

Refreshing Your RE Curriculum

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1. Welcome

2. Introductions brenda.lord@virgin.net dana.hanesova@umb.sk www.soulspace1014.com

Who are we?

Brenda:

I have been teaching since the 1970's.

I ran the History department in a Christian boarding school from 1978 – 86. I also taught RE.

It was a traditional Christian school although many of the pupils came from non-Christian homes.

In more recent years I have done a range of youth work within churches. This means that I am familiar with church youth curricula. Youth work has given me more of an insight into the needs of our young people. I am currently part of an [REinspired team](#) that helps with RE lessons in schools in our local area in the UK.

I have seen many changes over the years in styles of curriculum. When I began we did not have a written curriculum. Now we have an overload of detail and targets.

Dana: is an Associate Professor of Education in Slovakia. She trains teachers and is involved with the Narnia School in Banská Bystrica. <http://www.dedm.org/doc-paeddr-dana-hanesova-phd/>

We have been friends since 1989. We have worked on several projects together including one on this area of curriculum. The fact that it was a cross-cultural exercise was very beneficial to both of us.

Our aims today

To share some insights from our study

To help you step back and review your RE curriculum and teaching.

To hear from you about your situation and to see if there are ways in which we can help each other.

The first part of the PowerPoint gives an overview of curriculum and points to be considered in writing one. The second part focuses on some practical suggestions. Part 3 has information concerning extra details that there is time to cover during a workshop.

Your situation

Where do you teach/manage?

- Christian school with only Christian students
- Christian school with many Christians but also some/many non-Christians
- Christian type school but mostly non-Christians
- State school
- Church group

What age range do you teach?

Do you have a written curriculum at present?

No: Would one be helpful?

Yes: Can you identify anything about it that you are not happy with?

How much control are you able to exercise over your curriculum?

3. Pace of change

We will not be suggesting that you change everything about what you do. Change needs to be managed carefully to avoid burn-out unless God is clearly guiding otherwise.

But we will imagine what it would be like to step back and take a fresh look at what a Christian RE curriculum might look like. Our hope is that you might be able to take away just one idea that will help you to refresh what you are doing.

4. Jesus our role model

Enjoyment

An old school friend came to visit me recently. She commented – they have taken all the enjoyment out of education. I used to enjoy Geography field courses when I was at school but when my son went on one; the first thing the teacher said was ‘You are not here to enjoy yourselves.’

Likewise, my son’s school followed a GCSE course that seemed to me to be a very good one with many topics that I would include with a church youth group. However when I bought the books for the course, they were dull and boring! It was very disappointing.

As Clarendon was a strong Christian boarding school, my top aim was that they **enjoy** the lessons. I wanted them to see the Bible as a book which they may want to read again when they were older. If children are not enjoying a subject, they will not learn much. They also need a positive relationship with their teacher.

Jesus as a teacher was

- Interesting & Humorous: He is our role model. Let them enjoy the subject. Teach them something they don’t know. Take a different approach to the one they expect.
- Good planner: Jesus (and his Father) had planned his visit to earth very carefully. Yet he also adapted his responses to those around him. Just because he was Jesus did not mean that when he woke up every day and had his time with God, that he knew everything that would happen that day. When he was on his way to heal Jairus’ daughter, he had an unexpected interruption but he responded to that in a positive way. He was flexible.
- Challenging: He made people think. Some followers left him because of this. He sometimes gave different answers to people to the same question e.g. ‘What must I do to inherit eternal life?’
- Relevant: His examples were from everyday life and everyday situation. Look at your student’s questions and the issues they face.

5. Structure

What do these 2 monuments have in common? (Images of the Eiffel Tower and the Statue of Liberty)

Both were designed by Gustave Eiffel who was a bridge builder and who knew the importance of allowing room for movement within a large structure. The Statue of Liberty moves! This makes it stronger. If these monuments were rigid, they would not withstand strong winds. A curriculum needs a good structure but should not be so tightly packed that there is no room to make adjustments e.g. can put it on hold to cover a serious issue.

6. Overview

Last year a delegate told me that although they teach RE in her school, they do not really have a curriculum. This is how it was when I started teaching. Most of it was in our hearts and minds. In

some ways this was good and it encouraged creativity. In other ways it would have been helpful to have had a little more written down. To be clear about the overall aims and objectives of our curriculum can help us to assess if it is meeting the needs of our students.

7. Why?

Why do you teach RE?

Even if you feel it is obvious it can be very helpful to write this down.

There is a wide range of possible reasons; both Christian ones and educational ones including many that satisfy school inspectors. (See slide 46 or the appendix)

Which aims do you want to focus on **at present**?

Be selective. You can't do everything. Maybe some of you need to lighten your load here.

"Let us strip off every weight that slows us down and keep our eyes on Jesus." Hebrews 12:1-2

Before we start to draw up a programme, it is essential to stop to consider the question '**Who are we teaching?**'

8. Who?

Children are not adults!

When I was training, a teacher told me that the lessons she prepared in the holidays were not as good as those which she prepared in term time because "even in that short time I forget what they can and cannot do".

Mistakes are made in both directions. Some targets aim too high for an age group, others too low.

9. Children are

When we plan a curriculum we must keep a careful eye on the needs and developmental level of each age group across every area of their lives. Dana and I began by writing a brief summary on Child Development. This is available on the web site on the 'Training' page. Please note that we did this quickly as a general guide. It is not an all-inclusive piece of work.

Children are:

- Physical beings
- Spiritual beings
- Emotional beings
- Social beings
- Intellectual beings

10. What Questions are Children Asking?

Do you listen well so that you know which questions your children are really asking?

Our church youth worker went to the Democratic Republic of Congo for a year to work with street children. On his return he gave a presentation to the church about his work there. He was careful not to go into too much detail about some aspects and left people to fill in the gaps themselves.

At the end the first question was from an 11 year old boy who asked "Did any of the things you saw and heard about, cause you to question your faith in God?"

Wow! All the adults were astonished at the depth of the question from someone so young.

Children are asking different questions today. They also get upset by some of the stories in the Bible in a way that did not happen before.

11. What Questions are Teenagers Asking?

One of the lessons that the REinspired team do in schools is 'Difficult Questions'. The team leader asks the teacher to collect questions from the students beforehand. This makes it easier to prepare an appropriate lesson. There is not time to cover these questions in any depth of course but it shows that Christians are prepared to face up to such questions and also to admit that they sometimes struggle with some of these questions themselves e.g. suffering.

Last November we took this lesson to a year group of about 200 students aged 12-13. We were able to summarise their questions into a list of about 27 which were divided into 4 groups for 4 different activities. See slides 40-45 for details.

The main themes that occurred were:

- Suffering
- Life after death
- The universe: how was it made; are we alone?
- Purpose of life

12. What Issues & Challenges are Children Facing?

- Fear
- Guilt
- Insecurity
- Weak self-image
- Identify
- Anger

There are many more and we could be more specific here but these are the top ones overall.

13. What? Many approaches to RE

There have been many approaches to RE, especially in the UK where it is a statutory subject. Over the last few decades it has been on something of a journey there.

- Traditional: Journey through the Bible, alternating Old & New Testaments
- Faith and moral issues
- Faith + different aspects of life
- Faith + contemporary issues
- Interfaith
- Beliefs and values
- Philosophy of RE

Sometimes as teachers, we can focus too much on the academic side of our subject. This is not helped by the demands of government and education authorities. Even as Christians, we have been good at focusing too much at times on Bible knowledge.

Likewise, to give them an overview of the whole Bible is good but not at the expense of overlooking other areas of need. We are not there as History teachers.

Church programmes often focus on stories for younger children and move on to topics for older ones but they often don't mix the two.

[What sort of curriculum do you have at present?](#)

[Do you use a fairly traditional one based on Bible stories?](#)

[Do you include other topics?](#)

14. What?

Areas you may wish to include in a curriculum

1. All key Bible stories
2. Doctrines (creed / catechism)
3. Questions that children ask
4. Issues that children face e.g. fear, self-image
5. Church History
6. Contemporary topics e.g. euthanasia, evolution
7. Other major religions

Dana and I made lists of every area and topic that we might want to include in a curriculum and put them on the walls. This is a summary. We wanted to combine most of the topics with Bible stories as far as possible. There were just a few areas which might require going beyond Biblical text in some ways. We had very interesting cross-cultural discussions over whether to include Church History and other major religions. We will return to those in a minute. Let's look at the key areas of our beings that we identified earlier.

15. RE can be holistic

The Bible is designed to bless every aspect of our lives.

We felt strongly that it would be possible to combine most of the topics we wanted to include with Bible stories. We therefore set about arranging the main content into the 4 main groups that reflect our all-round needs

- Intellectual = apologetics & doctrine
- Spiritual
- Emotional = pastoral
- Lifestyle = how to treat others

Even physical needs are addressed in the Bible such as the hygiene laws which were centuries ahead of scientific research.

My child, pay attention to what I say. Listen carefully to my words. Don't lose sight of them. Let them penetrate deep into your heart, for they bring life to those who find them, and healing to their whole body.
Proverbs 4:20-22

16. Great commandment slide

It was at this point that we realised that what had emerged in front of us was nothing less than the Great Commandment. It was one of those 'wow' moments.

And it then seemed so obvious. **The Great Commandment is at the heart of the whole Bible. Of course our curriculum should be centred around it.**

I want to focus on these for the second part of the workshop. First, we will take a very quick look at the areas which might require going beyond the Bible text in some ways.

17. Plus

Do we just teach from the Bible or do we sometimes look at other areas but from a Christian perspective?

- Contemporary issues e.g. medical ethics
- Church history: Denominations & Christian heroes
- Other religions

18. Church History

Every culture has its' Christian heroes. And heroes make good role models for young people. It can also be helpful to give some explanation about why there has been division within the church and how God is working to bring people back together.

Which heroes would you pick from your own culture and from the international scene?

19. Contemporary Issues

We need to remember current issues such as medical ethics. Sometimes we may be able to link them to our Bible-based programme and sometimes we may need to add some extra sessions.

20. Other Religions

Do you teach about other faiths in your school? If so how much?

Christian schools have been slow to include other faiths in their RE curriculum. Yet it is part of 'loving our neighbour'. To love our neighbour we need to understand them better. If we are to have an attitude towards those of other faiths that is pleasing to God, then surely we need some understanding of those faiths.

21. Should we study them?

No

- We don't need to as we don't have anyone from other religions in our country.
- Our students might become confused in their own beliefs.

Yes

- To understand and love our neighbour better
- To promote respect and understanding for those of different faiths, especially Islam at this time.

22. How?

At what age do you think children may be ready to be introduced to other faiths?

How much detail / time on each?

I think we would agree that we want to establish a strong Christian foundation with younger children first. Bible stories such as the Good Samaritan, Ruth, & Naaman can be used to encourage a tolerant attitude towards those of other faiths.

In the UK, where children look at several religions each year from the age of 5, it has been found that they cannot distinguish between different faiths.

We suggest allocating one major religion each year. Keep to a few main points. Not too much, not too little.

Content could include:

Foundation / History; Key figures; Main beliefs & writings; Main duties & festivals; Main differences & similarities with us

23. Our attitude:

The first Christian booklet that I ever read about other faiths was so negative and judgemental that I felt it had been written in entirely the wrong spirit.

- Study other faiths in a spirit of love not criticism.
- Look for both the similarities and the differences. There is some truth in all.

- To compare Christianity with other faiths can help Christians to better understand their own beliefs. It encourages you to take a closer look at what you believe.
- See what you can learn from other faiths. E.g. The Hindus & Buddhists may have much to teach many Christians about why our pace of life is keeping us from the peace of God.

One good introduction for teachers is 'So What's the Difference?' by Fritz Ridenour

We could learn much from Revd. Andrew White, known as '**The Vicar of Baghdad**'¹. He is a very committed Christian with a traditional faith who has an amazing ministry in the Middle East working at promoting understanding and peace between different faiths. He knows many religious leaders, including those from Islam, Judaism, the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church, whom he respects and regards as friends. Here are some quotes from his book that there was not time to read in the workshop.

¹**Page 14:** Whilst Andrew was studying theology at Cambridge the CU organised a mission and decided to invite evangelists from 'Jews for Jesus'. This upset many of the practising Jews who were also friends of Andrew so he was asked to intervene.

"I told my fellow Christians that trying to persuade people to change their religion is a very dangerous undertaking, but in any event it can be done only if you form a relationship with them."

After the mission the Jewish and Christian students set up a joint society.

¹**Page 138-9:** "Some of the people I trust most are Muslims – including those who translate for me now at church services... They are ardently opposed to all forms of violence, but they are also extremely serious about their faith and their commitment to serving God. I have to say that I have more in common with them than I do with many of my so-called Christian colleagues.

If we genuinely want to resolve the very real problems between the West and the Islamic world, we need to begin by using the right language... We need to truly respect Islam, which means having regard for those Muslims who are serious about their faith. In my experience, most Muslims are tolerant and ready to work with others, but they want other people to respect them, and even to be willing to learn from them. Indeed, it may well be that the West – and even the church – has a lot to learn from Islam... We need people in this field to be orthodox in their faith and committed. That is what Muslims expect all Christians to be."

24. A new look at old stories

Santa is stuck in the chimney! How often do you go to church and the preacher starts to talk about a Bible story and you know what he is going to say? We can get 'stuck in a rut' with Bible stories giving the same teaching aim that we were given when we were young. Yet the Bible is so rich that there are many ways in which a story can help people.

1. A few years ago I had 2 teenagers in my group who were adopted. This led me to think about the issues that many children face if adopted, fostered or have significant family problems.

Ishmael: how often do we hear that Abraham's faith wavered and the result was Ishmael! What does that say about Ishmael? Was he just one of Abraham's mistakes? Should he never have been born? God allowed Ishmael to be born. God blessed Ishmael (as indeed Abraham prayed that he would). God made Ishmael the father of 12 tribes! At Abraham's funeral, there was Isaac and there was Ishmael. One of Isaac's sons married one of Ishmael's daughters. There was reconciliation but it took time and there was rejection first. The story of Ishmael is so rich is what it can teach us.

2. I once met a **single parent** who seemed to have a hostile attitude towards Christianity and I wondered why. Such people often feel that the church would be judgemental. What is there in the Bible to encourage single parents and their children? Well, God through Solomon showed compassion to the single mothers who were arguing over the baby. These women were prostitutes and therefore living outside of the Israelite theocracy but they were treated just the same way as any other woman would have been. (Of course we would not use the word prostitute with younger children but we can still make a good point.)

3. We must remember that it was not inevitable that people like David and Joseph would do the right thing just because they are Bible heroes. When David and his men were hiding in the back of the cave and Saul came in to 'go to the bathroom', on a scale of 1-5, how tempted do you think David was to kill Saul? David has done so much for Saul and Saul had treated him so very badly. He had every reason to feel angry and resentful. So did many of his men – who were in the back of the cave willing him to kill the man.

4. Joseph had suffered a great deal. Then life changed and all was well but when his brothers appeared in Egypt to buy food, all the pain came rushing back. Forgiving them was not going to be easy. It would take time. Some of his behaviour towards them is quite erratic at times. He was in emotional turmoil. Then there is that amazing moment when Judah stepped forward and offered to give his life in place of his brother Benjamin. This is the first time in the Bible that anyone had done this. Judah – who was the ancestor of Jesus, behaved in this situation in a Christ like way. And I think that it was in that moment that Joseph was finally able to forgive them completely.

5. All children/teens have difficulties with parents sometimes. It is comforting for them to realise that even Jesus was not part of a perfect family and experienced misunderstandings with his parents.

6. There is so much to learn from the story of Adam and Eve e.g. the origin of Fear; the fact that we are made in the image of God.

25. Lifestyle / Loving other people

We are quite good at teaching this on the whole.

Ten Commandments – how to treat God & others

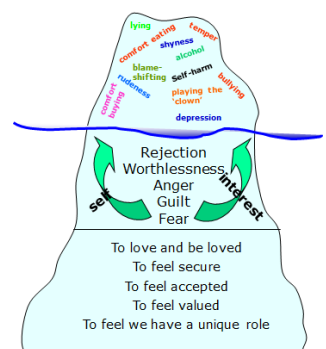
How can we vary the approach? The Ten Commandments were given to adults not just to children. Older children appreciate seeing how something such as honouring parents changes during the different stages of life.

Don't just tell them not to lie, look into why people lie and the consequences

Yet relationship problems are one of our biggest challenges.

How can we help them to understand people better?

Behind the masks. We all wear masks but behind them we hide the same emotions – fear, guilt, doubt.



26. Pastoral / Emotional Literacy

What are our main emotional needs?

How can we meet these in a Biblical way?

- To love & be loved
- Security
- Self-worth
- Significance
- Identity & belonging

Problem areas:

- Fear
- Guilt
- Anger

God created us with certain needs including the emotional ones listed here. When Adam and Eve turned away from God, they suddenly found themselves facing some powerful negative emotions - particularly fear, guilt and anger. They still had the same basic needs but the new emotions seriously disrupted the ways in which God has arranged for these needs to be met.

Ever since, people have used a wide range of unhelpful - negative, behaviours and activities in their attempts to feel secure, loved and valued.

I use notes from Christian counselling courses to write lessons on these topics for young people.

27. Pastoral / Emotional Literacy

Emotional literacy is a term that is now being used in some places. It means to understand your emotions and how to handle them. There is a Family Links article on the training page of the web site if you require more information.

There is much talk about self-image and self-worth these days. We need to look at these in a balanced Biblical way. Human beings are made in the image of God, but also from the 'dust' of the earth. We often do wrong but we are always treasured as priceless by God.

- Self-image / God's Image
- Is My Self-Image Built On Sand?
- Dealing with Fear
- Battle for the Mind

If we can help children to ground their self-image in the fact that they are made in the image of God, this will give them a strong foundation to their lives. The world encourages us to base it on the sandcastles of personal appearance, skills, popularity and possessions. These just get washed away in time.

For younger children the 'Inside Out' film can be used as a focus for teaching material on emotions. 'Children's Ministry' have written some teaching material but it is expensive. If you take a look at their web site, there is a short summary and you can then use the basic ideas to write your own material.

<http://www.childrens-ministry-deals.com/products/emotions-5-week-childrens-ministry-curriculum>

The video clips are free for those who are able to use such technology.

<http://www.thehelpfulcounselor.com/20-inside-out-clips-to-help-teach-children-about-feelings/>

Cavan Wood has written a book of lessons called 'Emotionally Intelligent RE: Learning about Our Emotions from Bible Stories'. He believes we need to pay more attention to emotions and mental states. "Self-understanding or 'emotional intelligence'—whichever phrase you use—has never been more urgently needed than today."

28. Spiritual

We teach **about** spiritual matters. Can we also help their spiritual development?

Mostly this is difficult to do within the classroom.

- Are there any opportunities outside the classroom?
- Prayer spaces

Has anyone ever set up a creative prayer space in either a school or a church?

The idea is to help people connect directly with God

These have been very successful in state school as well as churches. There are some very helpful web sites to help here.

<http://www.prayerspacesinschools.com>

[How to Set Up a Prayer Space](#)

[24-7 Prayer International | Origins: Youth Prayer Course](#) - This is a very good course on prayer

29. Apologetics and Doctrine

Traditionally we are good at teaching doctrine but do you include apologetics?

Do you assume that all your students believe in:

- God
- The resurrection
- The authority of the Bible...?

Even with a Christian group I have found that they appreciate considering questions such as 'Does God exist?' We should not assume that they believe everything without questioning just because they come from a Christian family. Apologetics will equip them to better understand, retain and share their faith. Even with younger children we can include reasons covering why we are confident about truths such as the resurrection.

30. Different Christian viewpoints

Fact = Christians hold different beliefs over certain key issues

How do we feel about this?

What attitude do we hold/encourage towards Christians with whom we disagree?

How do you deal with controversial issues e.g. evolution where there is still fierce debate.

Do you present one view point or several?

What questions may they face after they leave school?

Romans 15:7 - Accept each other just as Christ has accepted us so that God will be given glory

31. RE-inspired call my bluff cards

This is an example from a game we play in an ecumenical session in schools.

In our REinspired team we have people with different views on this. Some student's/ teachers find this helpful. Many are surprised that some Christians do believe in evolution.

32. What do Christians believe about Evolution?

1. God made everything instantly. Nothing evolved.
2. There was evolution within species e.g. the first dogs had the gene pool for every type of dog
3. Unsure. God created everything somehow. Author Kevin Logan² calls this 'reverent agnosticism'
4. God triggered evolution from one species to another at various stages of creation. He created Man separately.
5. Everything evolved. Adam & Eve were not real people. It's just a spiritual story.

²Responding to the Challenge of Evolution: by Kevin Logan

In today's world, many Christians believe all of the above views.

It is important the older children understand that a person can be a Christian whatever they believe about something like evolution. None of us have the full and perfect truth. God will change our/their views on this as and when he wishes. It should not be a stumbling block for people coming to faith or in relationships between Christians. The Bible does not say that we can't become a Christian if we believe/don't believe in evolution for example.

33. Theme image / song

Spend some time with God and also with your team

What would you like to change about your RE curriculum this coming year?

Ask for a fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit for your work.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TdioQL3HWLM>

Links & Resources

Web sites

Subscription

<http://www.energize.uk.net/>

This is a web site from Urban Saints (formerly 'Crusaders') with a wide range of resources for many age groups. They offer a 30 day free trial and then you pay a subscription. I know many people who use these resources in their churches and like them.

Shops

<http://www.barnabasinchurches.org.uk/>

www.barnabusinschools.org.uk

<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/products/children-youth/>

<http://www.scriptureunion.org.uk/Shop/Childrensand youthwork>

<http://www.curbsproject.org.uk/>

Free

www.soulspace.com – includes plans and leaders' notes for some of the topics mentioned here

www.reinspired.org.uk

<http://www.max7.org/pt>

Facebook has a page called 'UK Apologetics' which has some good discussions and information.

Text books

Top educational publishers include:

Hodder: <http://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/Religious-Education-Philosophy>

Nelson Thornes – now part of Oxford University Press

<https://www.educationumbrella.com/nelson-thornes/nelson-thornes-religious-studies>

<https://global.oup.com/education/secondary/subjects/re/?region=uk>

Every UK GCSE curriculum now has books that are written by the examiners. The main examination boards are AQA and OCR. Their books can be found easily on Amazon as well as the web sites above.

Remember that Amazon provides customer reviews and used books. www.amazon.co.uk

Appendix

Why teach RE? Some educational reasons:

Skills: Enquiry; Reasoning; Interpretation; Empathy; Reflection; Evaluation; Analysis; Meditation

Attitudes: Tolerance; Open-mindedness; Appreciation; Self-worth; Morality; Curiosity; Respect; Fairness/justice; Commitment; A critical mind

Questions children ask

The numbered questions here appear in the book 'So, who is God?' by Robert Willoughby. Others were presented by our own groups.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Who is God? | 16. How does God keep us safe? |
| 2. Did God make the world? | 17. How big is God? |
| 3. How do you know God is really with you? | 18. Why did God make people? |
| 4. Why do bad things happen to good people? | 19. Does God like giving? |
| 5. Does God live in the sky? | 20. Can God make a stone so big he can't lift it? |
| 6. Would God forgive a murderer? | 21. Does God know everything? |
| 7. Is God a man? | 22. How do you know God is your friend? |
| 8. Where did God come from? | 23. Does God ever go to bed? |
| 9. Has God ever made a mistake? | 24. How old is God? |
| 10. Does God ever get cross? | 25. Are there 3 Gods or just one? |
| 11. What does God look like? | 26. Why do we have so many wars? |
| 12. What is God's real name? | 27. Is God in everything? |
| 13. How do you know you can trust God? | 28. How can God be a father? |
| 14. How can God hear everyone? | 29. Does God have feelings? |
| 15. Does God speak English? | 30. Does God like my pet rabbit? |

Questions from a Church youth group

Who goes to heaven?

Why should a bad Christian go to heaven when a good non-Christian won't?

Earning your way to heaven – is it selfish?

Do you still go to heaven if you backslide/rebel/go away from God – are you still a Christian?

Will my pet go to heaven?

What happens when we die?

Why do bad things happen to good people?

Why do we have so many wars?

What are the main differences between Christianity and the other Religions?

Do we pray to God the Father or Jesus?

What is the role of the Holy Spirit in prayer?

How do you know if God is speaking to you?

Top Spiritual Questions of Adults: UK survey in 2000

1. Destiny – what happens when we die?
2. Purpose – why are we here?
3. Universe – accident or design?
4. Is there a God?
5. What about the supernatural?
6. Why is there so much suffering?

Year 8 (age 12-13) Difficult Questions List
Bulmershe School UK, November 2015

REinspired is an organisation that enables teams of ecumenical Christians to support RE lessons in state schools. The aim is to help them understand what Christians believe and support the Christianity part of the RE curriculum.

One of these lessons is on the theme 'difficult questions'. The team leader prepares for the lesson beforehand by asking the teachers to collect questions from the students. Below are the main questions that we covered with one year group in November 2015. The students came from a range of faiths and none.

1. If God is real and supposed to be good, then how come so many bad things happen in our world today?
2. Why do bad things always happen to good people?
3. Where was God on 9/11?
4. Why does violence exist?

5. Will the universe ever end?
6. Is God real?
7. Do spirits exist?

8. Do Christians believe in the Big Bang Theory?
9. Did God make the world in 6 days?
10. Do Christians believe in evolution?
11. Did humans evolve from apes?
12. What is the reason for us living/existing?

13. Are we alone in the universe?
14. Are there other universes and if so do they have their own God?
15. Which religion is real? Why can't we just have one?

16. What do Christians believe happens after you die?
17. Will people go to heaven if they commit suicide?
18. Is heaven actually real as there is no proof it exists?

19. Why do some people think they are better than you?
20. Do all humans have emotions and how do we know that we're human?
21. Why does God not speak to us?

22. If Jesus is the Son of God, who is God's wife?
23. When Jesus was buried after he died, how come he came back to life?

24. Is the weather God's emotions?
25. Is it ever acceptable to murder a wanted murderer?
26. Is animal testing right?
27. Was Hitler a good person?

Emotionally Intelligent RE: Learning About Our Emotions from Bible Stories

by Cavan Wood

[Emotionally Intelligent RE: Learning About Our Emotions from Bible Stories](http://www.barnabasinschools.org.uk/pdfs/9781841016177.pdf)
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Introduction

Why do we teach RE?

There have been many different reasons given in the last few decades.

- In the 1940s and 1950s, it was to help children understand their faith - which was assumed to be Christian.
- In the 1960s, there was an increasing emphasis on moral problems.
- The 1970s and the 1980s saw a desire to pursue multi-faith teaching.
- By the 1990s, RE was no longer confessional but assumed multi-faith, no faith or some faith. Many people were retreating from the ideas of phenomenology (the study of religion by concentrating on the experiences and rituals that religious believers have) and began to be interested in the philosophy of religion.
- With the emphasis on 'learning about' and 'learning from' that developed in the late 1990s, RE teachers began to realise that something needed to be done to make bridges with children who were highly secular in their outlook. Some attention has been paid to emotions and mental states, but I think we need to do more. Self-understanding or 'emotional intelligence'— whichever phrase you use—has never been more urgently needed than today. The ancient Greek oracle at Delphi told people, 'Know yourself', but we can often be far from that knowledge in our world today.

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