



UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIANITY – ARE WE THEOLOGICALLY LITERATE ENOUGH?

The 'Making a Difference' report from 2014 about the state of RE in Church schools recommended the need to promote the development of pupils' ability to think theologically by providing:

- ◆ a clear rationale for the place of theological enquiry in RE as a key to the distinctiveness of RE in Church schools
- ◆ curriculum models which promote the progressive development of theological thinking within the pupils' study of Christianity
- ◆ a repertoire of approaches to learning that promote the development of the skills of theological enquiry alongside other aspects of enquiry in RE
- ◆ guidance on how the process of enquiry can be built into the way pupils' progress in RE is defined and assessed.



One of the responses to this has been the publication of 'Understanding Christianity' which has been a collaboration between a number of funding bodies, the Church of England, RE Today and a team of gifted academics, thinkers and writers. This was launched on 26 May at Lambeth Palace and we are now planning how we can make the best possible use of the excellent materials on offer. They are full of engaging ideas, art work to stimulate thinking and discussion, and support for teachers.

One of the criticisms of RE for some time has been a lack of a coherent pedagogy for the subject. 'Understanding Christianity', which is designed for all schools, aims to help teachers and pupils to make sense of the text, understand the impact and make connections. Pupils will encounter a series of key concepts and teachers will teach them through key questions using a model based on a pedagogy with three elements. This will develop pupils' abilities:

- ◆ to make sense of texts related to the core concepts
- ◆ to understand the impact of belief in these concepts in the lives of Christians and in the Christian community
- ◆ to make connections beyond the concepts with other learning, including pupils' own responses

We have talked about a 'concept tree' in a number of our sessions together. The concepts are God, Creation, Fall, People of God, Incarnation, Gospel, Salvation and Kingdom of God. We know that there will be challenges in developing theological literacy based on these concepts but, as a diocese, we will be providing further details of how you can access these materials through training over the next year, with the plan to implement them in our schools in September 2017.



'Art in Heaven'



I know that a number of our schools have taken part in the 'Spirited Arts' competition over the past few years and I have seen

some stunning displays that have resulted from the teachers' and pupils' creativity and engagement with the themes.

In its 13th year, this competition has attracted over

300,000 participants averaging 2,000 entrants per year since 2004. Hundreds of UK schools get involved, and entries come from as far afield as Cyprus and Australia, Indonesia and South Africa.



The annual competition starts at the beginning of every school year and runs through to 31

July, in order to enable teachers to incorporate the art competition into their RE lessons. Many schools have an 'Art in Heaven' unit of work, or a special learning RE/arts week.

<http://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Spirited%20Arts/2016/Spirited%20Arts%202016%20entry%20form%204.pdf>

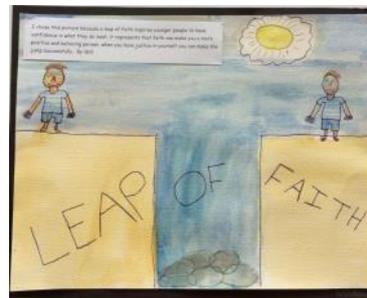
Judging by RE Today Advisers and students, takes



place in August and winners are announced in the new academic year.

There are two major changes to Spirited Arts for 2016 to enable teachers to continue to develop and improve their RE through the competition.

Firstly, it has been decided, not without some



discussion, to suggest certain themes would suit Primary or Secondary classrooms better. It has been felt that detail, depth and creativity is limited by offering themes which talk to five year-olds as much

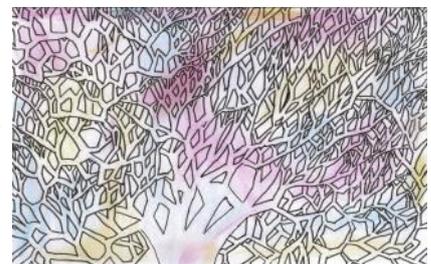
as fifteen year-olds. Therefore this year the first two themes have Secondary pupils in mind, and the last three have Primary pupils in mind. There is nothing to stop you choosing a theme out of your age range. This decision was made to improve the level of challenge in the themes in response to what children at certain ages do well, from the exuberant imaginations of the youngest to the insightful critique of the oldest.

Secondly, this year the step has been taken of showing what sort of content would be expected in



response to themes. This has been made possible by splitting the themes into Primary and Secondary. There are brief examples of subject knowledge, discussion questions or teaching and learning approaches to

get your pupils in the right frame of mind to respond to the theme. This content is only suggested, and the aim is to see all sorts of ideas, but there should be some evidence that some RE content has been explored in coming to create the artwork.



Please get in contact if you have further questions by emailing chelsey@natre.org.uk

Above all, please think about arranging a special day or week in term 6 to get everyone involved in this!

Celebrating 40 years of Commonwork at Bore Place



2016 is the 40th year of the Commonwork Trust which was founded by Neil and Jenifer Wates, after moving to Bore Place in 1976. To mark the occasion, there is a year full of events, courses and activities for all ages. Some are old favourites and others are special events. It's an anniversary – time to reflect and connect! So if you've yet to visit or it's been a while, go along and see what's happening! Events include:

July - Saturday 2nd

[Meadow walk and picnic with Kent Wildlife Trust](#) A guided walk through 700 year old Kentish meadows. [Picnic in the gardens at Bore Place](#) Bring a blanket and a picnic and relax in the garden.

August

[Summer holiday fun on the farm](#) Dates throughout August— All sorts of fun for primary age children. Pizza making, pond dipping, papermaking, den building, pancake flipping, cookie baking, minibeast hunting...

[Summer camp out at Bore Place](#) Date tbc

A night under canvas and under the stars. Campfire, woodcraft activities and camping fun for all. Date and details to be confirmed

For more information or to book onto any of these events, please contact [Becky BeckyB@boreplace.org](mailto:Becky_BeckyB@boreplace.org) or 01732 463255.

An invitation to worship and to learn

Susie Braid who has been the RE and worship co-ordinator at Chiddingstone CE primary school for some time has been sharing her wisdom and creativity with our church schools for a number of years. She believes that the best way to do this is to have an experience first-hand and see what you can take away from it. She has, therefore, given an open invitation for the school's Harvest Festival on Tuesday 4th October at 9 am in St Mary's Church, Chiddingstone, which is opposite the school. She says that any worship co-ordinators are welcome to come and stand on for coffee and an informal chat about festival services.

Please email [Susie on susiebraid@uwclub.net](mailto:susiebraid@uwclub.net) if you are planning on joining the school for their service.



WHAT DO I THINK AND BELIEVE? WHAT DO OTHERS THINK AND BELIEVE?

The RE support groups have often discussed how we might make sure that teachers and pupils make sure that a wide range of views is represented within the classroom. The NATRE website contains a section on 'What is the meaning of life?' It enables children to have their say and then offers a bank of responses in which children from a wide range of religious and non-religious backgrounds share their ideas about the same question. The questions themselves are good discussions starters and the different ideas give excellent opportunities for widening the debate and extending thinking <http://old.natre.org.uk/db/>



COMING UP

KENT SACRE DAY FOR YEAR 5

There is a plan to hold a day for Year 5 pupils in Kent schools on Tuesday 18 October at Highworth Grammar School in Kent. Some of you were able to attend a similar day at Canterbury Christ Church University last summer for which there was much positive feedback. This will be a free event funded by Kent SACRE. The invitation would be for a small group of year 5 pupils who could then be 'RE ambassadors' in school. Please look out for the information coming into school as there will be limited places and they will go quickly!

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES 2016



JUNE

- Wednesday 8th June RE Support Group—Bennett Memorial Diocesan School, Tunbridge Wells TN4 9SH **1.30pm—4pm** (please park on the road as parking is limited in the school grounds) **Capturing thinking. Please bring a few examples of pupils' work with you.**
- Thursday 9th June RE Support Group—Rochester Diocesan Offices ME1 1SL. **1.30 pm—4 pm Capturing thinking. Please bring a few examples of pupils' work with you.**
- Friday 10th June RE Support Group—Crayford Community Hall (Bexley Schools) **1.30 pm to 4 pm Capturing thinking. Please bring a few examples of pupils' work with you.**
- Wednesday 22nd June Education Celebration Service and Garden Party - **service 5.30 pm—6.30 pm** Rochester Cathedral followed by a garden party at Bishop's Court St. Margaret's Street, **6.30 pm—8.30 pm** (Invitation letter to follow)

NOVEMBER

- Wednesday 2nd November RE Support Meeting RE Support Group—Bennett Memorial Diocesan School, Tunbridge Wells TN4 9SH 1.30pm—4pm (please park on the road as parking is limited in the school grounds)
- Thursday 3rd November RE Support Group—Rochester Diocesan Offices ME1 1SL. **1.30 pm—4 pm**
- Friday 4th November RE Support Group—Crayford Community Hall (Bexley Schools) **1.30 pm to 4 pm**
- Monday 7th November New to a Church School—Rochester Diocesan Offices ME1 1SL **1.30 pm—4 pm**
- Tuesday 15th November New to Leading RE—Rochester Diocesan Offices ME1 1SL **1.30 pm—4 pm**

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

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

- Thursday 6th October Breakfast meeting **8 am (coffee) —10.30 am** The Holiday Inn Wrotham TN15 7RS
- Friday 7th October Diocesan Offices St. Nicholas Church, Boley Hill, Rochester ME1 1SL **1.30 pm– 4pm**