

Religious Studies Curriculum Summary

From the earliest years, children are naturally curious about the “Big Questions”. Religious Studies at St John’s provides children with the opportunity to think about these questions and to discover the answers given to them by religious faiths and philosophical thinkers through the centuries. The discursive approach employed in the RS classroom offers children the freedom to explore and to develop their views as well as a vocabulary to express them. Nurturing broad-mindedness, tolerance, and critical-thinking is at the heart of the RS curriculum.

Religious Studies at St John’s aims to:

Thinking Ethically

Can recognise that life involves choices between right and wrong and identify what is of value and concern to themselves

Thinking Critically

Asks questions about religion and beliefs, making links between their own and other's responses

Expressing Belief

Can recognise aspects of life which they find intriguing and talk about things that are important to them
Can say what is important in their own lives using religious material as a starting point and describing their feelings

Skills

Understanding Others

Can describe some religious ideas from stories and some basic religious beliefs, teachings and events
Can identify how religion and belief is expressed in different ways
Can describe some religious objects/places/symbols and talk about their significance
Can talk about cultures other than their own

Thinking Ethically

Can identify the effects of actions on others when considering moral dilemmas
Responds sensitively to the values and concerns of others, including those with a faith, in relation to matters of right and wrong

Thinking Critically

Can identify similarities and differences in features of religions and beliefs.
Can ask a range of questions about puzzling aspects of life and experience; suggest answers, including religious ones and understand that some questions are difficult to answer.

Expressing Belief

Can describe experiences and feelings they share with others, including characters in a story with meaning
Can describe their own beliefs, religious or otherwise

Skills

Understanding Others

Can demonstrate knowledge of key religious beliefs, ideas and teachings and their importance
Can identify different religious practices that demonstrate belonging and know that some practices are characteristic of more than one religion
Can demonstrate some knowledge of the functions of objects/places/symbols e.g. sacred texts within religious practices and lifestyles
Can demonstrate empathy towards different socio-cultural backgrounds and people

Thinking Ethically

Can explain how common/shared beliefs of what is right and wrong affect behaviour
Can make links between values and commitments and their own attitudes or behaviour

Thinking Critically

Can identify similarities and differences between religions and beliefs

Expressing Belief

- Can identify questions to which there are no universally agreed answers and compare their own and other people's ideas about these
- Are able to talk about the meanings of Christian stories and how they relate to their own experience

Skills

Understanding Others

- Can describe the key beliefs and teachings of the religions studied and the impact of beliefs on individuals, groups and communities
- Can show understanding of ways of belonging to religions, through practices and behaviours
- Can identify religious symbolism and show, using technical terminology, how religious beliefs, ideas and feelings can be expressed in a variety of forms, giving meaning for some symbols, stories and language
- Can describe different socio-cultural forms of religious expression

Thinking Ethically

- Can link beliefs and actions in their own and others' lives and ask questions about matters of right and wrong
- Can suggest answers to ethical questions that show an understanding of moral and religious issues

Thinking Critically

- Can describe similarities and differences within and between religions and beliefs
- Can identify and ask questions, including questions of faith, to which there are no universally agreed answers, suggesting their own answers, making reference to the teachings of religions studied

Expressing Belief

- Can make links between religious stories and their own experiences, considering their own response to key religious ideas (e.g. sacrifice)
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Form 5 Skills

Understanding Others

- Understands and is tolerant of how belonging to a religion may mean different things to different people and may create different beliefs and behaviours
- Can use religious and philosophical vocabulary to show clear understanding of how and why different people express their religious and ethical beliefs
- Demonstrates an understanding of how and why religious, philosophical and ethical beliefs and behaviours can change over time
- Recognises key figures and themes of religious texts and can explain how and why these themes are represented

Thinking Ethically

- Can take into account different ways of seeing the world, environment, society and religions
- Can evaluate their own opinions on ethical dilemmas

Thinking Critically

- Can evaluate different views and reach conclusions when considering big questions
- Can use evidence and examples effectively to support arguments or points made

Expressing Belief

- 1 .
 - 2 - Expresses personal beliefs and opinions and justifies these opinions with evidence and explanation
- Examines how their belief compares to the beliefs expressed in the topics covered and considers opposing beliefs to their own

Form 5 Topics

- The creation - stewardship of the natural world
- Core critical writing skills
- The creation - religion and science
- The Fall - interpreting scripture
- Cain and Abel - crime and punishment
- The near sacrifice of Isaac – Biblical sacrifice, and the nature of sacrifice today and sacrificial lives
- Moses – vocation
- The Exodus and Passover
- Elijah at Mount Carmel - journalism and fake news
- David and Bathsheba – leadership and morality amongst those in the public eye

Expressing Belief

- Can explain and justify their beliefs using a range of reasons, evidence, reflections and examples
- Can evaluate their own beliefs in light of new information and change or justify their belief accordingly

Form 6 Topics

- The Messiah – fulfillment of prophecies
- Miracles – nature of miracles, miracles claimed today, places such as Lourdes
- Parables - Jesus' ministry
- Plato's life and thought - truth, knowledge and political philosophy
- John Stuart Mill's life and thought - ethical decision-making; utilitarianism, deontology
- David Hume's life and thought - arguments for the existence of God, the problem of evil
- Just War Theory - analysis of a chosen war
- Life and Death - euthanasia, abortion, quality vs sanctity of life

RS develops SMSC in a wide variety of ways, including:

- Understanding and exploration of a range of religious beliefs and practices
- Giving children a vocabulary with which to explore beliefs and values
- Teaching children about inspirational figures from around the world and how they have affected others
- Exploring moral questions from religious and other points of view
- Working collaboratively
- Listening to one another and respecting the opinions and beliefs of others
- Understanding how religious belief has shaped different communities