The key purpose of this resource is to support pupils in developing their understanding of Christianity, as a contribution to their understanding of the world and their own experience within it.

Understanding Christianity offers a clear, coherent approach to teaching and learning about Christianity in RE for 4s-14s (Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 3). It is based around a selection of core Christian concepts and structured across the age range to support pupils in deepening their understanding.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

There has been a need identified in RE for support to enable the progressive and systematic investigation of Christian beliefs and practices. A number of funders, together with the Church of England, agreed the need to create a more intellectually coherent and challenging approach for teaching about Christianity as part of the wider RE curriculum, and to use this resource as a contribution to raising the level of pupils’ religious literacy.

THE AIMS of Understanding Christianity

• To enable pupils to know about and understand Christianity as a living world faith, by exploring core theological concepts
• To enable pupils to develop knowledge and skills in making sense of biblical texts and understanding their impact in the lives of Christians
• To develop pupils’ abilities to connect, critically reflect upon, evaluate and apply their learning to their own growing understanding of Christianity, of religion and belief more widely, of the world and human experience.

Note:
The outline on the following pages offers a simplified account of the concepts selected, representing a mainstream Christian understanding. The resource materials themselves show that there are different ways to make sense of Christian belief and practice.

UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIANITY

TEXT IMPACT CONNECTIONS

This resource was written by a team of RE advisers from RE Today Services, in collaboration with more than 30 expert teachers, advisers and academics, and trialled in over 50 schools.

The Resource Pack includes

• A Teacher’s Handbook
• 29 full units of work, from Foundation Stage 2 through to Year 9
• Introductory booklets for each phase
• More than 150 photocopiable resource sheets
• The ‘Big Frieze’ illustration, by Emma Yarlett
• The ‘Big Frieze’ guide book, setting the concepts within a wider biblical context
• Understanding Christianity Website – www.understandingchristianity.org.uk

Understanding Christianity resources feature the Big Frieze’ illustration by Emma Yarlett

Emma is an author and illustrator who lives and works in Falmouth, Cornwall with her husband Alex. She has authored and illustrated many award-winning picture books, most notable of which are Orion and the Dark, Poppy Pickle and Nibbles: the Book Monster. She also illustrated RE Today’s best-selling The Bible: The Big Story.

www.annyarlett.com

These resources were commissioned by the Church of England Education Office. Both they and the funders were keen that the project should support RE within church schools, community schools, academies and free schools.

www.churchofengland.org/education.aspx

For more information, go to www.understandingchristianity.org.uk

The Understanding Christianity Project was generously supported by the following trusts:

Sir Hally Stewart Trust
The Jerusalem Trust

www.understandingchristianity.org.uk
We want pupils to understand Christianity

INTRODUCTION TO THE UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIANITY APPROACH

So, we’ve identified eight core concepts at the heart of Christianity that pupils need to understand. These concepts tell the ‘big story’ of the Bible, and the frieze is an artist’s response to this idea. The Big Frieze is designed to give teachers the opportunity to make pupils aware of the wider context of each concept, unit and text studied in the Understanding Christianity materials. Effectively, Understanding Christianity presents a view of the ‘big story’ of Christianity as more than a collection of different texts – one which has an overarching coherence and story.

The artwork illustrates these concepts, from Creation to Kingdom of God, presenting a Christian view of the Bible as a whole. It provides a visual summary of the ‘big story’ in the Bible, to help pupils understand it as a whole story.

The Big Frieze highlights the ‘big story’ of the Bible, and reminds pupils regularly of where a particular text occurs within the ‘big story’ by pointing it out on the frieze, for example.

We want pupils to understand the ‘big story’ of the Bible, and the frieze is an artist’s response to this idea. The Big Frieze is designed to give teachers the opportunity to make pupils aware of the wider context of each concept, unit and text studied in the Understanding Christianity materials.

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