

Sound of Silence Unit- Year 3/4

About the Unit

Pupils should begin from personal experience of times when they or others have found silence useful, thinking about why it was valuable. What kind of experiences reduce them to silence? What feelings accompany the stillness and silence? These feelings may be triggered by the natural world or by things that happen: joyful, sad, mysterious or frightening. They should go on to consider why Christians might value silence for worship or for contemplation. Explore Quaker worship. What kinds of things might they want to think through in God's presence? (This might raise some of the ultimate questions of life/death, joy/suffering, origin etc). Pupils should be introduced to the Buddhist practice of meditation, giving them the opportunity to practise concentration. They should be shown how the Buddha used meditation to seek answers to the important questions of existence, with an introduction to the Four Noble Truths to show how Buddhists understand the world. Pupils have an opportunity to think about what they would value having space and time to puzzle through for themselves, sharing 'difficult questions'.

Key Concepts

1.1 Beliefs, teachings and sources

- a) Finding out about teachings, sources, authorities and ways of life in order to develop some understanding of religions and beliefs
- b) Understanding and responding to beliefs

1.2 Practices and ways of life

- a) Exploring and considering how religions and beliefs influence the ways in which people live their lives.
- b) Understanding that religious practices may have similarities, are diverse and can change

1.5 Meaning, purpose and truth

- a) Exploring some of the ultimate questions that confront humanity

1.6 Values and Commitments

- b) Reflecting on their own values in relation to those of others

Key Processes

2.1c	beliefs and practices	(i) describe the key aspects of religions, especially the people, stories and traditions that influence the beliefs and values of others (ii) describe the variety of practices and ways of life in religions and understand how these stem from, and are closely connected with beliefs and teachings
2.1e	Religious/spiritual expression	interpret a range of forms of religious expression and understand why they are important in religion
2.1f	ultimate & ethical questions	describe and begin to understand religious and other responses to ultimate and ethical questions
2.2c	reflection on what individuals and communities value	Reflect on the importance of religion and other world views for individuals and communities
2.2d	responses to ethical and philosophical issues	Express their own and others' views of right and wrong, belief and religious truth, including reflection on sources of inspiration in their own and others' lives

Range and Content (traditions and themes)

This unit focuses on the Christian and Buddhist traditions.

Themes for this unit:

- a) **Beliefs and questions:** how people's beliefs about God, the world and others impact on their lives.
- c) **Worship, pilgrimage and sacred places:** where, how and why people worship, including at particular sites
- e) **Symbols and religious expression:** how religious and spiritual ideas are expressed
- f) **Inspirational people:** figures from whom believers find inspiration.
- g) **Religion and the individual:** what is expected of a person in following a religion or belief
- h) **Religion, family and community:** how religious families and communities practise their faith, and the contributions this makes to local life

Curriculum opportunities:

During the course of this unit children may use:

Literacy- To write poems reflecting on silence and stillness

The unit provides a strong input into the development of spirituality of pupils.

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:

	Year 3	Year 4
Basic	Pupils will know that there are some questions which do not have easy answers and identify one which puzzles them. They will recognise that for some people silence is a useful tool in dealing with problems. Level 2	Pupils will be aware of a range of puzzling questions and offer alternative solutions to one that puzzles them. They will explain simply how and why Christians and Buddhists use silence to think through such issues Level 3
Developed	Pupils will be aware of a range of puzzling questions and offer alternative solutions to one that puzzles them. They will explain simply how and why Christians and Buddhists use silence to think through such issues Level 3	Pupils will recognise that a variety of experiences and events lead to emotions and questions and will discuss these with understanding. They will explain the difference between the Christian use of silence in worship and the Buddhist use of meditation, comparing both to their own use of silence or other methods to seek solutions for the things that puzzle them. Working towards L4
Extended	Pupils will recognise that a variety of experiences and events lead to emotions and questions and will discuss these with understanding. They will explain the difference between the Christian use of silence in worship and the Buddhist use of meditation, comparing both to their own use of silence or other methods to seek solutions for the things that puzzle them. Working towards L4	Pupils can identify a range of experiences and events which might lead to emotions and the asking of ultimate questions. They can describe and compare Christian use of silence in worship and Buddhist meditation and can identify similarities and differences between these. They are able to respond personally to these practices and use these and their own methods to explore ultimate questions they want to ask. Level 4

Possible assessment tasks:

- Read poems written in response to silence and stillness
- Look at collections of ultimate questions generated in silent contemplation
- Observe pupil engagement in stilling and meditation activities

Resources

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

- Photographic images from the natural world (paper-based or on IWB).
- *Don't Just Do Something, Sit There*, Mary Stone, RMEP
- Current newspapers
- Picture of praying hands as a prompt
- Video: *Quakerism Through the Eyes of Quaker Children*, CEM.
- Visit to Quaker meeting house or a Quaker visitor or use a website such as: <http://www.quakerinfo.org/quakerism/worship.html>
- Reflection area in classroom with artefacts to aid meditation, such as candles, cross/crucifix, flowers.
- Videos/DVD:: *Buddhism for KS2*, Clear Vision Trust; *Worlds of Faith: Buddhist*, Channel 4.
- Buddha rupa, incense, flowers and candles.
- Story of the Buddha's life e.g. *Prince Siddhartha*, J Landaw and J Brooke, Wisdom or video- *Animated World Faiths*, Channel 4.
- Slips of paper/post-it notes.
- Post box/basket for collecting these in.

Vocabulary

natural	silence	stilling	Quaker	Christian	worship
Buddha	Buddhist	meditation	Four Noble Truths		

Glossary of Key Terms

Quaker Worship

Quakers usually follow the tradition of gathering in silence, without the services of a designated pastor or minister. This is a time for emptying the mind and focusing thoughts on worship. From time to time a participant may be moved to bring a message to their fellow worshippers.

Stilling

The act of quietening the mind and body in order to reflect on spiritual matters.

Buddhist Meditation

In Buddhism the person meditating is not trying to get into a hypnotic state or contact a supernatural entity. Meditation involves the body and the mind. For Buddhists this is particularly important as they want to avoid what they call 'duality' and so their way of meditating must involve the body and the mind as a single entity. In the most general definition, meditation is a way of taking control of the mind so that it becomes peaceful and focused, and the meditator becomes more aware. Buddhist meditation encompasses a variety of meditation techniques that develop mindfulness, concentration, tranquility and insight. Buddhists pursue meditation as part of the path toward Enlightenment and Nirvana.

Enlightenment and Nirvana

Enlightenment (or 'bodhi') can be translated as "awakening." Buddha means "one who has achieved bodhi." Nirvana, or full enlightenment, carries the meaning of being free from raga (greed), dosa (hate) and moha (delusion). Buddha described nirvana as the perfect peace of the state of mind that is free from craving, anger and other afflictive states. The subject is at peace with the world, has compassion for all and gives up obsessions and fixations.

Four Noble Truths

1. Life means suffering. 2. The origin of suffering is attachment (to transient things e.g. wealth, fame, popularity) 3. The cessation of suffering is attainable (removal of cravings, approaching nirvana) 4. The path to the cessation of suffering (The Eightfold Path)

Further Guidance

The ideas in this unit could also link to work on the Hindu or Sikh traditions, where meditation is also practiced, though the Buddhist tradition places this more centrally. Hindu work could look at yoga and mantras. Prayer beads known as malas are used as an aid to meditation and could link to the rosary as a Roman Catholic aid to meditation.

Ensure that in dealing with the Buddhist tradition you avoid the idea of belief, since Buddhists understandings are based on experience and not faith.

When adapting this unit for a Year 4 class or a mixed Year 3/4 class, make sure you provide opportunities for the children to actively compare the use of silence in the two traditions. They should also link the use of silence explored to their own experiences and be given opportunity to generate their own ultimate questions in response to times of meditation and reflection.

This takes into account that older children may be further along the assessment scale than children in Year 3, at whom this unit is aimed.

Teaching the Unit:

Learning objectives	Key questions	Content	Teaching and Learning Activities	Learning Outcomes	Resources
<p>2.2d Express their own and others' views of right and wrong, belief and religious truth, including reflection on sources of inspiration in their own and others' lives</p> <p>To identify things in the natural world that make you respond with silence</p>	<p>What makes me go silent?</p> <p>How do I feel then?</p> <p>Who did I want to share my feelings with?</p>	<p>Experiences which arouse feelings of awe, wonder, sadness, mystery, fear etc which reduce people to silence.</p> <p>Personal responses.</p>	<p>Look at a series of images (paper-based or using an IWB) that depict natural beauty, delicacy, power etc. Ask the children to share the questions the images bring to their mind and make a mind map of the class' responses.</p> <p>Discuss with the children times when sights or events might reduce them or others to silence e.g. disasters, amazing sights, unusual happenings, relief when something is over. Discuss times when the children choose to be silent and how they use the silence.</p> <p>Conduct a stilling activity to help the children experience stillness and silence. A resource like Mary Stone: <i>Don't Just Do Something, Sit There</i>, has some good guidance on this. This might lead into poetry writing with the title 'The Silence'.</p>	<p>Children can identify things which could make them fall silent.</p>	<p>Photographic images from the natural world (paper-based or on IWB).</p> <p><i>Don't Just Do Something, Sit There</i>, Mary Stone, RMEP</p>
<p>2.1f describe and begin to understand religious and other responses to ultimate and ethical questions</p> <p>To identify events which would make you want to pray to God</p>	<p>Which events/sights cause me to want to ask questions?</p>	<p>Individual questions in response to events/sights.</p>	<p>Make a list of observations, events and issues (or use newspapers as prompts) that might cause someone to ask questions and want to place these before God in prayer.</p>	<p>Children can identify events which might prompt them to ask questions to God in prayer.</p>	<p>Current newspapers</p> <p>Picture of praying hands as a prompt</p>

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<p>2.1c (ii) describe the variety of practices and ways of life in religions and understand how these stem from, and are closely connected with beliefs and teachings</p> <p>2.1e interpret a range of forms of religious expression and understand why they are important in religion</p> <p>To investigate Quaker worship and how silence is used</p> <p>To use silence to contemplate what you have learned and suggest aids to help you to focus</p>	<p>What makes Christians want to be silent with God?</p> <p>How do Quakers use silence in worship?</p>	<p>Ultimate questions such as: Creation, suffering, birth/death, good/evil, war/peace, need</p> <p>Quaker worship.</p>	<p>Learn about Quaker worship, preferably by making a visit to a Quaker meeting house to see how its plainness helps to aid concentration. If a visit is impractical, use ICT, video/DVD, books or a visitor to explore this concept.</p> <p>Discover how Quakers use the silence in their worship and explain that other Christians also set aside time to worship or contemplate in silence, sometimes using aids such as a candle, cross/crucifix or flowers. Perhaps set up a reflection area in a quiet corner of the classroom so children can experience using these things and discuss how they aid contemplation. Ask the children for ideas about what they would find useful to add to the area as a suitable aid to meditation.</p>	<p>Children are able to identify key aspects of Quaker worship and how silence is used.</p> <p>Children can share their own experiences of using silence in contemplation and suggest suitable aids to help them to focus.</p>	<p>Video: <i>Quakerism Through the Eyes of Quaker Children</i>, CEM.</p> <p>Visit to Quaker meeting house or a Quaker visitor.</p> <p>Reflection area in classroom with artefacts to aid meditation, such as candles, cross/crucifix, flowers.</p>

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<p>2.1c (ii) describe the variety of practices and ways of life in religions and understand how these stem from, and are closely connected with beliefs and teachings</p> <p>2.1e interpret a range of forms of religious expression and understand why they are important in religion</p> <p>To demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of Buddhist meditation</p> <p>To have a go at using Buddhist meditation for yourself</p>	<p>How do Buddhists make use of silence?</p>	<p>Buddhist meditation practice.</p>	<p>Show the children footage of Buddhist meditation. Explain that it is different from worship and is a way of focussing the mind. Listen to Buddhist chanting and give pupils opportunity to try the meditation posture and attempt to clear their minds of everyday things. Repeat on several occasions to show the effect of practice.</p> <p>Share the objects that would be found in a Buddhist shrine that would aid meditation.</p>	<p>Children know the purpose of Buddhist meditation.</p> <p>Children are able to try using Buddhist style meditation for themselves.</p>	<p>Videos/DVD:: <i>Buddhism for KS2</i>, Clear Vision Trust; <i>Worlds of Faith: Buddhist</i>, Channel 4.</p> <p>Buddha rupa, incense, flowers and candles.</p>

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<p>2.2c Reflect on the importance of religion and other world views for individuals and communities</p> <p>To retell the story of Buddha's Enlightenment</p> <p>To know the Four Noble Truths and discuss how these affect a Buddhist's life</p>	<p>Who was the Buddha? What did he teach?</p> <p>What are the Four Noble Truths?</p> <p>How do these impact a Buddhist's life?</p>	<p>Part of the life of the Buddha.</p> <p>The Four Noble Truths.</p>	<p>Share the story of the Buddha's first journey as an introduction to his discovery of his dissatisfaction and of his enlightenment. Introduce the Four Noble Truths (don't go into the Noble Eightfold Path), perhaps describing it as a way of living skilfully or wisely. Discuss how these truths would impact practically on the life of a Buddhist.</p>	<p>Children know the story of the Buddha's enlightenment.</p> <p>Children are able to state the Four Noble Truths and some can elaborate on how these impact on a Buddhist's life.</p>	<p>Story of the Buddha's life e.g. <i>Prince Siddhartha</i>, J Landaw and J Brooke, Wisdom or video-<i>Animated World Faiths</i>, Channel 4.</p>
<p>2.2d Express their own and others' views of right and wrong, belief and religious truth, including reflection on sources of inspiration in their own and others' lives</p> <p>To write puzzling questions to focus on during a time of silence and stilling</p>	<p>How might I make good use of stillness and silence?</p>	<p>Pupils' own puzzling questions.</p>	<p>Go on a silence walk in the school grounds and ask each pupil to think of three things to focus on as they walk (or ask the class to select 3 things).</p> <p>Return to the classroom and have a time of stillness. Give out slips of paper and ask the children to write on slips of paper puzzling questions (known as ultimate questions) which they would like to think through. Share these anonymously or use to lead into reflective poems.</p>	<p>Children can write down puzzling questions that they have focused on in times of silence and stillness.</p>	<p>Slips of paper/post-it notes.</p> <p>Post box/basket for collecting these in.</p>