

Optional KS2 Enquiry: Humanism - How could Humanists lead good lives?

This enquiry is designed to give a brief introduction to Humanism. This will ensure that children understand that everyone has beliefs and views about life and sometimes these are not connected to an organised religion, so might be called a worldview. This new 'Introduction to Humanism' enquiry introduces children to Humanism as a worldview. We have also added prompt boxes to some enquiries when we think the big question lends itself to adding a Humanist perspective. This is, of course, optional.

It should be made clear to children that Humanism is not a religion, and this could open the conversation about "What is a religion?".

Humanists try to live by the "Golden Rule" which is "Treat other people as you would like them to treat you". (This rule is found in most religions also.)

Humanism has been part of human thought for thousands of years. It holds, at its core, a belief in reason, questioning and science. Traditionally, societies based great emphasis in belief in one or many gods as a way of explaining that which could not easily be explained, for example where life came from and what might happen after death. Humanists approach life in a different way, focussing on human achievement, scientific discoveries and personal autonomy. Rather than learning from a sacred scripture, Humanists will use their Golden Rule as the basis for their approach to life, and look to learn from their own and others' life experiences in order to inform their decisions and actions. Because of a lack of belief in a life after death, Humanists would consider eternity in a very different way to a religious believer who considers that human death is not the end. To a Humanist, the impact you have had in this life is all that lives on, so e.g. Charles Darwin has left an eternal legacy in his work on evolution.

The enquiry considers how Humanists may live their lives based on the following key beliefs:

1. There is no evidence of a god – science gives many answers to things previously attributed to gods e.g. the formation of life
2. We have one life – we need to make the best of it
3. It is our responsibility to treat humans and other living things ethically, fairly and positively
4. We need to take personal responsibility for our actions
5. We have the potential to achieve great things which will benefit humanity and future generations
6. Humanists value freedom, empathy, reason and human rights
7. Humanists respect people's right to hold their own beliefs; however they are opposed to human rights being violated which can happen in some societies, some of which may be governed by religious law.



The 'Happy Human' is a symbol often associated with Humanism – it is designed to highlight the potential of humans and the ability to celebrate life and achievements which benefit humankind and other living things.

Humanists celebrate human achievements and believe that we all have talents which we should use to benefit others. Humanists now have non-religious ceremonies;

many countries legally recognise these (although not in all areas of the UK to date - 2020)
such as naming, weddings and celebrations of life.

For a large bank of resources check the Understanding Humanism education website
<https://humanism.org.uk/education/> produced by Humanists UK.