New Line Learning Academy
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Religious Education Short Course

GCSE – Year 11

The Year 11 Religious Studies curriculum challenges students to apply the religious knowledge developed in Year 10 to contemporary ethical, philosophical and social issues. Students investigate how religious teachings influence moral decision making whilst recognising that many issues have no single correct answer. Throughout the year, students evaluate contrasting religious and non-religious viewpoints, developing the confidence to justify their own reasoned conclusions using evidence from sources of wisdom and authority.

Throughout the year, students investigate:

- How should people build healthy relationships and families? *(Relationships and Families)*
- Can religion help create a more peaceful world? *(Religion, Peace and Conflict)*

Each enquiry builds upon the last, allowing students to apply religious teachings to increasingly complex real-world issues. Along the way, they explore topics including marriage, family life, sexuality, gender equality, divorce, peace, justice, forgiveness, terrorism, war, nuclear weapons, pacifism and religious responses to conflict, considering the perspectives of Christianity alongside non-religious beliefs and other worldviews within contemporary British society.

Throughout the year, students strengthen their evaluative thinking by analysing religious teachings, interpreting sacred texts, evaluating contrasting viewpoints and constructing balanced, evidence-based arguments. By the end of Year 11, students understand that Religious Studies is not simply about learning what religions believe, but about exploring how beliefs shape individuals, communities and society whilst developing the critical thinking skills needed to engage with some of the most challenging ethical questions facing the modern world.

Terms 1 and 2
Enquiry

How should people build healthy relationships and families?

Big Picture
What are the main ideas and big questions in this topic?

This enquiry forms part of the AQA GCSE Religious Studies Short Course and explores how religious and non-religious beliefs influence attitudes towards relationships, family life and gender in contemporary society. Students investigate Christian teachings alongside contrasting religious and non-religious perspectives, considering how beliefs shape moral decision making on issues that affect individuals, families and communities. Throughout the enquiry, students recognise that there are often differing viewpoints within religions and society, encouraging respectful discussion of complex ethical issues.

Students consider how beliefs continue to influence debates surrounding marriage, sexuality, equality, parenting and family life, whilst recognising the diversity of relationships and family structures within modern Britain.

Zoom In
What knowledge, skills and key vocabulary will we learn step by step?

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The enquiry begins by exploring the nature and purpose of relationships and families. Students investigate Christian teachings about marriage, family life, procreation, commitment and the role of parents and children, considering why family remains an important institution within many religious traditions. This fulfils the National Curriculum expectation that students investigate religious beliefs, ethical issues and sources of wisdom and authority whilst developing religious literacy.

Attention then turns to contemporary issues surrounding relationships and family life. Students investigate differing religious and non-religious perspectives on sexuality, contraception, cohabitation, same-sex relationships, divorce, remarriage and gender equality. Alongside the GCSE specification, students also explore family life, committed relationships, parenting, fertility, routes to parenthood and pregnancy choices through the school's RSHE curriculum, enabling them to apply religious teachings to real-life situations whilst recognising diversity within modern British society.

The enquiry concludes by evaluating how religious beliefs continue to shape ethical decision making in the modern world. Students consider how values such as love, commitment, equality, responsibility and respect influence debates surrounding relationships and family life. Throughout the enquiry, students strengthen their disciplinary understanding by interpreting Biblical teachings, comparing religious and non-religious viewpoints, evaluating ethical arguments and constructing balanced conclusions supported by evidence from sources of wisdom and authority.

Students explore key questions including:

- How should people build healthy relationships and families?
- What is the purpose of marriage and family life?
- Should religious beliefs influence modern relationships?
- What challenges do families face today?
- How should society promote equality and respect?

Key vocabulary including marriage, cohabitation, commitment, contraception, divorce, remarriage, sexuality, gender equality, discrimination, prejudice, family planning, nuclear family and extended family is explicitly taught and revisited throughout the enquiry.

Pre-Requisite Knowledge *What have we already learned that will help us with this topic?*	**Pitch Up** *How will we challenge ourselves?*
Students build upon their understanding of Christian beliefs developed during the Year 10 study of the AQA GCSE Religious Studies Short Course, particularly teachings about God, love, forgiveness, justice and human responsibility. They also draw upon Key Stage 3 Religion and Worldviews learning surrounding identity, relationships and ethical decision making. Students continue to develop disciplinary skills including interpreting sources of wisdom and authority, comparing religious and non-religious viewpoints and evaluating ethical arguments.	Students are challenged to evaluate complex ethical issues where there are differing religious and non-religious viewpoints. They investigate contrasting perspectives within Christianity and wider society, applying religious teachings to contemporary issues whilst recognising that many questions have no single correct answer. Students apply their knowledge through GCSE-style evaluative questions, constructing balanced arguments supported by evidence from sources of wisdom and authority and demonstrating respect for differing opinions.

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Wider Framework
How does this learning connect to future topics and bigger goals?

This enquiry develops students' understanding of applied ethics within the AQA GCSE Religious Studies Short Course, strengthening the evaluative skills required for success in GCSE examinations. Students learn to apply religious beliefs to contemporary issues whilst recognising the complexity of moral decision making.

The enquiry also encourages students to become thoughtful, respectful and informed citizens who can engage confidently with ethical issues that affect individuals, families and wider society.

Curriculum Hinterland
What wider knowledge will deepen our understanding of this topic?

Students investigate how attitudes towards marriage, family life and gender have changed throughout history and continue to evolve in Britain today. They explore the influence of law, culture, media and religion on family life, recognising that beliefs about relationships vary across different communities and societies.

Students also investigate how changing attitudes towards relationships, marriage, parenting and family life continue to shape British society. Through contemporary case studies, they explore issues including fertility treatment, pregnancy choices and the responsibilities of parenthood, recognising the ethical, legal and religious factors that influence personal decision making.

Authentic connections
How does this topic connect to real life, careers, other subjects and important values?

Through this enquiry, students develop spiritual understanding by reflecting upon love, commitment, identity and the importance of relationships. Moral understanding is strengthened through exploring ethical issues surrounding marriage, sexuality, equality and family life, whilst social and cultural understanding is developed by recognising the diversity of relationships and family structures within contemporary Britain.

The enquiry makes explicit links to the British Values of mutual respect, individual liberty and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs, encouraging students to appreciate differing viewpoints whilst promoting equality, dignity and respect for others.

There are strong cross-curricular links with PSHE, through healthy relationships, consent, parenting and family life; Citizenship, through equality, human rights and discrimination; Science, through reproduction, fertility and contraception; and English, through discussion, debate and persuasive writing.

The enquiry has strong explicit links to RSHE, supporting students in exploring healthy relationships, parenting, fertility, routes to parenthood, pregnancy choices, equality and respect. Students consider how religious beliefs, personal values and the law influence decision making whilst developing the knowledge needed to make safe, informed and respectful choices in later life.

The enquiry supports the Skills Builder Universal Framework, particularly Teamwork, through respectful discussion and collaboration; Problem Solving, by evaluating complex ethical dilemmas surrounding relationships and family life; and Leadership, by developing the confidence to make informed decisions and positively influence others. Students also explore careers including teaching, social work, healthcare, family law, midwifery, counselling, psychology and youth work, where communication, empathy and ethical decision making are essential.

Resources
What books, websites, videos and materials will support our learning?

Assessment
How will we show what we know, remember and can apply?

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• AQA GCSE Religious Studies Short Course Specification • The Holy Bible (NIV and Good News Translation) • BBC Bitesize Religious Studies • TrueTube • RE:ONLINE • Oak National Academy • PSHE Association resources • Brook Learn • NSPCC educational resources • Christian Aid educational resources • Contemporary news articles and ethical case studies • Sources of wisdom and authority relating to relationships and families	Students demonstrate their understanding through knowledge retrieval activities, source analysis, structured discussion and GCSE-style examination questions from the AQA GCSE Religious Studies Short Course. Students explain Christian and contrasting viewpoints, apply religious teachings to contemporary ethical issues and construct balanced evaluations using evidence from sources of wisdom and authority. Substantive Knowledge (60%) assesses students' understanding of marriage, family life, sexuality, contraception, divorce, gender equality, family structures and differing religious and non-religious beliefs. Disciplinary Knowledge (40%) assesses students' ability to interpret religious teachings, compare contrasting viewpoints, evaluate ethical arguments and construct balanced conclusions using accurate religious terminology and evidence from sources of wisdom and authority.

Terms 3 and 4
Enquiry

Can religion help create a more peaceful world?

Big Picture
What are the main ideas and big questions in this topic?

This enquiry forms part of the AQA GCSE Religious Studies Short Course and explores how religious and non-religious beliefs influence attitudes towards peace, justice, forgiveness, war and conflict in the modern world. Students investigate Christian teachings alongside contrasting religious and non-religious perspectives, considering how beliefs shape responses to violence, terrorism, nuclear weapons and peacebuilding. Throughout the enquiry, students recognise that religion can both inspire peace and be misused to justify conflict, encouraging thoughtful and balanced evaluation of complex ethical issues.

Students consider how beliefs continue to influence global debates surrounding justice, reconciliation, extremism and human responsibility, whilst recognising the importance of promoting peace within increasingly diverse societies.

Zoom In
What knowledge, skills and key vocabulary will we learn step by step?

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The enquiry begins by exploring the meaning and importance of peace, justice, forgiveness and reconciliation within Christianity. Students investigate Christian teachings about violence, pacifism, just war and holy war, considering how these beliefs influence individual and collective responses to conflict. This fulfils the National Curriculum expectation that students investigate religious beliefs, ethical issues and sources of wisdom and authority whilst developing religious literacy.

Attention then turns to contemporary issues surrounding war and conflict. Students investigate differing religious and non-religious perspectives on terrorism, nuclear weapons, weapons of mass destruction and peacekeeping. Alongside the GCSE specification, students also explore friendship, diversity, bullying, prejudice and extremism through the school's RSHE curriculum, examining how individuals and communities can recognise, challenge and prevent extremist attitudes and behaviours whilst promoting inclusion and mutual respect.

The enquiry concludes by evaluating the role religion plays in creating a more peaceful world. Students investigate the work of religious organisations and individuals involved in peacebuilding, humanitarian aid and reconciliation, considering how beliefs can inspire compassion, justice and social action. Throughout the enquiry, students strengthen their disciplinary understanding by interpreting Biblical teachings, comparing religious and non-religious viewpoints, evaluating ethical arguments and constructing balanced conclusions supported by evidence from sources of wisdom and authority.

Students explore key questions including:

- Can religion help create a more peaceful world?
- Is war ever justified?
- How should society respond to terrorism and extremism?
- Can forgiveness achieve justice?
- What responsibility do individuals have in promoting peace?

Key vocabulary including peace, justice, forgiveness, reconciliation, pacifism, just war, holy war, terrorism, extremism, prejudice, discrimination, nuclear deterrence, weapons of mass destruction and reconciliation is explicitly taught and revisited throughout the enquiry.

Pre-Requisite Knowledge
What have we already learned that will help us with this topic?

Students build upon their understanding of Christian beliefs developed during the Year 10 study of the AQA GCSE Religious Studies Short Course, particularly teachings about justice, forgiveness, compassion and human responsibility. They also draw upon learning from the Relationships and Families enquiry, applying ethical reasoning to wider issues affecting communities and society.

Students continue to develop disciplinary skills including interpreting sources of wisdom and authority, comparing religious and non-religious viewpoints and evaluating ethical arguments.

Pitch Up
How will we challenge ourselves?

Students are challenged to evaluate some of the most complex ethical issues within the GCSE course. They investigate contrasting religious and non-religious perspectives on war, terrorism, peacebuilding and extremism, recognising that many questions have no single correct answer.

Students apply their knowledge through GCSE-style evaluative questions, constructing balanced arguments supported by evidence from sources of wisdom and authority whilst considering multiple viewpoints before reaching justified conclusions.

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Wider Framework
How does this learning connect to future topics and bigger goals?

This enquiry brings together the theological and ethical understanding developed throughout the AQA GCSE Religious Studies Short Course, strengthening the evaluative skills required for GCSE examinations. Students learn to apply religious teachings to contemporary global issues whilst recognising the importance of dialogue, justice and responsible citizenship.

The enquiry also encourages students to become informed, respectful and active members of society who can engage confidently with issues surrounding conflict, diversity and global responsibility.

Curriculum Hinterland
What wider knowledge will deepen our understanding of this topic?

Students investigate significant conflicts and peace movements from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, exploring how religion, politics and culture have influenced global events. They also examine the work of organisations such as Christian Aid, CAFOD, the United Nations and the Red Cross, recognising how faith communities and humanitarian organisations contribute to peacebuilding, disaster relief and reconciliation.

Students explore contemporary examples of community cohesion, anti-racism initiatives and the prevention of radicalisation, recognising the importance of education, respectful dialogue and shared values in creating safe and inclusive communities.

Authentic connections
How does this topic connect to real life, careers, other subjects and important values?

Through this enquiry, students develop spiritual understanding by reflecting upon justice, forgiveness, reconciliation and humanity's responsibility to create a more peaceful world. Moral understanding is strengthened through evaluating ethical issues surrounding war, violence, terrorism and human rights, whilst social and cultural understanding is developed by exploring diversity, community cohesion and the experiences of people affected by conflict.

The enquiry makes explicit links to the British Values of mutual respect, individual liberty, the rule of law and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs, encouraging students to challenge prejudice, discrimination and extremist ideologies whilst promoting inclusion and democratic values.

There are strong cross-curricular links with History, through twentieth-century conflicts and peace movements; Citizenship, through democracy, human rights, justice and community cohesion; PSHE, through diversity, bullying and respectful relationships; and English, through discussion, debate and persuasive writing.

The enquiry has strong explicit links to RSHE, supporting students in exploring friendship, diversity, bullying, inclusion and strategies for recognising and challenging extremist attitudes and behaviours. Students develop the confidence to question harmful influences, appreciate diversity and contribute positively to safe, respectful and inclusive communities.

The enquiry supports the Skills Builder Universal Framework, particularly Problem Solving, by evaluating complex issues surrounding conflict and peace; Leadership, through considering how individuals can challenge injustice and promote positive change; and Speaking, by developing the confidence to present balanced, evidence-based arguments during discussion and debate. Students also explore careers including the armed forces, the police, law, journalism, international relations, humanitarian aid, diplomacy, charity leadership, teaching and the civil service, where ethical decision making, resilience and effective communication are essential.

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Resources *What books, websites, videos and materials will support our learning?*	**Assessment** *How will we show what we know, remember and can apply?*
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