

The rebirth of the RE Newsletter

If you have worked in Slough schools for some time you may remember the existence of a regularly published RE newsletter. You may also have noticed its disappearance. The SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) has now decided to re-introduce this publication as one of the ways in which it supports RE in schools.

We will try to keep you informed, in this way, about local and national initiatives, news and issues in RE. We know, for example, Ofsted now looks carefully into how effectively schools promote community cohesion. It is quite likely, therefore, that this means RE will be receiving a bit more attention in the inspection process because it is an area of school life rich with community cohesion potential—remember we have had the following as an aim of the local RE syllabus for the last fifteen years: *RE should help pupils develop a positive attitude towards other people, respecting their right to hold different beliefs from their own and towards living in a society of diverse religions.*

The SACRE regularly discusses ways in which it can best support RE in schools. Members would welcome ideas from teachers. As editor of this newsletter, I should also very much welcome contributions from teachers throughout Slough. If you have discovered a particularly good resource perhaps you could write a review; if you have taken pupils to visit a place of worship or had a visitor in to speak, it would be great if you and/or your pupils could write some reflections on the experience. If you have taught a particularly successful lesson or series of lessons other teachers would love to hear about it through this newsletter. We are all aware that everyone is working hard within their own schools to provide stimulating RE. It is always nice to hear about ideas that have worked well elsewhere—sharing eases the burden of planning and thinking up new ideas. Please do get in touch with your contributions and comments. Here's how:

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Jo Fageant (Chair of the SACRE)

Slough Religious Studies Centre

The Centre has been relocated and can now be found at Slough Islamic Primary School, Wexham Road, Slough with parking access from Grasmere Avenue. We are open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays between 3.30-5.30pm and at other times by appointment.



The Centre is a free resource for all Slough LA schools and is there to help you. As part of our on-going commitment to ensuring you get the best service possible, the Centre now has a selection of new DVDs to replace some of the old video resources and there is a small selection of CD ROMs.

As always, I'm seeking information about topics you cover in school and suggestions of resources we could stock to help you with these. We already have topic boxes on Buddhism, Christianity, Chinese New Year, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, Worship, Religious Dress. There are others on individual festivals: Christmas, Diwali, Hanukkah, Passover and Purim. Still more focus on places of worship and rights of passage. We have a wide range of artefacts including a thurible and a sukkah. I'd love to hear from you about how we can best meet your needs. Call in and see me at the RS Centre, phone on 01753 822888 or email me to sloughrecentre@waitrose.com to discuss your ideas and requirements.

We look forward to seeing you soon.



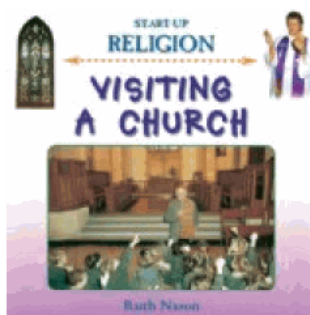
Jo Osborne (Centre Resources Officer)

Have you used the latest version of www.reonline.org.uk? This website has been redesigned and now includes some new and very useful material. For example, there is now a subject knowledge section for those people who need to know a bit more about the religions they explore in lessons. As well as the six main religions found in the RE syllabus, there are sections about the Baha'i faith, Humanism, Jainism and Zoroastrianism. A link through to <http://www.diversityanddialogue.org.uk/news> provides lots of material relevant to RE's contribution to the promotion of community cohesion. <http://pof.reonline.org.uk/christianity.php> takes you through to more information about people living out their faiths in a variety of ways. The new design allows you to find, via the 'Teachers' Resources' section, more easily than before, a wide range of resources including virtual visits to places of worship and film clips on all sorts of aspects of religious life and practice. For those who like to use films, in the REFuel section there are lots of ideas you will enjoy. If you are not sure of how to pronounce words you need to use in RE there is an audio digest of terms. In short, if you haven't looked at reonline recently, make it a priority because you could save yourself both time and money as there is so much there to support you.

Books for KS1

The Start up RELIGION series of books about visiting places of worship (includes church, gurdwara, mandir, mosque and synagogue) is an excellent resource. Those for Christianity, Islam and Judaism are also available as big books. The illustrations and accompanying labels are very clear. The books help explore features of the buildings, practices and main beliefs of the faith communities. They also recognise that there is variety in each religion's places of worship. These books would be very good to help prepare young children for a visit.

RMEP is in the process of publishing two new series of books for Key Stage 1 which are available in big and pupil sized formats. One series is entitled 'Stories to Remember'. This comprises books each of which has a collection of three stories from a faith tradition. The Christian stories book has 'An Amazing Catch of Fish', 'The Little Man in the Tree' and 'The Birthday of the Church' all presented in language appropriate for 5-7 year old pupils. Similarly the Hindu book has 'The Boy with Stars in



His Mouth' (Krishna), 'The Elephant-Headed God' (how Ganesh got an elephant's head) and 'The Monkey General' (Hanuman). The other series focuses on places of worship and takes the form of an illustrated conversation between two children about significant features of a place of worship, what goes on there and how worship is practiced in their homes. At present books on church and synagogue are available. Each book in both series costs £2.99. If you like the RMEP series 'Times to Remember' you will like these which are similar in presentation.

CD Rom Resource for KS2

Reading's Faith Forum has funded the development of a CD ROM entitled *Showing Faith Here & Now* which teachers of pupils in Key Stage 2 will find to be of value. It comprises

15 narrated five minute PowerPoint presentations providing 'a glimpse into how Christians, Muslims, Jews, Sikhs and Hindus celebrate faith today'. Four themes are addressed for a selection of religions. These are as follows:

'Seeing God through the eyes of faith' (Ch, H, I, J, S) - exploring the question: How

does what people believe about God show in what they do?

'Inspiring faith through sacred writings' (Ch, H, I, J, S) - exploring the question: How are sacred writings used and shown respect within faith communities?

'Celebrating faith with other people' (Ch, I, S) - exploring the question: How, where and why do people of different faiths meet and worship?

'Keeping faith at home' (H, J) - exploring the question: How is faith celebrated, grown and shared at home?

Each of these presentations includes a summary in text form of the main points covered.

In all, this resource provides 300 original photographs which could also be used with pupils in Key Stage 1. If you are interested in obtaining a copy, contact the Faith Forum on 0118 926 2372 or write to 14 Erleigh Road Reading, RG1 5LH (Cost £35, with permission to network within the school).



This Faith Forum also has a great website : <http://readingfaithforum.com/>

Resources on Humanism for all Key Stages



The British Humanist Association (BHA) argues strongly that Humanism should be included in religious education courses. The Non-statutory National Framework for RE on which the Slough syllabus is based says:

'To ensure that all pupils' voices are heard and the religious education curriculum is

broad and balanced, it is recommended that there are opportunities for all pupils to study:

- *other religious traditions (other than those required by the syllabus) such as the Baha'i faith, Jainism and Zoroastrianism*

- *secular philosophies such as humanism.'* To support schools with the inclusion of Humanism, the BHA has published some helpful books and now has resources freely available on its website:

<http://www.humanismforschools.org.uk/> These include five 'toolkits' which comprise teachers' notes, lesson plans and PowerPoint presentations: KS1—What makes us special; KS2—What do we celebrate and why? How should we treat other people and why?; KS3—How do we know it's true? How do you tell right from wrong? What's it all for? There are also discussion papers on a whole range of topics—for primary schools: Happy Human Symbol; How the earth began; The Golden Rule (Intriguingly, in exploring the Golden Rule as an important principle of human living the version selected from Christianity for comparison with those from other traditions is 'Love your neighbour as yourself' (Lk 10:27) rather than 'Treat others as you want them to treat you' (Matt 7:12) which is much closer in form to all the other examples selected.); Celebrations and ceremonies. Those for KS3 are divided into three groups: Social and moral issues eg abortion, animal welfare, drugs, suicide, world poverty; Philosophical and religious issues eg Creationism, Evil and Suffering, Does God exist?; and Humanism and human history eg What is Humanism? Humanists working for a better world.

The quality of these resources is good and schools wanting to include an organised study of Humanism will find them valuable.

Resources on Islam

Online resources about Islam (primary and secondary) can be found at www.iaw-schools.org.uk Although still under development, this resource is certainly worth exploring. It was produced as a collaboration between Islam Awareness Week, Leicester SACRE, young people and volunteers from the community. It explores issues such as: what Muslims believe, what they do and how religion influences their lives. There are also lesson plans, workshop ideas, songs and film clips.

Free Resources!

Fantastic news—two highly respected RE organisations are currently providing some excellent 'must have' free resources on the web.

Shap has two RE led cross curricular units, one for KS1 and the other for KS2. The KS1 unit is entitled *What should we eat and why?* The introduction says: 'In this unit, children are invited to consider some of the choices they make in considering what they eat. They are given opportunities to reflect upon these choices and those of others including both religious and non-religious people. They are asked to explore a range of issues including their potential responsibility for themselves, for others and for the world around them. They are enabled to acquire skills and attitudes relevant not merely to RE but also to their own personal development. The unit provides them with a context in which they can both learn about and learn from religion and other belief systems'.

By the end of the unit—Most children will use religious and other relevant words and phrases to identify some of the beliefs and practices associated with food in different religions and belief systems; begin to show awareness of similarities in religions and belief systems in relation to food; identify how religious and other beliefs are expressed through every day actions; ask and respond sensitively to questions about their own food choices and to those of other people; recognise their own values and those of other people in relation to moral choices about food.

The Key Stage 2 unit is entitled *Living Ethically—Making a Difference?* The introduction is similar to that found in the KS1 unit but the outcomes are expressed as— Most children will: Use a developing religious vocabulary to describe and show understanding of sources, practices, beliefs, ideas, feelings and experiences. They make links between them, and describe some similarities and differences both within and between religions. They describe the impact of religion on people's lives. They suggest meanings for a range of forms of religious expression, raise, and suggest answers to, questions of identity, belonging, meaning, purpose, truth, values and commitments. They apply their ideas to their own and other people's lives. They describe what inspires and influences themselves and others. **Shap** also publishes a journal each year on subjects of interest to teachers of RE and relevant to the RE syllabus. This year's journal is entitled, *Food, Faith and Community*. All the articles within this publication and Shap journals back to 1994 are available to download from www.shapworkingparty.org.uk. This is also the address at which to access the units described above.

The Stapleford Centre is currently publishing, week by week 40 top teaching tips written by Margaret Cooling. Each week's ideas remain available to download free for five weeks. Thereafter it is possible to purchase them at a cost of 99p each. So far 18 week's worth of ideas have been released. They will build into an excellent resource and RE subject leaders are encouraged to collect them for themselves from <http://www.stapleford-centre.org/resources/free-resources>

Jo Fageant and Jo Osborne are ensuring that reference copies are available at the Slough Religious Studies Centre.

Council of Christians and Jews KS3 Resources

CCJ has produced an interactive CD-ROM for pupils in KS3. It's called 'Citizenship Identity and Difference'. It 'explores different strands of religious and non-religious traditions in British society today, and stimulates discussion on the nature of identity and citizenship.' This is a nicely produced resource which is easy to use. There are five strands, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and no faith background, all accessed through encounter with a young person from these positions. CCJ says, 'the material explores what is specific to each person's tradition, while stressing that the different strands together forge a commitment to the future of British society.' Interestingly there are two Christian young people, one being described as 'nominal Church of England'.

The homepage provides images of the young people and you engage with each one by clicking on their image. There is a short film clip in which they introduce themselves and then you go into a room in their house. Taking Safiya, the Muslim girl, as an example to illustrate what the resource provides: In Safiya's room you can click on three significant features each of which takes you to some background information about the item, a story related to it and some more 'advanced' material. For Safiya, the significant items are a compass (focus on prayer), the Qur'an and an Eid card from which users learn much about Ramadan. The final aspect of the encounter with Safiya, as with all the others, is a short film clip in which she explains what it means to her to be a Muslim, an Asian and British. She also explains why she chooses to wear hijab. Along with the CD-ROM there is a pack of support material

This is a very good resource and good value at £25. CCJ has also developed a Passover pack for churches to enable Christians to learn about Pesach. While this is not specifically designed for use in schools, it may not be an entirely inappropriate resource. You can find out more about this at: [http://www.ccj.org.uk/dialogCCJ_has_also_developed_a_Passover_pack_for_churches ue%20janiary%20stage%202%20r.pdf](http://www.ccj.org.uk/dialogCCJ_has_also_developed_a_Passover_pack_for_churches_ue%20janiary%20stage%202%20r.pdf)

More resources for secondary schools

On the website dedicated to the new secondary curriculum (http://www.newsecondarycurriculum.org/content/library/re_other.aspx#) there are now four short films about good ideas that have been successfully implemented in schools. They are certainly worth a look.

Alan Brine, HMI, has written an interesting brief paper on the new Ofsted arrangements and their implications for RE in schools. This paper can be found at: http://news.reonline.org.uk/re_news.php?288

If you don't already use it www.gcser.org.uk is worth a look. It covers most information relating to GCSE RE pretty comprehensively.

Art in Heaven Competition 2010

Once again NATRE is running its annual competition and in so doing providing another opportunity for schools to show case good RE work. This year's themes are:

Mystery Stories; Spiritual Space; Respect: a logo for RE; Celebrating Life Celebrating Love; Talking to God: Where is God?

Entries have to be in by 31 July 2010. A look at the gallery of 2009 winners might spark off some ideas: www.natre.org.uk/spiritedarts



Festivals

Festival dates and details can be found at the following addresses

www.reonline.org.uk/festivals.php
www.culham.info/tvr/festlist.html
www.bbc.co.uk/schools/religion/
www.holidays.net

These sites have lots of links to others with information about all the religions included and their festivals.

