## **RE-Juvinating and RE-Inspiring RE Conference 2021**

# Creative, thoughtful and spiritual RE 4-16

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## **RE-Juvinating and RE-Inspiring RE Conference 2021**



RE in Partnership Thanks to colleagues from Wiltshire, Dorset and BCP SACRES.



#ReReRE2021



Piscovery RE



## **RE-Juvinating and RE-Inspiring RE Conference 2021**

## In one hour... (William Blake: 'eternity in an hour')

- RE needs creative teaching, imaginative learning, open hearted and broad minded approaches to plurality and every encouragement to pupils to understand the meanings of spirituality
- In an hour, I am going to demo how this works with reference to a theological question, three teaching and learning ideas and two ways to give voice to the thoughts of children and young people themselves.













## Lena Deng, 13 A logo for RE

- Lena's wonderfully creative invitation to open mindedness is a suitable place to start the morning because she knows what I think we all know: that RE is a space where broad minds and open hearts can be cultivated, for the harmony of the person and the community.
- RE is the opposite of indoctrination: the most broad minded and open hearted ways of looking at the world we can make it.
- In the hour, I will present 4 examples of how creativity can lead to thoughtfulness and how both can enable spiritual growth or development.

#### Andy Goldsworthy style in art From Lisa Holland's 8-9s in Warrington...

- Concept: Creation, the Garden of Eden and the Fall of Humanity: 'only one rule, and we broke it'.
- Story: Genesis 3: Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden
- Beliefs: humanity, created by God, is good, but spoiled by sin – our own bad choices.
- Martin Luther: 'each of us is Adam or Eve to our own soul.'
- Task: create a 'school grounds' (forest school?) sculpture to show some hidden meanings from the story of Adam, Eve and the Serpent.



• "Our nature picture of the Garden of Eden shows the Tree of Knowledge and Evie is playing the part of Eve, taking the fruit. Maybe the Serpent knew that Eve would take a risk. It was only one rule, but they broke it, so they were made to leave the perfect garden of Eden. They had to start working hard!"



• "Our nature picture shows the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden, with the wall all around it. We made the wall from leaves. We think the story has a hidden message: that if we make bad choices, then we have to face up to the consequences." • "We wanted to show that the people were given the choice, and they chose to do the wrong thing. We made Adam and Eve out of sticks. Even though they were made to leave the garden, it turned out for good: Christians believe God sent Jesus to bring people back to heaven."



• "In our nature picture we put a tree falling sideways. The people fell away from God – that is why it is called the fall! We imagined that after the people did wrong and went out of the Garden, then there was no one to care for the garden, and we have shown that the tree might have fallen over too. The whole world needs people to care for the trees."

# Poll: whose natural world sculpture is best RE?



# What do Christians believe about God?



By the end of this unit pupils should know that many Christians believe:

- in one God, who created and loves the Earth and all people
- God is 'beside, behind and ahead' with people all the time
- the Spirit of God is invisible, but with people always, so they can pray to God any time and in any place
- Jesus shows what God is like









Lots of children gave ideas from prior learning about God.

Every child tackled this task differently.

Leighton, 6, thought of things to thank God for, including tractors, stars, sun and moon, spaceships... He drew them all into his letter-outline.



Leighton 6 Tractos Caris Stars Feng rabos trees Water Mud Sun lounary moon SPaship

#### Children are invited to think of the words they link to God, and draw them into the letters

It is important to note this is to link to the idea of God- this is not about them believing in God. How do you know the wind is there?





The activity gives children the chance to think about the meanings of the word 'God' for themselves. Teachers may need to explain different words to the class.





Show these examples to your class, but then ask them to work from their own thoughts, not to copy what others have done. Good modelling encourages thinking, not copying, in RE.





66





Hi, I'm Grace. I'm a Christian. What can you see that I am wearing that is a clue to my religion? I have got 5 thoughts about God. The first is that God is amazing because he made the world, including cats. I like cats best of all the animals.



My second thought about God is that God loves us. I think that is why we have Christmas. It reminds us that God came to Earth to show love.



I also think it is really good that we can pray to God any time and anywhere, and God listens to our prayers (even though he does not always give us what we ask for).



And I think that sometimes people can feel close to God. I sometimes feel God is close when I sing a 'thank you' song at church. And also when my cat is sleeping on my lap.



My fifth thought is that God is a mystery. We don't know what God looks like, and we can't see – God is invisible. I hope I learn more about God when I am older.

Grace thinks God loves us. What Do you think God made the do you think? What do you think world? What do you like Christmas is all about? about the animals of the Earth? Grace says, 'God is a mystery'. What do you think about the Do you agree with Grace about What makes Grace feel close mystery of God? prayer? What are your thoughts to God? Does anything make about talking to God? you feel close to God, or not?





Pupils learn from Grace's ideas, and think about her identity: she is a Christian. Then they are invited to suggest five of their own thoughts about God. These could include not there!







Learning is focused by the request for five ideas: this enables children to do work that is particular to their own ideas.







Children's ideas come from what they have heard in home or school settings. Some children learn about God at a place of worship.









Ideas are many, and varied: all are welcome and open to discussion. Ask: What do we mean by...?

My name is	My first thought about God is
, Here is a picture of me.	My second thought about God is I also think And I think
	My fifth thought is that God is



I'm Imran. Hello. I'm a Muslim, and my religion is called Islam. Did you notice that my T-shirt has a Muslim sign on it? I believe in Allah, and I believe Allah created the heavens and the Earth.





My second thought about Allah is that God is merciful. Us Muslims say that when we pray every day. It means God will forgive humans who say sorry.





Another thing is that God gives us all the good things we enjoy on Planet Earth, so we should be thankful to him. I enjoy chocolate and chips, thanks be to Allah!





And I like going to mosque because that is where I can easily feel close to God. The Qur'an says Allah is as close to us as our jugular vein. It's like God is right inside you!





My fifth idea is that it is very important to do what God says. That is why I try to pray five times every day, and I am learning to read the book of Allah, the Holy Qur'an. We follow the ways of the Prophet Muhammad.

#### Imran

## Song: God behind, God beside, God ahead

- Listen to the song by Stephen from Fischy Music
- It's a song for Christian children, but anyone can sing along if they want to.
  You don't have to, of course
- What does Stephen believe about God?

(To start the song, click on the speaker on the next slide)

Can children draw one of the times when Stephen feels close to God? Breakfast? Christmas?





When I wake up in the morning, in my bed God behind, God beside, God ahead When I'm eating up my breakfast - bacon and egg God behind, God beside, God ahead When I'm going on a summer holiday God behind, God beside, God ahead When I'm opening my presents, Christmas day God behind, God beside, God ahead In the sunshine (Aaah!) And the rain (Aw!) In the laughter (Ha Ha Ha!) And in the pain (Ouch!)

With us in the morning, with us in the day With us in the evening, always, always, always, always When it feels like you've been left out, on your own God behind, God beside, God ahead When there are no cards or letters, no-one phones God behind, God beside, God ahead When you fall out with your friends... feeling sad God behind, God beside, God ahead When somebody in your family drives you mad God behind, God beside, God ahead In the sunshine - and the rain In the laughter - and in the pain

With us in the morning, with us in the day With us in the evening, always, always, always, always...
- Stephen wrote this song. What does he believe about God?
- If somebody thinks God is always with them, how would that make them feel?
- Christians believe that God always listens when they pray. How do you think they might feel about that?
- Christians sometimes pray prayers that start like these. Can you finish off the prayers? Which ones do you like best and why?
  - 'Dear God, please help me not to be scared of...'
  - 'God, please help me to be kind to...'
  - 'Jesus, you were always friendly, but I sometimes feel unfriendly. Help me to ...'
  - 'Please God, help me to...'
  - 'Dear God, I am sorry for doing a bad thing...'
- Some people don't believe in praying, but they do believe in reflecting or meditating. Do you like to pray, or to reflect, or to meditate? Or is that something that you don't do?



	Thinking about Prayer	
When a Chris	tian talks to God they might say:	
'Dear God, pl	ease help me not to be scared of <u>tranch</u>	
'God, please	help me to be kind to	
'Jesus, you w	rere always friendly, but I sometimes feel unfriendly. Help me to	
'Please God,	help me to do a provoco	Hay
	an sorry for not cleen ing	

Here are some thoughts about praying. Don't ask children to pray in RE: many come from families who don't believe in praying. Talk to children about how we are all different.

Instead, in this activity, children are invited to show that they understand the kind of things Christians might pray.

	Thinking about Prayer
Vhen a Chris	tian talks to God they might say:
Dear God, ple	ease help me not to be scared of 0.
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God, please h	elp me to be kind to KIN 92401
	are always friendly, but I compting of the first the second
Jesus, you we	ELE UNULLY INPUTUAL DIT SOMPTIMOS TOOL UNTRIANDLY LIGHT TO A
	ere always friendly, but I sometimes feel unfriendly. Help me to
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# What might a Christian child pray?

"Dear God, please help me not to be scared of the dark. Please help me to be kind to Kingston... Help me to wave and smile... Help me do my work... I am sorry for messing around..."

Monday 13th July 2020 Thinking about Prayer When a Christian talks to God they might say: 'God, please help me to be kind to +hen 5' be frende. 'Jesus, you were always friendly, but I sometimes feel unfriendly. Help me to... Please God, help me to QM 900 J Dear God, I am sorry for froing My hat inthrichner

BIG QUESTIONS BIG ANSWERS – Investigating God Editor: Fiona Moss © RE Today 2021

Monday 13th July 2020

#### Thinking about Prayer

When a Christian talks to God they might say:

Dear God, please help me not to be scared of & the dark

'God, please help me to be kind to be the Stell Adam.

'Jesus, you were always friendly, but I sometimes feel unfriendly. Help me to... be sply to my roll alls.

Please God, help me to NULS to SUS det.

"Dear God, I am sorry for Smith my



Key words: can you explain these words?

God Creator Prayer Trinity Father



Holy Spirit

Jesus

A big one

Omnipresence



For RE in the Primary or Secondary School See hundreds of 'Art in Heaven' entries at www.natre.org.uk/spiritedarts Till 31<sup>st</sup> July – enter your school's top ten Also note that I will email you our special offer order form from today. You can't go wrong with our current "24 books for £99" gobsmacker!





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God's Footprints Thomas Moore (5) In my picture I have painted the sky and the sun, then I added grass and flowers. Next I painted God's footprints because although you can't see God, I think you can see that He has been everywhere.



## Up in the Sky By Eliot, Age 8

"My picture is about where I think God is. The balloons and kites are messages to God - like his mail, instead of a postman. This picture shows me where God is: not far away."

### Yolande, 9

"My model is called 'All you need is love'. Some people don't believe in god, but they do believe in love. This is my belief. I am one of the non religious people."





Esme, 9: "God always watches us from the sky. I have mainly done the eyes of God because we don't know what God looks like, but he sees us from above. God is always watching and sees everything, so I feel safe."

## GOD LOVES EVERYONE.

Where is God? Understanding Love By Lloyd, Age 11

"My work is about God being everywhere and loving everyone. People think God is not around us.

I think they are wrong. If God wasn't part of everyone how would we understand what love is and what it means? I wanted to show this by showing God's hand reaching out to everyone's 'heart'."

LIOYD STARR 7RO.



"Fish have no certain knowledge of what is outside the pond. Humans cannot literally find God. We have to be content that he is watching us and protecting us, like the man on the side of my pond. The stone falling into the pond can be interpreted as all the bad things that fall into life, but could also stand for something heavenly, falling from the realms of God like a miracle. The Earth asks 'where is God?' because we cannot leave the fishpond alive. We cannot find God unless he reaches down to us, as I believe he did with Jesus Christ. We must find God through the things he does on earth."

Rebecca, 13.



This school in Tower Hamlets used Art in Heaven in conjunction with silk painting work in art and RE. The silks all have a great commentary from the students who made them - one is included in detail on the next slide.

"My artwork is a spiritual reflection of my thoughts because it shows how I feel I can communicate with God peacefully. When I pray I feel relaxed because I say things that I wouldn't tell people I know. After I have done my prayers, I feel lighter and more relieved because I have told Allah how I feel about all my problems and therefore unloaded my thoughts in a safe and special way."

#### Where I find God

"My artwork is about the question: Where do you look for God? I think that people should look for God within their prayers. In Islam there are five daily prayers a Muslim must perform each day because that's a job the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) left us to do based on God's orders.

I have included 5 prayer mats and within the prayer mats I have included a letter from Allah's name. I have done this to show that I find Allah in my prayers more than anything else. The purple background of my silk work shows how peaceful I feel during prayer.

I have chosen this idea of prayer as it makes me think more about my religion and looking at other people's work made me realise that people find God in different ways and even though I find God in my prayers, different people find God in different ways so therefore no way is the right or wrong way.

My artwork is a spiritual reflection of my thoughts because it shows how I feel I can communicate with God peacefully. When I pray I feel relaxed because I say things that I wouldn't tell people I know. After I have done my prayers, I feel lighter and more relieved because I have told Allah how I feel about all my problems and therefore unloaded my thoughts in a safe and special way. By praying, I feel that some one is always there to listen to me and that is the most important thing, as it doesn't matter to me that God doesn't always answers prayers.

To make the image I used silver and gold gutta, and some silk paints. I chose these materials because I found them easier to use to make people understand my thoughts better and also to inspire them to create their own artwork.

What I like best about my work is the words fitting in the prayer mats. I like the way they are a different colour from the outside as this is important to me because I used the Prophet's favourite colour and tried to add other colours he liked because as a Muslim, I want to follow his example as he is the perfect Muslim that everyone wants to be like."





Open Your Eyes by Inayah, 15 "The number of people in the world who call themselves atheist or agnostic is around 850 million. These people either do not believe that God exists or are unsure. One of the main reasons that many of these people do not believe in God is because they claim to not be able to see any evidence of the almighty being. However, the girl in my picture represents these people who do not see any evidence of God. Her eyes are closed..."

#### Open Your Eyes by Inayah, 15

"The number of people in the world who call themselves atheist or agnostic is around 850 million. These people either do not believe that God exists or are unsure. One of the main reasons that many of these people do not believe in God is because they claim to not be able to see any evidence of the almighty being. However, the girl in my picture represents these people who do not see any evidence of God. Her eyes are closed.

It is my belief that people who do not see the evidence of God's work in creation and design of the world need to open their eyes wider to see the sheer beauty of the world and the plain evidence that God does exist. From the beauty of the stars and the sky and nature to the amazing systems such as our own nervous, circulatory and digestive systems, God's remarkable skill is displayed everywhere My painting shows "God" written everywhere and anyone viewing the picture can see this very obviously. It is just as obvious, by looking at nature that God is everywhere, as is the evidence that he exists. The painting shows that there is evidence of God in absolutely everything and all we need to do to see it is to open our eyes wider."





- Shamiso, 15
- 'The psychological bondage of believing in God'
- A photomontage project to explore the idea that if you believe in god, then you sacrifice freedom of mind and heart.

#### Shamiso, 15: The Psychological Bondage of 'God'

"A white mask is painted over my eyes and I whitened my lips, my most expressive features, to obscure them. As Karl Marx said: "religion is good for social control" and "prevents any form of revolt, as it threatens eternal damnation". I did this obscuring to show that by committing to a religion, you lose aspects of your character. To portray the constraints of religion I strapped various belts around my body and bound my head with wire. The crucifix and padlock on my lips shows that belonging to any religious group (Christianity was used only as an example) censers free expression. I appear alone in all the images and they are taken from perspective of someone more powerful watching, taken "through the eyes of God".

The journey ends with 'God' watching as I clutch onto a balcony to keep from falling, giving him the chance to save me. The final shot looks at me after falling. If you do choose to devote your life to God, there is no guarantee that your God will ever deliver you.

Inspiration for this came from considering that parts of Africa are extremely Christian yet seem to suffer the most: their God has failed them. In 'The God Delusion' Richard Dawkins suggests that perhaps religion is evil; if it was benign then God would be able to prevent suffering and would certainly not cause it. I think religion psychologically imprisons people."



"I don't want to know who God is - I like God to be an unsolved mystery, a leap of faith.

Contemplate: God stays anonymous for a reason."





#### Who is God? Hannah, 17

"This image is made from acrylic paint, building layers by mixing paint differently each time. Charcoal and chalk shade the picture and blend, particularly where the colours fade to the left. The texts on the branches of the trees name some of God's qualities.

I wanted to show how complex and detailed nature is, the amazing world of tiger, trees, leaves and flowers, every tiny thing. God walks the earth like a spirit, reflected in all beauty, peace and happiness. I don't believe in a traditional form of God, but this intricate universe is not an accident. I have painted God in the shape of a human, who walks among us and grows in every leaf and branch. A presence in nature, we sense God without seeing him. God is almost blown away on the breeze. My work is spiritual, showing what might have once been the Garden of Eden, tranquil and peaceful, with the ferocious lion and the soft flower united. I have not given God a face. We all have such different ideas of perfection: decide for yourself what God looks like!

The spiralling tree grows its network of leaves and branches: God is constantly growing, always present, sustaining creation. Many Christians and other believers hold this belief.

I like the way this work encourages the viewers to think for themselves. I'm not really answering the question 'Who is God?' I'm trying to get you to think about it. I don't want to know who God is - I like God to be an unsolved mystery, a leap of faith.

Contemplate: God stays anonymous for a reason."

GOD LOVES EVERYONE.





Favourites? Progression evidence? Setting high standards of thinking? Will you enter now?







# Poll: picking the gold, silver, bronze entrants

2 Footprints, Thomas, 6 3. God in the clouds, Eliot, 8 4. God's green eyes, Esme, 8 5 Yolanda, Love is all you need, 9 6 Lloyd, God loves everyone, 11 7 Rebecca, the Pond, 11 8 Islamic Silk Paintings, 14 9 Inayah, Open your Eyes, 15 10 Psychological Bondage, Shamiso, 16 11 Who is God? Hannah, 17

1 Everywhere, Bethan, 5

## Art in Heaven: an open competition from NATRE

- Web gallery:
- <u>https://www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/spirited-arts/spirited-arts-2020/</u>
- Competition for all ages
- 5 themes
- Enter from your school!

Skills: self expression / use of language / theological and philosophical thinking / creativity and imagination / applied theologies / improving my own work / teamwork / openness and dialogical



"When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene bought spices to anoint Jesus' body. Very early on the first day of the week, she went to the tomb, wondering "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"

But the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. The guards were all asleep..." "The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said... go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you... Now I have told you." So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples."





So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in, but did not go in. Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the clothing lying there....

The Eleven and those with them were together that evening in the Upper Room, and Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." Startled and frightened, they thought it was a ghost. "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."

When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. While they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement...





He showed them his hands and feet. And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" <sup>42</sup> They gave him a piece of fish, and he took it and ate it...

He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. <sup>46</sup> He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day... and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations..."

# Better RE

To make RE better, we might need more...

- **Questioning** because RE like religion addresses fundamental questions, but too often gets narrowed down to little facts
- **Creativity** because pupils are the shapers and makers of their own meanings, and self expression is a vital but neglected part of RE
- **Spirituality** because RE is a focus in the whole curriculum for SMSCD, and religions are a focus in life for spiritual growth
- **Thinking** because the aim of RE is enable young thinkers, not mere rememberers or copiers!

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## In one hour... (William Blake: 'eternity in an hour')

- RE needs creative teaching, imaginative learning, open hearted and broad minded approaches to plurality and every encouragement to pupils to understand the meanings of spirituality
- In an hour, did I manage to excite you? To demo how this works with reference to a theological question? Give you three teaching and learning ideas? Provide two ways to give voice to the thoughts of children and young people themselves?
- Time to get into the classroom and be your amazing teacher-self in RE

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