

Unit 1, Topic 3: Looking for meaning

Starter Lesson: The Big Picture/Developing your knowledge

Lesson focus

What is this topic about?

Student book 1

Unit 1 Religion and life issues
Topic 3 Looking for meaning
The Big Picture/Developing your knowledge
See pages 64–67

This lesson will enable students to:

- identify the main themes in the topic
- begin to consider and express their own thoughts about God, life after death and the value of religion.

Starter

- Play the song 'The meaning of life' from the film *The meaning of life* by Monty Python. Give students a copy of the lyrics on the **lesson 1 worksheet** and ask them to read through as they are listening.
- Ask students to make a list of all the philosophical questions that the song asks about the meaning of life. Highlight the key questions/ideas contained in the song that are in this topic of work.

God, life after death, heaven, hell, why we are here, science, etc.

Development

- Use the student book to guide students through the main ideas in this topic. Go through **The Big Picture** and **Key words** so students are aware of what this topic involves. (You may want to get them to write these down.) Explain that before they start looking at the issues in depth, it is important they have time to reflect on their own initial thoughts and ideas about the topic.
- Ask students to write down their initial thoughts about each of the following ideas. Make sure they explain their ideas fully, giving reasons for their opinions.

Is there a God? Why or why not?

What is God like?

What evidence is there for and against belief in God?

Is religion useful? Why or why not?

What happens after a person dies? Where is the evidence for this?

- Ask students to choose one of the question areas in italics above, and then to choose three people in the room to ask their views about this. Get students to jot down notes about what they found out.

Plenary

Choose a number of students to summarise what they think about the issues and what they found others thought.

Homework/extension task

Find out what family and friends think about the issues covered in this topic. Ask them to try to get reasons for different opinions.

Unit 1, Topic 3: Looking for meaning

Starter Lesson: The Big Picture/Developing your knowledge

Worksheet

Name: _____ Class: _____

Carefully read these lyrics, which are for the Monty Python song 'The meaning of life'. Then answer the questions at the end of this sheet.

Why are we here?

What's life all about?

Is God really real, or is there some doubt?

Well, tonight, we're going to sort it all out,

For tonight it's 'The meaning of life'.

What's the point of all this hoax?

Is it the chicken and the egg time?

Are we just yolks?

Or perhaps we're just one of God's little jokes.

Well ça c'est le 'Meaning of life'.

Is life just a game where we make up the rules,

While we're searching for something to say,

Or are we just simply spiralling coils

Of self-replicating DNA. (Nay, nay, nay, nay, nay, nay.)

In this 'life', what is our fate?

Is there heaven and hell? Do we reincarnate?

Is mankind evolving, or is it too late?

Well, tonight, here's 'The meaning of life'.

For millions, this 'life' is a sad vale of tears,

Sitting 'round with rien nothing to say

While the scientists say we're just simply spiralling coils

Of self-replicating DNA. (Nay, nay, nay, nay, nay, nay.)

So, just why - why are we here,

And just what - what - what - what do we fear?

Well, ce soir, for a change, it will all be made clear,

For this is 'The meaning of life'. C'est le sens de la vie.

This is 'The meaning of life'.

1 Make a list of all the philosophical (and unanswerable) questions the song includes.

2 Why do you think there are so many questions we cannot answer?

Unit 1, Topic 3: Looking for meaning

Lesson 3.1: belief in God

Lesson focus

Why do some people believe in God?

Why do some people not believe in a god?

Student book 1

Unit 1 Religion and life issues

Topic 3 Looking for meaning

3.1 Belief in God

See pages 68–69

This lesson will enable students to:

- analyse the concepts of theist, atheist and agnostic
- express reasons for different views of belief in God and explore personal views about God's existence.

Starter

- Give students three cards each – one red, one orange, one green. Read out statements from the suggestions below and ask students vote green for agree, red for disagree and orange for not sure. If cards are unavailable, you could do this with thumbs up (agree), thumbs down (disagree) and thumbs sideways (not sure).

Suggested statements, in this order

Strawberry is the best flavour of ice-cream.

Dragons exist.

You should never lie.

All religions teach.

You are only religious if you attend a place of worship.

God exists.

- Extend this activity by asking students to justify their opinions.

Development

- Share the learning outcomes with students, explaining that people hold different beliefs about God because of their upbringings and personal experiences.
- Ask students to complete a belief line showing the definitions of a theist, an atheist and an agnostic.
- Ask students to make a human belief line around the room and to stand on the line in a place that correlates with their beliefs. You can then ask them to give reasons for their beliefs and discuss why different people are standing in different places.
- Give students time to write down reasons already discussed for the views of a theist, atheist and agnostic. You can extend this activity by further discussion and giving more reasons or using the relevant pages in the student book to help expand ideas.

Students should then individually complete the evaluation question on the **lesson 1 worksheet**.

Plenary

Review the learning outcomes and recap the key words theist, atheist and agnostic. Ask students to form pairs and explain to each other the reasons someone may give for being a theist, atheist or agnostic.

Homework/extension task

Research famous people who claimed to be theists, atheists and agnostics. Compile and list and bring it to the next lesson to share.

Unit 1, Topic 3: Looking for meaning

Lesson 3.1: belief in God

Worksheet

Name: _____ Class: _____

1 Read the question below, then use the notes to help you complete an answer.

'Belief in God is the most important part of being a religious believer.'
Do you agree? Give reasons or evidence for your answer, showing you have thought about more than one point of view. Include reference to religious beliefs.

Notes

- Your opinion – do you agree with the quote? Why or why not? Give as many reasons as possible.
- Explain why someone might hold the opposite view to you and explain why. What reasons would they give?
- Explain what religious believers would say. Would they agree or disagree with the quote? What reasons would they give for their view?
- Use some of these reasons to help write your answer.
 - God is at the centre of many religions.
 - The Holy book is often related to ideas about God.
 - Other beliefs such as life after death, holy books and worship are just as important.
 - Action is as important as belief.
 - There are many parts to being a true religious believers.
 - Religious teachings all refer to belief in God.

Your answer

2 Now evaluate your answer. Use the level descriptors in your Student book (pages 000–000) to decide how many marks your answer would get.

Unit 1, Topic 3: Looking for meaning

Lesson 3.2: religion in a secular society

Lesson focus

What is the value of religion in a secular society?

Student book 1

Unit 1 Religion and life issues
Topic 3 Looking for meaning
3.2 Religion in a secular society
See pages 70–71

This lesson will enable students to:

- * explore the question of whether religion has any value in today's society
- * determine a personal response to the topic and participate in a debate.

Starter

Ask students to compile two lists: the advantages of religion; and the disadvantages of religion.

Advantages

*There's a group of people with the same beliefs.
You can pray to God.
Religion/God provides comfort in times of need.
Religion provides guidance, advice and help.
Religion helps to answer questions that science cannot.*

Disadvantages

*There are many other things to do instead of go to church.
Religion causes many problems such as wars.
Some religious groups have been linked to terrorist organisations.
In society today there seems to be increased crime/problems, and religion doesn't make a difference.
People are more interested in going out and having a good time.
Science explains everything, so religion isn't needed.*

Development

- Share the learning outcomes with students.
- Explain that they are going to participate in a class debate: 'Religion has no value in our secular world today.' Divide the class into groups of four. Each four further divides into two pairs. And each pair will present one side of a debate.
- Students can use their student book and their ideas from the starter activity to present their side of the argument. They have to write a short speech and also plan to anticipate questions thrown at them.
- The two pairs can work together towards the end to check their knowledge and understanding. (Give students approximately 20–25 minutes to complete this.) Students can record their ideas on the **lesson 3 worksheet** as they prepare for, and during, the debate.

As a whole class, students then have to debate the topic, giving as many reasons as possible for the view they are arguing.

Plenary

Ask students to discuss with a partner which side of the argument was stronger and why. The interactive version of the debate could be used to help summarise the ideas mentioned in the debate.

Homework/extension task

Write a summary of the debate that took place as though it was being reported in a newspaper.

Unit 1, Topic 3: Looking for meaning

Lesson 3.2: religion in a secular society

Worksheet

Name: _____ Class: _____

- 1** In pairs, you are about to take part in a debate: 'Religion has no value in our secular world today.' Use this sheet to record your ideas before, and during, the debate. Give the strength of each argument a number from 1 (very strong) to 5 (weak). This will help you to identify which are the better arguments to use in the debate.

| Arguments FOR the statement (agree) | Arguments AGAINST the statement (disagree) |
|--|--|
| | |

- 2** Now jot down some thoughts about these questions. They will help you during the debate.

What counter-arguments/questions may be thrown at you?

What is your opinion on the debate and why?

What might different religious believers say and why?

A Christian might argue _____

A _____ might argue _____

A _____ might argue _____

Unit 1, Topic 3: Looking for meaning

Lesson 3.3: The nature of God (1)

Lesson focus

How do people experience God?

Student book 1

Unit 1 Religion and life issues
Topic 3 Looking for meaning
3.3 The nature of God (1)
See pages 72–73

This lesson will enable students to:

- explore ways in which God is revealed to religious believers
- evaluate religious believers' experience of God.

Starter

Ask students to study the illustration on page 72 of their student books, then make a list of the ways in which God is revealed.

[SH1] Development

- Share the learning outcomes with students and make them aware that God can be revealed in many ways.
- Ask students to produce a diagram showing the different ways in which God is revealed. They may want to do this in pictorial form.
- In the theme park illustration, the mystery ride is not explained. Ask students to complete a proposal for this ride by writing a description of what it is like and how God is revealed through it. They should also complete a detailed drawing of what it looks like.

Plenary

Share ideas of the mystery ride.

Homework/extension task

Find out how another religion believes God is revealed.

Unit 1, Topic 3: Looking for meaning

Lesson 3.3: The nature of God (1)

Teacher's notes

These Teacher's notes are intended to give you general background to the viewpoints of the three religions NOT covered in the corresponding lesson of the student book for this topic.

Buddhism

- No god is recognised in Buddhism.
- However, Buddhists believe they are enlightened, so this is a form of revelation (where something that was hidden is revealed).
- Buddhists believe enlightenment is gained through meditation, focus on the person and acts of kindness.
- Buddhists strongly believe in following the Eightfold Path and the Four Noble Truths, which will help them on their journey to enlightenment.

Judaism

- Judaism is similar to Christianity in that Jews believe God can be revealed in many ways.
- Jews believe a main source of revelation of God is the Torah.

Torah means 'teaching' and is believed to contain God's revealed instructions to his people.

- God is seen to have a very special relationship with the Jewish people, founded between God and Abraham and called the Covenant.
- The Torah also contains the revelation to Moses of the Ten Commandments, which are the rules that Jews follow.
- The Prophets are another source of revelation of God, as they were given messages from God to pass on to the Jewish people.
- Jews believe that God is revealed through religious leaders such as the rabbis who guide them and look after the synagogues.
- God is revealed through the natural world as well through personal experiences that people undergo.
- Jews believe that God is revealed through the tradition and history of the religion, which can be traced back to Abraham.

Sikhism

- Sikhs believe the first revelation of God was experienced by Guru Nanak.
- They also believe that God is revealed to Sikhs through their holy book – the Guru Granth Sahib.
- They place so much importance on their holy book that it has a room to itself in the Gurdwara and normally rests on a special stand under a canopy.
- Sikhs believe that worship brings them closer to God.
- Sikhs do not need proof of God's existence; they accept without question that he is a real entity.
- Knowledge of God comes through grace and mystical experience.
- Sikhs also believe God is part of his own creation and so can also be known through the world itself.

Unit 1, Topic 3: Looking for meaning

Grade studio

Lesson focus

Grade Studio is a tool that can be used by teachers and students to practise examination-style questions. The lesson plan below provides one suggestion of how this tool can be used. There are many opportunities within the student book for further activities.

Student book 1

Unit 1 Religion and life issues
Topic 3 Looking for meaning

This lesson will enable students to:

- understand the levels examiners use to mark their responses
- practise examination-style questions.

Starter

- Give students the following examination question and ask them to complete a concept map showing all the ideas that could be mentioned in this question.

Examination question

'We shouldn't worry about life after death. It is the life we are living now that is important.' Do you agree? Give reasons or evidence for your answer, showing that you have thought about more than one point of view. You must include reference to religious beliefs in your answer. (8 mark questions, AO2)

Ideas students may include on their concept map are:

- actions in this world affect the afterlife
- heaven and Hell
- purgatory
- life now is about enjoying yourself.

Development

- Explain the Learning outcomes to students so they understand the purpose of the lesson.
- Explain to students that understanding the level descriptors is vital to securing a good mark in the examination. This lesson will help to achieve this for the evaluation questions worth 8 marks and they will be given the opportunity to identify the level descriptors and practise this style of question.
- Students should be given a copy of the grade studio worksheet. (It may be better if the level descriptors are cut out so they can do it as a card sort activity.) Students have to identify and match up the correct level descriptions with the marks available. They should then try to match the appropriate student answer to the level descriptions showing how the answer is built up.
- Feed back from the students as to where they have put their cards.
- Ask students to complete one of the examination questions in the book using the levels to help them produce a model answer.

Plenary

Discuss the level descriptions to ensure that students produce a high level answer.