Exemplar Unit of Work: Life after death

This unit of work contributes towards the principal aim of RE in Wiltshire: to engage pupils in enquiry into key questions arising from a study of religion and belief, so as to promote their personal and spiritual development.

Step 1:	The journey of life and death: why some occasions are sacred to believers, and what
The theme	people think about life after death;
	Ensure that you have considered any pupils who have experienced a difficult or
	traumatic family event, or have experienced loss within their family. As well as the
	preparation letter, contact particular families and seek their advice if in any doubt.
Step 2: Key	Why do some people believe in life after death and what difference does it make?
question	
question	This unit is designed as an enquiry based unit which may be taught over a series of
	weeks or in a shorter, more concentrated period such as during an RE week. It is
· ·	impossible to write a pure child led enquiry this way and so the unit assumes some
	questions your pupils might choose to investigate and suggests ways to investigate
	them. What you do in this unit will depend on the questions generated by the children
	in your class.
	Examples of questions that children might come up with are in red, the adult
	presentation of that question to the whole class then appears in black.
	Where does this fit into our Key Stage planning?
	It may fit in with a broader study around Easter or with work around life cycles in
	Science. This work is most suited to children aged 9-11.
Step 3:	We are focusing on what happens when we die, so have selected the following
Learning	learning outcomes:
outcomes	
	i. <i>identify</i> some mysterious and puzzling questions that religions help some people
and	to find answers to;
assessmer	
	in the context of religious and non religious beliefs;
	iii. explain why a believer may wish to mark the end of life with a particular religious
	ceremony;
	 iv. explain how different beliefs about what happens when we die may cause people to live their life in different ways;
	v. express their own beliefs about life after death reflecting on ideas from at least
	two religions they have studied.
	These learning outcomes are turned into levelled "I can" statements in the teaching
	and learning activities below.
	Level 2
	Identify a Christian belief about life and death
	Identify a belief from a religion other than Christianity about what happens when we die
	Suggest three questions about life and death that are interesting and hard to answer
	Level 3
	Describe the difference between a description of my physical appearance and
	describing what makes me the person I am?
	Describe the Hindu belief in reincarnation
	Describe the beliefs about judgement held by Christians
	Make a link between a reading that might be used at a funeral and a Christian belief
	about life after death

	with non re Recognise ideas about Ask some to the que Ask some	questions of my own about life after death and suggest two different answers
	someone i Show und	he impact that the belief that we have a soul might have on the way might live their life erstanding of the Hindu belief in Reincarnation and how being reincarnated en as curse rather than a blessing.
	different to Describe v Christian to Describe to the life of s Use the rig <i>Create a</i> s	erstanding of the Christian belief in Judgement and how that is similar and o the Hindu belief in reincarnation what might happen in a Christian funeral explaining how it shows some beliefs about life after death he impact that believing that nothing happens when we die might have on someone who holds these views ght words to describe what two religions say about life and death statement of my own beliefs about life and death, referring to ideas from two or beliefs I have studied
	life. Explain the life. know that similarities Explain ho illustrate d <i>Express m</i>	e impact for a Hindu, of a belief in reincarnation, in a series of areas of their e impact for a Christian, of a belief in Judgement, in a series of areas of their similarities and differences in funeral ceremonies illustrate differences and a in belief and suggest reasons for this ow similarities and differences in ideas about what happens when we die ifferences and similarities of belief suggest reasons for this ny views about what some religions and belief systems say happens when we the ideas to my own life.
Step 4: Content	key cotwo dif	ncepts in death such as judgement, heaven, reincarnation, karma and soul; ferent religious views and one non religious view of what happens after Christian and Hindu, Humanist;
	 consider and here discuser question examination 	er similarities and differences ceremonies that mark the end of life on earth ow these express different beliefs; s the difficulties and uncertainties that can arise when considering 'ultimate'
	 reflect Extra cont 	on their own ideas, concerns and worries about death. ent: You may want to look at Muslim or Jewish views of death if these are ou are studying
Step 5: Teac and learning activities	hing	Develop active learning opportunities and investigations, using some engaging stimuli, to enable pupils to achieve the levelled outcomes. Don't forget the skills you want pupils to develop. Make sure that the activities allow pupils to practise these skills.

Learning outcomes Teaching should enable pupils to	Teaching and Learning Teachers can select from the following and adapt as appropriate, making sure that the learning outcomes are met and that pupils' learning needs are addressed. This material need not be taught as a whole unit but can be linked to work in other subject areas.	Levelled pupil outcomes: so that pupils can say "I can" to one or more of the statements below.	Notes
<i>i. identify</i> some mysterious and puzzling questions that religions help some people to find answers to;	 Ask Questions: Set up an enquiry Ask the pupils to cast their mind back to when they were younger and asked all sorts of questions that are difficult to answer e.g. Where does the sea end? Can they remember some they used to ask? Explain that these questions are answerable but sometimes the explanations are very complicated Talk to the pupils about life's big questions or 'Ultimate Questions'. You may want to think about questions such as 'Is there a God?' or 'How did the world come to be?' Use this discussion to introduce the unit question, 'Why do some people believe in life after death and what difference does it make?' Sharing a story to generate questions Read a story such as 'Heaven' by Nicholas Allan. Use this as a stimulus to generate the kind of questions and answers that can surround death and dying. Draw on the board a stick person with a speech bubble containing a question mark coming out of their mouth. Share with the children that the person is sad because their dog has died. Ask the children to write any questions and group the questions As a class identify a few key questions that you want to find some answers to in the unit. Remind them that there may be lots of different answers. Express why the questions have been chosen. Ask the pupils to share any answers they might have to the questions chosen. Give pupils space and time to reflect and respond to the question, sharing personal stories, experiences, fears and questions. 	L2 Suggest three questions about life and death that are interesting and hard to answer L3 Ask some questions of my own about life after death and suggest two different answers to the questions	Before starting study in this unit a letter informing parents of the topic should be sent home. As this is an enquiry based unit pupils will create their own questions, adapting the key question so they can enquire what most interests and challenges them. Ultimate questions Is there a God? If there is how can we communicate with God? How did the world begin? How should we live

Explain to the pupils that they have received a letter from the character in the book, Lil, asking what will happen when she dies? The learning that they do and their own questions that they answer will enable them to write a class response to her question at the end of the unit of	our lives? What happens when die?
work.	Heaven - Nicholas Allan
The questions that follow are sample questions that children may develop. Use the questions and material appropriate to your children. You do not need to use all of this material.	<i>Red Fox books</i> 978-0099488149

Learning outcomes Teaching should enable pupils to	Teaching and Learning Teachers can select from the following and adapt as appropriate, making sure that the learning outcomes are met and that pupils' learning needs are addressed. This material need not be taught as a whole unit but can be linked to work in other subject areas.	Levelled pupil outcomes: so that pupils can say "I can" to one or more of the statements below.	Notes
<i>ii. ask questions</i> <i>and suggest</i> <i>answers</i> to the <i>question 'what</i> <i>happens when we</i> <i>die' in the context</i> <i>of religious and non</i> <i>religious beliefs;</i> <i>iv. explain</i> how different beliefs about what happens when we die may cause people to live their life in different ways;	Investigate Select from and use a variety of skills to work with relevant material, to address the enquiry question The following activities will be selected from depending on the questions the class have chosen to investigate? What do some people think carries on after we have died? What is our soul? Exploring beliefs about the soul Ask pupils to fold a piece of A4 paper in half, landscape. Ask them to then draw a portrait of themselves on one side and write their characteristics and personality traits down the other side. Ensure that pupils suggest characteristics and not physical descriptions. Give pupils the opportunity to represent visually the soul or spirit. Use your own portrait and description to illustrate the concept of spirit or soul by showing that at the point of death, everyone believes the body is finished with. Show this by tearing down the middle and throwing it away. Retain the characteristics/personality and explain that this represents what is known by many people as a person's spirit or soul. Religions try to answer the question what happens to the soul. What do they think it looks like? What happens to it when we die? Where does it come from? Do animals have souls? Does the spirit or soul have anything to do with God? Give pupils space, time and resources to capture their ideas about the spirit or soul in words, pictures or other appropriate form. If part of a person lives on does that affect how you live your life now?	L3 Describe the difference between a description of my physical appearance and describing what makes me the person I am? L4 Describe the impact that the belief that we have a soul might have on the way someone might live their life	All the answers to this question depend on an understanding of the spirit or soul. It can be quite a dramatic moment when the 'body' side is separated from the 'spirit'. Only use your portrait, never one of the pupils'.

Learning outcomes	do some people believe in life after death and w Teaching and Learning	Levelled pupil outcomes:	Notes
Teaching should enable pupils to	Teachers can select from the following and adapt as appropriate, making sure that the learning outcomes are met and that pupils' learning needs are addressed. This material need not be taught as a whole unit but can be linked to work in other subject areas.	so that pupils can say "I can" to one or more of the statements below.	
	Investigate	L3	More detail on this lesson
 ii. ask questions and suggest answers to the question 'what happens when we die' in the context of religious and non religious beliefs; iv. explain how different beliefs about what happens when we die may cause people to live their life in different ways; 	 Do some people believe that you come back to life as a different thing? What is reincarnation? Sharing ideas of reincarnation and karma Use the image of a ladder. Ask pupils to imagine this ladder represents life, with the best people at the top and the lowest animals at the bottom. Ask pupils to discuss this and then draw their own. Who might be at the top and who at the bottom? Where would they place themselves? Use this image to introduce and explain the belief of reincarnation. Ensure pupils understand the purpose for believers is to get to the top of, then off, the ladder completely, to become one with God. Move on to use the image to introduce and explain the concept of 'Karma'. Once understood, challenge the pupils to consider what qualities can be found in humans at different points of the ladder. What qualities and habits would move people up and down? Ask them to annotate their ladder with these. Sharing their ideas Pupils can then respond through writing/drawing. Who, would believers say, decides who is at the top/bottom and which habit or behaviour is important? Will people behave differently in life if they believe in reincarnation? Why? 	Describe the Hindu belief in reincarnation L4 Show understanding of the Hindu belief in Reincarnation and how being reincarnated can be seen as curse rather than a blessing. L5 Explain the impact for a Hindu, of a belief in reincarnation, in a series of areas of their life.	can be found in Exploring the journey of life and Death Ed. Joyce Mackley RE Today services It is easy for pupils to become attracted to the idea of reincarnation without understanding the belief that the cycle of life is there to be broken by living a good life and one soul going to Heaven. Ensure pupils make a link between a belief in reincarnation and living a life of good 'Karma.' The Hindu philosophy says that the body is just the outer garment of the individual. The real self does not die but goes on and assumes another body. Death is when the soul leaves the body.

Learning outcomes Teaching should enable pupils to	Teaching and Learning Teachers can select from the following and adapt as appropriate, making sure that the learning outcomes are met and that pupils' learning needs are addressed. This material need not be taught as a whole unit but can be linked to work in other subject areas.	Levelled pupil outcomes: so that pupils can say "I can" to one or more of the statements	Notes
ii. ask questions	Investigate Do you get to heaven if you do things wrong? Judgement	below. L3 Describe the	More detail on this lesson can be found in Exploring the
and suggest answers to the question 'what happens when we	Use the image of a set of weighing scales to introduce and explain the concept of 'judgement', with good deeds weighed on one side and 'bad' deeds on the other. Discuss with pupils what the word 'judgement' means.	beliefs about judgement held by Christians	journey of life and Death Ed. Joyce Mackley RE Today Services
die' in the context of religious and non religious beliefs; iv. explain how different beliefs about what happens when we die may cause people to live their life in different ways;	 Scoring your life Once understood, challenge pupils to consider what 'pass mark' they would set for entry into a happy afterlife. What qualities and habits would be found in people who 'passed'? Ask pupils to imagine that they are in charge for the day of who gets into Heaven. Pupils need to be able justify why they have set the pass mark where they have. They can then complete the sentence 'If the roof fell in now, I would score _ out of ten'. Ask pupils to discuss who or what type of people they think score highly and who would receive a low score. What do you think your score is now and what do you do to increase or decrease your score? After this discussion ask pupils to annotate a set of scales with their ideas about these questions in writing or drawing. Use this image to introduce and explain the belief of one life and judgement. Share with pupils that Jews, Christians and Muslims believe this. God judges us according to the decisions we have made within our life. Each of the religions believes something different about how God will judge us. All these religions teach that if we have made positive decisions something positive will happen - we will go to Paradise or Heaven. Each of these religions also teaches that if we have made bad decisions then we will suffer consequences. 	L4 Show understanding of the Christian belief in Judgement and how that is similar and different to the Hindu belief in reincarnation	The concept of 'judgement' demands acknowledging that some lives would be judged as unsatisfactory. All religions that believe in judgement accept that only God can judge a life's work and that there is guidance as to how t live a good life. Different Christians have different beliefs about what happens when we die. Some
	• How might one get a higher or lower score? What happens to those who do not	L5	will say that as long

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 make it? Explain that this is another ultimate question that many believers have to consider. Ask pupils to respond through writing/drawing thoughts or completing sentence starters. Judgement means Different religions say The similarities and differences between these ideas are If I made the rules as to who can go into heaven, I would make sure because My score is because Looking at this today has made me think Divide pupils into groups to find out about beliefs about judgement in Christianity and Judaism or Islam. Envoy information to other groups. 	Explain the impact for a Christian, of a belief in Judgement, in a series of areas of their life.	as we believe in Jesus as the Son of God we will go to heaven and come face to face with God. People who believe this try to follow Jesus' teachings. Others believe that we will be judged on the way we have lived our lives. Some Christians believe there will be a time of judgement before people go to Heaven.
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Learning outcomes Teaching should enable pupils to	Teaching and Learning Teachers can select from the following and adapt as appropriate, making sure that the learning outcomes are met and that pupils' learning needs are addressed. This material need not be taught as a whole unit but can be linked to work in other subject areas.	Levelled pupil outcomes: so that pupils can say "I can" to one or more of the statements below.	Notes
 <i>ii.</i> ask questions and suggest answers to the question 'what happens when we die' in the context of religious and non religious beliefs; <i>iii.</i> explain why a believer may wish to mark the end of life with a particular religious ceremony; 	 Investigate What do Christians think happens when we die? How do they mark a death? Ask the children to work in groups to collect what they already know from the lesson on Judgement about what Christians believe. Read the poem 'Heaven' by Steve Turner. This poem is written in a contemporary style and from a Christian perspective. In groups answer a selection of questions from the poem for example: The poet is a Christian. How can you tell? Which verse in the poem do you think is most important for Christians? Why? What puzzling questions does the poem make you think about? What answer do you think a Christian would give to the questions in the last two lines? Ceremonies when people have died? Look together at an order of service for a Christian funeral, looking at what it says about a believer's hope in death. What bible passages do people read? What do they say about beliefs about death? Use the idea of the eulogy to promote discussion about memories and sadness of bereaved friends and family. Explain it is an honest story of the person's life. If it is appropriate choose someone well known who has died eg a children's author or sports person and ask groups to write a Eulogy. Will what they write only be about what they were famous for? 	 L2 Identify a Christian belief about life and death L3 Make a link between a reading that might be used at a funeral and a Christian belief about life after death L4 Describe what might happen in a Christian funeral explaining how it shows some Christian beliefs about life after death 	Heaven by Steve Turner can be found in Steve Turner poems selected by Rebecca Winter (Lion Publishing, ISBN 0 7 59 4802 2) It can also be found on Poemhunter www.poemhunter.co m Information on Christian death beliefs <u>http://www.request.o</u> <u>rg.uk/main/basics/basision/pa</u>

Learning outcomes Teaching should enable pupils to	Teaching and Learning Teachers can select from the following and adapt as appropriate, making sure that the learning outcomes are met and that pupils' learning needs are addressed. This material need not be taught as a whole unit but can be linked to work in other subject areas.	Levelled pupil outcomes: so that pupils can say "I can" to one or more of the statements below.	Notes
 <i>ii.</i> ask questions and suggest answers to the question 'what happens when we die' in the context of religious and non religious beliefs; <i>iii.</i> explain why a believer may wish to mark the end of life with a particular religious ceremony; <i>iv.</i> explain how different beliefs about what happens when we die may cause people to live their life in different ways; 	 Investigate What do people who don't believe in God think happens when we die? Different ideas of death Draw a time line for a person, ending at the point of death. Fork this line in 3 ways to demonstrate the different answers to 'What happens when we die?' - judgement, re-incarnation and then the response, 'nothing'. Extend understanding of this by making it clear that this response often leads to a desire to live life to the full. Can pupils think why? How is the belief that nothing happens different to the other two beliefs studied? How do we live life to the full? Reflect and ask pupils to respond to what 'live life to the full' might mean. You could introduce the idea of the books such as '100 things to do before you die' and '100 places to see before you die'. Explain that at a funeral of a non-believer, the life is celebrated for what was achieved and what was given to others. The focus is on the life lived, not on a life to come. Share some readings that could be chosen for a non religious funeral service. Give pupils opportunity to consider and write mission statements that set out hopes and dreams for their own lives. 	 L3 Recognise and describe two similarities or differences between the views of someone with non religious views about death to those of either a Hindu or a Christian L4 Describe the impact that believing that nothing happens when we die might have on the life of someone who holds these views L5 know that similarities and differences in funeral ceremonies illustrate differences and similarities in belief and suggest reasons for this 	Pupils might be tempted to think 'living life to the full' means living pleasure filled, selfish lives. Humanists believe a full life is one that contributes to the lives of others as well, so relationships and caring for others are seen as part of being 'fully human'. The British humanist association provides information about funerals on its website <u>www.humanism.org.uk</u> It also publishes Funerals without God by J Wynne Willson

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Learning	Why do some people believe in life after death and what Teaching and Learning	Levelled pupil	Notes
outcomes		outcomes:	10103
	Teachers can select from the following and adapt as appropriate,	so that pupils can	
Teaching should	making sure that the learning outcomes are met and that pupils'	say "I can" to	
enable pupils to	learning needs are addressed. This material need not be taught as a	one or more of the	
	whole unit but can be linked to work in other subject areas.	statements below.	
	Evaluate and Express	L3	A ready-made set of
ii. ask questions	Weigh up arguments and assess conclusions	Recognise and	cards for this activity can
and suggest	And	describe one	be found on p27/28 of
answers to the	Articulate findings and their implications	similarity and one	Exploring the journey of
question 'what	Impersonal evaluation	difference between	life and Death Ed. Joyce
happens when we	• Give the pupils a series of statements about what Christians, Hindus and	two beliefs systems	Mackley RE Today
die' in the context	those who hold non religious beliefs believe about death. When you first	ideas about death	services
of religious and non	give the quotes to the children don't tell them who holds this belief. Ask		
religious beliefs;	the children to sort the cards into three piles depending on the belief that	Ask some questions	Alternatively you could
	they think they represent.	and give some	make up your own set of
	• Explain to the pupils who hold the views. Is this surprising or did their	answers about what	cards by searching on
v. express their	learning help them to get these answers right?	one of the religions I	question 3 on the
own beliefs about	Give each pair of children a Venn diagram and ask them to use just two	have studied says about life and death	Children Talking website
life after death	sets of cards. Label one circle, for example, Christian only and the other	about me and death	http://www.natre.org.uk/d
reflecting on ideas	Hindu only. Where the two overlap place shared beliefs. Ask the children	L4	<u>b/</u>
from at least two	to sort the cards.	Use the right words	
religions they have	Meet up with another pair to share ideas, justify conclusions and make	to describe what	
studied.	any amendments	two religions say	
		about life and death	
	Explain to the children that they now need to write back to Lil and explain the		
	different answers to the questions. Ensure that in their response they will	Create a statement	
	need to explain how holding certain beliefs makes people behave in their	of my own beliefs	Heaven by Peter
	lives. You will need to differentiate this activity with sentence starters and	about life and death,	Blowfield can be
	writing frames.	referring to ideas	downloaded free by
		from two religions or beliefs I have	going to
		studied	• •
		รเนนเยน	http://www.natre.org.uk/s
	Personal evaluation	L5	piritedarts/poetry.php
			The poem can be

 Read the poem Heaven by Peter Blowfield (aged 10) available free from the NATRE website. Read and discuss the poem in small groups. Set the pupils some questions to consider for example What is the poet certain/uncertain about? Why do you think the poet has so many questions but no answers? What do you think this poet might believe about what happens when we die? Ask the children to go back to the questions they answered at the beginning of the unit. Have their views changed? 	Explain how similarities and differences in ideas about what happens when we die illustrate differences and similarities of belief suggest reasons for this	accessed by downloading the 2006 winners
Personal expression Set the pupils the task of writing their own poem about life and death, perhaps with a repeating phrase such as Heaven, Heaven what does it mean? Can they express their own ideas in their poem? When the poem is written ask the children to write an explanation of how it shows their own beliefs about death, comparing their ideas to two other ideas they have studied.	Express my views about what some religions and belief systems say happens when we die, relating the ideas to my own life.	

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Resources

Teachers might use:

Books:

- It is likely that some source material will be available in school libraries and RE resource material. It is worth looking for the most appropriate level
 of text.
- Certain books deal with the issue of death in a child appropriate way. Pick the one that seems to best open the dialogue with your pupils. 'Heaven' by Nicholas Allan (Red Fox, 2006) is an excellent text. Other teachers have found success with 'Badger's Parting Gifts' by Susan Varley (Picture Lions & Magi various editions) and 'The Sad Book' by Michael Rosen (Walker Books, 2004)
- Many books which compare death rites in different religions and societies are also available. For example 'End of life Rituals' C Chambers (Cherrytree Books, 2007)
- 'I was only asking: poems about big questions' by Steve Turner (Lion, 2004)

Web:

- A search engine would be able to identify many websites, drawing from all religious traditions and none, that would allow pupils to research particular rituals, customs and arrangements.
- Information on Hindu beliefs about death http://hinduism.iskcon.com/practice/600.htm
- Information on Christian death beliefs <u>http://www.request.org.uk/main/basics/basics.htm</u>

Visual and other resources

- Most RE focused Schools Programmes cover the topic of 'Dying' through the festival of Easter. These could be used wherever appropriate. 'The Miraclemaker' DVD (Hodder & Stoughton, 1999) includes the Easter story.
- BBC Whiteboard Active 'Rites of Passage' video clips, photos, audio, stories and interactive activities around the journey of life, including a section on the end of life.
- Samples of support networks for bereaved children –Winston's Wish family line 0845 2030 405 <u>www.winstonswish.org.uk</u>, The Child Bereavement Trust 01494 440057 <u>www.childbereavement.org.uk</u>, Child Death Helpline 0800 282986