

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

PRIMARY



The Celebrating RE Month of March 2011 is an ideal opportunity for religious education to be the creative curriculum focus.

Children will be able to explore such areas as, diversity and belonging, beliefs, teachings and sources or values and commitments. They can develop skills - for example, of enquiry, interpretation, empathy, or critical thought. In addition, these ideas give opportunities for spiritual development, promote community cohesion, improve respect and understanding and of self and others and contribute to the five outcomes of Every Child Matters.

Publicity

During Celebrating RE month, remember to include RE items in the school's newsletter or make features on the website or blog. Encourage pupils to make contributions. In the final week, hold an exhibition in the hall or school reception area for parents/ carers and visitors to see. Have an "exhibition opening" to which guests are invited and where children could talk about the RE work or projects that they have been doing. If you have a special event, inform the local media, press, radio or TV and invited them to make a feature. These are excellent ways to raise the profile and status of RE - amongst pupils, parents, staff, governors and the local community.



RE

- Mark the celebration of festivals of the faith unit you are teaching. There are various religious festivals during March 2011 and one or more may fit in with the RE your class is engaged in. Investigate the symbolism of foods used in the celebrations and make simple dishes in class for a class party. Research symbolic rituals or music.
- Perform class presentations and explore issues from the faith you are investigating (especially if a holy day, time of reflection or festival is being celebrated/ marked within the faith).

Celebrations in March 2011:

- ▶ Bahá'í: Nineteen Day Fast, Naw-Rúz
- ▶ Christianity: Saint David, Saint Patrick, Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, Lent, Annunciation
- ▶ Hinduism: Mahashivratri
- ▶ Judaism: Passover, Purim
- ▶ Sikhism: Hola Mohalla
- ▶ Zoroastrianism: Jamshedi Noruz, Kordad Sal

- Invite parents/ carers or members of the local faith community to share with you their personal experiences of the festival / time of reflection.

During the month, investigate faiths that have fasts and feasts and identify some important questions you could ask.

- Create an area where children can examine ceremonial / special clothes, where artefacts can be handled with respect and sensitivity, or a range of books or resources can be used for individual or group enquiry.

- Encourage children to reflect for example, on how a person of faith might use an artefact to express a religious belief. Pupils might write a poem, or do a role play or perform piece of drama to show their understanding and express their views.
- Tell sacred stories from the faith unit you are teaching. Invite parents/ carers or others from the faith community to share a religious story and explain its meaning for them. Visit a place of worship and listen to the story in its faith setting. Many Internet sites have examples of sacred stories written in pupil-friendly language.



RE and ICT

If used creatively ICT can make a great impact on the quality of outcomes for RE. It is important to remember that although the children may learn new techniques through the process of using ICT, the key is to ensure that high quality RE outcomes are achieved.

- Children could research different areas of a faith unit eg. celebrations, symbolism, food etc. The information could be collated and made into a class magazine, newspaper or digital presentation. This outcome could be for display, to present to peers, for assessment or a parents' evening.
- Design a page for the school website:
 - * advertising the RE Celebration month outlining events that will take place in the school
 - * showcasing an RE activity or visit
- Have a class blog, updating it each day with photos and highlights of the day. This is a great way of involving the children and of keeping a record of the month's events. Children love to see their poems, pictures, journals of visits, podcasts, etc. showcased - particularly for a wider audience. As well as providing great opportunities for e.g. collaborative work, SMSC development, art, music, speaking, listening, reading and writing, it gives meaningful opportunities for pupils to show and express religious understanding - their own and others.

- If the school has a plasma screen or TV in its welcome area, make sure that during Celebrating RE month there are RE events and activities showcased.

RE and Art/DT

- Hold a competition to design a symbol celebrating the RE Month 2010. This would be a good way to enable and encourage children to think about values, beliefs and community cohesion.
- Invite an artist in to work with a group of children to make the winning design a reality and a lasting legacy for the school.
- Create models of a place of worship visited e.g. using recycled boxes, construction pieces, clay or papier maché. Design a new inter-faith centre. If this were a building to be used by different religious groups, what sorts of things would we need to think about?
- Make a montage of images taken as photographs during a visit annotated with captions expressing reflections, feelings, or insights gained during the visit. Invite parents/ carers or members of the faith community to see the montage.
- Use modelling materials to create or sculpt artefacts seen at the place of worship visited (Be aware and sensitive that this might not be an appropriate activity for the children of some faiths.)
- Use cardboard and clingfilm or coloured acetates to design and create stained glass windows on a religious theme - e.g. symbol, story, justice, right and wrong, a puzzling question.
- Create class or entrance hall exhibition boards focussing on a religious theme or the faith being learning about during celebrating RE month. Involve the children in the design and creation of the boards.
- Use coloured sands to create mandalas. Depending on the religion being studied (Hinduism or Buddhism) the mandala may be made more permanent by using a glue, or left impermanent so it can be destroyed.

RE and other curriculum links

Literacy:

- write letters to the leader of the place of worship visited which convey thanks, but also express some thoughts or views or asks puzzling questions about what they have seen and experienced.
- create a religious magazine on a visit or a theme e.g. fair trade, a religious festival, “What on earth are we doing?” which might explore religious and world views of how we should care for the planet, with articles, poetry, pictures, photographs, interviews, or thoughts for the day.



Maths:

- When visiting a place of worship, look at shape, symmetry and pattern. There are also possibilities for estimating, comparing and measuring. Space, shape and pattern units lend themselves perfectly to this focus eg. create a collage of a place of worship using shapes, construct a replica of the building using 3D shapes with different construction.

Personal, Social and Emotional (PSE):

- Examples of values relating to RE are respect, self-awareness and empathy. Within a safe and supportive atmosphere, circle time provides an excellent opportunity to practise the skills underpinning these values and gives children opportunities to express their views or beliefs.

Humanities:

- Use an online program e.g. Google maps or draw a map of the local community showing the locations of places of worship.
- Research a local, national or globally significant religious figure and the impact that the person has made.

RE and the school's local community

- Arrange a visit to the local places of worship related to the unit you are teaching. Ensure that children and adults are dressed appropriately and understand protocols and expected behaviour. Invite parents /carers to be a part of the visit. In preparation, children should consider some “big” questions to ask. Invite the local imam, rabbi, vicar or other religious leader into school for the children to interview.
- Make links with schools in other areas, particularly ones where the balance of faiths is different from your locality. If possible make visits, create a school-to-school video conference, or become “techno” pen pals. Invite a fellow year group from a partner school to share the work they produced during the RE Month or collaborate on a joint project.

- Create a religious trail in your area. How has religion shaped the locality? Look for evidence for example in street names or buildings, shops and other aspects of community life. Take some digital photographs, make some notes draw and draw a path of the route and upload to a Google map as in this [example](#). Look at the RE Trails website for help and advice on creating trails. See www.retrails.org.uk



- As the name suggests, the creative curriculum enables schools to be innovative and imaginative. This could lead to religious and cultural days with special clothes or traditional dress being worn. Perhaps a ‘meet and eat’ multi-cultural food event in which parents/carers and the wider community could be involved, not only in attending the event, but in contributing, for example recipes, or traditional, symbolic or religious stories associated with the foods.