b>	Both religion and science are concerned with the pursuit of truth in uncertain fields, seeking answers to ultimate questions. Religion and science are sometimes presented as opponents. It is important in RE to explore ways in which they relate to each other as forms of understanding. Specific scientific issues often have an ethical dimension which can be effectively explored through skills learned in RE
<b>Maths</b>	RE makes occasional use of numeracy skills The history of maths has interesting connections with religion, for example in the Arabic number systems of early Islam.
<b>PE</b>	Surprisingly to some, RE and PE provide many common opportunities for spiritual and social development through team work and shared endeavour.

## RE relating to a range of learning styles

### Seven intelligences with seven RE examples

<p><b>Linguistic intelligence</b> relating to language and expression through words written or spoken.</p>	<p>In a unit for 9 year olds, pupils learnt the words that Muslims use to talk about Hajj, and develop their own use of the metaphor of 'life as a journey', describing the place they began, and where they are going, the signposts, motorways and beauty spots along the way.</p>
<p><b>Logical-mathematical intelligence</b> relating to mathematical and scientific approaches, manipulation of numbers and abstract symbols, logical structured approach to problem solving.</p>	<p>In a unit for 14s – 16s learners ask the question: 'What will make our society more tolerant and respectful?' A problem solving approach uses data from the census (see <a href="http://www.statistics.gov.uk">www.statistics.gov.uk</a>) to develop reasoned policies for more respect in our society.</p>
<p><b>Visual-spatial intelligence</b> relating to visualisation and manipulation of images, construction of models, and understanding of spatial relationships.</p>	<p>In work for 8 year olds about temptation, pupils develop dramatic presentations using 'freeze frame' or 'conscience alley' techniques to examine the emotions of being tempted. Both guided imagination and using the interrelations of people in a dramatic scenario use this kind of intelligence.</p>
<p><b>Bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence</b> relating to movement and use of the body in controlled ways.</p>	<p>In a unit for 12-13s about inspiring leaders, pupils could use a group role play to welcome or exclude one member of the group using 'body language' only (no words). The powerful experience of being shut out like a villain, or welcomed like a princess links well to the ways many religious heroes challenge exclusion.</p>
<p><b>Musical intelligence</b> relating to sensitivity to music, sound and rhythm.</p>	<p>In a unit for 6-7 year olds about creation, children choose from a range of examples presented by the teacher which pieces of music would be most suitable for the 7 'days' of creation in the Judaeo – Christian stories of Genesis 1.</p>
<p><b>Interpersonal intelligence</b> relating to sensitivity towards other people, understanding and predicting their responses, and communicating well.</p>	<p>In a unit for 14-16s about the value of spiritual dimensions to life in the 21st century, learners are challenged to find good things in spirituality that is not their own – web based daily inspiration from Sikhs, Jews and Christians are reviewed. Can they be sensitive to others, no matter how different they are?</p>
<p><b>Intrapersonal intelligence</b> relating to a sense of self and awareness of own feelings, strengths and weaknesses.</p>	<p>In a unit for 5-7s on the natural world, children are encouraged to use 5 senses to explore the world of nature, and a 'sixth sense' of reflection to see how the world of plants and animals makes them feel.</p>