Being special; where do we belong?

EYFS Learning Pathway

UNIT 3

This unit of learning is thematic, focusing on Christianity, Hindu Dharma and Islam. Within this unit, the children will reflect upon the things that are special to them and why they value these things. The children will learn about key religious symbols for Christians, Muslims and Hindus. They will find out about why many Christians believe that children are special to God and learn about the story of Jesus and the children. The children will also find out about the welcoming ceremonies that many Muslims and Christians have for a new baby. The children will learn out about how Hindu brothers and sisters might show their love and respect for each other at Raksha Bandhan.

KEY VOCABULARY

- MUSLIMS
- HINDUS
- CHRISTIANS
- JESUS
- BAPTISM
- RAKSHA BADHAN
- WELCOME
- LOVE
- SPECIAL
- RAKHI



Lesson 1: What makes us feel special? What makes many Christians feel that they are special to God?

STEP 1: Read a story to the pupils about something that is special to a character. You might like to choose Baggy Brown by Mick Inkpen or Dogger by Shirley Hughes.

STEP 2: Talk to the pupils about the item that was important to the character in the story.

Why was it special to them?

Ask the pupils to share some of the things that are important to them in their lives.

Why are these things important?

STEP 3: Sit the pupils in a circle and encourage them to say what is special about another friend in the circle.

Ask: Were all the things the same?

Explain that Christians believe that everyone is made unique, and they are all special to God. Explain that Psalm 139 in the Bible says that people are fearfully and wonderfully made by God.

Focus Group:

Give the pupils a photograph of another child in the class, encourage them to say one thing that is wonderful about them. Record what the pupils say on post it notes and display with the photographs in a class scrapbook or floor book or find another way to collate.

Independent Group:

Ask the pupils to draw pictures of their friends and talk about what is wonderful about them.

Lesson 2: Why do many Christians believe that children are special to God?

STEP 1: Remind the pupils of the last lesson and talk about what Christians think it means to be wonderfully made.

STEP 2: Show the pupils a children's Bible (a good version is the Beginners Bible) and ask them who this is a special book for. Explain that this book is the holy text for Christians. Show the pupils a few different Bibles so that they know that they can look different.

STEP 3: Tell the pupils that there are many stories found in the Bible that teach Christians different things about God. Explain that today we are going to listen to a story from the Bible that explains why Christians believe that children are special to God. Read the story from the Bible (Mark 10:13-16.) to the pupils. When you have finished reading the story, ask the pupils some of the following questions:

Why do you think that the disciples told the children to go away?
Why do you think Jesus wanted to talk to the children?
Why do you think that Christians believe that children are important to God?

Focus Group:

Using a story bag or small world play items, encourage the pupils in the focus group to act out the story of Jesus and the children. Use the questions from the main part of the lesson to assess their understanding.

Independent Group:

Have a selection of different Bibles (e.g., NIV, children's bible, journaling bible and Beginners Bible) set up for the pupils to investigate. If a teaching assistant is available, ask them to note down the similarities and differences that the pupils notice.

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Early Years Foundation Stage – Learning Pathway

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Explain that Christians believe that everyone, including children are welcome in God's family.

Lesson 3: Where do you belong? Which groups do some religious people belong to?

STEP 1: Talk with the pupils about the last lesson and remind them that we found out about the Christian belief that children are important and special to God. Explain that this week we are going to be thinking about where we belong and where people from different religious worldviews belong.

STEP 2: Read a story to the pupils about a family, a helpful text here might be 'Peace at Last' by Jill Murphy. Ask the pupils:

Who belongs to the family in the story.
How do the pupils feel when they are with the important people to them for example the people who care for them/ their families?

STEP 3: Ask the pupils if they belong to any groups e.g., cubs, rainbows, after school clubs etc. Look carefully at some of the logos for these groups (you could also make links to belonging to your school, using the logo as a guide). Ask:

Why do we have symbols and logos?

STEP 4: Explain that some religious people also wear symbols to show that they belong to their religious worldview. Show the pupils the Om/Aum, cross and crescent moon, and star. Ask:

Have you seen any of these before?

Show the pupils some further pictures of these symbols in use e.g., on a mosque, as a necklace on cards etc. Explain that today we are going to be investigating how to create these symbols.

Focus Group:

Give the pupils plasticine/playdoh and ask them to create the symbols that they learnt about earlier in the lesson. Ask:
Can you remember who these symbols were important for?

Independent Group:

Give the pupils photographs of the symbols that they studied earlier in the lesson. Encourage them to have a go at drawing these.

Lesson 4: How do we show people they are welcome? How are babies welcomed into the Christian family?

STEP 1: Show the pupils the symbols that they studied in the last lesson. Ask:
Who are these symbols important for?
Can you remember the names of any of the symbols?

STEP 2: Show the pupils the cross and explain that this week, we are going to be finding out about how some Christians welcome a new baby into the family (note it is important to share with the pupils that not all Christians believe in infant baptism).

Ask pupils to guess what is in your bag (have a feely bag or use the images on the PowerPoint) Ask the pupils to guess what the items inside are for.

Show the pupils the candle, baptism certificate, picture of a font and some water. Ask:

Do you know what these things are for?

Focus Group:

Show the pupils a selection of baptism cards. Ask:
Why do you think some Christians might send these?
Look at the symbols and pictures on them. What would pupils include on a baptism card to show their understanding of baptism? If time pupils can make a baptism card.

Independent Group:

Set up a role play area that the pupils can act out a baptism in. Ensure that the key artefacts that were explored earlier in the lesson are in the space.

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STEP 3: Explain that just as people welcome others into their home, Christians want to welcome people into God's family. Explain that some Christians do this as adults, and some do this for babies. Show the pupils a video of an infant baptism*. Ask the pupils:

What the symbol is that the vicar puts on the baby's head?

Why do you think that the vicar uses this symbol?

Explain that at infant baptism, the baby is welcomed into the church family and the parents are promising to bring the baby up knowing about Jesus.

* a good example can currently be found at https://request.org.uk/resource/restart/2014/04/08/infant-baptism-in-an-anglican-church/



Lesson 5: How are some babies welcomed in the Muslim tradition?

STEP 1: Recap with the last lesson with pupils: how are some babies welcomed into the Christian family? Show the pupils the symbol for Islam that they studied a few weeks ago. Ask if they can remember which religious worldview this was an important symbol for. Explain that today we are going to be finding out about how some babies are welcomed into Muslim families.

STEP 2: Show the pupils a picture of a man whispering into the ear of his new baby. Ask:

What do you think he is whispering?

Explain that he is whispering important words into the ear of his newborn baby. Ask:

What might these important words be?

STEP 3: Tell the pupils that the man is whispering the words of the Shahadah. 'There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah'. Explain to the pupils that many Muslims believe that it is important that these are the first words that a new baby hears. Ask:

Why do they ask these words are so important?

Explain that Allah means God in Arabic and that the man is saying that God is the most important being in a Muslim's life and that they should remember that the Prophet Muhammad was a prophet who shared words from Allah with Muslims.

STEP 4: Focus & Independent groups

STEP 5: At the end of the lesson, bring the class back together and show the pupils a photograph of a baby having its head shaved. Explain that this ceremony is called Aqiqah and that some Muslims families shave the baby's hair, weigh it and give the weight of the hair away to the poor in silver (you could also tell the pupils that other Muslim families give away food or if they can't afford it, may give a smile). Explain that many Muslims do this because they believe that they have been given something so precious that they should give something to other people.

Focus Group:

Show the pupils a picture of a man whispering into the ear of his baby. Ask them to explain what he is saying and write down their responses.

Independent Group:

Have some dolls in the classroom and encourage the pupils to whisper words that they think are important into the baby's ear.

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Lesson 6: How do Hindu brothers and sisters show their love for each other at a festival?

STEP 1: Show the pupils the Om/Aum symbol that they found out about a few weeks ago. Ask:

Can you remember who this was an important symbol for?

Explain that today we are going to be finding out about how Hindu brothers and sisters show their love for each other at a festival.

STEP 2: Show the children some examples of different Rakhis.* Ask:

What can you see?

What colours or patterns or material do you notice?

Who do you think these might be for?

Explain that Rakhis are given by sisters to their brothers at the festival of Raksha Bandhan.

STEP 3: Read a story together about Raksha Bandhan (a good text that links with being eco minded is Lilu's Rakhi by Devika Joglekar or a story about the festival- Rani celebrates Raksha Bandhan by Rakhi Singh). Talk as a class about this festival being a time when brothers and sisters show their love for one another and share their intention for caring for each other.

*Exploring Hindu Dharma which is available to NATRE members has a section on Raksha Bandhan and Rakhis

Focus Group:

Give the pupils strips of paper and encourage them to decorate these to make a Rakhi for a friend.
What will they promise them when the band is made into a bracelet?
Who do they want to care for?

Independent Group:

Show the pupils a range of different Rakhis and encourage them to investigate them, saying what they notice. The pupils might like to draw the symbols and murtis that they see.

Learning Outcomes

- Share and record occasions when things have happened in their lives that made them feel special
- Retell religious stories making connections with personal experiences

- Retell religious stories making connections with personal experiences

- Recall simply what happens at a traditional Christian infant baptism and dedication
- Recall simply what happens when a baby is welcomes into a religion other than Christianity

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