

Pp

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:

Why do people believe or not believe in God?

- Give pupils a chance to talk in pairs/small groups in answer to the lesson question first. They could stay as detectives, if you wish. Make sure they use the technical terms theist/atheist/agnostic. What reasons can they come up with for why people may believe or not believe in God? Get them to record their ideas on separate cards so that they can sort them into the ones they think have most impact or they think are most persuasive for people's beliefs.
- Talk about their ideas. Present some additional ones, if they have not thought of them all. Mix these up and get pupils to decide if they are reasons for believing or not: e.g. (see p.9 for a photocopiable version of this grid).

I was brought up as a believer. It is all I have ever known. My family all believe. We worship, pray and practise our faith. It is just the way it is.	I grew up in a home where religion was not important and was not often talked about. It never occurred to me to believe.	When I was a teenager I had a religious experience. I had a sense of the presence of God. It was amazing! I cannot forget it. I had a sense of great peace and joy.	I believe that what the Bible says about Jesus is true. He is God. He was born, crucified and rose again. His teaching and his guidance in my life make me sure he is real.
I was in trouble and I prayed: 'God, if you exist – please help me now!' And God answered my prayer. I could hardly believe it – but now I trust and believe in God.	I was in trouble and I prayed: 'God, if you exist – please help me now!' But there was no answer. I prayed a lot but it made no difference. There is no god to answer prayers.	The universe is such a complex and amazing place – as we can see, and as science shows us. It couldn't have happened on its own. There must be a Creator behind it all.	I think science can give us all the explanations we need for the universe. We can check them too. We don't need to believe in a Creator God.
There is so much suffering in the world. If there is a good God, then God would want to stop suffering. A powerful God would be able to. So I say there cannot be a God.	Humans want to think there is more to life than the physical world. I think humans create ideas of God to give them a sense of purpose. Why else are there so many religions?	Most people on Earth believe in one god or another. Science is really useful and tells us a lot, but I don't think it can tell us everything about life.	Humans are limited creatures. If there is a god, it would be much greater than us and we would not be able to know it. Like a fish cannot understand life outside the water.

- Ask pupils which of these are the most/least persuasive. Who might say these? Point out that some people start with a faith and lose it; some people start without a religious faith but convert to faith. If pupils gathered data from family and friends in the previous section, compare the reasons given with the examples here. Which ones are most common? Can pupils suggest why? Add any new ones to their cards.
- See if pairs of pupils can act out a simple discussion between a theist and an atheist, giving some back and forward reasons to believe or not, just to revise some of the information they have been learning. They should try to give reasons for their statements.

Make sense of belief:

- Give examples of reasons why people do or do not believe in God

Understand the impact:

- Make clear connections between what people believe about God and the impact of this belief on how they live

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

...give at least three reasons why a person believes in God

... give at least three reasons why a person doesn't believe in God

...give an example of what difference it makes for someone to believe in God or not to believe in God

...suggest why at least two reasons for believing in God would persuade/not persuade someone to believe
 ...express some of my own ideas about why people believe or not, giving reasons