

Unit 1B What does it mean to belong in Christianity?

ABOUT THE UNIT

In this unit children draw upon their own understanding of belonging, and then relate this to what Christians from different traditions understand about belonging. They look at what Jesus taught about children, and how the church welcomes children into its family. They think about how people show they belong and what is special about belonging.

WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

The concepts within this unit could be applied across religious traditions. This unit builds on unit RB 'Who were the friends of Jesus?' Also see the generic unit 1A 'What does it mean to belong?'

PRIOR LEARNING

It is helpful if children have:

- had previous opportunities to discuss and think about the idea of belonging

VOCABULARY

In this unit children will have an opportunity to use words and phrases related to:

- religion, eg *God, belonging, commitment*
- Christianity, eg *Jesus, baptism, christening, cross*

RESOURCES

- a baptism candle
- a photograph of a font
- a photograph or video of baptism by immersion
- a version of Matthew 6¹³⁻¹⁷; the story in the Bible of the baptism of Jesus, which contains language that is suitable for this age group
- some examples of baptism cards
- a cross on a chain, fish badge
- prepared worksheets
- use of painting facilities and a sand pit

EXPECTATIONS

At the end of this unit

most children will:

retell what happens at baptism services (for infants and adult believers), giving a simple explanation of some of the symbolism; reflect on their own understanding of belonging; talk about what belonging means to Christians from different traditions

some children will not have made so much progress and will:

recall the main features of a baptism service; describe simply their own experiences of belonging

some children will have progressed further and will:

explain the symbolism involved in baptism services, and the reasons why Christians have these services; make connections between their own experience and the Christian beliefs about belonging

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

POINTS TO NOTE

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

CHILDREN

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BELONG?

- about ways in which they belong
 - about how belonging is expressed and shown
 - the concept of belonging to their families
 - that religious people have ways of showing how they belong together
- Talk about belonging to the class, school, clubs and their families to 'unpack' the word 'belonging'. Ask the children to discuss how they show that they belong to these different groups.
 - Ask the children to identify a badge or uniform they wear which shows that they belong.
 - Using a word bank, ask the children to complete a worksheet saying who they belong to. The children could illustrate one example of who they belong to, *eg by drawing a badge*.
 - Talk about belonging to a family in more detail. Ask the children to complete a pre-drawn family tree. They could add on other people who are important to them in their lives. Talk again about what they do to be part of their family.
 - Introduce the idea that people who believe in God belong to a family too – a religious family. Explain that they do things together to show that they belong.

- write about what they belong to
- identify ways in which they show belonging
- draw on their own experience to identify what is involved in belonging to a family
- suggest ways in which members of a religious family might show they belong together

- The word 'family' is used here in its broadest sense, so that it includes all children.
- There are opportunities to explore emblems and badges that the children are familiar with, *eg school badge, town or village sign, Beavers, Rainbows*.
- This lesson could be used to create a class display showing ways in which they belong. Other display materials about 'belonging' could be added over the course of the term.
- The family tree can be tailored to suit the backgrounds of the children in the class. This activity will need to be treated sensitively.

A SIGN OF BELONGING

- to understand that there are a number of religions in the world
 - to understand that religious people feel they belong to a faith
 - about examples of how Christians belong to Christianity
 - to illustrate a sign of belonging
- Recall, from the end of the last lesson, the idea of a religious family and how members do things and wear things to show that they belong.
 - Do a class audit of the children's faiths. If relevant, ask them to explain to the rest of the class what they and their families do and wear to show that they belong to a religious family.
 - Investigate using books, videos or pictures what people do in one religion to show that they belong, *eg wear a cross or fish badge to show they belong to a church*.
 - Ask the children to complete some sentences on what they have discovered about the different things Christians wear and do. They could overwrite the given part of the sentence. Ask them to draw one thing that is worn by Christians, and write a sentence describing what the object is.

- know that religious people belong to a faith
- write about how Christians belong to Christianity
- identify an example of something that is worn by a Christian to show that they belong

- In Christianity, denominations have their own initiation ceremony for infants:
 - Catholic – christening/baptism
 - Church of England – christening/baptism
 - Baptist – dedication
 - House church – dedication
- Note that the Church of England and Catholic churches use similar services of baptism for both infants and adults.

HOW DO CHILDREN BELONG IN CHRISTIANITY?

- that some Christians baptise babies
 - about the symbolism of the cross and the candle used in baptism
 - that baptism is a sign of welcoming into the Church
 - to reflect on the way their families welcome babies
- Either take children to look at the font in a local church or show them a photograph of one. After exploring what a font is, show them what happens at a baptism.
 - Talk about the symbolism of the cross that is made on a baby's head in the context of welcoming a child into the family of God in the church. Ask them what the cross symbolises.
 - Invite children who have personal experience of going to baptisms to talk about them.
 - Explore the importance of naming and the term 'Christian' name.
 - Show children a baptismal candle and talk about what it might symbolise. Children could make a font and 'roll' candles.
 - Tell children that baptism is the way that some Christians welcome babies into Jesus' family. Invite the children to talk about how their own families welcome babies.

- identify baptism as an important Christian practice
- identify some of the symbols used in baptism
- describe some of the practices associated with baptism
- identify their family traditions regarding babies

- Teachers could invite a member of the clergy to demonstrate the 'baptism' of a doll.
- Baptism cards usually refer to the child passing from darkness into light, and to their belonging to Christ.

WHY DO CHRISTIANS BAPTISE?

- the story of Jesus' baptism
 - why the story is important to Christians
 - to understand the link between this story and the baptism they have seen enacted
 - how it might feel to be given an important job to do
- Invite children to remind each other about the discussions of the previous lesson. Ask them why they think some people want to have their babies baptised.
 - Tell the story of John the Baptist inviting people into the River Jordan for baptism to show that they were turning away from their old lives and beginning a new life; emphasise the symbolism of water.
 - Complete the story with the baptism of Jesus, exploring John's feelings about being asked to baptise Jesus. Invite children to talk about how it would feel to be asked to do something really important.
 - Talk about why this story is important to Christians and link it to the earlier work on infant baptism.
 - Invite pupils to make baptism cards for someone who's about to be baptised.

- know elements of the story of Jesus' baptism
- suggest reasons why the story is important to Christians
- make links between this story and the baptism of babies
- express their feelings about an important job

- The story is in the Bible in Matthew 6¹³⁻¹⁷.
- The baptism cards could be used in the role play area.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

POINTS TO NOTE

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

WHY DO SOME CHRISTIANS BAPTISE ADULTS?

- that some people make the choice to be baptised
 - that believers' baptism usually involves total immersion
 - about the symbolism of the water in baptism
- Show children a photograph or short video of baptism by total immersion and invite them to talk about what they can see. Encourage comments on the water and the 'bath', helping them to make links to earlier work.
 - Invite children to talk about how it feels to have their faces wet and ask them why they think anyone would want to go right into the water, until their face was covered. Draw out the idea that it must be something the person feels is really important.
 - Explain very simply what happens during baptism and explore through questions and discussion how the water symbolises a new start. Emphasise that this is the way that some people show they want to belong to Jesus.
 - Explore the links with Jesus' baptism in the river.

WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT BELONGING?

- how people belong to a religion
 - to reflect on ways in which they belong
 - what is special about belonging
 - about the idea of specialness
- Ask children in groups to sequence cards with sentences and pictures that describe how a child and an adult belong to a religion.
 - Ask the children to think about and discuss what is special about belonging to their family, club or school. Write up the answers they give so that everyone can see the collective response.
 - Fill in missing words in given sentences on the above. Then link to what is special about belonging to a religion for a believer. Use the sequencing cards as an aid. Ask children to complete the sentence, 'belonging to a religion is special to that person because...'
 - Ask the children to paint or draw a picture to illustrate their response.

CHILDREN

- recognise features of a believers' baptism and link them to the baptism of babies
- give simple explanations about why water is used in baptism

- know how people belong to a religion by sequencing cards
- identify where they belong
- identify what is special about belonging
- illustrate their idea of specialness

- Emphasise the element of choice and decision.
- Further links could be made by showing children photographs of baptisms in the River Jordan today.

- Some classes will need time to unpack the word 'special', before continuing with the rest of this lesson.
- In this sense belonging is not about ownership but implies contexts in which children feel included, *eg family, home, class, school, religious community*.
- The children's answers could be added to the display on ways in which they belong, along with their pictures of specialness.

FUTURE LEARNING

Children could go on to:

- explore in greater depth the concept of belonging in Christianity
- explore the concept of belonging in other religious traditions