

Our Nativity mobiles are in the Cathedral until 2 February!

We often hear the question ‘Do people today really understand what Christmas is really about?’ If you visit Rochester Cathedral before 2 February 2016, you will find out that the children in our Church schools all around the Diocese know exactly what Christmas is all about. With a simple plastic hoop, schools from every part of the Diocese have created a set of twelve Nativity mobiles to hang in the Cathedral to remind us all what is most important about Christmas.



For St Barnabas in Tunbridge Wells, their mobile helped them to think more about their Christian values and so, ‘Each image on our mobile reminds us that, as a school, we continue the tradition of making the glory of the Word made flesh known in our

parish and community’.



Explaining their ‘Host of heavenly Angels’, St John’s school in Tunbridge Wells said, ‘At our school, we sing about Jesus’ birth, we act out the story of the Nativity, we dance as we remember the joy the shepherds and the kings must have felt when they were visited by the Angel Gabriel’.



For St John’s Infant School in Chatham, they explain by saying, ‘We realised that every single person on our earth will see the very same stars that the three kings saw no matter where they live or what their beliefs are’.



At St Nicholas Infant School in Strood, making a giant mobile meant that, ‘We thought about the people that were important in the story and decided that the humble shepherds reflected our beliefs about how we should serve God’.

If you get the opportunity to see the Nativity display in the Cathedral and read about how the children have thought about Christmas, remember how much children can continue to teach us. If we think on this, it should come as no surprise to us that Jesus came to as a tiny child to teach us everything that we need to know.



Wateringbury school pupils say this better than I can, ‘Making our mobile (A Starry Night) made us think about Jesus being the light of the world and helping us show the right path in our own lives’.

RESOURCES

National RE Conference



There is a national RE conference at Center Parcs Woburn Forest on Saturday **18 June**. It is sponsored by St. Albans Diocese and Bedfordshire RE

Society and has workshops for all phases run by national RE advisers including Lat Blaylock, Fiona Moss, Dilwyn Hunt, Kathryn Wright, Andy Lewis and Ed Pawson and local teachers Juliet Lyl (from NATRE) and Sarah Payne.

The conference runs from **9.30am to 4.30pm** and there will be RE publications on sale. Afterwards, you can join others in the Center Parcs pool or one of the restaurants, bars or take part in leisure activities. **You can stay on site until 10.30pm!** Alternatively you may wish to stay overnight with a group of friends (to be arranged separately to the conference) or at a local Travel Lodge. There is plenty of parking at Center Parcs, but you can also arrive in Flitwick by train as the Parc is a five-minute taxi ride away.

Workshops include:

- What is a TeachMeet?
- What is the purpose of RE?
- How do I introduce active learning?
- Will I be able to talk to others about the new GCSE?
- How do I use enquiry methods in RE?
- How do I improve my subject knowledge on Islam?
- Which key concepts should I teach in RE?

Please note discounts for bookings: early bird for bookings made before 15 January, and for NQTs, ITT and Beds RE Society members. If you are interested, contact jchipperton@stalbens.anglican.org

The Good Lie – one of the thought provoking sessions offered by Empathy Action



The Good Lie follows the journey of a group of Sudanese boys, orphaned by the civil war in their home country, as they battle terrible odds to make the danger-ridden journey to Kenya,

thousands of miles away. After spending more than a decade in a refugee camp, four of the survivors are chosen by lottery to be relocated to the United States. The film then charts their attempts to adapt to a country and culture completely alien to them. For year 9 students, watching the film has been a way of getting them to think beyond the boundaries of their own lives. Coupled with Empathy Action's immersive experience, the children were challenged to see that poverty and injustice can easily enslave but that there is still hope in situations such as these.

The Good Lie ends with an African proverb, 'If you want to go fast go alone, if you want to go far go together'. At Empathy Action, the vision is to see an end to poverty, brought about by concerted, compassionate, community action. Their simulations are not just about educating or raising awareness but about asking participants, 'how can we work together to defeat poverty?'

To find out more or to book a session in school with Empathy Action, use contact@empathyaction.org or visit <http://www.empathyaction.org/>

CPD for Primary Teachers- world faiths (other than Christianity)

By popular request this is a repeat of the training offered in 2015. The training will be run by secondary RE specialists from schools in Bexley and Bromley and it is designed to provide secure and detailed subject knowledge and give teachers the opportunity to think about how they help pupils to learn about and from religion in relation to these faiths.

Each Session will run from 1.30 pm—4 pm
Cost £150 for all 5 sessions **or £40** per session.

Venue : Diocesan Offices, Rochester ME1 ISL

Wednesday 27th January 2016—Hinduism

Wednesday 10th February—Islam

Wednesday 9th March—Judaism

Wednesday 16th March—Sikhism

Wednesday 23rd March—Asking & Answering the Big Questions.

Judaism: An opportunity for a group of schools?

Jewish Living Experience is a travelling exhibition which has been on the road for more than 35 years. It enables pupils and their teachers to gain a fresh insight into Judaism as a living faith and lifestyle that has been sustained for over 5,000 years.

Experience Judaism through beautifully illustrated display panels, authentic artefacts to be touched and held, and practical hands-on educational activities which promote experiential learning.

Although visitors are encouraged to explore the exhibition personally, trained guides are on hand where possible to explain each aspect of the exhibition and to answer questions posed by teachers and pupils. Jewish Living Experience staff run INSET training for



teachers, and provide worksheets and Teachers' Packs to support each school's visit.

Jewish Living Experience is available to all educational, religious and interfaith organisations, museums and libraries. The cost of the exhibition varies depending on location. Jewish Living Experience is an educational experience for all Key Stages but it is especially suitable for Key Stage 2.

For more details or to make a booking, please contact the Education Department on 020 7543 5400 or jewishliving@bod.org.uk

If you are interested in organising this for a group of schools in your locality and there is a suitable venue, let me know and I can try and organise this with you (virginia.corbyn@rochester.anglican.org)

The British Library: sacred texts

The British Library is one of the world's great treasure-houses for the study of all religions.

ONLINE GALLERY
SACRED TEXTS
Explore treasures of the world's great faiths



Amongst the collections are the

sacred texts of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism and Zoroastrianism. They range from some of the best-known and most beautiful handwritten copies (manuscripts) of the scriptures of various religions to a very extensive collection of printed editions, both early and modern. Those who have visited the exhibition have found it fascinating and well worth the trip. If you cannot visit, there are some interesting online resources at <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/sacredtexts/>

A resource on Hinduism for pupils and teachers

The Hindu Council has set up a website called *Questions and Answers on Hinduism* with short clips addressing questions such as: Does Hinduism have many gods? What is the caste system? Is it ok to worship God using images? Look at the website at: hinduismquestionandanswer.com, to watch a series of videos which explore these themes further.

Oliver P (2010) *Teach Yourself World Faiths: An Introduction*. Hodder Education £9.99 ISBN 978-1-444-10513-1

Limited subject knowledge about different world religions, including Christianity, remains a significant issue for primary schools. Paul Oliver's book is wide ranging and covers the six major world faiths but also other religions and traditions such as Taoism and Shinto as well as New Religious Movements (NRMs) such as Jehovah's Witnesses. Although coverage is fairly brief, it does provide a useful overview. There is also a useful introductory chapter which looks at some of the similarities and differences between the religions considered. With clear and accessible writing, the book also includes a useful glossary, a list of websites and a helpful index along with some suggested further reading.

Second hand copies are currently available for 1p and new copies for less than £4.00 on Amazon marketplace.

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES 2015



**2016
JANUARY**

Monday 25th January Foundation Governors Induction Course Start 4.30 pm—6.30 pm at the Diocesan Offices, St. Nicholas Church, Boley Hill, Rochester ME1 1SL

Wednesday 27th January CPD for Primary Teachers—world faiths (other than Christianity) **Hinduism**—1.30 pm to 4. pm at the Diocesan Offices, Boley Hill Rochester ME1 1SL

FEBRUARY

Wednesday 10th February CPD for Primary Teachers—world faiths (other than Christianity) **Islam**—1.30 pm to 4 pm at the Diocesan Office, Boley Hill, Rochester ME1 1SL

Wednesday 24th February RE Support Group—Bennett Memorial Tunbridge Wells TN4 9SH **1.30 pm—4 pm** (*please park on the road as parking is limited in the school grounds*) Visiting Places of Worship

Thursday 25th February RE Support Group—Rochester Diocesan Offices ME1 1SL. **1.30 pm—4 pm** Visiting Places of Worship

Friday 26th February RE Support Group—Crayford Community Hall (Bexley Schools) **1.30 pm to 4 pm** Visiting Places of Worship

MARCH

Tuesday 1st March SIAMS briefing—Learning Walks 1.30 pm—4pm Diocesan Offices, Boley Hill, Rochester ME1 1SL

Wednesday 23rd March CPD for Primary Teachers—world faiths (other than Christianity) **Asking & Answering the Big Question**. 1.30pm-4pm Diocesan Offices, Boley Hill, Rochester ME1 1SL

2016

****HEADS AND CHAIRS BRIEFINGS****

After consultation with schools there will now be 1 breakfast meeting and 1 afternoon meeting

Thursday 28th January Breakfast meeting **8 am (coffee) —10.30 am** The Holiday Inn Wrotham TN15 7RS

Friday 29th January Diocesan Offices St. Nicholas Church, Boley Hill, Rochester ME1 1SL **1.30 pm– 4pm**