

Teaching and learning ideas and activities

Select and adapt as appropriate to suit your class, and to ensure pupils achieve the outcomes.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

These activities will help pupils to work towards achieving the following expected outcomes:

How many people believe in God?

- Begin with a guessing game in groups. Imagine that the world was a village of 100 people, how many would belong to each religion, and how many non-religious people would there be? Give them the six big religions (Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs) as well as non-religious people. You could use counters for pupils to move into groups on their desks; you could bring in 100 jelly babies to demonstrate the numbers.... Compare their answers with the data: Christians (32) Muslims (24) Non-religious (16) Hindus (15) Buddhists (7) Other (6) (includes Sikhs – 0.4; Jews – 0.2; folk religions 5). Talk about these numbers: were there any surprises? What and why?
- Compare the same activity, imagining the **UK** and/or **your area** shrunk to 100 people:
UK 2011 Census: Christians 59; No religions 25; Muslims 5; Hindus 2; other 9 (includes Sikhs 0.8, Jews 0.5, Buddhists 0.4; answer not given 7)
Your area (see syllabus p.146) Talk about these statistics: include in your discussion which of these groups believe or don't believe in God.
- Introduce some vocabulary: *theist* – a person who believe in God; *atheist* – a person who says there is no god; *agnostic* – a person who says they don't know or cannot know if there is a god or not, (from Greek *theos*, god; *a-theos* – no god; *a-gnosis*, no knowledge). Note that the 'non-religious' numbers from above include both atheists and agnostics.
- Get pupils to write their answers on their mini-whiteboards to hold up, or stick the words 'theist', 'atheist' and 'agnostic' around the room. Read out some statements and ask pupils to write on their whiteboard or stand next to the word they think best connects with the statement. Ask pupils to explain why they think the term applies. E.g.
 - I believe there is a Creator who speaks to humans through his prophets and messengers
 - I think there is more to life than what is here on earth but I can't quite decide what it is.
 - I know that there is more to life than just the physical universe and my faith guides me
 - I need more evidence to make any decisions about God
 - I think we don't get guidance from beyond the universe; I only rely on reason and science to guide me
 - I have thought about God and haven't made my mind up; to be honest I'm not all that bothered about it
 - God is hard to define and unknowable
 - I need evidence and no-one has shown me evidence of God yet
- Talk about these ideas. They are not hard and fast, and people change their minds. This unit will explore the ideas further.

Make sense of belief:

- Define the terms 'theist', 'atheist' and 'agnostic' and give examples of statements that reflect these beliefs
- Identify and explain what religious and non-religious people believe about God, saying where they get their ideas from

Make connections:

- Consider and weigh up different views on theism, agnosticism and atheism, expressing insights of their own about why people believe in God or not

Sample 'I can...' statements

...say what the words theist /atheist /agnostic mean

... give at least one example of what a theist, atheist and agnostic might say about god

...give some examples of what a theist (e.g. a Christian) believes about God

...give some examples of what an agnostic and atheist might say about God.

...begin to talk about some ideas to do with atheism, agnosticism and theism