



Big Ideas for Religious Education



Programmes of Study for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The [EYFS Statutory Framework](#) for schools in England (2021) provides help for early years providers and childminders working with 0 - 5-year-olds. Below, we have produced guidance for those working with 3-5 year-olds on how the six Big Ideas for RE can be used to enhance the EYFS strands of 'Understanding the World', 'Expressive Arts and Design', 'Personal, Social and Emotional Development', and 'Literacy'.

The learning objectives listed for each Big Idea below are most useful if treated as a *starter* or a kind of *menu* for possible learning. You may well find yourself deviating dramatically, if a thirst for knowledge from the children leads somewhere unexpected!

SUBJECT CONTENT in the Programme of Study

EYFS: CLICK ON THE ICONS BY EACH BIG IDEA TO SEE EXAMPLES OF PRACTICAL IDEAS AND RESOURCES FOR USE IN THE CLASSROOM

BI1: Continuity, Change and Diversity

Many people get their beliefs and traditions from religions / worldviews. Not everyone has the same beliefs and traditions.



Click the Icon

Children at the expected level of development will be learning:

- about people in their neighbourhood who belong to different religions / worldviews
- about places of worship in their neighbourhood
- that there are similarities and differences between places of worship and between people of different religion / worldview groups (e.g. most have festivals, which celebrate important events and stories, and most religions follow the teachings of a different holy person, but there are differences, e.g. places of worship have different things inside, and people may celebrate special occasions in different ways)
- about traditions, including some in England and some in other countries, that come from religions / worldviews
- about the sense of identity and belonging that people may feel when they are part of a group with shared beliefs and traditions.

EYFS Link: Understanding the World: People, Culture and Communities

Children at the expected level of development will:

- describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps;
- know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and – when appropriate – maps.

BI2: Words and Beyond

People communicate and express their religious beliefs and worldviews in a variety of ways.

Children at the expected level of development will be learning:

- that religious beliefs, signs, symbols, words, stories, books, artefacts, buildings, festivals, celebrations, food, art, music, dance, actions and drama are diverse and should be treated with respect
- that there is a variety of ways in which people communicate and express their feelings, beliefs and worldviews, including without words and/or writing
- that some sounds, speech, signs, symbols, artefacts, clothes, buildings, festivals, celebrations, food, art, music, actions, dance and drama may have a deeper 'spiritual' meaning
- to express some of their own ideas about the world in a variety of ways (e.g. art, dance, drama).



EYFS Link: Expressive Arts and Design: Creating with Materials and Being Imaginative and Expressive

Children at the expected level of development will:

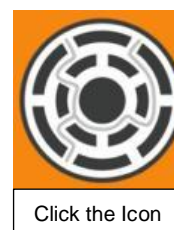
- safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function;
- share their creations, explaining the process they have used;
- make use of props and materials when role playing characters in narratives and stories
- invent, adapt and recount narratives and stories with peers and their teacher;
- sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs;
- perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and (when appropriate) try to move in time with music.

BI3: A Good Life

Religions / worldviews teach their followers how to be good.

Children at the expected level of development will be learning:

- to explore their own and others' feelings and behaviour
- that we can hurt ourselves as well as others when we make bad choices about our behaviour and action or when we are thoughtless and unkind
- to explore reasons for rules, including their own school / class rules, such as feeling safe and secure, caring for others, and being fair and kind
- that many rules and values have their roots in religious / worldview traditions
- about the names and example of some key people in religions / worldviews who have influenced the ways in which we behave.



EYFS Link: Personal, Social and Emotional Development: Self-Regulation, Managing Self & Building Relationships

Children at the expected level of development will:

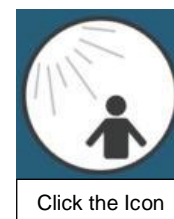
- show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others, and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly;
- set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses when appropriate;
- give focused attention to what the teacher says, responding appropriately even when engaged in activity, and show an ability to follow instructions involving several ideas or actions
- be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge;
- explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly;
- work and play cooperatively and take turns with others;
- form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers;
- show sensitivity to their own and to others' needs.

BI4: Making Sense of Life's Experiences

Some people have had special, puzzling and mysterious experiences which have changed their lives.

Children at the expected level of development will be learning:

- to explore feelings and reactions to the wonders and mysteries of the natural world
- stories about life-changing or mysterious experiences and asking their own questions about them
- about some beliefs and traditions, both religious and non-religious, that are linked to celebrations of the natural world



EYFS Link: Understanding the World: The Natural World

Children at the expected level of development will:

- explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants;
- know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter.

BI5: Influence and Power

Religions / worldviews make a difference to communities.

Children at the expected level of development will be learning:

- about the names and roles of some local and national religious and community leaders (e.g. priest, imam, minister, bishop, archbishop, rabbi)
- that Christianity has a long but changing influence on life in Britain and that more recently other religions and traditions are playing an increasingly larger role in society (e.g. at the Coronation of King Charles III)
- about important characters and events from the past related to religious / worldview traditions.



EYFS Link: Understanding the World: Past and Present

Children at the expected level of development will:

- talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society;
- know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.

BI6: The Big Picture

Religions / worldviews have highly valued stories that give insights into important events and moments in life.

Children at the expected level of development will be learning:

- ⑩ that certain stories are found in books which are very special to people (e.g. Bible, Qur'an, Guru Granth Sahib)
- ⑩ how stories from religious / worldview traditions are told to remind us about important people and events, to explain customs and why the world is as it is
- ⑩ to explore the possible meanings and messages of words, poems and stories from particular religions / worldviews.



EYFS Link: Literacy: Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing

Children at the expected level of development will:

- demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary;
- anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories;
- use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play;
- read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words;
- write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.