

Belonging and Believing:



Exploring the Lived Experience of Families from Eight Worldviews

The culmination of this three year project, working with eight wonderful families each of a different worldview, could not be more timely.

- The introduction of the new EYFS Framework for England, (September 2021) strengthens the place of religious education through the explicit reference to 'religious communities' within the ELG – People, Culture and Community.
- The September 2020 Development Matters document reiterates the importance of enabling children to understand and appreciate the significance of religion and worldviews within our society.
- The Commission on RE Report (2018) states that "in an increasingly diverse society, understanding religious and non-religious worldviews has never been more essential than it is now."
- The new curriculum for Wales (2022) revised legislation provides for all pupils from the age of 3 years to be legally entitled to education in religion, values and ethics.

This is all great news for the education of our children and supporting them to live in an ever increasing diverse and plural world.

So, the Books at Press publication - a set of beautifully produced hardback books for learners of all ages, is an essential resource to support understanding of the diversity of religion and worldviews. Each book focusses on a five year old child within the family and includes simple text and full page photographs to illustrate aspects of the child's and family's everyday life.

Families reflecting Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism, the Báhá'í faith, Islam and humanism are featured and reflect some lesser known traditions and expression of beliefs.

"It is fantastic to have a whole series of books about children from families with such a wide range of faiths and worldviews specifically aimed at children in Early Years. The range includes worldviews that are less well resourced and this makes this series particularly valuable not just for Early Years but for Key Stage 1 as well." Catriona Card EYFS Practitioner Lead and RE Subject Leader, Berkeley Primary School, Scunthorpe



Many of the pages also feature a key question to encourage readers to reflect more deeply on the concepts explored within the pages.

“The books are set out in a user friendly way, not too much text on each page when sharing with the children and questions to help them engage with the vocabulary and concepts covered. I really like the way that subject specific vocabulary, such as names of key figures and festivals is introduced in the text. This supports teachers in using the vocabulary in context.” Catriona Card

A beautifully illustrated ‘story’, within each book, provides the context for understanding the family’s beliefs and practices.



The stories are very simply written to explain hard concepts to the children and these can be used for discussion, role play, re-telling, puppet work etc. The inclusion of a story from each faith also helps to further the understanding of the beliefs.

These books are a great resource for the Early Years classroom. They are very clearly written and illustrated in ways that will appeal to very young children for example starting with the child and what they like to do. The books describe the ideas and beliefs of the children in clear and easy to understand words. The photos as illustrations, are a lovely way to show visually the children’s beliefs in action. Sally Giovanelli, EYFS Practitioner Lead. RE and Art Subject Leader at Danegrove School. East Barnet.

Parents/carers/students/teachers’ notes are included at the back of the book to give sufficient information to delve deeper, as required, for learners of different ages and abilities.

“The supporting information for teachers at the end of the book is comprehensive.” Catriona Card

Another key feature is the summary of each worldview written from the perspective of a five-year-old and verified by the parents. This, alongside a colour coded timeline of key figures makes a wonderfully informative double page spread.

“Through face to face encounters with children from different religions, the books are a high quality resource that ensure teachers have accurate knowledge of different faiths. Through these books, your class will be exploring and encountering different

faith values, feelings and ways of living in an age appropriate way. The books would engage children of any primary age in learning about the ideas, teachings, stories and practices.” Naomi Emison, EYFS Practitioner Lead, Reception teacher and RE Subject Leader at Mickle Trafford Village School, Chester.



It has been a privilege and a pleasure to be involved in the lives of these wonderful families, all of whom have embraced the project wholeheartedly. Each family has fully committed to ensuring that we have accurately reflected the reality of their particular expression of their beliefs. This is an exciting opportunity to acknowledge the diversity that exists within religious and non-religious traditions. These are real people with real lives. We have been welcomed into their homes and communities with amazing hospitality and kindness. Each family has shown a real willingness and enthusiasm to openly share aspects of their personal lives, to enable others to learn about their practices, values and beliefs. We have spent many hours talking, walking, laughing, learning, drinking, eating, playing, and sometimes praying with family members, and such is the reality of life, there has even been a few inevitable tears along the way!

“Because of the themes in these books such as belonging, helping, kindness etc., they can be used in lots of different ways in the classroom. They can be used to stimulate discussions about these ideas via photos and text. They can be used to introduce different themes to the class such as kindness and then followed up with a variety of practical activities in the classroom. They encourage lots of comparisons between the children’s lives and ideas. The books are a great addition to the Early Year’s RE book collection and also are a great resource for KS1 as well.” Sally Giovanelli

This new series is a fresh and much needed resource for teaching religion and worldviews. It has been produced specifically with 3 – 7 year olds in mind but is suitable for older learners also.

A wealth of support material is available free of charge to enable practitioners to make the most of the opportunities to utilise these resources fully, alongside the [EYFS curriculum for England](#) and the new [RVE curriculum for Wales](#).

For further details visit www.booksatpress.co.uk or contact gill@booksatpress.co.uk

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