

Unit: Does God Exist?

About this unit: This unit is designed for use probably in year 9. It could be used as an introduction to a suitable GCSE course. It aims to develop students thinking skills and aid the development of the ability to produce balanced arguments. Inevitably it will begin in a Christian context but it is expected that the viewpoints of other faiths communities and in particular secular philosophies will feature. It builds on units in year 7/8 that have explored ultimate questions.

Prior learning	Technical Vocabulary	Resources
It would be helpful if Students have: - Looked at evolutionary theories in Science Had spent some time considering Ultimate questions	In this unit children will have an opportunity to use words and phrases related to: - Atheist Agnostic Theist Humanist First Cause Evolution First Cause Big Bang Ontological Teleological	'This is RE 3' Cath Large and Alan Brown: John Murray Questions about God: Developing Secondary RE (RE Today Services) (www.humanism.org) VCR Walking with Cavemen/Dinosaurs etc BBC Robert Kirkwood's 'Looking for Proof of God' 'AQA B Thinking about God and Morality (Heinemann 'Listening to young people' by Lat Blaylock published by RE Today Services. Does God Exist Human Bar Chart sheet

Expectations	
At the end of this unit	
<i>Most children will: (Level 6)</i>	Be able to give an informed account of several theories for the existence or otherwise of God. They can express an opinion using reasoning and examples on the existence or otherwise of God.
<i>Some children will not have made so much progress and will: (Level 4)</i>	Be able to describe and show understanding of several theories for the existence or otherwise of God. They can raise and suggest answers and apply their own ideas to issues connected with the existence or otherwise of God

<p><i>Some children will have progressed further and will:</i></p> <p><i>(Level 7)</i></p>	<p>Be able to show coherent understanding and analyse theories connected with the existence or otherwise of God.</p> <p>They can articulate personal and critical responses to theories connected with the existence or otherwise of God</p>
--	--

Learning Objectives	Possible Teaching Activities	Learning outcomes	Contribution to other Curriculum Areas
<p>Students should: -</p> <p>Explore their own views and those of others on the existence of God.</p> <p>Learn terms such as Atheist, Agnostic, Theist,</p> <p>Understand humanist and other secular philosophies views on the existence of God</p>	<p>Does God Exist? What do you think? What difference would it make if he didn't exist?</p> <p>Use a suitable stimulus to get students thinking. Perhaps an example of a particularly evil event (i.e. The murder of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman or a Media clip that deals with God or a force in the universe. Star Wars!)</p> <p>Many textbooks (Such as This is RE 3 page 44) will contain examples of pupil's views on Does God Exist. Having looked at these do the Human Bar Chart task Does God Exist. Discuss results, possible role play defending their bar chart position.</p> <p>Ask the class to anonymously write a personal statement on their belief/view about the existence of God. This should be kept safe as we will return to it at the end of lesson.</p> <p>Explain the terms Atheist. Agnostic, Theist. Use the anonymous statements from the class and in groups classify their classmates views.</p> <p>Explain and consider Humanist and evolutionary explanations</p>	<p>Students should be able to: -</p> <p>Reflect on their own views on the existence or otherwise of God.</p> <p>Understand, explain and be able to use terms such as Atheist. Agnostic, Theist</p> <p>Raise and suggest answers/use reasoning and examples/analyse arguments on issues connected</p>	<p>Thinking Skills</p> <p>Science</p> <p>Opportunity for Spiritual development</p> <p>Literacy</p>

	<p>for the existence of the universe. Watch a short section from Walking with Dinosaurs or Cavemen or similar. How do we know this is accurate? What evidence do we have? What has been added by the imagination of the Director? Does it matter if extra bits have been added? What is trying to be explained here?</p> <p>Read the creation passage from Genesis. Ask the same questions? How do we know this is accurate? What evidence do we have? What has been added by the imagination of the Author? Does it matter if extra bits have been added? What is trying to be explained here?</p> <p><i>NB Be aware that you are delving into the Creationism v Evolution debate, This can arouse surprisingly strong reactions from parents on both sides of this argument.</i></p> <p>Imagine you had to prove To a Christian, Muslim or Jew that God <u>doesn't</u> exist. What arguments would you use? Process the arguments by putting them in rank order.</p> <p>There is a really fun exercise in Questions about God: Developing Secondary RE (RE Today Services) called 'When the OfGod inspector calls' how would world leaders and religious leaders prepare for inspection? Who would be in serious weaknesses etc?</p> <p>There is a good opportunity to research and explore the beliefs of groups such as Humanists (www.humanism.org)</p> <p>The key focus here is what difference it makes to our behaviour whether or not God exists.</p>	<p>with the existence or otherwise of God</p>	<p>ICT Research Skills</p>
--	--	---	--------------------------------

<p>Students should: -</p> <p>Learn and explore a range of arguments connected with the existence or otherwise of God.</p> <p>Learn terms such as First Cause, Ontological, Teleological,</p> <p>Understand Christian and secular views connected with the existence or otherwise of God.</p>	<p>If God doesn't exist how did we get here? Accident or Design?</p> <p>Look at some aspect of nature or pictures of something complex and intricate i.e. a fingerprint. Pose the question was this is an accident or did it happen by design?</p> <p>How do they think the Universe got here? Discuss answers.</p> <p>What proofs have they for their views?</p> <p>Look at the Humanist view explanation. This is summarised simply on their website (above). A task taking this and improving its presentation might be suitable.</p> <p>Look at a range of design and accident arguments. (First Cause: St Thomas Aquinas, Ontological, Teleological: Paley etc) Despite various other efforts in textbooks Kirkwood's 'Looking for proof of God' remains the clearest. The text is too dense for most classes and the questions often too difficult but the cartoons work well. Often the best simplified guides to this are in the GCSE Revision guides 'AQA B Thinking about God and Morality (Heinemann)' is quite good.</p> <p>Students summarise arguments in less than 100 words. or 'The Sun's Guide to how the universe came to exist.</p>	<p>Students should be able to: -</p> <p>Reflect on their own views on the existence or otherwise of God.</p> <p>Describe/Explain/give an informed account/show coherent understanding of a range of theories and arguments connected with the existence or otherwise of God.</p>	<p>Thinking skills</p> <p>Science</p> <p>Opportunity for spiritual development</p> <p>Literacy</p>
<p>Students should: -</p> <p>Learn and explore a</p>	<p>Why do people believe that God exists?</p> <p>Explain that for most believers these arguments are largely</p>	<p>Students should be able to: -</p>	<p>Opportunity for</p>

<p>range of arguments connected with the existence or otherwise of God.</p> <p>Understand Christian experience connected with the existence or otherwise of God.</p>	<p>irrelevant as they don't base their faith on them, what is more important is personal experience. Listen to people talking about their personal experience of God or whatever. There are various videos that will include this. Alternatively invite some believers in to hot seat them. One good source is 'Listening to young people' by Lat Blaylock published by RE Today Services. Page 12. These quotes can be sorted, evaluated, explained etc.</p> <p>At the end of this a suitable task would be to repeat the Human Bar Chart activity from the start of the unit. Have views changed? Why is this? Encourage some open ended reflective writing on students own views on 'Does God Exist' using their original anonymous statements as a starting point to consider how their thinking has developed over the course of this unit.</p> <p>Also see assessment task.</p>	<p>Reflect on their own views on the existence or otherwise of God.</p> <p>Express an opinion/raise and suggest answers/articulate personal and critical responses to Christian responses to the existence of God.</p>	<p>spiritual development</p> <p>Thinking skills</p> <p>Literacy</p>

Suggested Assessment Task:

GCSE Style 'Essay': using the following or (suitable depending on your GCSE Syllabus)

Draft. Peer assess...rewrite

Science has disproved the existence of God. Discuss.

Suitable quotes giving both viewpoints

I agree/disagree/not sure with the view that science has disproved the existence of God.....

My strongest reason is

One other important reason is.....

I can see that other people might disagree with me particularly because...

.....

The thing that still confuses me is