

Growing in RE

Teaching RE in Special Schools

by Anne Krisman

for RE Today Services



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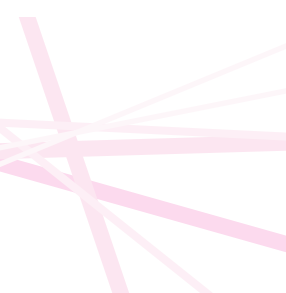
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What are the legal requirements for RE in the special school?

RE is a statutory part of the basic curriculum in all maintained schools. It is taught according to a **locally agreed syllabus** in England and Wales, according to the **Religious and Moral Education Guidelines** (1992) in Scotland, and according to the Revised Core Syllabus in Northern Ireland. (See *A Teacher's Handbook of Religious Education*, 3rd edition, edited by Rosemary Rivett, RE Today Services, 2007).

In special schools the legal requirement to provide Religious Education is varied by section 71(7) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998: special schools should provide RE 'so far as is practicable', with all children taking part unless withdrawn by their parents.

It is also good practice for special schools to:

- take into account the needs of their pupils when planning the RE curriculum;
- adapt the RE curriculum to suit the needs of their pupils by, for example:
 - choosing content from the age group below the actual age of the learners;
 - selecting aspects that connect with the lives and experiences of learners with special needs, appropriate to their abilities and understanding;
 - ensuring sensory learning strategies are implemented rather than discussion or written tasks.

A secondary special school took the question 'How and why do Hindus celebrate Diwali?' which appears in their Agreed Syllabus in Year 3.

Pupils in Year 7 with more complex needs, while listening to Hindu devotional music, touched red glittery material. They saw authentic pictures of the goddess Lakshmi and pointed to her red sari. They then collaged red paper onto a picture of her and made her look special by adding gold sequins and glitter.



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Why is RE so important for children with special needs?

RE connects with the lives of children.

- RE can help children **reflect on issues in their own lives** and **show how others have faced life challenges**. This is especially appropriate to those who have experienced struggle, bereavement or difficult experiences.
- RE can offer times of **peace, reflection and calm**.
- RE offers **colourful sensory experiences**. Religious practice for believers is full of colourful sensory experiences: the sound of a call to prayer, the taste of matza, the touch of tefillin, the smell of incense, the sight of a murti. For pupils who experience the world so strongly through their senses, the subject speaks to them in a direct way.
- RE offers children an opportunity to **share meaningful experiences and beliefs**. Many pupils with special needs are instinctive individuals who may have deep spiritual insights and experiential moments that are at odds with other areas of understanding. Children with a faith may also have a pride and openness in sharing elements of their own religion with others and a recognition and connection with home beliefs that links some elements of their lives together.

A pupil with severe learning difficulties experienced wearing a tallit during celebrations for Jewish New Year. He also took a 'soft Torah' and put it underneath the tallit and wrapped himself snugly around, closing his eyes and enjoying its warmth and comfort.



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Can RE be too hard for children with special needs?

A common concern is that children will get 'mixed up' by learning about different religions, and that RE is too complex with many different beliefs, specialist language and challenging concepts. In reality, for many children with special needs, these barriers do not exist. They have a freer engagement with the overarching values and spirituality that the world religions share. A girl who said that Guru Nanak lived 'thousands of years ago' but who could talk about how he loved and cared for everyone, just as her support assistants cared for the class, was close to the heart of Sikhism.

The difficulties children face may also become strengths, for example:

- Pupils' **slow progress**, with staff valuing each small step of achievement, may lead some children to reflection on meaning and purpose of life. One girl once said: 'I might not be able to read but at least I know how to be kind to people.'
- **A dependence on others for help** may lead to an understanding of what God means to believers.
- **A fascination with watching others** may lead to an interest in what believers do and why they do it. A Sikh boy who formerly wore a turban but cut his hair was the centre of attention of many pupils in one special school, as was a Muslim boy who, because of his medication, did not fast during Ramadan. A girl who daily carried two toothbrushes to school, as her special objects, treated them with the reverence accorded to religious artefacts, placing them on a high shelf when she took part in dance activities.

These larger concepts go beyond 'learning about religion' and are more to do with affinity, the 'analogous experience' of the Warwick RE Project (*Religious Education: An Interpretative Approach* by Robert Jackson, Hodder and Stoughton, 1997) and the effect a religion has on people. To develop effective RE with pupils with special needs, it is important to find those points of connection between the individual and wider religious behaviour.

The ritualised movements and fixations of some pupils may find a reflection within the behaviour of religious believers. An autistic pupil, for example, was very excited when he saw how Jewish women bless the Shabbat candles, as it was close to his own ritualised hand movements.



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What role is there for spiritual development?

Teachers should be aware that some pupils' progress shows spiritual insights and knowledge and understanding which exceeds expectations based on performance in other curriculum areas. Work for such pupils needs to enable their spiritual growth and depth of knowledge and understanding to develop appropriately.

Isle of Wight Agreed Syllabus for RE (2001)

Some have tried to define the essence of a spiritually developed person. A definition which is found in a variety of RE Today publications is: 'someone who is self-knowing, reflective, loving, striving and sensitive'.

For pupils with special needs, we might think of the way in which they:

- respond instinctively and openly to moments of awe and wonder;
- seem to inspire love towards those around them;
- can create something beautiful that appears to be beyond their own perceived ability.

A group of Year 9 pupils with speech and communication difficulties looked at statues of the Buddha, sculpted their own models of him in clay, and then painted them gold. The results were all remarkable and uplifting as each child seemed to have conveyed the essence of the Buddha in a simple but powerful way.



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In a Year 11 class the boys gathered around Jordy, who had just had a shave. They touched his chin with admiration and one boy said, 'Look, a new Jordy.' This moving moment said something about transformation in our lives, combined with a sense of value for a loved individual.

Spirituality happens both within and beyond RE lessons and can be seen in moments that seem to encapsulate something about life.

There should be a way in which spirituality and the essence of religious traditions can be melded. In RE within the special school, we are aiming to create RE that:

- links with the pupils' developing selves, their unique personalities, and points of connection with the world outside them;
- uses the sensory elements of faiths to engage pupils and develop their understanding of religion as something special to people;
- is powerful, not watered down, and gives a insight into the world of religion and human experience;
- offers opportunities within an RE context to develop communication, a sense of self and a sense of community.

A class teacher of children with autism and complex needs created a class 'shrine' during Divali time, with pictures of Lakshmi, Ganesha, Rama and Sita on glittery red fabric, and flowers and divas the children had made out of clay. One Hindu boy in the class was seen to put his hands together in prayer when he saw the pictures of Ganesha. The Hindu area not only provided a stimulating place for all pupils, but also helped a pupil to make a link with his home culture.



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How do I plan RE around the needs of my pupils?

An issue in planning RE within the special school is how to create meaningful activities that develop the child but which also give genuine access to the world of religion and human experience.

Here are two possible approaches.

A micro approach

This approach can be seen in guidelines developed to support the Somerset and North Somerset Agreed Syllabus, *Awareness Mystery and Value* (2004). For the key question 'What is it like to be a Jew?' and the learning opportunity 'to learn about some of the practices associated with belonging to a Jewish group or community', the following clear breakdown of activities is given to link with P levels 4–8. Explicit religious links come in at P6. The Jewish clothing specified is the tallit, kippah, tzitzit and tefillin.

<p>P4</p> <p>Try clothing on (if appropriate) (AT1). Talk about special clothes they wear and when (AT2).</p>	<p>P5</p> <p>Recognise and acknowledge when clothes are special (AT1). Respond to simple questions about clothes and why they might be special (AT1). Talk about their special clothes (AT2).</p>	<p>P6</p> <p>Matching clothing to different people (AT1). Look at a picture of a Jewish person, identify what special clothes they are wearing (AT1). Draw/talk about their own special clothes (AT2).</p>
<p>P7</p> <p>Stick pictures of Jewish clothing on appropriate parts of body outline (AT1). Draw their own special clothes (AT2).</p>	<p>P8</p> <p>Draw pictures of Jewish clothing. Why is it special to a Jew (AT1)? How would a Jewish person feel putting the clothing on (AT1)? (Could draw/choose faces, to show). Write sentence about when they wear special clothing (AT2).</p>	

Although the unit gives access to pupils, is child friendly and explores 'specialness', important elements have to be missed out because of the small, zoomed-in focus. The whole powerful area of prayer, for example, does not become part of this unit for all pupils and therefore religious clothing may not be seen in a genuine context.

Zoom out and see the larger picture

This approach looks at bigger concepts in RE which link with pupils' experiences and offer powerful RE experiences. It can be seen in one of the EQUALS RE units for 11–14 year olds in special schools. In this unit on 'What can a Humanist teach us?' one of the key questions focuses on happiness and what makes us happy. It links with the important idea that Humanists are happy without God in their lives.

- Pupils are asked to respond to the Humanist symbol – the Happy Human – and see if they can discover it in a picture of a stained-glass church window in Muncie, Indiana, USA, that shows symbols of different faiths and beliefs.
- Where appropriate, they can stretch out and jump into the shape of the Humanist symbol and create their own stained-glass window using tissue paper.
- There are opportunities to choose their own PECS pictures of what makes them happy, or photographs of them laughing or smiling.

Pupils will therefore have responded to a symbol, shared their own experiences and linked into a very important 'macro' question – what is happiness and how do we show it?



Children's 'stained-glass' window: 'Happy Human' © REToday

Exemplar units

Two examples of ways of approaching RE in the special school are provided here. In both, 'big ideas' are used which mean that pupils are able to enter into RE in a meaningful and powerful way.

Shabbat (Judaism)

**I wish I could be Shabbat,
I would be so calm and
peaceful.**

A sixth-form pupil

The Jewish celebration of Shabbat is often explored with 5–7 year olds. Shabbat is focused on as a special day with important rules and as a day of rest. The Friday-night Shabbat meal is seen as central and a time when families come together. Some Agreed Syllabuses mention the Havdalah ceremony that concludes Shabbat, and may include it in exploring how special days are ended or in the context of ritual objects. However, it can be less usual to do this with pupils with special needs.

In the following exemplar unit (pages 11–12), pupils participate in welcoming Shabbat into the room, using the Jewish idea of 'do and you will understand', which links well with learning in the special school. It is through action that deeper insight into the meanings behind rituals is encountered. The idea of welcoming Shabbat (in the mystical tradition, as a bride) links with the way in which many pupils respond to visitors to their classroom, with pleasure taken in greeting new people and waving them out of the door when they leave. The repetitive action of kindling the Shabbat lights connects with some pupils' ritualised comfort movements.

The main idea behind the unit's approach is to focus on the more mystical elements of Shabbat, which are at the core of Orthodox believers' responses to the celebration. These have a resonance with pupils within the special school, whose experiences are rooted in the sensory. The Havdalah ceremony, with its mystical features, has as its essence the concept of 'separation', a concept that is deep in the Jewish experience.

Impermanence and change (Buddhism)

Within Agreed Syllabuses, it is less common for Buddhism to be specified to be taught to 5–11 year olds. The London Borough of Greenwich has incorporated Buddhism into its Agreed Syllabus, for this age group, including the life and stories of the Buddha, the meaning of mudra hand positions, and the idea that ‘all things change’.

WOW!

**A pupil who rarely speaks
responding to a water-lily opening**

Out of these, the idea of change and impermanence is one that will connect well with pupils with special needs. The acceptance among pupils when a classmate is having a bad day, or watching staff deal with the changing moods and emotions of pupils, enables them to enter into some of the important concepts in Buddhism. In one special school, children who could add one onto numbers were given a certificate and made part of the ‘Plus One Club’. This accepted breaking-down of progress into very small steps of learning links with the Buddhist idea of *anicca* – that all is changing all the time. Equally, the distress that some children experience when change happens – for example, when a wastepaper basket is moved or a new support assistant works with the class – reflects the Buddhist idea that suffering (*dukkha*) comes from not accepting change.

In the following exemplar unit (pages 13–14), the peace and tranquillity of Buddhism is a key theme. A special school can be noisy and busy. The water-lily activity is a remarkable activity for reflection and encouraging a class of individuals to focus inwards and outwards. The lilies themselves often get waterlogged and smudged and this too brings pupils into a connection with Buddhist thinking.

Shabbat

What does Shabbat mean to Jewish people?

Special needs groups: children with more complex needs

About this unit

Many schemes of work on Judaism concentrate on the family dimension of Shabbat and the sharing of a Friday-night meal. However, the more mystical elements of Shabbat may communicate more strongly to pupils with complex needs.

In this tradition, Shabbat is described as a bride or queen coming into the home. The Talmudic song *Lecha Dodi*, sung on Friday night, says: 'Come my beloved, come and greet the Sabbath bride'. The Havdalah ceremony enables pupils to experience through their senses how Jewish people end Shabbat, and is a practical way of saying goodbye to the activity and starting something new.

RE objectives

- To experience, through the senses, some aspects of the spiritual meaning of Shabbat.
- To experience some of the joy, peacefulness and calm that Jewish people feel on Shabbat.
- To touch and respond to some of the special objects connected with Shabbat.
- To experience the ending of the Shabbat activity, as the Havdalah (completion) ceremony ends Shabbat for Jewish people.

Skill development

The activities in this unit will help develop the skill of how to treat important religious objects. They will also help develop the use of appropriate behaviour at special times and will encourage communication.

Expectations

Using the 8-level P scale, pupils working at level 3ii, for example, will be able to:

- indicate that Shabbat has arrived by greeting staff and pupils by shaking hands or other means of communication;
- engage with the Havdalah activity and show interest in what is happening;
- show interest in touching and exploring the Shabbat objects for a more extended period.

Resources needed

- A piece of floaty white silk, lace or cotton material.
- Where appropriate, two candles.
- A selection of Jewish liturgical music/peaceful music. Dusters for cleaning the room.
- Where appropriate, special Jewish objects such as a kippah, two candlesticks, a challah cover, a challah, a kiddush cup.
- A Havdalah set, i.e. a spice box and Havdalah plaited candle, would be ideal, but some cloves or something spicy to smell would serve the purpose.
- Red fruit juice can be used to symbolise wine.

Also

- Jewish Klezmer music could create a strong contrast with the liturgical music played during the peaceful part of the lesson.
- The movements for blessing the Shabbat candles after they are lit could be incorporated into this activity. The mother, with her head covered with a scarf, draws the light towards her three times, before closing her eyes and saying the blessing. www.myjewishlearning.com/daily_life/Shabbat/Overview_Shabbat_at_Home/nerot.htm
- A song that includes the Shabbat blessings and a fun chorus – *We Sing Shabbat, We Sing Shalom* by Peter and Ellen Allard – can be downloaded from www.torahtots.com
- **Lecha Dodi can be heard on** www.headcoverings-by-devorah.com/LkhahDodi.html

For the teacher

- 1 **The teacher and support assistants announce that Shabbat is coming.** Everyone prepares the classroom for a special visitor, dusting and sweeping. Lively music will help create a busy atmosphere.
- 2 **Shabbat is here!** Make the room darker. Play Jewish liturgical music. Where appropriate, burn a rose scent, or bring fresh flowers into the room. Pupils touch and are covered with the white material. Where appropriate, they can try coming into the room as the Shabbat bride, covered with the white material, while others clap, cheer or shake things to welcome them.
- 3 **Pupils touch the Shabbat special objects.** They can match the real objects, such as the challah, kiddush cup and Shabbat candles, with pictures of them that are provided.
- 4 **Saying goodbye to Shabbat – the Havdalah ceremony:** Pupils smell the box of cloves or spices, and the teacher pours red fruit juice into a cup so that it runs over into a saucer. The teacher lights the Havdalah candle, where appropriate, and extinguishes it in the fruit juice in the saucer.

Everyone shakes hands and wishes everyone a good week – the Hebrew ‘shavua tov’ could be used. The special white material and all the other special Shabbat objects are packed away. The room is made very light again and another activity begins, to indicate that Shabbat is over and the rest of the week has begun.

For information

The theologian Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907–1972) called Shabbat ‘a palace in time’.

- **Shabbat is a day of peace and rest, set aside from other days of the week.** Jewish people believe that when God made the world, he rested on the seventh day: ‘And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because on it God ceased from all the work of creation that He had done’ (Genesis 2:3).
- **Shabbat is celebrated each week from sundown on Friday night until after nightfall on Saturday evening,** traditionally when three stars are seen in the sky. The two Shabbat candles are lit and families share a meal together. Nowadays the beginning and ending times of Shabbat are printed in Jewish calendars, newspapers and diaries.
- **Jewish people are commanded to both observe and remember Shabbat,** as it is considered the central festival. Very observant Jews will try to keep all the rules that link with prohibition of work, which include not lighting a fire, not writing two or more letters or tearing. Orthodox Jews walk to synagogue on this day, instead of using a car. Reform Jews attend synagogue and carry out activities that enhance the spirit of Shabbat.

Teacher’s comments

- The pupils responded well to the many sensory opportunities in these activities. One girl chose to wear a white lace curtain. Some were very excited to see the juice pouring over the cup.
- More-able groups responded well to hearing the Shabbat blessing and the repetitive ritual of ‘kindling the lights’ appealed to the autistic pupils in the class.
- Some of my pupils enjoy waving goodbye and seeing visitors out of the door, so this activity fitted into their own experience.

Impermanence and change

What do impermanence and change mean to Buddhists?

Special needs groups: children with general learning difficulties

About this unit

Our pupils with special needs, because of their life experiences, can be seen as close to concepts found in Buddhism. The linked ideas of impermanence (nothing lasts for ever) and change (all is changing, all the time) are at the core of Buddhism. Pupils who may have short-term memory difficulties and who live in the moment could be seen to connect with Buddhist teachings of valuing the here-and-now. Staff who work with children with special needs are aware of changes in their behaviour as the day progresses, or indeed, of small steps of progress that reveal themselves when they look back over a year. Sickness and death is also a sad reality that has to be faced within many special schools.

RE objectives

- To experience some quiet contemplation, or contemplative wisdom, while looking at something beautiful.
- To help create an area of peace and tranquillity for all the class to share.
- To begin to understand the Buddhist idea that nothing lasts for ever by exploring some examples, through the senses.
- To begin to understand Buddhist ideas about change by exploring some examples, through the senses.

Skill development

The activities in this unit will help develop the skills of concentration and reflection. The skills of working together and communication will also be developed.

Expectations

Using the 8-level P scale, pupils working at level 5, for example, will be able to:

- say simply how they have changed over the years, after looking at baby pictures or old school photographs;
- respond to a reflective activity, such as the floating water-lily, and say how it made them feel;
- take part in a small-group activity of making a peaceful area for all to share.

Resources needed

- A statue or poster of the Buddha would help to put the work into context.
- A display that includes a selection of natural objects, a bowl of water, flowers and candles, where appropriate, will add to the pupils' understanding.
- A plastic tank or paddling pool is also useful for the water-lily activity.
- A collection of material, pot-pourri, silk petals, feathers, cushions plus screens could be gathered together to create a peaceful zone.
- A Tibetan singing bowl (which can be purchased from artefacts catalogues) is popular with pupils and helps develop concentration as they listen for the sound to end.
- For an example of how to make a water-lily see www.lcpuk.co.uk/downloads/190288731x.pdf

Also

- The BBC's RE Curriculum Bites 2 episode A Place of My Own shows 11–14 year olds with special needs making a peaceful place in the classroom.
- Buddhist music and sounds can be downloaded from www.buddhanet.net/audio-library.htm including songs for young children.

For the teacher

- 1 **Children look at and touch a statue of the Buddha**, paying attention to the hand position (mudra), the closed eyes and peaceful face. Listening to quiet music, they draw a picture of the Buddha.
- 2 **The class goes on a walk around the school** with the teacher and support assistant in a search for peaceful places. Gentle and peaceful behaviour is encouraged during the walk. If it helps, children can carry a picture of the Buddha's face, the picture they have drawn, or a flower, as a reminder to be peaceful and to link these two activities. Each child can then pose for a picture in a place that feels peaceful to them, with the teacher stressing the importance of peaceful eyes, peaceful hands and peaceful sitting.
- 3 **The class makes a special quiet place** where they can put the Buddha and where children in the class can sit if they want to be peaceful. Children are given a range of interesting material, pot-pourri and cushions to use for this activity. To emphasise the concept of change and impermanence, the structure can be changed each week.
- 4 **Children colour the back of a water-lily template with wax crayon.** (You can find a template on www.lcpuk.co.uk/downloads/190288731x.pdg) A picture of the child's face could be placed in the middle of the lily. More-able pupils could draw what is special to them in their lives. The lilies are cut out and their petals folded. While listening to Buddhist music, children can quietly watch as the lilies are put into the water tank and the petals slowly open.
- 5 **Children look at pictures of themselves when they were younger pupils in the school** or, where appropriate, when they were babies. They can also look at pictures of baby and adult animals and see how they have changed. Children are each given a fresh flower to look at and to smell and touch. The flowers are labelled with their names. Children return to look at their flowers to see how they have changed. When the flowers have died, the class can choose a natural place to scatter them.

For information

- **Buddhism is a religion that began in North-West India.** It is based on the teachings of Siddhattha Gotama, born about 580 BCE, who became known as The Buddha (the one who is awake). After his enlightenment, he realised the truth about the world and how we create suffering – *dukkha* – by wanting too much.
- **Some of the ideas in these lessons link with the Buddhist concept of *anicca*** – that everything in life is changing all the time.
- **The work also alludes to some of the qualities in the Noble Eightfold Path.** This shapes how Buddhists lead their lives. For example, the water-lily activity will touch on Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration.
- **The fresh-flower activity encourages children to accept, as the Buddha did, that things do not stay the same.** We must try not to be sad if flowers go brown and die. This is the way the world is.

Teacher's comments

- The children were really focused during the water-lily activity – I had never seen them so quiet or concentrating so intensely!
- The class responded very well to making the peaceful area and wanted to sit in it after they made it.
- The places the children chose as being peaceful surprised me and made me think of where I would go to in the school if I wanted peace and quiet.

How do I decide what to teach in RE?

For teachers without Agreed Syllabus guidelines for children with special needs

It can be challenging to shape RE. The content of each religion can be overwhelming and it is difficult to know what direction to take. Although it is common to take a festival approach to faiths, this will not work with every religion, and indeed, it can lead to an expectation that this is what all religion is about.

A way forward is to explore the sensory and mystical elements of religion, which will lead pupils into the 'burning core', but will connect too with their own sensory responses to the world. Here are some thoughts, with activities that have worked within a special school, which will help pupils to understand deeper concepts. The idea is that a range of varied, stimulating activities based on a powerful overarching concept will web together into a growing understanding of RE.

Religion	Overarching concept	Practical activities
Judaism	<p>Shabbat as a 'palace in time'</p> <p>(Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, 1907–1972) For the Jewish person, Shabbat is an oasis of peace and a time of delight.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose white from a selection of colours, using PECS where appropriate. • Create a new, fresh feeling to the room by tidying together. • Dress as the Shabbat bride and welcome her. • Smell spices to symbolise the end of Shabbat. • Pour grape juice into a cup and let it overflow, to mark the end of the week.
Islam	<p>Remembrance of God's name (<i>dhikr</i>)</p> <p>In Sufi terms, repetition of God's name is a way of stepping out of this world to become closer to God.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write their own name or make a mark in paint on a folded piece of paper and create a reflection. • Touch and rub Islamic plaques that have raised Arabic letters. • Use gold paint to decorate a word that is special in their lives. • Listen to Arabic devotional music – <i>nasheeds</i>. • Stick the name 'Allah' onto paper plates and decorate with special gold paper.
Hinduism	<p>Aum</p> <p>For the Hindu, 'aum' is a sacred word, first heard when the world was created.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record sounds that the class makes and identify who is making what sound. • Listen to the Gayatri Mantra and add musical effects with an ocean drum and shakers. • Trace the aum symbol and decorate with sequins, glitter and pictures of Hindu people. • Choose a favourite aum from a selection from www.himalayanacademy.com • Film or take photographs of the natural world outside and look at this with <i>aarti</i> or other devotional music playing.

<p>Buddhism</p>	<p>Change and impermanence</p> <p><i>Anicca</i> (impermanence) is a central teaching in Buddhism.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry a statue of the Buddha around the school and find peaceful places to photograph him. • Float water-lilies (see page 14). • Make a collection of flowers, leaves and natural objects and see how they change over a few weeks. • Recognise themselves from photographs, or look at baby pictures where appropriate. • Respond to a change in the classroom with acceptance.
<p>Sikhism</p>	<p>Loving all</p> <p>The devotional and loving attitude towards God (<i>bhakti</i>) shown by Guru Nanak is also reflected in his love for humanity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to Sikh kirtan (sacred hymns from the Guru Granth Sahib) while looking at a slideshow of images of the Gurus. • Make a Guru Nanak garland out of tinsel with a picture of him. • Take photographs of people showing kindness and love around the school. • Stick the Ik Onkar symbol onto a picture of Guru Nanak that has been cut up, reassembled, stuck down and coloured. • Collage together lots of pictures of people's faces around the face of Guru Nanak.
<p>Christianity</p>	<p>Light of the world</p> <p>Jesus said, during the Sermon on the Mount, 'You are the light of the world' (Matthew 5:13–14) and this reflects the commitment and love of those who work with pupils with special needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crayon white onto a piece of paper, and then black on top. Scratch into the crayon to reveal the white. • Take a picture of a baby or Jesus, where appropriate, and use yellow felt-tips and glitter to make the picture look very special. • Stick card together to make a cross and take photographs of it in the sunshine. • Draw round each other, with support, using the light of the whiteboard projector, and cut out a silhouette using black paper. Choose from a selection of backgrounds, e.g. a snowy scene or a beach, and stick on the silhouette. • Listen and move to Christian choral music, e.g. Vivaldi's <i>Gloria</i>.
<p>Jainism</p>	<p>Non-violence (<i>ahimsa</i>)</p> <p>Ahimsa is the cornerstone of Jain doctrine and leads to protecting all life – even not eating rooted vegetables or breathing in insects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Jain <i>ahimsa</i> symbol – a hand with a wheel on the palm – as a sign to stop any violent behaviour in the class. • Trace round a hand, with support, then add a cut-out wheel inside and decorate. • From a number of toy farm animals and other objects, sort out which ones are animals. • Go for a Jain walk, carefully brushing away insects on the ground with a paintbrush. • Search on the internet, with support, for pictures of either animals, insects, birds, flowers or vegetables. Cut them out and place them in a special decorated box to keep them safe.
<p>Baha'i</p>	<p>The Gate</p> <p>For Baha'is, the Báb (meaning 'Gate') was a messenger who prepared humanity for the coming of Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the religion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk around the school, where appropriate, and take photographs of gates. • Make a folded card with a gate on the front and a picture special to them hidden inside. • Make a ring out of gold paper with the Baha'i ringstone symbol. • Deliver a message to a member of staff. • Create a peace zone in the classroom, with a white cloth covering the table, flowers and quiet music.

Suggested reading

Michael Grimmitt, Julie Grove, John M Hull and Louise Tellam **A Gift to the Child ... Revisited: Series 2**, , Articles of Faith, 2006.

Liz O'Brien, **Connecting with RE**, Church House Publishing, 2002, ISBN 978-0-7151-4984-3.

Angela Wood, Jane Oxley, Lesley Prior and Pauline Sims, **Homing In: A Practical Resource for Religious Education**, Trentham Books, 1998, ISBN 978-0-948080-87-6.

Dilwyn Hunt, **Meeting SEN in the Curriculum – Religious Education**, David Fulton, 2005, ISBN 978-1-843121-67-1.

Erica Brown, **Religious Education for All**, David Fulton, 1996, ISBN 978-1-853463-92-1

Anne Krisman, 'Building Up to the Sky', *REsource*, 21:2 (1998), 6–9.

Anne Krisman, 'The Moving Image: Exploring the Spirit through Digital Video', *REsource*, 29:1 (2006), 14–16.

Abraham Joshua Heschel, **The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man**, Shambala, 2003, ISBN 978-1-590300-82-4.

EQUALS, PO Box 107, North Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE30 2YG, www.equals.co.uk. EQUALS is an educational charity committed to improving the lives of children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities through supporting high quality education. Publications include material relevant for special needs and RE.

QCA: Secondary Curriculum (England): <http://curriculum.qca.org.uk>

QCA: RE – Responding to Pupils' Needs: http://qca.org.uk/qca_1939.aspx

Inclusion: supporting individual learning needs: <http://inclusion.ngfl.gov.uk>

Welsh Assembly Government (Wales):

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/?lang=en>

Growing in RE

We make shapes, etch out, tear
We shout, are quiet, live in new worlds
Together we grow, we glow
We throw
Moments of sparks
Glitter on the floor
We close the door
Till next week
Bye

Anne Krisman