

Year 3&4 Key Stage 2

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Resource File



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Useful websites

The following websites may be of use to share with pupils or for your own information. Please note all websites should be checked before use.

Buddhism

www.dharmaforkids.com

www.buddhanet.net/budtales.htm

Christianity

www.request.org.uk

Extremely informative site which supports teaching about Christianity in Religious Education. It has photos of different types of churches, information sheets, virtual tours and videos.

www.topmarks.co.uk

With religious stories illustrated for children, for example, the Nativity story.

www.rejesus.co.uk

Images of Jesus in the 'Faces of Jesus' section.

www.educhurch.org.uk

Compares three different churches.

Hinduism

www.hindukids.org

www.hindukids.org/pray/om.html

Om sound.

www.devon.gov.uk/dcs/re

Click on 'Places of worship'.

<http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/carolrb>

Click on 'Hinduism' for a virtual visit and information.

Humanism

www.humanism.org.uk

www.redcross.org.uk

Islam

www.islam4schools.com

www.jannah.com/learn/flashprayer1

How Muslims pray.

Judaism

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/religion/judaism

www.annefrank.org.uk

Sikhism

www.sikhs.org/wedding

Information on Sikh weddings.

<http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/carolrb>

Click on 'Sikhism' for information on different aspects of Sikhism.

General RE websites

www.reonline.org.uk

Excellent gateway site with glossary, virtual visits and teacher information. Suitable for pupils to use to search for websites.

www.natre.org.uk

RE teachers' site that includes details of the spirited arts competition, course details, access to the excellent 'Children Talking' website and other downloads. (Formerly www.pcfre.org.uk)

www.retoday.org.uk

Training opportunities

<http://re-xs.ucsm.ac.uk>

Information on different religions, including places of worship and rites of passage.

www.cleo.net.uk/subjects.php

Click on KS2 RE to access resources such as film of Wuzu, worship in different faiths and baptism.

www.religiousstudies.co.uk

Other websites

www.mlkonline.net

Information about Martin Luther King.

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/teachers/ks1/religion.shtml

Information for teachers on festivals.

www.strath.ac.uk/Departments/SocialStudies/RE/Database/Graphics/Images.html

Pictures of artefacts.

<http://re-xs.ucsm.ac.uk/re/places/>

Virtual visits to places of worship.

www.reep.org

This site has primary RE linked to the environment.

www.globalgang.org.uk

This Christian Aid website is designed for children and relates to key issues that children face around the world. It has teachers' sections with downloadable support materials.

www.traidcraft.co.uk

Information on current campaigns and foundation principles explaining why Christians should support issues such as fair trade.

www.ncb.org.uk

Information on bereavement.

www.bbc.co.uk/religion

BBC Religion and Ethics site.

Note

It is not unknown for unscrupulous individuals or organisations to place highly unsuitable material on websites to which children might have access. It is essential that teachers check the contents of websites before allowing the children access to them. Although we have tried to suggest reliable sources, websites can sometimes be removed or have their addresses changed. LCP cannot be held responsible for websites which are removed, or change their addresses, nor for the content of websites.

Summary of faiths

Buddhism

Buddhism was founded by an Indian prince – Siddattha Gotama – in the sixth century BCE. He became known as the Buddha, which means the enlightened one. A Buddha is not a god but someone who has awoken from the greed and suffering of ordinary life. A Buddha can help others to awaken. The Buddha is not worshipped or prayed to. He is honoured for his teachings and followed as an example.

Prince Siddattha was brought up in a palace, living the luxurious life of a royal. He was prevented from seeing suffering in any of its forms: old age, sickness or death. Eventually he secretly left the palace and saw all of these things. He became a wandering monk and tried to find the answer to human suffering. He became enlightened at the age of 35 after meditating under a Bodhi tree. He taught the ‘Middle Way’, the path which avoids all extremes, as neither extreme wealth nor extreme poverty had brought him enlightenment. He spent his remaining 40 years known as the Buddha, teaching his followers a way of life based on meditation, morality and giving.

The Four Noble Truths

Buddha taught this in his first sermon.

The First Noble Truth is that suffering exists, no one ever experiences total satisfaction and nothing is permanent.

The Second Noble Truth states that the cause of suffering is not being satisfied, or constant desire. People are greedy and self-centred. It is because of this that they are reborn.

The Third Noble Truth is to remove desire by recognising and getting rid of feelings of greed and dissatisfaction. This puts an end to suffering.

The Fourth Noble Truth is that the path of enlightenment is open to all people and this is called the Noble Eightfold Path.

The Noble Eightfold Path

Following the Eightfold Path provides a way of life that can lead to enlightenment and an end to suffering.

Right View – understand what you are doing with your life.

Right Thought – give up worldly desires.

Right Speech – speak in a positive way.

Right Action – do not harm others.

Right Livelihood – avoid taking jobs which harm other living creatures.

Right Effort – practise meditation to change attitudes.

Right Mindfulness – be completely aware of what you are doing all the time.

Right Concentration – concentrate on being at one with your situation.

The Five Precepts

The following is personal ethical guidance for Buddhists to follow which will help them on the Noble Eightfold Path.

1. Not harming any living beings – trying to show more loving kindness and concern for all life.
2. Not stealing – trying to be more generous in thoughts, words and deeds.
3. Not practising sexual misconduct – practising stillness, simplicity and contentment.
4. Not speaking cruelly or telling lies – trying to speak the truth and say kind and helpful things.
5. Not taking drink or drugs that stop you thinking clearly – trying to be aware of all your thoughts, words and deeds.

The Sangha

This is the community of monks and nuns established by the Buddha. These communities focus on the Dhamma, the teachings of the Buddha, and live according to an elaborate set of rules. They rely on the lay community to provide them with food and clothing. Most Buddhists do not become monks or nuns but follow Buddhism whilst continuing their ordinary lives.

Devotion

Whilst some Buddhists choose to meditate at a temple many others perform their meditation and devotions at home in their own shrines.

Enlightenment

Buddhists live their lives believing in the enlightenment. By following the teaching of the Buddha, Buddhists are attempting to attain enlightenment. It is only at this point that they can break the cycle of rebirth, a state which is known as Nirvana.

Christianity

Christianity began in approximately 33 CE. It was started by the followers of Jesus. At the centre of Christianity is the belief that Jesus is the Son of God. The basic beliefs of a Christian can be summed up in the creeds. The two main creeds in Christianity are the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed.

The Apostles' Creed

*'I believe in God the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.*

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

*He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and
born of the Virgin Mary.*

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,

Was crucified, died and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

*He ascended to heaven, and is seated at the right hand of
the Father.*

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

The holy catholic church,

The communion of saints,

The forgiveness of sins,

The resurrection of the body,

And the life everlasting.

Amen.'

The Trinity

Christianity is a monotheistic religion which teaches that God has three ways of being. These are the Father, Jesus the incarnate and the Holy Spirit working in the world. The Trinity is one God working in three different ways.

Jesus Christ

Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Palestine to a woman called Mary, who the Bible says was a virgin. The Bible also tells of the visitors at his birth: angels, shepherds and wise men. He grew up in Nazareth and at the age of about 30 became a preacher, healer and teacher. He was baptised and the Bible tells of his temptation by Satan in the wilderness. Jesus recruited a group of followers called the disciples. The Bible describes Jesus telling parables and performing healings and miracles. He taught that the greatest commandment was to 'love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength'. The second greatest commandment was to 'love your neighbour as yourself'. At the age of 33 Jesus was crucified by the Roman rulers. Christians believe that three days later he was resurrected. The Bible tells of many sightings of Jesus after he died and before he went to be with his Father in Heaven. Christians believe that because Jesus died, their sins are forgiven and that if they believe in Jesus as the Son of God they will enter Heaven when they die.

The Bible

The Christian holy book, or Bible, contains within it many writings or books.

It is divided into the Old Testament – made up of the Jewish scriptures, writings before the time of Jesus, and the New Testament – writings which are concerned with the life of Jesus and his apostles.

The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew and consists of 39 books. The books include laws, prophecy, psalms, poetry, history and stories. There are 27 books in the New Testament, originally written in Greek. These books contain history, prophecy, gospels and letters.

All Christians consider the Bible a source of teaching and authority but there are different views on whether it is literal truth, a spiritual truth or an exploration of meaning.

Worship

Christians see themselves as a body of believers. It is the community rather than the building they meet in which is of principal importance. Christians meet regularly on a Sunday but during the week there are many other informal prayer meetings and groups that get together to study the Bible or discuss how best to live a Christian life.

Most Christian churches celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus by sharing bread and wine. This has many different names such as Communion, Eucharist or Mass. Many services also include praying, praising of God through singing, listening to the Bible and learning about its meaning.

Praying and reading the Bible are not activities confined to Sundays. Many Christians pray and read the Bible every day. The prayers they offer individually and in communal worship include praise of God, confession, thanksgiving and asking for help and guidance from God.

Denominations

The Christian Church is divided into many different groups commonly known as denominations. There are some different beliefs and ways of worshipping between the denominations but they all hold some central beliefs. These are a belief in the Trinity and the resurrection, that Christians should live their lives in a way that shows a love of God, and that when they die they will go to be with God.

The denominations can be organised into three groups:

- The Orthodox Church;
- The Roman Catholic Church;
- The Protestant Churches.

Festivals

The most important festivals for Christians are Christmas, Easter and Pentecost.

At Christmas, Christians commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ. The period beginning four Sundays before Christmas and leading up to Christmas is called Advent, which means 'coming'.

Easter is the time when Christians remember the death and resurrection of Jesus. The 40 days leading up to this are called Lent, when Christians spend time praying and considering the importance of the events at Easter. Holy week includes Maundy Thursday (when the Last Supper is commemorated), Good Friday, the crucifixion of Jesus, and Easter Sunday where the joy of the resurrection is celebrated.

Pentecost is the time when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples and Jesus finally ascended into Heaven.

The Hindu religious tradition

The Hindu tradition has no one founder or formal creedal statement. It dates back to around 1800 BCE. The word Hindu comes from a Persian form of the ancient Sanskrit word 'Sindhu', which was used to describe the river Indus. The term Hinduism is used to describe the ancient religion of India. Those who practise the Hindu religious tradition often call it the Sanatan Dharma, or the eternal way. The Hindu religious tradition is complex; some people describe it as being like the roots of the Banyan tree.

The Hindu religious tradition is extremely diverse, depending on things such as culture, family background and geographical location.

Hindu ideas about God

Brahman is the name given to the ultimate life force. Many Hindus would say there are many gods and goddesses but only one God and that is Brahman. The most important deities are the Trimurti which represents the three aspects of God. These are Brahma – the creator, Vishnu – the preserver and Shiva – the destroyer.

Hindu families will devote themselves to one or two particular gods or goddesses as a way of coming to God. Some people devote themselves to the human forms of the god Vishnu, known as Avatars. Vishnu is believed to have come to Earth in human and animal form, for example, as Rama and Krishna.

Sacred text

Hindu scriptures are of two types: Shruti and Smriti. Shruti means that which is heard, Smriti means that which is remembered.

Shruti are also called revealed truths. These are scriptures which Hindus believe were revealed by God to holy men, who interpreted them for people to aid their spiritual development. One example of these is the Vedas, which were written in Sanskrit. One part of the Vedas is known as the Upanishads, which includes discussion between holy men and their students.

As these texts were hard to understand, Hindu teachers wrote Smritis, which are also called remembered truths. Many of these are stories, often in the form of poems. The stories tell of the Trimurti and talk about the right way to behave. They explain the beliefs and values of the Hindu way of living. An

example of these is the Ramayana which tells the story of Rama and Sita, and the Mahabharata, the most celebrated part of which is the Bhagavad Gita. The Bhagavad Gita tells the story of Arjuna and his charioteer Krishna. The Bhagavad Gita is the most loved and well known of the scriptures and for many Hindus the one they are most likely to possess and be familiar with.

Worship

For most Hindus, worship is a private thing and there is an emphasis on worship in the home. Even worship in the mandir, or temple, has some individual elements as well as communal aspects. Many Hindu homes will have a room or a corner of a room set aside for a shrine before which puja, or worship, will be performed. In the mandir in this country there will be several shrines to different gods and goddesses whereas in India each mandir is often devoted to one deity. Communal worship at the mandir usually takes place twice a day.

Dharma

Dharma is fulfilling the duties of a Hindu, both those that are religious and those that relate to the extended family. There are many important duties such as looking after your dependants, avoiding arguments, ahimsa (respect for life) and worshipping.

Karma

Karma is the law of cause and effect. This is the idea that every action has a positive or negative effect. Karma is the sum of everything that an individual does: good and bad.

Samsara

Many Hindus have a belief in the cycle of reincarnation known as Samsara. If they lead a good life and fulfil their duties their next life will be better than their present one. If they lead a bad life and do not fulfil their duties they will be reborn into a life less comfortable. Eventually Hindus hope they will be able to step off the wheel and achieve Moksha, spiritual freedom, when the soul or Atman is no longer reborn.

Festivals

There are many festivals and special times which draw together family and community. There are some large community celebrations such as those for Diwali. Some other important festivals are Navaratri, Holi, Shivaratri and Raksha Bandhan.

Samskaras

There are four stages of Hindu life: student, householder, retirement and renunciation. The various samskaras, or ritual steps, are sacraments designed to initiate a new stage of life. Not all of these are carried out by all Hindus. Instead it depends on the caste that each person belongs to. There are different ritual steps based around birth and naming, the sacred thread ceremony, marriage and death. For example, the sacred thread ceremony happens at the beginning of the student stage when a boy is aged seven or above. Within the ceremony a boy is given a thread of cotton with three strands on it. He must wear this and make vows of commitment promising to worship God, to respect holy men and their writing, to honour parents, elders and ancestors and to do his duty to the poor and all living things.

Islam

The word Islam means submission. The religion was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in the seventh century CE. Muhammad (pbuh) was born in the city of Makkah in 570 CE. Muhammad (pbuh) is not seen as the founder of Islam but rather as the final and most important of the prophets, the first of whom was Adam. There are many other prophets mentioned in the Qur'an including Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses) and Isa (Jesus). Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is known as the seal of the prophets.

Muhammad (pbuh) was a trader happily married to his wife, Khadijah. At the age of 40 he began experiencing a series of revelations from Allah. These revelations were delivered by the Angel Jibril or Gabriel. These happened over a number of years and form the sacred text of the Qur'an. The text of the Qur'an was written soon after the death of the Prophet (pbuh). The words are regarded as a direct transmission from Allah himself.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his followers were persecuted in Makkah and eventually migrated to Madinah in 622 CE. This was known as the Hijrah. By the time of the Prophet's death (pbuh) in 632 CE, Islam was an established religion in the Arabian peninsula.

The Qur'an and Hadith

The Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) over a 23-year period. Muslims show their love and obedience to Allah by being obedient to the words in the Qur'an and living as closely as possible to the way the Prophet (pbuh) lived. The Qur'an gives guidance on a range of topics about everyday life. It is treated with reverence, being handled carefully, wrapped up and kept above other books when it is not being used. When the Qur'an is being read, a Muslim will carry out Wuzu, which is ritual washing. The Qur'an is always rested on a stand. Children learn to read in Arabic and recite the Qur'an.

The Hadith is the collection of sayings and stories of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his closest followers. Sunnah are the actions of the Prophet (pbuh) which are believed to have interpreted the word of Allah.

Tawhid

Islam is a monotheistic religion. The concept of Tawhid is the oneness of Allah. Allah is more important than everything. Allah cannot be represented pictorially. Geometric designs and the calligraphy found in many mosques can show the complexity and yet the unity of Allah and humanity. The different attributes of Allah are shown in his 99 beautiful names such as Al-Rahim the most merciful and Al-Hafeez the protector of the weak.

The belief in one God is at the centre of the declaration of faith – the Shahadah.

The Five Pillars of Islam

These provide a structure and a focus for Muslim daily life. Muslims express and uphold their faith by practising these pillars.

The Shahadah (the declaration of faith)

‘There is no God except Allah. Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.’

Belief in the oneness of God is the foundation of Islam. The words of the Shahadah form part of the words of the Adhan, which are the first words whispered into the ear of a newborn baby and are also the last words a Muslim will hope to hear.

Salah (Prayer)

Prayers are offered five times a day as a duty to Allah. All Muslims must pray: men, women and children from the age of about 12. Prayers are said at specific times of day which alter slightly depending on the time of year. At the mosque, Muslims pray in rows behind the Imam, the leader of congregational prayers. Women do not have to pray at the mosque, although some mosques provide separate women’s galleries for prayer. Prayer is often carried out at home or at work. All that is needed is a prayer mat, access to water for Wuzu and a clean, quiet room. Muslims face Makkah when they pray.

Sawm (Fasting)

Many Muslims fast at various times of the year, but the month of Ramadan has special religious significance. In this month every adult Muslim over the age of about 12 fasts from dawn until sunset. Fasting means refraining from eating, drinking, smoking and sexual relations. Ramadan is regarded as a time of spiritual discipline that contributes to spiritual growth. There is also a sense of identifying with the poor. There are exemptions, for example, for pregnant women or the sick, but they must make up the time at a later date.

Zakah (Almsgiving)

All Muslims must annually give 2.5 per cent of their savings. This is distributed among the poor and needy.

Hajj (Pilgrimage to Makkah)

Pilgrimage to Makkah is an obligatory act of worship for those who can afford it. All Muslims should try to complete the Hajj once in their lifetime. The pilgrimage takes place in the last month of the Islamic calendar. Pilgrims wear a simple white piece of material, ihram, and complete a series of ritual and spiritual acts such as walking seven times around the Ka’bah, the black stone in Makkah, and throwing stones at pillars in the desert to show a rejection of Satan and temptation.

Festivals

Two very important festivals are Id-ul-Fitr and Id-ul-Adha.

Id-ul-Fitr celebrates the end of the fast of Ramadan. This is a time to ask for forgiveness, thank Allah for the Qur’an and share in congregational prayers. Special food is prepared and shared with family and friends. Presents are given and new clothes are often bought. This is also a time when Muslims will visit the cemetery and remember dead family and friends.

Id-ul-Adha celebrates the devotion shown to Allah by his Prophet Ibrahim to sacrifice his son Isma’il. Allah ordered that a lamb was sacrificed instead of Isma’il and so this festival is about devotion to Allah. This festival is celebrated at the end of the Hajj and either an animal sacrifice is made or money is sent to the poor and needy in lieu of a sacrifice.

Judaism

Judaism is the oldest of the three monotheistic religions and its origins are in the time of the Patriarchs: Abraham, his son Isaac and his son Jacob. The name Judaism is derived from Judah, one of the 12 sons of Jacob.

There are three particularly important features in Judaism:

- belief in one God;
- the Torah;
- the community and their land.

Belief in one God

Jews believe in a creator God who made humans in the image of himself. They believe that we cannot know what God looks like and so no visual representation of God will be found in synagogues or homes. Many Jewish people believe the name of God is too sacred to pronounce.

The words of the Shema are at the centre of Jewish belief. The opening of the Shema is:

‘Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength.’

The Torah

The content of the Torah is at the centre of Judaism as it embodies the covenant that Jewish people made with God in which God promised to give the land of Canaan to Abraham and look after his descendants. The teaching in the Torah, which means instruction, contains 613 commandments. The most well known of these are the Ten Commandments, which were given to Moses.

Jews have other important teachings that together make up the Tenakh or written Torah. These are:

- Torah – five books of Moses;
- Nevi'im – the books of the Prophets;
- Ketuvim – the holy writings.

The initials of each of these, T, N, K, make up the word Tenakh.

Also important is the Talmud which is known as the oral law.

The Torah is written in Hebrew, and in Orthodox synagogues it is read in Hebrew. The Torah is written

on a set of parchment scrolls by a qualified scribe. Scrolls are treated with respect and are dressed in various items before being placed in the Ark of the Covenant in the synagogue. A Torah scroll is covered with a mantle, it has a silver breast plate, a yad or pointer is used when reading the scrolls, and bells or crowns are placed on the wooden rollers. The Ark is situated so that worshippers look towards the holy city of Jerusalem when they are facing it. It takes one year to complete a reading of the Torah and the festival of Simchat Torah celebrates the completion of this annual reading. This festival is full of joy with Torah scrolls processed or danced around the synagogue.

The community and their land

The Jewish identity is very important and at times this has been a challenge as Jews have faced oppression. The land of Israel is a holy site for Jews, wherever they live in the world. Jews believe it was promised to them by God through the promise to Abraham and his descendants. There are many sites of pilgrimage in Jerusalem, the most important of which is the Western Wall, which formed part of the second temple in Jerusalem.

The family and the wider Jewish community are essential to living a Jewish life. The Kashrut or Jewish food laws play an important part in the daily lives of Jews, reminding them of their covenant with God. Foods which are fit to be eaten are called kosher. Food which is unfit to be eaten is called treyfah. In order to be kosher only certain types of meat and fish can be eaten and they must be killed in a special way. Meat and dairy products must not be eaten at the same meal and separate kitchen utensils and crockery are used for these different types of food. Several hours must elapse between the eating of a meat meal and a dairy meal.

Many Jewish festivals are based around the home as much as the synagogue showing the importance of the family in Judaism. Each week the Shabbat meal is celebrated at home on a Friday evening. This is followed by a day of rest with the family and a time to worship God.

Festivals

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are two important festivals. Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish New Year, which is celebrated in September or October. It is a time for thinking about the achievements of the past year and considering plans for the next year. Yom Kippur is the Day of Atonement. It begins at sunset, ten days after Rosh Hashanah. Many Jews fast for 25 hours. It is vital for Jews to forgive one another for anything they have done wrong before the beginning of Yom Kippur. There are many other festivals, including Pesach (Passover) and Hanukkah (festival of lights).

Sikhism

Central to Sikhism is a belief in one God. God is described by Sikhs as Truth, Eternal and Creator. These beliefs are reflected in the Mool Mantar, an important part of the Sikh holy book which is regularly used in worship.

Sikhs believe in equality, which is essential for ethical decision making. All people are equal; whether male or female, Sikh or follower of a different belief system. Sikhs show their belief in equality in many ways, for example, anyone can eat in the langar, the free kitchen provided after every service in the gurdwara. Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru, said that there is no difference between a temple and a mosque, or between the prayers of a Hindu and those of a Muslim.

The concept of service, sewa, is essential to Sikhs. There are many different types of service: manual service, such as preparing and serving food in the langar, or cleaning the shoes of the worshippers; or charitable service, such as giving money or goods to charity; or intellectual service, such as teaching children about Sikhism or showing adults around the gurdwara.

Sikhs should take part in honest work. This is work that is needed for the good of both the family and the wider community. Work should not exploit others. This links with the ideas of equality and the idea of generosity of possessions and time.

The Mool Mantar

(an interpretation in English)

'There is one God

Truth by name

Maker of all things

Fearing nothing and at enmity with nothing

Timeless is his image

Not subject to the circle of birth and death

Self-existent

By the grace of the Gurus

Made known to men.'

The Sikh Gurus

Guru Nanak was the first of the Sikh Gurus, born in 1469, and it was his teachings that were the beginnings of the Sikh religion. There have been ten Gurus, who Sikhs believe conveyed God's word to their age.

Guru Nanak (1469 to 1539)

With a few disciples, he devoted himself to meditation on the name of God and writing hymns to help believers reach out to God. He travelled widely, teaching through the words he had written. He shaped the Mool Mantar.

Guru Amar Das (1479 to 1574)

He taught the practice of the sharing of a common meal in the langar.

Guru Angad (1504 to 1574)

Created the script in which the scriptures are written.

Guru Ram Das (1534 to 1581)

Founded the city of Amritsar and built a shrine which has now grown into the Golden Temple.

Guru Arjan (1563 to 1606)

He collected together the hymns of the first four Gurus, which became the Adi Granth, the first part of the Guru Granth Sahib. He was the first Guru martyr when he was killed by Emperor Jehangir.

Guru Har Gobind (1595 to 1644)

He taught Sikhs to stand up against oppression and injustice and instituted the Nishan Sahib.

Guru Hari Rai (1630 to 1661)

Guru Har Krishan (1656 to 1664)

Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621 to 1675)

He was killed for sharing his belief that everyone should be free to worship God in any way that they choose.

Guru Gobind Singh (1666 to 1708)

He created the Khalsa in April 1699 at the festival of Baisakhi. He said that after him there would be no more human Gurus and that from then on the Guru Granth Sahib was the place to look for spiritual guidance.

The Guru Granth Sahib

This is the sacred book and is a guide for Sikhs now that there are no more living Gurus. It is a collection of hymns and words of the Gurus. It is considered to be the last Guru and so is treated carefully with respect and honour. It is held high above the head when it is moved and put on a bed in its own special room at night. When it is being used in worship it is positioned higher than the worshippers. A book of extracts from the holy book is called a Gutka and many Sikhs find this easier to keep at home than a full Guru Granth Sahib.

The Gurdwara

This means house of the Guru and is the place where the Guru Granth Sahib is housed and is also a place of worship. The Nishan Sahib, the Sikh flag, is flown, declaring freedom of worship and the availability of hospitality. It is also the focus of life for the Sikh community where religious teaching takes place and many other community activities.

The Five Ks

In 1699 Guru Gobind Singh instituted the Khalsa, a group of committed Sikhs. To show their commitment they were to wear a number of symbols: the five Ks.

1. **Kesh** – Uncut hair. A man will cover his uncut hair with a turban.
2. **Kangha** – A small comb which keeps the hair in place.
3. **Kara** – A steel bracelet which is worn on the right wrist. It is a symbol of the oneness of God.
4. **Kachera** – Shorts which are worn under clothes to symbolise action. In the Punjab they would have allowed for freedom of movement and modesty.
5. **Kirpan** – A sword which a Sikh should always carry to symbolise the readiness to defend the faith or use against oppression.

Sikhs who join the Khalsa take part in an initiation ceremony called the Amrit ceremony. Joining the Khalsa means someone making promises that require a high level of commitment to the faith and in their own personal life.

Festivals

There are two different types of festivals. Gurburbs are holy days related to the life of a Guru, such as the birthday of Guru Nanak. Melas are days that coincide with a Hindu festival but are also significant because of something that happened during the life of one of the Gurus, for example, Divali when Guru Har Gobind was freed from prison having negotiated the release of all the other prisoners.

Glossary

General

God

Creator and ruler of the universe. A supreme being worshipped by believers. Some believers, such as Hindus, may worship more than one god. In this case, the gods represent different aspects of the supreme being.

Miracle

A surprising and wonderful event, which does not seem possible and is therefore believed to be the work of God.

Pilgrimage

A journey to a sacred place, for religious reasons.

Prayer

Thanksgiving, praise, confession or request made to God. May also be a conversation with God.

Prophet

A religious teacher sent by God to pass on his commands.

Worship

The act of showing love to and paying respect to God.

Buddhism

Buddha

The Buddha taught in India in the fifth century BCE and started the religion of Buddhism. He was called Siddhattha Gotama and spent his life trying to be a better man. The word Buddha means 'Awakened' or 'Enlightened One'.

Buddhism

A religion founded by the Buddha in North East India in the 5th century and based on his teachings. The Buddha taught that suffering is brought about because we always want things that we do not have. He taught that we can overcome suffering by not giving in to bad thoughts and actions, such as greed, ignorance and hatred. Buddhism involves meditation in order to focus on the way to lead a better life.

Buddhist

Someone who follows the teachings of the Buddha.

Christianity

Advent

Means 'coming'. Advent is the period beginning four Sundays before Christmas and leading up to Christmas. It is a time of preparation for Christmas.

altar

A special table in a church. It represents the table of the Last Supper. The priest or minister uses the table to prepare the bread and wine for communion. Originally altars were used to make sacrifices to God and now Christians remember Christ's sacrifice here when they share bread and wine.

Ascension

The event when Jesus was taken up into heaven, 40 days after the resurrection.

Ash Wednesday

The first day of Lent. Some churches hold services during which Christians are marked on the forehead with a cross of ashes as a sign of repentance for wrongdoings.

Baptism

A ceremony in which a person has water sprinkled on them, or they are immersed in water, as a sign that they belong to the Christian faith. At the baptism of a baby, the child is given his or her Christian names during the ceremony, which is also called a christening. A believer's baptism is chosen by a person who is old enough to understand that they are committing their life to Christ.

Baptistery

A pool in a church used for baptisms by total immersion.

Bible

The holy book of Christians.

bishop

A bishop is a senior religious leader in some Christian churches. An archbishop is the chief bishop responsible for a large district, for example, the Archbishop of Canterbury.

christening

A ceremony at which a baby is given its name in a church (see also baptism).

Christian

Someone who follows the religion of Christianity. Christians believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Christianity

A religion founded in Israel around 2000 years ago. Christians believe in one God in three persons (God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit). Christians believe that God created the world and sent his son, Jesus Christ, to live on Earth and give people the chance of salvation. Christianity is based on the teachings of Jesus. He taught about God and about how Christians should live their lives. Christians believe that after Jesus was put to death he rose from the dead and ascended into heaven.

Christians hope to attain eternal life after death through faith in Jesus Christ. They try to keep God's Commandments by showing love and respect for everybody.

Christmas

A festival held on 25th December to commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ.

church

1. A place of worship where Christians go for services and prayer; 2. the whole community of Christians; 3. a particular denomination of the Christian faith with its own leaders, buildings and principles, for example, the Church of England or the Roman Catholic Church.

commandment

A command given by God, such as one of the Ten Commandments: rules of conduct given to Moses on Mount Sinai and recorded in the Bible; or the two commandments to love God and love your neighbour as taught by Jesus.

confirmation

A ceremony in which a Christian person is confirmed. He or she affirms Christian belief and is admitted as a full member of the Church.

cross

A symbol to represent the cross on which Jesus Christ was crucified.

crucifix

Cross with the figure of Jesus Christ on it, to depict his death through crucifixion.

crucifixion

A Roman method of executing criminals by tying or nailing them to a cross and leaving them to die. Jesus Christ was put to death in this way.

dedication

A service in which a baby is brought to church and welcomed into the Christian family. This service is chosen by people who believe the baby must make the choice to be baptised when he or she is older.

disciple

A follower of Jesus Christ.

Easter

An important Christian festival, which celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ after his death on the cross.

Epiphany

A festival in January that commemorates the journey of the wise men (Magi) to visit the baby Jesus.

font

A bowl, usually mounted on a stand, that holds the water for baptisms.

godparent

Someone who agrees, at a baby's baptism, to support the parents in the religious upbringing of the child.

Good Friday

The Friday before Easter Sunday. Commemorates the day Jesus died on the cross.

Holy Communion

(Also called Eucharist, Mass, Lord's Supper.) A ceremony in which people share holy bread and wine. It recalls the last meal of Jesus Christ and reminds Christians that Jesus died to bring them salvation. The bread represents the body of Christ and the wine represents the blood of Christ.

Holy Spirit

The presence of God in the world that enables believers to do God's will.

Holy Week

The week before Easter, when Christians remember the last week of Jesus' life on Earth.

incense

An aromatic herb that gives a sweet smell when burned. Represents purity and prayers going to God.

Jesus Christ

The central figure of Christian history and devotion, believed by Christians to be the Son of God, who was sent to live on Earth to teach people and to die for them.

Last Supper

The meal eaten by Jesus and his disciples on the night before Jesus was crucified.

Lent

The period of 40 days leading up to Easter. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and lasts for 40 days (not including Sundays). Christians associate Lent with the 40-day period when Jesus went into the desert to fast and pray. Some Christians fast or give up something they enjoy. Lent is a time of preparation for Easter.

Magi

Wise men in ancient times who studied the stars.

ministers: priest, pastor, vicar

A religious leader in charge of a church, who may be called a minister, pastor, vicar, rector, parson, etc. depending on the denomination of Christianity.

myrrh

An aromatic resin used for anointing dead bodies.

Nativity

The birth of Jesus Christ, or the festival that celebrates his birth.

New Testament

The second part of the Bible, comprising 27 books.

nun

A woman who has taken vows to dedicate her life to God as a member of a religious community and promised not to marry.

Old Testament

The first part of the Bible, which Christianity shares with Judaism, comprising 39 books.

Palm Sunday

The Sunday before Easter that commemorates the occasion when Jesus entered into Jerusalem and crowds waved palm branches to welcome him.

parable

A short story that makes a moral or religious point.

Pentecost

On the day of this feast, when the Jews were gathered in Jerusalem for the Jewish festival of Pentecost, the disciples received the Holy Spirit. The Christian festival of Pentecost is also known as Whitsun because Christians traditionally wore white for baptisms and confirmations on this day.

resurrection

The rising from the dead of Jesus Christ on the third day after his crucifixion. The word resurrection means 'return to life'.

sermon

A talk on a religious or moral subject given during a church service.

sin

A bad choice that does not obey God's instructions.

witness

Someone who tells others about God and their Christian beliefs.

Hindu religious tradition

ahimsa

Non-violence and respect for life.

Aum (Om)

An important symbol and the most sacred of Hindu words. It is said to be the name most suited for God and the sound made when the world was created.

avatar

Meaning 'one who descends'. This refers to a god who comes to Earth in a different form to overcome the threat of evil.

Bhagavad Gita

A Hindu holy book, which is the most important scripture for most Hindus. Also called 'Gita'.

Brahma

A Hindu god in charge of creative power. One of the Trimurti with Vishnu and Shiva.

Brahman

The supreme God or the ultimate reality. Hindus worship many gods, but believe in one supreme Divinity who is all-powerful.

Hindu

Someone who follows the Hindu religious tradition.

Hindu religious tradition

An Indian religion with many gods founded 3500 years ago. Hindus believe in one supreme God, but they worship many different gods and goddesses that represent different aspects of this all-powerful Divinity. Hinduism teaches its followers to be caring, considerate towards family unity, hardworking and honest. Culture and traditions are very important. Hindus believe in reincarnation – that people have another life on earth after they die.

Krishna

A popular Hindu god who is usually considered an avatar of Vishnu. The Bhagavad Gita contains the teachings of Krishna.

lotus flower

A pink water lily, regarded as sacred.

mandir

Temple – a place of worship for Hindus.

murti

Form – the image of a god or goddess that is used as a focus of worship.

Shiva

A Hindu god of destruction and the dance. One of the Trimurti with Brahma and Vishnu.

Trimurti

Trimurti means 'the three deities'. These three principal Hindu gods are Brahma, the creator, Vishnu, the preserver, and Shiva, the destroyer.

Vishnu

A Hindu god, preserver and protector of the universe. One of the Trimurti with Brahma and Shiva.

Islam

Adhan

The call to prayer, which states that there is no god but Allah. The Adhan is whispered into a newborn baby's ear.

Allah

The Islamic name for God in the Arabic language.

Aqiqah

A feast and naming ceremony that often takes place seven days after a baby's birth.

crescent moon and star

The symbol of Islam. Just as the moon and stars show the way in the desert at night, so Islam shows the way to God.

Five Pillars of Islam

The Five Pillars of Islam are an essential part of Muslim life. These are five rules that every Muslim has to live by. They are:

shahadah declaration of faith.

salah saying prayers to Allah five times a day.

zakah giving money to less fortunate people.

sawm going without food from dawn until sunset during Ramadan (fasting).

hajj pilgrimage to Makkah at least once in a lifetime.

Id (Eid)

A Muslim festival, for thanking Allah and celebrating a happy time, in particular:

Id-ul-Fitr celebration of breaking the fast on the day after Ramadan ends;

Id-ul-Adha celebration of the devotion shown to Allah by the Prophet Ibrahim. It marks the end of Hajj, the holy pilgrimage.

Islam

The religion that Muslims follow. Islam originated in Arabia in the 7th century and is founded on the ministry of a man named Muhammad (pbuh). It teaches that there is only one God, called Allah. Allah revealed his messages to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) who recorded these moral rules and rituals in the Qur'an.

Muslims believe in the Five Pillars of Islam. They try to follow the example of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in their daily life. The word 'Islam' in Arabic means to surrender oneself to God and by doing so attain peace.

mosque or masjid

A building where Muslims go to pray and worship.

Muhammad (pbuh)

Name of the last prophet to be sent by Allah, who founded the religion of Islam. Muhammad (pbuh) is so revered that it is usual to make the statement 'peace be upon him' (shortened to pbuh) every time his name is mentioned.

Muslim

Someone who follows the religion of Islam. Muslims accept Islam by professing their faith and living according to its rules for everyday life.

Qur'an

The holy book of Islam. It is the record of Allah's messages to humanity and was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). It is treated with great respect; it must be touched with clean hands and not placed on the floor.

Tawhid

Belief that there is only one God – Allah.

Judaism

Abram/Abraham

Jews believe that God told Abram, who lived around 2000 BCE, that he would be the father of a great people if he followed God's path. He and his wife spent their lives travelling and teaching that there was only one God. After he had done this work God gave Abram the new name of Abraham when his first son was born.

Ark

A special cupboard in a synagogue in which the Torah scrolls are kept.

Bar Mitzvah

A synagogue ceremony and family celebration to mark a boy's coming of age at 13 years old. Bar Mitzvah means 'Son of Commandment'.

Bat Mitzvah/Bat Chayil

A synagogue ceremony and family celebration to mark a girl's coming of age at 13 years old. Bat Mitzvah means 'Daughter of Commandment'. Bat Chayil means 'Daughter of valour' and is used in some Orthodox communities where girls do not take part in the same ceremony as boys.

challah

Braided loaf of sweet bread.

commandment

A command given by God, especially one of the Ten Commandments: divine rules of conduct given to Moses on Mount Sinai and recorded in the Old Testament.

Exodus

The journey of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land.

Hanukkah

An eight-day festival of light celebrated in December. It commemorates the re-dedication of the temple in Jerusalem in 165 BC after a period during which a hostile king gave it over to the worship of Greek gods and prevented the Jews from worshipping their God there.

Havdalah

A special ceremony that marks the end of Shabbat and the start of a new week.

Hebrew

Ancient language used by Jews for prayer and study.

Hebrew Bible

A term sometimes used to describe the holy books of Judaism. This is also known as the Tenakh and contains the Torah (Law), the Nevi'im (Prophets) and the Ketuvim (Writings). These books are also mostly found in the Old Testament part of the Christian Bible.

Jew

Someone who follows the religion of Judaism. (May also describe someone who is from the Jewish cultural community, but who does not practise the religion.)

Judaism

The religion that Jews follow. It was founded over 3000 years ago when God revealed the Torah (the first five books of the Hebrew Bible) to Moses on Mount Sinai. This holy book gives the Jewish people ethical rules for everyday life. Judaism is based on the belief that there is only one God who created the universe and controls it. Jews love, fear and respect God. They believe in justice and mercy towards all people. The family and community are very

important in Jewish life. Judaism also devotes itself to the study of Jewish literature and history.

kashrut

Laws about Jewish lifestyle, such as how to prepare food and which foods may be eaten.

Kiddush

Meaning 'holy' or 'set aside for God'. The Kiddush is a special prayer said at Shabbat.

kippah

Head covering (also called yamulkah, capel).

kosher

To describe food that satisfies the requirements of Jewish law. Rules about how food should be prepared and which food should be eaten are found in the scriptures.

mezuzah

A small case containing verses from the Torah. It is fixed to doorposts in a house to show that God is present.

mitzvah

Meaning law or command given by God. The 613 rules given to Moses.

Moses

Around 1300 BC Moses led the Jews out of slavery in Egypt to the land that God had promised them. Jewish people believe that God revealed the first five books of the Bible to Moses.

Passover/Pesach

Festival that commemorates the Exodus from Egypt, celebrated in spring.

Pentateuch

The first five books of the Jewish scriptures, more often called the Torah.

Promised Land

The land of Canaan, that was promised to Abraham and his descendants.

Rosh Hashanah

The Jewish New Year. There are three things Jewish believers think they should do to get ready for the New Year:

teshuva – say sorry;

tefillah – pray;

tzedaka – do good things.

Seudat

A celebratory meal for a Bar Mitzvah.

Shabbat

The Sabbath, observed each Saturday as a day of religious worship.

Shema

An important prayer found in the Torah which affirms belief in one God.

synagogue

A building where Jewish people meet for prayer, worship and study.

tallit

A prayer shawl.

tefillin

Small leather boxes with verses from the Torah inside them. They may be worn around the head and arm for prayers.

Torah

The most holy scriptures of the Jewish people. Torah means Law, but it also contains history guidelines for Jewish life. The Torah is made up of the Five Books of Moses (the first five books of the Hebrew Bible).

Torah scroll

The Five Books of Moses hand written on parchment and rolled to form a scroll.

Tu B'Shevat

A Jewish festival that celebrates trees.

yad

Hand-held pointer used in reading the Torah scroll.

Yom Kippur

A day of reflection and atonement, which occurs ten days after Rosh Hashanah.

Sikhism**Akhand Path**

The continuous reading of the whole of the Guru Granth Sahib over 48 hours.

amrit

Sacred liquid made of water and sugar.

Baisakhi

Celebration in spring of the Sikh New Year. It also remembers the forming of the Khalsa in 1699.

Chanani

Canopy under which the Guru Granth Sahib is placed.

Chauri

Fan waved over the Guru Granth Sahib during services in the gurdwara.

Divali

Festival of light, which celebrates the release of Guru Har Gobind, who was imprisoned for his faith.

Five Ks

Most Sikhs wear or have The Five Ks (panj kakke), which are five items that show that a person is a Sikh. They are:

kesh uncut hair, which symbolises devotion to God;

kangha wooden comb, which represents personal cleanliness and tidiness;

kara steel wristband, which shows that God's love is eternal;

kachera under shorts, worn to remind Sikhs of moral purity;

kirpan small sword, symbolic of freedom and defending the Sikh faith.

Granthi

A person who reads the scriptures from the Guru Granth Sahib.

gurdwara

A Sikh place of worship.

Gurmukhi

Meaning 'from the mouth of the Guru'. A written form of Panjabi and the language in which the Guru Granth Sahib is written.

gurpurb

A festival that celebrates an anniversary in the life of a Guru.

Guru

A Sikh religious teacher.

Guru Angad

The second Guru, after Guru Nanak.

Guru Gobind Rai

The tenth Sikh Guru, who formed the Khalsa in 1699 and became Guru Gobind Singh.

Guru Granth Sahib

The Sikh holy book.

Guru Har Gobind

The sixth Guru, who was imprisoned for his faith. His return from prison is celebrated at Divali.

Guru Nanak

The first Sikh Guru and founder of Sikhism (1469–1539). His birthday is celebrated in autumn.

Kaur

Meaning 'princess'. The name given to Sikh females.

Khalsa

The Sikh community and its rules for the Sikh way of life.

Khanda

A two-edged sword and symbol of Sikhism.

langar

The gurdwara dining hall where food is served to all-comers.

mela

A name for Sikh festivals that are not gurpurbs.

Mool Mantar

A statement that summarises the essential beliefs of the Sikh faith.

Nishan sahib

Sikh flag flown at gurdwaras, usually orangey-yellow.

Panj Piare

Meaning 'the five beloved ones'. The name given to the five Sikhs who were first initiated into the Khalsa.

Prashad

A sweet pudding made of sugar, flour and butter that has been blessed. This ceremonial food is offered to the congregation after a service in the gurdwara.

rumalla

A piece of silk that is used to cover the Guru Granth Sahib when it is not being read.

Sahaj Path

The reading of the whole of the Guru Granth Sahib over about ten days.

Sikh

Someone who follows the religion of Sikhism.

Sikhism

An Indian religion founded in the 15th century by Guru Nanak, the first Sikh guru, in the Punjab (North West India). Sikhs believe in one God, who is not exclusive to one religion. They are taught to respect other people's views since all religions simply have a different perspective on this one God.

Sikhism is based on the teachings of Guru Nanak, the other nine gurus who succeeded him, and the scripture of the Guru Granth Sahib. Sikhs are taught to believe in equality and tolerance. Sikhs aim to work honestly, remember God and share with others who are less fortunate than themselves. Most Sikhs also wear or have the Five Ks.

Singh

Meaning 'lion'. The name given to Sikh males.

Takht

Meaning 'throne'. A special platform for the Guru Granth Sahib.

turban

A long piece of fabric wound around the head to cover the hair of Sikh men.

yatra

A journey or pilgrimage.

Other

Bishnoi

An Indian community who build their lives upon the Hindu belief that all life is sacred. They eat no meat, they use only dead wood for fires and always check that there are no living creatures inside it first. They believe that all life should be protected.

Humanism

Humanism is an approach to life that is based on reason and common humanity. Humanists believe that moral values come from human nature and experience only.

For any other information on Teaching Religious Education in Primary Schools please refer to the Religious Education Council.