

'Beyond the binaries: beauty, breadth and depth in Islamic and non-religious worldviews

Adam Robertson, RE Today



CREative and REinspiring Annual RE Conference 2022

An inspiring day of RE CPD
'CREative and REinspiring RE Conference'
in conjunction with
Wiltshire, Dorset and BCP SACRES



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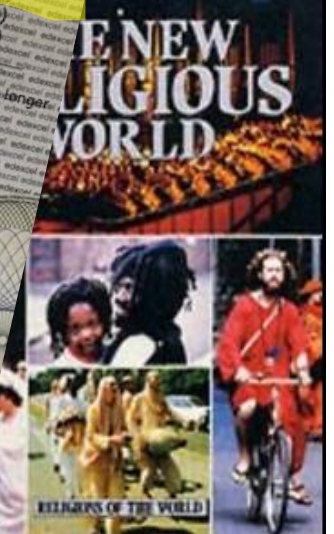
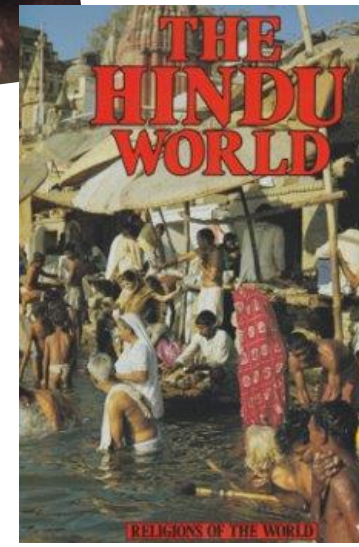
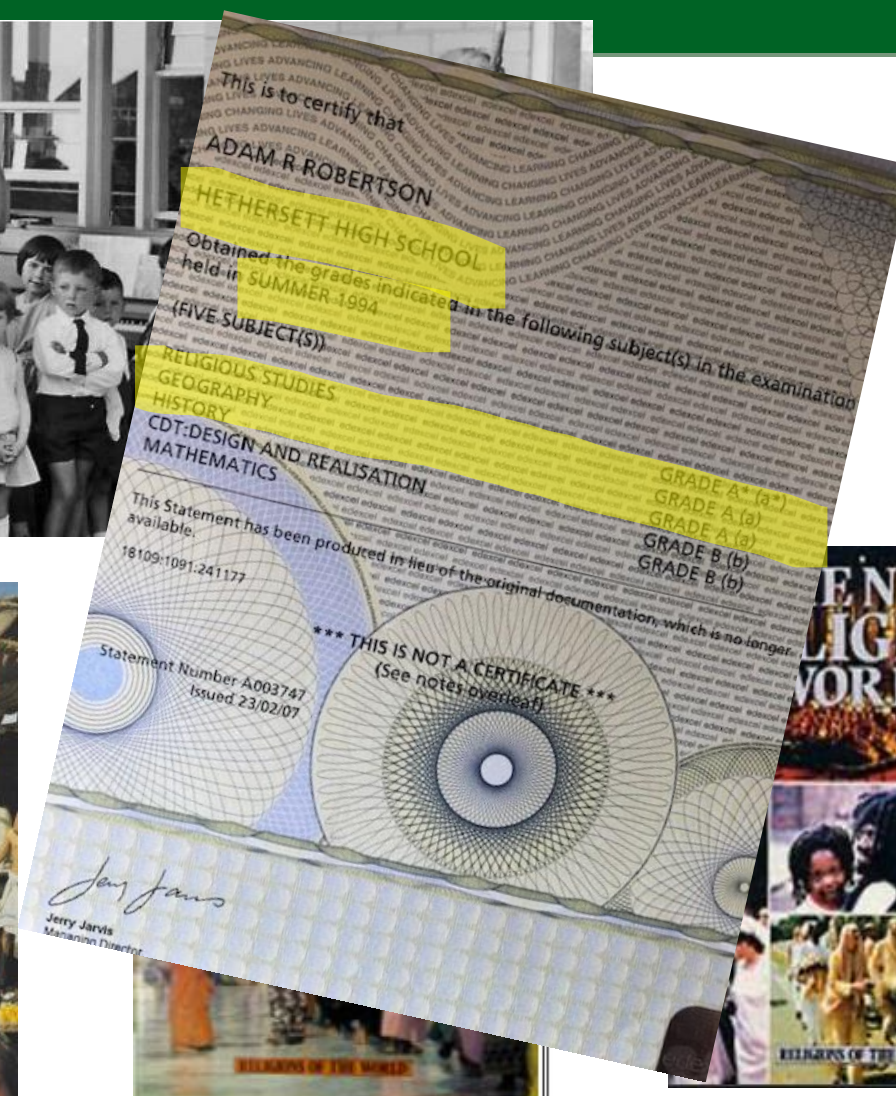
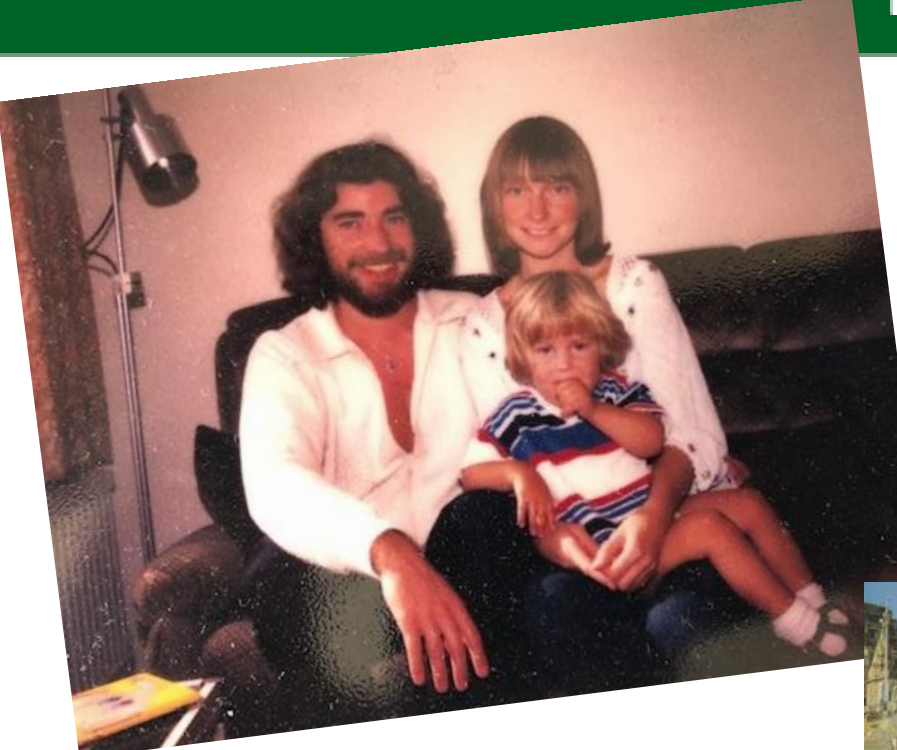
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What/where was your RE meet-cute?

**Put some
ideas into
the chat!**



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What is religion? ... depends on your etymology

- Religion from the Latin – ‘religio’

Religere: ‘yoke or bind’

Lactantius

Bond between human and
(Christian) God

Exclusive

Faith-centric

Divine

Relegere: ‘retrace’ or ‘reread’

Cicero

Following customs of community and family

Pluralistic – variation is normal

Ritualistic

Human

Source: Paul Hedges, 2021



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So What? 'Words, words, words...'

- 'Dharma': just duty?

'Not harming, truthfulness, remaining free from anger and charity... this is the Sanatana Dharma (Mahabharata 13.147.22)

'The Wise say that dharma is whatever is based on love for all beings. This is the characteristic mark that distinguishes dharma from adharma.' (Mahabharata 12.251.24)

Source: Dass/Sutton 2017



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So What? ‘Words, words, words...’

- ‘Deen’: religion or more?

‘This day I have perfected your *religion* (deen) for you, completed My favour to you. I have chosen *Islam* to be your *faith* (deen)’ (Sura 5:3)

This day I have perfected your *customs* (deen) for you, completed My favour to you. I have chosen *submission* (islam) to be your *behaviour* (deen)’ (Sura 5:3)

Source: Paul Hedges, 2021



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Beyond the Binary – Religion = belief

What do you think about this idea?

Sometimes the term ‘religion’ can be helpful or unhelpful!

Religion as ‘*epistemic placeholder*’ (Jeppe Sinding Jensen)



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Bringing in diversity of belief and non-belief from KS1

Key Stage 1 Theme: Believing Title: **What do some people believe about God?**

Religion and Worldview: Christianity and Non religious worldview

Learning Outcomes

- Talk about the ways in which a Christian/ or some Christians might describe God.
- Talk about how not everybody believes in God
- Ask puzzling questions

Can we, sometimes in RE, privilege religions and religious ways of thinking and being – by discussing non-religious as 'not' rather than 'for'?



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My name is Dexter and I am a **humanist**. This means I follow Humanism. I have a **non-religious worldview**.

I believe that human life is special and **valuable**.

I think that we are very lucky to be alive. I think we should try to be happy and make others happy.

I don't believe in God. I think we should use our intelligence (**reason**) to work out what to do in life.



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Put some ideas into the chat!



I love the Ice in the Forest story. It help me to think about how to think to make the best choices.

What do you think the hidden meaning of the starfish story might be?



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Could you make a 'hidden meaning' box to show your interpretations of these stories?



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Bringing in diversity of belief and non-belief from KS1

Key Stage 1 Unit 2 Theme: Believing

Title: The beginning of the world: what can we tell from the stories people tell ?

Religion and Worldview: Jewish / Christian and non religious world view.

Learning Outcomes

- Re-tell a story that most Jewish and Christian people tell about how the world was made
- Talk about how this story might help people think about God and creation
- Retell the scientific story of the Big Bang that may be told by many people
- Describe how some Jewish people have a weekly day of rest (Shabbat- as God rested)
- Communicate your own beliefs and feelings about the world and how it might have come to be.

Can we, sometimes in RE, not show that there is awe, poetry and beauty in scientific explanations of the universe as well as factual knowledge?

Discovery RE Year 1 Does God want Christians to look after the world ?" Is Shabbat important to Jewish children?"



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Bringing in diversity of belief and non-belief from KS1

KS1 <i>Exploring</i>	KS2 <i>Connecting</i>	KS3 <i>Applying</i>
<p>Believing What do some people believe about God?</p> <p>The beginning of the world: what can we learn from special Christian and Jewish stories?</p> <p>Why is God important for Muslims?</p>	<p>Beliefs and questions What do different people believe God is like?</p> <p>What matters to Christians about Easter?</p>	<p>Beliefs and concepts (choose at least four questions) Is there a God? What and why do people believe? Death: is it the end? Does it matter? Is there a purpose to life? Does life have meaning? Why is there suffering? Was Jesus God on earth? What does the Holocaust teach us about a Jewish way of life and about human nature?</p> <p>Religion and science What can science and religion tell us about the universe, world and life?</p>



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Addressing potential misconceptions

**What percentage of
Christians believe the
world was created in 6
days:
take a **Literal account**
of the Creation story?**



**Ideas in the
chat!**



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Addressing potential misconceptions

A [YouGov poll](#), commissioned by Newman University in Birmingham, has found that 72% of atheists polled believe that someone who is religious would not accept evolutionary science. In fact, only 19% of religious respondents in the poll rejected Darwinian thinking in favour of a literal reading of the Book of Genesis.

According to the research, nearly two-thirds of Britons - as well as nearly three-quarters of atheists - think Christians have to accept the assertion in Genesis that God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. But just 16% of believers accept the creation myth - according to which, in the words of the questionnaire, “humans and other living things were created by God and have always existed in their current form”. Only 9% of all Britons reject evolutionary theory.

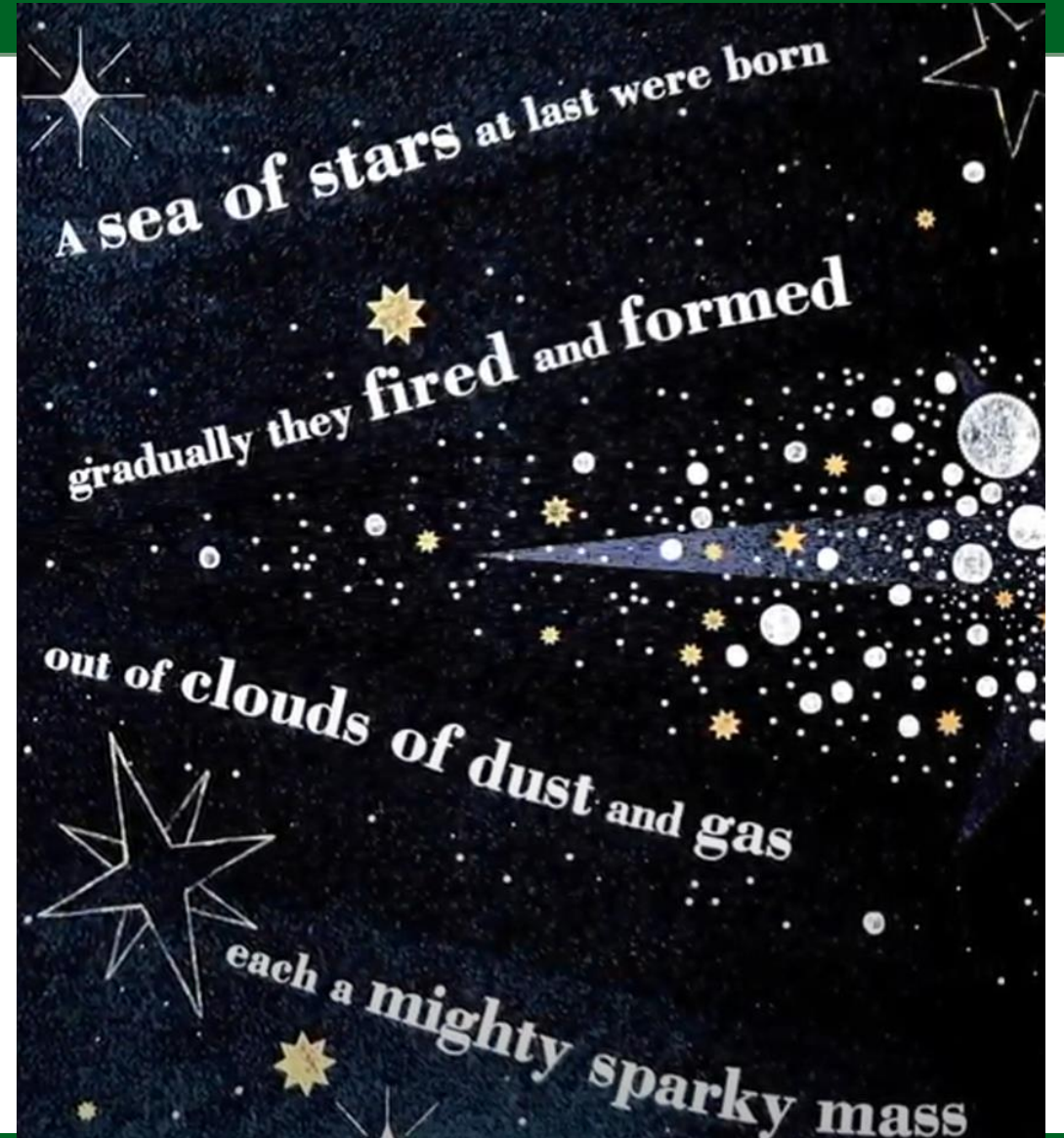
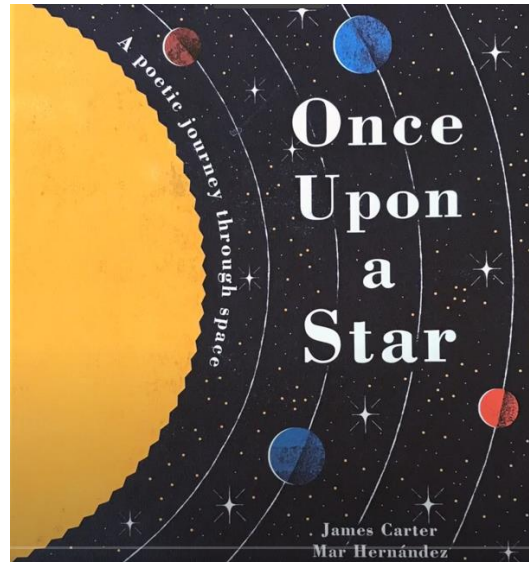


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[\(109\) Once Upon a Star by James Carter - Children's Story Read Aloud by This Little Piggy - YouTube](#)

Privilege story:

Show the **innate beauty** of a scientific explanation for origins of the universe



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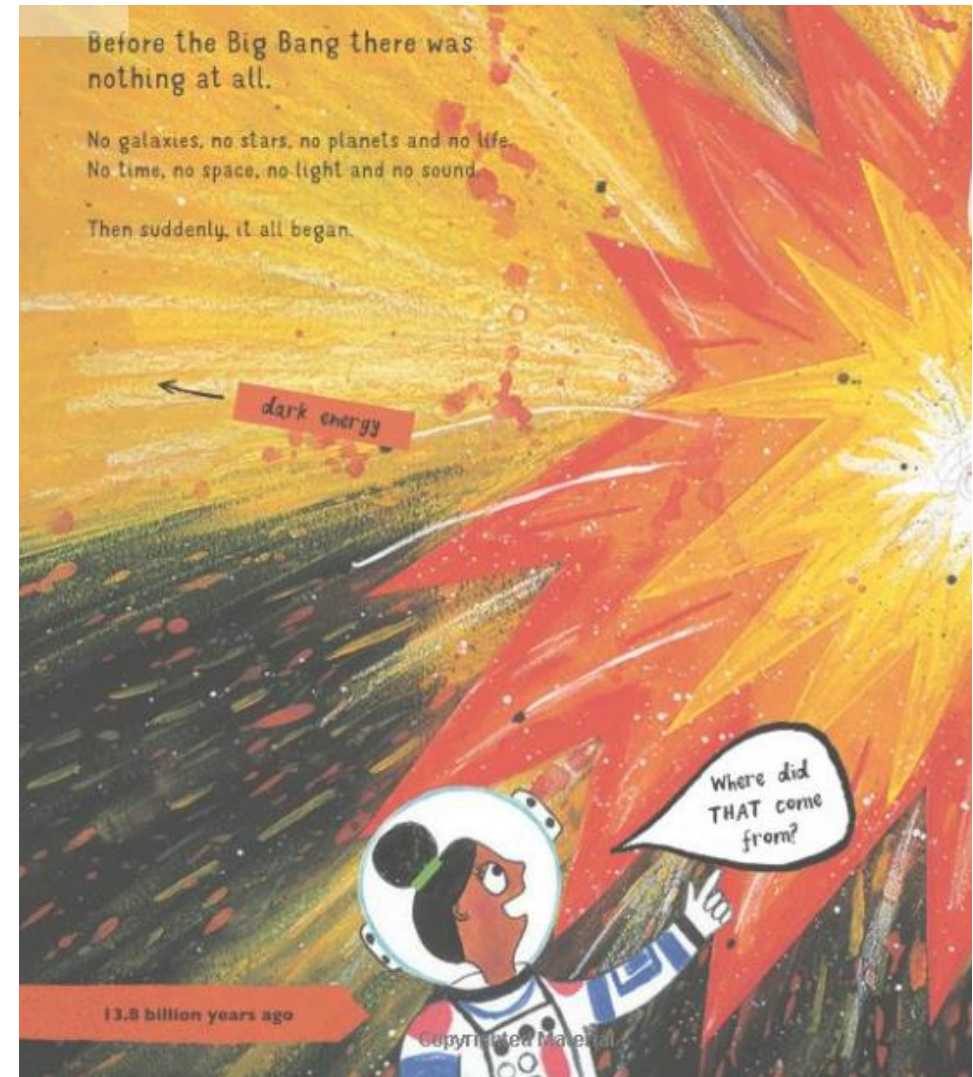
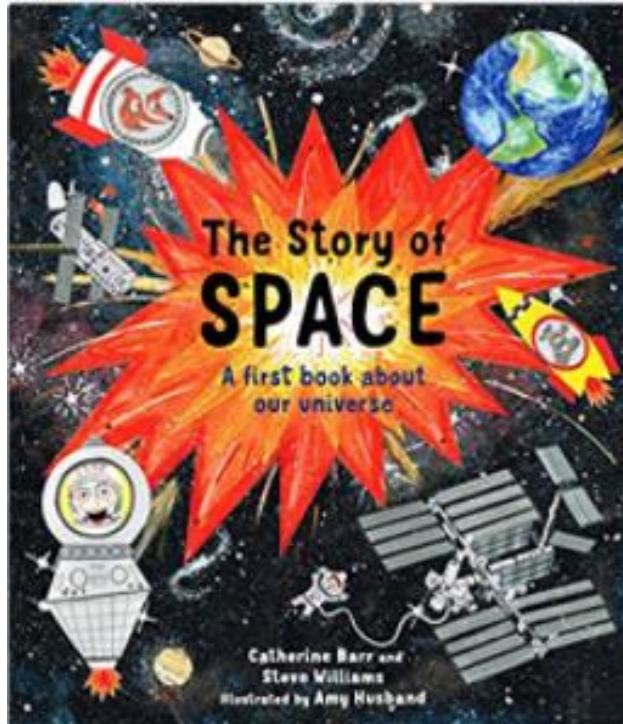


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Progression in KS2:

Key Stage 2 Theme: Believing Title: **1. What do different people believe about God?**

Religion and Worldview: Christianity and Islam/ Hinduism + Non religious worldview



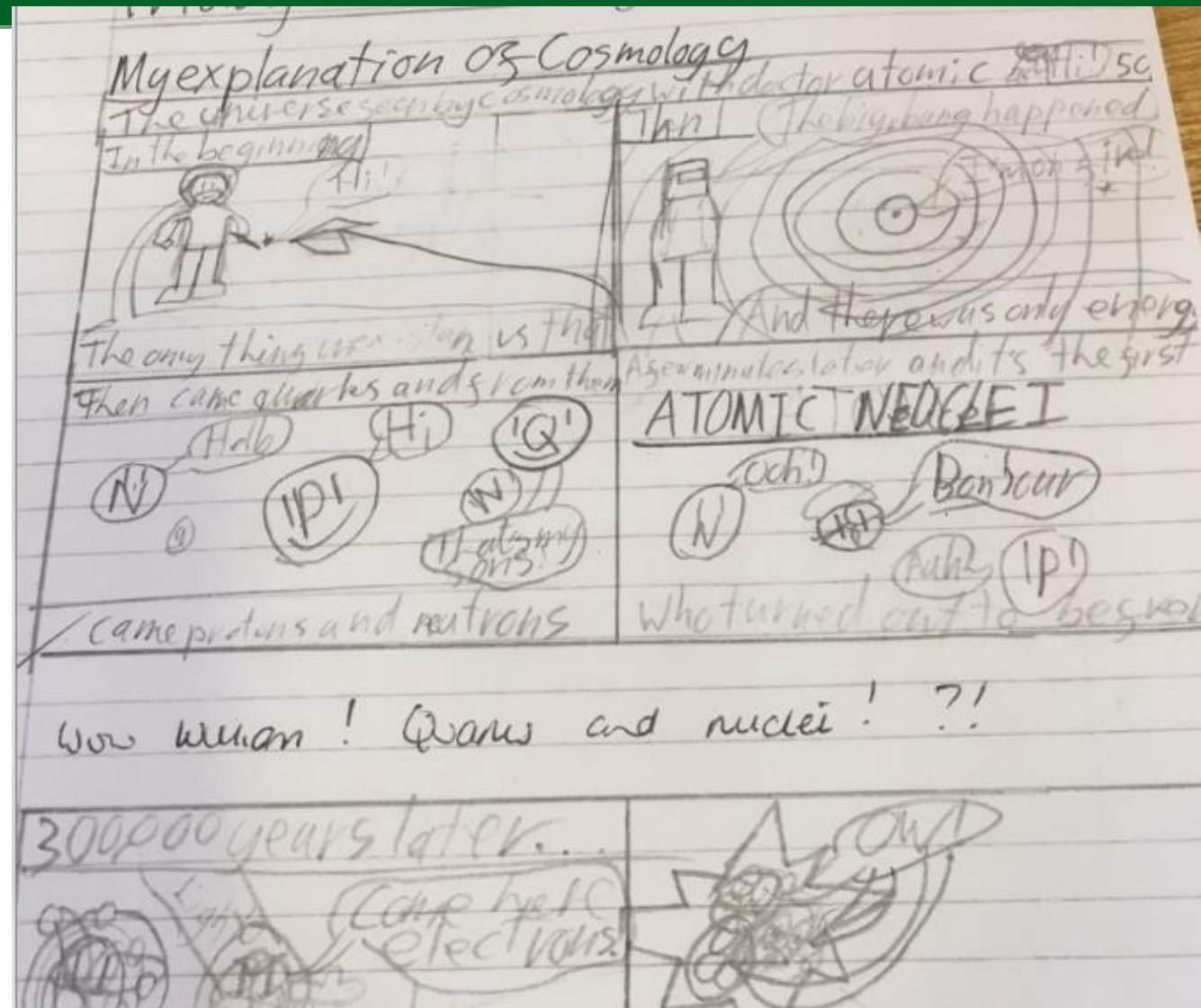
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Well done, you have thought of some really interesting questions

Friday 7th February 2020

Questions for a panel about science and creation

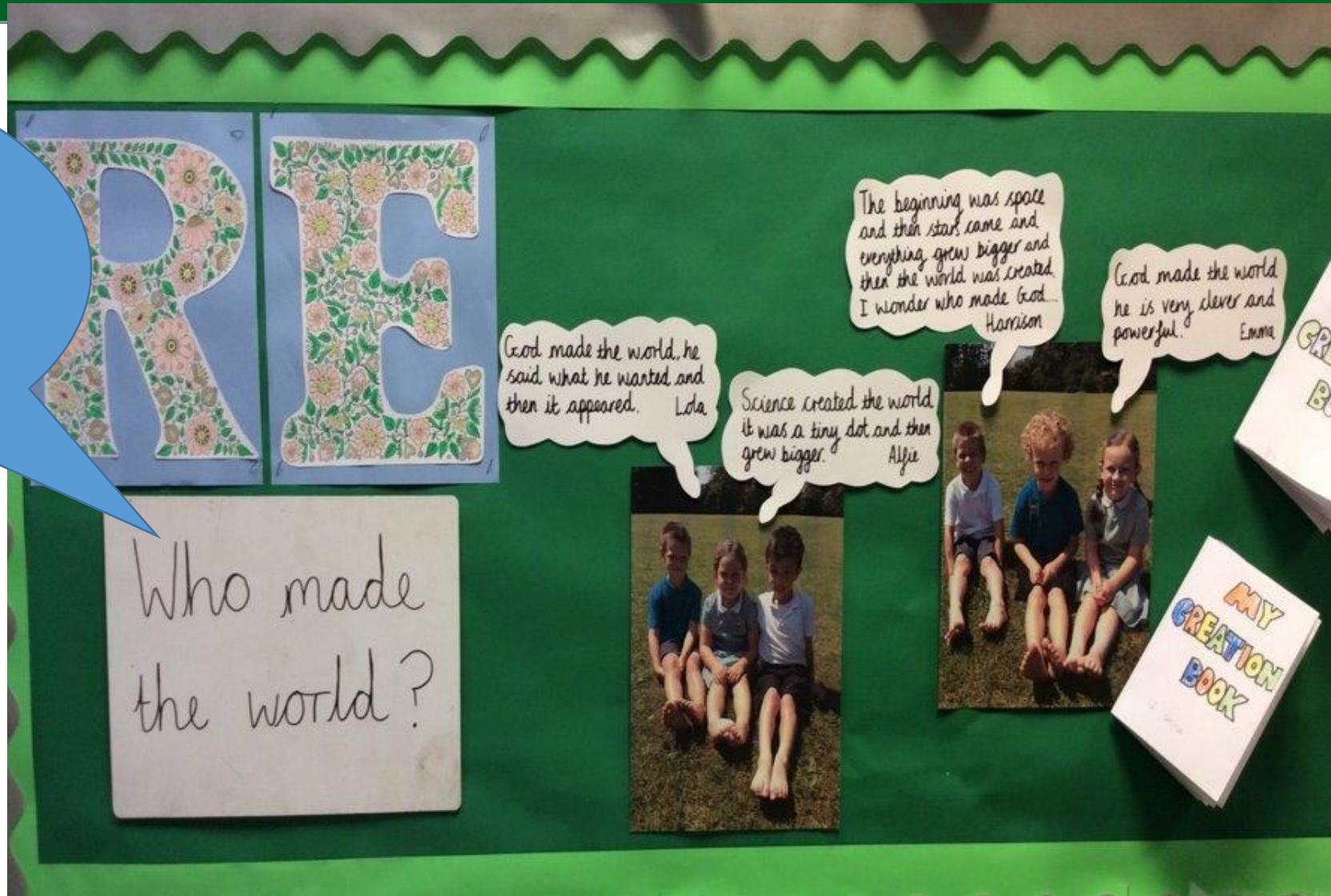
Names of members of the panel: Karl, Johnathon and Katie

Question	What do you feel about the concept of... creation and the theories of it? (Katie)	Which aspects of science and religion do you find... interesting and parts that you don't think are true? (Karl)	What do you think about the creation story? (Johnathon)	Do you agree with any of the theories, which one? (Karl and Katie)
Predicted Response	I think the big bang still happened as of proved evidence even though I also believe in religion.	I think how God created the world in 7 days and the other theories aren't true. (Karl)	I'm not sure what he'll say. I think that no big bang would lead to consequences.	I agree with the literal theory as I believe in only the creation story! (Karl)
Response	(Katie) I am able to trust in God knowing that I can trust his word but there are all sorts of stories in the Bible about it and its about which parts you want to believe.	(Karl) For the first part I love the idea of miracles and I find that interesting. Scientists learn about things that can't be explained. I think not all parts are true but the truth is the truth.	(Johnathon)	I agree with the concordist theory as it is proven that animals were from periods of evolution. (Katie)
Reaction	(Katie) I'm surprised that she links them so well.	(Karl) I thought he would go against most of it.		(Karl) The one I believe is that I believe in some of it but the way that they contain truth and fact. (Katie) I believe that the Big Bang is true and that God made it happen. (Johnathon) (Karl) surprised as I thought he would believe in all of it. (Katie) I thought she would say something a bit more scientific.



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Possibly:
'How did the world begin?'



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What do you think
about teaching
questions of origins
of the universe in
school?

How have you
approached
different views and
attitudes?



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Beyond the Binaries: Prayer and worship

Worship, pilgrimage and special places

Where, how and why do people worship?

Why is pilgrimage important to some religious believers?

Expressions of spirituality

What does it mean to be human?
How do humans express their spirituality?

Do we sometimes give the impression in RE that adherents and devotees are very pious and engaged in all forms of practice?



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Do some predicting...

How many people might pray in the UK?

Make a prediction using some percentages

How often do people pray?



- a. Several times a day
- b. Once a day
- c. Several times a week
- d. Every week
- e. Occasionally (less than once per week)
- f. Never

**Fill in the
Online Poll**



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	2018
'About how often do you pray?'	%
Several times a day	8
Once a day	6
Several times a week	4
Every week	3
Occasionally (less than once a week)	29
Never	50
Number of people asked	1,552



Interesting 😊

Surprising 😬

Puzzling 😕



1, 552 people over 16 in UK
2018, British Social
Attitudes survey

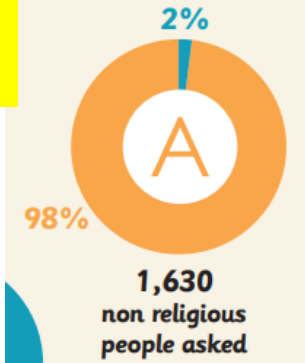
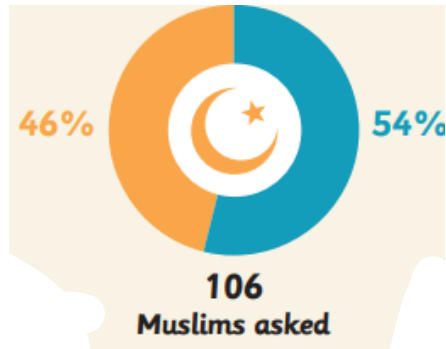
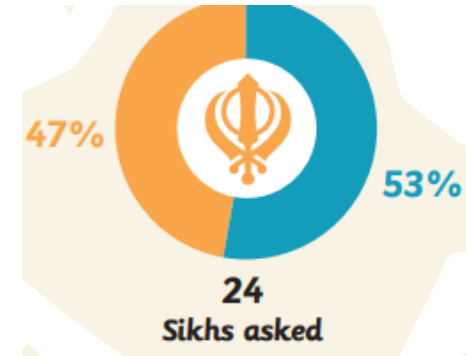
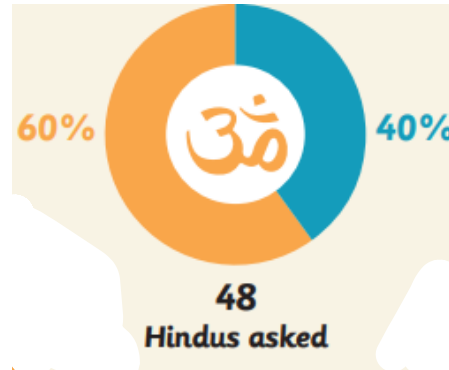
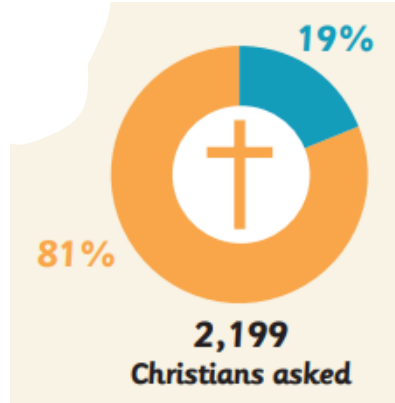
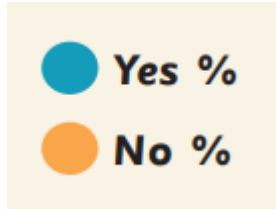
Stephen Pett © RE Today 2022



Religious practice with others or alone?

Other data we can examine....

Do you currently engage in any religious or spiritual practices with other people e.g. attending services at a place of worship?



What is interesting or surprising here?

4,437 people over 16 in UK
2013, YouGov/University
of Lancaster

Religious practice with others or alone?

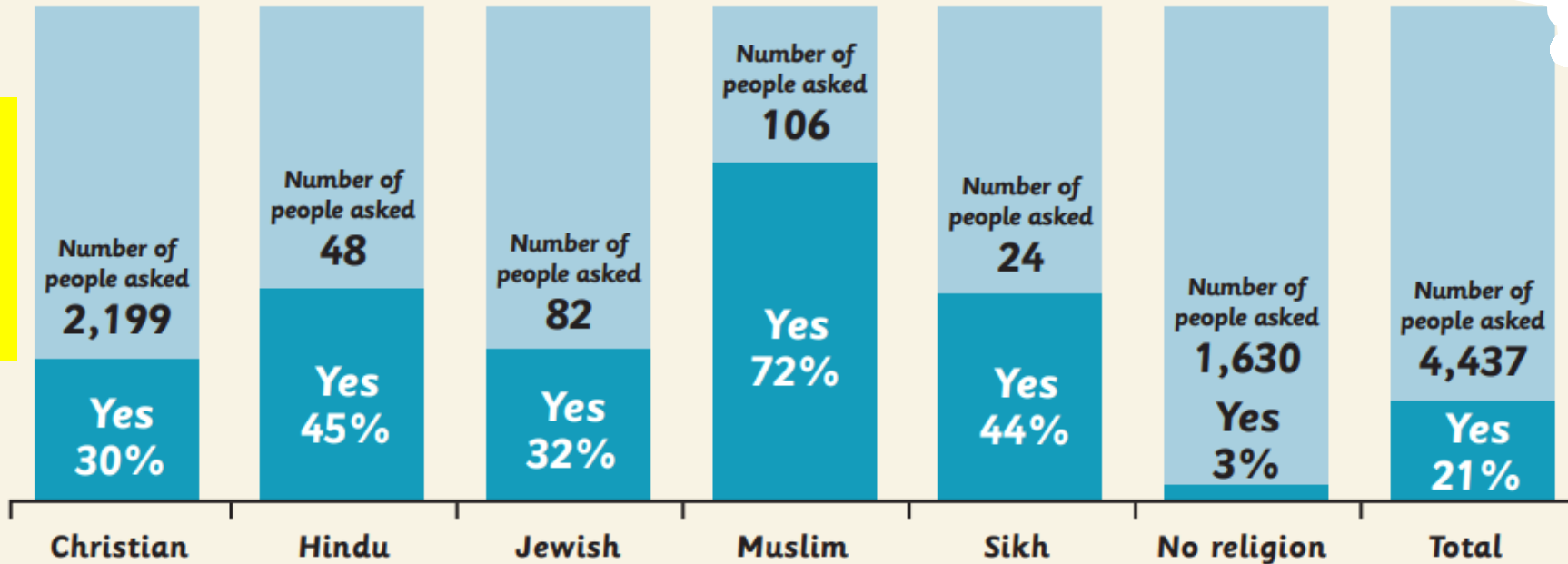
Other data we can examine....

Have you practised prayer in private in the last month?

Religious practice alone

In 2013, the same 4,437 people representing the population of Great Britain were asked:
'Have you practised prayer in private in the last month?'

How might we use this data in class?



4,437 people over 16 in UK
2013, YouGov/University
of Lancaster

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Support to write well: because, but, so*

Because...explains why something is true

But...indicates a change of direction

So...what happens as the result

The Jewish practice of keeping Shabbat is important.

The Jewish practice of keeping Shabbat is important **because it is a time of rest to stop work and focus on your family and God.**

The Jewish practice of keeping Shabbat is important **but different Jewish people keep Shabbat in different ways.**

The Jewish practice of keeping Shabbat is important **so many Jewish people celebrate Shabbat every week.**

Thanks to Joe Kinnaird and the Writing Revolution



Joe Kinnaird
@josephkinnaird Follows you



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Support to write well: because, but, so*

Because...explains why something is true

But...indicates a change of direction

So...what happens as the result

Prayer is significant to some people

Prayer is significant to some people **because**

Prayer is significant to some people **but**

Prayer is significant to some people **so**

**Choose and
finish a
sentence!**



Joe Kinnaird
@josephkinnaird Follows you

Thanks to Joe Kinnaird and the Writing Revolution

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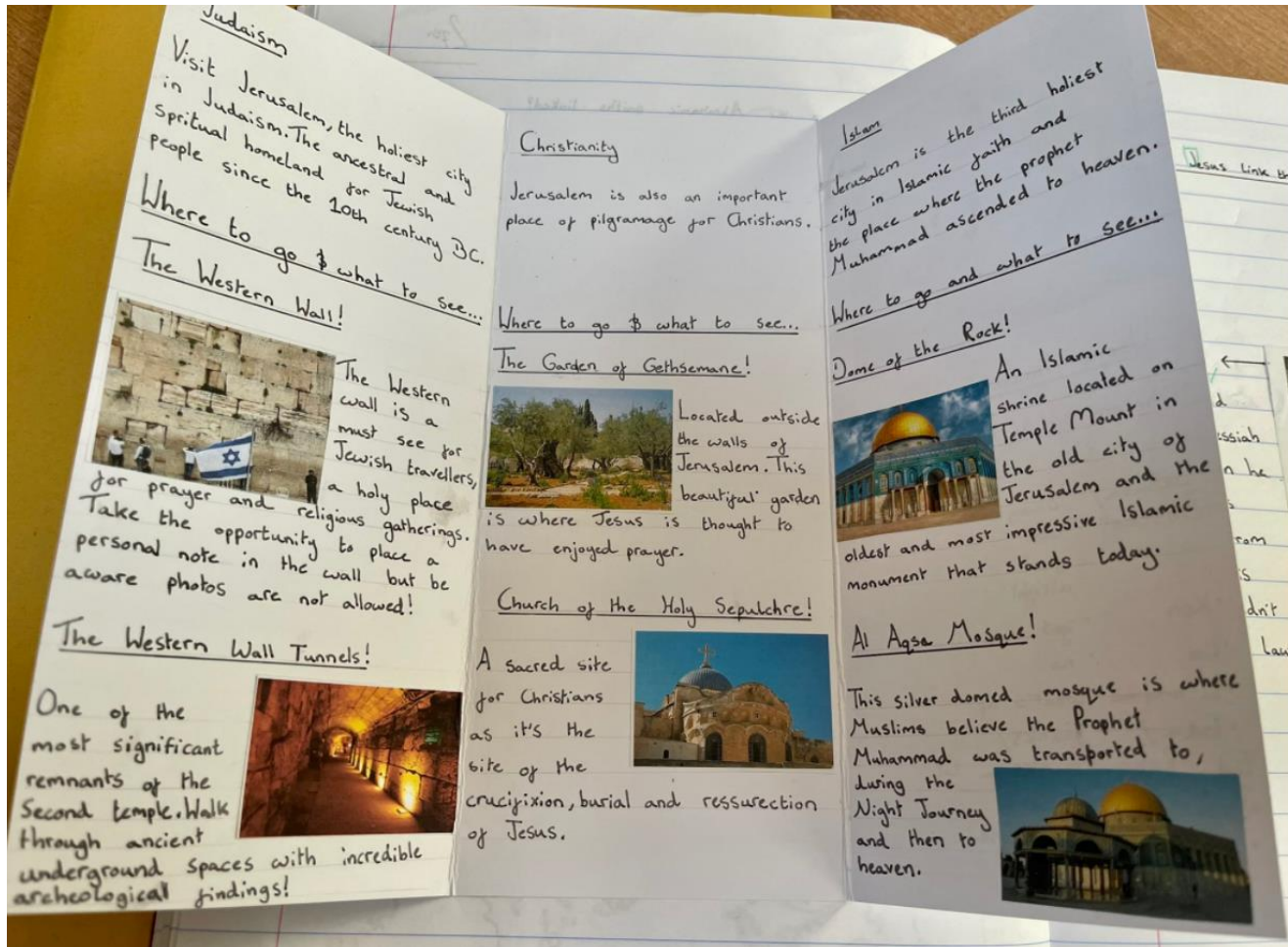


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Pilgrimage? Beyond the binaries



Nikki McGee
@RE_McGEE

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Beyond the Binaries: Islam: Men – Women World – UK

What do you know by heart?



What kind of person could become a hafiz?

What difference might it make to know the Qur'an by heart?

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Beyond the Binary: Men – Women World – UK



[BBC Scotland - The Social, Becoming A Female Quran Reciter With Madinah Javed](#)

[\(116\) Madinah Javed - YouTube](#)



[BBC World Service - Heart and Soul, The lives of female Qur'an reciters](#)

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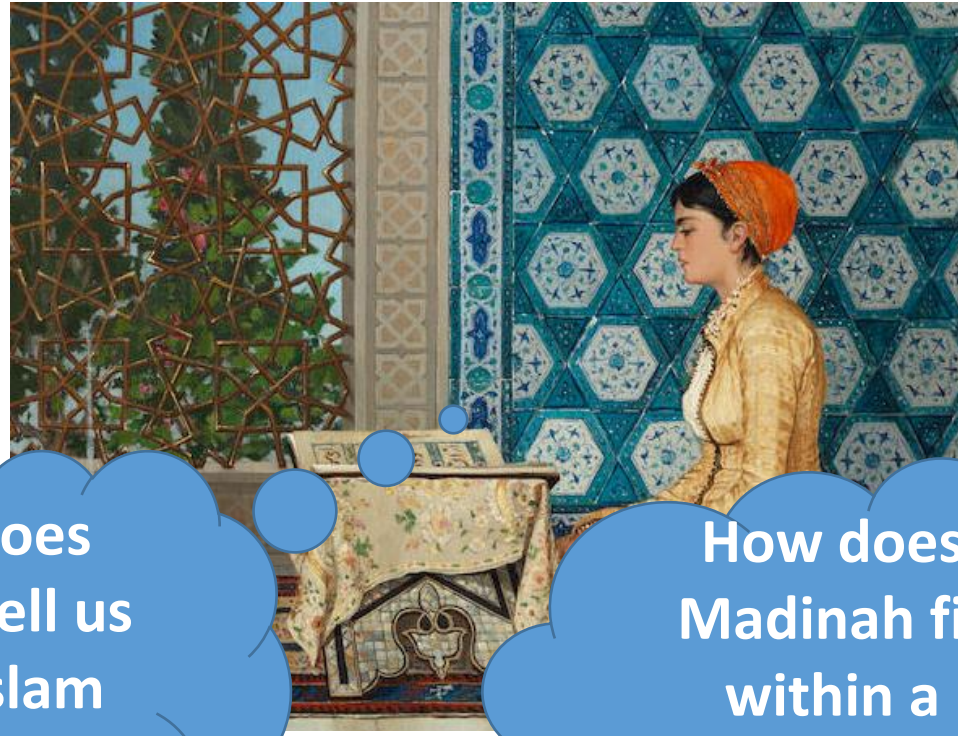


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Beyond the Binary: Men – Women World – UK



What three words might sum up Madinah?



What does the clip tell us about Islam and Christianity?

How does Madinah fit within a tradition of women in Islam?

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‘It’s not really the brown girls from Jersey city who save the world’
Kamala Khan

Could Kamala Khan be a way to explore representation of women and Muslims in mass culture?

[Official Trailer |](#)

[Discovery RE](#)

Marvel ©

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[Poetic Faith, Noor In My Heart \(baytalfann.com\)](http://baytalfann.com)



تَوَكَّلْ & شُكْر

Be thankful to Allah
for what He gave you
And trust in Him for
you're hoping to get

NOORINMYHEART

الحمد لله

When in doubt, fear or distress,
remember:

Allah will always make sure
that we end up in the right place.
Right where He wants us to be.

NOORINMYHEART



تَوَكَّلْ

I'm scared.
But I also know everything
is going to be alright,
because You are my Lord.
And if this one thing won't work out,
another one will.

NOORINMYHEART

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Beyond the Binaries:

Religion and Worldviews mix of beliefs and practices, customs and culture. Adherents may sit close or far from 'orthodoxy'.

Non-religious worldviews should be integrated early and shown in their beauty and complexity to allow pupils to see stories and ideas as complex and positive.

Take the teaching of Islam beyond Saudi centred and privileging male to the complexity and beauty of modern British and worldwide Islam – representation matters!

