



DISCERNING DISCIPLES

A religious education programme
for Catholic primary schools in
the Archdiocese of Birmingham

First edition: Summer Term 2026

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This resource has been officially endorsed to confirm that it meets the requirements of the *Religious Education Directory: To Know You More Clearly*. The Catholic Education Service has reviewed this resource and confirms that, as appropriate: it meets the expected outcomes for the relevant age-phase covered by this resource; it provides an age-related sequence of learning that enables all pupils to make progress in religious education; it ensures pupils are developing each of the three ways of knowing (understand, discern, respond) at all points in their learning; it gives appropriate weight to each of the knowledge lenses, allowing pupils to make meaningful connections between scriptural texts (hear), Catholic beliefs (believe), prayer and liturgy (celebrate) and the relationship of faith to life (live); as part of the live lens it provides students with the study of a rich mix of philosophical and ethical issues, artistic expression, and lived religion elements in each year of their study; it is reflective of the global nature of Catholicism and is inclusive of the diverse cultural expressions of Catholic faith and life; it presents learning in an age-appropriate sequential way designed to maximise progress.



This endorsement has been approved by the Department of Education and Formation of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

Nihil Obstat: Revd. Father Paul Dean, Diocesan Censor

Imprimatur: The Most Revd. Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham, given on 11 July 2026

Published by: Birmingham Diocesan Education Service, Don Bosco House, Coventry Road, Coleshill, B46 3EA

Foreword

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I am delighted to commend *Discerning Disciples*, the religious education curriculum for primary schools in the Archdiocese of Birmingham.

This curriculum is rooted in our shared diocesan mission of ‘forming Christ-centred pilgrims of hope with kind hearts, questioning minds, a thirst for knowledge and a hunger for justice’. It has been carefully developed to comply with *the Religious Education Directory for Catholic schools, Academies and Colleges in England and Wales*, offering a coherent, sequential and progressive curriculum through which pupils can grow in knowledge, understanding, and love of the Catholic faith.

These words express something essential about the purpose of Catholic education. Our schools do not simply pass on knowledge about the Catholic faith; they help pupils to encounter Christ, to recognise their dignity as children of God, and to grow in wisdom, virtue, and love.

To be a discerning disciple is to learn how to recognise what is true, good, and right, and to make wise decisions in the light of faith, reason, and lived experience. From their earliest years, pupils are invited to listen attentively to the Word of God, to wonder at the beauty of creation, to come to know Jesus in the Gospels, and to understand the life and mission of the Church. As their knowledge deepens, so too does their capacity to reflect, to ask thoughtful questions, and to see how faith illuminates the whole of life.

At the heart of *Discerning Disciples* is the conviction that religious education belongs to the mission of the Church. Jesus entrusts His disciples with the task of proclaiming the Good News and serving the world with courage, compassion, and hope. Our schools share in this mission in a particular way. Through careful teaching, prayerful reflection, and joyful witness, they help pupils to grow as young people who know they are loved by God and who are ready to respond generously to His call.

This curriculum also reminds us that faith must bear fruit in love. Rooted in Catholic social teaching, pupils are helped to recognise the dignity of every person, to care for creation, to serve the common good, and to develop a hunger for justice. They are also given opportunities to learn about other faiths and religions, supporting the respectful dialogue and encounter that are so important in our communities today.

I am grateful to all those who have contributed to the development of *Discerning Disciples*, and to the leaders, teachers, governors, and directors who will now bring it to life in our schools. May this resource support you in your vital work of forming pupils who are confident in faith, rich in knowledge, generous in service, and joyful in hope.

With every blessing,

+Bernard Longley
Archbishop of Birmingham



Dialogue and Encounter

Nursery
Week 1
Dialogue



Listen to someone from the local parish, what it means for them to be a friend of Jesus.

Know

People in the parish have special jobs to do.

People in the parish help the priest spread Jesus' love.

We can see lots of people who help the priest at church on a Sunday.



Discern

Some people in the parish can show us and tell us about God's love.

Suggested discovery questions

1. What do the people in the parish do that show us God's love?
2. How do people in the parish help the priest?
3. How can we help the parish?



Respond

Invite a member of the parish to speak with the children to learn more about who they are and how they support the parish priest and the parish church.

Draw ways in which the parishioner supports the parish.

Pray a short prayer in thanksgiving of the parish.

Write a thank you card for the visitor.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

parish	a local group of Christians who belong to a church community
parishioner	someone who is a member of the parish

Teacher Notes

Inviting a member of the parish supports the work of pupils understanding the area in which they live. It creates a space to begin to understand what it means to be a good neighbour.

In this week's learning, pupils are introduced to the parish as a community of people who follow Jesus together. Theologically, the parish is part of the Church, which is not only a building but the 'People of God' gathered in love and service. Even young children can begin to understand that God's love is made visible through the actions of others.

Within a parish, different people have particular roles. The priest has a special responsibility to lead prayer, especially the Mass, and to help the community grow closer to God. However, the priest is not alone; many parishioners support this mission through acts of service such as welcoming others, reading, singing, caring for those in need, and helping to prepare for worship. These shared responsibilities reflect the Christian belief that all are called to live out Jesus' command to love one another.

In a Catholic parish, the mission of the Church is shared among many people, each contributing in different ways to the life of the community. These roles reflect the belief that all the baptised are called to serve God and one another.

An altar server assists the priest during Mass. This role is both practical and symbolic: servers help with actions such as carrying candles or preparing the altar, and they model attentive participation in worship.

A sacristan prepares everything needed for Mass and other liturgies, such as vestments, candles, and sacred vessels. This quiet, behind-the-scenes role highlights care and reverence for the celebration of the sacraments.

An usher (or welcomer) greets people as they arrive at church and helps them feel included. This expresses the Church's identity as a welcoming community where all belong.

The parish council is a group of parishioners who support the priest in decision-making about the life and mission of the parish. Their role reflects collaboration and shared responsibility within the Church.

For Nursery-aged pupils, the key theological idea is that God's love is shown through people. By recognising helpers in the parish, pupils begin to see that they too can respond to God's love through simple acts of kindness, belonging, and participation in the life of the Church.



Dialogue and Encounter

Nursery
Week 2
Dialogue



Know

Jesus lived a long time ago in a town called Nazareth.

People in Nazareth wore long clothes and sandals to keep cool in the sun.

Jesus had dark skin and dark hair like the people who lived in Nazareth.



Discern

Jesus lived a long time ago in a place called Nazareth. He looked like the people who lived there.

Suggested discovery questions

1. What do you notice about how Jesus looks?
2. What do people wear and what jobs do people have where we live?
3. I wonder what Jesus wore and did when he was a child?



Respond

Explore nazarethvillage.com to see what it was like when Jesus lived on the earth.

Explore games that Jesus may have played and were popular in first century Palestine. (Running and chasing, drawing in sand, singing and clapping games, animal care) Explain that Jesus would not have had expensive or plastic toys as they didn't exist, but that he would have had the same need to play as every other child.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

Jesus	God's Son who became man and lived on earth
Nazareth	the town where Jesus grew up as a child

Teacher Notes

Jesus lived over 2,000 years ago in Nazareth, in what is now part of Israel and Palestine. People there wore simple, loose clothing made from wool or linen to keep cool in the hot, dry climate. Men usually wore:

- A tunic (a long, light shirt reaching the knees or ankles)
- A belt or sash around the waist
- A cloak or outer robe for warmth
- Sandals made of leather
- A head covering to protect from the sun

Clothing was often plain and natural in colour (cream, brown, or off-white) because dyed fabrics were rare and expensive. Jesus would have dressed like everyone else in Nazareth: simple, practical clothes showing he shared the everyday life of ordinary people

The intent of this lesson is for pupils to understand that Jesus would have looked and dressed like everyone else in Palestine at the time and would have had brown skin and dark hair. Re-imagining history from the time of Jesus (e.g., the Nazareth Village website) could help deepen this appreciation.



Dialogue and Encounter

Nursery
Week 3
Dialogue & Encounter



Explore a range of pictures of Jesus from a non-European tradition

Know

People around the world draw and paint Jesus in different ways.

Jesus can look different in different images, but he is the same Jesus who loves everyone.

Images of Jesus always tell us something special about Him.



Discern

People around the world show Jesus in different ways, and he loves everyone.

Suggested discovery questions

1. What do you see that's different in these pictures of Jesus?
2. Which picture do you like best and why?
3. How do you think Jesus shows his love to people?



Respond

Create your own picture of Jesus using a range of materials

Place a range of images of Christ on a world map to show the area of the world the art came from, helping children to appreciate the diversity of artistic expression.

Pray for those who have given their gifts and talents to paint and draw Jesus in different ways.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

Teacher Notes

When helping very young pupils explore how people around the world draw and paint Jesus, it is important to understand that every image of Christ reflects both the artist's faith and their culture. Theology teaches that Jesus is truly human and truly divine, the Son of God who came for all people. Artists across the world show this truth through the styles, colours, and symbols familiar to their own communities. Though the skin tones, clothing, or surroundings may differ, each artwork shows the same Jesus who loves everyone equally.

1. **Robert Lentz** (Native American) [*Apache Christ \(Bik'egu'indán\)*](#)
Robert Lentz draws on Native American symbolism to present Jesus as one who walks among Indigenous peoples. His halo echoes the sun, a sacred sign of life and light, reminding viewers that Christ's light shines in every culture. The feathers and patterns express healing, peace, and respect for creation.
2. **Sadao Watanabe** (Japan) [*The Last Supper*](#) (1972/1978)
Watanabe was a Japanese Christian who wanted ordinary people, not just churchgoers, to encounter the Gospel through familiar art. He used the traditional katazome method of stencil-dyeing, a craft usually used for kimono fabrics. This technique fills the scene with soft texture, earthy colour, and flowing movement, showing that faith can live within everyday culture. Jesus and the disciples sit closely together on the floor, following Japanese custom rather than the Western table setting. This reminds us that the heart of the story is not about furniture or historical detail but about friendship, sharing, and God's presence with his people. Wherever people gather in love and thanksgiving, Christ is present.
3. **Norval Morrisseau** (Canada Ojibwe) [*Jesus Christ*](#) (1974)
Painted in bright colours and flowing lines inspired by Indigenous storytelling. His work reveals the unity of all living things and shows Jesus as one who brings harmony and renewal to creation.
4. **Janet McKenzie** (US) [*Jesus of the People*](#) (1999)
American artist Janet McKenzie paints Jesus with African and Native American features. A halo of soft light surrounds him, and behind him stand symbols of the Spirit and the feminine. Her work challenges narrow images of Christ and celebrates his universal love: Jesus as truly 'of the people', for all peoples.



Dialogue and Encounter

Nursery
Week 4
Dialogue



Hear a simple life of St. Peter and St. Paul, friends of Jesus

Know

Jesus had special friends who told everyone that Jesus loves them.

One friend of Jesus was called Peter. He caught fish in a boat before he met Jesus.

Another friend of Jesus was called Paul. Paul saw a bright light and heard Jesus speak to him.



Discern

St Peter and St Paul showed Jesus' love by helping others and sharing His Good News.

Suggested discovery questions

1. How did St Peter and St Paul help people?
2. I wonder what it is like to be Jesus' friend?
3. What might we say to someone if we wanted to share some good news, and how might we say it?



Respond

Children create a long paper chain to show how Peter and Paul shared God's love with lots of people.

Use construction materials to 'build' a church.

Represent in different ways Jesus saying 'Come, follow me!'

Textual references

Key vocabulary

St Peter	A friend of Jesus who helped people and built his Church
St Paul	Paul heard Jesus and told everyone that Jesus loves them

Teacher Notes

St Peter, originally named Simon, was a fisherman who lived by the Sea of Galilee. Jesus called him to leave his nets and become one of his first disciples, saying, 'Come, follow me.' Peter became one of Jesus' closest friends and witnessed many important moments in his life, including his miracles, the Transfiguration, and the Last Supper. Although Peter was strong and faithful, he sometimes made mistakes; he denied knowing Jesus when he was afraid. Yet Jesus forgave him and trusted him again, asking Peter to care for his followers. After Jesus' resurrection, Peter became the first leader of the Church, often called 'the rock' upon which it was built. He taught others about Jesus' love and helped the early Christian community grow.

Key ideas for children:

- Peter was Jesus' friend.
- He followed Jesus and helped others.
- Jesus forgave Peter and trusted him.
- Peter helped build the first Church.

St Paul, first known as Saul, did not begin as a follower of Jesus. At first, he did not understand Jesus' message and even tried to stop his followers. While travelling to Damascus, Saul experienced a powerful vision of the risen Christ that changed his life completely. After this encounter, he became Paul and devoted himself to sharing the Good News. Paul travelled to many places across the Roman Empire teaching that Jesus loves everyone, no matter who they are or where they live. He helped form new Christian communities and wrote many letters (epistles) offering guidance, encouragement, and teaching. His words helped shape the faith of the early Church and continue to inspire Christians today.

Key ideas for children:

- Paul learned about Jesus and changed his heart.
- He told everyone that Jesus loves us all.
- He travelled and helped people be friends of Jesus.
- He wrote letters to teach about God's love.

Possible Discovery question responses:

1. How did Peter and Paul help people?
 - a. They told people about Jesus
 - b. They helped people be kind
 - c. They helped the Church to grow
2. I wonder what it was like to be Jesus' friend?
 - a. Happy
 - b. Nice because Jesus loves you!
 - c. We could say prayers together.
3. What might we say to someone if we wanted to share some good news and how might we say it?
 - a. Tell them Jesus loves them.
 - b. 'Guess what...;
 - c. Be excited, happy, joyful etc.



Dialogue and Encounter

Nursery
Week 5
Encounter



Know

People pray and talk to God in different ways.

Some people have special clothes or objects for their faith celebrations.

People believe different things, but we can all be kind and learn from each other.



Discern

People everywhere pray, sing, and celebrate faith differently. We can learn from them.

Suggested discovery questions

1. What do you do when you pray (talk to) to God?
2. What special things do you experience when you celebrate something to do with your faith?
3. Have you ever seen or heard people praying or singing in a different way?



Respond

Invite someone into the class from the local area or a school community member to talk about their local faith community and why it matters to them.
Develop opportunities to engage children in a broad sensory curriculum about the music, food, smells, tastes, and specific clothing worn, to enrich understanding.

Invite someone from a local faith tradition into school to speak with the children about their faith community and why it is important to them.

Provide opportunities to engage children in a broad sensory curriculum about the music, food, smells, tastes and specific clothing worn, to enrich understanding.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

faith feeling secure in God because we know He loves us

Teacher Notes

Teachers are free to explore religions that speak best to the demographic or needs of their pupils.

Inviting someone into school from the local area to talk about their faith and why it matters to them is an important aspect of dialogue and encounter. Complete the 'visiting speakers checklist' from the CES before inviting anyone into school.

For example:

Judaism

Judaism is one of the world's oldest living faiths and helps its followers, called Jewish people, to live in friendship with God. They believe in one God who made the world and who asks people to live kindly, fairly and faithfully. The Torah is their most important holy book. Many Jewish families go to a place of worship called a synagogue, where they pray, sing and listen to readings from the Torah.

For very young pupils, the sensory and celebratory aspects of Jewish life are the most meaningful starting points. They might notice how the Shabbat (Sabbath) meal brings families together each week on Friday evening. Candles are lit, special bread (challah) and wine or grape juice are shared, and songs of blessing are sung. The celebration ends with the lighting of a braided candle (Havdalah) to mark the new week. Pupils can begin to understand that Jewish people thank God through rest, song, and being together as a family. Exploring symbols such as the Star of David or hearing gentle Hebrew songs helps them appreciate the beauty and peace found in this ancient tradition.

Islam

Islam is a faith followed by Muslims, who believe in one God, called Allah, and follow the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Muslims pray to God five times a day, facing Makkah, to remember that God is close to them and cares for all people. Their holy book is the Qur'an, written in Arabic, which teaches kindness, honesty and care for others.

With very young children, focus on the sensory and rhythmic aspects of Muslim life. They might listen to the adhan (call to prayer) and notice its peaceful, singing tone. They could see a prayer mat, learn how people wash their hands and face before praying, and look at simple geometric patterns used to decorate mosques. The month of Ramadan and the festival of Eid al-Fitr can be explored through tasting sweet food, noticing bright clothes, and understanding that people celebrate with family and give to others.

At this age, pupils do not need deep theological explanation; instead, they are introduced to the idea that people around the world show love and respect for God in different ways, all of which can teach us something good and beautiful.

Prayer can take place in different settings, and each has its own character within the life of the Church.

In church, prayer is communal and liturgical. It follows set patterns, especially in the Mass, where the whole parish gathers as the Body of Christ. Actions, words, music, and silence are carefully ordered to express worship and reverence, helping people to encounter God together.

In school, prayer is both communal and formative. It often happens in classrooms or assemblies and is shaped to help pupils grow in faith. It may include scripture, reflection, and simple responses, supporting pupils to understand how to pray and why prayer matters.

At home, prayer is more personal and relational. It can be spontaneous or follow familiar prayers, often shaped by family routines such as bedtime or mealtimes. This setting emphasises that prayer is part of everyday life, where individuals and families speak to God in their own words.



Know

People have special times to say thank you and celebrate.

Every festival has its own stories, songs, and ways to show love.

Families get together to share food, music, and joy.



Discern

People celebrate in different ways, and we can remember their special times.

Suggested discovery questions

1. What festivals/celebrations have we learned about this year?
2. What did you see, hear or taste at those celebrations?
3. How do people show they are happy at their special times?



Respond

Review the festivals that have been experienced throughout the year. A chance for children to remember what they have learnt and did and look at photos of themselves.

Say a prayer of thanks to God for the wonderful world we live in.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

celebrate	to show joy and thankfulness, often because of something important God has done
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to show joy and thankfulness, often because of something important God has done

Teacher Notes

This is an opportunity to review learning about festivals throughout the year.

Celebrations are an important part of human life and faith. In Christian theology, celebration is rooted in thanksgiving, giving thanks to God for creation, for love, and for Jesus Christ. The Church's year itself is a cycle of celebrations: Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost each recall how God acts in history and in people's lives. For very young pupils, these truths are experienced rather than explained, through joy, colour, sound, and community.

All cultures celebrate special times to express gratitude, hope, and belonging. While not every celebration is religious, every act of giving thanks reflects something of the divine. When pupils learn about festivals from different faiths, they begin to see that people everywhere value love, family, and togetherness.

For Christians, celebration always involves remembering and sharing. The Eucharist, meaning 'thanksgiving', is the greatest Christian celebration, bringing the community together to thank God for Jesus. In early learning, this is echoed when pupils recall their own happy times, share food, sing, or pray.

Teachers can help pupils recognise that joy, gratitude, and love are gifts from God, and that remembering good times together helps us see how wonderful the world is and how much God loves everyone.



Dialogue and Encounter

Reception
Week 1
Dialogue



Listen to someone from the local Parish, what it means for them to be a friend of Jesus.

Know

People in our parish try to be friends of Jesus by praying, helping others, and coming together at church.

Being a friend of Jesus means showing love and kindness, just as Jesus does.

We can learn from others in our parish how to live like Jesus every day.



Discern

People in our parish can inspire us to help others.

Suggested discovery questions

1. What does it mean to be a good friend, like Jesus?
2. How do people in our parish show they are friends of Jesus?
3. What do people in the parish do to help others?



Respond

Write a thank you card or letter for the special visitor from the Parish

Write and draw how we can be inspired by Jesus

Make a simple fact file of the work of the parishioner.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

church	the place and community where Christians gather to follow Jesus
parish	a local church community where people belong and follow Jesus together

Teacher Notes

Invite a parishioner into school to discuss their role within the parish. If there are no parishioners available, then a Catholic senior leader or the RESL can be interviewed by the pupils instead.

This learning explores how members of the parish community live as friends of Jesus through prayer, service, and love for others. The parish is the local family of the Church, gathered around the altar with the priest, united in faith and mission. For young pupils, this provides a first experience of understanding that faith is not private but shared within a community of believers.

At its heart lies the theology of communion. In baptism, every Christian becomes part of the Body of Christ and is called to live in friendship with Jesus and others. Friendship with Jesus is expressed through prayer, participation in the sacraments, and acts of charity. Pupils can see this in real, visible ways: people reading at Mass, visiting the sick, organising food banks, or helping at church events. These actions mirror the Gospel call to love one another (John 13:34).

Being a friend of Jesus means sharing in his mission. Even the youngest pupils can begin to grasp that following Jesus involves kindness, forgiveness, and helping others. Teachers can emphasise that everyone has gifts to share and that we learn from each other's example. This builds early awareness of vocation: that God calls each person to love and serve in different ways.

Theologically, parish life is a sign of the Kingdom of God growing on earth, a community shaped by prayer, mercy, and joy. By learning from parishioners, pupils discover that holiness is lived out in ordinary life. They come to see that Jesus is present in their local community and that by loving others, they too are loving him.



Dialogue and Encounter

Reception
Week 2
Dialogue



Hear a simple life of St. Peter and St. Paul, friends of Jesus

Know

St Peter was one of Jesus' closest friends who helped to lead his followers after Jesus went to heaven.

St Paul told lots of people about Jesus and helped them to know his love.

St Peter and St Paul loved Jesus and tried to do what he taught them, so we remember them as his special friends.



Discern

Listening to the stories of St Peter and St Paul helps us learn how they followed Jesus by being brave, helping others, and telling people about his love

Suggested discovery questions

1. Why do you think St Peter and St Paul wanted to keep telling people about Jesus, even when it was difficult?
2. What helps you to be brave when you are doing something new or a bit scary, like St Peter and St Paul?
3. How can we show love and kindness to others like St Peter and St Paul did, even when it's not easy?



Respond

Create message scrolls with a positive message for someone, and then gift this to them.

Follow Jesus journey map. Children add their footprints and write / draw how to follow Jesus, by praying, being kind, sharing etc.

Following Jesus sometimes needs bravery. Make a shield and decorate this with symbols of bravery (cross, heart etc). Write times we might need to be brave.

Textual references

Luke 5:1-11	Jesus calls Peter as one of his first friends
Matthew 14:22-33	Peter walks out on the water, showing trust in Jesus
Matthew 16:13-19	Jesus blesses Peter and says he will help to lead his Church
Acts 13:1-12; 16:9-16	Paul tells people about Jesus

Key vocabulary

apostle	a special friend of Jesus who was chosen to share His message
saint	a person who is close to God and followed Jesus' teachings

Teacher Notes

This learning introduces pupils to the friendship between Jesus, St Peter and St Paul, showing how these saints followed Jesus with courage and faith. St Peter and St Paul are remembered together because both were leaders of the early Church who helped others to know Jesus' love. For young pupils, they provide simple, human examples of trust, bravery, and love in action.

St Peter, one of Jesus' first followers, is a key figure in the Gospels. Jesus calls Peter to leave his fishing nets and follow him (Luke 5:1–11). Later, Peter learns to trust Jesus when he walks on the water (Matthew 14:22–33). Jesus blesses Peter and calls him the 'rock' on which his Church will be built (Matthew 16:13–19). These stories reveal that Peter's faith sometimes wavered, but Jesus forgave him and gave him strength to lead others. This helps pupils understand that Jesus always forgives and helps us to begin again.

St Paul did not know Jesus during his earthly life. He first tried to stop Christians, but after meeting the risen Jesus (Acts 9), Paul's heart was changed. He spent his life telling people about Jesus' love and travelled to many places to share the Good News. Through Paul, pupils can learn that everyone can change and that God's love can transform lives.

Both saints show that following Jesus can be hard at times, but with prayer and love we can be brave. Teachers can help pupils see that bravery in faith means doing what is right, being kind, and sharing God's love, even when it feels difficult. These stories teach pupils that Jesus' friends trusted him completely and that we can trust him too.



Dialogue and Encounter

Reception

Week 3

Dialogue & Encounter



Explore a range of pictures of Jesus from a non-European tradition

Know

People show Jesus in ways that reflect their own country, clothes, and culture.

Artists use colours, patterns, and symbols from their own part of the world to show what Jesus means to them.

Even though pictures of Jesus look different, they all show his love, kindness, and care for people.



Discern

Exploring pictures of Jesus from around the world helps us see that people in every place know and love Jesus in their own special way.

Suggested discovery questions

1. Why do you think people show Jesus wearing different clothes or colours?
2. What do these pictures tell us about the places where people live and pray to Jesus?
3. If you could make your own picture of Jesus, what would you want it to show about him?



Respond

Clothe Jesus by exploring patterns and fabrics from around the world. Children to give reasons for their choices.

Use the art from the teachers notes to create an *Our World, Our Jesus* gallery. Children discuss the similarities and differences between the pictures. Then they can recreate their own.

Encourage children to act out ways Jesus could show love them today. What do they think he would say and do at school, at home, in the shop etc.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

Jesus God's Son, who loves all people everywhere

Teacher Notes

In this week's learning, pupils explore how Jesus is represented in different cultures around the world. Theologically, this reflects the universal nature of the Church: Jesus is for all people, in every place and time. While Jesus lived in a specific historical context, believers across the world express their relationship with him through their own cultural forms.

Art is one way this is shown. Artists often depict Jesus using familiar colours, clothing, and patterns from their own country. This helps communities to recognise that Jesus is close to them and understands their lives. These images are not intended to change who Jesus is, but to express the meaning of his love in ways that are meaningful within different cultures.

Despite visual differences, all authentic representations point to the same truth: Jesus reveals God's love, kindness, and care for all people. This supports a key theological principle that unity in faith can exist alongside diversity in expression.

For young pupils, the focus is on recognising both difference and sameness: pictures of Jesus may look different, but they all show someone who loves and cares. This encourages respect for others and an understanding that faith is lived globally.

Christ of the Earthquakes (18th Century, Peru)

This painting shows Jesus as the 'Christ of the Earthquakes,' from a church in Cuzco, Peru. It reminds us that Jesus is present in places where people live and experience things; here he is trusted in a land of earthquakes. For pupils, this image can help them see that Jesus is with them in their home, their country and their culture. Theologically it emphasises that Jesus does not belong only to one culture or one people, but to all peoples and places. You might guide pupils to notice the colours, the setting, and ask how this Jesus might feel loving the people who live in the Andes.

Black Jesus by Clementine Hunter (1985, USA)

This painting shows Jesus depicted with darker skin by the African-American artist Clementine Hunter. It is a powerful teaching tool for pupils: it shows that people imagine Jesus in ways familiar to them, and that he loves everyone whatever their skin colour or culture. Theologically, it connects with the truth that Jesus took flesh, genuinely human, and comes to us in all our human diversity. With young children you might invite them to think of how their family or friends might show Jesus, and how this picture shows Jesus as part of their community.

Sacrocubist Christ portfolio by Jorge Cocco Santángelo (Contemporary, Argentina)

Argentinian artist Jorge Cocco Santángelo works in a style he calls 'sacrocubism', combining sacred themes with modern shapes and colours. His depiction of Jesus looks different from a traditional Western image; the shapes and bright colours may feel new to pupils. Use this to show that artwork can change the way we see Jesus and help us think: 'What does this picture tell me about Jesus?' Theologically, it underlines that Jesus is beyond any one style or era: he is the same Lord for all times and all places. Ask pupils what colours or shapes they see and what they think those might mean about Jesus' love or care.



Dialogue and Encounter

Reception
Week 4
Encounter



Know

Jesus lived over 2,000 years ago in a town called Nazareth, in a country called Israel.

People in Nazareth lived in simple homes made of stone and clay.

People went to the synagogue to pray and learn about God.



Discern

Learning about where and how Jesus lived helps us understand that he was part of a real family and community who cared for each other and loved God.

Suggested discovery questions

1. What do you think Jesus' home in Nazareth might have been like?
2. What jobs did people in Nazareth do? How are they the same or different from jobs people do now?
3. How do you think Jesus helped his family and friends when he was a child?



Respond

Use the nazarethvillage.com website to explore what life was like for Jesus. Create a class chart with two comparative columns: Life In Nazareth, life today.

Jesus Childhood Role Play. Set up a small world of role play of simple props, wood blocks, baskets and fabric and support pupils to act out every day life. Fetching water, helping parents etc.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

Israel	the country where Jesus lived on earth
Nazareth	the town where Jesus grew up
synagogue	a place where Jewish people go to pray and learn about God

Teacher Notes

Life in Nazareth *(when Jesus was a boy)*

People lived in small houses made of stone and mud.

People wore long robes and sandals to stay cool.

Families used clay lamps and candles for light.

Water was fetched from a well or stream.

People cooked on a fire or clay oven outside.

Children helped with chores and caring for animals.

People travelled by walking or on donkeys.

People went to the synagogue to pray and learn.

Toys were made from wood, sticks, and stones.

Life Today *(where we live)*

We live in brick houses or flats with electricity and water.

We wear different clothes for each season: coats, shoes, t-shirts.

We use electric lights and lamps.

Water comes from taps in our homes.

We use cookers, ovens, and microwaves.

Children go to school and help at home.

We travel by cars, buses, or bikes.

We go to church, mosque, temple, or school assemblies to learn and pray.

Toys are plastic or electronic and come from shops.

This week is a fantastic opportunity to go into Forest School and make bread like Jesus would have done, if you are able!



Dialogue and Encounter

Reception
Week 5
Encounter



Know

People celebrate to remember special times and to show what is important to them.

Festivals help people say thank you to God or to remember stories from their faith.

Different faiths and cultures have celebrations with their own songs, clothes, and traditions.



Discern

People celebrate special times to remember, give thanks, and show love for God and each other.

Suggested discovery questions

1. Which special festivals and celebrations do you remember?
2. What do people do at different festivals and celebrations?
3. Why do people have special celebrations?



Respond

Celebration Detective: Look back at photos from throughout the year (Harvest, Diwali, Christmas, Eid etc) Sort pictures and discuss what children remember.

Create a Thank you God, prayer or song for our wonderful world.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

faith	believing and trusting in God
festival	a happy, special time when people come together to celebrate, have fun, and say 'thank you' to God

Teacher Notes

This learning helps pupils understand that people celebrate to remember important events and to give thanks for the blessings in their lives. For people of faith, celebrations are more than parties; they are sacred times when communities express love for God and one another through prayer, song, story, and shared joy.

In Christianity, celebrations such as Christmas, Easter, and Harvest are ways of remembering key moments in the story of salvation. Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus, when God comes close to humanity in love. Easter celebrates Jesus rising to new life, showing that love is stronger than death. Harvest is a time to thank God for creation and for the people who help to bring food to our tables. These moments invite believers to respond with gratitude, generosity, and praise.

Across the world, other faiths also celebrate important moments of thankfulness and hope. In Hinduism, Diwali celebrates light overcoming darkness, reminding people that goodness and truth will always shine through. In Islam, Eid marks the end of Ramadan and is a joyful time of family, prayer, and giving to those in need. Although the details differ, each celebration expresses the human desire to give thanks and to remember what is holy.

For young pupils, this learning lays the foundation for understanding that celebrations have meaning. Teachers can help them notice that people celebrate with special clothes, food, songs, and decorations because these express love, joy, and belonging. By reflecting on their own experiences of birthdays, school events, or religious festivals, pupils can begin to see how gratitude and love are at the heart of every celebration, and how faith helps people turn ordinary days into moments of worship and wonder.



Dialogue and Encounter

Reception

Week 6

Dialogue & Encounter



Know

Jesus teaches us to love God and to love one another.

Being kind and thoughtful helps us to make friends and care for our new class.

When we listen, share, and help, we are showing God's love.



Discern

Jesus taught us to show love, kindness, and care for others.

Suggested discovery questions

1. What have we learned this year about being kind and caring?
2. How can we show love and kindness in our new class next year?
3. How do you feel about moving on and meeting new people?



Respond

Kindness chain of the future: Make paper chain links. Each child writes/draws one way to be a good friend in Year 1.

Thanking celebration of the word. Pupils say something kind or thankful. E.g. Thank you for playing with me, or I hope you have fun in Year one

Letter to my teacher: Pupils decorate and draw ways they want to show love and be kind in Year 1.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

Teacher Notes

The purpose of this final lesson is to consider Dialogue and Encounter in its everyday meaning. We need to be able to communicate effectively as we share in the world around us.

This learning draws together key ideas pupils have encountered throughout the year: that Jesus teaches us to love God and to love one another. For young pupils, this is the simplest and most important Christian truth. Jesus' commandment, 'Love one another as I have loved you' (John 13:34), reveals that love is not only a feeling but a way of living. It is shown through kindness, sharing, forgiveness, and care for others.

Jesus' teaching helps pupils understand that God's love is at the heart of every friendship and community. When children show patience, listen, or help someone, they are taking part in God's work of love in the world. This connects directly with Catholic theology of vocation: every person, even a child, has a calling to love. Teachers can highlight that these small acts of kindness are signs of God's kingdom growing on earth.

This theme also prepares pupils to transition confidently into a new class or stage of life. The values of love, kindness, and courage remain constant, even as surroundings change. By recalling how Jesus showed love to everyone, pupils can find reassurance that God's love travels with them wherever they go.

This topic offers a natural opportunity for thanksgiving and reflection. Teachers can invite pupils to remember the friendships they have formed and the ways they have grown in kindness. Scripture stories such as 'The Good Samaritan' (Luke 10:25–37) or 'Jesus Blesses the Children' (Mark 10:13–16) remind pupils that love is active and inclusive.

By helping pupils connect Jesus' teaching to their own experiences of school and friendship, they begin to see that following Jesus means showing love every day and trusting that his love never ends.



Dialogue and Encounter

Year 1
Week 1
Dialogue

	U1.6.1. Know that Christian means follower of Jesus Christ. U1.6.3 Recognise simple connections between Jesus' life and message and how Christians live today
<i>Know</i>	A Christian is a friend and follower of Jesus. Christians try to love God and love others, just like Jesus taught. Christians follow Jesus' example of love, kindness, and forgiveness in their lives today.

	D1.6.1 Listen to the stories and experiences of Christians from their local parish and asking them questions.
<i>Discern</i>	Being a Christian means choosing to follow Jesus and learning from his example of love and kindness. Suggested discovery questions 1. When you hear people at church talk about following Jesus, what do you think they mean? 2. How can we show that we are followers of Jesus in the way we live and treat others? 3. Can you think of a time when someone in our parish showed love or kindness like Jesus?

	R1.6.1 Consider how Christians in their local parish community could work together to help people
<i>Respond</i>	Create a poster showing different ways parishioners follow Jesus by helping others e.g. joining in the celebration of Mass, praying together, visiting the sick, going on pilgrimage, or raising money. Discuss with a parishioner a new way that their parish could show Jesus' love (like collecting food for families or making cards for parishioners) and write or draw their plan. To show gratitude, children create thank you cards for parishioners who serve others e.g. priests, deacon, religious sister, ministers and volunteers and write a short message of thanks about how they help people.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

Christian	someone who follows Jesus and tries to live like him by being kind, loving, and helping others.
Church	the family of people who believe in and follow Jesus.
parish	a local church community where people come together to pray, worship, and help one another.

Teacher Notes

This learning helps pupils understand that being a Christian means following Jesus and trying to live as he taught. The word 'Christian' means 'follower of Christ'. Pupils explore how Christians show their friendship with Jesus through love, kindness, forgiveness, and service to others. By learning about parish life, they see how people work together to live out Jesus' message, for example by caring for the sick, supporting the poor, and praying as a community. Teachers should emphasise that Christian love (agape) is shown through action, not just words. Linking this to pupils' own experiences of kindness helps them see how faith shapes everyday choices. Encourage reflection on how Christians today try to follow Jesus' example, and how the parish community helps them to do this. This learning builds early understanding of vocation and belonging to the Church as the family of God.



Dialogue and Encounter

Year 1
Week 2
Dialogue



U1.6.2

Recognise that Catholics are a part of a global Christian family, and all Christians are sisters and brothers.

Know

Catholics belong to a worldwide Christian family where all Christians are brothers and sisters in Jesus.

Catholic means 'universal,' or 'for everyone.'

The Church is open to all people, everywhere in the world, to follow Jesus.



Discern

Jesus wants us to love and care for everyone, because we are all part of God's big family.

Suggested discovery questions

1. What makes Christians all around the world part of one big family?
2. How can we show that Christians everywhere are our brothers and sisters?
3. How does knowing the Church is for everyone help us love and include others?



Respond

Use [Mission Together's Our Global Church resources](#) to create a world map, placing stickers or small crosses on different countries where Christians live. They can add pictures or flags to show that the Church is everywhere.

Write or say a simple prayer thanking God for Christians all around the world asking for peace and unity/love among them.

Each pupil can decorate a paper quilt square with a drawing of Christians helping or praying together. When joined, the squares make a big Christian Family Quilt for display.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

Catholic meaning 'for everyone', describing the worldwide Church

Teacher Notes

In this week's learning, pupils explore the idea that the Church is a global family. Theologically, the Church is described as the Body of Christ, meaning all Christians are united through Jesus, regardless of where they live. This unity is not based on location or culture, but on shared faith in Jesus and belonging through Baptism.

The word 'Catholic' means 'universal', expressing the belief that the Church is for everyone. From its earliest beginnings, the Church is called to welcome all people into relationship with God. This reflects Jesus' teaching that all are invited into God's family and should be treated as brothers and sisters.

Christians around the world may speak different languages and live in different ways, but they share common beliefs, prayer, and a commitment to love others. This diversity within unity is a key feature of the Church's identity.

For pupils, the central idea is that they belong to something much bigger than their local community. Understanding the Church as a worldwide family helps them to recognise others as part of the same family of faith and encourages attitudes of inclusion, respect, and love.



U1.6.4

Recognise that the Cross is a symbol of Christianity, and the Sign of the Cross is a prayer expressing Christian belief.

Know

The Cross helps Christians remember Jesus' love and sacrifice.

Making the Sign of the Cross is a way to pray to God.

When Christians make the Sign of the Cross, they are praying and showing they believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.



D1.6.2

Talk about their personal response to and artistic expression of Christian belief in a different Christian community (e.g. Missa Luba; Pentecostal Gospel music tradition; Contemporary Christian Praise and Worship music; Welsh choirs, Jesus Mafa paintings)

Discern

Christians all over the world show their love for God in many beautiful ways, and I can find my own special way to praise Him too.

Suggested discovery questions

1. How do Christians in different Christian communities show their love for God through music and art?
2. How do you feel when you see or hear different kinds of Christian music and art from around the world?
3. How might you show your own love for God in an artwork, song, or dance?



Respond

Explore different crosses from around the world, e.g. the traditional Latin cross, Celtic cross, Jerusalem cross and El Salvador crosses. Discuss which is their favourite cross and why. Children create and decorate a cross to show what it means to them. Invite children to make the Sign of the Cross together to show their love for God.

Learn a simple Christian song from another culture (for example, a joyful African or Caribbean worship song).

Create a "World of Worship" collage showing how Christians around the world express their love for God through art, music, and colour.

Key vocabulary

community	a group of people who care for and help one another.
sacrifice	giving up something important to help someone else because you love them. Jesus sacrifices himself on the Cross because he loves everyone so much.
Sign of the Cross	a short prayer that shows that Christians believe in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Teacher Notes

When Christians make the Sign of the Cross, they touch their forehead, chest, and shoulders while saying, 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.' It's a short prayer that reminds us that God is with us Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and that we belong to Him. Christians use it at the beginning and end of prayers, and it shows love and respect for God.

'A-cross the World' book by Betty Pedley and Martyn Payne is a resource to explore 40 different Christian crosses.

Missa Luba is joyful African Church music that helps people pray to God with singing, drumming, and dancing.

'My Lighthouse' by Rend Collective is a catchy, action-based worship song with a strong link to Jesus guiding us

'Our God is a Great Big God' is a very accessible worship song, reinforcing awe and joy in God

'You Who Say I Am' by Hillsong Worship focusses on identity as part of God's family

'This Little Light of Mine' (traditional, modern versions by Listener Kids) encourages living out faith visibly



	U1.6.5 Correctly use religious words and phrases to recognise features of Jewish religious life and practice (e.g. including specific vocabulary about the Jewish belief in one God and the special clothes some Jewish people wear each day).
<i>Know</i>	Jews believe in one God, and state this in the Shema prayer. Jews have a sacred text called the Torah which helps them to know how to live and love God. There are five books in the Torah: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

	D1.6.3 Ask questions about the stories and experiences of Jewish people.
<i>Discern</i>	Jewish people believe in one God. They read the Torah and say the Shema to learn how to love and be faithful friends of God. Suggested discovery questions 1. What do Jewish people learn about God when they read their special book, the Torah? 2. How do Jewish people show they love the one God they pray to in the Shema? 3. If you had a special message to help other people love and follow one God, what would it be?

	Pupils look at pictures of the Torah being read in the synagogue and talk about how people show respect for it (for example, dressing nicely, using a pointer, or standing). Draw or write one way to show respect for special or holy things in your own lives.
<i>Respond</i>	After learning some basic facts about the five books of the Torah, pupils talk about what these stories teach people about God and share their favourite story or message Visit a synagogue or invite a Jewish visitor into school to ask questions about their religious life and practice.

Textual references

Deuteronomy 6:4 11:13-21 & Numbers 15:37-41

original text of the Shema prayer (N.B. no detailed study required)

Key vocabulary

Jew/Jewish	a person who follows Judaism (the Jewish faith)
Torah	the special book of God's law that helps Jewish people know how to live and love God
Shema	a special prayer Jewish people say to show they love God with all their heart

Teacher Notes

Refer to CES guidance about visits and visitors into school.

Use images or recordings available on the Jewish Museum of London's website, such as Torah chanting and use inclusive Jewish imagery.

For Jewish people, belief in one God lies at the very heart of their faith. This belief is expressed clearly in the Shema, one of the most important prayers in Judaism. It begins, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one' (Deuteronomy 6:4). The Shema reminds Jewish people that there is only one God and that they are called to love Him with all their heart, soul, and strength. It is said every day in homes and synagogues and teaches that faith is not only about belief, but about living in a loving relationship with God.

Jewish people learn how to live out this love and faithfulness by reading the Torah, their most sacred text. The Torah forms the first five books of the Christian Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The Torah contains stories, laws, and teachings that reveal God's covenant with His people. It teaches Jewish people how to live good and holy lives, showing kindness, justice, and respect for others.

The Torah is treated with great reverence because it is believed to contain the word of God. In the synagogue, it is handwritten on parchment scrolls, kept in a special place called the Ark, and read using a pointer called a yad to avoid touching the sacred text. People may stand or dress respectfully when the Torah is read, showing honour for God's word.

For pupils, learning about the Torah and the Shema helps them see the deep connection between Judaism and Christianity. Jesus himself was a Jew who knew and prayed the Shema, and he taught his followers that the greatest commandment is to love God and love one another (Mark 12:29–31), echoing the Shema's message. Understanding this helps pupils recognise that both Jews and Christians seek to live in friendship with the same loving God.

Through these lessons, pupils begin to see that people of faith, though different in tradition, share a common desire to love, listen to, and follow God.



Dialogue and Encounter

Year 1
Week 5
Encounter

	U1.6.5 Correctly use religious words and phrases to recognise features of Jewish religious life and practice (e.g. including specific vocabulary about the Jewish belief in one God and the special clothes some Jewish people wear each day).
<i>Know</i>	Sukkot is a Jewish festival that remembers when God looked after the Israelites as they travelled through the desert to the Promised Land. The Torah tells Jewish people to live in small shelters during Sukkot to remember how God cared for His people when they lived in tents after leaving Egypt. Jews build a sukkah, a small hut with simple walls and a leafy roof open to the sky, to remember how God cared for His people in the desert.

	D1.6.3 Ask questions about the stories and experiences of Jewish people.
<i>Discern</i>	Sukkot reminds Jews that God takes care of us wherever we are. Suggested discovery questions 1. How does living or eating in the Sukkah help people remember the Israelites in the desert? 2. How is Sukkot typically celebrated within families or communities? 3. What activities are involved in building and decorating a sukkah?

	
<i>Respond</i>	Listen to a simple story about the Israelites in the desert or about a family celebrating Sukkot today, then ask children what part they liked best or what it teaches us Listen to joyful songs about Sukkot: What does this teach you about Sukkot? Children write or draw pictures of what they are thankful to God for.

Textual references

Leviticus 23:42-43

Instruction how to live during Sukkot

Key vocabulary

Sukkot	the autumn harvest festival
sukkah	a loosely roofed hut used during the festival of Sukkot

Teacher Notes

Sukkot is one of the most joyful festivals in Judaism. It lasts for one week and is often called the 'Festival of Booths' or 'Festival of Tabernacles'. Sukkot remembers the forty years when the Israelites journeyed through the desert after God freed them from slavery in Egypt. During this time, they lived in temporary shelters, relying completely on God to feed, guide, and protect them.

In Leviticus 23:42–43, God commands the Israelites to build temporary huts each year to remember this time of trust and dependence. These huts are called sukkot (singular sukkah). Each sukkah is made with simple walls and a roof loosely covered with branches and leaves, open enough for people to see the stars above: a sign that God watches over His people. Families eat their meals, celebrate, and sometimes even sleep in the sukkah during the festival.

Sukkot is also a harvest festival, thanking God for His goodness in providing food and creation. Families decorate their sukkah with fruit and vegetables hanging from the roof and with greenery and lights. The beauty and joy of these decorations remind everyone that all gifts come from God. In Israel, even modern apartment blocks are sometimes designed so that balconies are not directly above each other, allowing families to build a sukkah open to the sky.

Another ancient custom of Sukkot comes from Leviticus 23:40, where God commands the use of the four species: a palm branch (lulav), willow, myrtle, and a citrus fruit called etrog. These are held together and waved in all directions, north, south, east, west, up, and down, to show that God is everywhere and rules over all creation. This is one of the few traditions that still echoes the worship once offered in the Temple of Jerusalem.

The final day of the festival is Simchat Torah, meaning Rejoicing in the Torah. On this day, Jewish people celebrate the gift of God's Word. All the Torah scrolls are taken out of the Ark in the synagogue and carried in joyful processions with singing and dancing. The last verses of Deuteronomy are read, followed immediately by the beginning of Genesis, showing that the reading of God's Word never ends.

For pupils, Sukkot offers a beautiful insight into how Jewish people remember God's faithfulness and celebrate His care. It echoes the Christian call to live with gratitude, joy, and trust in the God who provides for His people always.

[Songs for Sukkot can be found here](#)



	U1.6.5 Correctly use religious words and phrases to recognise features of Jewish religious life and practice (e.g. including specific vocabulary about the Jewish belief in one God and the special clothes some Jewish people wear each day)
<i>Know</i>	Some Jewish people wear special clothes to remind them of their faith in God throughout the day, not just at prayer time. Some Jewish people wear a kippah on their head to remind them that God is always above them and with them wherever they go. The tallit has special threads and knots that remind Jewish people to follow God's commandments and live good lives.

	D1.6.3 Ask questions about the stories and experiences of Jewish people.
<i>Discern</i>	Some Jews wear special clothes to help them remember God and do good every day. Suggested discovery questions 1. What special clothes do some Jews wear to show their faith in God? 2. Why might wearing these clothes help people remember God? 3. How do special clothes make people feel close to their religion or community?

<i>Respond</i>	Show pictures of different Jewish clothing items (kippah, tallit, etc.) and ask how wearing something special might make someone feel. Read or tell a simple story about a Jewish child wearing a kippah or tallit, then discuss what it means to them. Invite a Jewish community member (such as a parent, rabbi, or educator) to visit the class to ask about these special clothes and what it means to them when they wear them.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

kippah	a small skullcap worn by Jewish men (and sometimes by women) as a sign of reverence before God
tallit	a special prayer shawl that some Jewish people wear when they pray
tzitzit	fringes on the corners of a tallit, reminding Jewish people to follow God's commandments and live a good, holy life

Teacher Notes

In Judaism, wearing special clothes during prayer and daily life is a way of showing love and respect for God. These clothes help Jewish people remember who they are and what God asks of them. The two most well-known items are the kippah (or yarmulke) and the tallit.

The kippah is a small cap worn on the head. In Hebrew, kippah means 'covering'. Wearing it is a sign of reverence, reminding the person that God is above them and watching over them. It expresses humility before God. Many Jewish men, and some women, wear a kippah all the time, while others wear it only during prayer, study, or when in the synagogue. There is no single rule about its shape or colour, but it always serves the same purpose: to remind the wearer of God's constant presence.

The tallit is a prayer shawl, usually white with blue or black stripes, and with fringes called tzitzit on each corner. These fringes are commanded in the Torah (Numbers 15:37–41) as a physical reminder of God's commandments. Traditionally, there are 613 tzitzit on a tallit to represent the 613 commands (mitzvot) contained in the Torah. When Jewish people wrap themselves in the tallit for prayer, it is like being wrapped in God's love and protection. Before putting it on, they say a blessing to thank God for the opportunity to follow His commandments. Boys may first wear a small version, called a tallit katan, from a young age, and an adult tallit gadol from their Bar Mitzvah onwards.

This learning helps pupils see that people of faith use special symbols and clothing to show love for God. Catholics also have outward signs that express inward faith, such as making the Sign of the Cross, wearing a crucifix, or the vestments priests wear at Mass. These acts remind believers of God's presence and of their call to live faithfully each day.

Teaching about the kippah and tallit helps pupils understand how Jewish people live out their covenant relationship with God. It shows how faith can be woven into daily life through visible and reverent acts. This connects closely with Catholic understanding: that faith is not only something we believe in our hearts but something we live and show through our actions.



Dialogue and Encounter

Year 2

Week 1

Dialogue

	U2.6.1 Say what the parable of the Good Samaritan teaches about how Christians should live.
<i>Know</i>	Jesus teaches that we should help anyone in need, even if they are different from us. Christians believe that God wants them to act with compassion, just like the Good Samaritan did. The parable teaches that love for God is shown through loving and helping other people.

	D2.6.1 Consider an answer, with relevant reasons, to the question 'Who is my neighbour?'	
<i>Discern</i>	Everyone is my neighbour because God calls me to love and care for all His creation.	Suggested discovery questions 1. Why does God want us to treat everyone as our neighbour? 2. How can I show love and care to people I do not know? 3. What might happen in our world if everyone lived like the Good Samaritan?

	R2.6.1 Reflect on the question 'Who is my neighbour?' in their life and wonder about how they can act as a good Samaritan in their local community.	
<i>Respond</i>	Pupils create a drawing or collage showing acts of kindness they can do for others in their school or neighbourhood, linking their ideas to the message of the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Each pupil writes a short promise or prayer describing one way they will show love and care to someone in their community during the week. These can be displayed on a 'Good Neighbour' wall or tree. In small groups, pupils act out everyday situations where someone needs help (e.g., a classmate feeling left out, an elderly neighbour needing assistance) and discuss how they could respond like the Good Samaritan.	

Textual references

Luke 10:25-37

Parable of the Good Samaritan

Key vocabulary

compassion	an important way of following Jesus by caring deeply about someone who is sad, hurt, or in need, and wanting to help them
neighbour	anyone in need

Teacher Notes

The Parable of the Good Samaritan teaches that every person is our neighbour and that love for God is shown through love for others. In the story, Jesus responds to the question, 'Who is my neighbour?' by showing that compassion should extend beyond our own friends, family, or community. The Samaritan helps a stranger from a group often despised by his people, showing that true love of God breaks down barriers of difference and prejudice.

For Christians, this parable reveals that mercy and compassion are not optional but central to living the Gospel. Jesus teaches that holiness is not just about prayer or knowledge of the Law, but about practical acts of love. The priest and Levite pass by, while the Samaritan acts, showing that real faith requires action.

In Catholic teaching, this connects to the commandment to 'love your neighbour as yourself' and to the Church's call to serve those in need. Pope Leo XIV continues to remind Catholics that charity and justice are inseparable from discipleship. He formally declared that charity is a reality that 'engages us and guides our decisions toward the common good' in his Message for the World Day of the Poor, published on 13 June 2025. Pupils can see that when we care for others, especially those who are hurt, lonely, or excluded, we are living out Jesus' message of love.

This story also helps pupils understand that God's love is for all people and that kindness can transform communities. By showing mercy, we share in God's work of healing the world and building His Kingdom of love and peace.



Dialogue and Encounter

Year 2

Week 2

Dialogue



U2.6.2

Describe an initiative Christians work on together locally and globally in the service of others.

Know

Christians believe Jesus taught them to love and serve others, especially people who are poor, sick, or in need.

Around the world, Catholic groups like Caritas work with others to bring food, care, and education to people who need help.

In local communities, churches often work together to help others, for example by running food banks or shelters for people without homes.



D2.6.1

Consider an answer, with relevant reasons, to the question 'Who is my neighbour?'

Discern

Christians live out Jesus' call to love their neighbour by serving and caring for others locally and globally.

Suggested discovery questions

1. How does serving others help Christians understand what Jesus meant by 'love your neighbour'?
2. In what ways can working together to help those in need bring Christians closer to God and to each other?
3. How might acts of service change not only the lives of others but also the hearts of those who serve?



Respond

On a world map, mark where Christian groups like Caritas help people, such as giving clean water or helping after disasters.

Create an 'acts of kindness' jar. Share ways in which children have cared for others both locally and globally, e.g. supporting the local food bank, raising money for improved health care etc.

Make and decorate prayer cards or write intercessions for people in different countries for peace, safety, clean water etc.

Textual references

Fratelli Tutti 69

'Each day we have to decide whether to be Good Samaritans or indifferent bystanders. If we extend a hand to help others, we will discover that we too are lifted up. The parable of the Good Samaritan shows us that we are all really responsible for all.'

Key vocabulary

Fratelli Tutti a letter written by Pope Francis to teach that everyone is part of one big family, and should help one another. (Literally, 'all brothers and sisters')

Teacher Notes

This learning helps pupils understand that serving others is a central part of Christian life, rooted in Jesus' command to love one another. Jesus showed through his words and actions that caring for those in need is a way of loving God. When Christians serve others, they follow Jesus' example and build God's Kingdom of love and justice on earth.

The Catholic Church teaches that love for others should extend beyond our own families or communities to people everywhere. Pope Francis writes in *Fratelli Tutti* that we are all part of one human family, and that true faith leads to kindness, mercy, and solidarity with others. The word 'caritas' means 'love', and Caritas International is a global network of 162 Catholic organisations working together to bring practical help to those who need it most. Their work includes providing clean water, shelter, food, healthcare, and education, no matter what a person's religion or background may be. *Fratelli Tutti* 69 explicitly links to Jesus' teaching on 'Who is my neighbour?' It moves pupils beyond proximity to responsibility. Emphasise that neighbour is defined by action, not distance. Connect to Caritas and local service: Christians choose to help. Highlight mutual transformation: serving others changes both the receiver and the giver.

Locally, Christians also join together to help others through food banks, homeless shelters, and refugee support projects. These acts of service show that the Church's mission is both local and global. Inviting a visitor from Cafod or another Christian charity can help pupils see how faith inspires real action. Activities such as creating a kindness jar or prayer cards allow pupils to see that even small acts of love can make a difference in living out Jesus' message of compassion and care.



Dialogue and Encounter

Year 2

Week 3

Encounter



U2.6.3

Make simple links and connections between some Jewish religious laws, beliefs, worship, and life (e.g., Keeping the Sabbath day holy and how this is celebrated in the synagogue and in Jewish homes).

Know

Jewish people use Hebrew, the language of the Torah, when they pray and read from the Torah.

Writing God's words beautifully in Hebrew shows respect and love for God.

Jewish scribes, called *soferim*, carefully write each letter of the Torah to keep it holy and special for worship in the synagogue and at home.



D2.6.2

Explore some examples of Hebrew calligraphy, for example, through the work of a sofer (scribe), and asking 'I wonder' questions about what they have seen.

Discern

Exploring Hebrew calligraphy shows how beautiful writing can be a way to honour and love God.

Suggested discovery questions

1. I wonder why the letters are written so carefully and beautifully?
2. I wonder how the sofer feels when writing God's words?
3. I wonder what we can learn about respect and care from this work?



Respond

Invite children to explore examples of Hebrew calligraphy, focusing on the beautiful and careful writing used in Jewish holy texts.

Show images or videos of a sofer (Jewish scribe) creating Torah scrolls, mezuzah scrolls, or prayer books. Encourage the children to notice the care, patterns, and meaning in each letter.

Talk about why people make special effort to write holy words neatly and beautifully. Children draw something they think is 'special to take care of.'

Textual references

Key vocabulary

calligraphy special, beautiful writing used to show care and respect for God's words

Teacher Notes

Hebrew is the sacred language of the Jewish faith and the original language of the Torah, the first five books of the Bible. Jewish people believe that Hebrew is a holy gift from God, and that using it in prayer and worship shows honour and respect for Him. When the Torah is read in the synagogue, it is always read in Hebrew. Many Jewish homes also have Hebrew prayers or verses displayed, such as the Shema, which begins 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one' (Deuteronomy 6:4). Pupils learnt about the Shema in Year 1.

The Torah is treated with the greatest care and love because it contains God's words and commandments. Each Torah scroll is written by hand by a trained scribe, called a sofer. The sofer uses special ink and a quill made from a feather, and follows strict rules for forming every Hebrew letter. This careful and beautiful writing is called calligraphy. It is not only about neatness but about showing reverence for God. A single mistake can mean a section must be rewritten, as the Torah is considered sacred. This process can take a year or more to complete.

Hebrew calligraphy is an act of devotion. It expresses the Jewish belief that God's words deserve to be treated with dignity and care. The beauty of the writing reflects the beauty of God's law and the love the community has for it. Pupils can see that, for Jewish people, the way holy words are written and cared for is a way of worshipping God.

This learning helps pupils reflect on how both Jews and Catholics show respect for God's Word. Catholics listen carefully to Scripture at Mass, bow to the Gospel, and keep the Bible in a place of honour. Both traditions remind believers that God's Word is precious and deserves to be treated with care and love.

Here are short, meaningful phrases from the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4–9) that are particularly suitable for Year 2 pupils to decorate and explore. They are carefully selected to retain theological integrity while remaining accessible:

Core declaration of faith

- 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.'
- Central belief in one God (key theological focus)

Love of God

- 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart.'
- '...with all your soul.'
- '...with all your strength.'
- Can be split across groups for creative work

Remembering God's words

- 'Keep these words in your heart.'
- 'Talk about them at home and on the way.'
- Links directly to daily life and practice



U2.6.3

Make simple links and connections between some Jewish religious laws, beliefs, worship, and life (e.g., Keeping the Sabbath day holy and how this is celebrated in the synagogue and in Jewish homes).

Know

Jewish people believe God commanded them to keep the Sabbath day holy as a day of rest and worship.

Jewish people go to the synagogue on the Sabbath to pray, read the Torah, and spend time with their community.

On the Sabbath, Jewish families celebrate with special prayers, meals, and by resting from work.



Discern

Keeping the Sabbath holy helps Jewish people pause from work, find peace, and remember their special relationship with God.

Suggested discovery questions

1. What do Jewish people do to make the Sabbath a special and peaceful day?
2. Why is rest and spending time with family and God important on Shabbat?
3. How do Jewish people get ready to welcome the Sabbath each week?



Respond

Read a short story or watch a video about a Jewish family preparing for Shabbat. Pupils ask questions they wonder about. Invite a Jewish speaker in to school to talk about these celebrations.

'The Sabbath is special to Jews because...' Pupils record their answer to show understanding in a personal, creative way.

Listen to a simple Shabbat song (like Shabbat Shalom).

Textual references

Genesis 2:2-3	Origin of the Sabbath
Exodus 20:8-11	Commandment to keep the Sabbath holy
Deuteronomy 5:12-15	Rest as a sign of freedom and gratitude
Exodus 16:22-30	Manna in the desert before the Sabbath, when no manna will appear

Key vocabulary

Shabbat Hebrew word for 'Sabbath', meaning 'stop' or 'rest'

Teacher Notes

The Sabbath, known in Hebrew as Shabbat, is one of the most important parts of Jewish life. It is a weekly day of rest and worship that begins at sunset on Friday and ends at nightfall on Saturday. The word Shabbat comes from the Hebrew word meaning 'to rest' or 'to stop'. Jewish people believe that God commanded them to keep this day holy as a sign of their special relationship with Him.

The origin of the Sabbath is found in the story of creation in Genesis 2:2–3, where God rests on the seventh day after creating the world and blesses that day as holy. Later, in Exodus 20:8–11, the commandment to keep the Sabbath is given to the Israelites as part of the Ten Commandments. In Deuteronomy 5:12–15, the Sabbath is also described as a reminder of freedom, recalling that God rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.

For Jewish people, keeping the Sabbath holy means stopping ordinary work and focusing on rest, family, and God. It is a time to pause from the busyness of the week, to pray, to enjoy peaceful meals, and to spend time together. On Friday evening, families welcome the Sabbath by lighting candles, saying prayers, and sharing a special meal that often includes bread (challah) and wine. The Friday night Shabbat meal is one of the most special and meaningful parts of Jewish life. As the sun sets, the family gathers to welcome the Sabbath with peace and joy. The mother of the family usually lights two candles, symbolising the two commandments in the Torah: to 'remember' and to 'keep' the Sabbath. She covers her eyes and says a blessing, inviting God's presence and peace into the home. Before eating, the father or another family member recites the Kiddush, a blessing over a cup of wine that thanks God for creating the Sabbath and setting it apart as holy. Two loaves of challah bread are placed on the table under a cloth, reminding everyone of the double portion of manna God gave the Israelites in the desert on the day before the Sabbath. The meal that follows is unhurried and joyful. Traditional foods such as chicken soup, fish, and sweet desserts are shared, and families often sing songs, tell stories, or bless one another. Parents bless their children with words of peace before the meal begins. The atmosphere is calm and full of love, helping everyone remember that Shabbat is God's gift of rest and togetherness. The next day, they may go to the synagogue to pray and listen to the Torah being read.

The Sabbath is more than just a day off; it is a joyful time to thank God for creation and for His care. The weekly rhythm of work and rest teaches that rest is sacred and that all people, animals, and the earth itself need time to pause. The Sabbath also reminds people that every person has dignity, since everyone, rich or poor, is invited to rest equally before God.

Through learning about the Sabbath, pupils can appreciate how Jewish people show their love for God through peaceful worship, family life, and gratitude. It teaches that rest, reflection, and time with loved ones are holy gifts that renew both faith and community.



U2.6.3

Make simple links and connections between some Jewish religious laws, beliefs, worship, and life (e.g., Keeping the Sabbath day holy and how this is celebrated in the synagogue and in Jewish homes).

Know

Kashrut is a set of special rules Jewish people follow about what they can and cannot eat, and how food should be prepared.

Jewish people do not eat certain animals, like pigs or shellfish, and meat and dairy foods must be kept separate.

Eating kosher food helps Jewish people remember their faith and live the way God asks them to.



Discern

Following the kosher food laws helps Jewish people honour God through everyday choices about what they eat and how they live.

Suggested discovery questions

1. How does following kosher food rules help Jewish people feel close to God?
2. What are some special kosher foods eaten during Jewish festivals?
3. What symbols or labels might show that food is kosher in a shop?



Respond

Read a short story or watch a video about a Jewish family keeping kosher. Ask: 'What did they do to make sure their food followed God's rules?'

Invite pupils to reflect on what it means to make choices every day based on faith after learning about kashrut.

Talk about why Jewish people thank God before and after eating. Then draw a picture of something pupils are thankful for at mealtime.

Textual references

Leviticus 11:3-8 & Deuteronomy 14:6-8

only certain animals may be eaten

Leviticus 11:9-12 & Deuteronomy 14:9-10

only certain sea creatures may be eaten

Exodus 23:19; 34:26 & Deuteronomy 14:21

meat and milk must not be cooked or eaten together

Key vocabulary

kashrut	a set of special rules Jewish people follow about what they can and cannot eat, and how food should be prepared
kosher	the food itself that meets the requirements of kashrut (literally, 'fit' or 'proper')

Teacher Notes

The Jewish food laws, called 'kashrut', are an important part of Jewish religious life and identity. These laws come from the Torah and guide Jewish people in what they can and cannot eat, and how food should be prepared. Food that follows these rules is called 'kosher', meaning 'fit' or 'proper'. By eating only kosher food, Jewish people show obedience to God's commandments and bring holiness into their daily lives.

The Torah teaches that certain animals are allowed to be eaten and others are not. Land animals must have split hooves and chew the cud, so cows and sheep are kosher, but pigs and camels are not (Leviticus 11:3–8). Sea creatures must have fins and scales, meaning fish like salmon and tuna are kosher, but shellfish such as prawns and crabs are not (Leviticus 11:9–12). The Torah also says that meat and milk must never be cooked or eaten together (Exodus 23:19; Deuteronomy 14:21). These rules remind Jewish people that food and life are gifts from God and must be treated with care and respect.

Following kashrut helps Jewish people live in a thoughtful way, making each meal a moment to remember God. Keeping kosher is about more than food; it is a way of showing faith and belonging to the Jewish community. It also teaches self-control, mindfulness, and gratitude.

Christians, on the other hand, do not follow the kosher food laws. In the New Testament, Jesus teaches that what comes from the heart matters more than what a person eats (Mark 7:18–23). Later, in Acts 10:9–16, Peter has a vision in which God tells him that all foods are clean. This shows that the message of Jesus is for everyone, not only those who keep the old food laws. For Christians, holiness comes through faith in Christ and how they live, rather than through dietary rules.

By learning about kashrut, pupils can see how both Jews and Christians express their faith through everyday actions. Both traditions teach that food is a blessing from God, to be received with thanks and shared with others. Eating thoughtfully and giving thanks at mealtimes helps people remember that God provides for all.

A note about birds

In kashrut, some birds are kosher, but not all.

Birds that are commonly accepted as kosher include: chicken, duck, turkey, goose

Birds of prey and scavengers are not kosher, for example: eagle, hawk, owl, vulture

The Torah (Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 14) does not list 'allowed' birds clearly but instead lists forbidden types, mainly birds that hunt other animals. Over time, Jewish tradition identifies which birds are permitted.

Put simply, for pupils: Some birds can be eaten if they follow Jewish food rules, but birds that hunt other animals cannot be eaten.



Dialogue and Encounter

Year 2

Week 6

Encounter

	U2.6.4 Talk about respecting the beliefs of people from different communities in their local area.
<i>Know</i>	People in different faiths, like Jewish people, thank God for their food in special ways, and we can show respect by listening and learning about their traditions. Saying prayers or blessings before and after eating reminds Jewish people to be thankful; we can respect this by being thankful and respectful at mealtimes too. When we share food or talk about different ways people give thanks, we show kindness and respect for everyone's beliefs in our community.

	D2.6.3 Listen to the stories and experiences of others from different communities in the class and the wider community.
<i>Discern</i>	Jewish people show love for God by giving thanks before and after eating. Blessings remind them that all food is a gift from God and should be shared and enjoyed with gratitude. Suggested discovery questions 1. Why do Jewish people say blessings before and after they eat? 2. What could we learn from Jewish people about being grateful for what we have? 3. How might eating together peacefully show love for God and others?

	R2.6.2 Reflect on how communities could be transformed if people acted as good neighbours.
<i>Respond</i>	Pupils create a collage showing people being good neighbours by helping, sharing, and saying thank you. This helps them see how small acts of kindness can make their community peaceful and caring. Pupils share a simple snack after saying a short blessing of thanks. They reflect on how giving thanks and sharing food can help people live together kindly. Pupils create simple blessing cards with drawings and short thank-you prayers inspired by Jewish mealtime blessings.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

blessing a prayer that thanks or praises God

Teacher Notes

In Judaism, giving thanks to God before and after eating is a daily act of faith. These short prayers, called 'berakhot' (blessings), help Jewish people remember that all food is a gift from God. The Torah teaches that God provides everything needed for life, so saying a blessing turns an ordinary act, such as eating, into a moment of prayer. Blessings are said before eating foods such as bread, fruit, or wine, and after a meal a longer prayer called the *Birkat Hamazon* thanks God for providing food for all creation.

The purpose of these blessings is to show gratitude and respect for God's gifts. Jewish people believe that saying blessings helps them live with thankfulness and care, remembering that food should be shared and never wasted. The Sabbath and Jewish festivals include special meals with blessings that bring families together to celebrate God's goodness.

This practice reflects the Jewish idea of 'shalom', meaning peace and harmony. By pausing to bless God before and after eating, Jewish people remind themselves to live peacefully with others and to care for those who are hungry.

Learning about these blessings helps pupils see how faith shapes daily life. It shows that gratitude strengthens relationships and helps communities live in kindness and peace. Pupils can recognise that Christians also say grace before meals to thank God, and that both traditions teach respect for creation and love for others. Through this, pupils learn that giving thanks is not only polite, but a way of living faithfully and showing love for God in everyday life.



Dialogue and Encounter

Year 3

Week 1

Dialogue & Encounter

	U3.6.1 Make links between Exodus (12:1-8,15-20, 13:3) and the account of the Last Supper in Luke (22:14-23).
<i>Know</i>	In Exodus, God tells Moses and the Israelites to share a special Passover meal with lamb and unleavened bread to remember how God saved them from slavery in Egypt. At the Last Supper, Jesus shared bread and wine with his disciples during the Passover meal and told them to 'Do this in memory of me'. Both the Passover and the Last Supper show how God rescues and saves his people, and how Jesus gives new meaning to the Passover through the Eucharist.

	D3.6.1 Wonder why Jesus chose to celebrate the Last Supper on the feast of the Passover.	
<i>Discern</i>	Jesus chose to celebrate the Last Supper on the feast of the Passover to show that He is the new Passover Lamb, giving Himself to save us from sin.	Suggested discovery questions 1. I wonder why Jesus wanted to share his last meal with his friends during the Passover feast. 2. I wonder how the Passover story of God rescuing the Israelites helps us understand what Jesus was about to do. 3. I wonder what Jesus wanted his friends to remember every time they shared bread and wine together after that meal.

	Pupils sit in a circle to retell the story of the Passover and the Last Supper using simple props such as bread, a cup, and a toy lamb. After the story, they share reflections on what Jesus wanted people to remember about God's saving love. Pupils create a simple table comparing key symbols of the Passover meal and the Last Supper, such as lamb, bread, and wine. They write short sentences showing how Jesus gave these symbols new meaning.
<i>Respond</i>	

Textual references

Exodus 12:1-8, 15-20; 13:3	Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread
Luke 22:14-23	The Last Supper (aka The Passover Supper)

Key vocabulary

Teacher Notes

The feast of the Passover is one of the most important celebrations in Judaism. It remembers how God freed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. In Exodus 12, God tells Moses to prepare the people for their journey to freedom. Each family is to sacrifice a lamb, mark their doorposts with its blood, and eat a meal of roast lamb, bitter herbs, and unleavened bread. That night, the angel of death passes over the homes marked with blood, sparing them. This is why the celebration is called 'Passover'. Jewish people still remember this event each year with a special meal called the Seder, giving thanks for God's saving power and faithfulness.

Jesus was Jewish, and the Gospels tell us that the Last Supper took place during the Passover feast (Luke 22:14–23). Jesus chose this moment to give new meaning to the meal. Instead of sacrificing a lamb, he took bread and wine and said, 'This is my body... This is my blood.' In doing so, he showed that he is the new Passover Lamb, offering himself to save people from sin. The Passover story of freedom from slavery now points to the deeper freedom Jesus brings through his death and resurrection.

The Last Supper becomes the foundation of the Eucharist, the central act of Christian worship. Just as Jewish families remember God's covenant through the Passover meal, Christians remember and share in Jesus' new covenant through the Mass. When Catholics receive the Eucharist, they remember Jesus' sacrifice and are strengthened to live in his love.

This learning helps pupils understand that both the Passover and the Last Supper tell the story of God's saving love. By linking the two, pupils begin to see how Jesus fulfils God's promise to free his people; first from slavery, and finally from sin and death.



 U3.6.2	Simply describe how Jewish people celebrate the Passover in Britain today making links with the Exodus account, correctly using specialist vocabulary to describe symbols and actions in the meal
<i>Know</i>	At Passover, Jewish people remember the Exodus by sharing a special meal called the Seder, which tells the story of how God freed the Israelites from slavery. During the Seder, each food on the Seder plate has a special meaning. The story of the Exodus shows that God keeps His promises and cares for His people, and the Passover meal helps Jewish families remember His love and faithfulness.

 D3.6.3.	Listen to the stories and experiences of those from the Jewish communities in the class or the wider community and ask questions about their laws, beliefs, worship, or life.	
<i>Discern</i>	The Exodus teaches Jewish people that God is faithful and wants His people to bring freedom, hope, and justice to others.	Suggested discovery questions 1. Why is the story of the Exodus so important to Jewish people? 2. How does the Exodus story show that God wants people to be free and cared for? 3. I wonder how Jewish people today might feel when they celebrate Passover and remember this story.

	Pupils act out scenes from the Exodus, such as Moses speaking to Pharaoh or crossing the Red Sea, then reflect on how it might have felt to be set free. Pupils look at photos of a Seder meal and label the foods, writing one sentence to explain how each symbol links to the Exodus story. Read or listen to short extracts from a child-friendly Haggadah that describe each part of the Seder. Pupils write a short reflection or prayer thanking God for freedom and promising to help others who are treated unfairly.	
<i>Respond</i>		

Textual references

Exodus 3:7-10	God calls Moses
Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14	The first Passover
Exodus 14:21-31	Crossing the Red Sea
Exodus 13:3-10	Remembering the Passover

Key vocabulary

Exodus	the story in the Torah of how God freed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt through Moses
Haggadah	a special book that Jewish people use during the Passover meal. It tells the story of how God rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and includes prayers, songs, and blessings to help families remember and give thanks to God.
Passover (Pesach)	the Jewish festival that celebrates God saving the Israelites and leading them to freedom
Seder	the special meal Jewish families share at Passover, where each food has a meaning linked to the Exodus story

Teacher Notes

The story of the Exodus is one of the most important in the whole of the Jewish faith. It tells how God saved the Israelites from slavery in Egypt through the leadership of Moses. The story shows that God is powerful, faithful, and loving, and that He wants His people to live in freedom and peace. It is found in the Torah, mainly in the book of Exodus, and is remembered every year during the Jewish festival of Passover (Pesach).

In Exodus 3, God calls Moses from the burning bush and promises to rescue His people. God sends ten plagues to persuade Pharaoh to let the Israelites go. In Exodus 12, God instructs the Israelites to sacrifice a lamb, eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, and mark their doorposts with the lamb's blood so that the angel of death will pass over their homes. Pharaoh finally agrees to free the Israelites, and in Exodus 14 they cross the Red Sea safely while the Egyptian army is swept away. These events show God's power to save and His deep care for His people.

The Jewish festival of Passover celebrates this deliverance. Families gather for a special meal called the Seder, which retells the story of the Exodus. Each item on the Seder plate has a symbolic meaning. Bitter herbs remind people of the pain of slavery, salt water recalls the tears of the Israelites, a roasted lamb bone recalls the Passover sacrifice, and unleavened bread (matzah) reminds them of how quickly they left Egypt. The meal begins with prayers of thanksgiving and storytelling, often led by the youngest family member who asks, 'Why is this night different from all other nights?'

For Jewish people, Passover is a time to thank God for freedom, to remember His faithfulness, and to pray for those who still suffer today. It is also a time to strengthen family and community bonds. Pupils can reflect that God's care in the Exodus continues to inspire Jewish people to work for justice and peace. Understanding this story helps them appreciate that freedom, hope, and gratitude are central to faith in both Judaism and Christianity.

During the Passover meal, Jewish families use a special book called the Haggadah, which means 'telling' in Hebrew. The Haggadah guides the Seder and contains the prayers, blessings, songs, and readings that help everyone take part in retelling the story of the Exodus. It includes the questions asked by the youngest person at the table, known as the 'Four Questions', which begin with 'Why is this night different from all other nights?' This question reminds everyone that the Seder is not just about remembering the past, but about giving thanks for God's saving love today.

The Haggadah also includes reflections about freedom, justice, and compassion. It reminds Jewish people that because God rescued their ancestors from slavery, they too must care for those who are poor or oppressed. By reading the Haggadah, Jewish people experience the Exodus as if they themselves were part of it, keeping the story alive for every generation.



	U3.6.3 Make simple links and connection between some Islamic religious laws, beliefs, worship, and life (e.g., belief in one God, the Creator, the significance of Muhammed, importance of the will of God etc.)
<i>Know</i>	Muslims believe in one God, called Allah, who created everything and cares for all people. Muslims believe that the Prophet Muhammad received God's message in the Qur'an and showed people how to live good and faithful lives. Muslims show their faith by praying, helping others, and following God's will in their everyday actions.

	Suggested discovery questions
<i>Discern</i>	Believing in one God (Allah) teaches Muslims to live with faith, discipline, and gratitude, showing their love for Him in all they do. 1. How do Muslims show their love for Allah in their daily lives? 2. Why is prayer an important way for Muslims to remember and thank Allah? 3. What can we learn from the way Muslims show gratitude and respect for God every day?

	R3.6.2 Talk, ask, and answer questions with others about their beliefs, experiences, and feelings, recognising the ways in which this could influence the way they live.
<i>Respond</i>	Pupils sit in small groups to look at pictures showing Muslims praying, giving charity, or caring for creation. They talk about why these actions are important to Muslims and how showing kindness or respect could change how people live together. Children make a 'Faith and Action' journal page. Explain how a Muslim's faith guides them to show love, discipline, or gratitude to Allah (e.g., prayer shows faith; giving shows kindness). After learning about how Muslims follow God's will through good deeds, pupils design a poster showing one way they could do good each day, such as helping a friend or caring for the environment.

Key vocabulary

Allah	Arabic word for 'God', who Muslims believe is the one Creator of everything
Muhammed	the Prophet who received God's message and taught Muslims how to live good lives
Qu'ran	the holy book of Islam that contains God's words given to Muhammed
prayer (Salah)	one of the five pillars of Islam. Muslims pray to God five times a day to show love and obedience
faith (Iman)	trust and belief in God that guides how Muslims live and treat others

Teacher Notes

Islam is a monotheistic religion, meaning Muslims believe in one God, called Allah. The word 'Islam' means 'submission' or 'peace through obedience to God'. Muslims believe that Allah is the Creator of everything and that life has meaning when people follow His guidance. This belief shapes every part of a Muslim's life, influencing how they pray, speak, act, and care for others.

Muslims believe that throughout history God has sent prophets to teach people how to live according to His will. The final and most important of these is the Prophet Muhammad, who received God's message through the angel Jibril (Gabriel). These messages were collected in the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam. Muslims treat the Qur'an with great respect because they believe it contains the exact words of God. It teaches about kindness, fairness, honesty, and caring for creation.

The Five Pillars of Islam are the main ways Muslims show their faith in daily life. They are: belief in one God (Shahadah), prayer five times a day (Salah), giving to those in need (Zakat), fasting during Ramadan (Sawm), and making a pilgrimage to Makkah (Hajj). These pillars help Muslims remember God in everything they do. Pupils will learn about these in Year 4.

Prayer is very important in Islam. Muslims pray facing Makkah and begin each prayer with the words 'Allahu Akbar', meaning 'God is the greatest'. They wash before prayer to prepare themselves to meet God with clean hearts and minds. This regular rhythm of prayer helps Muslims stay close to God and reminds them to live with peace and respect. Prayer is important for Muslims because it helps them remember that Allah is the Creator and always close to them. By praying five times a day, they show love, respect, and thankfulness for all that God provides. Each prayer is a moment to stop, focus on God, and promise to live in the right way. It keeps their hearts and minds centred on faith and gratitude.

Charity is also central to the faith. Muslims believe that everything they have comes from God, so they share their money and time with those in need. This reflects the belief that faith must be shown through good actions.

Learning about Islam deepens understanding of how faith guides people's choices and behaviour. Both Muslims and Christians believe in one God who created and loves the world, and both are called to love others, pray regularly, and live with gratitude. Recognising these shared values helps pupils appreciate difference while understanding that people of faith seek the same goal: to live good and faithful lives close to God.



Dialogue and Encounter

Year 3

Week 5

Encounter

	U3.6.3 Make simple links and connection between some Islamic religious laws, beliefs, worship, and life (e.g., belief in one God, the Creator, the significance of Muhammed, importance of the will of God etc.)
<i>Know</i>	Zakat is one of the Five Pillars of Islam, teaching Muslims to give a portion of their wealth to those in need. By giving Zakat, Muslims show gratitude to Allah and remember all they own belongs to Him. Zakat helps create a fairer community where people care for one another and no one is left behind.

 <i>Discern</i>	Suggested discovery questions Giving Zakat helps Muslims grow closer to Allah by showing kindness, justice, and gratitude. 1. How does giving to others show love and obedience to Allah? 2. Who might benefit from the help that Muslims give through Zakat? 3. What can we learn from Muslims about sharing and fairness in our own lives?
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	R3.6.1 Reflect on the meaning of what they have learned for their own lives.
<i>Respond</i>	Read or watch a story about a Muslim child giving Zakat, then discuss how giving can make people feel closer to God and others. Pupils draw a coin or hand symbol and write one sentence about something they could share to help someone in need. As a class, create a small 'Giving Tree', adding leaves that show ways pupils can give time, care, or kindness to others..

Textual references

Key vocabulary

Zakat	giving money or help to people experiencing need as an act of faith and obedience to Allah
Five Pillars	the five main ways Muslims show their faith: belief, prayer, giving, fasting, and pilgrimage
charity	helping others through sharing money, time, or kindness

Teacher Notes

Zakat is one of the Five Pillars of Islam and a central part of Muslim life. It means 'purification' or 'growth'. Muslims believe that by giving a portion of their money or resources to those in need, they purify their hearts from selfishness and help their communities grow in fairness and love. Zakat is not seen as optional generosity but as a duty commanded by Allah. It reminds Muslims that everything they own belongs to God and should be used for the good of others.

Muslims usually give 2.5% of their savings each year to charity. This money supports the poor, the sick, orphans, and people who are struggling. It can also be used to support schools, hospitals, or community work. The Qur'an teaches that giving helps people live in harmony and that God blesses those who are generous and just.

Pupils can learn that giving is not only about money. Muslims also practise 'sadaqah,' voluntary acts of kindness such as helping a neighbour or comforting a friend. These actions reflect the belief that faith should shape behaviour and bring good into the world.

Teaching about Zakat helps pupils understand that generosity and justice are shared values in both Islam and Christianity. Catholics and Muslims alike are called to serve others, share what they have, and see every person as created and loved by God. By reflecting on Zakat, pupils learn that faith inspires compassion and that even small acts of giving can make a real difference.



Know

Islamic calligraphy is a sacred art that uses words from the Qur'an, showing that God's word is precious and holy.



D3.6.2

Discern

Suggested discovery questions

1. How does Islamic art show Muslims' love and respect for God (Allah)?
2. How does the adhan help Muslims remember to worship and thank God each day?
3. What can we learn from the way Muslims use beauty and sound to express their faith?



Pupils use Arabic-inspired patterns to decorate a short phrase about gratitude or faith, showing that beauty can express belief.

Pupils discuss how music, words, and art in their own faith can help people pray or feel close to God.

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Key vocabulary

calligraphy	beautiful, artistic writing often used to show respect for the words of the Qur'an
adhan	the Muslim call to prayer, reminding people to stop and worship Allah
Mosque	the Muslim place of worship where people gather to pray together
pattern	a repeated design used in Islamic art to reflect the order and beauty of God's creation

Teacher Notes

In Islam, art and sound are not simply decoration or performance; they are acts of devotion that reflect the greatness of Allah.

Islamic art avoids showing people or animals because Muslims believe that God alone is the Creator and that no image should attempt to represent Him. Instead, artists use repeating geometric patterns and arabesques, symbolising the perfection, order, and unity of God's creation. Each pattern is carefully designed to reflect harmony and endlessness, reminding believers that God is infinite.

Calligraphy is one of the highest forms of Islamic art. Since the Qur'an is believed to be the exact word of God, Muslims write verses from it in beautiful Arabic script to honour its holiness. Calligraphy can be found in mosques, on tiles, or in books, and is often combined with geometric designs.

The adhan (call to prayer) is another example of beauty in faith. It is recited five times a day to remind Muslims that God should be at the centre of life. The adhan is not sung for performance, but as a spiritual reminder to stop, reflect, and pray. Its melody helps believers feel calm and focused on God.

Through this learning, pupils can appreciate that both Islam and Christianity use beauty, music, and symbolism to bring people closer to God. In both faiths, art and prayer are not separate from daily life but part of it; expressions of love, reverence, and gratitude. Islamic calligraphy patterns remind Muslims that everything created can bring glory and praise to God.

Some examples of [geometric and arabesque patterns](#)

Some examples of [Islamic calligraphy \(link to Qur'an and sacred words\)](#)

Some examples of [mosque decoration](#)



U4.6.1.

Describe some facts about the life of St Paul and explain why he is an important figure for Christians.

Know

St Paul was first called Saul, and he did not believe in Jesus until he had a powerful encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus.

After his conversion, Paul devoted his life to preaching the Gospel, forming Christian communities, and guiding them through his letters, known as the Epistles.

St Paul helped the early Church grow by teaching that salvation is offered to all people through faith in Jesus, not just by following old laws. His message continues to shape Christian belief and mission today.



D.4.6.1

Look at how a range of artists show St. Paul's encounter with Jesus and discuss which one they prefer, giving relevant reasons for their opinion.

Discern

St Paul's encounter with Jesus shows that God's grace can transform even the hardest heart and give a new mission in life. Artists help us see that in powerful ways.

Suggested discovery questions

1. How do different artists show what it might have felt like for St Paul to meet Jesus on the road to Damascus?
2. What do light, colour, or expression tell us about God's power and Paul's change of heart?
3. How might this story help us recognise moments when faith calls us to act differently?



Respond

Pupils compare artworks showing Paul's conversion (e.g., by Caravaggio, Rubens, and contemporary illustrators). They identify how each artist shows emotion, divine power, and change.

Pupils create a 'Before and After' artwork of Paul, contrasting his life before knowing Christ with his new life of mission and faith.

Pupils write a short reflection or poem on how following Jesus can change the way people think, act, and treat others.

Textual references

Acts 9:1-19	Paul's conversion
Galatians 2:20	New life in Christ
2 Corinthians 5:17	Becoming a new creation

Key vocabulary

conversion	a deep change of heart when someone turns towards God
grace	God's free gift of love that transforms lives
Epistles	letters written by apostles that teach about Christian life and faith

Teacher Notes

By Year 4, pupils already know that following Jesus means showing love and kindness. This unit builds on that by exploring how faith can transform a person's life completely. The story of St Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus shows how encountering Christ changes the heart, mind, and purpose of an individual. It introduces pupils to the idea that God's grace is powerful enough to bring light to moments of darkness and to set people on a new path of mission.

In Acts 9:1–19, Saul is travelling to Damascus to arrest followers of Jesus. Suddenly, a bright light from heaven surrounds him, and he falls to the ground. He hears Jesus' voice asking, 'Saul, why are you persecuting me?' When Saul opens his eyes, he realises he is blind. After three days, a Christian called Ananias visits him, prays, and restores his sight. Saul is baptised and becomes Paul, a disciple who spends the rest of his life sharing the message of Jesus. His story reminds Christians that God can use anyone for good, no matter their past.

St Paul's writings, known as the Epistles, shape much of Christian belief and practice. In his letters, Paul explains that salvation is a free gift of God's grace, that faith must be shown through love, and that the Church is one body with many parts. These ideas are central to Christian theology and continue to influence the way Christians live out their faith.

To deepen pupils' understanding, teachers can use visual art to explore this story. Caravaggio's *The Conversion of Saint Paul* (1601) is one of the most powerful interpretations. Teachers might draw attention to how the artist uses a sharp contrast between light and shadow to represent divine revelation breaking through human darkness. Paul's outstretched arms and closed eyes show both surrender and awe, symbolising his acceptance of God's call. Pupils can discuss what the horse's calmness might represent compared to Paul's turmoil.

Rubens' *Conversion of Saint Paul* (1620) offers a dramatic alternative. The swirling movement and bright energy of the composition convey the chaos and intensity of the moment. Teachers can ask pupils to focus on the movement of light and on Paul's posture, which communicates his helplessness and his encounter with something greater than himself.

Modern depictions, such as contemporary iconography or digital illustrations, may present the scene with bold colour or abstraction. These can help pupils recognise that artists in every generation try to express the same mystery of faith using the visual language of their own time.

When guiding discussion, teachers might use questions such as:

- What do you notice about the use of light in each painting?
- How do the artists show change or emotion?
- Which details help you understand that Paul's encounter was life-changing?

Encourage pupils to see art not as decoration, but as a form of theology expressed in image and colour. Artistic interpretation can help them grasp how spiritual experiences are both mysterious and deeply human by deploying some or all of the following devices:

1. Light represents revelation and divine grace.
2. Movement and gesture show the shock and awe of encountering God.
3. Shadow and contrast suggest the change from sin to faith.
4. Artists help viewers imagine the mystery of transformation and the human response to God's presence.

Finally, connect this learning to Christian life today. St Paul's story teaches that conversion is not only a single moment but a lifelong response to God's call. Pupils can reflect on how they might show openness to God's guidance, courage in change, and faithfulness in sharing love with others. This deepens their understanding of discipleship and prepares them for future learning about vocation, the Church's mission, and the power of the Holy Spirit.



U4.6.2.

Make links between Corinthians 13:1-7,13 and the theological virtues

Know

St Paul teaches that faith, hope, and love are the greatest gifts from God, known as the theological virtues.

Faith helps Christians trust in God and His promises. Hope helps them look forward to the joy of heaven. Love (charity) helps them act kindly and selflessly towards others.

St Paul says that love is the greatest virtue because it never ends and brings life and goodness to everything Christians do.



Discern

St Paul reminds us that faith, hope, and love guide how we live, and that love is the greatest virtue because it shows God's presence in our hearts and actions.

Suggested discovery questions

1. How do faith, hope, and love help Christians live as followers of Jesus?
2. Why do you think St Paul says love is the greatest of all virtues?
3. How might living with faith, hope, and love make a difference in the world today?



R4.6.1.

Discuss the meaning of what they have learned for their own lives.

Respond

In small groups, pupils read or listen to verses from 1 Corinthians 13 and discuss what St Paul means by each virtue. They share examples of how Christians show faith, hope, and love in everyday life..

Create a 'Virtue Chain': blue for faith, green for hope, red for love. Pupils write one way to live each virtue on a paper link. Join the links to form a class display that symbolises unity and growth in virtue.

Pupils write or draw ways that faith, hope, and love can be lived out through Catholic social teaching principles such as solidarity, care for creation, and human dignity.

Textual references

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

The Theological Virtues

Key vocabulary

virtue	a good habit that helps people choose what is right and live as God wants
faith	trust and belief in God and His promises
hope	confidence in God's goodness and the promise of eternal life
love (charity)	choosing to care for others selflessly, as God loves us

Teacher Notes

In 1 Corinthians 13, St Paul explains that even the most impressive gifts, like knowledge or prophecy, are worthless without love. He writes that love is patient, kind, and never proud or rude. This passage helps pupils recognise that true Christian living is not about achievement or power but about loving others as God loves us. The virtues of faith and hope prepare and sustain this love: faith helps believers trust in God, and hope keeps them looking forward to His promises, even in times of difficulty.

This learning builds on earlier knowledge about how Christians follow Jesus' teachings and prepares pupils to explore later themes such as moral choice, vocation, and virtue ethics. It encourages them to see faith, hope, and love not as abstract ideas but as qualities that can be practised daily in school, at home, and in their communities.

When teaching this unit, it is helpful to link the text of 1 Corinthians 13 to pupils' own experiences of kindness, encouragement, and forgiveness. Teachers can highlight that St Paul's words are often read at weddings or Church celebrations because they remind people that love must guide every relationship.

Encourage pupils to notice how St Paul describes love with action words: 'love is patient', 'love is kind', 'love always protects'. These phrases show that love is more than emotion; it is a deliberate choice to act with compassion and humility.

Teachers might also connect this learning to Catholic social teaching. Faith, hope, and love are the foundation of principles like solidarity (standing with others), the common good, human dignity, and stewardship of creation. In discussion, pupils can consider how people around the world put these virtues into practice through service, fairness, and care for the environment.



U4.6.3

Recount some facts about a different liturgical rite within the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church celebrates many different rites around the world, but all share the same faith, sacraments, and belief in Jesus Christ.

Know

The Latin (Roman) Rite is the most common, but other rites such as the Byzantine, Maronite, and Syro-Malabar use different prayers, music, vestments, and languages.

These rites show that the Catholic Church is one family made up of many traditions, each expressing faith in ways shaped by local history and culture.



Discern

Learning about different liturgical rites in the Catholic Church helps us see that the same faith is celebrated in many beautiful ways across the world.

Suggested discovery questions

1. What special prayers, symbols, or music are used in different rites of the Catholic Church?
2. How does worship look different in Catholic communities around the world?
3. How do these differences help us understand that the Catholic Church is universal and united in faith?



Respond

Research a specific Catholic rite (for example, Maronite, Syro-Malabar, or Byzantine) to find out where it began, what language it uses, and how it celebrates the Eucharist. Present findings as a short oral report or poster.

Create a visual comparison chart showing similarities and differences between the Latin (Roman) Rite and another rite, focusing on symbols, music, vestments, and gestures.

Write a short reflection about what this diversity teaches about the Church's unity in Christ and how it helps people worship God in ways that honour their culture..

Key vocabulary

rite	a specific way of celebrating the liturgy and sacraments in the Catholic Church, shaped by history and culture
liturgy	the public worship of the Church, especially the Mass, where Catholics gather to praise God
Universal Church	the worldwide community of Catholics who share the same faith in Jesus Christ
Byzantine Rite	an ancient Eastern Catholic tradition that uses beautiful chants, icons, and rich symbolism in its liturgy
Maronite Church	a Catholic Church based mainly in Lebanon that celebrates Mass in Syriac and Arabic, showing the Church's ancient roots
Syro-Malabar Rite	a Catholic way of worship that began in India and uses special prayers, songs, and traditions passed down from the time of St Thomas the Apostle.

Teacher Notes

The term rite refers to a distinct pattern of prayer, music, and symbols that developed in different parts of the world as the Gospel spread. These include the Latin (Roman) Rite, which most Catholics in Western Europe and the Americas follow, and several Eastern Catholic Rites such as the Byzantine, Maronite, Coptic, and Syro-Malabar. All of these Churches are fully Catholic and in communion with the Pope. Each rite expresses the same mystery of faith through its own cultural heritage. For example, the Byzantine Rite uses incense and iconography to emphasise the presence of God and the beauty of heaven. The Maronite Rite blends Syriac and Arabic prayers with chants that connect modern worship to ancient Christian communities. The Syro-Malabar Rite, rooted in India, shows how Christianity took deep root in Eastern culture long before it reached Europe.

By studying these examples, pupils can appreciate that diversity in worship strengthens rather than divides the Church. Teachers might use short video clips or images showing the distinctive vestments, languages, or music of these rites to help pupils make visual comparisons.

Discussion should emphasise that, despite their differences, all Catholic rites celebrate the same Eucharist, profess the same Creed, and share the same mission to spread God's love throughout the world. Pupils can be guided to reflect on how this unity in diversity mirrors the Body of Christ itself: many parts, but one body (1 Corinthians 12:12). This links directly with Catholic Social Teaching themes such as solidarity and the dignity of every culture. Through this learning, pupils come to see that the Church's variety of liturgical expression is not about difference for its own sake, but about celebrating God's love through the beauty of human diversity

The Universal Catholic Church

Below is a list of the six rites of the Catholic Church, followed by which 'sui iuris' Churches (i.e. autonomous churches in full communion) are contained within them:

1. Latin Rite: *Latin (or Roman) Catholic Church*
2. Alexandrian Rite: *Coptic Catholic Church; Eritrean Catholic Church; Ethiopian Catholic Church*
3. West Syrian (or Antiochene) Rite: *Maronite Catholic Church; Syriac Catholic Church; Syro-Malankara Catholic Church*
4. Armenian Rite: *Armenian Catholic Church*
5. East Syrian (or Chaldean) Rite: *Chaldean Catholic Church; Syro-Malabar Catholic Church*
6. Constantinopolitan (or Byzantine) Rite: *Albanian Catholic Church; Belarusian Catholic Church; Bulgarian Greek Catholic Church; Byzantine Church of Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro (or Križevci Catholic Church); Greek Byzantine Catholic Church; Hungarian Greek Catholic Church; Italo-Albanian Catholic Church; Macedonian Catholic Church; Melkite Greek Catholic Church; Romanian Catholic Church; Russian Catholic Church; Ruthenian Catholic Church (also known as the Byzantine Catholic Church in America); Slovak Catholic Church; Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church*



U4.6.4

Recognise some reasons why different liturgical traditions arose in different parts of the world.

Know

Different liturgical traditions arose because Christians around the world developed their own ways of worshipping God using local languages, music, and customs.

Climate, culture, and history influenced how different communities celebrate Mass and express their faith.

These differences show the richness and diversity of the Church while keeping the same belief in Jesus at the centre.



D4.6.2

Explore some examples of art or music from a different Catholic community, for example, icons of the Coptic Catholic Church, and ask questions about what they have noticed.

Discern

Exploring Catholic art and music from around the world helps us appreciate how faith is expressed and shows the Church's rich diversity.

Suggested discovery questions

1. What feelings or ideas does this art or music express about God?
2. What can we learn about their faith from what we see or hear?
3. What details stand out to you, and why do you think they are important?



R4.6.3

Reflect on what they can learn from the stories of families from different Christian traditions or who follow different liturgical traditions.

Respond

Explore some examples of art or music from a different Catholic community, for example, icons of the Coptic Church, and asking questions about what they have noticed. Gallery Walk: Display different Catholic artworks or play music from various traditions (like Coptic, Ethiopian, or Latin American). Pupils walk around, observe, and write one thing they notice or wonder about each piece.

Class Discussion: Share what you noticed about the art or music and talk about how it shows people's faith in different parts of the world.

Prayer Response: Write a short prayer or reflection inspired by the beauty or message of the art or music you explored.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

Teacher Notes

The Catholic Church is one global family that shares the same beliefs and sacraments, but expresses its worship in many different ways. These differences are often seen in art, music, language, and architecture. Over the centuries, Christians around the world have developed distinctive liturgical traditions that reflect their culture and environment, while always keeping Jesus Christ at the centre. These are not separate churches, but different expressions of the one Catholic faith.

Liturgical diversity began as Christianity spread beyond its Jewish roots and reached different lands such as Egypt, Syria, Greece, Ethiopia, and India. As local cultures adopted Christianity, they brought their own musical styles, artistic forms, and languages into worship. For example, the Coptic Catholic Church in Egypt developed a tradition of iconography in which religious images are painted in a stylised way that conveys deep spiritual meaning rather than realism. Coptic icons often feature large eyes to show spiritual vision and bright colours to represent divine light. These icons are not simply pictures, but are seen as windows into heaven that help the faithful to pray.

In contrast, the Ethiopian Catholic Church expresses faith through vivid colour, rhythm, and movement. Traditional Ethiopian Christian art often depicts biblical stories surrounded by decorative borders and bright tones of red, gold, and green. Music plays a major role in their worship, using drums and sistrums (a type of metal rattle) that encourage participation and joy. These musical and visual forms show that praise and beauty belong together in worship.

In the Byzantine tradition, found in Eastern Europe and the Middle East, the Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom is sung almost entirely, with long melodic chants that lift the hearts of worshippers. Gold mosaics and icons decorate their churches, symbolising the presence of heaven on earth. This reminds pupils that sound, space, and symbol can all become ways of praising God.

By comparison, the Latin (Roman) Rite, which most pupils will be familiar with, places strong emphasis on scripture and the Eucharist through structured prayer and sacred music. Gregorian chant and polyphonic choral settings grew out of this Western tradition. Together, these different forms reveal how Catholic worship adapts to local culture while remaining faithful to Christ's command to 'do this in memory of me'.

Teachers should help pupils see that liturgical and artistic diversity are not signs of division, but of unity in variety. Every rite and tradition enriches the whole Church, just as different instruments blend in a single symphony. Art and music express the mystery of faith beyond words, showing how people across the world love and honour God.

To deepen understanding, pupils could explore a variety of artworks or listen to recordings of music from Coptic, Ethiopian, or Latin American Catholic traditions. Encourage them to describe how each example makes them feel, what it teaches about God, and how it helps them appreciate the universal beauty of the Church.



	U4.6.5 Describe some ways Christians in their local area work together for the benefit of the whole community (or the common good).
<i>Know</i>	Christians in local communities support others by volunteering, fundraising, and caring for those in need.. Churches often unite across denominations for food banks, shelters, and social projects that build community. Working together for justice, peace, and charity shows that faith is active and that all Christians are called to serve others as 'one body'.

	D4.6.3 Listen to the stories and experiences of others from different Christian communities in the class and the wider community and asking questions about their beliefs, worship, or life.	
<i>Discern</i>	Hearing how different Christians live out their faith helps us understand that although they may worship in different ways, they all follow Jesus' command to love God and others.	Suggested discovery questions 1. What do you think it means to live out your faith in everyday life? 2. How does your church help people in the local community? 3. Why do you think Christians from different churches work together to help others?

	R4.6.2 Talk, ask, and answering questions with others about their beliefs, experiences, and feelings, recognising the ways in which this could change the way they live and the relationships in their local communities.	
<i>Respond</i>	Invite a local church representative to explain how their community serves others and why it matters. Create posters or digital slides showing examples of Christians working together locally (e.g. food banks, night shelters, parish partnerships).. Write a short reflection on how helping others can bring people closer to God and each other.	

Textual references

Key vocabulary

ecumenism	Christians from different churches working and praying together in unity because they all follow Jesus
unity	working together as one family of faith

Teacher Notes

Christians believe that serving others is central to following Jesus, who taught, 'Love your neighbour as yourself' (Mark 12:31). Throughout history, Christians have worked together to promote the common good: the idea that society should be organised so that everyone can flourish, especially the poor and vulnerable.

Pupils should learn that the Church is not just a place of worship, but a community of people who share God's love through practical help. Local churches often work together through ecumenical partnerships, such as 'Churches Together' groups, to run food banks, support refugees, offer debt advice, or care for the environment. These examples show how faith brings unity and purpose beyond denominational differences.

Highlight that the term 'common good' reflects Catholic Social Teaching, which encourages everyone to work for justice, peace, and dignity for all. Pupils should understand that volunteering, fundraising, and community projects are modern ways of living out the Gospel message.

Teachers could connect this learning with Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37) to reinforce that loving service is a mark of Christian discipleship. Encourage pupils to see the link between belief and behaviour: Christians act not only out of kindness but because they see every person as made in God's image.

Practical examples, such as Cafod's outreach work or parish partnerships supporting local schools, can make this learning tangible. Discussion should help pupils appreciate that Christianity is diverse in worship style and tradition but united in mission. By reflecting on how Christians collaborate for the good of others, pupils come to see that faith, when lived out in community, becomes a powerful sign of God's love in the world.



U4.6.6

Describe the five pillars of Islam and why they are an important part of Islamic faith and religious practice for British Muslims today.

Know

The Five Pillars of Islam are core acts of faith and worship that guide Muslim life.

They are: Shahadah (belief in one God, Allah), Salah (prayer), Zakat (charity), Sawm (fasting during Ramadan), and Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah).

Following these helps Muslims to grow closer to Allah, live with discipline, help others, and strengthen the worldwide Muslim community.



Discern

The Five Pillars of Islam teach Muslims how to live faithfully and serve others. By following these, Muslims show devotion to Allah and unity with believers around the world..

Suggested discovery questions

1. What does each of the Five Pillars help Muslims to remember or do?
2. How do the Five Pillars help British Muslims show their faith in everyday life?
3. How do the Five Pillars help Muslims feel part of a global family of faith?



Respond

Read or watch a story about a British Muslim family practising the Five Pillars. Write about how each pillar influences their choices, challenges, and community life.

Write interview questions for a British Muslim about how they follow the Five Pillars. Invite a member of the school community or a visitor in to share their experiences and answers.

Group Discussion: Talk in pairs or groups about how the Five Pillars help Muslims live good lives and stay connected to their faith in modern Britain.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

Shahadah	the declaration of faith that there is no god but Allah, and Muhammaed is his messenger
Salah	praying to Allah five times a day
Zakat	giving money to help the poor and those in need
Sawm	fasting during the month of Ramafan to show devotion and self-control
Hajj	a special pilgrimage to Makkah that Muslims try to make once in their lifetime
Ramadan	the holy month when Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset and focus on prayer, charity, and reflection
Ummah	the worldwide community of Muslims

Teacher Notes

The Five Pillars of Islam are the foundation of Muslim belief and practice. They represent five key duties that help Muslims worship Allah and live good, disciplined lives. These pillars are shared by Muslims across the world, uniting them as one faith community, or 'Ummah'. Each pillar is both spiritual and practical, reminding believers to keep God at the centre of their lives.

The Shahadah is the statement of faith and the first pillar. By saying and believing it, Muslims commit their lives to Allah alone. It forms the heart of Islamic identity and is recited daily as an expression of belief and surrender to God's will.

The Salah, or daily prayer, happens five times a day and provides rhythm and focus for life. Through prayer, Muslims remember Allah, seek guidance, and stay spiritually grounded.

The Zakat, or charitable giving, teaches compassion and justice. Muslims give a set portion of their wealth each year to support the poor. This ensures fairness and strengthens community ties.

The Sawm, or fasting during Ramadan, helps Muslims practise self-control and gratitude. During daylight hours, they abstain from food and drink as a sign of devotion and to remember those who suffer.

The Hajj, or pilgrimage to Makkah, is a journey of faith that every Muslim hopes to make once in their life. It symbolises unity and equality before God.

Teachers should encourage pupils to see how these pillars shape Muslim identity in everyday life, including for British Muslims today. Each pillar supports both personal faith and community responsibility, showing how devotion to God inspires kindness and service to others. Pupils should be guided to appreciate how the Five Pillars are a way of life, not just a set of rules, helping Muslims to grow in faith and goodness wherever they live.



	U5.6.1 Explain that the Bible came together over a period of more than a thousand years and contains sacred texts from Judaism, the four Gospels, and other early writings of the Church.
<i>Know</i>	The Bible was written and collected over a period of more than a thousand years by people inspired by God. The Old Testament contains the sacred writings of the Jewish people, which tell how God prepared His people for the coming of Jesus. The New Testament includes the four Gospels and other writings that tell of Jesus' life, death, Resurrection, and the beginnings of the Church.
	D5.6.1 Ask 'How can Sacred Scripture be "truth" if not everything in it is right?' (YOUCAT 15) and discuss how to read the Bible prayerfully and how the Church helps us understand Scripture.
<i>Discern</i>	The Bible is true because it reveals God's love and truth, which the Church helps us to understand through prayer and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Suggested discovery questions 1. What kind of truth does the Bible share with us about God and His love? 2. How can prayer help people understand what God is saying in the Bible? 3. Why do we need the Church to help us understand the meaning of Scripture?
	R5.6.1 Reflect on the books that matter to them in their lives
<i>Respond</i>	Create a simple illustrated timeline showing how the Bible was written over time, adding short reflections about what each part teaches us about God. In small groups, share a Bible story you know well and discuss what truth it shows about God and how it connects with your own life. Write a short letter imagining you are one of the first Christians, explaining what you have learned about following Jesus and how it might guide your choices today.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

Teacher Notes

The Bible is the Church's most sacred collection of writings through which God reveals His saving truth. Christians believe that all of Scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit, meaning that God worked through human authors who wrote in their own time, place, and style yet communicated divine truth. As St Augustine taught, the Scriptures are the 'letters from home' through which God speaks to His children. *Dei Verbum* describes this as the mystery of the Bible being both fully human and fully divine: human in its expression, divine in its origin and purpose. Written over more than a thousand years by poets, prophets, historians, and followers of Jesus, the Bible forms one continuous story of God's love and His plan for salvation.

The Old Testament contains the sacred writings of the Jewish people, including God's covenant with Abraham and the promises made through the prophets. It prepares for the coming of the Messiah and reveals how God calls His people to live in faith and obedience. Christians treasure the Old Testament because, as St Jerome wrote, 'ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ'. The New Testament fulfils this story, proclaiming through the four Gospels the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Acts of the Apostles and the letters of St Paul and others record how the early Church, strengthened by the Spirit, began to share the Good News with the world.

Not all Scripture is read in the same way. Some passages are historical, others poetic or symbolic, yet all communicate truth about who God is and how He desires humanity to live. The Creation stories, for example, are not scientific accounts but expressions of faith in God as Creator and Sustainer of life. Pope Benedict XVI explained that the Bible's truth is not found in literal detail but in its revelation of God's loving plan for the world.

Catholics read the Bible prayerfully, listening for God's voice in the words of Scripture. This prayerful encounter, known as 'lectio divina', invites reflection on how God continues to speak in every age. The Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, safeguards the faithful interpretation of Scripture through the Magisterium, ensuring that the Word of God remains at the heart of Christian faith, prayer, and life.



Dialogue and Encounter

Year 5

Week 2

Dialogue



U5.6.2

Know that the Church teaches that Sacred Scripture is the inspired Word of God and the Church helps Catholics read and understand the Bible.

Know

The Church teaches that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, written by human authors guided by the Holy Spirit.

Catholics believe that God speaks through the words of Scripture to teach, comfort, and guide His people.

The Church helps believers to read and understand the Bible through her teaching, worship, and living tradition.



D5.6.3

Discuss why the whole Bible is important for Christians, not just the New Testament

Discern

Both the Old and New Testaments are important for Christians because together they tell the one story of God's love and His plan to save all people.

Suggested discovery questions

1. What do we learn about God in the Old Testament that helps us understand Jesus more deeply?
2. How do both the Old and New Testaments show God's love and care for His people?
3. Why do Christians need the whole Bible to understand God's plan of salvation?



Respond

Design a 'The Bible is God's Word' poster showing how Scripture guides Christians in their thoughts, hearts and hands.

Hold a class discussion 'How can I use the Bible to help me make good choices?'

Explore favourite Bible verses. Link these to Catholic social teaching principles, to demonstrate how Scripture links to loving action.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

revelation	God making Himself known to His people
tradition	the living faith of the Church handed down through worship and teaching

Teacher Notes

The Bible is central to Christian faith because it communicates the living Word of God and draws believers into relationship with Him. The Church teaches that the Holy Spirit continues to inspire readers today, helping them to hear God's voice in the same Scriptures that were written thousands of years ago. The Bible is not simply a record of events but a sacred conversation between God and His people, inviting believers to understand who God is and how to respond to His love.

When pupils learn about both the Old and New Testaments, they come to see how each part of the Bible reveals a different dimension of the same divine plan. The Old Testament shows God forming His people through law, worship, and covenant, while the New Testament reveals how this story reaches its fulfilment in Christ. The two Testaments cannot be separated; they illuminate each other. Jesus and the apostles constantly referred to the Hebrew Scriptures, showing that the story of Israel finds its completion in the Kingdom He proclaims.

Teachers may wish to highlight that the Bible does not give one single literary voice but a rich collection of forms: law, poetry, prophecy, parable, and letter. Each conveys a distinct kind of truth. Catholic theology distinguishes between literal and spiritual senses of Scripture. The literal sense is what the author intended to express, while the spiritual sense reveals how the text points to Christ and the life of grace. St Thomas Aquinas described Scripture as containing 'truth in many layers', showing that understanding develops through prayer and reflection. The Church safeguards this understanding through the Magisterium. Guided by the Holy Spirit, it interprets Scripture within the living tradition of faith. This prevents individual readings that distort the Gospel's message and ensures unity in what Catholics believe and live.

For pupils, this means learning to listen to Scripture as both a story and a source of guidance. When they hear the Word of God at Mass or read a passage quietly in prayer, they are taking part in the same dialogue that has shaped the faith of the Church for centuries.



U5.6.3

Know that the Bible is translated from different languages into many languages.

Know

The Bible was first written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, and later translated into many other languages so people everywhere could read God's word.

Translating the Bible helps the Church share God's message with all people, in every place and culture.

Different Bible translations use slightly different words, but they all express the same truth about God's love and His plan for the world.



Discern

The Bible is shared in many languages so that all people can hear and understand God's word.

Suggested discovery questions

1. Why do you think people wanted the Bible to be written in many languages?
2. How does translating the Bible help people around the world learn about God?
3. What might it feel like to hear or read the Bible in your own language?



R5.6.2

Talk to others about their sacred texts and why they matter.

Respond

In small groups, interview classmates about their favourite Bible stories and why those stories are important to them, then compare with how people of other faiths treasure their sacred texts.

Create a short presentation or poster showing how the Bible is shared around the world in different languages, and include quotes from other sacred writings that teach love or peace.

Hold a respectful class discussion where pupils share what they have learned about why sacred texts, such as the Bible, Torah, or Qur'an, matter deeply to believers and guide how they live.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

translation	changing words from one language into another so that more people can understand them
Vulgate	the Latin translation of the Bible made by St Jerome so that people in the early Church could read it in their common language
evangelisation	sharing the Good News of Jesus with others so that everyone can hear and understand God's message of love

Teacher Notes

The Bible is the most widely translated book in the world, reflecting the Church's mission to share God's Word with all peoples and nations. From the earliest centuries, Christians have understood that the message of salvation is not limited by language or culture. The command of Jesus to 'go and make disciples of all nations' calls the Church to ensure that every person can encounter God's Word in a language they understand. Translation is therefore an act of evangelisation and a sign of the Church's universality.

The Scriptures were originally written in three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. The Old Testament was largely written in Hebrew, the language of the Jewish people, with some sections in Aramaic. The New Testament was written in Greek, which was widely spoken throughout the Mediterranean world at the time of Jesus and the apostles. As the early Church spread beyond these regions, translators produced versions in Latin, Coptic, Syriac, and other languages so that new Christian communities could hear the Word of God in their own tongue. The Latin translation known as the 'Vulgate', completed by St Jerome in the fourth century, became especially important in the Western Church and remains a key reference point for biblical scholarship today.

Catholics believe that while the Bible's words may appear in many different languages, its truth remains the same. Translation is more than changing words; it involves interpreting meaning carefully so that the message of God's love is faithfully preserved. The Church continues to oversee this work through biblical commissions and scholars who study the original texts to ensure accuracy and reverence. Modern Catholic translations, such as the Jerusalem Bible and the Revised Standard Version (Catholic Edition), are approved for use in liturgy and teaching.

This topic also provides a valuable opportunity to explore how other faiths value their sacred texts. Jews revere the Hebrew Scriptures as God's covenant word, and Muslims believe the Qur'an to be God's revelation in Arabic. By comparing these perspectives, pupils can see how sacred texts express the deepest beliefs of each faith community.

Learning about translation reminds pupils that God's Word is for everyone. Wherever the Bible is read or proclaimed, it continues to speak the same living truth: that God loves all people and calls them into friendship with Him.

Understanding why sacred texts matter helps pupils make meaningful comparisons across faiths. For Jewish people, the Torah is the foundational revelation of God's law and covenant. It is not only read but lived: it shapes daily actions, moral decisions, and community life. Its physical treatment (e.g. handwritten scrolls, careful handling, use in synagogue worship) reflects a belief that these are the very words of God and therefore holy.

For Muslims, the Qur'an is believed to be the literal word of God (Allah), revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. It holds ultimate authority in guiding belief, worship, and conduct. The Arabic language is significant because it preserves the original revelation; recitation is therefore central, with sound and rhythm carrying spiritual meaning. The Qur'an is treated with deep respect (e.g. washing before handling, storing it carefully), reinforcing its sacred status.

Both texts function as more than books: they are sources of identity, authority, and encounter with God. This supports pupils in recognising that sacred texts are not simply historical documents but living guides that shape how believers understand truth, live ethically, and relate to God and others.



Dialogue and Encounter

Year 5

Week 4
Encounter



U5.6.4

Recognise that the Tanakh uses different names for God that reveal aspects of his nature.

Know

In the Torah, God is called by different names such as Adonai, Elohim, and El Shaddai.

Each name reveals something true about who God is.

These names help Jewish people understand God's nature and remind them to speak His name with respect and reverence.



D5.6.2

Explore the place of Sacred Scripture in Jewish life today.

Discern

Sacred Scripture is central to Jewish life, guiding how Jewish people pray, worship, and live each day.

Suggested discovery questions

1. How do Jewish people show respect for the Torah and why is it treated with such care?
2. Why is reading and learning from the Torah so important in the Jewish faith?
3. How is Scripture used in Jewish worship at home and in the synagogue today?



R5.6.3

Think and talk about ways of showing respect for sacred texts.

Respond

Show pupils short video clips or images of a Bible reading at Mass and a Torah reading in a synagogue. Discuss what they notice about how people treat these texts.

Design a 'Respect for Sacred Texts' guidebook with drawings or captions showing how people of different faiths handle, store, or read their holy books with care and attention.

Visit other classrooms and areas of the school, discussing with other pupils why it is important to ensure our Bibles, sacred texts and prayer areas are kept dignified.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

Torah	Jewish name for the first five books in Hebrew Scriptures (which Christians call the Old Testament)
Adonai	Hebrew name for God meaning 'Lord'; used by Jewish people to show reverence and respect
Elohim	Hebrew word meaning 'God'; used in the Scriptures to show His power as Creator of the world
El Shaddai	Hebrew name for God meaning 'God Almighty', showing His strength and protection

Teacher Notes

In Jewish life today, Sacred Scripture continues to hold a place of great honour and devotion. The central text is the Torah, which contains the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Jewish people believe that the Torah is the revealed Word of God, given to Moses on Mount Sinai. It is not only a record of history but a living guide to how they are called to live in faithfulness to God's covenant. For Jewish communities, studying and reading the Torah is a holy act that strengthens their relationship with God and with one another.

How do Jewish people show respect for the Torah?

The Torah is treated with the utmost reverence. It is handwritten on parchment by a specially trained scribe, known as a sofer, using ink and a quill. The scroll is kept in the ark (or aron kodesh) in the synagogue, usually covered by an ornate curtain. When taken out for reading, it is often carried in procession, kissed by members of the congregation, and touched only with a silver pointer called a yad. These gestures express deep respect for the presence of God in His Word.

Why is reading and learning from the Torah so important?

Reading from the Torah is central to Jewish worship and learning. Portions of the Torah are read publicly each week in the synagogue so that the entire Torah is completed once a year. Jewish children begin studying the Scriptures from an early age, learning Hebrew and discovering how God's commandments guide moral and spiritual life. For Jews, studying the Torah is not merely intellectual but a form of prayer, since it draws the believer closer to God.

How is Scripture used in Jewish worship at home and in the synagogue?

In the synagogue, Torah readings are accompanied by blessings, chants, and songs, making the act of listening an experience of worship. At home, many Jewish families read Scripture during festivals and prayers, particularly on the Sabbath. Texts from the Tanakh also shape daily prayers such as the Shema, which declares faith in one God.

Studying Jewish Scripture offers insight into the shared heritage of faith. Understanding how Jewish people revere and live by the Word of God helps pupils appreciate the roots of their own Scripture and the importance of treating all sacred texts with dignity and reverence.

In the Jewish faith, the sacred scriptures (known as the Tanakh, which Christians call the Old Testament) reveal much about God through the different names used for Him. Each name teaches something about God's nature, His relationship with people, and His presence in the world. Jewish people use these names with deep reverence, recognising that every title expresses a different aspect of God's holiness and care.

The name Adonai means 'Lord' and reminds believers of God's authority and loving protection. Elohim, meaning 'God', highlights His creative power and majesty as the one who sustains all life. El Shaddai, often translated as 'God Almighty', expresses God's strength and His faithfulness in keeping His promises. Each of these names helps Jewish people to pray with humility and gratitude, acknowledging that the one true God is both powerful and personal. The most sacred name of God, written in Hebrew as YHWH, is never spoken aloud. When reading the Torah, Jewish people say Adonai instead. This custom shows profound respect for God's holiness and reminds pupils that for Jewish people, even speaking of God is an act of reverence.

Understanding these names helps pupils see that language about God points to mysteries that words cannot fully express. Jewish tradition teaches that to speak of God is to enter a relationship of awe and love, not simply to describe an idea. This insight deepens appreciation for how faith and worship shape Jewish life today, where study, prayer, and the reading of Scripture remain at the heart of daily practice.



U5.6.5

Use specialist vocabulary to describe some Jewish beliefs expressed in the Shema prayer.

Know

The Shema begins with the words 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one', expressing the Jewish belief in one God who is the Creator and ruler of all things.

The Shema teaches that loving God involves the whole person, meaning that faith should shape every thought, feeling, and action.

Jewish people place the words of the Shema inside a mezuzah on their doorposts and in tefillin worn during prayer to remind them to keep God's commandments in their homes and daily lives.



Discern

The Shema is a prayer of faith which reminds Jewish people to love and honour the one God in every part of their lives.

Suggested discovery questions

1. The Shema is a prayer of faith which reminds Jewish people to love and honour the one God in every part of their lives.
2. How do Jewish people show their love for God through their daily words, actions, and prayers?
3. Why would putting the words of the Shema in a small box by the door help Jewish people remember their faith?



Respond

Write and decorate your own short prayer inspired by the Shema, expressing how you can love God with all your heart, soul, and strength in everyday life.

Create a simple model or drawing of a mezuzah, including the words of the Shema inside, and explain how it reminds Jewish families to live their faith each day.

Compare the Shema with the Our Father, and discuss how both teach believers to love and stay close to God in all they do.

Key vocabulary

Mezuzah	a small case fixed to the doorpost of a Jewish home that holds a scroll with words from the Shema, reminding the family to love and follow God
Shema	a special Jewish prayer that declares there is only one God and reminds believers to love and serve Him with all their heart, soul, and strength
Tefillin	small leather boxes containing verses from the Torah that Jewish people tie to their arm and forehead during prayer to keep God's Word close to their mind and heart

Teacher Notes

The Shema is the most important prayer in Judaism and is recited daily by Jewish people throughout the world. It appears in the Torah (Deuteronomy 6:4–9) and forms the heart of Jewish belief: that there is one God, who must be loved with every part of one's being. The word Shema means 'hear' or 'listen', and the prayer begins with a call for Israel to listen and to respond faithfully to God. It is not simply a statement of belief but a declaration of loyalty and love.

The Shema expresses the Jewish understanding of monotheism; the belief in one, eternal, and indivisible God. This belief sets Judaism apart from the ancient religions that surrounded Israel, which worshipped many gods. For Jewish people today, the Shema continues to affirm that God alone is sovereign and that every thought, word, and action should reflect His holiness. It reminds believers that faith is not limited to prayer or synagogue worship but extends into every part of daily life.

The prayer also calls for love of God 'with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength'. Jewish scholars interpret this as a call to love God with one's emotions, one's whole being, and one's actions. This comprehensive love is shown in obedience to God's commandments, in acts of kindness, and in commitment to justice.

The words of the Shema are placed in two physical reminders: the mezuzah and the tefillin. The mezuzah is a small decorative case attached to the doorposts of Jewish homes, containing a scroll with verses from the Shema. Touching or kissing it when entering or leaving reminds the family that their home belongs to God. The tefillin are small leather boxes worn during weekday morning prayers, containing the same words. Worn on the arm and head, they symbolise keeping God's Word in both heart and mind.

Studying the Shema helps to appreciate the deep Jewish roots of Christian faith. Jesus Himself quoted the Shema when asked about the greatest commandment, showing that loving God completely and loving others are inseparable. The Shema therefore continues to speak powerfully about faith, unity, and wholehearted devotion to God.

The Shema

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.

Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.



Dialogue and Encounter

Year 5

Week 6

Dialogue & Encounter



Know

In the Old Testament, God made covenants with Noah, Abraham, and Moses, promising to love and guide His people

Jewish people remember God's covenant through prayer, Scripture, and keeping the commandments.

Christians believe that Jesus fulfils God's covenant by bringing salvation and a new relationship between God and all people.



Discern

Jews and Christians look to God's promises for hope and guidance, though Christians believe these promises are fulfilled in Jesus, the Messiah..

Suggested discovery questions

1. What promises did God make to His people in the Old Testament, and how do Jewish people remember these today?
2. How do Christians believe God's promises are completed in the life and mission of Jesus?
3. Why do both Jews and Christians find hope and strength in remembering God's faithfulness?



Respond

Create a 'Covenant of Hope' scroll, writing or illustrating one promise of God that inspires you and showing how it gives hope today.

Compare a Jewish prayer of hope, such as a Psalm, with a Christian hymn or prayer about God's promises, identifying what both say about trust in God.

Write a short reflection or group prayer thanking God for being faithful to His promises and for calling people to live in hope and love.

Textual references

Brief revision of previously studied covenants:

Genesis 9:12-17	God's covenant with Noah
Genesis 12:1-3	God's covenant with Abraham
Exodus 19:3-8	The Sinai Covenant with Moses

Key vocabulary

Teacher Notes

In the Jewish faith, the idea of covenant (in Hebrew, 'berit') is at the heart of how God and His people understand one another. A covenant is not a contract or deal; it is a sacred and binding relationship freely offered by God and accepted by His people. It establishes both identity and belonging: the Jewish people are called to be God's chosen people, living in faithfulness to His commandments and reflecting His holiness in the world.

The earliest covenant in the Hebrew Scriptures is made with Noah after the flood (Genesis 9). It is a universal covenant, showing that God's care extends to all creation. The rainbow is given as a visible sign that God will never again destroy the earth. This story teaches Jewish believers that creation itself is holy and that human beings are stewards of God's world.

The covenant with Abraham is the foundation of Jewish faith and identity. God calls Abraham to leave his home and promises him descendants as numerous as the stars. This covenant is marked by the sign of circumcision and expresses a relationship of trust and obedience. Jewish people believe they are heirs to this covenant, chosen not for privilege but for purpose: to be a light to the nations and to make God's presence known through justice and mercy.

The covenant with Moses at Mount Sinai reveals how the people are to live out their relationship with God. God gives the Law (the Torah), including the Ten Commandments, as a guide to holiness. Jewish life today continues to be shaped by this covenant. Observing the commandments, keeping the Sabbath, studying Scripture, and celebrating festivals such as Passover are all ways of renewing that covenant relationship. It is not seen as belonging only to the past but as a living reality: a daily partnership between God and His people.

For Jewish people, faithfulness to the covenant is the way to show love for God. Every generation is invited to hear again the call made to Abraham and Moses: to walk with God in righteousness and to build a world that reflects His justice.

Christians believe that God's covenant love reaches its fulfilment in Jesus, who brings the promise of salvation for all humanity. Yet both faiths share the conviction that God is faithful and that His promises endure for ever.



 U6.6.1 <i>Know</i>	Explain in an age-appropriate way the meaning of 'the common good' and the principles of Catholic social teaching Catholic social teaching is the Church's guide for living out faith by building a just and loving society, respecting every person's dignity, and working for justice, peace, and care for those most in need. The common good means working together for the good of all, making decisions and taking actions that consider how they affect every person in society and the wider world. Living for the common good means thinking about everyone, acting fairly, and working to make life better for all people, not just ourselves.
 D6.6.1 <i>Discern</i>	Reflect on the statement 'Everyone should be concerned to create and support institutions that improve the conditions of human life' (CCC 1926), consider how this challenges people to change. Suggested discovery questions 1. What kinds of things make life better or fairer for people in our world? 2. How can groups or organisations help to make people's lives safer, happier, or more just 3. What could we do together in our school or community to help improve life for others? Everyone should be concerned to create and support institutions that improve the conditions of human life.
 R6.6.2 <i>Respond</i>	Identify ways, they could act differently because of their learning about Catholic social teaching dialogue. Use the statement: 'Catholics should work to promote unity and love among all people' to consider ways in which people can act differently to promote this. (N.B. statement taken from <i>Nostra Aetate</i>) Pupils form small 'dialogue circles' where they discuss real life scenarios based on Catholic social teaching. Each group talks about how people could respond unkindly or unjustly, and then how a person inspired by the Church could act differently. Pupils explore how one person's positive choice, inspired by Catholic social teaching can create a ripple effect spreading through dialogue and action.

Key vocabulary

common good	working together so that everyone can live with fairness, dignity, and opportunity
solidarity	standing alongside others as one human family, especially those who are poor, lonely, or treated unfairly

Teacher Notes

The Church teaches that all people share a common origin in God and therefore possess equal dignity. This belief underpins both Catholic social teaching and the Church's commitment to dialogue and peace. A key text for understanding this is *Nostra Aetate* ('In Our Time'), a declaration of the Second Vatican Council published in 1965. It marked a profound change in how the Church relates to people of other faiths and to the wider human family.

Nostra Aetate begins by affirming that all nations and peoples form one community, sharing the same beginning and destiny in God. Every person, regardless of race, culture, or religion, bears the divine image and is called to seek truth, goodness, and love. The document acknowledges that the world's religions express this search in different ways, and that the Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in them. This teaching encourages Catholics to look for the presence of God's Spirit in the lives of all people and to respond with respect, friendship, and cooperation rather than fear or suspicion.

The document's first section calls everyone to promote 'unity and love among men, indeed among nations'. This phrase captures the heart of *Nostra Aetate* and connects it to the wider principles of Catholic Social Teaching. The dignity of the human person, the pursuit of the common good, and the virtue of solidarity all arise from the belief that humanity is one family. Living these principles means working to build a world that reflects God's justice, peace, and mercy.

For pupils, this teaching helps to explain why Catholics believe dialogue is part of living the Gospel. Dialogue is not simply about debate or agreement; it is about listening deeply, sharing experiences, and working together for what is right. True dialogue recognises that unity does not mean uniformity. Christians are called to stand confidently in their faith while building understanding and friendship with people who believe differently.

This message becomes practical when pupils show kindness to others, include those who feel left out, and take responsibility for making the school community more just and compassionate. Every act of respect and care reflects the Gospel commandment to love one another and contributes to the common good of all.



Dialogue and Encounter

Year 6
Weeks 2 & 3
Dialogue & Encounter

 U6.6.2 U6.6.3	Use the term 'worldviews' and understand its meaning, giving simple examples. Describe some ways Christians work together with people of different worldviews to promote the common good.
<i>Know</i>	A worldview is the way a person understands life, the world, and what is most important to them, which shapes how they think and act. People with different worldviews, such as Christians, Muslims, or those with no religion, often share values like kindness, justice, and care for others. Christians work with people of different worldviews through charities and community projects that help those in need, protect the environment, and build peace in society.

	D6.6.2 Consider the term 'common good', discuss why charities with different worldviews work to promote the same goals.
<i>Discern</i>	Working for the common good unites people of different beliefs and worldviews, as they share the goal of helping others and building a fair and caring world. Suggested discovery questions 1. Why might people from different religions or worldviews still choose to work together to make the world fairer and kinder? 2. How does helping others for the common good show that everyone's life has value and dignity? 3. What can we learn from charities or groups with different beliefs who work for the same goals of justice, peace, and care for others?

	R6.6.1 Consider how engaging in dialogue with those who hold different beliefs could transform their own lives and the future of the communities.
<i>Respond</i>	Explore the work of 'Religions for Peace' and 'Religions for Peace Europe'. Identify the common themes that unite all: 'Peaceful, Just, and Inclusive Societies, Gender equality, The Environment, Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion, Interreligious Education and Global partnerships. Pupils to prepare a celebration of word highlighting the importance of everyone working towards the common good. The Good Samaritan could be a useful scripture link.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

worldview	the way a person understands life, the world, and what is most important to them, which shapes how they think and act
dialogue	how we communicate with others who may think differently to us

Teacher Notes

The term 'worldview' describes how a person understands life and what they believe gives it meaning. It includes their ideas about truth, morality, purpose, and how people should live together. Every person has a worldview, whether or not they belong to a religion. For Christians, a worldview is shaped by belief in God as Creator, by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, and by the call to love God and neighbour. For people of other faiths or no faith, a worldview may be shaped by culture, experience, or values such as compassion, equality, or justice. Recognising different worldviews helps pupils understand how people can see the world differently yet still share many hopes and concerns.

In Catholic teaching, all people are created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27). This means that everyone, regardless of belief, has inherent dignity and worth. Because of this shared dignity, the Church encourages cooperation with people of all faiths and worldviews to build a more just and peaceful world. This idea connects closely to Catholic social teaching, especially the principles of the common good and solidarity. The common good means working for the good of all, not only for one group or individual. Solidarity means standing with others in friendship and compassion, especially those who are poor or suffering.

Christians believe that dialogue and shared action with people of different worldviews reflect the love of Christ for all humanity. The Church participates in global partnerships and interfaith initiatives, such as 'Religions for Peace' and 'FaithInvest', which unite people of many beliefs to address issues like climate change, conflict, and poverty. These movements show that even when beliefs differ, shared moral values can inspire cooperation.

In Scripture, Jesus models this inclusive approach through the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37), which teaches that compassion and mercy go beyond boundaries of religion or culture. The Samaritan's care for a stranger is an example of living for the common good.

For pupils, this learning shows that faith and action are connected. Understanding worldviews invites respect and curiosity rather than judgment. Working for the common good together helps young people see that every act of kindness and justice contributes to God's vision of peace for the whole human family.

Theos Think Tank video ['What is your view of the world? What makes you who you are?'](#)

There are three pathways to explore the way Christians and people of other worldviews work together for the common good:

- 1. The Dialogue of Life** (*being a good neighbour*)
This is the everyday form of dialogue that happens when people of different faiths or worldviews live side by side, showing mutual respect, kindness, and friendship. It is about relationship before debate. In this week's learning, it connects with the idea that working for the common good unites people who might believe different things but still share a desire for fairness, peace, and compassion. When pupils include others, listen respectfully, or help those in need, they are practising the dialogue of life.
- 2. The Dialogue of Action** (*working together for peace and justice*)
This pathway involves practical collaboration between believers of different religions and worldviews to improve society. Examples include interfaith charities, environmental projects, or peacebuilding efforts. Pupils explore how Christians work with others through charities and community projects to help the poor, protect creation, and promote human dignity. The dialogue of action turns shared values into visible cooperation for the common good.
- 3. The Dialogue of Religious Experience** (*sharing spiritual riches*)
This form of dialogue allows people to share their inner experiences of faith, prayer, and goodness, while recognising the beauty of different ways of seeking God. 'Spiritual riches' here refers to gifts such as love, forgiveness, peace, and hope. For pupils, this connects with understanding worldviews as diverse yet united by the search for truth and goodness. It reminds them that people do not need to share the same beliefs to appreciate holiness, reverence, or compassion in others.

Together, these three pathways help pupils see that dialogue is not only talking: it is living, acting, and sharing with others. They show how the Church's call to work for the common good becomes real through everyday relationships, cooperative service, and respect for the spiritual gifts present in every person.



	U6.6.4 Recognise links and simple connections between some Dharmic beliefs, practices and way of life making links between them.
<i>Know</i>	Dharmic faith originates in the Indian subcontinent and share ideas about living truthfully, showing kindness, and respecting all living things. Service, meditation, and self-discipline are important in Dharmic faiths because they help people grow in goodness and live in harmony with others and the world Many Dharmic religions teach karma (that actions have consequences) and ahimsa (non-violence), encouraging people to act with care and compassion.

	D6.6.3 Explore some examples of creative expressions of faith from a Dharmic pathway.	
<i>Discern</i>	People of Dharmic faiths use art, music, and symbols to express their beliefs and deepen their connection with the divine.	Suggested discovery questions 1. How do art, music, or symbols help people show what they believe? 2. What might a picture, song, or symbol teach us about what is important to people of Dharmic faiths? 3. How do you think people feel when they create or use art and music in worship?

	Choose two Dharmic faiths (either: Hinduism and Sikhism; or Buddhism and Jainism) to explore similarities between their beliefs, practices and way of life. Design a 'Day of Harmony' poster that shows practical ways pupils could live out shared Dharmic values such as peace, honesty, and respect for all life in their own school or community. Read short sayings from Dharmic scriptures (for example, the Bhagavad Gita, the Dhammapada, or the Guru Granth Sahib) and write a few sentences comparing what each teaches about how actions can lead to peace and happiness (see Teacher Notes)
<i>Respond</i>	

Key vocabulary

Teacher Notes

Teachers are free to choose to study any Dharmic pathway, or combination of Dharmic pathways, which best suit their class's contexts and needs. Your choice will follow-on to next week's learning.

Dharmic pathways refer to the spiritual traditions that arise from 'dharma'; a key concept in Indian religions meaning moral order, right living, and truth. The Dharmic religions (sometimes called the 'Indic religions') include Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. These faiths share ancient roots and some similar ideas about harmony, responsibility, and spiritual growth, though each understands dharma differently.

1. **The Hindu Pathway: *Living according to Dharma***
In Hinduism, dharma means living rightly according to one's duty, stage of life, and relationship with others. It involves truthfulness, compassion, self-control, and service. Hindus believe that living by dharma keeps harmony between people, creation, and the divine. Many Hindus also follow the concept of ahimsa (non-violence), which inspires respect for all living beings; a principle that connects closely to the idea of the common good and solidarity.
2. **The Buddhist Pathway: *The Noble Eightfold Path***
Buddhists follow the Eightfold Path taught by the Buddha to end suffering and promote peace. It includes right understanding, right speech, right action, and right mindfulness. This pathway is about transforming the heart and mind to act with wisdom and compassion. The Buddhist vision of harmony, compassion for all beings, and peacebuilding provides an important model for dialogue and shared action for justice.
3. **The Jain Pathway: *Ahimsa and Truth***
Jainism emphasises ahimsa (non-violence) as the highest virtue. Jains seek to harm no living being in thought, word, or action. They also value satya (truth) and aparigraha (non-attachment), promoting simplicity and care for the environment. These values align strongly with Catholic social teaching about human dignity, stewardship, and peace.
4. **The Sikh Pathway: *Seva and Equality***
Sikhs believe in seva (selfless service) and equality among all people. Their faith teaches that God is present in everyone, and so serving others is a way of serving God. This is expressed through langar, the community kitchen where everyone, regardless of faith or status, is welcome to share a meal. Sikh seva mirrors the Christian call to love one's neighbour and to work together for the common good.

For many followers of Dharmic faiths, religion is not only about belief but about how life is lived each day. The teachings of 'karma' (that every action has consequences) and 'ahimsa' (non-violence towards all living things) are central to living rightly. These principles encourage people to act with self-discipline, kindness, and care for others. Their way of life seeks harmony between the person, the community, and the wider world.

Art, music, and symbol are also vital ways of expressing faith in Dharmic traditions. The 'Om' symbol in Hinduism, the 'Dharma Wheel' in Buddhism, and the 'Khanda' in Sikhism are not mere decoration but expressions of deep spiritual meaning. Chanting, singing, and meditation help to calm the mind and focus the heart on God, truth, or enlightenment.

Learning about these expressions of faith helps to deepen understanding of how belief shapes identity, beauty, and moral action. It also provides moments for reflection on shared human values such as peace, self-control, and service; qualities that bring people of different faiths and worldviews together in their hope for a more just and compassionate world.

Hinduism text example (from Bhagavad Gita) 'You have the right to action, but not the fruits of action' (2:47) --> acting selflessly (without worrying about rewards) leads to inner peace.
Buddhism text example (from Dhammapadam) 'Hatred does not stop by hatred, but only by love' (1:5) --> peace comes from controlling the mind and responding with compassion.
Sikhism text example (from Guru Granth Sahib) 'Where there is forgiveness, there is God' --> loving actions bring closeness to God and inner peace



Know

Dharmic religions teach dharma: the right way to live through truth, kindness, and responsibility.

Followers of Dharmic religions worship in temples, gurdwaras, or meditation halls, using prayer, chanting, or meditation to grow closer to the divine or to find inner peace.

Festivals such as [Diwali, Vesak, or Vaisakhi] are important times for Dharmic communities to celebrate faith, renew commitment to good living, and share joy with others.



D6.6.4

Listen to the stories and experiences of those who follow a Dharmic pathway in the class or the wider community and ask questions about their laws, beliefs, worship or life.

Discern

Listening to people of Dharmic faiths helps us understand how their beliefs guide the way they live, worship, and care for others.

Suggested discovery questions

1. What can we learn from the stories and experiences of people who follow a Dharmic faith?
2. How do the beliefs and traditions of Dharmic religions shape the way their followers live and worship?
3. In what ways can hearing about other people's faith help us respect and understand them more deeply?



Respond

Invite a pupil / parent to discuss their faith with a focus on laws, beliefs, worship and life. Pre-prepare questions with pupils and provide them to the visiting speaker.

Create a class display or digital collage showing images, artefacts, and quotes that represent how Dharmic believers live out their faith through prayer, festivals, and service.

In groups, plan and present a short role-play or discussion circle showing how someone from a Dharmic faith might make a moral decision guided by their beliefs and teachings.

Key vocabulary

dharma	a key idea in many Indian religions meaning the right way to live, by doing good, telling the truth, and caring for others
Diwali	a Hindu festival of light that celebrates the victory of good over evil and light over darkness.
Vesak	a Buddhist festival that celebrates the birth, enlightenment, and death of the Buddha.
Vaisakhi	a Sikh festival that marks the founding of the Khalsa and celebrates faith, equality, and community.

Teacher Notes

*N.B.: This week, teachers should select **one** Dharmic religion to study.*

Listening to the stories and experiences of people who follow a Dharmic faith helps pupils understand how belief shapes daily life. For followers of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism, faith is expressed through both devotion and action. These traditions teach that goodness is shown not only in words and prayers but through the choices people make and the way they live in harmony with others.

Each Dharmic faith blends spiritual reflection with community life. Worship in temples, gurdwaras, or meditation halls strengthens a sense of belonging and peace, while home practices such as prayer or meditation help believers grow in discipline and compassion. Festivals, service, and family rituals also remind communities that faith is a shared way of life, not just a private belief.

When pupils hear from people who live out these traditions, they learn how moral values such as respect, peace, and generosity can take different forms across the world's religions. Asking careful and thoughtful questions encourages understanding rather than comparison. This builds empathy and helps pupils recognise that, although beliefs may differ, people of all faiths seek truth, live responsibly, and work for a more peaceful world.

Diwali

Diwali, known as the Festival of Light, is one of the most joyful and important Hindu celebrations. It symbolises the victory of light over darkness, truth over ignorance, and good over evil. Homes and temples are decorated with lamps called diyas, which represent the divine light that guides people towards wisdom and goodness. The festival has several meanings across India. In some regions, it marks the return of Lord Rama and Sita to Ayodhya after the defeat of Ravana, as told in the Ramayana. In others, it honours the goddess Lakshmi, who brings prosperity and blessings to those who live with honesty and gratitude. Families clean their homes, share food and sweets, and gather for worship and celebration. Diwali invites reflection on the inner light that shines in every person. For pupils, it shows that faith can be expressed through beauty, joy, and acts of kindness. Teachers can help pupils connect the festival's message to the Christian understanding that goodness and light overcome darkness. Both faiths remind believers that love, truth, and generosity have the power to transform the world.

Vesak

Vesak, or Buddha Day, is the most important Buddhist festival. It celebrates the birth, enlightenment, and passing of Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha. Buddhists recall how the Buddha reached enlightenment by seeing through selfishness and desire, discovering peace through compassion, mindfulness, and wisdom. Temples and homes are decorated with lanterns and flowers, symbolising light and new life. People visit temples to offer incense, candles, and food, not to worship the Buddha as a god but to honour his example. Acts of generosity, such as giving to the poor or releasing animals back into freedom, express the Buddhist values of compassion and respect for all life. Vesak teaches that inner peace leads to peace in the world. Pupils can learn that Buddhists seek harmony through right thought, speech, and action, following the Buddha's example of non-violence and kindness. Teachers can link this to Catholic values of conscience, compassion, and care for creation, showing that different religions share a longing for peace and goodness.

Vaisakhi

Vaisakhi is a joyful Sikh festival that celebrates both harvest and faith. It marks the founding of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699, when Sikhs were called to live with courage, equality, and devotion to God. The Khalsa reminds Sikhs that faith is shown through action and service, not only through words or rituals. Sikhs celebrate Vaisakhi by visiting the gurdwara for prayer, listening to hymns, and sharing food in the langar, where everyone is welcome. Processions called Nagar Kirtans fill the streets with singing and colour, showing that faith belongs in the heart of community life. The festival recalls the moment when Guru Gobind Singh gave the Five Ks as symbols of Sikh identity and commitment. Vaisakhi reminds Sikhs to live bravely, serve others, and work for justice. Vaisakhi offers a powerful example of how faith inspires service and unity. Both Sikh and Christian traditions teach that love of God is shown through love of neighbour. Pupils can reflect on how acts of courage, kindness, and equality are expressions of faith that build stronger and more caring communities.



Know

St Francis of Assisi met Sultan Al Malik during a time of conflict and taught his followers to be gentle, peaceful, and respectful towards everyone.

He believed that people should speak kindly and live humbly, showing peace through their words and actions.

Pope St John Paul II followed this example by inviting leaders of different faiths to Assisi in 1986 to come together to pray for peace and justice.



Discern

St Francis of Assisi and Pope St John Paul II showed how people of different faiths can meet in peace, respect, and prayer to work for justice in the world

Suggested discovery questions

1. What can we learn from the friendship between St Francis of Assisi (a Christian) and Sultan Al Malik (a Muslim)?
2. Why do you think Pope St John Paul II invited people of different faiths to come together to pray together for peace?
3. How can we follow their example by building peace and understanding in our own lives?



Respond

Study Sassetta's *Saint Francis before the Sultan* and the icon *St Francis of Assisi and the Sultan Al-Kamil* by Brother Robert Lentz, OFM, to understand more about the meeting between Saint Francis and the Sulta.

Write a letter from St John Paul II's perspective inviting others to come to Assisi. Explain the importance of working together towards peace and justice.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

Teacher Notes

The Meeting of St Francis of Assisi and Sultan Al-Kamil

In 1219, during the Fifth Crusade, St Francis of Assisi crossed enemy lines to meet Sultan Al-Kamil, the Muslim ruler of Egypt. Rather than confront him with hostility, Francis sought dialogue, peace, and understanding. This meeting became one of the earliest and most powerful examples of interreligious encounter rooted in mutual respect. Francis was moved by Christ's teaching to 'love your enemies' (Matthew 5:44) and wished to show the love of God through humility, courage, and compassion.

Both men treated each other with dignity. The Sultan recognised Francis's sincerity and holiness, while Francis admired the Sultan's faith and generosity. Though they did not agree on theology, they found common ground in their devotion to God and concern for peace. This encounter influenced Franciscan spirituality and the Church's later understanding of dialogue between faiths. It foreshadowed the Church's modern call to peacebuilding and respect for people of all religions.

Artworks by Sassetta & Brother Robert Lentz

Sassetta's *Saint Francis before the Sultan* (1437–44) is a tempera painting from Siena, Italy, which shows St Francis humbly greeting the Sultan while soldiers and courtiers observe. The calm gestures and gentle expressions of both figures highlight peace and holiness rather than conflict. Francis stands barefoot and unarmed, and the Sultan listens attentively, suggesting respect and openness. The artist's soft colours and balanced composition invite viewers to see dialogue itself as something sacred; a meeting of peace rather than opposition.

Brother Robert Lentz's *St Francis of Assisi and the Sultan Al-Kamil* is a modern icon that retells this encounter for today's Church. The two men are shown standing as equals, surrounded by radiant light that symbolises the presence of God where people seek truth and understanding. The gold background and careful symbolism express unity, hope, and the breaking down of barriers between faiths.

Together, these artworks show that art can express theology by revealing spiritual truth through image and beauty. They help pupils see holiness as courage, gentleness, and respect for others. Both pieces reflect the continuing mission of the Church to promote peace and dialogue, showing how love and faith can heal division in the world.