

It's a busy old world



Lets have some ME time...sit and just think...ponder life's questions...if you could ask the ultimate question, what would it be? Write it down

GIVE 2-3 MINUTES THINKING TIME THEN DISCUSS THE BIG QUESTIONS WE COULD ASK...

e.g. Why is there never peace in our world all at the same time? Why do rich countries not share more with poor countries? Does charity work?

But what if you were a child? What questions are important to them – and do we value them any less?

Why are there never enough orange smarties?

Why is there always money down the back of the sofa – but I'm never the one to find it?

Why am I on this course?

1 thing we don't have enough of is 'ME TIME' and the chance to just sit and ponder – and this is the basis for good RE teaching.

Developing the RE Curriculum

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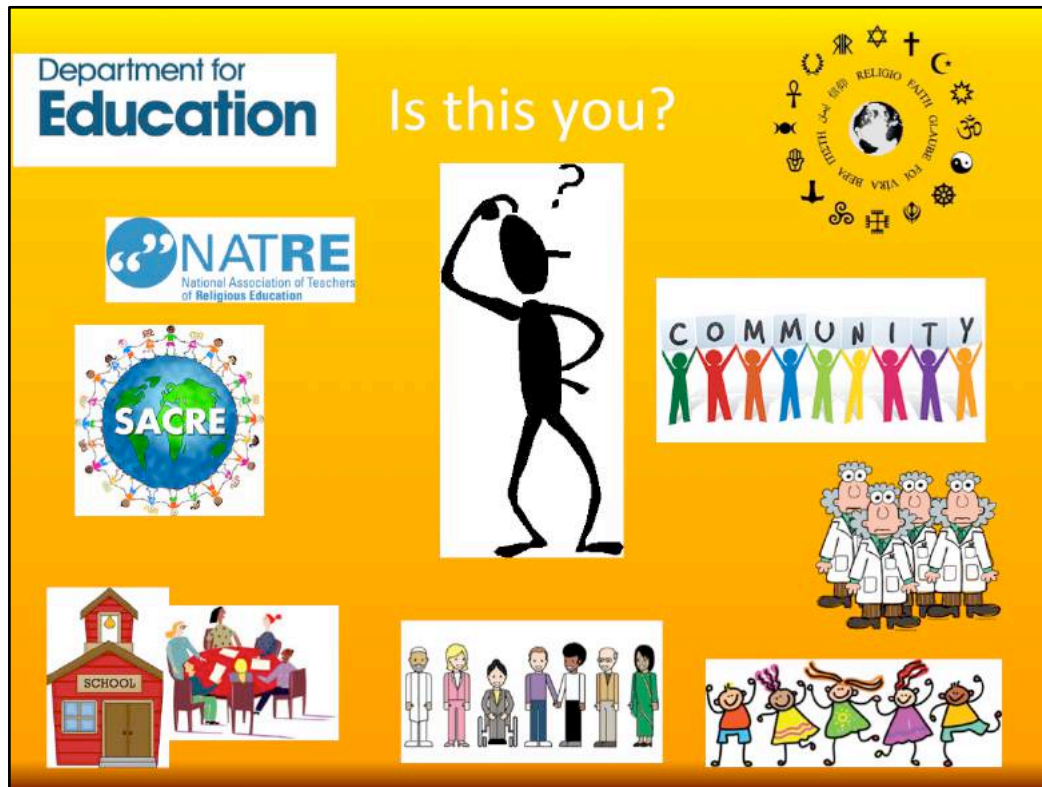


Simples!

Introduce myself and explain background

So why have I been asked to present this workshop – because the world around us makes teaching RE too hard when actually we should be doing what we feel is right for our pupils **FIRST AND FOREMOST** and that's what I've done at my schools as a Head and as a Deputy Head.

If you read recent HMI advice, it is all indicating that now is the time for Heads and school leaders to break away from the norm and do what is right for their children, in their school at this time – as long as progress, attainment, etc etc are clearly happening of course.



So the RE curriculum today:

You've got

Politicians telling you what to teach...new National Curriculum brought in over 2014 and 2015;

National RE Association...suggesting what and how you should teach RE

Local SACRE...writes the syllabus you should be teaching

School and Governors...maybe connected to a specific religion or have governors who are very vocal about their thoughts and views on RE or specific religions (even harder!!)

You've got the Equality Act – which is 5 areas – Race, Gender, Disability, Sexual Orientation and Religion & Belief...

You've then got the actual faiths and religions themselves....

You've got the views of your community which might be very against RE completely or specific religions – how will you deal with that?

And then you've got a group of teachers who may not have a clue about specific religions and leave RE teaching til last because 'well its hard'

And finally you have the children – who may not have any religious experience except what parents have said at home, expectations from the family society, only know about their own or none, really don't care to be honest – or worse still have their views only from the media and social networking

SO WHERE DO WE BEGIN IN ALL OF THIS? ANY IDEAS??

Where to begin...your journey...



- Start with YOU...
- Have a think...
- What do you want children to experience in RE?

MY VIEW IS: It all starts with you.

Consider – what is your background with RE and what was good about it and not so good about it – jot some thoughts down

Okay – taking 1 good aspect, consider is this something you feel children should have an experience or knowledge of AND why? SHARE

Take a bad aspect – do you feel children should have the opportunity to learn what you didn't....WHY? WHY NOT? SHARE

ASK – what do you want children to get out of RE? and WHY? Discuss and share with colleagues

What's the point of RE? If we don't know what the point is then why are we doing it? And this is what you need to do with your teachers....we don't spend long enough on RE because it gets crammed out by English and Maths and....and you need to have a Senior leader on board to support you with the Head! We need to show teachers that good RE actually benefits behaviour, English, learning, morals, British Values, ethos of caring, sharing etc etc etc

SHARE ABOUT TEACHER WHO IS CHRISTIAN AND DOESN'T WANT TO LOOK AT OTHER RELIGIONS;

SHARE TEACHER WHO 'WELL THEYRE ALL FOREIGNERS ANYWAY' ATTITUDE

So what are your non-negotiables?



WHAT DO YOU WANT THE CHILDREN TO EXPERIENCE IN RE? WHAT ARE YOUR NON-NEGOTIABLES?

Mine were clear:

I wanted children to experience:

- Awe and Wonder
 - Find out something they didn't already know
 - Challenge ideas and thoughts they already had
 - Make them think outside of themselves and find out about people around them
 - Widen that Narrow view of 'People and their Religions' SHARE THE STORY OF WHAT ARE SIKHS?
 - A trip to every place you can or a visitor in school
 - Enabling parents to come with us
-
- Just make a list of your non-negotiables – they may not be able to happen for a variety of reasons, but lets start somewhere...

From your ideas to what you HAVE to cover....do they match?

**Lancashire SACRE
statement of intent:**

**To support pupils'
personal search for
meaning by engaging
enquiry
into the question
'What is it to be human?'
- exploring answers
offered by religion and
belief.**



So from your own thoughts, we can look at our guidance from Church, Local Authority etc etc.

And now the problem of marrying it all up comes into play – BUT WHOSE ARE MOST IMPORTANT? YOURS OR SOMEONE ELSE'S?

Remember YOU know YOUR community and its needs

As long as you are covering the basic expectation, we need to stand firm on what WE BELIEVE is right for our children. Children in a little village school in Cumbria like Levens don't see people of different race or religion very often so getting out and about is needed for their WHOLE development, not just for RE

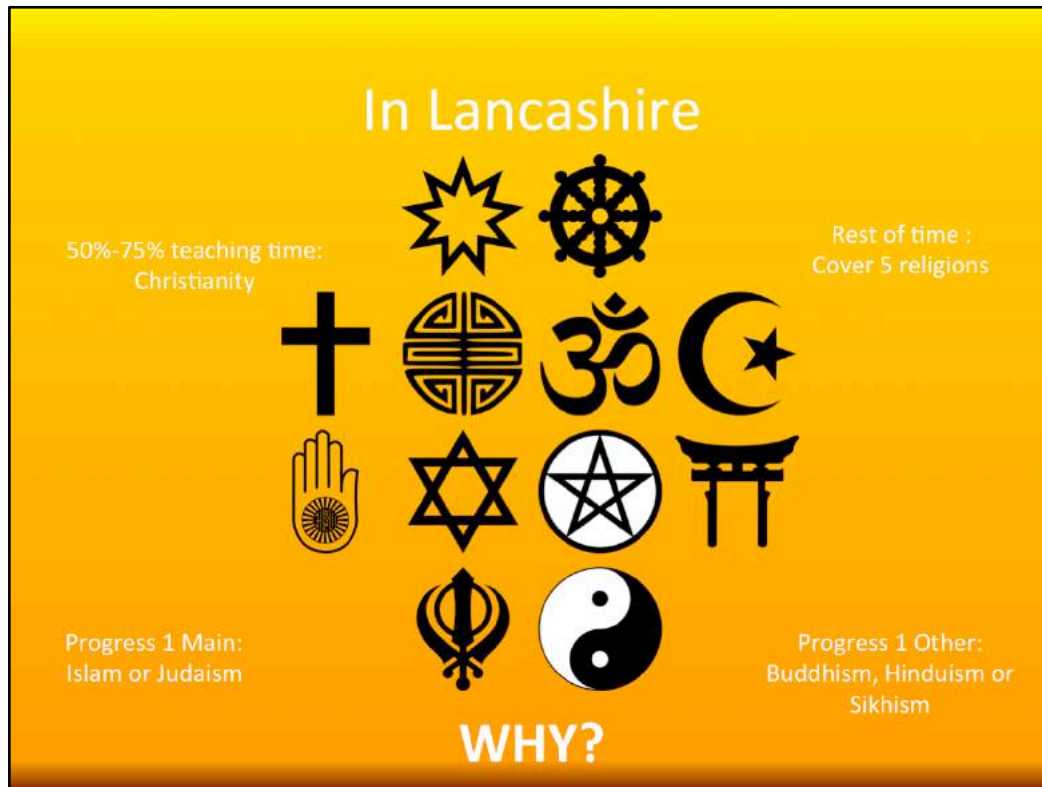
Children in a school in Blackpool had parents who blamed the troubles of the world in Islam – so we invited them to go with us, and that was a necessary focus for the school

The school I'm now at doesn't have any strong faiths and all are accepted from all backgrounds – so we want a general approach to RE with no religion being highlighted above others

SO AGAIN, MAKE THE SYLLABUS SUIT YOU, NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND

THINK AGAIN ABOUT YOUR CURRENT PROVISION AND SYLLABUS:

- 1) WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE? AND WHY?
- 2) WHAT WOULD YOU DO WITHOUT IF YOU COULD?
- 3) HOW WILL YOU TAKE THE SCHOOL FORWARD IN ITS RE THINKING?



In Lancashire we cover the 6 main religions of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism NOTE IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER SO NO ONE CAN SAY I'M PREJUDICED – IS THIS RIGHT???

We can also create units to go with specific religions connected to where we live – for example in Chorley some schools cover a unit on the Mormons; in St Annes we had a number of Jehovah Witness children in the school so again we started to develop a unit on that so they could share their faith in a non-preaching way (need to be careful!) – again it comes back to your circumstance – as long as there is BREADTH and DEPTH and not one or two narrow foci.

From there at least 50% and up to 75% RE teaching must be Christianity – 3 half terms out of 6

We then have a Progressed Main Religion – which is focussed one more than the other Main Religion – so either Islam or Judaism
And then can Progress one of the other religions – do more of Buddhism, Sikhism or Hinduism

MY QUESTION IMMEDIATELY WAS....BUT WHY? Having said that religions are equal, that no faith is above another's; in trying to teach tolerance and equality, we then say – but we'll cover two religions more than others

So what did we do...

| Year | Term 1a | Term 1b | Term 2a | Term 2b | Term 3a | Term 3b |
|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1 | | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | | |
| 6 | | | | | | |

We decided to look across Years 1-6 and ignore the Early Years for now as they were going to look at RE in a thematic approach within their continuous provision

6 half-terms over 6 years – 36 units

At least half have to be Christianity following SACRE guidelines

So what did we do...

| Year | Term 1a | Term 1b | Term 2a | Term 2b | Term 3a | Term 3b |
|------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1 | C | C | C | | | |
| 2 | C | C | C | | | |
| 3 | C | C | C | | | |
| 4 | C | C | C | | | |
| 5 | C | C | C | | | |
| 6 | C | C | C | | | |

So let's just put them in for now

So we are left with 18 units for 5 religions – so once every 2 years?

So what did we do...

| Year | Term 1a | Term 1b | Term 2a | Term 2b | Term 3a | Term 3b |
|------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1 | C | C | C | S | | I |
| 2 | C | C | C | J | B | H |
| 3 | C | C | C | I | S | |
| 4 | C | C | C | H | J | B |
| 5 | C | C | C | | I | S |
| 6 | C | C | C | B | H | J |

And still 3 spaces – well wouldn't it be great to have some time for comparative work?

So what did we do...

| Year | Term 1a | Term 1b | Term 2a | Term 2b | Term 3a | Term 3b |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|
| 1 | C | C | C | S | Places of Worship | I |
| 2 | C | C | C | J | B | H |
| 3 | C | C | C | I | S | Festivals |
| 4 | C | C | C | H | J | B |
| 5 | C | C | C | Texts and Images | I | S |
| 6 | C | C | C | B | H | J |

So now we have all religions (apart from Christianity) being given equal time; all religions being covered every two years AND most importantly a chance for children to actually compare what happens within religions from what they have learnt, rather than RE being one-off about one religion.

We then took this to the staff as we designed our Creative Curriculum and asked their opinions and where the specific religions might best fit in to their year

So what did we do...

| Year | Term 1a | Term 1b | Term 2a | Term 2b | Term 3a | Term 3b |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | C | C | I | C | S | Places of Worship |
| 2 | J | C | C | B | C | H |
| 3 | I | C | S | I | C | Festivals |
| 4 | C | H | J | C | B | C |
| 5 | S | C | I | C | Texts and Images | C |
| 6 | B | C | C | H | C | J |

And this was what we ended up with for a wide variety of reasons such as:

- Linking to another topic – Geography; History; PSHE; Values work
- Year group study – e.g. the story of Jesus' birth after Christmas is rarely covered yet was an important time within the Christian faith so cover in Year 2 and again in Year 6
- Same again for the events of Easter and what happened after the resurrection – Year 6
- Some were moved to fit in with specific festivals and times of the year
- And its still a moveable feast – as long as the 6 units are taught within that year group they can be taught when is best for the children and the teacher

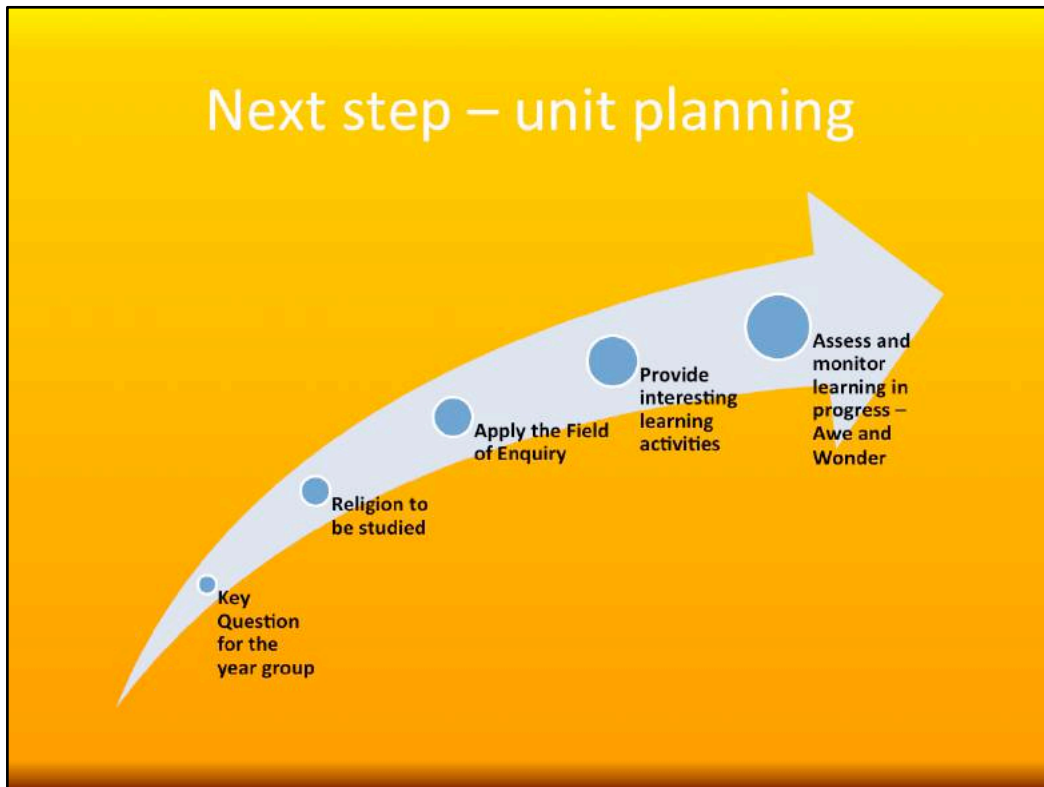
SO WE HAVE ALL RELIGIONS COVERED AND ALL EQUAL (EXCEPTING C OF COURSE)

Time to consider

- What are your non-negotiables?
- What religions do you HAVE to cover?
- What religions do you feel your pupils should cover?
- Are there any local religious groups you need to be aware of?
- What opportunities for the children are there to explore these religions beyond the school?
- What time do you feel you want to give to each religion in a frame of Equality and Diversity?

Time to consider and make some notes for yourself...next steps

Next step – unit planning



So we start with our Key Question to be studied across the year group. These have been suggested by Lancashire SACRE and adopted by many schools

Next step – unit planning

1 BIG question to focus on all year

Y1: What do people say about God?

Y2: How do we respond to things that really matter?

Y3: Who should we follow?

Y4: How should we live our lives?

Y5: Where can people find guidance on how to lead their lives?

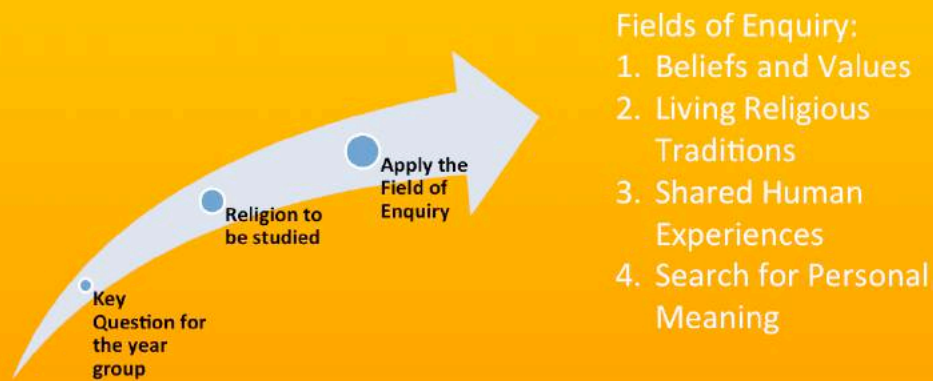
Y6: In what way is life like a journey?



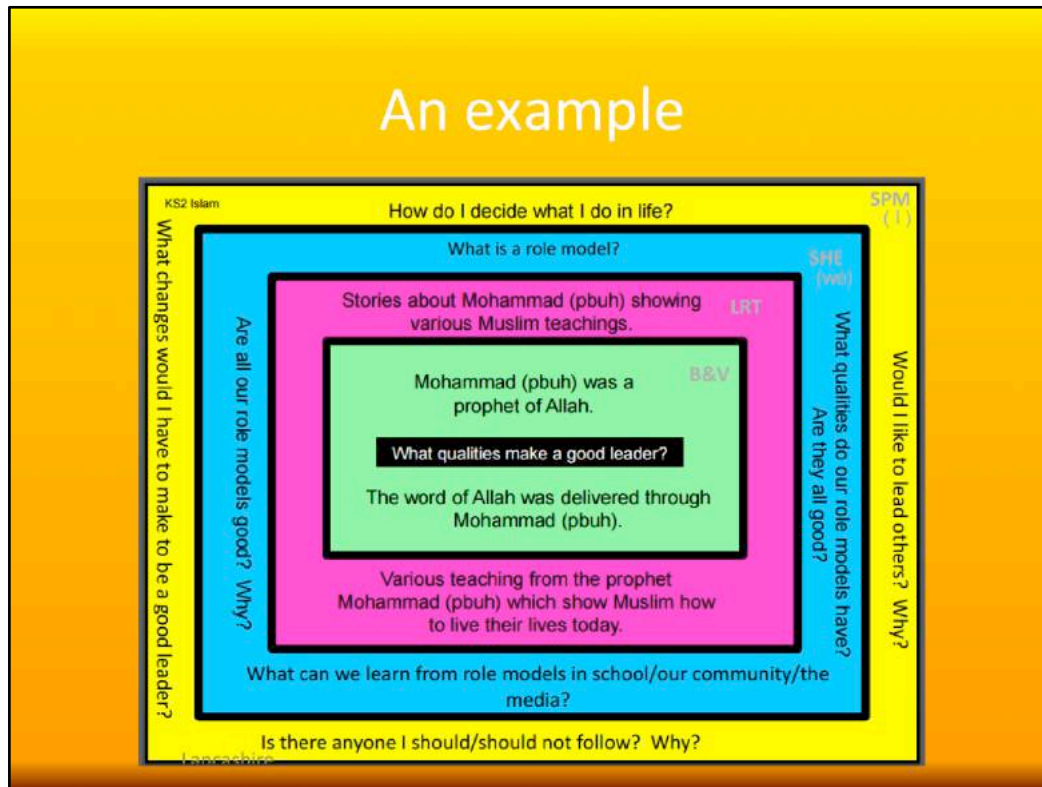
These are your philosophical questions and they can be adapted to suit your children again – some schools who re doing P4E are already doing this, and we are hoping that by Year 6 the children may decide what their BIG question is to do with religion and use that for their own study...making the learning their own. The teacher then becomes the facilitator rather than the teacher.

DO YOU AGREE WITH THESE QUESTIONS? WHICH MIGHT YOU CHANGE? WHAT BIG QUESTIONS COULD YOUR CHILDREN LOOK INTO?

Next step – unit planning

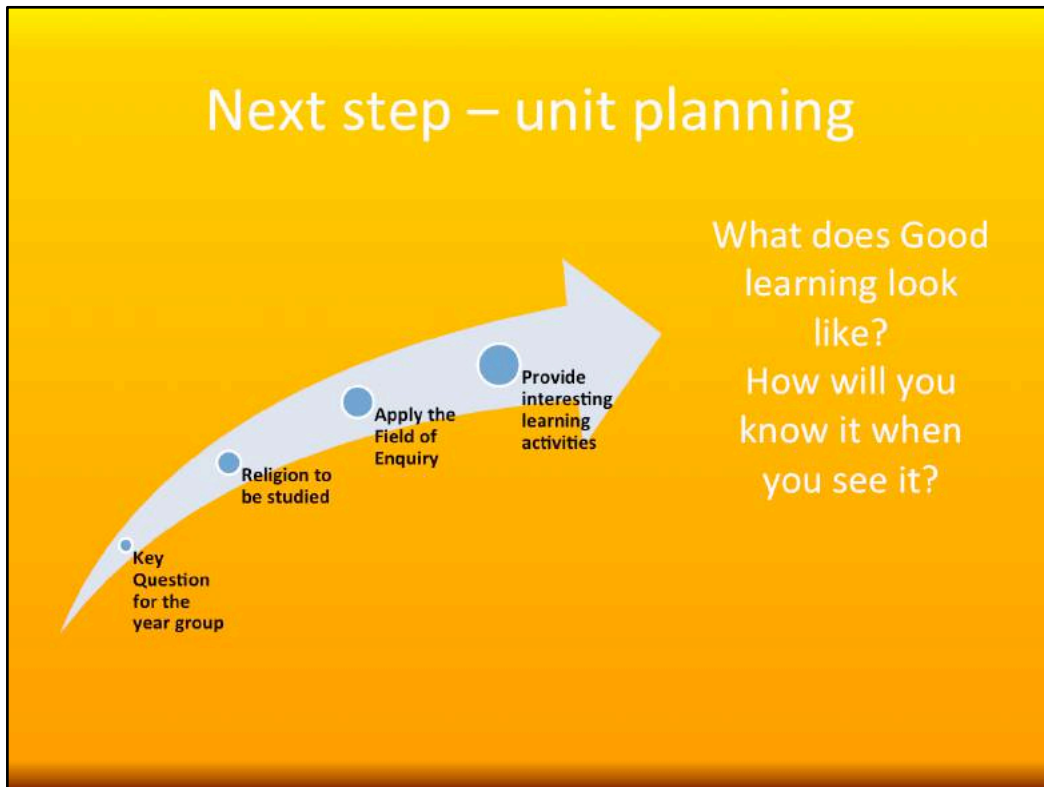


We already have our religions for the year, we now have our BIG question for the year...so lets break the learning down to what we feel they should be exploring and finding out about – the Field of Enquiry. But what will you be covering within those Fields of Enquiry? Again, Lancashire have now produced helpful supportive documents to show what some schools are doing



So we start with the teaching part, the Beliefs and Values – TEACHING STUFF
 We move on to teaching about how the Religion is lived today through the leadership of Mohammad
 Then we start to explore and learn independently, And ask more questions about how this experience of following a leader within Islam is shared and learnt and found out about. CHILDREN CAN SUPPLEMENT THEIR OWN QUESTIONS IN HERE AS WELL – so you can extend for the more able within RE; e.g. What qualities do Mohammad, Jesus and the Buddha have in common to make them good leaders? How do we know this from the different religions?
 And finally we move onto the effect it has on us personally. This is the more difficult element as some children will undoubtedly say that ‘its nothing to do with them’ but what you are really wanting them to do is ask ‘Has this learning affected any of my views of life? In what way? For the positive or negative? How do I view things now? And what will I do about it?’ Its that whole approach to shared learning and learning through all of our experiences in life

Next step – unit planning



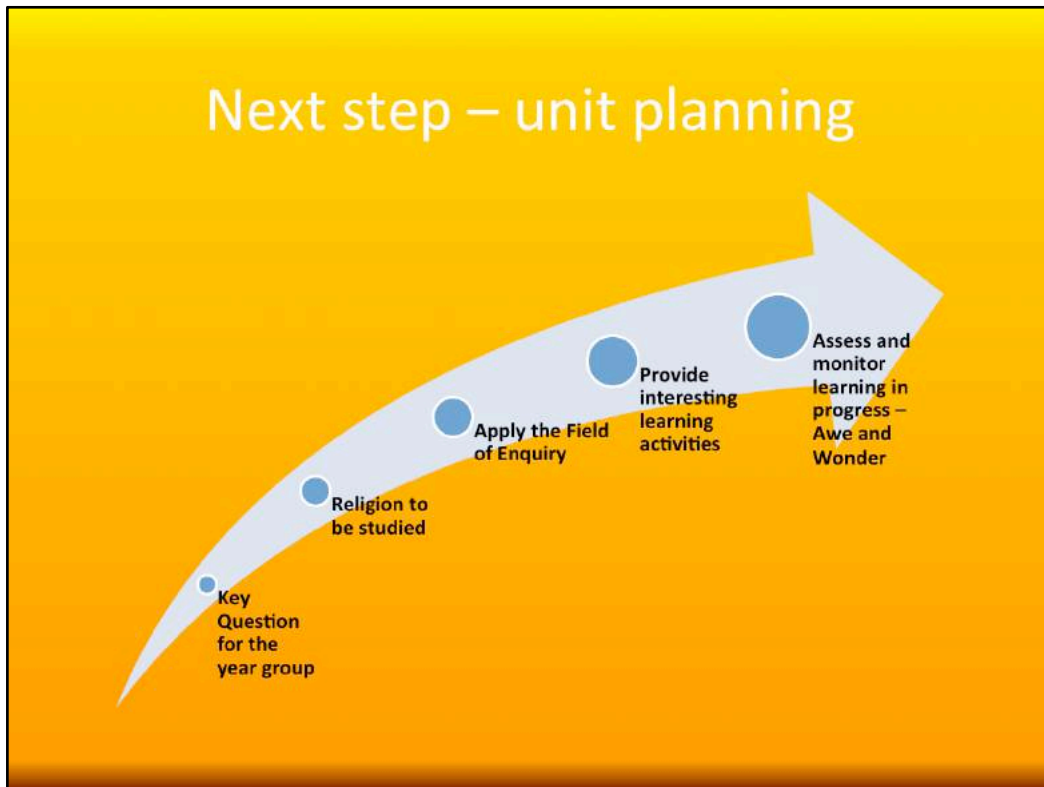
In your pairs – what does learning look like? How will you provide stimulation, enjoyment, enthusiasm for learning about RE?
Too many RE lessons are history based and fact finding and dull and boring and using the internet and printing pictures off...but RE can be so much more...

RE must start with experiencing (and enjoyment!)



How is RE taught in your school – does it involve all of these things? Which could you do by next week? By next month? How would you find out about places of worship to visit? Visitors to come into school (DBS checks!) resources that are good quality

How will you immerse the children in RE learning without preaching! Very easy within Christianity to preach not teach!



And finally to assessment. We can all assess work itself and mark it, but what are we marking in RE?

Don't get hung up on the spellings/punctuation etc – all important and transferred skills, but what we are after in RE has to be something more – understanding, empathy and enquiry

Do your children show an enquiring mind about religion? Do they challenge views positively and explain their views and why they hold those views? Do they understand the importance of religion to some people? Do they show their sense of awe and wonder in a wide variety of ways – walking into a place of worship; looking at photographs/pictures; seeing an LRT in action; taking part in a religion (without conflicting their own faith); do they take this beyond their RE learning – standing on top of a mountain?

Awe and Wonder



Photo of kids walking to top of Lingmoor or Loughrigg

Our whole aim in RE should be to share the Living Religious Traditions, with their historical backgrounds, so that children (and adults) have the information to make choices in life. It may be an actual choice over their own religion, but more importantly it will be a choice about the empathy and understanding they can give to others and the fact that their choices can affect others of religion, race, culture – and without an understanding those choices or statements may be wrong.

It all comes back to equality and valuing that everyone has a right to believe in their religious upbringing and with a little more positive education, we can understand them better.

Thank you

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