



Big Ideas for Religious Education



BRINGING BIG IDEAS TO LIFE: MEDIUM TERM PLANNING

The bridge between the Big Idea and the substantive knowledge for pre-school children is the learning objective in the left-hand column of the table below.

The Practical Ideas right hand column draws largely on Gill Vaisey's curriculum support documents (used with kind permission) and in particular her [Religion and Worldviews Education: the EYFS 2025 Framework and Development Matters 2023](#). Some further suggestions have been added also.

Schools should interpret the sections in relation to the religions / worldviews they have chosen to feature for this age-group. These decisions will reflect the national legal requirement and any local or denominational requirements.

Learning objectives, helpful resources and practical ideas for Ages 3-5

BI 6: THE BIG PICTURE: AGE-RELATED BIG IDEA FOR AGES 3-5

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

Sample resources

This Big Idea focuses on the stories found in different religions / worldviews that show how those traditions reflect on important aspects of life. It can link well with aspects of PSHE.

Use children's versions of some 'holy' or special books or texts.

For Humanist accounts and presentations of some important aspects of life, see, e.g., <https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/early-years/> This page contains links to such aspects of life as being happy, being part of a family (of which there are many different kinds, of course), naming ceremonies, how the world began, how humans came to be, and care for the natural world. The same themes can be explored through any other religion / worldview of your choice. For example, look at how Jewish people care for others and the world (and links with the Torah story of Shabbat) using BBC Bitesize:

www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zqbw2hv/articles/zc2fsk7

If you have, or can buy, Gill Vaisey's publications, e.g., the [Belonging and Believing](#) series, they will be useful here too.

Similarly, the University of Birmingham project, ['Gift to the Child', Series 2](#) (Simon & Schuster, 1991), can be used to explore, e.g., the celebration of 'Shabbat' in Jewish families, and the idea of having a 'day of rest' once a week. Download the pupils' books from [here >>](#)

RE Today also has relevant lesson ideas in the Primary RE Books, e.g., 'Sacred Words' in the 'RE Ideas' series and 'Opening up Easter' in the 'Learning from Religion' series.

If you want to explore the idea of festivals being based on stories about important aspects of life, try the BBC's 'My First Festivals' series, e.g., Purim in the Jewish tradition:

www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m000snhg/my-first-festivals-series-2-2-purim This one links well with the story of Margalit in 'My Jewish Family' from the Belonging and Believing series, as it's her favourite festival!

Children will be learning:	Practical ideas and resources
that certain stories are found in books which are very special to people (e.g. Bible,	Read, or show an animated version of a story from a religion / worldview tradition, and then show children a special book or resource that it comes from. Help them to remember the names of some special or 'holy' books and model how and why people take special care of such books.



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Qur'an, Hebrew Bible, Guru Granth Sahib)	Use, for example, the story of Purim in the Jewish tradition and how it is remembered in a Jewish family and throughout the world today (see resources above). Link with the Book of Esther in the Hebrew Bible.
• 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	Explore the Jewish tradition of keeping Shabbat; thinking about time and precious time; lighting candles; link to the story of creation in the <i>Torah</i> (see Sample resources above); explore what happens when a Jewish family celebrates Shabbat. Use Belonging and Believing - My Jewish Family to explore how and why Margalit and her family celebrate Shabbat. Note, if you use 'Shabbat' in the 'Gift to the Child' series, one of the five suggested sessions is a story about the Holocaust – this story can be left for older children. Use the <i>Understanding Humanism</i> materials to see how Wilf's family look at how the world began (see resources above). Choose another topic from these materials, e.g., 'Humanist Naming Ceremonies' and talk through the slides with children. Go on to explore the Christian practice of infant baptism and link with the story of Jesus' baptism. Use the Puddles and the Christening Splash book to explore infant baptism.
• about the possible meanings and messages of words, poems and stories from particular religions / worldviews.	Explore the possible meanings of story from a worldview tradition about one of the most important aspects of life, such as how the world began, or how we care for the world around us [see resources above for Humanist and Jewish examples]. Share pictures, stories and poems about an important individual in a religion / worldview, in such a way that children get a simple overview of their life and/or teaching. For example, tell stories and show pictures of Jesus through telling elements of the Easter story, using, e.g. activities in RE Today's 'Opening up Easter' book (see resources above). Use Belonging and Believing - My Christian Family which includes an outline life of Jesus and shows the impact of him / his life on Vesper's family. This can put the Easter story in the context of Jesus' whole life. To further explore meanings and messages in different traditions you could share and act out some important words using, e.g., examples from RE Today's 'Sacred Words' book (see resources above).
TRANSFERABLE QUESTIONS What parts of a (particular) story do you like best? Which are the most important bits?	