Worldview metaphors: classroom ideas

Consider the best metaphors for making sense of worldviews. Explore these suggestions with your students and consider how helpful they are.

**Worldviews as lenses** – like contact lenses or glasses. We put them on and look through them at the world. They shape what we see and how we see it. They help us to see clearly.

One weakness of this idea is that it implies that we don’t already have a worldview before we put on the glasses – but we do! Perhaps using eyes as a metaphor would address that.

One strength is that we can imagine trying on someone else’s glasses – to see what things are like from within their worldview, to help us understand it (and them) better.

**Worldviews as a mixing desk.** A musician mixes different sounds at different levels to create a whole, bringing some instruments forward and moving others back, to highlight what is most important at the time. So, we have a wide range of beliefs, values, desires, hopes, fears, feelings and intentions, and they vary at different times and in different contexts.

For example, some questions about beliefs (about God, say) may never occur to students until you ask about them in RE lessons! When you face a challenge in life, particular values may become more important – such as care, selflessness and mindfulness during a pandemic lockdown; justice, equality and courage during a climate crisis or responding to issues raised by protests about inequality (e.g. Black Lives Matter). When someone you know is very ill, it may bring ideas of God and prayer to the fore.

What other metaphors are helpful ways of understanding worldviews?

Use Resource 1.2B with students, to explore the metaphor of worldviews as a mixing desk in more depth. It gives students a chance to identify what elements of a worldview are more important in different situations.