



## Year 9 Philosophy and RE

### The Curriculum Overview for Year 9

#### **Unit 1: What makes a religion a religion?**

In this unit pupils come up with, and test, a definition of 'religion'. To help them do this, they will look at beliefs that are commonly called religions that they may not have come across before, such as Rastafarianism and Druidism. They will also look at beliefs that are less widely accepted as religions, such as the Branch Davidian cult, Scientology and Jedi. They shall also examine to what extent all beliefs claiming to be 'religions' deserve equal treatment before the law and whether all believers should be free to put all of their beliefs into practice.

This work is assessed with an essay. Teachers will be particularly looking for a mature and reflective approach and a clear point of view supported with examples from the lessons.

In a class discussion:

First Student: "I think we should respect all beliefs because, you never know, they might turn out to be right. We shouldn't just assume that we know best."

Second Student: "But how can we respect beliefs when we don't know whether they are true or not?"

To support this unit at home students could:

- Research some of the less well-known beliefs that they look at in class such as Melanesian cargo cults.

#### **2: What is truth? What is proof?**

In this unit pupils ask whether there is more than one type of truth and whether some 'true' things are more 'true' than others. They will also examine how it is that we know things and how we can prove them to ourselves and others.

This work is assessed informally in class by the teacher who will be particularly looking for a thoughtful approach, the ability to listen to, and respond to, the thoughts of others.

In a Year 9 lesson:

Student: "Sir, I'm confused."

Teacher: "Are you confused because you are thinking about the question or because you haven't been paying attention?"

Student: "Thinking, Sir."

Teacher: "So, are you doing good work?"

Student: "Yes, I suppose I am."

To support this unit at home students could:

- Talk to their Science, Maths and History teachers about how things are proved 'true' in each of these disciplines.

### **Unit 3: Should we believe in God?**

In this unit pupils will examine arguments for and against the existence of God from ancient Greece to the present day. They will also consider whether proving God's existence or non-existence is even possible.

This work is assessed with an essay. Teachers will be particularly looking for a thoughtful approach, a clear point of view that is well explained and supported with examples from the lessons.

To support this unit at home students could:

- Talk to an adult about why they do, or do not, have religious faith.

### **Unit 4: Is jihad just war?**

In this unit pupils will learn about the Islamic concept of jihad and ask whether it means more than fighting. They will also look at Christian teachings about the idea of a 'just war' and begin to formulate their own views on the rights and wrongs of using physical violence.

This work is assessed informally in class by the teacher who will be particularly looking for a thoughtful approach, the ability to listen to, and respond to, the thoughts of others.

To support this unit at home students could:

- Find out what different historical leaders (i.e. Winston Churchill or Tony Blair) have said in order to justify taking their country into a war and think about whether they believe that their reasons justified the conflict.

### **Unit 5: Why is the Israel/Palestine problem so hard to solve?**

In this unit pupils will learn some history of the Palestinian and Jewish peoples and some history of the Holy Land. This knowledge should help them come up with an explanation as to how history, politics and religion combine to make conflict in the Middle East very difficult to resolve.

This work is assessed informally in class by the teacher who will be particularly looking for a thoughtful approach, the ability to listen to, and respond to, the thoughts of others.

To support this unit at home students could:

- Re-read their Geography homework on this subject.
- Watch or read news stories about Israel and Palestine.

### **Unit 6: Should abortion be abolished?**

*Because of the potentially upsetting nature of this subject, this unit is taught with particular care and a strong emphasis on respect.*

In this unit, pupils will look at the arguments for and against abortion and begin to justify decisions about the rights and wrongs of the question.

This work is assessed informally in class by the teacher who will be particularly looking for a thoughtful approach, the ability to listen to, and respond to, the thoughts of others.

To support this unit at home students could:

- Discuss the question with an adult.

### **Unit 7: Should euthanasia be legal?**

*Because of the potentially upsetting nature of this subject, this unit is taught with particular care and a strong emphasis on respect.*

In this unit, pupils will look at the arguments for and against euthanasia and begin to justify decisions about the rights and wrongs of the question.

This work is assessed informally in class by the teacher who will be particularly looking for a thoughtful approach, the ability to listen to, and respond to, the thoughts of others.

To support this unit at home students could:

- Discuss the question with an adult.

### **Unit 8: Could Buddhism make me happy?**

In this unit, pupils will think about what makes them happy. They will also learn about some of the teachings of Buddha and ask whether his philosophy or Buddhist religious practice could make them happy.

This work is assessed with an essay. Teachers will be particularly looking for a thoughtful approach, a clear point of view that is well explained and supported with examples from the lessons.

To support this unit at home students could:

- Find out more about the differences between Buddhist schools of thought and their practices.
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