



Religious Education in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Background

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework focuses on children from birth to the end of the reception year. For the purpose of this document, we are referring to the later part of the EYFS, namely children aged from 3 to 5 who are in a school setting for Nursery or Reception. It is, however, adaptable for all settings with children in the EYFS.

Religious education is statutory for all pupils registered on the school roll. The statutory requirement for religious education does not extend to nursery classes in maintained schools and is not, therefore, a legal requirement for much of the Foundation Stage. It may, however, form a valuable part of the educational experience of children throughout the EYFS.

The aim of preparing this guidance is to help practitioners working with young children to provide appropriate personal, social and emotional experiences which will support the development of their understanding of the place of religion and beliefs in people's lives. This syllabus draws upon the principles that underpin the EYFS Framework:

- **quality and consistency** in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind;
- **a secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and are assessed and reviewed regularly;
- **partnership working** between practitioners and with parents and/or carers; and
- **equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

The EYFS specifies requirements for learning and development and for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. The learning and development requirements cover:

- the areas of learning and development which must shape activities and experiences (educational programmes) for children in all early years settings;
- the early learning goals that providers must help children work towards (the knowledge, skills and understanding children should have at the end of the academic year in which they turn five); and
- assessment arrangements for measuring progress (and requirements for reporting to parents and/or carers).

The safeguarding and welfare requirements cover the steps that providers must take to keep children safe and promote their welfare.



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British Values

The government has stated that promoting British values is part of the early years curriculum. This means that as part of Ofsted's inspections, early years providers will be inspected on how these values are promoted within the setting. According to Department for Education, the fundamental British values can be broken down as:

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs

British values should be included in the whole curriculum. The children in early years settings live in an increasingly diverse society and this guidance will support encouraging them to learn that it is possible to live together peacefully, each of them a valuable part of our multicultural world. It is important to work closely with parents and communities and the ideas in this guidance will support making those links and delivering a broad provision.

British values are embedded in the curriculum of an early years setting when children learn to be kind, helpful and respectful of others, to be part of their local community and to appreciate that it is acceptable to have a group where people believe different things and that they can support and respect each other in those different beliefs.

In finding out about those times that are special to themselves and others and in learning to work together and accommodate different needs we are laying foundations that can be built on in the Key Stages to follow.



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Overarching principles

Four guiding principles should shape practice in early years settings. These are:

- every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships;
- children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers; and
- children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

The areas of learning and development

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early years settings, which are important and interconnected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity, enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three prime areas are:

- communication and language;
- physical development; and
- personal, social and emotional development.

The other four specific areas are:

- literacy;
- mathematics;
- understanding the world; and
- expressive arts and design.

Our guidance provides suggestions for ways in which practitioners can both create an environment and also plan activities which help children to further understand the world around them through Religious Education.



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Introduction

During the Foundation Stage, children begin to explore the world of religion in terms of special people, books, times, places, objects and visiting places of worship. Children listen to, and talk about, stories. They are introduced to specialist words and use their senses in exploring religious beliefs, practices and forms of expression. They reflect upon their own feelings and experiences. They use their imagination and curiosity to develop their appreciation and wonder of the world in which they live.

It is important for young children to approach early experiences related to religious education with open attitudes and interest and to feel free to talk about the place of religious experience in their own lives. In order that this can happen it is necessary to foster an environment within each setting where children can appreciate that everyone is of equal importance, where diversity is celebrated and where children can develop an understanding that the needs of everyone should be treated fairly and equally. Within such a learning environment, cultural and religious diversity is regarded as positive and children can feel that they are able to express their viewpoints and beliefs in safety.

The resources and experiences that are suggested in this document are meant to support and protect the home cultures and beliefs of every child. This syllabus explores five areas of development for the EYFS where careful resourcing and consideration for religious education outcomes can enable ordinary classroom opportunities to significantly develop foundations for Key Stage 1. Each aspect should be an integral part of early experiences and often two or more aspects may occur simultaneously.

In line with the principles of the EYFS, it is strongly recommended that all planning and provision should be relevant and begin with the child and their personal/real experiences. It is vital that practitioners become aware of the individual child and the child's significant and unique experiences, in order that all activities and learning opportunities are relevant.

Play is essential for child development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. The religious education curriculum must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. By providing a safe climate, experiences can be shared and learning can move forward as children become aware of the community around them and their place in it.

Practitioners wishing to decide which faiths and beliefs to include in their classroom planning should primarily consider the need for very young children to recognise their home backgrounds and see them acknowledged and celebrated in the school environment. They should therefore take those faiths and beliefs to which the children in their group belong as their starting point and be prepared to be flexible and responsive in their planning to meet the needs of each particular cohort.



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If this way of selecting which faiths and beliefs to focus on proves unhelpful, practitioners should discuss with Key Stage 1 colleagues those faiths and beliefs which will be studied and encountered in Years 1 and 2 and decide on some or all of these as their starting point in order to avoid confusing the children with too wide a range of faiths and beliefs with which they are unfamiliar.

Festivals celebrated by members of the school community that feature in the programme planned for the school or in the classroom will provide many opportunities to help children to begin to develop connections between faiths, beliefs, festivals, key figures, places, stories and symbols. As they talk about the story associated with each festival and the way in which the festival is celebrated, children should be beginning to connect festivals to their faith or belief context. For example, it is important that children learn that Christmas is a Christian festival celebrated by Christians.

Adults find stories are powerful vehicles for developing ideas and concepts and promoting discussion. It is however not always helpful to trawl the Bible and the traditions of other faiths and beliefs for stories in the hope that they will provide useful religious education starting points. Within an Agreed Syllabus there are focused occasions for the use of such stories which have been carefully planned in discussion with their relevant communities. The introduction of such stories at earlier stages would not prove helpful to the children.

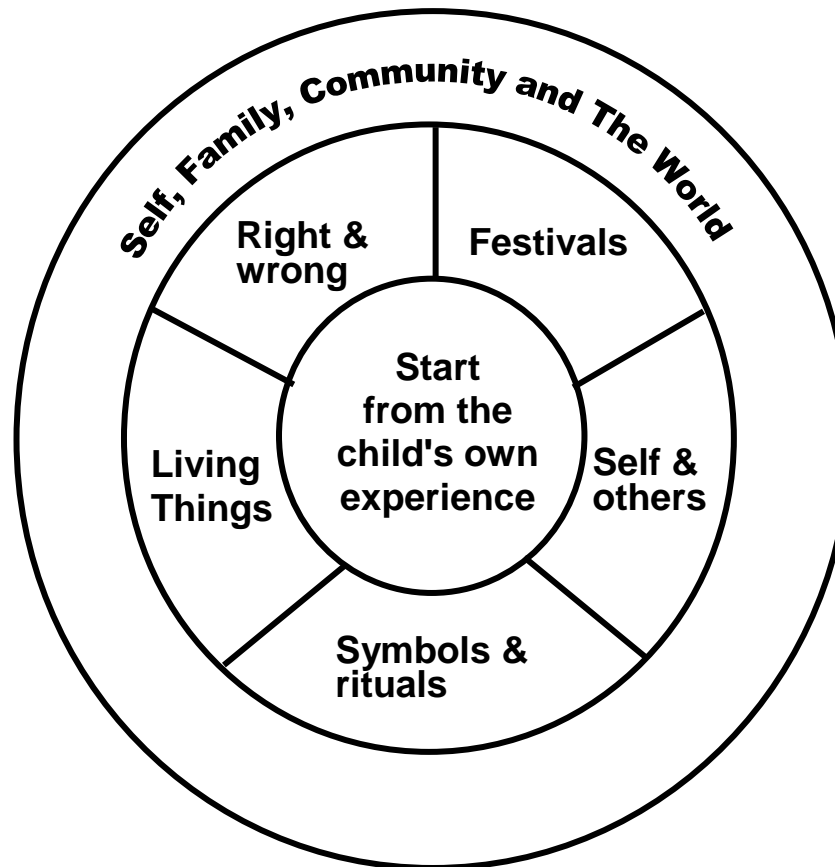
To help practitioners in their choice of stories to use for these religious education foundations for the EYFS, example booklists have been provided within this advice in order to support the development of the four aspects of personal development. The books on the booklists are not meant to be set texts and these are not exhaustive lists, they merely demonstrate a wide range of possibilities for development within some well-known texts. Practitioners will all have other favourites which they will wish to add or use instead to provide similarly useful opportunities.



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The Five Areas of Development

Practitioners need to ensure that they cater for all Five Areas across each year group in this stage.





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Festivals

Alongside the four other aspects of personal, social and emotional development referred to in this advice, practitioners will wish to make a focus on some festivals during the year. It is important to decide which festivals and which faiths and beliefs to include, taking into consideration the need for very young children to recognise their home backgrounds celebrated in their school environment. Therefore take those communities to which the children in the group belong as a starting point. Here are some principles that should be considered when selecting festivals to include:

- ◆ Be aware of the cultures, faiths and beliefs represented within your setting.
- ◆ Select a limited and balanced number of festivals over the year. This should be between 3 – 6 festivals per year.
- ◆ Plan festival focuses at the appropriate time of year to help children to make sense of their own experiences.
- ◆ Be clear about the faith or belief to which each festival belongs.
- ◆ Introduce the story attached to the festival at an appropriate level for the children.
- ◆ Enable children to appreciate that a festival is a celebration whilst ensuring that you do not give them or their carers the impression that they are being asked to participate at the level of a member of a faith community
- ◆ Be clear about what you want the children to gain from the experience - refer to Development Matters and the subsequent Early Learning Goals and EYFS Framework. Is this work relevant and meaningful?
- ◆ If you intend inviting children to share foods related to festivals take the opportunity to talk about any food restrictions and laws which relate to the faith concerned and ensure that you are aware of the food laws adhered to by members of the group so that you do not offend or confuse.
- ◆ The ways in which people celebrate the festival should be clearly referenced to the faith and cultural tradition - e.g. the making of Diwali cards should be an opportunity to investigate and use Indian or Hindu art and symbol.
- ◆ Be alert to the need to avoid racial, cultural and gender stereotyping.
- ◆ Where possible, involve members of the relevant community so that children realise the festival is really celebrated by real people.

Practitioners and community representatives should be careful that they are clear about the level at which they should approach these areas with young children. They should appreciate that involvement is not an opportunity to convert or engage children in activities more appropriate to members of the focus faith community.

A festival planner follows - this is to help practitioners to ensure that they have addressed all the necessary issues and help to provide some depth of experience. There is also a blank booklist for settings to complete with resources they find successful and relevant to them.



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Booklist: Festivals		
Title, Author, etc	What is it about?	Possible themes

Learning Together Through Faith and Beliefs

Festival planner: some things to consider	
Festival name and symbol	Faith/culture / belief group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Are there any members of this group in your setting?
When will I celebrate the festival?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ How does this fit into your planning over the year? ◆ It is important to focus on this festival at the relevant time of the year. 	
What will the children gain from this experience?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Make links to Development Matters, Early Learning Goals and EYFS Framework 	
Who from the learning community will be able to contribute? How?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Consider staff, children, parents/carers, community leaders. 	
What story and resources will I need?	Key vocabulary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider health and safety issues. ▪ Be clear about the story characters, locations and names of artefacts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The vocabulary will need to be accurate and appropriate to the children in your setting
What will happen?	What does it mean?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Key activities/experiences/opportunities/ dates/times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This might look at any symbolism or inner meanings that are appropriate
Things I have found useful for future planning	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information, resources etc. 	



Religious Education in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Self and others

Children should know and understand: about their own culture and beliefs and those of other people; that there are differences between people and that different does not mean better or worse

Expected Outcome	Look, listen and note	Examples of activities, opportunities and experiences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ To enable children to raise their self-esteem and value themselves ◆ For the children to develop sensitivity and respect towards others ◆ For the children to develop a sense of belonging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Developing a sense of what it is to be members of a variety of beliefs. ◆ Children can express their own beliefs comfortably in a supportive environment and where having beliefs is acceptable. ◆ Developing awareness and respect for the range of beliefs, traditions and customs in the group and the wider society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Role - play area reflects different cultures, beliefs and lifestyles through e.g. costumes, dress, decorations, dolls, utensils, musical instruments. ◆ Dual language songs/books available and used with a particular religious education aim, e.g. for raising self esteem through the celebration of personal language, faith, belief and culture, and raising awareness that there are different texts used in books. ◆ Displays reflecting a range of cultures and beliefs. ◆ Use of stories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ from a range of cultures/faith backgrounds ▪ to develop self-worth ▪ for a purpose behind the story either as a story demonstrating a culture/faith background or about a festival/celebration or containing concepts which may need to be developed such as the idea of a special place. ◆ Encouraging support from parents/carers from all faiths and cultures.

AREAS OF LEARNING LINKS: Three prime areas of learning; personal, social and emotional development, communication and language and physical development should be identified. Four specific areas in which the prime skills are applied: literacy, mathematics, expressive arts and design, and understanding the world.

How does this link with KS1 R.E?

- Understanding that religious belief is an important part of some people's lives
- Familiarity with dress, food, celebrations related to different faiths
- Understanding that books can be written in different languages as a foundation for studying holy books



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Example Booklist: self and others		
Title, Author, etc	What is it about?	Possible themes
<i>All the colours of the earth</i> by Sheila Hamanaka Published by Morrow 0-688-11131-9	Human diversity - glorying in the range of people in the world through its children.	Difference
<i>Amber's other grandparents</i> by Peter Bonnici Published by Bodley Head 0-370-30671-6	A little girl from a mixed race family meeting one set of grandparents for the first time.	Who am I? Families
<i>Jennifer has two daddies</i> by P. Galloway Published by Women's press 0-88961-095-9	A story about step-families and how a little girl comes to terms with understanding that both her fathers love her.	Families Relationships
<i>Clever Sticks</i> by Bernard Ashley Published by Collins	Human diversity - being clever	Individual worth
<i>Nothing</i> by Mick Inkpen Published by Hodder 0-340-65674-	A sense of belonging	Everyone is important
<i>Tell me again about the night I was born</i> by Jamie Lee Curtis, Scholastic 0-590-111477	Living in different family units – adoption	Families Relationships
<i>Loving</i> by Ann Morris Published by Mulberry Books 0 068811361 33	A book showing loving relationships around the world	Families World family
<i>The best loved bear</i> by Diana Noonan Published by Picture Hippo 0-590-55851-X £3.99	All the children bring their bears for the competition - which one will win?	Special things Love
<i>Something Else</i> by Kathryn Cave & Chris Riddell Puffin 0-14-054907-2	Being different and belonging.	Difference
<i>Amazing Grace</i> by Hoffman & Binch Frances Lincoln 0-7112-0699-6	Grace learns about challenging the barriers of difference	Gender, race



Religious Education in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Symbolism and rituals

Children should know and understand : the *symbolism and rituals* which are part of everyday life

Expected Outcomes	Look, listen and note	Examples of activities, opportunities and experiences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ To enable the children to understand and appreciate that there are a variety of ways in which people live their lives. ◆ To give children the opportunity to talk about why certain rituals are part of every day life and their values (e.g. washing hands before meals). ◆ To enable the children to share how they live their lives and to learn to accept that there are many ways in which life may be lived. ◆ To help the children learn that there are symbols which help people to lead their lives e.g. green and red men on the crossing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Children understand that some members of the group have rituals in their lives which have religious meaning. ◆ Children should see and understand that some symbols relate particularly to faith communities, e.g. outside a place of worship telling you the purpose of that building. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide opportunities to talk about everyday routines that we perform as individuals or in groups, e.g. bedtime rituals or family prayers. ◆ Provide photographs and symbols around the room to develop awareness that symbols convey meanings. ◆ Focus on rituals associated with festivals, including foods. ◆ Discuss preparation rituals necessary before different activities e.g. aprons on before sand/wet play. ◆ Share stories about getting ready for festivals/ family celebrations. ◆ Possibly visit a place of worship to find out about a faith/family ritual e.g. a wedding.

AREAS OF LEARNING LINKS: Three prime areas of learning; personal, social and emotional development, communication and language and physical development should be identified. Four specific areas in which the prime skills are applied: literacy, mathematics, expressive arts and design, and understanding the world.

How does this link with KS1 R.E?

- Rituals in religions, importance of 'being clean' before worship.
- Understanding that different religions have different rituals.
- Recognising that some practices are expressed differently in different religions, e.g. welcoming ceremonies.
- Understanding that religious symbols relate to different religions.



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Example Booklist: symbolism and rituals		
Title, Author, etc	What is it about?	Possible themes
<i>Welcoming babies</i> by M B Knight Published by Tilbury House 0-88448-123-9	How special babies are and how they are greeted cross the world and in different faiths	Special times
<i>The Red Woollen Blanket</i> by Bob Graham Published by Walker 0-7445-1132 1	The relationship between a little girl and her comforter.	Special things
<i>Chatting</i> by Shirley Hughes Published by Walker 0 7445 3248 5	Importance of bedtime ritual	Special times routines
<i>Rhymes around the day</i> by Jan Ormerod Published by Kestrel 0-7226 5808	The day told through rhyme and pictures	Everyday rituals
<i>Lights for Gita</i> by Rachna Gilmore Published by Second Story Press 0-929005-61-9	Gita celebrates her festival of light	Special times
<i>Can't You Sleep Little Bear?</i> by Martin Waddell Published by Walker 07445 1316 2	The baby bear's bedtime rituals	Special times in the day
<i>Peepo</i> by Janet & Allan Ahlberg Published by Picture Puffin 0-14-050384-6	Going through the baby's day	Routines
<i>Eat Up Gemma</i> by Sarah Hayes Published by Walker 07445-13228-6	Mealtimes when Gemma doesn't want to eat her dinner	Routines
<i>Lucy's Sunday</i> by Margaret Barratt Published by Heinemann 0 435 30401 1	How Lucy and her family spend every Sunday	Special times



Religious Education in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Living things

Children should know and understand: *the significance of living things*

Expected Outcomes	Look, listen and note	Examples of activities, opportunities and experiences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ To encourage children to learn about their world. ◆ To help the children develop a sense of the pattern in nature. ◆ Children to further develop knowledge and understanding of living things and have the opportunity to look closely at similarities, differences, pattern & change. ◆ For the children to develop a caring and responsible attitude to living things. ◆ Children to be provided with opportunities to experience awe & wonder. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Children to begin to reflect on attitudes to life, living things and the world. ◆ Children begin to become aware of the cycle of life and death. ◆ Children respond to significant experiences, showing a range of feelings. ◆ Children develop caring attitudes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide a range of natural objects reflecting seasonal and growth changes, life and death. ◆ Create opportunities to plant, observe and care for living things. ◆ Organise visits to school grounds, parks gardens, farms etc. ◆ Display attractive posters and books. ◆ Use natural things in the classroom wherever possible. ◆ Tell stories relating to care of pets, plants and the natural world.

AREAS OF LEARNING LINKS: Three prime areas of learning; personal, social and emotional development, communication and language and physical development should be identified. Four specific areas in which the prime skills are applied: literacy, mathematics, expressive arts and design, and understanding the world.

How does this link with KS1 R.E?

- KS1 work on Faith beliefs about respect for nature and all life.
- Beliefs regarding the creation of the world.



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Example Booklist: living things

Title, Author, etc	What is it about?	Possible themes
<i>God's world makes me feel so little</i> by Helen Caswell Published by Scripture Union 0-86201-501-4	Tiny Creatures	Wonder of the world
<i>The world that Jack built</i> by Ruth Brown Published by Anderson Press 0-86264-269-8	Pollution	Caring for the world
<i>Dogger</i> by Shirley Hughes Published by Picture Lion 0 00 661464 7	Dave loses Dogger - his favourite toy. How will he cope?	Loss Sacrifice
<i>Leaving Mrs. Ellis</i> by C. Robinson Published by Bodley Head 0-370-31856-0	Anxieties about moving on from a well-known teacher	Loss Special people
<i>Come back Grandma</i> by Sue Limb Published by Bodley Head 0-370-31807-2	How much Grandma is missed and the links of family relationships	Loss Special people
<i>I'll always love you</i> by Hans Wilhelm Published by Hodder & Stoughton 0-340-401532	How much a relationship continues to matter after a bereavement.	Special relationships Loss
<i>In the small, small pond</i> by Denise Fleming Published by Red Fox 0 09 943181 5	A small pond but very busy	Diversity of nature
<i>The very worried sparrow</i> by Meryl Doney Published by Scripture Union 0 7459 23445	The sparrow worries about so many things and then discovers that God has been looking after everything all the time.	Everything in nature is important
<i>The very hungry caterpillar</i> by Eric Carle Published by Puffin 0 14 050087 1	The miracle of growth and change	Changes
<i>Lucy's Rabbit</i> by Jennifer Northway Published by Picture Hippo 0-590-13546-5	Looking after a Rabbit	Caring for animals



Religious Education in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Right and wrong, fairness and justice

Children should know and understand: about *right and wrong and fairness and justice*

Expected outcomes	Look, listen and note	Examples of activities, opportunities and experiences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ To encourage children to understand that there need for agreed values and codes of behaviour for groups of people. ◆ To encourage the development of appropriate behaviour patterns. ◆ To encourage self-discipline. ◆ To help children to explore and express their feelings and interact positively with each other. ◆ For the children to foster the development of a sense of responsibility. ◆ To help children to realise the effect of their words and actions on themselves and others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Children develop respect for themselves and each other. ◆ Developing respect for each other's property e.g. by discussion about looking after equipment and reasons why ◆ Children will begin to learn about different rules e.g. faith rules ◆ Children to begin to find out how faith communities work. ◆ Children to develop positive attitudes towards faith rules e.g. those about food laws or faith dress conventions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Create opportunities for sharing and taking turns e.g. in games or on outside equipment. ◆ When playing games, encouraging an understanding that they won't always win. ◆ Provide adult intervention to encourage a sense of responsibility by challenging, praising, rewarding and reminding about behaviour. ◆ Verbalise everyday rules e.g. 'their turn now' to establish reasons for behaviour. ◆ Encouraging children to say sorry when necessary and to accept apologies from others readily. ◆ At festival times share foods appropriate to the faith and talk about those foods that are not permitted. ◆ Try on religious dress items (e.g. prayer hats) and talk about why they are worn.

AREAS OF LEARNING LINKS: 1 prime - Personal, Social and Emotional Development; 1 specific - Understanding of the World

How does this link with KS1 R.E?

- Understanding that communities have rules and that when rules are broken you make yourself and other people unhappy.
- Early knowledge of some faith rules e.g. do not steal.



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Example Booklist: right and wrong, fairness and justice		
Title, Author, etc	What is it about?	Possible themes
<i>The Lost Sheep</i> by Butterworth & Inkpen Published by Harper Collins 0-55-102873-4	Story told by Jesus as a parable. A shepherd loses a sheep and searches everywhere until he finds it.	Everyone's important Lost & found
<i>Jamaica's Find</i> by Juanita Havill Published by Little, Mammoth 0-7497-0190-0	A little girl finds a toy and is uncertain what to do next.	Ownership Selflessness
<i>Janine and the new baby</i> by Iolette Thomas Published by Andre Deutsch 0 233 97916-6	Preparation for a new baby and then visiting it when it arrives.)belonging)Families,)Relationships)Feeling left out
<i>Will there be a lap for me?</i> by D. Corey Published by 0807591106	Anxieties before the new baby arrives	
<i>Bad tempered Ladybird</i> by Eric Carle Pub. by Picture Puffin 0-14-050398-6	A ladybird's experiences as he learns to share.	Sharing Keeping your temper
<i>Titch</i> by Pat Hutchings Published by Puffin 0-14-050096-0	Titch learns that everyone is equally important.	Fairness and justice
<i>Angry Arthur</i> , by H Oram Published by Red Fox 0-992-9001-4	Arthur has to learn what is acceptable behaviour.	Right and wrong
<i>Little red hen</i> , by G. Rose Published by C.U.P. 0-521-47606-2	The hen's request for help is ignored and what happens next.	Fairness
<i>This is the Bear</i> by S. Hayes & H. Craig Published by Walker Books 0-7445-3621-9	How the bear suffers because of the bad behaviour of the dog.	Consequences of your actions
<i>Guess how much I love you</i> by Sam McBratney Published by Walker 0-7445-3224-8	Expressing feelings positively	Families
<i>When the Teddy Bears came to stay</i> by Martin Waddell Published by Walker Books 0-7445-4763-6	Have the new baby and all the teddies given as presents taken over mum and dad?	Families Relationships



Religious Education in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Appendix: Examples from the Non-Statutory National Framework for religious education that link to this guidance adapted to match the latest EYFS advice:

Prime areas of learning in the EYFS: Personal, social and emotional development

Examples of religious education–related experiences and opportunities

- Children use some stories from religious traditions as a stimulus to reflect on their feelings and experiences and explore them in various ways.
- Using a story as a stimulus, children reflect on the words and actions of characters and decide what they would have done in a similar situation. They learn about the story and its meanings through activity and play.
- Using role-play as a stimulus, children talk about some of the ways that people show love and concern for others and why this is important.
- Children think about issues of right and wrong and how humans help one another.

Example of an activity

In the context of a learning theme to do with ‘growing’ or ‘the natural world’, children encounter the parable of the mustard seed. They look at and talk about some tiny seeds and the teacher tells the parable, putting it into context as a story Jesus told. The teacher emphasises how, in the story, the tree that grew from the little seed became a safe home for birds. Children talk about what helps them to feel safe. They take a walk to look at trees and touch trees and think about how they should look after them. They plant, grow and take care of vegetables, plants and flowers they have grown from a seed.

They talk about what it would be like to fly up into the branches. They explore ways of moving and respond to music, growing like a seed. They produce shared or independent writing on what they would like to grow into. They discuss what happens as they grow and observe changes in their body over time. Through these experiences children become more aware of themselves, for example of the concepts ‘I am growing’, ‘I need to feel safe’. They respond to the significant experiences of exploring a story and wonder at the growth of seeds. They learn to understand their responsibility to the natural world and begin to consider beliefs about Jesus.



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Prime Area (EYFS): communication and language and Specific Area: literacy

Examples of religious education–related experiences and opportunities

- Children have opportunities to respond creatively, imaginatively and meaningfully to memorable experiences.
- Using a religious celebration as a stimulus, children talk about the special events associated with the celebration.
- Through artefacts, stories and music, children learn about important religious celebrations.

Example of an activity

In the context of a learning theme to do with ‘books’ or ‘favourite stories’, children look at a child’s Haggadah and are encouraged to ask questions about it. They are told that the book belongs to a Jewish child who is celebrating Passover. The story of Passover is briefly told. Children are invited to think about their favourite books. The teacher talks about the child learning Hebrew and having an important job to do at the celebration meal. Children think about where and how they learn and how it feels to do something really well. They learn the words ‘Jewish’ and ‘Hebrew’. They use language in role-playing a family meal. They look at and talk about a variety of dual-language books, share other old stories from both oral and written traditions and make a class book based on a favourite story or a celebration they have shared. A questions board is set up for children to record any questions that come into their heads. Through these experiences, they learn about the importance of story and sacred texts in religion, develop respect for the beliefs and values of others and extend their vocabulary.



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Specific Area (EYFS); Understanding of the world

Examples of religious education–related experiences and opportunities

- Children ask and answer questions about religion and culture, as they occur naturally within their everyday experiences.
- Children visit places of worship.
- They listen to and respond to a wide range of religious and ethnic groups.
- They handle artefacts with curiosity and respect.
- Having visited a local place of worship, children learn new words associated with the place, showing respect.

Example of an activity

In the context of a learning theme to do with ‘buildings’ or ‘special places’, children are shown a selection of pictures. They then learn about three different places where children go with their families to worship God: a church, the Golden Temple and a mosque.

Children are invited to talk about the pictures of places of worship, looking for common and distinctive features. They talk about somewhere they have been that they will remember. They go out and photograph significant places (and people) in the local area and display their pictures in school. They visit a place of worship and record what they see. They talk about building materials and how they are used. They look at patterns *and create buildings with construction resources*. They sort collections of and talk about photographs of buildings and they compare buildings in their local environment and far away, talking particularly about the local church, the Golden Temple and the mosque.

Through these experiences, children learn about the importance of places of worship, relating this to their own special places. They begin to be aware of their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people.



Religious Education in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Specific Area (EYFS); Expressive arts and design

Examples of religious education–related experiences and opportunities

- Using religious artefacts as a stimulus, children think about and express meanings associated with the artefact.
- Children share their own experiences and feelings and those of others, and are supported in reflecting on them.

Example of an activity

In the context of a learning theme to do with ‘water’, ‘journeys’ or ‘the natural world’, children look at a sealed pot that has water from the Ganges river inside it.

Once they know that the pot contains water, they are encouraged to imagine a wide, flowing river. They look at photographs or videos of rivers and waterfalls and talk about how water moves. They hear the story of the birth of the river Ganges (regarded by Hindus as sacred). The teacher emphasises that it is a story that helps some people imagine what God might be like. They look at photographs of Hindus bathing in the Ganges and talk about why the river is important to them. They are invited to think about their ideas about Heaven. In response to the story, they explore water through play, create rivers on the ground by pouring water and following the direction of the flow. They create a great river collage, using a variety of media. They explore different long flowing marks they can make with watery paint. They make a river dance, using lengths of coloured fabric and accompany it with percussion music.

Through these experiences, children develop their imagination through a variety of creative and expressive arts. They begin to think about the importance of water as a symbol in religion and why some people regard particular places as sacred.