

Pioneer Federation
Medium term plan
Cycle 2, Term 1
R.E



Subject: Why do some people believe in God and some people not?

Key Concept/ Theme: Identify and explain what religious and non-religious people believe about God. Consider and weigh up views on theism, agnosticism and atheism, expressing insights of their own about why people believe in God or not.

Prior Learning links:

KS1 – Cycle 1, Term 2: What do Christians believe God is like?

LKS2 – Cycle 1, Term 2: What is it like for someone to follow God?

UKS2 – Cycle 1, Term 6: What matters most to Humanists and Christians?

Vocabulary: theist, atheist, agnostic, liberating, restricting

- Reconnection:** See prior learning links above

LO: Let's learn what it means to be theist, atheist or agnostic

Activity: Begin with a guessing game: If the world was a village of 100 people how many would belong to each religion or non-religious group? What surprises them when the real figures are revealed? Christian (33.5), Muslim (18), Agnostic (15), Hindu (12.5), Other religions (9), Buddhists (6.5), Atheists (4.5), Jewish people (0.6), Sikhs (0.3). Which of these groups believe in God, which don't believe in God? Discuss the meanings of the words theist, agnostic and atheist and write the definitions on their cover pages.

Work in pairs to sort the groups into theist (believes in God), agnostic (cannot say if God exists or not) and atheist (believes there is no god)

If the UK was a village of 100 people? Pupils look at some more tables of statistics for religion in your local town, the region, the UK and the world. What do they observe? The government site www.statistics.gov.uk is great for this.

Ask the pupils to work in their groups to form 3 reasons why a person might believe in God, 3 reasons a person might not believe in God and 3 reasons why a person might not have made a decision about their beliefs about God.

Stick the words Theist, Atheist and Agnostic in three different locations in the room. Share a series of descriptions of people's beliefs like the examples below. After reading out each example ask the pupils to move to the word that most accurately describes their belief. Ask pupils why they have made their decision? Do they agree or disagree with the opinion offered?

 - I believe in following reason and science. These guide me in my life decisions.
 - I think there is more to life than what is here on earth but I can't quite decide what it is.
 - I know that there is more than just us and my faith guides me
 - I need more evidence to make any decisions about God
 - I have thought a bit about God and haven't made my mind up but to be honest I'm not all that bothered about it
 - God is hard to define and unknowable
 - I need evidence and no-one has shown me evidence of God yet

Take photos of this activity for books and create a sticker alongside it to explain the learning from the lesson. Create a pupil voice sticker and ask pupils to write what they believe in terms of whether they are a theist, atheist or agnostic, explaining why they believe that.

Reflection Question: Do you think the world would be different if everyone believed the same? Would it make it better or worse? Explain your thoughts!

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2.	<p>Reconnection: Christian beliefs about Creation – what is the creation story?</p> <p>LO: Let’s learn what Christians believe about how the world began and explore whether they all believe the same</p> <p>Activity: What looks like a design and what looks random? Go outside on a 5-minute mission to find something beautiful and well designed in the natural world (e.g. leaf, daisy, acorn, piece of fruit). Discuss these items: do they seem to be accidents, random, or designed?</p> <p>Discuss: Where do these objects get their fitness for purpose? Too amazing to be chance? Consider the idea of evolution – does this rule out God? If God did design the universe, what does the universe tell us about what God is like? Consider Creation accounts in Genesis 1 and 2. Explain that Christians view these accounts differently – some read it literally, while others see it as telling a truth about human nature. In both interpretations Christians see God as creator and designer of the natural world. It’s a belief shared with Sikhs, Muslims and Jews – but not with atheists. What impacts and challenges might such beliefs have upon the lives of Christians? Do all Christians think the same? (No – illustrate some diversity)</p> <p>Statements for and against the design argument posted around classroom, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- We just think the world in beautiful because we’re taught to think if something works well it is beautiful- Evolution means that the Bible stories are meaningless- Our world could easily have come about by chance. There are billions of planets that it is simply the law of averages that at least one planet would contain life- Everything clearly has a purpose: there can be no doubt that the world has a designer- Even if ‘God’ did design the universe, that doesn’t mean ‘God’ still exists today- If God did design the universe, then sack God. The design is bad e.g. evil and pain. <p>Pupils write responses/ reflections/ questions on post-it notes and stick them onto statement posters. Take photos of pupils doing this and the finished posters to go into RE books, alongside a sticker explaining the activity.</p> <p>Give each table one of the posters – give them time to collate people’s ideas and then ask them to write a written response to the statement they have, identifying what others believe, their own personal beliefs and HA can say how they think Christians would respond to the statement.</p> <p>Reflection Question: Do you think it makes a difference to how people treat the world if they think it was created by God? Why or why not?</p>
3 + 4	<p>Reconnection: Previous learning of creation and what do Christians believe God is like?</p> <p>LO: Let’s answer the big question: Is God Real?</p> <p>Activity: This will last over 2 lessons. Set up an enquiry for the pupils by acting in role as a detective, the boss of a detective agency, and present the big investigation question (Is God Real?) in an envelope. The class need to then undertake a series of activities to give their own answer to the question.</p> <p>Ask pupils to list all the questions that they think they will need to answer if you are going to solve the Big Question. If they struggle you could give them a selection of questions to choose from e.g. who is this God? What kind of God are we talking about? What kind of God are we not talking about? Are there any witnesses for this God? Can I trust them? Are there any witnesses against this God?</p> <p>Set up a carousel of the activities listed below:</p> <p>Activity 1: Focus the investigation on Christianity and explore What is God supposed to be like? Discuss with the pupils how they are going to find out about what God is supposed to be like? What are they going to need to do? Share some metaphors and similes about God from the Bible. What do each of these tell the pupils about God? Provide pupils with the quotes or ask them to look them up to see what they say about God. Discuss with pupils what simile and metaphor is. You could use Father (Psalm 103:13), Creator (Genesis 1:1),</p>

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Rock (Deuteronomy 32:3-4), Shepherd (Psalm 32), Fortress (Samuel 22:2-3), Light (1 John 1:5), Jesus (Colossians 1:15;2:9), Spirit (John 4:24), Eternal (1 Timothy 1:17), Everywhere (Jeremiah 34:24), Almighty (Matthew 19:26).

Activity 2: Ask pupils to create a wanted poster for God- they wouldn't be able to draw God so what would their description say? What is this God like? Explain to pupils that many people think it is really hard to describe what God is like and so one medieval thinker, Maimonides, used 'the negative way' describing what God is not. As a class come with a series of statements about what God is not like. Collect them all together. Do these descriptions about what God is NOT like help to make more sense of what Christians think God is like? Why?

Activity 3: Talk about who you would like to have as witnesses in this investigation. Make a list of people from history and today. Who would be the best witnesses and Respond thoughtfully to the question, "Is God real?", giving evidence to back up my ideas why? Are there any local people who would come in to your school to answer some questions?

Witness interrogation: if you can, arrange for two people to come to your class one Christian and one Atheist Otherwise, get the pupils to act out as if they were Christian and Atheist. In a pair, make a list of your interview questions. Share these with another pair and decide your best three questions and interrogate!

Activity 4: Ask pupils to collect evidence from around school - can they each get 3 or 4 quotes from pupils and staff about whether or not they believe in God, why and how this affects their life. Discuss the responses and ask them to create a continuum on their desk from 'Yes, God is real' to 'No, God is not real' Place the statements on the line. Discuss what do each of these people think God is like? Can you tell why they believe or don't believe? What difference do the beliefs make to how they live? This information will then feed into the final task of the unit writing a report back to the boss.

Collate all of the evidence pupils have gathered and discuss together as a class. Pupils to then write a report back to the detective answering the question 'Is God real?'. They must use evidence from the four activities and offer their own opinion at the end of the report.

Reflection Question: Do you think it would make a difference to the world if everyone believed in God? Why or why not?

5

Reconnection: previous learning within the topic.

LO: Let's consider why people do or do not believe in God and the role of Science within this

Activity: Compare the sources of authority of Christians (e.g. Bible, Church teachings, religious leaders, individual conscience) with some non-religious sources (e.g. individual conscience, some philosophers and other thinkers)

Explore some reasons why people do or do not believe in God. Consider some of the main reasons:

- Family background
- Religious experience (many people say they have had a prayer answered or they have felt the presence of God)
- Some argue that the universe itself and its creation is evidence of a higher power or creator
- Many people who do not believe in God point to suffering that happens in the world
- Atheists argue that religions are created by humans
- Some argue that science provides evidence and explanations that religion does not

Many Christians would say that they want to find out more about the world and how it works – doing science is part of their response to belief in God as the creator. Find out about Christians who are also scientists (Jennifer Wiseman, John Polkinghorne, Denis Alexander, Russell Stannard) and create a fact file/biography about them, including their stance as a Christian as well as a Scientist.

Reflection Question: Do you think people have to believe one way or the other about God to offer opinions? Explain your thoughts.

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Reconnection: previous learning within the topic

LO: Let's reflect on how what people believe about God impacts the way they choose to live

Activity: Explore what impact believing in God might make on the way someone lives his or her everyday life. Is faith in God restricting or liberating? Define these words together and write the definitions on their cover pages. How do people respond to God? E.g. from personal responses in private prayer, study, worship etc.

Talk about and reflect upon the possible benefits and challenges of believing or not believing in God in Britain today. Get pupils to reflect upon their own views and how they view people with different beliefs than their own.

Give pupils time to prepare and then hold a debate to answer the question: It is harder to believe in God in Britain today. Think about the rise of different cultures and religions within Britain, social media and TV etc.

Take photos and create sticker to explain the task. Create a pupil voice sticker for pupils to write their own response to the question.

Reflection Question: How can believing in God be valuable? How can it be challenging?

End Points:

To know what 'theist', 'atheist' and 'agnostic' mean and what these people believe

To know why some people believe in God and some people do not

To know why God is so special to believers and why sometimes it is challenging to believe in God

Evaluation: What have the pupil self-reflections and termly work told you about what the children can remember and recall? What are the gaps? Ensure that the areas that need further reinforcement are documented in the next subject unit MTP.