

# Unit 6C Why are sacred texts important?

## Generic

### ABOUT THE UNIT

In this unit children will find out about the importance and significance of sacred texts to believers. The unit can either be taught using the sacred text of a specific religion, or by comparing the texts of the religions studied in key stage 2. Children will use a variety of sources: written, visual and real people. They will use material taken directly from the sacred text and study its meaning and effect on the lives of believers. Children will discover the messages within sacred texts, and develop their understanding of this type of material and its effect on people's lives. They will have opportunities to think about the significance of important words in their own lives, which could provide opportunities for spiritual and moral development.

### WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

This unit builds on previous work done at key stage 2 in unit 3D in year 3 on the Bible, and on the units on belief and practice in year 1. It allows children to study in more detail issues that may have arisen in previous units, such as the year 5 unit 'Where did the Christian Bible come from?' The unit will prepare children for more evaluative work on texts and beliefs at key stage 3.

### VOCABULARY

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

- the treatment of sacred texts, eg *romallas, chauri, scroll, Ark*
- the content of sacred texts, eg *gospel, psalm, prophecy, Hadith, laws*
- the names of sacred texts, eg *Guru Granth Sahib, Qur'an, Vedas, Bible, Torah*

### RESOURCES

- pictures, copies or models of the sacred texts being explored
- contact with faith adherents who can come and visit and/or provide a series of quotes about the importance of sacred texts within their own life
- examples of the type of secular guidance for living that is given
- a selection of books, magazines, poems, song lyrics etc, which include words of meaning
- copies of stories that show how the sacred texts were revealed
- books, CD-ROMs and videos including information on sacred texts
- a suitable selection of parts of the sacred text to use directly with the children

### EXPECTATIONS

#### At the end of this unit

*most children will:*

express why certain words or books are important to them; describe and compare how and why texts are treated in special ways, and their significance to believers; ask questions about a story of the revelation of a sacred text; form questions and address them sensitively to a believer about the effect of sacred text in their lives; explain the connection between particular parts of sacred texts and the beliefs of that religious group; describe and explain one of the main messages of the sacred text being studied

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

know the name(s) of the sacred text and explain how it should be treated; suggest how a believer would act in a particular situation – showing that they have understood a specific quote from the sacred text being studied; explain why a particular book or words are important to them

*some children will have progressed further and will:*

explain how a person of a particular faith group may act when faced with a particular dilemma, using quotes from the sacred text in their explanation; form deeper questions to ask believers about the effect of a sacred text within their life; transfer their understanding of the significance of sacred texts of one faith to those of other faiths

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

## POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

## POINTS TO NOTE

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

CHILDREN

### WHAT ARE SACRED TEXTS?

- some of the different ways a secular book can be important as a source of guidance
- about some stories of how the sacred text being studied was revealed

- Discuss the type of book the children would like to have to provide guidance for them. *Where do you turn to for guidance? Study some of the secular types of support and guidance, eg magazines, television, older siblings.*
- Introduce some facts and history about the sacred text being studied, and show the children the text if possible. Tell stories, such as the revelation of the Qur'an to Muhammed ﷺ or Guru Gobind Singh announcing the Guru Granth Sahib. Ask children to work in groups to rewrite the story so it can be told and made significant to younger children. Ensure that the books created include questions that encourage the children to understand both the importance of the story and the holy book to which it relates.

- identify and express their views on secular sources of guidance and reassurance
- retell a story of the revelation of a scripture in a way that is accessible to younger children but still carries meaning

- A desktop publishing package could be used to create the story book. Concentrate on using ICT to support RE rather than ICT skills.
- Choose a class that is studying the same topic in key stage 1 to read the books to.

### HOW ARE SACRED TEXTS TREATED?

- what the word 'sacred' means
- about the way different books are treated and what this shows about the believer's view of them

- Revisit and explore the meaning of the word 'sacred'.
- Look at the scriptures to be studied with the children. *How are they treated? Does the difference in the amount of reverence shown mean that the sacred word is less important to some groups? Why not? Watch a video showing how a sacred text is treated, where and how it is kept and what it looks like. Ask the children to create a set of information cards for a new teacher, explaining how each text should be treated and why. These could then be placed with the school's artefacts or pictures of the sacred text.*
- Ask the children to draw on their understanding of the word 'sacred' and write an acrostic poem based on the word 'sacred'.

- explain what is meant by 'sacred'
- describe the way that the text is treated and the significance of this
- give reasons for the particular treatment of the text

- An acrostic is a poem based on a word in which the letters form the beginning of each line, eg  
S.....  
A.....  
C.....  
R.....  
E.....  
D.....

### WHAT ARE THE MAIN TEACHINGS OF THE TEXT?

- about the main teachings in a sacred text
- to understand ways of representing main teachings

- Identify any teachings and interesting stories that best illustrate the main teachings of the text to believers: *eg Exodus 20, the Ten Commandments given to Moses; Luke 10 and 27, the two most important commandments according to Jesus.*
- Ask the children to read extracts and explore artistic ways of representing these teachings which reflect what they know about the beliefs and practices of the religion being studied.

- talk about and explain the main teachings of the text being studied
- present extracts from sacred texts in forms appropriate to the tradition to which they belong

- Draw on material covered in previous units.

### HOW IS THE TEXT USED IN WORSHIP?

- about how a sacred text is used in worship

- Look at the way the sacred text is used in worship, where it is placed, and when it is used. Many of the major faiths have talks within worship which explain a piece of sacred text and help believers know how to live out that text in their everyday lives. Ask children to work in groups to write a talk based on a religious text that could be used with children and present it to the class.

- talk about and explain how a sacred text is used in worship

### HOW ARE THE TEXTS RELEVANT TO BELIEVERS?

- the meaning to believers of the messages in the sacred book

- Invite a believer in to discuss the meaning of the words within the sacred text, and how they have affected his/her life. Video clips or written words and CD-ROMs can also be used to support children's research.
- With the children, create a ranking diamond using different quotations suggesting why a particular sacred book is still significant today. Place the most significant reason at the top and the least significant at the base. Start a class discussion with the question, *Why is this sacred text important to believers?*
- Work in groups to plan and present a short play showing how the sacred text affects the life of modern believers, drawing on evidence from the discussion with a faith adherent and children's own research.

- devise relevant questions about the effect of the sacred text on a believer's life
- ask questions and receive a visitor respectfully
- explain the connection between particular religious beliefs and quotes from the sacred text

- Never ask children to represent God or Muhammad ﷺ in a pictorial form.

## **PRIOR LEARNING**

It is helpful if children have:

- learnt some stories from the religion(s) being studied, especially stories that relate to the key figure in the religion
- an understanding of some important beliefs of the faith being studied
- visited the place of worship and seen the place of the sacred text within worship
- had opportunities to develop the skills of reflection, application and interpretation in RE
- learnt how to use artefacts with respect and as a resource for learning

## **FUTURE LEARNING**

Children could go on to:

- study in further depth the significance of a sacred text to believers
- study how different traditions within a religion treat the sacred text, comparing and contrasting differences and similarities

## **OUT-OF-SCHOOL LEARNING**

Children could:

- find texts that are treated in a significant way at home and develop a set of guidelines for how to treat them
- collect examples of significant texts and quotes that are meaningful to themselves and to other people in their family