

Unit 5D How do the beliefs of Christians influence their actions?

ABOUT THE UNIT

In this unit children gain a knowledge and understanding about Christian teaching on behaviour and action. They develop their understanding that Christians base their behaviour on the teaching of Jesus and the guidance of the church, and that this reflects their Christian beliefs. Through exploring some Christian teachings children develop their understanding that beliefs affect action and behaviour. They build upon their understanding of the links between their own attitudes and behaviour and religious values by developing their ability to ask questions about the basis for moral choices and decisions, and how Christian values may offer a basis for morality.

WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

This unit builds on all previous units on Christianity. It lays the foundation for further study of Christianity in key stage 3 and for all units which consider the impact of religious beliefs on actions, *eg unit 7E in year 7, 'What are we doing to the environment?'* Children studied parables and the use Jesus made of these stories to teach people in unit 2B, year 2, 'Why did Jesus tell stories?'

PRIOR LEARNING

It is helpful if children have:

- an understanding of how rules for living are developed
- an understanding of what influences moral values and choices

VOCABULARY

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

- moral choices, *eg right and wrong*
- Christianity, *eg Bible, New Testament, believe, love, neighbour, forgiveness*
- stories, *eg parable, symbol, meaning*

RESOURCES

- a Bible
- a traditional Russian tale, 'Papa Panov'
- materials from Christian organisations that help others, *eg Christian Aid, CAFOD, Tear Fund*

EXPECTATIONS

At the end of this unit

most children will:

begin to suggest what moral and religious implications may be involved in choices and decisions; suggest answers to moral questions and understand what might be regarded as right and wrong; recognise that Christians believe that their behaviour and the choices they make should be based upon their faith; begin to identify the key concept of love as being basic to Christian life

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

make a link between religious values and their own behaviour; compare their own and other people's ideas about moral questions and making choices; explain meanings contained in a religious story that might be given by believers

some children will have progressed further and will:

begin to recognise the basis of some of their own decisions and choices and compare this with the Christian view; express their own ideas and beliefs in relation to moral questions; describe the significance of Biblical teaching with regard to choices and behaviour

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

POINTS TO NOTE

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

CHILDREN

HOW SHOULD I LIVE?

- that we all make decisions about how we will live
- that we make our own choices based upon our beliefs and values
- that Jesus gave two sayings which Christians try to follow in life

- Read or tell a story that contains a moral dilemma, and which ends without a decision having been made. In pairs, ask the children to discuss what should be done in the story and then share their thoughts with the class. *How did you make up your mind about what to do? How did you reach a decision?* Divide the children into groups to discuss what they might base their decision upon and then share ideas with the class. Ask if there are any rules that they could follow to help them make up their mind. Introduce a belief about action related to the story: *If you shared this belief, how would it affect the choice you made?*
- In small groups discuss how the children reach decisions and make choices. *Do you have any rules that help you make up your mind about how to behave?* Talk about how Christians try to follow the example and teachings of Jesus.
- Provide copies of the two commandments in Leviticus and Deuteronomy endorsed by Jesus in Luke 10²⁷⁻²⁸. Ask the children to write the end of the story based upon the application of these two rules.

- identify the link between belief and action
- explain that we all make decisions based upon our own beliefs
- know the guidance Jesus gave for behaviour
- explain how Christians apply the teaching of Jesus in practical situations

- This introductory activity gives children the opportunity to begin to explore the basis for making decisions. By using a story in the first place children are removed from personal involvement, will feel free to discuss the actions of those within the story, and to make a decision based upon these.
- Working in pairs and small groups ensures that all children have the opportunity to engage with the tasks and make their own contribution.

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR?

- that Christians believe that all people are neighbours to be loved as they love themselves
- that stories can be used to teach something beyond their face value
- that religions could have something to teach them about how they should live

- Remind the children of the two commands of Jesus contained in Luke 10²⁷⁻²⁸. Working in small groups, ask the children to brainstorm an answer to the question *Who is my neighbour?* Share ideas as a class.
- Explain that you are going to look at a story Jesus told which is important to Christians. Using the Bible text read together Luke 10²⁹⁻³⁷. Explain that the traveller was Jewish. Stop reading after verse 31, and then again after verse 32, to explain that a Jewish priest and Levite were respectable religious people who worked in the Temple in Jerusalem. Ask the children what they think the crowd listening to Jesus would expect to happen, and why, when these people came along the road. In pairs, ask them to speculate about why they did not stop. Before beginning verse 33, explain that Jews and Samaritans were from different religious and racial groupings and would have had nothing to do with one another.
- *What do you think the crowd would expect when the Samaritan came along?* Arrange the children to work in pairs to discuss why the Samaritan helped the man. Ask the children their views on the answer to Jesus' question in verse 36.
- Discuss what Jesus meant by telling the teacher of the law to do as the Samaritan had done, and what this might include. In pairs, encourage the children to discuss why Jesus told a story instead of giving a straight answer, and how the story answered the lawyer's question.
- Discuss who might be a neighbour today, and what this story could teach Christians about their own behaviour. Discuss the idea that the 'hero' of the story is the despised and afflicted person.
- *Who is my neighbour?* Ask the children to answer this question, either in writing or by drawing a cartoon strip, putting their story in a modern setting.

- understand and explain the reasons why Christians try to see all people as neighbours
- demonstrate their knowledge that Christians believe they should show their love for all people in practical ways
- demonstrate their understanding that stories convey meanings beyond the literal

- The lesson gives the opportunity to explore the religious text. It also provides the opportunity to develop the idea of a parable as a story that can teach us something.
- Children can reflect on whether the ideas and principles apply to their own lives.
- Emphasise that in telling this story Jesus was showing that people could learn from the poor and despised.
- This activity can be linked to the teaching of Jesus about loving your enemies (Matthew 5).

HOW DO CHRISTIANS SERVE THEIR NEIGHBOUR?

- Show the class materials from Christian agencies that help others, eg *Christian Aid, CAFOD, Tear Fund*. Materials from local church magazines and notices can also be shown. Brainstorm why Christians are involved in this type of work, and keep a note of the children's responses.
- Read to the class the traditional Russian tale of Papa Panov, including the words of Christ in the vision, 'whatever you did for one of the least of these, you did for me'. Ask the children to read the story of the sheep and the goats from Matthew 25³¹⁻⁴⁰. In pairs, ask them to write down the similarities between the story of Jesus and the Russian tale. As a class, compare the similarities. Ask the children to work in pairs to decide what the words of Jesus in verse 40 mean. Refer to the Christian materials, and the results of the brainstorm to support this activity.
- Drawing on the biblical and other material used in this unit, ask the children to write an answer to the question, *Why and how do Christians help others?*

- give examples of ways in which Christians help others
- explain the link between the teaching of Jesus and Christian action
- suggest possible interpretations of biblical texts

- Teachers may wish to continue beyond Matthew 25⁴⁰. However, this section would need to be dealt with very carefully and sensitively as it raises many difficult questions and deals with difficult concepts.

WHAT DOES JESUS MEAN?

- that the teaching of Jesus can be applied to different life experiences
- that Christians believe they should treat others as they would want to be treated
- to apply a principle to solve a moral problem

- Show the command of Jesus in Luke 6³¹. As a class, consider what this statement means. In pairs or small groups, consider whether the rule is a good one to live by.
- As a class, discuss how it is different from 'do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you.' In small groups, consider how this command could help the world if everyone followed it.
- Divide the children into small groups to role play secular situations. As a class, share the role plays and discuss Christian solutions.

- explain the meaning of Luke 6³¹ and apply it in a contemporary situation
- evaluate underlying Christian moral principles

- The use of a secular situation gives the children the opportunity to apply a Christian principle to a moral problem. It enables them to understand that Christian principles can be seen to be practical in that they can be applied to situations and that they can result in improving the situation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

POINTS TO NOTE

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES	LEARNING OUTCOMES	POINTS TO NOTE
<p>CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN</p> <p>WHY SHOULD CHRISTIANS FORGIVE?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">that Jesus taught that people should forgive one another as an example of loving othersthat there are benefits to forgiving others as well as difficultieshow to use the Bible and explore meanings contained in stories <p>WHAT COULD THIS MEAN IN PRACTICE?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">that elements from within religion could be applied to situations they experience in their own lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">As a class, brainstorm the word forgiveness, giving examples.In pairs or small groups, ask the children to discuss times when they have been forgiven. Include how they felt before and after being forgiven. Ask them to consider whether some things are hard to forgive and why.Explore as a class the benefits of being forgiven. <i>What would happen if you were never forgiven?</i>Explore as a class the benefits of forgiving. <i>What is it that makes forgiving someone difficult? Is forgiving more difficult than holding a grudge? Can you forgive someone and still keep reminding them of their fault? Can punishment and forgiveness be linked? How should we seek forgiveness from another? How can we show that we forgive someone?</i>Introduce three examples of Christian teaching about forgiveness:<ul style="list-style-type: none">the story of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18²³⁻³⁵the Lord's prayer in Matthew 16the words of Jesus on the cross in Luke ('Father, forgive them ...')Drawing on the discussion and these examples explain how a Christian might try to think about someone who has treated them badly in particular situations. Use examples of people, eg <i>Mr Wilson in Enniskillen</i>.	<p>CHILDREN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">explain the concept of forgiveness and explain some of the benefits and difficulties involved in putting it into practiceuse the Bible and interpret examples of the teachings of Jesus about forgivenessdraw on their own experience of forgiveness to inform their understanding of the Christian view <ul style="list-style-type: none">discuss the difficulties of following a moral principlediscuss how to apply a moral principle to a 'real-life' situationuse role play to analyse the differences between two contrasting responses to a situationevaluate the impact of the two responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Forgiving others is an essential aspect of Christian ethics. Christians believe that to forgive is to reflect the loving nature of God and his reaction to human beings.To understand some of the difficulties involved in forgiveness and the benefits that can come from forgiving and being forgiven is an important element of understanding the Christian belief about God and his purpose for humankind.In the final activity teachers should be prepared to follow-up situations which the children have previously identified as hard to forgive. <ul style="list-style-type: none">This lesson gives the children the opportunity to apply some of what they have learnt in a 'real-life' situation. It takes the application of Christian moral principles out of the theoretical area of stories and words into how these principles may be applied in life.

FUTURE LEARNING

Children could go on to:

- study Christian practice in further depth
- ask questions about the nature of faith and how it informs what religious people believe and do

OUT-OF-SCHOOL LEARNING

Children could:

- visit a religious community and ask questions about their beliefs and practices
- find out about a charity in greater depth
- find examples from newspapers and television of current moral dilemmas