

Year 5&6 Key Stage 2



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Resource File

Year 5 units of work - Life's big questions - Ultimate questions





Lesson 1 Ultimate questions

The big picture

This lesson introduces the unit of work on life's big questions, sometimes called 'ultimate questions'. The intention of the lesson and the unit is to lead people into an understanding of how the way someone answers a few important questions has a big effect on the way they live their lives and the choices they make.

Learning objective

- To understand the term 'ultimate question' and consider its importance for everybody, regardless of faith.

Success criteria

Learning about:

- Pupils will have learnt what is meant by the term 'ultimate question' and have considered some of the most frequently asked.

Learning from:

- Pupils will have considered whether they know any common answers to some of life's big questions and how important they think they are.

Religious Education Council Requirements

A3, C1, C2

Resources

- Large sheets of flipchart paper
- Writing and drawing materials

Vocabulary

Ultimate question

Key questions ?

*Which questions in life are very difficult to answer?
Why do you think there is more than one answer to each of these questions?*

Introduction

Ask the class to think back to when they were younger and they used to ask their parents and teachers all sorts of questions that are hard to answer. You may wish to give examples such as, 'Why is the grass green?', 'Why do dogs bark?', 'What is the moon made of?' and so on. Can they remember any that they themselves used to ask? Explain that all these questions do have answers, but they are mostly too hard for young children to understand.

Introduce the learning objective: 'In this lesson we will begin to think about some of the biggest questions that all humans think about and why they are so important.'

Explain that over the next few weeks, they will be looking at how there are different answers to some of these questions and how everyone has to decide for themselves what they believe the right answer to be.

Activities

Stimulus

Put the following five questions on the board:

Key questions ?

Is there a God?

If there is, how can we communicate with God?

How did the world begin?

How should we live our lives?

What happens when we die?

Explain that these are some examples of 'ultimate questions'. That means that they are questions that everyone asks themselves at many different points in their lives about why they are alive and what they should do with their lives. Both religious and non-religious people believe this is what makes humans unique amongst all other creatures. Give the class some time to look at the questions and discuss them in groups of two or three. Ask them to consider why one person's answer to these questions might not be right for someone else.

After an appropriate time, write each of the five questions on a flipchart page and put them up around the room. Explain to the class that you would like them to go and put their name on each of the pages containing a question, along with a score out of ten to show how hard or easy the question is for them to answer. A score of one means it is impossible for them to answer, five means they have got a kind of answer but it is hard to explain, and ten means they have definitely got an answer and could explain what it is and why they believe it. Make sure they know they could put any score in between these points.

After everyone has had a chance to write their names and scores on the pages have a look at them as a class. Did anyone give a score of ten? Which pages have the lowest scores? If there is an obvious progression from high score to low score then highlight that to the class and discuss why this might be. If not, discuss why this is so.

Response

Explain to people that now they have looked at the whole class's response, you would like them to share their own responses to these questions. Ask them to copy the questions down and then code them with a traffic light as follows:

- Red = impossible for them to answer;
- Amber = they have got an answer but it would be hard to explain;
- Green = they have got an answer and could explain what it is.

Challenge them to explain their responses. If a question is coded red, why is that? What would they need to know to answer it? Do they have an experience or has anything happened that has led them to the response they have given?

Plenary

After sufficient response time, go through each question asking people to share their responses to each question with a show of hands. Explain that in the lessons to come they will be looking at some of these questions in order to explore the difficulties they present along with some different possible answers. Tell them that they will not be looking at the question, 'What happens when we die?' at this stage but they will get a chance to look at it in the future.

Encourage everyone in the class to pick one question to ask as many people as they can this week, both at home and at school. Ask them to find out if people have different answers and why they believe in the answers they do.

After time to think, people could copy and complete the following sentence:

- Looking at this today, I have been thinking about...

Differentiation

(By support) all members of the class should be able to access this lesson if grouped as suggested. It may be appropriate to form a group which you or another adult can lead.

Extension

More able people will be able to work at this open-ended task at a level and in a style appropriate to their abilities.