

RE in the nursery

Activities children engage in during their nursery years are experiences which provide the building blocks for later development. Starting with things which are familiar to the children, and providing lots of hands-on activities and learning are an important part of children's learning at this stage.

Some ideas for religious education in the nursery can include:

- creative play, make-believe, role play, dance and drama
- dressing up and acting out scenes from stories, celebrations or festivals
- making and eating festival food
- talking and listening to each other; hearing and discussing stories of all kinds, including religious and secular stories with themes such as goodness, difference, the inner world of thoughts and feelings, and imagination
- exploring authentic religious artefacts, including those designed for small children such as 'soft toy' artefacts or story books
- seeing pictures, books and videos of places of worship and meeting believers in class
- listening to religious music
- starting to introduce religious vocabulary
- work on nature, growing and life cycles or harvest
- seizing opportunities spontaneously or linking with topical, local events such as celebrations, festivals, the birth of a new baby, weddings or the death of a pet
- starting to talk about the different ways in which people believe and behave, and encouraging children to ask questions

Themes which lend themselves to opportunities for RE work include the following:

Myself	People who help us	Special times
My life	Friendship	Our community
My senses	Welcome	Special books
My special things	Belonging	Stories
People special to me	Special places	The natural world

Good teaching in the EYFS will always build on children's interests and enthusiasms as well as their learning and development needs, and themes should be developed accordingly.

RE in the Reception year

Non-statutory guidance for RE for all 4–5s in the Reception year

The approach outlined for nursery will also serve Reception class teachers, especially in the earlier months of the Reception year. In addition to this, the following pages are suggestions of questions, outcomes and content that will ensure good provision for RE in Reception.

The questions, outcomes and content below are non-statutory but should be read by all schools and settings to ensure that their provision is effective. For teaching to be high quality the questions, learning outcomes and content need to be taught together. It is not sufficient simply to use the questions suggested.

Religions and worldviews

In Reception class, children should encounter Christianity and other faiths as part of their growing sense of self, their own community and their place within it.

Three units below focus on Christianity, and the others include opportunities to encounter Christians, Hindus, Jews and Muslims, as well as non-religious responses and ways of living.

Six units are provided. Schools should teach **at least four** of these.

F1 Why is the word 'God' so important to Christians?

F2 Why is Christmas special for Christians?

F3 Why is Easter special for Christians?

F4 Being special: where do we belong?

F5 Which places are special and why?

F6 Which stories are special and why?

Staggered entry: Clearly, for most children, entry to school will be staggered. This means that there needs to be flexibility about when units are done; so, for example, a unit supports around six hours of RE and can be fitted in to suit the needs of the children, rather than timetabled rigidly into each half-term.

Note: Unit F4 (*Being special: where do we belong?*) is suggested as a good introductory section to use in the first term or two. For all schools, this is a time of integrating the children into the new school environment. The themes of belonging and community are likely to be important elements of provision at this time, and practitioners should take the opportunity to include RE where appropriate. (See Guidance p.147 for a sample long-term plan to see where these units might fit during a school year.)