

Bridging and transition from year 6 to year 7

An approach for Religious Education in Nottingham City and County

Where schools and teachers are able to liaise effectively between key stages 2 and 3, standards of work in RE can be significantly enhanced. Progression in pupils learning can be effectively facilitated by the use of a bridging unit of work, which is begun in year 6 at primary school, sent on to a pupils' new school, and completed in year 7.

Benefits

This transition unit is an optional part of the Nottingham City and County Agreed Syllabus, but its use has many potential benefits in supporting and facilitating progression in RE between key stages 2 and 3. These include:

- providing evidence of achievement,
- enabling continuity in learning,
- a focus on pupils' work and achievement (rather than being focused only on assessment scores or data),
- reflecting the aims and two attainment targets of RE in a balanced way,
- assisting the primary school by providing a 'summative' focus to RE learning for each pupil,
- assisting the secondary school where liaison with many feeder primary schools is problematic.

Rationale:

The aims of this unit of work for RE are to enable pupils to show that they can:

- retell some key stories from the religions they have studied
- describe the significance of these stories to believers
- make links between stories, festivals, scriptures and values
- explain some meanings of the stories with regard to belief about God or the divine
- suggest answers to questions about the values and beliefs which the stories touch upon.

Additionally, the unit has some broader educational aims associated with transition from key stages 2 to 3. These include:

- to contribute to pupils' confidence at school transition.
- to provide a good 'finish' to key stage two RE.
- to enable teachers of pupils in year six to finish their RE courses in ways that provide for continuity and progression to further learning.
- to provide teachers of pupils in year seven with a starting point for the RE achievements of each pupil, which may assist with assessing pupils' achievements on entry to Key Stage 3.
- to avoid adding to the administrative and workload difficulties associated with extensive reporting of achievement by levels at the end of key stage 2 from school to school, providing a lightweight structure for pupils to show their new schools what they have achieved in RE
- to assist teachers at key stage three who work with pupils from large numbers of different primary schools to establish a clear picture of the standards set in RE by pupils from different schools (this is of course dependent on the acceptance of this guidance by large numbers of schools).

Outline: Learning about God from stories of faith.

The unit can be taught to pupils in 5-8 hours of teaching time in year 6, and 5-8 hours in year 7. There are eight stories, which each have a key connection with ideas about God or ultimate reality in the religions from which they come. Each story is presented with some discussion questions and some suggested activities. Generally, the application of literacy strategies from year 6 text level work will enhance understanding and deepen learning, so teachers may freely adapt the material given here to the needs of each class or pupil.

Lesson ideas: Year 6

1. A Muslim Story:	The Slave Bilal and the One God	C5
2. A Hindu Story:	Rama, Sita and the Demon King Ravana	C7
3. A Jewish Story:	Adam and Eve: the first people break the first rule. De-creation: an ecological story.	C9
4. A Christian Story:	Jesus makes a person with leprosy clean and well.	C13

Making meaning: a creative opportunity for pupils to compare and reflect upon stories from different faith traditions for themselves, and write a spiritual story of their own (see pages 22-24 for this activity).

Lesson ideas: Year 7

1. A Christian Story:	Dreaming of true riches	C15
2. A Sikh Story:	Guru Nanak and the Court of God	C17
3. A Buddhist Story:	Hatching Out of your Egg: the enlightened chicken	C19
4. A Jewish Story:	The Wall ~ a British Jew visits a holy site.	C21

Making meaning: a creative opportunity for pupils to compare and reflect upon stories from different faith traditions for themselves, and write a spiritual story of their own (see pages 22-24 for this activity).

Planning Guidance

- This unit can be taught in various flexible ways, as determined by schools and individual teachers.
- It is better to deal with two of the stories in depth than to tackle all four too quickly.
- There is enough material here for 5-8 hours of taught RE in both year 6 and year 7.
- The value of story in religious traditions should be emphasised in each example presented to pupils. Some of these stories are from sacred texts, others have different sources, but each is told and retold inside a faith to teach about god or ultimate reality. Their use in RE is similar.
- It is largely through stories that religions clarify their understanding of God. The emphasis in this work is on beliefs about God as much as it is on stories, and these links are central to the way the unit is presented and taught. Careful planning and questioning will enable pupils to think about the ideas of God held in the religions they have studied, and their own ideas.
- Some teachers have kept their RE factual, because the 'God questions' are unanswerable in some ways, and as teachers, we like to have the right answers. But this unit encourages the teacher to lead and stimulate open ended discussion and work, about all the mysterious aspects of questions about God. If pupils learn that (even) the teacher cannot answer these questions, then one good RE lesson will have occurred. RE is about truth-claims in uncertain fields, and this unit seek to celebrate this, rather than make it a problem.
- The unit is equally suitable for theists, agnostics and atheists. Its aims and intentions are to explore a range of ideas about God / ultimate reality in increasing depth.
- The unit does not need to be taught at the exact point of transition. Year 6 term 3 and Year 7 term one are pressure points for the whole curriculum, for various reasons. Using this RE material earlier in year 6 and later in year 7 may be the best plan for some schools. Another alternative would combine the unit with literacy work in an 'after SATS' week at the end of year 6.
- The materials in this unit can be copied freely for use in a Nottingham City and County school.

Stories of God: Assessment ideas: 'I Can...'

If pupils can say 'Yes' to most of the 'I can...' statements in each box, they are working at the level indicated. These can be made even more specific to particular stories, but are written generally here.

<p>Level 2: I can...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retell a story from each of two religions I have studied. • Say simply what the story-writer thinks about God. • Suggest what a religious symbol or word in the story means. • <i>Talk sensitively about what matters in the story, and what matters to me.</i> • <i>Write a thoughtful story of my own which includes an idea about God.</i> 	<p>Tick</p>
<p>Level 3: I can...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe how a religious story shows a belief about God or about humanity • Make a link between a story and a festival when it is told. • <i>Compare my ideas about God with those in a religious story.</i> • <i>Suggest an answer to a 'God ~ question' of my own</i> • <i>In a story of my own, link a belief about God with my own attitudes.</i> 	
<p>Level 4: I can...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe how a religious story shows some key beliefs about God from the religion. • Connect the story with sacred text, and a festival today, accurately. • Give a description of the meaning of the stories studied and their symbolism. • <i>Ask and answer questions about the characters in the story referring to the beliefs of the religion.</i> • <i>In a creative story of my own, show a clear understanding of a question about God in the light of a religion I have studied.</i> 	
<p>Level 5: I can...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how two religious stories from different traditions are similar and distinctive in what they say about God. • Explain how a religious follower might change their life because of a religious story. • Explain how symbols are used to express religious ideas in the stories. • <i>Make an informed response expressing my own ideas to the religious story, and its beliefs and values.</i> • <i>In a creative story of my own, express my ideas about some questions about God, meaning and purpose in the light of the religions I have studied.</i> 	

AT1: Learning about religion: plain text

AT2: Learning from religion: italic text

A Muslim story for year six.

How Bilal the slave became the first Muezzin of Islam

Themes: the power of Islam to change people's lives, courage to stand up against injustice, the call to prayer, belief in Allah / God and the demands of belief in God.

Many years ago in Mecca, there lived a slave called Bilal. Bilal's master was a hard, cruel man called Umayya. He was wealth, powerful and arrogant. He demanded that all his slaves worship just like him. Now, Umayya worshipped many idols.

One day, Umayya called Bilal, gave him a whip, and ordered him to beat another slave. 'He says there is only one God,' said Umayya hotly, 'and that every person is important. Huh. The whip will teach him a lesson.' However, the sight of the whip did not frighten the slave. He kept calling out, quite calmly, 'One God, only one God.' His courage brought Bilal to believe also. He could not whip such a man. He was impressed with his devotion to God.

Umayya was angry. Not only had Bilal disobeyed him. Now, he too stood in the courtyard shouting, 'One God, only one God.' Soon all the slaves would revolt. Bilal must be taught a lesson. Umayya ordered that his hands and feet be tied. Then Bilal was dragged outside the city wall to lie, without shelter, on the sands, under the scorching sun. But all the time he shouted boldly: 'One God, only one God.'

The shouting vexed Umayya. 'Find a great, heavy rock,' he ordered. 'Place it on his chest. That will quieten him.' It did. Under the weight of the torturing rock Bilal could hardly breathe. But still, through dry, cracked lips he whispered persistently: 'One God, only one God.'

Now it happened that Abu Bakr, a follower of the Prophet, was passing by. He was shocked. He went to Umayya to ask how anyone could treat another in that way. 'He is my slave, I'll do what I like with him,' yelled Umayya furiously. 'If you do not like it, you can always buy him.' So Abu Bakr bought Bilal and he, too, became a follower of the Prophet.

Bilal and the others decided to build a place where they could worship God. When it was finished they had to decide on the best way to call the people to prayer. Should they use a bell or a drum, a horn or maybe even a trumpet. But they couldn't agree. Then Abdullah, another of the Prophet's followers spoke about a dream he had, in which he heard a human voice calling the people to prayer. All agreed this was a fine solution - just the human voice on its own. But who was to have this honour?

The Prophet placed his arm around Bilal's shoulder. 'Yours shall be the voice, Bilal,' he said. 'The voice that praised God even from under a rock.' 'But what am I to call?' said Bilal nervously. 'I don't know what to say.' 'Praise God, tell the people Muhammad is his messenger and call them to prayer. That will be sufficient,' answered the Prophet.

Bilal raced up the top of the mud roof of the mosque. He stood still, staring at the people down below. Then he threw back his head, raised his voice, and from deep inside him came the words that still echo, five times a day, in the towns and villages of Islam:

'Allahu Akbar, God is most Great. I witness that there is no God but Allah. I witness that Muhammad is the messenger of God. Come to prayer. Come to salvation.' So the slave of Umayya became the companion of the prophet and the first Muezzin of Islam.

Activities for Pupils.

Question: What did you learn from this story?

What mattered most to Bilal? A Paired discussion activity

Give each pair a copy of the target diagram and the 12 items below. Ask pupils to discuss whether each of the possible answers to the question 'what mattered most to Bilal?' should go on the bull's-eye.

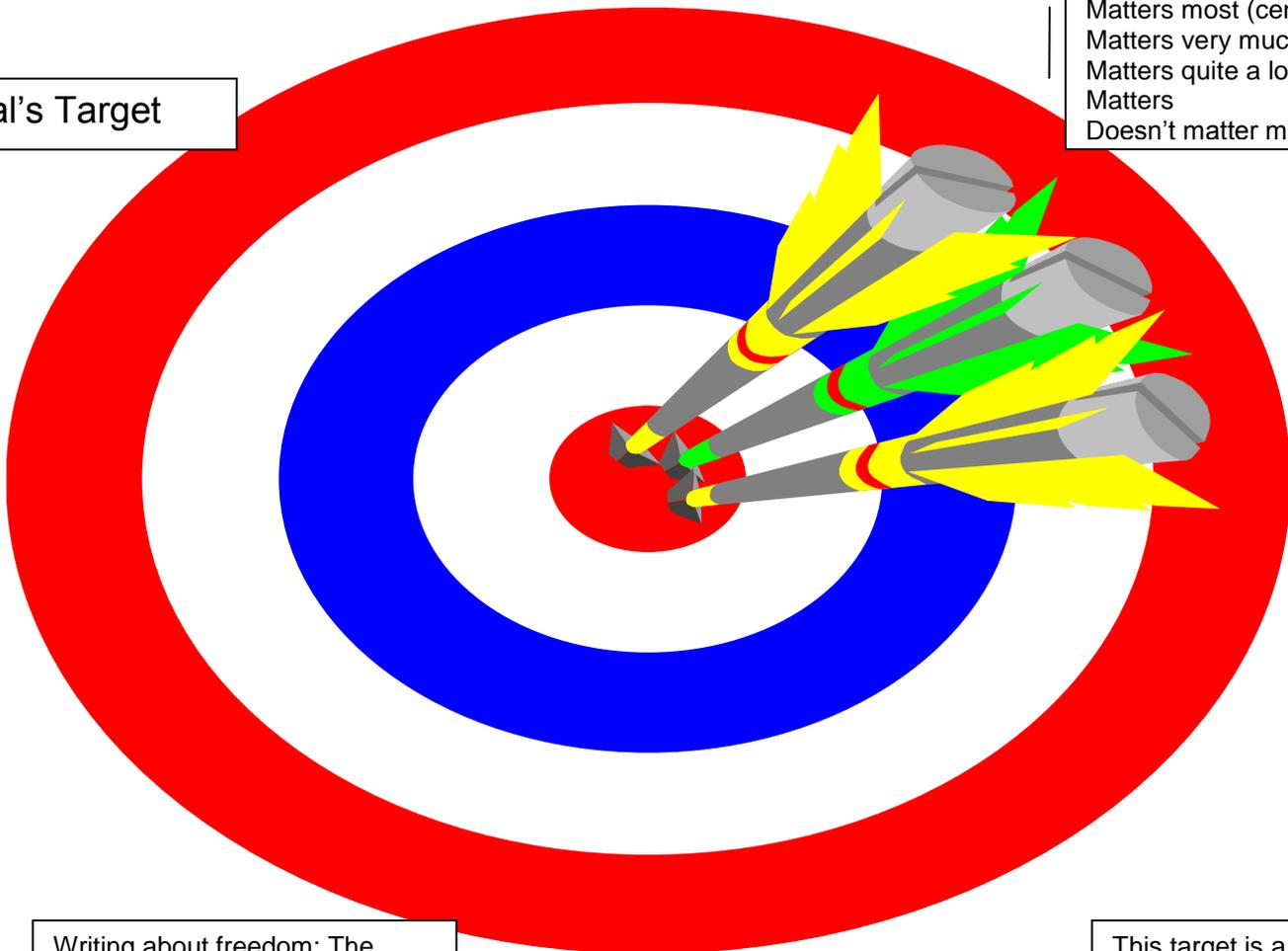
There are no definitive correct answers, and rules can be varied: one in the centre and no more than

three in any one circle is a good way to do it. The discussion centres on interpretation, a key RE skill, but one often lacking. Focus on the idea of God in the story.

His work	His own comfort	Using the gifts God gave him	Being loyal to his friends
Serving Allah	Escaping from slavery	Preserving his own life	Praying
Following the Prophet	Obedying his master	Trendy clothes	Helping other people

Bilal's Target

Matters most (centre)
 Matters very much
 Matters quite a lot (blue)
 Matters
 Doesn't matter much (red)



Writing about freedom: The story of Bilal's liberation shows what he was 'freed from' and what he was 'freed for'. Ask pupils to think of examples of being set free, and to write one of their own on this theme

This target is a standard MS word graphic, and you can find it easily on your school computer, to print copy or modify.

A Hindu story for year six.

The Rescue of Sita:

Themes: Good overcoming evil, each person doing their part, the hidden presence of the divine, the festival of Diwali

Many stories are told at Diwali about gods and goddesses, particularly those about Vishnu and his wife Lakshmi the goddess of good fortune, but the most significant is the story of Rama and his wife Sita. Diwali celebrates Rama's triumphant return to Ayodhya with Sita, and his coronation. Sacred Hindu stories tell how the god Vishnu has come to earth nine times, when need is great, to save humanity.

The story of Rama and Sita

Long ago there lived in India a king called Dasratha who ruled over the kingdom of Ayodhya. He had three wives and four sons. The eldest son Rama was heir to the throne.

Rama was really the god Vishnu in human form and had special powers to destroy evil demons in the world. The main trouble maker of the times was a terrifying 10 headed demon called Ravana. Queen Kaikeyi, the king's favourite wife, was jealous because Rama was to become King and she wanted her son Bharat to inherit the kingdom. So she told her husband lies about Rama with the result that the king banished Rama for fourteen years, sending him into the forest. Bharat became king, but he was angry with his mother because of the lies she had told. He took a pair of Rama's golden slippers and placed them on the throne as a symbol of Rama's rightful place saying 'I will look after Rama's kingdom until he returns'

Rama had a beautiful wife Sita. When he was banished to the forest, she chose to go with Rama: her loyalty and devotion were matched by her strength of character. Rama's loyal brother Lakshman chose exile too, and stayed in the forest with Rama. Their life was simpler than the life of the palace – but more dangerous too. The brothers made a circle of fire to protect Sita, while they went hunting. But one day whilst Rama and Lakshman were out hunting, the evil demon king Ravana, changed himself into a wandering holy man. He tricked Sita into leaving her protected place in the forest. He grabbed her, bundled her into his chariot and sped off across the skies to the island of Lanka. He believed that if he married Sita he would rule the world.

The brothers were shocked and upset to find Sita missing and determined to find and rescue her. Hanuman, the monkey king, who was totally devoted to Rama, helped them. He took a ring of Rama's to Sita secretly, so that she knew how he was trying to save her. Sita, in captivity, became thin and sad – but her love for Rama is fixed and firm. Hanuman got together all the monkeys in the forest and together they built a bridge of their own bodies across the sea to Sri Lanka.

After ten days of fierce fighting they defeated the demon Ravana. Sita and Rama were reunited and returned back to the Kingdom of Ayodhya, as their 14 years of forest Exile were now over. The people of the kingdom lit little oil lamps called divas all along the way to help the couple find their way home. Rama and Sita became king and queen and the golden slippers were removed from the throne so that they could sit in their rightful place.

So every year at Diwali, Diya lamps remind devotees of Vishnu of the triumph of good over evil.

Activities for pupils

Questions for discussion and writing

1. In this story, who are the 'goodies' and who are the 'baddies'?
2. What actions in the story are right and wrong, good and bad? List ten actions and put them in a ranking: best to worst.
3. Think of actions similar to these from some movies you like, e.g. Disney, Dreamworks stories. Is it true that all stories have heroes, villains, good fortune and mistakes in them? Disney movies won't last thousands of years like the Divali story, but they have some similar themes.
4. Make a 'feelings graph' for the Rama and Sita story. In a group of three, take one character each and plot their feelings onto the axes. Put your three graphs together. What do you notice?
5. This story has been told by millions of people for thousands of years. That's one way of seeing that it's a holy or sacred story. Why do you think it has lasted so long? Why is it a sacred story?
6. Rama and Sita are shown to be a god and goddess. But in the story, they live like humans. Many Hindu stories are about the way gods and goddesses are hidden, and at work secretly in the world. Why do you think they keep their identity secret?
7. What is the story really about? Some Hindu people say it's the story of the triumph of good over evil. Do you agree? And does goodness triumph over evil in real life?
8. 'The divine is present in all life' say the Hindus. So whatever activity we are doing, God might be found hidden somewhere in it. Do you agree? Why or why not?
9. What did you learn from this story?

Sequencing: A set of pictures for a sequencing activity – drawn by the class, or from a published source – are an excellent starting point for work around re-telling the story (a level 2 skill).

Bookmaking: Ask Year Six pupils in groups to review some of the many books about the Divali story that are available. Ask them to create a 8 - 12 page picture book, for children aged 5 to 7, that shows the key events of the story, and to write a text (only about 50 words per page are needed) to re-tell the story for these younger pupils.

Perspectives: Use the pupils' literacy skills to get them in groups of four to write the Divali story from four different perspectives: Bharat, Sita, Lakshman and Hanuman.

Festival links: This story obviously connects to the Festival of Divali. These links could be reinforced in many ways by good teaching.

Two Jewish stories for year six

2 stories about Creation and Desecration

Themes: the natural world, keeping the rules, care for the environment, God's generosity and goodness to humanity, human responsibility or 'stewardship'.

Adam and Eve take the forbidden fruit

Eve and Adam looked around them at the beautiful world that God had created. God was right; it really was very good. There was just one thing they had to remember. God had told them that they could eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden of Eden except for the tree in the middle, which God called 'the tree of knowledge of good and evil'. God had warned them that if they took fruit from that tree, it would make them very unhappy and they would have to leave the beautiful garden that God had created. At the time, Adam and Eve thought there were so many other wonderful fruits to eat, they would never need to eat fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

One day, however, the crafty serpent came to visit Eve. He asked her what God had really said about which trees they could eat fruit from. When Eve told him that they were not allowed to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the serpent told her that God had said that because God didn't want her to become as wise as God was. The serpent said that if she ate from that tree she would learn all about good and evil and become like God.

Eve had a look at the fruit on the tree of knowledge of good and evil. It certainly looked very tasty. She had sometimes wondered what it might taste like. She didn't think it was fair that God was keeping things from her and Adam, so she reached out and picked one of the fruits. She had a bite, and gave some to Adam as well.

As soon as they had eaten the fruit, Adam and Eve realised what it meant to do something bad. They were embarrassed, and the next time God came to see them in the garden, they ran away and hid so God wouldn't see them. God knew what was wrong, and asked them if they had eaten from the tree of knowledge of good and evil that they had been told not to eat from. Even though he had eaten some himself, Adam blamed Eve, who had given him the fruit to eat, then Eve blamed the deceitful serpent who had tempted her to take the forbidden fruit.

God told the serpent that because of what it had done in tempting Eve to eat the fruit, it would always be cursed, and would have to crawl along the ground, and be the lowest of all animals. God sadly told Adam and Eve that because of what they had done, they would have to leave the beautiful garden of Eden. God told Eve that women's lives would be hard because they would find it painful to have children. God told Adam that men would always have to work very hard to feed themselves and their families and earn a living. God also told Adam and Eve that they would not live for ever, but would die when they got old, and would go back to the ground from which they were made.

God made Adam and Eve some clothes to wear, made of skin, and banished them, sent them out of the garden of Eden so they would not take anything else that they shouldn't touch. They sadly left the garden, for they had learned what it means to be bad, and they had changed God's world for ever.

Activities for Pupils

The story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden starts at Genesis 2:4b. The story told here, often called 'The Fall', of their taking the forbidden fruit and being punished for their wrongdoing, is found in Genesis 3. A slightly different version of this story can be found in the Qur'an; see 20:116 onwards. Teachers need to notice that, despite popular tradition, the fruit in the story is never referred to as an 'apple'. It is positively good for children to use the Biblical text, rather than a re-telling. There are many published video and picture book versions of the story, which can be useful to teachers of RE.

A starter activity.

Put an ordinary chair with a box of fruit on it in a prominent place in the school hall, or where pupils walk out of classes to the playground, with a big notice on it saying: 'It is forbidden to touch this chair'. Station two pupils with a tick chart nearby, but not obviously involved with the chair, and get them to record how many pupils walking by notice the sign, and touch the chair. It provides an interesting starting point for the idea that 'rules are made to be broken' and that temptation feels strong when something is forbidden – the origin of the idea of 'forbidden fruit' is clearly in Genesis! The discussion point is that Adam and Eve had one rule, and broke it – but would anyone have done any differently?

Questions for discussion and writing:

1. Why do you think God made the one rule for Eve and Adam?
2. What did Eve do in the story that was wrong? Why was it wrong? How was the serpent involved? How was Adam involved?
3. What was the result of Eve's action? What was the result of Adam's action? What was the result of the serpent's action? What suffering resulted from each of these peoples' actions?
4. In what ways have you been tempted to do things you knew to be wrong? In what ways have you tempted others to do things you knew to be wrong?
5. Why did you do wrong?
6. When have you successfully resisted temptation to do wrong?
7. What have been the consequences of your wrongdoing? In what ways have you been punished?
8. Have you or others suffered as a consequence of your wrongdoing? In what ways?
9. Can you work out what the writer of the story believes about God?
10. What did you learn from this story?

Story making: pupils can use titles like 'temptation', 'forbidden fruit' or 'one rule' to write stories of their own, for the twenty first century. Discuss whether these stories will include a divine character ~ why, or why not?

Using Creative Arts: Look carefully at some of the great art works inspired by the Garden of Eden story. How do the artists show their ideas and beliefs about God? Why is it difficult to picture God?

Create a work of art about the Garden of Eden story yourself: how will you show your beliefs about God through the arts?

And Man said...

This is a story about humankind's treatment of the earth since the industrial revolution. It is adapted from an unknown source. Pupils can compare it with the story of God creating the world in Genesis 1. It includes some Jewish insights into human responsibility. It is good to have it read aloud by two voices, the second always taking the part of a paragraph that begins '...and man said'.

On the seventh day before the end of the earth, man created all kinds of machines, which meant that one person could do what hundreds of people were needed to do before, and as well as that, they could do it much faster than before. And man said: "Now we can really start to improve this pathetic creation that God has given us."

On the sixth day before the end of the earth, man discovered oil, and made petrol, diesel and jet engines, and rushed about all over the earth for holidays and business trips, and poured thousands of tonnes of pollution into the air. And man said: "Everybody has the right to travel wherever they like, as often as they like, and as fast as they like - except those people who can't afford it - and even if it pollutes the earth, we'll find a better way of running the engines before the pollution gets too bad."

On the fifth day before the end of the earth, man decided that the way nature had done things ever since the beginning of creation wasn't good enough, and the land needed soaking with chemical fertilisers, and the crops spraying regularly with pesticides to stop weeds growing. And man said: "From now on these crops will be bigger and better, and they will all be ours to eat. We won't share the crops with the birds and the wild animals, and if some wildlife disappears for ever it won't matter because God made far too many types of wildlife in the first place."

On the fourth day before the end of the earth, man invented nuclear weapons to kill people and nuclear power stations to make energy. And man said: "Now that we can destroy the whole of the earth with nuclear weapons by pressing just one button, we will have peace. Now that we can make so much power from a little bit of uranium we will be able to do so many more things. By the time we have to work out what to do with all the nuclear waste we leave behind, it will be our grandchildren's problem, or maybe we'll have thought of something by then. Anyway, we didn't get where we are today by thinking too much about the future."

On the third day before the end of the earth, man invented biological weapons that made people's enemies get sick and die. And man said: "It's terrible that we should even have to think of hurting people in this way, but we have to invent them because if we don't do it, some of our enemies are bound to invent them, and we can't allow them to use the weapons against us. Of course, they will never get used on purpose, and we hope there will never be an accident which makes the weapons get out."

On the second day before the end of the earth, man discovered how to make genetically modified food. And man said: "This is the best thing we have done so far. Now we know all about making life itself, and we will be able to create anything. We will be just like God."

On the last day before the end of the earth, man finally realised that he had completely destroyed the way plants, animals and people could live on the earth. He also had no idea how he was going to get himself out of the fix he was in. And man said: "Oh God!"

And God said...

Questions for discussion and writing

1. Do you think 'man' in the story includes women? Why or why not?
2. What did people invent in the story?
3. Does everything that humans invent spoil the world? What inventions do you think are good, and why? In what ways do you think each of the things that humans invented in the story helps or spoils the world?
4. This story is similar and different to the creation story you read before. Make two lists: all the similarities and all the differences.
5. God is the lead character in the first story, but only comes in at the end of the second story. Why? What difference would it make if God was in the second story? What would God say at the end of each of the last seven days? Work out seven sentences for this.
6. Do you think the story gives the right impression of what humanity is doing to the world?
7. What is the message of this story?
8. Why do you think the world has problems with the environment? How do you think they are caused?
9. What do you think you can do to stop some things spoiling the earth?
10. Is God to blame for the way the world is? What would Jewish people say about this ~ and what do you think?

Brainstorm as a class: all the things which are a threat to the world, which might lead to 'the end of the world as we know it'. Start with pollution and war.

Creative writing: Write a 'countdown to the end of the world' story of your own. Include the 'voice of God' to comment on what happens in your story.

A Christian Story for Year 6

Jesus makes a person with leprosy clean. From Matthew 8:1–4

Themes: the treatment of 'outsiders'. Miracle. Faith. Prejudice

When Jesus lived on Earth, about 2000 years ago, he had a reputation as a healer. People would come from miles away to ask him about their illnesses, or troubles, and many went away well. Jesus would often say to them 'Your faith has healed you. Go in peace.'

Many people at the time of Jesus suffered from leprosy, or other dreaded skin diseases. One of the worst things about such skin diseases was that people could see the sick person's affliction, and they were often frightened that it would be catching, so 'lepers' were not allowed to come anywhere near people who were 'clean'. They had to carry a bell, and live out in open country, and shout 'unclean, unclean' if any 'normal' person came near them. They were forbidden to use public wells for washing or drinking, and often could not keep clean. They could not work. They were outcasts.

One day Jesus had been up in the mountains. When he came down great crowds followed him. There was a leper who wanted to come to Jesus. From the back of the crowd, he shouted 'unclean, unclean' and the people turned with disgust and fear – get away, you're not allowed to come here' they shouted – but they backed away too. He was able to make his way through the crowd until he stood right in front of Jesus. Silence fell. The leper had ugly marks on his face. Some of his fingers were missing. He was dirty. He knelt before Jesus, and spoke in a croaking voice: 'Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean.'

Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, held on to his shoulder. From the crowd, mutterings were heard 'disgusting' 'he'll catch it if he's not careful'. Jesus smiled, and said: 'I do choose to help you. Be made clean!'

Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. Then Jesus said to him, 'See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.'

The man stood, and went to do as Jesus had told him. Anyone who recovered from leprosy had to go to the priest to be pronounced clean. As he walked to the synagogue, his heart was light. Not only had Jesus said he was cleansed, but also, for the first time in many years, another human being had touched him. He felt well in his body – and his soul.

Activities for Pupils

Questions for discussion and writing

1. What was more important, the man's faith, the touch of Jesus or the healing?
2. Some people believe in 'healing miracles'. Others do not. What would believers and non believers say to each other? And what do you think of the 'healing miracle' in the story?
3. Why were lepers treated so badly in Jesus' time?
4. Who is treated badly today because of fear, or their appearance? Why is this wrong?
5. Read the two Christian comments in the bubbles.

'For me, this story shows the power of God and the love of God. Jesus had the power of God to heal diseases, and it was the love of God that made him choose to help this poor man, who everyone else rejected.'

'I know there are a lot of people with leprosy today, and they can't be healed as simply as this. But the story tells me that if anyone wants to be a follower of Jesus, then they must love as he loved – so we should never be scared of how a needy person looks – we should always do what loving thing we can to help someone who needs us.'

Write a speech bubble of your own to explain what you think the story means (60 words maximum).

6. What can you tell about what the writer of this story believes about God, about miracles, and about leprosy?

Activities for pupils

A. Find out more The Leprosy Mission is a Christian charity that works to help people with leprosy today. It publishes some very useful educational resources. www.leprosymission.org.uk

B. Argument Trialogue

Some people believe that God can heal people with miracles, for example sending a cure for leprosy. Mark Miracle is one such person.

Some people believe that God can inspire anyone to show love and give help to those who need it, such as a person with leprosy. Philippa Carefor is such a person.

Some people believe that God may not be real, and does not help us – but we can still take care of each other. Andy Agnostic is such a person.

Work in a small group. Create a dramatic argumentative 'trialogue' (3 people arguing) about the miracle story of Jesus and people's experience today. Make it so that Mark, Philippa and Andy each say what they think of the Jesus story, and why, and what they think can be done for people with leprosy today. Make it dramatic, and rehearse to perform your argument to the class.

Stories of God: Year Seven Examples

A Christian story for year seven.

Dreaming of wealth, dreaming of true riches

Themes: Dreams and aspirations, God and money, the things money can't buy. Adapted from an original story by Anthony de Mello.

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. **'Please' he asks 'give me whatever it is that you've found that made you able to hand over that diamond so easily.'**

Activities for pupils

Questions for discussion and writing

1. Why do you think the writer made up this story?
2. If you had a dream like this, what would you do?
3. Does this story connect up with the national lottery? Many people in our society spend a lot of time dreaming about being rich – is this a good thing?
4. Does God make some people rich and others poor?
5. Does God's place in this story show what the author believes? Can you explain?
6. How, if at all, does the story relate to your own experience of life? Is there a lesson for you here?
7. 'We dream of what we long for. But if we get it, we may long for something else' What do you think? What do you dream of?
8. What's this story really all about?

Speculation fiction: Write 'chapter 2' of the story – no longer than this one which is 299 words. What do you think happens next? Include the rich man, the nun ~ and another dream if you want to.

9. Arrange to read aloud and discuss several of the class's 'chapter 2' writings.
10. What did you learn from this story?

A Sikh Story for Year 7

Nanak is lost in the river of God

Themes: Experience of the divine, mystery, insight, turning points in life, belief about God.

Every morning, Nanak got up early and went to take a bath in the river. Then, when he felt clean, he said his prayers. Nanak loved to pray.

One day as the twilight was just giving way to the dawn Nanak's friend Mardana was sitting by the river. He saw Nanak stripping to bathe as usual: leaving his clothes on the river bank, Nanak waded out into the deep, clear river water, and dipped his head beneath the cool, flowing stream. Mardana sat on the bank. Time passed.

Suddenly Mardana was aware that the small pile of clothes had been by the bank a long time- and Nanak had not come out of the river. He ran to the bank, and scanned the still waters, calling his friend's name. No reply broke the quiet morning air. The river flowed calmly, unbroken by any swimmer's movement. Mardana was worried, and the people of the village came running as they heard his urgent shouting, his voice full of the fear that Nanak had drowned. They searched all morning, bringing nets to drag the river, going several miles downstream, and searching the opposite bank for any sign of Nanak at all. Nothing.

One by one, some sooner than others, they went back to the village. Nanak must have drowned. Mardana and Nanak's sister waited, watching the water flow by, with tears flowing down their own faces.

The next day, nothing. But amazingly, on the third day, without fuss or surprise Nanak came back out of the river alive and well. He sat on the bank, dripping, quiet, contemplating. He seemed absorbed by some mystery or secret, and spoke not one word. Mardana and his sister, and other friends and villagers gathered at the bank as word spread quickly round the village 'Nanak's back'. The crowd wondered if he was injured – brain damaged, perhaps, or mad? After a long silence, Nanak spoke: 'There is no Muslim. There is no Hindu. God is not a Hindu or a Muslim. Whose path shall I follow? I will follow God's path.'

Some of the crowd drifted away, shrugging, going back to work. Others were puzzled about Nanak's disappearance, and his words. Mardana was just glad to see his friend alive again. Nanak could not speak to them about where he had been for the three days, or what he had experienced, but he was different – he had changed. He went to his house, and took most of his possessions to give away to poorer people. Later he wrote a poem:

"I was a minstrel, out of work.
The Lord gave me employment
The Mighty One instructed me
'Night and day, sing my praise.'

The Lord summoned the minstrel to his high court.
On me he placed the robe of honour, singing His praise."

Activities for pupils

Questions for discussion and writing

1. This is a mysterious story. What do you think it is all about?
2. Do you think Nanak went to 'the court of God'? What other explanations of his mysterious experience might the villagers have given?
3. Why do you think it was impossible for Nanak to describe what had happened to him?
4. Nanak seems to suggest that finding God is like being immersed in water – completely submerged. What does this metaphor mean?
5. Nanak had a spiritual experience. Do you know other stories of spiritual experiences? Have you ever had such an experience yourself? They are surprisingly common – about one third of adults have had a spiritual experience that changed their lives, though they mostly keep these private.
6. The Sikh Scriptures, the Guru Granth Sahib, say this:
 'God, you are the river. How can I, the fish within you, measure your limits? Wherever I look, I find no-one but you, and if ever I were to leave you I would die.
 What is the use of bathing in the holy rivers if God is not in your heart? Your outside comes out clean, but your inside is as dirty as before!'
In what ways do you think this explains Guru Nanak's experience?
7. Guru Nanak believed many things about God. Three of them are:
 - a. God is like a river, and we are like fish – we live in God.
 - b. God is not a member of any one religion – that's impossible.
 - c. A clean heart is more important to God than a clean body.Do you agree or disagree with these beliefs? Explain why, and say what your own beliefs are.
8. What did you learn from this story?

Creative idea: Use the images of waves and flowing water to create a picture of Nanak, 'lost in the river of God'. Choose sound or music that would make a good soundtrack for this – remember that Nanak could not describe what had happened to him.

ICT: Look at the website 'Children Talking Online' www.natre.org.uk/db Here you can search hundreds of children aged 7-17 talking about spiritual experience. Collect some examples, write one of your own, and discuss the different experiences which these young people share.

Writing: Make a poem about spiritual experience. It could be an acrostic on the word 'spiritual' or on 'seeing the truth'. Or you might turn Nanak's experience into a poem as he did himself. Or you might write a 'questions' poem – made up completely of the questions you find puzzling about this story and about God.

A Buddhist story for year seven: The enlightened chicken

Themes: What is real? Perceptions and reality. Compassion.

Once there was a clever little chicken, growing up nicely inside an eggshell. She could feel her wings growing, and her whole body getting bigger as time went by. She knew she was changing as she grew older. She lived in the dark, in a tiny universe. Food supplies seemed to be running out, and she was worried: would she die if there was no more to eat?

Then one day she felt an urge, strong and lively, in her heart to break free. It was frightening in one way, but exciting too. Where could the urge lead her? She might die!

But she was a courageous chick, so she began to peck at the edge of her universe with her little beak. Suddenly, the whole thing cracked up completely, the universe she had known literally split in two and she was in a new world, the outside world. Everywhere there was warmth, bright lights, sights to see. She looked around, felt her wings flap, breathed the warm air of spring. Everything about her old life suddenly made sense.

She noticed that there were other eggs in the nest she had come from, she had been the first to hatch. She wondered straight away about her brothers and sisters: they were still living in the dark, maybe they were as scared as she had been five minutes earlier. How could she tell them? She realised each chicken must find out for themselves, at the right time ~ but she felt compassion for them, so while Mother Hen went to peck some grain, the chicken sat on the eggs for her, warming them and speeding the moment when they would see reality for themselves.

Activities for pupils.

Questions for discussion and writing

1. What makes the chicken in the story suffer?
2. The chicken has an 'urge to break free'. You too? When? What from? Did you go with the urge? Share your experience.
3. Have you ever had a moment when you suddenly 'saw the light' and understood something valuable?
4. Buddhists teach that lots of what seems real to us is actually fake, and it is hard to see what is truly real. Do you think this makes sense? Explain your answer.
5. In Buddhism, questions about God are not important. Instead, Buddhists think carefully about what is real. This means this story is unlike some of the others you have been looking at. Buddhism teaches that you can see the truth without talking about God. Do you agree? Why?
6. What could this story say to:
 - a. A person starting at a new school;
 - b. A person who has just got out of prison;
 - c. A person trying to learn to ride a bike, or to swim;
 - d. A person who is bereaved, whose partner has died?
7. What is this story really about? Do you think it is a wise story?
8. What did you learn from this story?

List of Examples: Make a list of as many examples as you can think of that are similar to the chicken in this story. Start with caterpillars – butterflies.

A Buddhist poem:

'By ourselves is evil done
By ourselves we pain endure
By ourselves we cease from wrong
By ourselves we become pure.
No one saves us but ourselves
No one can and no one may
We ourselves must walk the path
Buddhas only show the way.

This poem is closely based on texts from the Dhammapada, a Buddhist scripture. It is displayed on the wall at the East Midlands Buddhist Association Vihara in Leicester.

Ask pupils to read it, and see how many lines of the poem they agree with. Ask them to write a poem of their own about what they think is most important in life.

A Jewish story for year seven.

Themes: history and its influence. Spiritual awareness, and belief about God, 'the outpourings of hearts'

THE WALL

It started with a long walk to the wall, there were many other people with exactly the same destination. I thought it rather like a pilgrimage.

From a distance looking at the wall I was amazed at its enormous size and tremendous atmosphere. I felt myself being dragged forwards by an incredible force towards the wall, yet backwards in time with the weight of past Jewish history.

I touched the warm stones with my arms outstretched and fingers ready for the impact. Here I saw screwed up bits of paper pushed into the joins in the rock. I wondered whether these were notes of remorse or rejoicing. I realised mostly these must have been the outpourings of people's hearts.

The wall belongs to all Jews from reform to very religious alike. My heart was touched not by the foreign tourists who had flocked to the wall, but the Jews and Jewesses praying with joyous thankfulness or crying with misery or mourning. Would their plea be taken by God?

How many wars had been fought for this one wall of the Holy Temple? How many other people had throughout the centuries stood on the spot where I was standing and thought the thoughts I was thinking?

I felt a great feeling of pride. Perhaps King David had stood here before me. I was honoured to be able to stand there.

If someone asked me what I felt most about the wall, I would probably say it was the feeling that this was my heritage because people have been coming here for thousands of years.

I then realised there was an extra meaning for the name 'Jerusalem the Gold'. This was not just the gold top of the Mosque of Omar but the golden feeling that Jews from the diaspora can sense when they visit the Western Wall.

Anna Simkin was 13 when she wrote this piece.
King David High School, Liverpool
from: Exploring a theme 'Journeys' CEM

Activities for Pupils

Questions for discussion and writing

1. Find out more about the Western Wall. Why is it so special to Jewish people?
2. Anna mentions King David and the Holy Temple. Look these up in a Bible handbook, and find out about them – dates, appearance, significance. What difference do they make to Anna's feelings?
3. Anna may have been going to Jerusalem for a Bat Mitzvah. At about her age, it is a ceremony for girls to mark the move to being a full adult. Do you think Anna is mature enough to be seen as an adult? How can you tell?
4. Do you think Anna's piece of writing is good? What do you think she does to make the writing realistic?
5. If someone said to Anna 'it's just a load of old stones', how do you think she would reply?
6. What would Anna say is the difference between a tourist and a pilgrim?
7. What does Anna believe about God? How can you tell?
8. What have you learned from this story?

An inspiring place, a golden feeling

In all your life, which place have you been to or visited that gives you a 'golden feeling'? Write a description of your trip there, trying to make it as good a piece of writing as Anna's.

The outpourings of hearts

Take two pieces of paper each, and write on them some of the things you imagine might have been written on the paper pushed into the joins in the rock on the western wall – to get the experience, you could even go to the most crubly wall at your school, and put your papers into the joins and gaps you find there. Clear up afterwards! Does God hear the outpourings of people's hearts? Do prayers make a difference to what happens, and to how people feel?

Daily Jewish Prayer

This is a small part of the daily Jewish prayer called the Amidah. Anna might have said the prayer at the Wall. With a partner, read it carefully and make a list of six Jewish beliefs about the Almighty that can be found in the prayer. Discuss with your partner: do you share any of these beliefs? Can you write a 'declaration' of six things you believe about God?

We declare with gratitude that you are our God.
And the God of our fathers forever
You are our rock, the rock of our life and the shield that saves us.
In every generation we thank you and recount your praises
For our lives, held in your hand, for our souls that are in your care
And for the signs of your presence that are with us every day...

...Grant us peace, goodness and blessing
Life, grace and kindness, justice and mercy.
O Father bless us all together with the light of your presence...

Activities for Pupils: Summarising the learning and being creative with ideas about God.

At the end of this work, pupils may have read and thought about up to 8 religious stories, which each seek to express a belief about God or ultimate reality from one religion.

Drawing up a comparison between the different stories, their meanings, and the religions which they come from is a very powerful way of reinforcing the learning. This grid may serve as a starting point for such a comparison. It might be begun in year 6, and completed in year 7. This writing frame is a good start for this work, but able pupils working at level 4 or 5 may want to use the frame as a starting point for notes, and write a more extensive comparison.

Beliefs about God in the different religions:	How does the story you have read show this belief?
Christians believe that God came to earth as Jesus to show humans the path of love.	
Muslims believe that submission to the One True God – Allah, who is just and fair is the purpose of life.	
Many Hindus believe that the divine is found in all life. At times of special need, a god or goddess may be born on earth to save people from evil.	
Jews believe that all the universe is created by the Almighty God, and he has given the human race a job as stewards of the good earth.	
The Buddha taught that gods or goddesses won't help you. To live well, you must see reality, be courageous, and show compassion for the sufferings of others.	
Sikhs believe the there is one God, eternal and unexplainable, who leads humanity to live as equals even when they are different.	

Making meaning. Creative opportunities for pupils to compare and reflect upon stories from different faith communities for themselves.

Stories for pupils to write:

One of the activities from this unit of work should be a creative writing opportunity for pupils. They have the chance to make a story which shows some of the ideas about god they have been thinking about. This does not ask them to 'adopt' any particular beliefs about God, but to examine the ideas in fiction. The task is a challenging one, but can also be fun. Some pupils may need the support of a writing frame, or a start line to their story – but for others, these things are a constraint to their imagination.

These themes, titles or ideas might provide some starting points. Pupils can write fiction stories, but can also be encouraged to use their own experience in their story if they wish. The form of a parable is a good one to explore. They relate to the stories studied above, and to the objectives of the transition unit.

- **A new start**
- **Stepping out for myself**
- **The triumph of good over evil: victory for goodness**
- **The enlightened caterpillar**
- **Finding freedom for myself: escaping to freedom**
- **Finding my path in life: the right direction**
- **The river of God**
- **The urge to break free**
- **Dreaming the truth**

Other ideas developed by the pupils themselves may well provide better starting points than these. Teachers can give all the support that the literacy strategy implies to this piece of writing, to enable pupils to do their best work.

Pupils will find it helpful to draft and redraft their story, to make the best they can. Teachers might give guidance about how to make a spiritual story, drawing out the key literacy lessons from the text-level work above.

The story may be the main evidence of what pupils have been learning in the AT 2 area of learning from religion and as such may show their progress and achievement clearly.

SACRE and the writers of the Agreed Syllabus are interested in examples of the work pupils do on the bridging unit. It would be good for RE in the LEA to disseminate good practice and examples of children's work at various levels. Please share these, in the first instance by contacting the RE consultant for the syllabus, Mr Lat Blaylock (lat@retoday.org.uk or 0121 472 4242).