

Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus Key Stage 3 Example Unit of Work Is Our World Perfect? The Problem of Evil – Year 9

About the Unit

The purpose of this unit is to explore the question, 'Is our world perfect?', in relation to the problem of evil. Also to consider the variety and forms of suffering (including the Holocaust) and to explore, reflect and respond to the various responses to it. Students could be taken to The Holocaust Centre, Beth Shalom, Laxton, Newark, Nottinghamshire, NG22 OPA, www.bethshalom.com, in order to gain further insight into this topic.

Please note that the unit is set out as discrete blocks of learning with suggested starters and plenaries, but can easily be adapted to suit other curriculum models.

Key Concepts

1.1 Beliefs, teachings and sources

- a) Interpreting teachings, sources, authorities and ways of life in order to understand religions and beliefs.
- b) Understanding and responding critically to beliefs and attitudes.

1.5 Meaning, purpose and truth

- a) Engaging critically with ultimate questions that confront humanity.

Key Processes

2.1 Learning about religion (AT1)

| | | Pupils should be taught to: |
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| 2.1a | Importance/Impact of Religion & Religious Diversity | Investigate the impact of religious beliefs and teachings on individuals, communities and societies, the reasons for commitment and the causes of diversity. |
| 2.1g | Issues of Truth | Analyse religious beliefs, arguments and ideas, including analysis of the evidence and arguments used when considering issues of truth in religion and philosophy. |

2.2 Learning from religion (AT2)

| | | Pupils should be taught to: |
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| 2.2b | Reflection on Belonging | Reflect on and evaluate the challenges and tensions of belonging to a religion and the impact of religion in the contemporary world, expressing their own idea |
| 2.2c | Reflection on What Individuals and Communities Value | Express insights into the significance and value of religion and other world views on human relationships personally, locally and globally |
| 2.2d | Responses to Ethical and Philosophical Issues | Express their own beliefs, ideas, values and understanding, in a variety of ways, including creative forms and reasoned arguments. |

Range and Content (traditions and themes)

This unit focuses on the problem of evil and suffering from Christian, Buddhist and secular perspectives.

Themes for this unit:

Ethics and Experiences of Human Relationships: questions and influences that inform ethical and moral choices including forgiveness and issues of good and evil

Curriculum opportunities:

During this unit pupils will have the opportunity to develop understanding in the following areas:

- d) Discuss religious, ethical and philosophical questions, giving reasons for their own beliefs and those of others
- e) Reflect on their own and others' beliefs and values
- f) Use a variety of forms of expression to express and communicate their own and others' insights
- g) Identify and explore the connections between RE and other subject areas.

Assessment

During this unit pupils should have opportunities to show their knowledge, understanding and skills. When working at differentiated levels, pupils could demonstrate this in the following ways:

Less developed (e.g. working towards level 5 in year 9) could:

- Explain how religious sources are used to provide answers to ultimate questions and ethical issues, recognising diversity in forms of religious, spiritual and moral expression, within and between religions.
- Explain what inspires and influences them, expressing their own views on the challenges of belonging to a religion.

Developed (e.g. level 6 in year 9) could:

- Interpret sources and arguments, explaining the reasons that are used in different ways by traditions to provide answers to ultimate questions and ethical issues.
- Express insights into their own and others' views on questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, showing respect.
- Consider the challenges of belonging to a religion in the contemporary world, focusing on values and commitments.

Extended (e.g. level 7 in year 9) could:

- Analyse issues, values and questions of meaning and truth.
- Evaluate the significance of religious and other views for understanding questions of human relationships, belonging, identity, society, values and commitments, using appropriate evidence and examples.

Possible assessment tasks:

- Silent debate, 'Is our world perfect?' The question is written on a piece of sugar paper. Students work in small groups, each student in the group has a different colour pen (so the teacher knows who has contributed what), students are encouraged to answer the question from many viewpoints and link and develop ideas.
- Students should pick a picture that demonstrates good and evil, and deliver a presentation to the class to explain how it represents good and evil, 'What is good, what is evil, should we forgive and is there a purpose to suffering?' It could then be peer assessed. Students should be advised if their picture is appropriate before they present, staff should stress that the research and presentation should be sensitive as it is such a powerful topic, if necessary students can be provided with the images.
- Assessment opportunity page 14, *Evil & Goodness*, Edited by Joyce Mackley, Christian Education Publications ISBN 1-904024-20-3 RE Today Services
- Essay title: '*The problem of evil and suffering can easily be explained*' Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer. Make sure you consider religious views (this could be adapted to suit the assessment criteria of GCSE specifications)

Resources

You may find the following resources useful when teaching this unit:

- Holocaust survivors testimonies www.historyspeaks.org.uk
- *Evil & Goodness*, Edited by Joyce Mackley, Christian Education Publications ISBN 1-904024-20-3 RE Today Services
- *Questions about God, Some perspectives*, Edited by Rosemary Rivett, Christian Education Publications ISBN 1-904024-48-3 RE Today Services
- *Schindler's List* DVD. Plot, Oskar Schindler uses Jews to start a factory in Poland during the war. He witnesses the horrors endured by the Jews, and starts to save them.
- Various text may be useful – *The Buddhist Experience*, Mel Thompson, Hodder & Stoughton ISBN 0-340-74771-4, *One World Many Issues, Religion And Life* etc
- The Holocaust Centre, Beth Shalom, Laxton, Newark, Nottinghamshire, NG22 OPA, www.bethshalom.com has a lot of resources available. Such as, Learning About The Holocaust ISBN 1-90038-10-9-5

Vocabulary

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| Good Agnostic | Evil Free-will | Suffering Forgiveness | Natural Evil Sin | Moral Evil The Fall | Holocaust Karma | Theist | Atheist |
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Further Guidance

The problem of evil and suffering is a very sensitive topic and this will need to be taken into consideration as the topic is taught. For example, being aware of any relevant personal circumstance of students etc. See *Dealing with sensitive & controversial issues in Religious Education: a practical guide* available at www.futuresinlearning.net

Teaching the Unit:

| Learning objectives | Key questions | Content | Teaching and Learning Activities | Learning Outcomes | Resources |
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| <p>AT1 2.1g Analyse religious beliefs, arguments and ideas, including analysis of the evidence and arguments used when considering issues of truth in religion and philosophy.</p> <p>AT2 2.2c Express insights into the significance and value of religion and other world views on human relationships personally, locally and globally.</p> <p>2.2d Express their own beliefs, ideas, values and understanding, in a</p> | <p>What do we mean by good and evil?</p> <p>Are there degrees of evil and degrees of goodness?</p> <p>Are human beings naturally good or naturally bad?</p> | <p>How can goodness and evil be explained?</p> | <p>Starter: In pairs give the students a range of quotes about good and ask them to diamond-rank placing the strongly agree at the top and strongly disagree at the bottom. As a class come back together and discuss how the class believes good can be explained.</p> <p>Main: Introduce the concept of evil and ask the students to reflect how they would explain it. Ask the students to play 'The Worst Things In The World' game in groups. Individually students should draw up their own ten worst evils, and write a paragraph to justify their answer. As a class some students should feedback their ideas. Discuss: What is evil? What is goodness? Are there degrees of evil and degrees of goodness? Are human beings naturally good or naturally bad?</p> <p>Optional Assessment: Students should pick a picture that demonstrates good and evil, and deliver a presentation to the class to explain</p> | <p>Students can explain their and others' opinion on what goodness and evil are.</p> <p>Students can explain if they believe humans are naturally good or bad.</p> | <p>Diamond board and quotes about good</p> <p>'The Worst Things In The World' game (page 3-6 <i>Evil & Goodness</i> book)</p> |

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| <p>variety of ways, including creative forms and reasoned arguments.</p> | | | <p>how it represents good and evil, what is good, what is evil, should we forgive and is there a purpose to suffering? It could then be peer assessed. Students should be advised if their picture is appropriate before they present, staff should stress that the research and presentation should be sensitive as it is such a powerful topic, if necessary students can be provided with the images.</p> <p>Plenary: Provide pupils with a collection of pictures of 'good' and 'evil' people, this might include Princess Diana, Hitler, Martin Luther King, Myra Hindley, Gandhi, Harold Shipman. Ask pupils to sort them into two categories of their choosing. Discuss the key questions from the lesson.</p> | | |
| <p>AT1 2.1g Analyse religious beliefs, arguments and ideas, including analysis of the evidence and arguments used when considering issues of truth in religion and philosophy.</p> <p>AT2</p> | <p>What is moral and natural and evil?</p> <p>What is the problem of evil?</p> <p>Why do we suffer?</p> | <p>Define and explain moral and natural evil. Consider the problem of evil and suffering.</p> | <p>Starter Give students an array of newspaper headlines of different types of suffering i.e. Baby rescued alive from earthquake, Holocaust victims still suffer etc. Ask them to sort them into two categories 'manmade' and natural</p> <p>Main As a class discuss how students have categorise the headlines. Introduce the terms moral and natural evil. Choose one moral evil i.e. Hillsborough disaster, the twin towers and one natural evil i.e. Boxing Day Tsunami.</p> | <p>Students can explain moral and natural evil.</p> <p>Students have considered the problem of evil and why we suffer.</p> | <p>Newspaper headlines</p> <p>Hedgehog activity (page 7, <i>Questions about God</i>)</p> <p>Mini-whiteboards</p> |

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| <p>2.2c Express insights into the significance and value of religion and other world views on human relationships personally, locally and globally.</p> <p>2.2d Express their own beliefs, ideas, values and understanding, in a variety of ways, including creative forms and reasoned arguments.</p> | | | <p>Ask student to discuss in groups who/what caused it? How has it caused suffering?</p> <p>Ask students to discuss in their groups is it possible to have a world without, evil, pain, suffering or death?</p> <p>Ask students to complete the hedgehog activity (see resources required) 'Play God', devise a world that would be perfect for hedgehogs!</p> <p>Discuss: Is the creation of such a perfect world for hedgehogs, possible, desirable? Is 'suffering' for hedgehogs a necessary part of 'the way things are'?</p> <p>How can we apply our perfect world for hedgehogs to a perfect world for human beings? Does the same hold true?</p> <p>Explain the problem of evil.</p> <p>Optional Assessment</p> <p>Silent debate, 'Is our world perfect?' The question is written on a piece of sugar paper students work in small groups, each students in the group has a different colour pen (so the teacher knows who has contributed what), students are encouraged to answer the question from many viewpoints and link and develop ideas.</p> <p>Plenary</p> <p>Ask the students to write the answers to the key questions (What is moral and natural and evil? What is the problem of evil? Why do we suffer?) on their whiteboards and hold up their answers</p> | | |
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| <p>AT1 2.1a Investigate the impact of religious beliefs and teachings on individuals, communities and societies, the reasons for commitment and the causes of diversity.</p> <p>AT2 22.b Reflect on and evaluate the challenges and tensions of belonging to a religion and the impact of religion in the contemporary world, expressing their own ideas.</p> <p>2.2c Express insights into the significance and value of religion and other world views on human relationships personally, locally and globally.</p> <p>2.2d Express their own beliefs, ideas,</p> | <p>Who suffered in the Holocaust?</p> <p>What questions for the Jewish religion might be raised by the evil of the holocaust?</p> <p>What is the difference between a religious and traditionalist Jew?</p> | <p>Explain who suffered during the Holocaust. How where the Jews tested in their faith. Why did some Jews remain religious and others become traditionalists .</p> | <p>Starter Write, Hitler, Churchill, Mussolini, Roosevelt, Anne Frank, and Schindler on the board and ask the students to find links between these words. There is a bonus for the person who can link the most words!</p> <p>Main Show the students an array of pictures from the Holocaust or an extract from a survivor (www.historyspeaks.org.uk) or an extract from Schindler's List. As a class discuss who suffered and how Give the students 'Evil in Poetry' poems, ask students to work in pairs to answer the questions, introduce the key words atheist, theist, agnostic. Ask a selection of students to read their answers to the class. Discuss what questions might be raised by the evil of the holocaust for Jews? What is the difference between a religious and traditionalist Jew?</p> <p>Plenary Prediction: What do you think will happen in the future? Why do you think this? (consider recent genocides) Use key questions from the lesson to direct the students.</p> | <p>Students have an understanding of who suffered during the Holocaust.</p> <p>Students consider how the Jews where tested in their faith and why some Jew remained religious and others became traditionalists.</p> | <p>Pictures from the Holocaust</p> <p>Extract from a survivor www.history Speakes.org.uk</p> <p>extract from <i>Schindler's List</i></p> <p>'Evil in poetry' (page 32 <i>Evil & Goodness</i> book)</p> |
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| values and understanding, in a variety of ways, including creative forms and reasoned arguments. | | | | | |
| <p>AT1 2.1a Investigate the impact of religious beliefs and teachings on individuals, communities and societies, the reasons for commitment and the causes of diversity.</p> <p>AT2 22.b Reflect on and evaluate the challenges and tensions of belonging to a religion and the impact of religion in the contemporary world, expressing their own ideas.</p> <p>2.2c Express insights into the significance and value of religion and</p> | <p>Why do good people suffer?</p> <p>To what extent does the story of Job have a positive message to all those in the world who feel unjustly treated?</p> | <p>Consider the answers that can be given as to why good people suffer and the meaning and purpose behind Job's suffering.</p> | <p>Starter Ask students to write down how a character in a soap opera who has suffered (such as Dot Cotton, Ken Barlow etc) and why do they think they have suffered?</p> <p>Main Ask the students to read Job 1:13-22 and create a snowstorm of all the suffering he endures. Ask students to read 4 statements: Suffering is God's way of testing people: God punishes the wicked and rewards the good: Suffering is part of God's plan, we are unable to understand this: Suffering has nothing to do with God. They should rate them 1-10 strongly agree to strongly disagree. Give students an overview of the story of Job. Give the student's reflection time and then discuss the following questions as a class: How does Job's acceptance of his situation make you feel? Does it alter the ratings of your statements? Why do good people suffer? Why does God allow suffering? What does the story of Job tell us about God? To what</p> | <p>Students have considered why good people may suffer and how the story of Job's suffering can be explained.</p> | <p>Bible</p> <p>Overview of the story of Job</p> |

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| <p>other world views on human relationships personally, locally and globally.</p> <p>2.2d Express their own beliefs, ideas, values and understanding, in a variety of ways, including creative forms and reasoned arguments.</p> | | | <p>extent does the story of Job have a positive message to all those in the world who feel unjustly treated? Can the innocent suffer?</p> <p>Plenary In pairs, answer the question set at the start on a 'post-it' note. Stick on board and review, does the class agree?</p> | | |
| <p>AT1 2.1a Investigate the impact of religious beliefs and teachings on individuals, communities and societies, the reasons for commitment and the causes of diversity.</p> <p>AT2 22.b Reflect on and evaluate the challenges and tensions of belonging to a religion and the impact of religion in the contemporary</p> | <p>What are the fall, sin and free will?</p> <p>How does original sin help explain suffering for Christians?</p> | <p>Students will consider how sin originated and how this helps to answer the issue of suffering for Christians.</p> | <p>Starter Discuss in pairs, if you where told specifically <u>not</u> to do something would you? Feedback to the class</p> <p>Main Narrate the story of 'the fall/original sin' ask the students act it out or use props. Discuss should we have a perfect world? Would it have been possible to maintain a perfect world (relate to the perfect world for hedgehogs from previous lesson)? Ask students to discuss in pairs what the fall, sin and free will are, then discuss in groups what the fall ,sin and free will are, finally as a class agree what the fall, sin and free will are. Ask students to design a piece of art work to show what they think the fall says about human beings and the world today (guide them to</p> | <p>Students will understand what the fall, sin, free will and original sin are. Also how these concepts help Christians explain suffering in the world.</p> | <p>Story of 'the Fall'</p> <p>Craft box</p> <p>Assessment (see page 14, <i>Evil and Goodness</i>)</p> |

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| <p>world, expressing their own ideas.</p> <p>2.2c Express insights into the significance and value of religion and other world views on human relationships personally, locally and globally.</p> <p>2.2d Express their own beliefs, ideas, values and understanding, in a variety of ways, including creative forms and reasoned arguments.</p> | | | <p>include 'original sin ' and suffering)</p> <p>Optional assessment This could be completed as a assessment (see page 14, Evil and Goodness)</p> <p>Plenary Ask students to place their art work on the desk, with an explanation next to it. Explaining how their art work shows what they think the story says about human beings and the world, tell them to include the answers to the key questions within their explanation.</p> | | |
| <p>AT1 2.1a Investigate the impact of religious beliefs and teachings on individuals, communities and societies, the reasons for commitment and the causes of diversity.</p> <p>AT2 22.b Reflect on and evaluate the</p> | <p>What are the Four Noble Truths? How Do they explain suffering?</p> <p>What are Karma and Reincarnation?</p> | <p>Student will consider how the Four Noble Truths explain suffering. Students will consider what karma and reincarnation are.</p> | <p>Starter How do you feel after you eat lots of chocolate? How would you feel if you risked all your money on the stock exchange and lost it?</p> <p>Main Explain the Four Noble Truths to the students; refer back to the starter questions whilst doing this. Then ask the students to create a role play as if they are at the doctors to explain the Four Noble Truths or to complete a series of freeze frames to explain the Four Noble Truths. Ask students to perform/show their role</p> | <p>Students will understand how the Four Noble Truths explain suffering, karma and reincarnation.</p> | <p>Snakes and Ladders Board (page 18 <i>Evil & Goodness</i> book</p> <p>Buddhist Wheel of Life (Page 57 <i>The Buddhist Experience</i>)</p> |

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| <p>challenges and tensions of belonging to a religion and the impact of religion in the contemporary world, expressing their own ideas.</p> <p>2.2c Express insights into the significance and value of religion and other world views on human relationships personally, locally and globally.</p> <p>2.2d Express their own beliefs, ideas, values and understanding, in a variety of ways, including creative forms and reasoned arguments.</p> | | | <p>play/freeze frames to the class. Show the students the snakes and ladders board, discuss whether they think good actions should be rewarded and bad actions should be punished. Explain the concept of karma. The students could make a snakes and ladders game to consolidate their learning.</p> <p>Ask students to contemplate what answer could be given to the question, What happens when we die? Introduce the concept of reincarnation, using the Buddhist wheel of life to assist you.</p> <p>Plenary</p> <p>Give the students anagrams of The Four Noble Truths, Suffering, Karma and Reincarnation. Ask them to put each anagram into a sentence to explain how it relates to what they have learnt this lesson.</p> | | |
| <p>AT1</p> <p>2.1a Investigate the impact of religious beliefs and teachings on individuals, communities and societies, the reasons for</p> | <p>What have you learnt this module?</p> | <p>What students have learnt will be assessed.</p> | <p>Starter</p> <p>Students can watch Nick Vujicic (available on Youtube) link this to the students not give up and trying their best in their assessment.</p> <p>Main</p> <p>Essay title: <i>'The problem of evil and suffering can easily be explained'</i>. In your answer you should refer to at least</p> | <p>Students understanding is assessed</p> | <p>Nick Vujicic Youtube</p> <p>End of Module feedback sheet</p> |

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| <p>commitment and the causes of diversity.</p> <p>2.1g Analyse religious beliefs, arguments and ideas, including analysis of the evidence and arguments used when considering issues of truth in religion and philosophy.</p> <p>AT2</p> <p>22.b Reflect on and evaluate the challenges and tensions of belonging to a religion and the impact of religion in the contemporary world, expressing their own ideas.</p> <p>2.2c Express insights into the significance and value of religion and other world views on human relationships personally, locally and globally.</p> | | | <p><i>one religion. i) Do you agree? Give reasons for your opinion. ii) Give reasons why some people may disagree with you.</i> The question could be written in the style of a GCSE question to introduce GCSE skills.</p> <p>Optional What other fundamental questions do people ask? QCA: unit 9C: Why do we suffer? Last lesson</p> <p>Plenary Ask students to fill out a feedback sheet on the module</p> | | |
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| 2.2d Express their own beliefs, ideas, values and understanding, in a variety of ways, including creative forms and reasoned arguments. | | | | | |
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