

Unit: Asking Difficult Questions: Are miracles evidence of God?

Key areas of enquiry: A + E

This is a compulsory unit.

About this unit

This unit is intended for Year 7/8. This unit acts as preparation for units in year 9 and at GCSE level that consider such Ultimate questions as Does God Exist?

In this unit learners will learn that miracles are a form of religious experience and may be used by believers to validate their faith. Learners will be given an opportunity to consider what a miracle is including its purpose and function. Learners will focus on miracles within Christianity and in particular the miracles of Jesus. Learners will consider the implications of these miracle stories and will test their reliability. Learners will then go on to consider how a belief in the miraculous might affect the lives of believers (belief and practice). Learners will consider why people choose to believe in the miraculous in a scientific world.

Prior learning	Technical Vocabulary	Resources
<p>It would be helpful if:</p> <p>Learners are familiar with Christian beliefs about the Bible, God and the person of Jesus. It is also helpful if pupils are familiar with evaluation, giving their opinions and supporting them with reasons/evidence.</p>	<p>In this unit children will have an opportunity to use words and phrases related to:-</p> <p>miracle miraculous faith synchronicity supernatural natural law/order exorcism pilgrimage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bibles/extract sheets • News paper articles (teacher or pupils to collect) • Miracle Maker video (clip of Mad Mary & Paralysed Man) • Optical illusion magic eye PowerPoint • Hume Worksheet <p>Useful Text books <u>Jesus for Today</u>, Chris Wright, OUP <u>The Christian Experience</u>, JF Aylett, Hodder & Stoughton <u>This is RE 2!</u>, C Large, John Murray <u>Believing and Experiencing</u>, G Craigie, Hodder Murray <u>KS3 Curriculum Bites</u>: multi storey miracle, also three cartoon clips of Jesus' miracles. <u>Believe it or not</u>: Lourdes</p> <p>Recommended Websites www.lourdes-france.com www.mcn.org/1/miracles</p>

Skills	Attitudes
Investigation – I can search for answer Interpretation - I can interpret actions and events	Respect for all in Religious Education including all pupils Appreciation and wonder

Expectations At the end of this unit	
<i>Core (Level 4 & 5):</i>	<p>level 4 Learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> understand different interpretations of miraculous events (e.g. feeding the five thousand, resurrection of Jesus, virgin birth). <input type="checkbox"/> ask and respond to a range of questions in relation to their own and other people's beliefs about the miraculous recognising that responses may vary, including the response of those belonging to faith communities (e.g. do miracles happen? What is a miracle?). <p>Level 5 Learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> explain how belief in the miraculous may have an impact on the lives of believers (e.g. pilgrimage to Lourdes, Christian healing, Jackie Pullinger). <input type="checkbox"/> explore key questions in relation to the miraculous and examine how and why belief affects behaviour (e.g. response to the Turin Shroud, need for healing, search for God, search for personal meaning).
<i>Reinforcement (Level 3):</i>	<p>Learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> demonstrate (simple) knowledge of Christian belief in the miraculous (e.g. one of Jesus' miracles, modern day healing). <input type="checkbox"/> talk about their own views and ideas on the miraculous and listen to the views and ideas of others, including those belonging to a faith community.
<i>Enrichment (Level 6):</i>	<p>Learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> offer critical analysis of key religious beliefs connected with the miraculous. <input type="checkbox"/> evaluate a range of religious and secular responses to questions about the miraculous, offering their own reasoned answers and ideas.

Learning Objectives	Possible Teaching Activities (Select from)	Learning outcomes	Contribution to other Curriculum Areas/ other information
<p>Learners should have the opportunity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore what a miracle is • learn about examples of miracles • understand that it is difficult to provide proof of miracles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>How can we define a miracle?</u> Use magic eye pictures to illustrate differences in interpretation and faith a PowerPoint presentation of some examples of magic eye pictures is included on the scheme of work CD Rom. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thought shower 'miracle' – discuss ideas • Use secular examples of use of 'miracle' e.g. in song lyrics • Create a card sort activity 'What is a Miracle?' to enable learners to realise the differences between a miraculous event and an amazing one (statements on cards e.g. someone coming back from the dead, birth of a baby) – paired activity leading to group and then class discussion. • Use a text e.g. <u>Jesus for Today</u> as a basis for discussion, to stretch G&T pupils, or as an aid for less confident thinkers. • <u>What is a miracle?</u> • Pupils could look at examples of miracles/unusual events in news papers and discuss whether or not they are miraculous giving reasons. • Pupils to work in groups/pairs to define 'miracle'. "A miraculous event is one that..." • Research (news papers, internet, T.V. shows, personal experience) an example of a modern miracle. Say why it is a miracle and not just an amazing event. What evidence is there that this event 	<p>Learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforcement give examples of miracles show simple understanding that people see events in different ways • Core show understanding that people see events in different ways define a miracle from a faith community view • Enrichment explain that it is difficulties in providing evidence for miracles 	<p><u>Note</u> : Students on the Asbergers continuum may have difficulties accessing magic pictures</p> <p><u>Language for Learning</u> Writing definition of 'miracle' using a basic sentence structure Selecting information (card sort, newspapers) <u>Key Words</u> miracle, miraculous, proof, evidence, natural law <u>ICT</u> Research <u>Science</u> Proof & evidence</p> <p><u>Skills</u> Investigation I can discover criteria Interpretation I can interpret events</p> <p><u>Attitudes</u> Appreciation and wonder developing imagination and curiosity</p>

	happened? Can you prove that it did/did not?		appreciating the sense of wonder at the world in which they live
<p>Learners should have the opportunity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> discover that it is difficult to provide proof of miracles know and understand that miracles can provide proof for religious claims appreciate that the Bible teaches that Jesus performed miracles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Why do people believe in miracles?</u> Use a standpoint exercise or human bar chart activity to explore the different kinds of supernatural things people believe in. Use the results of the above as a basis for discussing why people might choose to believe in these sorts of things gradually bringing the focus in on miracles. A table of events could be made with the reason for believing stated in the next column. Ask learners to look at their examples and decide how easy it would be to prove that this event occurred (a third column?). Learners should be encouraged to give reasons. Use the Hume sheet about the reasons why miracles cannot be proved. Learners could decide which they agree/disagree with (card sort or human bar chart). Record responses in books giving reasons for choice. E.g. I agree with "... " because... Look at an example of one of Jesus' miracles e.g. the paralysed man (Luke 5:17-26) or use the clip from the Miracle Maker video. Learners could give a brief account of the miracle and then consider whether or not the evidence for it is reliable using Hume's statements. <p>Consider some of these key questions</p>	<p>Learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforcement give an example of one of Jesus' miracles give a simple explanation why people believe in miracles (e.g. proof of God, gives hope) Core give an explanation why people believe in miracles (e.g. proof of God, gives hope) give reasons why it is difficult to prove a miracle's authenticity Enrichment begin to explain Christian beliefs about miracles & what they show about the person of Jesus 	<p><u>Language for Learning</u> Use of point, evidence, explain & sentence structure frame <u>Key Words</u> Evidence, proof</p> <p><u>Skills</u> Investigation I can discover criteria Interpretation I can interpret events</p> <p><u>Attitudes</u> <u>Appreciation and wonder</u> developing imagination and curiosity appreciating the sense of wonder at the world in which they live <u>Respect for all</u> developing skills of listening – listening to views of others even when they are different</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Difference would it make to a Christian if the Miracle was real? What difference would it make to a Christian if it wasn't true? • What difference would it make to a non Christian if were true? <p>Research activity - find out about one place of Christian pilgrimage. E.g. Lourdes www.lourdes-france.com Where is it? Why do people go there? What evidence is there that this is a special place?</p>										
<p>Learners should have the opportunity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand that the Bible teaches that Jesus had the power to heal people and control nature • understand that miracles are believed to show God's love & power • appreciate that miracles are used by religions to authenticate claims of divinity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Did Jesus Perform Miracles?</u> Learners should look at a minimum of two different miracles (the Paralyse Man may be used again). Other possibilities include 'Jesus heals a boy with an evil spirit' (Luke 9:37-43), the Calming of the Storm (Luke 8:22-25) & The Feeding of the Five Thousand (Luke 9:10-18). <u>Jesus for Today</u> covers these quite well Look at the selected miracle stories in turn (using the Biblical text and/or Miracle Maker video clip) use question & answer session to assess learners' understanding. Discuss with learners other possible explanations encouraging them to refer back to previous work and modern ideas (e.g. possession = mental illness). Evaluate each miracle using a table: <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Christians think...</td><td>The disciples would think...</td><td>Non believers think...</td><td>I think... because...</td></tr> <tr> <td>because...</td><td>because</td><td>because...</td><td></td></tr> </table> <p>Learners could then use this as the basis of a written</p>	Christians think...	The disciples would think...	Non believers think...	I think... because...	because...	because	because...		<p>Learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforcement show simple knowledge that Jesus performed miracles show simple understanding of what miracles mean to Christians say what they think about miracles • Core show knowledge that Jesus performed miracles show understanding of what miracles mean to Christians say what they think about miracles giving reasons • Enrichment evaluate Biblical accounts of 	<p><u>Language for Learning</u> Use of evaluation table and sentence structure to aid extended writing <u>Key Words</u> Exorcism if relevant</p> <p><u>Skills</u> Investigation I can discover criteria Interpretation I can interpret events</p> <p><u>Attitudes</u> Appreciation and wonder developing imagination and curiosity appreciating the sense of wonder at the world in which they live</p>
Christians think...	The disciples would think...	Non believers think...	I think... because...								
because...	because	because...									

	<p>report, essay or GCSE style question.</p> <p>Learners could use the information gathered to write a news paper style investigation into the miracles – ICT could be used here.</p> <p>Learners could prepare a group presentation on a miracle exploring its claims and importance for believers.</p> <p>Learners could explore different responses to the miracle stories through the use of role play/taking part in a debate as one of the characters.</p>	<p>miracles and show understanding that different people believe different things about miracles</p>	<p>Respect for all developing skills of listening – listening to views of others even when they are different</p>
<p>Learners should have the opportunity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> learn about at least one example of a modern miracle explore how belief in miracles affects the lives of believers (e.g. prayer and/or pilgrimage) know and understand the difference between fact and faith 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Do miracles happen today?</u> Visit www.mcn.org/1/miracles this website contains a collection of 'Modern miracles' draw from all faiths and none. Most are based on newspaper and media reports. Learners to research a modern day miracle (internet, news papers, books). Allow learners to share their research and encourage learners to consider: Is this really a miracle according to my definition? Is there sufficient evidence that this occurred? Is the evidence reliable (including eyewitness testimony)? Why would someone choose to believe in this miracle? Use the learners' research and subsequent discussion as a basis for a class discussion/collation of ideas. Record Learners' responses and encourage the class to critique each one (use a table or writing frame). Give learners time to consider what miracles show about the religion studies (Christianity), God and the person of Jesus. What would a believer say? Learners could perform short role plays using 'freeze 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforcement give an example of one modern miracle say what they think about miracles Core give an example of one modern miracle and say why believers think it is a miracle explain how belief in the miraculous might change how one behaves and/or views the world Enrichment explain why proof is not always necessary for believers (faith vs. fact) 	<p><u>Skills</u></p> <p>Investigation I can discover criteria Interpretation I can interpret events</p> <p><u>Attitudes</u></p> <p>Appreciation and wonder developing imagination and curiosity appreciating the sense of wonder at the world in which they live Respect for all developing skills of listening – listening to views of others even when they are different</p>

	<p>frame' to discuss the believers' experience/beliefs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If pilgrimage is studied pupils could write a diary account from a believer's perspective or a postcard recounting a miracle and what it means to them. 		
	<p>Attainment Target 1</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does the word 'miracle' mean? 2. Describe a miraculous event. 3. How would a Christian explain the event you described for question 2? 4. How would an atheist (someone who does not believe in God) explain the event you described for question 2? 5. Why do many religious people believe in miracles? <p>Attainment Target 2</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Explain your own ideas and opinions about miracles. 7. Why are there so many different opinion and ideas about miracles? <p>Alternative assessment activity is a newspaper article (see sheet).</p>		

Miracles

Your task is to produce a newspaper article about either the Feeding of the 5000 or the paralysed man.

You need to include the following...

1. A Newspaper Name
2. A headline

NB DON'T SPEND TOO MUCH TIME ON 1 AND 2
AS THERE ARE NO MARKS FOR THESE!

3. A brief description of the chosen miracle
4. An interview with an eye-witness
 - a. What did they see?
 - b. What did they think about this?
5. A discussion of whether you believe in miracles or not
 - a. Arguments in favour
 - b. Arguments against
 - c. Your view, reason, justify

Extension task

6. Write a letter from a Believer or an Atheist responding to your article



Levels This is what you may achieve - Good Luck!!

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|-----------|---|
| Level 3 - | I have described some basic ideas and detail and expressed my views. |
| Level 4 - | I have used more detail and explained how people were affected. I have also written about what miracles are. |
| Level 5 - | I have used a lot of detail and explained what happened. I have explained my own views in detail. I have explored alternative views including Christians. |
| Level 6 - | I have explained the reasons for the variety of views, and given examples to back up my opinions. I recognise the effect of beliefs on people's lives. |