

**Year 6    Unit 1: IDEAS ABOUT GOD                      Week 1**  
**Title: Exploring ideas about God and about believing**

**Learning Intentions:**

**AT1:** To know that people have different ideas about God and beliefs.

**AT2:** To think through questions relating to faith and belief and explore what influences, challenges and inspires me.

**Assessment:**

AT1: I can use a developing religious vocabulary to describe and show understanding of different beliefs about God.

AT2 L4: I can raise questions and suggest answers to questions about religious belief and about God people's lives.

**Key Words:**

Belief  
Knowledge  
Proof  
God  
Agnostic  
Atheist

**Resources:**

Developing primary RE: Symbols of faith  
ISBN 1-904024-47-5  
(RE Today services)

**Activities:**

- Introduce the idea of 'belief'. Pupils should discuss in groups some of the things they believe and do not believe. Share what the groups have said. As the RE teacher in this situation, you need to try and make sure that pupils understand the difference between belief and knowledge ie what is provable. Pupils need to know that belief in what is not proved is a part of human life. For some people, beliefs are so bound into their lives and their values that what they believe in their minds cannot be separated from the whole process of living. (AT1)
- Explain that this unit is going to look at beliefs about God in different religious traditions and that the starting point is going to be an exploration of the pupils' ideas about God. Make sure that pupils also understand that people might be:
  - Agnostic – someone who believes that you cannot know whether or not there is a god
  - Atheist – someone who believes there is no god.
- Hand out slips of paper and on them ask pupils to write 'My idea about God is.....' and then finish the sentence. Fold up slips, put them in a container and hand them out again – everyone then responds to the statement (which should

not be their own) by writing 'I agree because....' or 'I disagree because.....' – you can do this just once or several times by taking in the slips and handing them out again. Then ask pupils to choose a piece of paper for the last time and read out what it says. This 'anonymises' the ideas but gives plenty of scope for debate.

- At the end of the discussion, give pupils time to write down the five most interesting ideas which they heard/read about God and give reasons for their choices.
- Another way of exploring ideas about God is by completing statements such as  
If God was a flower, God would be..... because....  
If God was a colour, God would be..... because....  
If God was a food, God would be..... because....  
If God was an animal, God would be..... because....  
If God was a character from a film, God would be..... because....  
You would need to model this:  
Eg If God was an animal, God would be a lion, because the lion is the king of the jungle
- This is to encourage ideas about what God is like – avoid drawing God as it does not draw out the qualities of God and is offensive for some religious traditions. It may be that some pupils find this difficult because they do not believe in God or do not think of God in this way. They might write down their ideas or questions in some other way.
- Additional questions might focus on:  
What is God like?  
Why do some believe and some do not believe?  
Why is it hard to describe God?  
Where do we find ideas about God? (AT2)

**Year 6 Unit 1: IDEAS ABOUT GOD Weeks 2 and 3**  
**Title: What do Christians believe about God?**

**Learning Intentions:**

**AT1:** To know that Christians believe in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Trinity)

**AT2:** To describe what influences and inspires ourselves and others.

**Assessment:**

AT1 L4: I can show understanding of the ways in which the three persons of the Trinity are the same yet distinct.

AT1 L5: I can use a wide religious vocabulary to explain the significance of beliefs about God for a Christian.

AT2 L4: I can describe what inspires and influences me and I can show the impact of beliefs about God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) on Christians.

AT2 L5: I can explain what I believe about God and express my own and others' views on the challenges of believing in God.

**Key Words:**

Trinity

God

Father

Son

Holy Spirit

**Resources:**

See suggestions within the materials below

**The suggestions for these lessons are encouraging an exploration of the Trinity – use those which will best do this for your class/group. You are not expected to do all of them!**

**Activities:**

- Introduce the word 'Trinity' to see what pupils know about this word and about its significance in relation to the Christian belief in a Trinitarian God – God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Think about the prayers which are used in school – which are addressed to God the Father (the Lord's Prayer) or to Jesus (Lord Jesus....In the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord), or to the Trinity (the Grace). These show the Christian belief in God as Three in One. What do pupils think are the characteristics of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit? What ideas about Father, Son and Holy Spirit are helpful to pupils in thinking about their own beliefs?

Look at this in some practical ways but make sure that you talk about what the activity has taught pupils about the Trinity

- Trinity flexagons

A flexagon is a folding strip which can be opened in three ways to show symbols for each of the persons of the Trinity. This is a little tricky but very satisfying to make. Pattern and instructions from Flame: Creative Children's Ministry. Do NOT try with children before you have successfully made one but it really does work! You could design one with different Trinity symbols.

Compare the struggle to make this with the early Christian struggle to make sense of the belief that Jesus was God and the implications that has for monotheism (belief in one God).

- <http://flamecreativekids.blogspot.co.uk/2013/06/trinity-flexagon-print-out-make-andplay.html>

- Mobius strips

Using strips of A3 paper, experiment with making a Mobius strip. How many surfaces does it have? Draw round with a marker pen to show it has a single surface. Cut round this line. What happens? =2 linked circles. Cut round one of the circles again. What will happen?

See demo at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=BVslAa2XNKc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BVslAa2XNKc). Their final experiment gives 3 circles but if you follow the instructions above you get all 3 circles linked centrally. Do NOT try with children before you have successfully made one.

Tell the story of St Patrick and the shamrock. Add ideas about God the Father, Son and Spirit to the circles of your Mobius strips.

- Sculptures

Research different trinity sculptures e.g. Annie Henry, Cornwall, Gubilini, Simon Forstner. Some represent the Christian Trinity and others are just groups of three. Divide play-dough into 3 'balls'. Can you make any of them with your play dough? Consider different aspects or characteristics of different persons of the trinity and how these could be represented separately and then think about how to represent them all in one figure. How will your Trinity sculpture be different?

- Rublev's icon of the Holy Trinity

One of the most famous icons ever painted, this represents the story of Abraham and the three visitors (story can be found in Genesis 18:1-8). However the painting

may be read as an image of the Holy Trinity. A children's talk can be found at [www.emergentkiwi.com](http://www.emergentkiwi.com)

Older pupils can work with the talk and a copy of the picture. They can do detailed pencil crayon pictures, make play-dough models or a person sculpture which they can video with others doing a commentary on the sculpture. What are the important points to make and what questions would they ask Rublev or a Christian?

- Using a Celtic style song

Sammy Horner's 'Blessed Trinity' is a simple song full of examples of 'threes' that children as young as Y3 could work with and maybe use as a basis to write their own poetry or songs.

Download MP3 track: <http://www.amazon.co.uk/Blessed-Trinity/dp/B007MPAHIG>

Or from Celtic Praise: <http://sammyhorner.bandcamp.com/track/blessedtrinity-2>

- Glory be

This song by American pastor Michael A. Schmid is based on the traditional Gloria Patri – Glory be to the Father. Each verse focuses on the activity of one of the persons of the Trinity. This anthem could be learnt in school and worked on in RE. Pupils could devise a power-point of suitable pictures to go with the song and possibly learn to sign the chorus.

[http://www.truevinemusic.com/glory\\_be.htm](http://www.truevinemusic.com/glory_be.htm)

- Dancing the Trinity

'Perichoresis' is a theological term meaning 'the dance of God', all three persons of the trinity inter-relating in a totally harmonious fluid way. C.S. Lewis described the Trinity as a "dance" saying, "God is not a static thing...but a dynamic, pulsating activity, a life, almost...a kind of dance" (*Mere Christianity*, p 136).

See notes at: <http://www.prismleadership.org/trinitarian-dance/>

Dance alone, and in threes. Create a sequence of movements in three's – different ways of moving together, keeping contact, etc., use of flags and scarves.

- The cube

Make a cube with opposite sides painted red, yellow, blue. Is it blue all the way through? Or red? Or yellow?

The cube is made up of 3 dimensions, height, length and width. Each represents 1 person of the trinity, but all 3 together make up a cube, you cannot separate the 3 dimensions or else it ceases to be a cube.

You can read more about Trinity explained through the 'cube' at 'Three-personal God' by CS Lewis. <http://ldolphin.org/CSLtrinity.html>

## **Trinity: Background Information**

### What do we mean by Trinity?

*Adapted from Teaching Christianity at Key Stage 1 - Seaman and Owen*

Christians believe that God is revealed to them in three ways – God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit – yet remains one God. Whilst Christianity is one of many faiths that believe in one God (monotheists), this belief in God as ‘trinity’ is a distinctive feature and marks a real difference from, for example, Judaism and Islam.

This central belief developed in the early church when Christians were struggling to explain their understanding that Jesus was God on the earth as a human being. Trinity or ‘tri-unity’ (three as one) was a term they developed to try and explain the relationship between God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. This belief in Trinity was later defined in the statement of faith at the Council of Nicaea in AD 325; the ‘Nicene’ Creed is still repeated by many Christians today in their worship.

The creed says:

We believe in one God, the father, the almighty, maker of heaven and earth

...

This describes God as a creator, the image of God as Father has had a lasting significance to the Christian faith down the ages.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God ....

Christians assert that Jesus is both human and divine; this was the way in which God experienced what it was to be human.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life ...

For Christians, the Holy Spirit is the power of God, whom people experience in their daily lives. He is ‘God in us’, God the sustainer and God the encourager.

This way of trying to make sense of God might be thought of as a matter of intellectual curiosity, but down the ages Christians have looked for ways of talking about their experience of God, without doing injustice to the majesty and the all-embracing might that this word entails. The doctrine of the Trinity is one result of this searching, and it remains a mystery that God can be the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit all at the same time.

### Get into good habits!

- Do ensure that the children learn that Christians believe God can be related to in a personal way and can even be their friend.
- Do ensure that symbols of the Trinity are there to support understanding rather than being an end in themselves.
- Do encourage connections between Bible Stories and the Trinity
- Do encourage “God-talk” throughout the curriculum e.g. isometric patterns and talk of the Trinity, mini-beasts and the creator.
- Do be kind to yourself – remember that ‘Trinity’ is ultimately beyond human understanding. One of the greatest early Christian theologians said that trying to explain the Trinity was like trying to empty the ocean with a cup.
- Do not suggest that God can be broken into separate parts.
- Do not allow the different symbols to lead to thinking that God is inanimate e.g. ‘God is a triangle’ is wrong.
- Do encourage big questions even if you don’t know the answer to such things as: Where was Jesus the Son when God created the world?  
Don’t close down big discussions even if uncertain about your own knowledge.

**Year 6    Unit 1: IDEAS ABOUT GOD    Week 4**  
**Title: What do Jews believe about G-d?**

**Learning Intentions:**

**AT1:** To know what Jews believe about G-d.

**AT2:** To describe what influences and inspires ourselves and others.

**Assessment:**

AT1 L4: I can use a developing religious vocabulary to describe Jewish beliefs and ideas about G-d.

AT1 L4: I can make links between beliefs in Christianity and Judaism.

AT1 L5: I can use a wide religious vocabulary to explain the significance of beliefs about G-d for a Jewish believer.

AT2 L4: I can respond to Jewish ideas about G-d by asking my own religious questions and suggesting answers.

AT2 L5: I can explain what I believe about God and express my own and others' views on the challenges of believing in God.

**Key Words:**

G-d

Omnipotent

Omnipresent

Omnibenevolent

Omniscient

Eternal

Infinite

Transcendent

**Resources:**

Bibles or [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) to reference Jewish stories

[www.jewfaq.org](http://www.jewfaq.org)

[www.ritualwell.org](http://www.ritualwell.org)

**Activities:**

- See below for information on the word G-d. Make sure that pupils understand that the use of this word is about the level of reverence and respect given to the name of God in the Jewish faith. (AT1)
- Is there anything which pupils treat with a similar level of respect and why? (AT2)



- Here are some of the ways in which G-d is described in the Jewish tradition

G-d:

*Exists*

*Only one*

*No other gods*

*Cannot be divided into different persons*

*Is the only one to be worshipped*

*Above and beyond everything on earth*

*Does not have a body*

*Is neither male nor female*

*Created all of the universe*

*Is everywhere all of the time*

*Can do anything at all*

*Is beyond time*

*Has always existed*

*Will always exist*

*Is just yet merciful*

*Punishes the bad*

*Rewards the good*

*Is forgiving*

*Is personal and accessible*

*Is interested in each individual*

*Listens to each individual*

*Speaks to individuals in unexpected ways*

- Give pupils a list of these characteristics and ask pupils to think of some of the stories which they have encountered from Judaism eg Creation story, Abraham, Moses (escape from slavery in Egypt and the Ten Commandments, Gideon, King David etc) Give them a list of the stories they know. Is G-d like this in those stories? Record their examples and their reasons for making their choices.
- Print out and cut up the six words and their meanings (see below). Give pupils the single words and see if they can suggest definitions working in groups and also ask why these words are used to describe God in different traditions. (AT1)
- How do these words reflect the ideas about G-d from this lesson and the previous lessons? Are these ideas which pupils have about God? (AT2)

## Judaism: Background information

The custom of substituting the word "God" with G-d in English is based on the traditional practice in Jewish law of giving God's Hebrew name a high degree of respect and reverence. When written or printed, God's Hebrew name (and many of the other names used to refer to God) cannot be erased or destroyed. (See below)

There is no prohibition in Jewish law against writing out or erasing the word "God" in English. However, many Jews have afforded the word "God" with the same level of respect as the Hebrew equivalents. Because of this, many Jews substitute "God with G-d so that they can erase or dispose of the writing without showing disrespect to God.

The Ancient Name of God: The Hebrew name for God, YHWH (in Hebrew spelled yud-hay-vav-hay), is never pronounced out loud in Judaism. When it appears in Jewish scripture or liturgy, the reader substitutes the Hebrew word "adonai" which means "my lord" or often just "the Lord." Any book that contains this name written in Hebrew is treated with reverence. The name is never destroyed, erased, or effaced and any books or writings containing the name cannot be thrown away according to Jewish law.

Adonai: Among many traditional Jews even the word "adonai" is not spoken outside prayer services. Because "adonai" is so closely linked to the name of God, over time it has been accorded more and more reverence as well. Outside prayer services, traditional Jews will replace "adonai" with "HaShem" meaning "the Name" or some other way of referring to God without using "adonai."

Other names to refer to God: Because YHWH and adonai are not used casually, dozens of different ways to refer to God have developed in Judaism. Each name is linked to different conceptions of God's nature and aspects of the divine. For example, God can be referred to in Hebrew as "the Merciful One," "Master of the Universe," "the Creator," and "our King," amongst many other names.

omnipotent	All powerful, reflecting the belief that God can do anything logically possible.
omnipresent	Present everywhere simultaneously, reflecting the belief that God is everywhere, there is no place where God is not
omni-benevolent	All-good, reflecting the belief that God is pure goodness
omniscient	All-knowing, reflecting the belief that God knows everything about people, the world and the universe
eternal	Without beginning or end, reflecting the belief that God always was and will always be
infinite	Without limit, immeasurable, reflecting the belief that God's wisdom is infinite
transcendent	Not limited by the material universe, reflecting the belief that God is above and beyond everything on earth

**Year 6 Unit 1: IDEAS ABOUT GOD**  
**Title: What do Muslims believe about Allah?**

**Week 5**

**Learning Intentions:**

**AT1:** To know what Muslims believe about Allah.

**AT2:** To describe what influences and inspires ourselves and others.

**Assessment:**

AT1 L4: I can use a developing religious vocabulary to describe Muslim beliefs and ideas about Allah.

AT1 L5: I can use a wide religious vocabulary to explain the significance of beliefs about Allah for Muslims.

AT2 L4: I can respond to ideas about Allah by asking my own religious questions and suggesting answers.

AT2 L5: I can explain what I believe about God and express my own and others' views on the challenges of believing in God.

**Key Words:**

Allah  
Surah  
Qur'an  
Muslim  
Islam

**Resources:**

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone/clips/has-the-quran-changed-over-the-years/319.html>

(from BBC learning zone clips)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=-PqP0BCiTiE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-PqP0BCiTiE)

<http://www.islamicity.com/Mosque/99names.htm>

(for the 99 names)

**Activities:**

- If you have a Qur'an in school, use it to re-cap information from Year 4/5 about what Muslims believe about the Qur'an and that this is where we can learn what Muslims believe about Allah. The first clip listed above will help serve as a reminder about the Qur'an if needed.
- Either read a translation of the opening of Surah I in the Qur'an or listen to it being read in the original Arabic eg on [www.youtube.com/watch?v=-PqP0BCiTiE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-PqP0BCiTiE) (which also displays a translation). Encourage pupils to watch it

a second time and pick out some key words about Allah. Discuss what the words mean and what this reveals about Allah.

- Introduce some of the 99 names given to Allah and talk about what they tell us about Muslim beliefs. Ask pupils to research others. Remember that Muslims do not compare Allah to humans but that the descriptions do help people to gain a fuller understanding of what Allah is like. (AT1) - see website suggestion above.
- Have pupils gained any new insights personally into what God might be like? (AT2). How do these compare with what they know about Christianity and Islam? (AT1)

**Year 6 Unit 1: IDEAS ABOUT GOD Week 6**  
**Title: What do different faiths believe about God? What do I believe?**

**Learning Intentions:**

**AT1:** To know what Christians, Jews and Muslims believe about God.

**AT2:** To describe what influences and inspires ourselves and others.

**Assessment:**

AT1 L4: I can make links between beliefs in Christianity, Judaism and Islam

AT2 L4: I can respond to ideas about God from different faiths by asking my own religious questions and suggesting answers.

AT2 L5: I can explain what I believe about God and express my own and others' views on the challenges of believing in God.

**Key Words:**

God

G-d

Allah

Beliefs

Similar

Different

Atheist

Agnostic

**Resources:**

See below

**Activities:**

- Take some time to 'sort out' the different ideas which you have explored from Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Can pupils record this in some way – a chart or a table? This could be done individually or in groups. Try and focus on similarities and then move on to differences. (AT1)
- Ask pupils to record five (or more) new ideas which they have learned about beliefs about God in the last few weeks. (AT1)
- Take some quiet time to reflect on the challenges of believing in God and talk about some of the difficult questions which this raises about suffering, lack of justice etc – are there any questions which the class would like to 'ask' God about these difficult issues? (AT2)

- There is a clip in which a number of well known people talk about their views of God –  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone/clips/is-there-a-god/2801.html>
- Watch this yourself to see if you think that pupils will be able to take in the new ideas which are put forward – you may want to hear a selection of these rather than all of them. This should generate a discussion about the wide variety of ideas which exist and what pupils believe about God and why, as a conclusion to this unit. (AT1/2).