

Unit 3E What is faith and what difference does it make?

ABOUT THE UNIT

This unit is designed to give children the opportunity to develop their ability to work in pairs and to share their own research and discuss the outcomes, in order to understand the impact of religious faith. Although this unit is based on Abraham it could be adapted for other religious figures, past and present.

WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

This unit builds on work done on Christianity covered in key stage 1. It also builds on unit 3D in year 3, 'What is the Bible and why is it important for Christians?'

PRIOR LEARNING

it is helpful if children have:

- experience of collaboration
- experience of working independently with support

VOCABULARY

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

- religion, eg *faith, God, promise, covenant*
- idols

RESOURCES

- a selection of appropriate source materials on a variety of individuals who have lived lives which exemplify their faith in God

EXPECTATIONS

At the end of this unit

most children will:

know about the life and faith of Abraham and one other person of faith, and evaluate their impact; understand something of the motivating potential of faith; reflect on the nature and expressions of faith; follow their own lines of enquiry, and respond appropriately

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

know something of the life and faith of Abraham and one other person; understand that they were motivated by faith; reflect on what faith inspired them to do

some children will have progressed further and will:

understand that faith has many expressions; explain the difference faith can make to a person's life

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

POINTS TO NOTE

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

CHILDREN

WHAT IS FAITH?

- the story of Abraham
- to understand what the word 'faith' means in a religious sense
- to reflect on the emotional impact of the story

- Tell the story of Abraham, the epitome of faithfulness, focusing on his response to God's promise on his great journey and his readiness to sacrifice his son Isaac. Discuss what made Abraham respond as he did. Invite children to work with the story in small groups, changing the storyteller in each group on a prearranged signal, retelling it orally to each other, in turns. Go on to explore the emotional implications through a 'hot-seating' activity.
- Tell Sarah's story. *How did Abraham depend on her to be able to carry out his faithfulness?*
- Invite children to talk about what they think 'faith' is and to make their own calligrams of the word.

- describe the key points of Abraham's life as expressions of his faith
- describe faith as a religious activity
- identify some of the characteristics of faithfulness

- The story of Abram, who became Abraham, is in Genesis 12–22.
- Group storytelling is an effective preparation for a drama activity.
- A calligram is the visual expression of a word which reflects its meaning.

WHERE IS FAITH?

- the story about Abraham from Midrash
- to understand why Abraham is revered in three world faiths
- to reflect on present day 'idols'
- to explore the characteristics of faithfulness
- to consider how writers use stories to teach particular ideas

- Recall the biblical story of Abraham and what it showed about faith. Remind children that Abraham is important in Judaism, Christianity and Islam and is thought of as the first person to believe in 'One God'.
- Tell the Jewish story of Abraham and the idols.
- Invite children to talk about where people put their faith today. Explore some of the current 'idols', recognising that faith in God is still very important for some people.
- Tell Hagar's story. Discuss: *Are faithful people always good?*
- Ask the children to suggest reasons why people still tell the story of Abraham. *What do you think the writers of these stories wanted to teach through the ways they told the stories?*
- Explain the plan for the rest of the unit and, using Abraham as an example, invite children to think about the questions they might pose to build up a profile on another person of faith.

- make links between three religious traditions' beliefs about Abraham
- compare their own and others' ideas about 'idols'
- explain the viewpoint of the writers of the stories about Abraham

- The story of Abraham and the idols is in Midrash.
- Retellings of this story and other stories about Abraham can be found in published collections of Jewish stories.
- It is important to note that idol worship is not part of the Jewish religion.
- Emphasise that faithful people, even in the Bible, are not always good and wise.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES FAITH MAKE?

- to plan an investigation
- about the impact of religious faith on the person being researched
- about the impact of faith in action on others/the world

- Begin by drawing up a collective list of questions to be used by children to support their investigations. This could be done by a class brainstorming activity or in stages, giving children time to generate questions first in pairs. Order the questions into categories covering biographical details, actions, the impact of faith on the person and the difference he or she made to the world.
- Use the information from the previous activity as a way of structuring the children's illustrated reports, which could be presented as epitaphs from a range of different perspectives, *eg friend, son, rabbi*.
- Give children a choice of subjects from a suggested list; supported by an appropriate range of source material. Pair children in either ability-matched or mixed ability partnerships depending on their needs and the support available.
- Talk about simple research skills. Give a time limit of three or four lessons, always beginning and ending lessons with discussions about plans and evaluations of progress. Refocus children where necessary by inviting them to share something they have discovered or that surprised them.
- Invite children who wish to do so to share their findings with the class. Display all the reports. Use them to refocus the discussion about faith and the difference it makes.
- Talk about the things that may not have happened if it had not been for the faith of the selected individuals.
- Invite children to talk about their responses to the stories of faith.

- prioritise the aspects of investigation and organise their own work in pairs
- ask questions about the experiences of others and draw conclusions about the impact of faith
- compare their own ideas about faith with those of others
- make an informed and considered response to the stories of faith

- The list could include other biblical figures, or people who have been inspired by faith and have made an impact on their world recently or long ago, *eg*:
 - *Simon Peter*
 - *St Helena*
 - *St Augustine*
 - *St Clare*
 - *Sir Thomas More*
 - *St Francis*
 - *Mother Julian of Norwich*
 - *Oliver Cromwell*
 - *Gandhi*
 - *John Bunyan*
 - *Corrie Ten Boom*
 - *Elizabeth Fry*
 - *Sojourner Truth*
 - *George Fox*
 - *Harriet Tubman*
 - *Gladys Aylward*
 - *from the Bible: Miriam, Esther, Huldah*
- There are many other examples, *eg someone in your local community*.

FUTURE LEARNING

Children could go on to:

- apply their investigative skills to research the lives and impact of men and women who have been motivated by faith in greater depth