

Peterborough Diocese Board of Education.

Support resources for Agreed Syllabus RE

The Local Faith Community
As a resource for Key Stage One in
The Northamptonshire Agreed Syllabus

School visits to a place of worship and the visit to the classroom by members of a faith community can be amongst the most rewarding experiences pupils have in RE. They are especially valuable learning experiences for AT2, Learning from Religion.

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that for those using the Northamptonshire Agreed Syllabus these visits are well planned both by the School and the faith community and that the visits contribute effectively to the pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.

The guidelines can be adapted to be used with the Peterborough Agreed Syllabus and can be used along with the Surrey County Council publication "Visiting Christian places of Worship" and the RE today booklet "Religious Believers Visiting Schools."

Unit : People in Christianity

For this unit you are encouraged to invite a visitor who can talk about how their beliefs affect the things that they do. Three questions of meaning and value are in the syllabus.

1. What is it like to belong to a religion?
2. What does it offer followers?
3. What kind of life might followers have to lead?

For a visitor you should invite either a minister or priest and lay person (probably to attend on separate occasions). You will find below **“Guidance for the visitor”**. This should be discussed with your visitor when you make initial contact and should help in clarifying their task and gives you a format to work from with them.

The visitor would find helpful a visit to the Culham web site. It gives valuable insights into the nature and purpose of RE and provides a questionnaire for ministers about supporting the teaching of RE.

Guidance for the visitor

The Class

You will be with children of different abilities and perhaps across the whole 4-7 age range, so an initial meeting with the class teacher in advance of the lesson is very important. Questions about how your input will fit in with the children’s work can be discussed. It would also be helpful in advance to see how the class work together and observe how the teacher talks to the class. It is also a good opportunity to learn some names.

The Lesson

Consider with the children contexts of belonging, belonging to a family, a community, a school and develop this as a background to belonging within the Church or Christian community.

Describe and talk about what it is like for you to be a Christian (5 minutes)

Describe what you do because of your faith (5 Minutes)

The questions could be broken down and how this is done could be discussed in advance of the lesson. The format could involve the teacher asking these questions. Be prepared to answer the children’s questions after your talk. Be honest and if you cannot answer a question, say so.

Areas to cover

A minister or priest could include a description of leading worship and of the variety of responsibilities of a minister.

A lay person could include descriptions of their roles in the Church community and describe why a Sunday is important to them.

These opening phrases might be helpful-

“As a Christian, I....”

“As a priest, I....”

“As a Christian I believe....!”

“It is important to me as a Christian that”

Finally ask about the follow up work and make the offer of further support.

Unit : Places in Christianity.

A very important element in this Unit is to visit at least two churches to compare type and style. Two questions of meaning and value are in the Syllabus.

1. What makes a place special?
2. Why do people worship in special places?

Very good guidelines for visits exist. These are helpful for both the teacher and the guide. Guidelines can be found in these publications:

D Lankshear, *Churches serving schools* The National Society 1996

C Richards, *Living Religions, Christianity Part One* Nelson 1996

A Seamen and G Owen, *Teaching Christianity at Key Stage One* The National Society 1999.
Surrey County Council *"Visiting Christian places of Worship."*

In addition the work of Mary Stone is very supportive of Key Stage One Church Visits and the Diocese has a video training pack of her work, which can be borrowed. It is highly recommended. See Mary K Stone, *Don't just do something Sit there*. RMEP 1999.
It should be possible to have a guide when you visit a local place of worship.

You will find below **"Guidance for the Guide"**. This should be discussed with the minister, priest or lay person when you make initial contact.

Guidance for the Guide

A warm welcome at the door is important. It can then be helpful if the children enter the church quietly with the encouragement that they look all around as they find a place to sit, noticing what they see, hear, smell and touch.

Open up opportunities for creative responses. Ask questions such as :

"Did anyone notice anything they would like to tell everyone about?"

"What does it feel like now you are in the church?"

In responding, be positive and probably do no more than speak back what has been said;

"So Shaun, you noticed a smell of wood."

"Hannah says that she is feeling very peaceful"

"Peter said that he is thinking about his auntie's funeral."

At some point this question should then be included. "WHY DO YOU THINK THAT PEOPLE COME INTO THIS CHURCH?"

From the answers, which will cover many things, a great deal of follow up work can take place in the classroom. The important thing, at this visit, is to value all of the answers.

The children could now walk round the church and identify the larger items, especially the altar, font, lectern and pulpit. Be ready to answer individual questions.

The visit could be concluded with some worship if this was appropriate.

Finally express an interest in the follow up work, which should include a visit to a different place of worship for contrast and comparisons.

Unit : Books and stories in Christianity.

Questions of meaning and value are in the Syllabus.

Why is the Bible important to Christians?

What do Christians believe about the origins of the Bible?

There is an opportunity to invite a visitor who can answer these questions. The minister or priest and the lay person who came previously would provide some continuity. You will find below further "Guidance for the Visitor".

Guidance for the Visitor.

Some suggestions for talking about why the Bible is important to you.

"One of my favourite Bible passages is....."

"When I was younger I liked the passage about"

"Some children I know like the passage about....."

"A modern version of this story Jesus told, which I enjoy is....."

"Looking back through my life, the Bible has been important to me in different ways. When I was"

"The Bible is most of all important to me because....."

In reading from the Bible, we will have our own favourite translations. The language used in the Good News Bible is very child friendly. Also recommended are **The Lion Bible for Children**, Murray Watts; **The Lion Read and Know Bible**, Sophie Piper and the re-telling of Bible stories by the writer Bob Hartman (Lion publishers). There are examples of these at Bouverie Court.

Unit : The Family in Judaism and the Torah

Many ministers and priests, because of their theological training, would be able to offer knowledgeable support for these themes. A meeting with them could be helpful for the class teacher in preparing these themes. Best practise is to take the opportunity to make contact with a member of the Jewish community who can be another welcome guest to your class. These questions of meaning and value can be explored with your guest:

- Why is the family important to Jews?
- Why is the Torah important to Jews?

There is a good video in the BBC Watch series to support this unit.