



### Creation stories and the ultimate questions they raise

- *To which questions do religions provide answers?*
- *How do people think the world started?*
- *How do Jews celebrate the Sabbath?*

#### **1. Questions, questions**

Complete the [questionnaire](#).

- Which questions have a definite or certain answer?

Explain that some answers will differ because they depend on a person's opinion.

- Which ones are they?
- Which questions have answers that can be worked out in time?
- Are religious beliefs the same as personal opinions? If not, why not?
- Which questions have answers that may depend on a person's religious beliefs?
- Will any of their answers change over a period of time? Why?

Ask the pupils to think up three more questions:

- A question with a definite answer.
- A question that requires an answer with an opinion or a religious belief.
- A difficult question that they would like to know the answer to.

#### **2. Who made the world?**

- Who made the world?
- Why is our planet so different from all the others?
- Who is God?

All of the main faiths have creation stories.

The Christian and Hebrew Bibles describe the creation of the world by God, from nothing over a period of time ('days' not necessarily representing 24 hours). Many Christians believe that God caused the 'big bang' at the beginning of our universe.

We have two 'big books' on creation - available for loan to schools in the Watford area.

- Watch 'Creation' episode (15min) on the BBC's Pathways to Belief video. The Bible describes God as CARING, LOVING, WISE, POWERFUL, FAIR, HOLY.
- Listen to how the children in the video try to describe God.
- Look at various natural objects under a microscope or magnified in a book.
- Imagine the world without any colour - just in black and white.

- Look at and draw natural objects (flowers, variegated leaves, cut fruit, shells etc.) much larger than life.
- Ask pupils to look for designs in nature and write a detailed description of what they can see - these designs could then be represented larger than life in art.
- Ask pupils to describe the most beautiful thing that they have ever seen.

### **3. Who made me?**

The Christian and Hebrew Bibles describe how God made humans and that each person is special to God. The Bible describes how people have been made by God for a purpose - to be his friends, to love God and to love one another and to care for his world.

Psalm 139 says that God knows each one of us. Jesus said "God knows every hair on your head" and in Isaiah it says that our names are written on the palm of God's hand.

- Read 'You Are Very Special' by Su Box (0 7459 4269 5 Lion £4.99 - available through our loan service.). This book introduces the concept that all of us have value as individuals. There is a mirror in the back of the book.
- Discuss some amazing facts about our bodies - see Year 2 for some suggestions.
- Ask children to bring in baby photographs. How are they different now from when they were born?
- Read a child's adaptation of Psalm 139. Talk about the words.

The Bible describes God as a loving Father. In Isaiah Chapter 49 verse 15 God says "I will not forget you. I have written your name on the palm of my hand" How do these words make the children feel?

- Ask the children to look carefully at each other and describe similarities and differences. Provide mirrors and draw or paint self portraits.

### **4. Celebrating the Jewish Sabbath**

The Bible says we should keep one day in seven special.

- Read the big book 'Shabbat', given to local schools in 2002.
- Look at restful paintings/pictures of people relaxing, for example Seurat's The Bathers and discuss why it is important to rest.

### **5. Where do we go when we die?**

- Explain that all living things are changing (and will die one day). Links to life cycles, seasons etc. See 'Sunflower' assembly page.
- Remind pupils of all the signs of new life seen in the spring. Plant beans, seeds (preferably from last years dead plants) and watch them split and grow.
- Explain that Christians believe that life goes on after the death.
- Watch the end of the BBC's Pathways to Belief 'Easter' episode which tells the story of the 'Dragonflies and the Waterbugs'. (also available in a booklet ISBN 0 264 66904 5 for about £1.50).
- Think about what the Bible says about life going on after death. In John Ch3 v16 he says "God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life."

- Remind pupils of the Christian belief in the resurrection of Jesus at the first Easter and the promises Jesus made about life in heaven.

Christians believe that the spirit of a dead person (“the invisible bit inside them”) has left their body and gone somewhere else. They believe that the old body, made of skin and bones, isn’t needed anymore so it can be left behind.

At a Christian funeral the people are sad because they will miss the person who has died. Christians go to church to think about all the good memories they have of that person and they say thank you to God for that person’s life. Flowers are often used as a symbolic reminder of the new life beginning in heaven.

- Explore what the Bible says about Heaven in Revelation chapter 21- that it is a wonderful place where there will be no more tears, no more pain and that God will be there. Poems about Heaven are in Cracking RE Autumn 1999 page 15.
- Read the Good-bye Boat by Mary Joslin (ISBN 0 7459 3693 8) £4.99.
- Use the imagery of a boat sailing over the horizon disappearing from our view but appearing to someone else in a far off distant land. We are sad but the people they go to meet are very pleased to see them.
- Think about positive ways that we can remember others.
- Look at the imagery of heaven used by famous artists.
- Ask pupils to describe in poetry or art what they think heaven might be like.
- Look at the story of Arthur Stace, the Eternity Man.

NB. Watford Schools Trust has several copies of books, highly recommended by Head Teachers, for use with children who are coping with bereavement. See the ‘Books’ section on the [Resources](#) page.