

Religion and Worldviews **Celebrating Diversity and Inclusion**

At Brough Primary School we are aware of the diversity of religious and other worldviews and respect these beliefs. We feel it would be helpful for us to share some of these key beliefs and information to provide an opportunity to increase knowledge and understanding.

In our school we follow the 2022 'Agreed Syllabus for Religion and Worldviews' and have chosen to study the following religions and worldviews:

Years 1 and 2

Christianity, Judaism and Bahá'í faiths

Years 3 and 4

Christianity, Hinduism and Humanism

Years 5 and 6

Christianity, Islamic and Humanism

This document provides some information regarding the following religions and worldviews:

Agnosticism

Atheism

Bahá'í

Buddhism

Christianity

Hinduism

Humanism

Islam

Jehovah's Witnesses

Judaism

Sikhism

Agnosticism

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zg2xk2p/revision/1>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zkyn2sg/articles/zfs2kmn#:~:text=Non%2Dreligious%20people%20may%20be,or%20not%20a%20god%20exists.>

Non-religious people are not an organised group of people, but a diverse mix, with a wide variety of beliefs, values and ways of looking at the world. For that reason, it is hard to talk about non-religious people as a single group. Still, it is probably fair to say, many non-religious people believe it is possible to live a good and fulfilling life without following a religion, and without a belief in a god or gods.

Agnosticism is a non-religious view that it is unknown (or even, unknowable) whether any god or gods exist or not. A person who holds this belief is called an agnostic.

There are several different kinds of agnosticism:

- Absolute agnosticism (also called hard agnosticism, closed agnosticism, strict agnosticism, strong agnosticism) is the belief that it is not possible to know whether a god/gods exists or not.
- Empirical agnosticism (also called soft agnosticism, open agnosticism, weak agnosticism, temporal agnosticism) is the belief that at present there is not enough information to know whether any god/gods exists or not, but that we might find out someday.
- Apathetic agnosticism is the belief that it does not matter whether any god/gods exists or not.

Agnostics have no traditions as no god/s to worship, so there are no symbols, special days, places of worship or leaders.

Atheism

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/atheism/>

Atheism is the absence of belief in any Gods or spiritual beings. The word Atheism comes from a, meaning without, and theism meaning belief in god or gods. Some atheists are hostile to religion. Here are some of their reasons:

- Religion gets people to believe something untrue.
- Religion makes people base the way they run their lives on a falsehood.
- Religion stops people thinking in a rational and objective way.

- Religion forces people to rely on outside authority, rather than becoming self-reliant.
- Religion imposes irrational rules of good and bad behaviour.
- Religion divides people, and is a cause of conflict and war.
- The hierarchical structure of most religions is anti-democratic, and this offends basic human rights.
- Religion doesn't give equal treatment to women and gay people, and thus offends basic human rights.
- Religion obstructs scientific research.
- Religion wastes time and money.

Most atheists concede there are some good things about religion, such as:

- Religious art and music
- Religious charities and good works
- Much religious wisdom and scripture
- Human fellowship and togetherness

Bahá'í

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/bahai/>

The Bahá'í faith is one of the youngest of the world's major religions. It was founded by Bahá'u'lláh in Iran in 1863.

Iran was then mainly a Muslim country, and the faith was proclaimed by a young Iranian, who called himself The Báb. He said that a messenger would soon arrive from God, who would be the latest in a line of prophets including Moses, Muhammad and Jesus Christ.

- Bahá'u'lláh, which means the Glory of God in Arabic, was born Mirza Husayn Ali in 1817
- Bahá'ís believe that Bahá'u'lláh is the most recent Manifestation of God
- Bahá'u'lláh himself stated that he is not God's final messenger
- The Bahá'í faith accepts all religions as having true and valid origins
- The idea of progressive revelation is of central significance for the Bahá'í faith
- Bahá'u'lláh taught that God intervenes throughout human history at different times to reveal more of himself through his messengers (called Divine Messengers, or Manifestations of God)

- The central idea of the faith is that of unity. They believe that people should work together for the common benefit of humanity.

The followers of Bahá'u'lláh were descended from the Bábis - believers in the Báb who foretold the mission of Bahá'u'lláh.

There are 6 million Bahá'ís in the world, in 235 countries and around 6,000 live in Britain.

Bahá'í beliefs about God

- Bahá'ís believe there is one God and that all the universe and creation belong to him
- God is omnipotent, perfect and has complete knowledge of life
- Bahá'ís believe that there has only ever been one God, who is called by different names in different religions
- God is too great to be ever understood by the finite human mind
- Knowledge of God means knowledge of the attributes of God
- The only thing we can actually know about God is that God exists
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So when we attribute properties to God we are actually making a false analogy based on human ideas - but it's the best that we can do.

Bahá'í holy texts

The writings of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh are regarded as Divine Revelation.

The writings of Abdu'l-Bahá are recognised as sacred.

The scriptures of other faiths, which include the teachings of previous Manifestations of God (such as Buddha, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad) are also regarded as Divine Revelations.

The Qur'an is recognised as fully authoritative and the Judaeo-Christian Bible as substantially authentic.

Holy days - Nineteen Day Feast, The Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, The Birth of the Báb, The Declaration of the Báb, The Martyrdom of the Báb, Naw-Rúz, Personal reflections on Bahá'í holy day, Nineteen Day Fast and Ridván.

Buddhism

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zh4mrj6/articles/zdbvjhv>

Buddhism started in India over 2,500 years ago. Buddhists follow the teachings of a man called Siddhattha Gotama. He became known as the Buddha, which means 'enlightened'.

Siddhattha Gotama was a prince who lived a life of luxury. When he was 29, Siddhattha went outside his palace and saw people suffering for the first time. He decided to leave his palace and live among holy men in search of truth. His search took him six years, but he became enlightened while meditating under a fig tree. Following this, Siddhattha became known as the Buddha, which means the 'awakened' or 'enlightened' one. From then on, he dedicated his life to spreading his teachings.

The Buddha discovered that the answer lay in what have become known as the Four Noble Truths. Buddhists try to achieve enlightenment by understanding these important principles.

Buddhists try to live a good life by following the Buddha's teachings, helping them to avoid suffering and bad feelings. They believe nothing in life is perfect and the way to avoid suffering is to follow a set of important guidelines known as the Noble Eightfold Path.

The Buddhist scriptures are known as the Tipitaka which means 'three baskets'. This is because the original writings were made on palm leaves and stored in baskets. The Tipitaka contains the teachings of the Buddha and his companions, comments on those teachings, as well as rules for monks. Buddhists call the teachings of the Buddha dharma which means 'truth'.

In Buddhist countries there are many temples. People bring flowers and incense for the shrine and food for the monks. When entering a temple, Buddhists will take off their shoes, put their hands together and bow to the image of the Buddha. They may also use prayer beads called malas. Some Buddhists may also have a shrine within their home too.

Festivals - Wesak and Nirvana Day

Christianity

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/ztkxpv4/articles/zvfnkmm>

Christianity is focussed on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, who Christians believe to be the Son of God. Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the Middle East over 2,000 years ago. Christians believe there is only one God, but that he is revealed in three different forms:

- God the Father
- God the Son
- The Holy Spirit

Christians model themselves on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Jesus taught people to love God and love their neighbour. Christians believe that God sent Jesus to live as a human being in order to save humanity from the consequences of its sins - the bad things humanity had chosen to do which had separated them from God. Christians believe that through the death and resurrection of Jesus this broken relationship with God is restored.

The Christian holy book is the Bible. It is divided into the Old and New Testaments. The New Testament explains how God sent his only son, Jesus Christ, to restore the broken relationship between people and God which had been caused by human wrong-doing. Jesus was executed on a cross (Crucifixion) as a criminal by the Romans, and according to Christian teaching after three days he rose from the dead (the Resurrection).

Many Christians worship in churches. Some groups meet in homes and other buildings. 'Church' means the gathering of Christians as well as the building in which Christians worship. Their leaders are called priests or ministers. Many churches hold a service called Communion, Eucharist or Mass, in which bread and wine are shared together, just as Jesus did with his followers before his death.

Festivals - Easter, Lent, Christmas

Hinduism

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zh86n39/articles/zmpp92p>

Hinduism is over 4,000 years old, making it one of the world's oldest religions. It is made up of a variety of different religious beliefs and practices. It originated near the Indus River in India. The name 'Hindu' comes from the word Indus.

Central to Hinduism is the belief in a supreme God Brahman. Brahman is present everywhere and there is a part of Brahman in everyone. Brahman takes many forms. Especially three forms called the Trimurti.

- Brahma is the creator of the world and all creatures. He is usually shown with four heads.
- Vishnu is the preserver of the world. His role is to return to the earth in troubled times and restore the balance of good and evil. He has blue skin and four arms.
- Shiva is the destroyer of the universe. Shiva destroys the universe in order to recreate it. Shiva has blue skin, a third eye and carries a trident.

Hindus believe that life is a cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. They also believe that the next life depends on how the previous life was lived.

Hinduism does not have a single holy book, but many ancient texts and scriptures.

- The Vedas - a collection of hymns praising the Vedic gods. Veda means 'knowledge'.
- The Ramayana - long epic poems about Rama and Sita.
- The Mahabharata - which includes the Bhagavad Gita.
- The Puranas - a collection of stories about the different incarnations and the lives of saints.

Hindus worship in a temple called a Mandir. Mandirs vary in size from small village shrines to large buildings, surrounded by walls. Hindus also worship at home and often have a special room with a shrine to particular gods.

Festivals - Holi and Diwali

Humanism

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/znk647h/articles/zmqpkmnanism>

Humanists do not believe in a god. They believe it is possible to live a good and fulfilling life without following a traditional religion.

They do not follow a holy book either. Instead, Humanists value traits like reason and rely on science to explain the way things are.

Humanists believe that people have one life to live - there is no afterlife. As a result they focus on being happy and making the most of their life. They also believe they have a duty to support others.

Humanists do not have a regular place of worship or rituals but they do value community, friends and helping those in need.

Humanists do not have a regular place of worship. They do, however, hold talks, lectures and discussion groups all around the country.

Humanists also have ceremonies, celebrations or special occasions. Many Humanists hold naming ceremonies, non-religious weddings and funerals.

Islam

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zpdtbkb/articles/zrxgwx>

The word 'Islam' in Arabic means submission to the will of God. Followers of Islam are called Muslims. Muslims believe there is one true God Allah (the Arabic word for God).

Muslims believe that Islam was revealed over 1,400 years ago in Makkah, Arabia through a man called Muhammad. Muhammad is so respected that it is usual for Muslims to say 'peace be upon him' whenever they mention his name.

Muhammad is believed by Muslims to be the last prophet sent by God (Allah). They believe God sent prophets to mankind to teach them how to live according to His law. Jesus (Isa), Moses (Musa) and Abraham (Ibrahim) are other respected prophets.

The Five Pillars of Islam are an important part of Muslim life. They are five things that a Muslim must do so they can live a good and responsible life. They include:

- The declaration of faith (Shahada)
- Praying five times a day (Salat)
- Giving money to charity (Zakah)
- Fasting during the month of Ramadan (Sawm)
- A pilgrimage to Makkah at least once in a lifetime (Hajj)

The Muslim holy book is called the Qur'an. Muslims believe this to be the word of Allah as dictated to Muhammad. They also have the Sunnah, which Muslims believe to be the practical example of Prophet Muhammad.

Muslims worship in a building called a mosque. On Friday at noon, the most important of the weekly services is held. When Muslims pray, they must always face Makkah in Saudi Arabia. Many Muslim men will wear a small cap called a taqiyah when they pray.

Festivals - Eid ul-Adha and Ramadan

Jehovah's Witnesses

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/witnesses/>

Like many reforming churches, the Witnesses base their lives and beliefs on the example of the early Christian Church and the words of the Bible.

The Bible

Jehovah's Witnesses believe the Bible was inspired by God and is historically accurate.

They see the Bible as the main way in which God communicates his will to human beings, and they interpret it literally (except for passages that are obviously meant to be symbolic or poetic). Witnesses test any religious idea or teaching against the Bible - if an idea or teaching doesn't agree with the Bible then they regard it as wrong.

Living for God

Witnesses believe that the point of their life is to live in the service of God. They are expected to live in accord with the beliefs and moral code of the movement.

They live in a tightly knit social structure which supports them in both their everyday lives and in fulfilling their religious mission.

Separation

Jehovah's Witnesses maintain a degree of separation from the world. They claim that they are in but not of the world.

Unlike the members of more extreme separatist movements, Witnesses both live and work among the secular community and send their children to secular schools.

Witnesses discourage participation in university education for its own sake.

Holy Days - Memorial of Christ's Death

The most important religious event of the year for Jehovah's Witnesses is the commemoration of the Memorial of Christ's Death, which takes place on the anniversary of the Last Supper, calculated according to the lunar calendar in use in Christ's time. They believe that this is the only observance commanded by Christ.

Christian festivals - Witnesses do not celebrate Christmas or Easter because they believe that these festivals are based on (or massively contaminated by) pagan customs and religions. They point out that Jesus did not ask his followers to mark his birthday.

Secular festivals - Witnesses do not celebrate birthdays or other secular festivals that originate in other religions.

Judaism

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/znwhfg8/articles/zh77vk7>

Judaism began nearly 4,000 years ago in a place called the Middle East. This is a large area on the border of Asia, Africa and Europe. Jews believe that there is only one God. They believe they have a special agreement with God called a covenant. Jews promise to obey God's laws to say thank you to him for looking after them

The Jewish holy book is known as the Tanakh or Hebrew Bible. The word Tanakh comes from the first letters of the three different parts of the book:

- The Torah (T) which is the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. The Christian Bible also begins with these books, in the part which Christians call the Old Testament.
- The Nevi'im (N) which are the books of the Jewish prophets such as Joshua and Isaiah.
- Ketuvim (K) which is a collection of other important writings.

The Torah has 613 commandments which are called mitzvah. They are the rules that Jews try to follow. The most important ones are the Ten Commandments given to Moses. The Torah is so special that people are not allowed to touch it. It is kept in a safe place called an ark in the Jewish temple and when people read from the Torah, they use a special pointer stick called a yad to follow the words.

Jews worship God in a synagogue. Jewish people attend services at the synagogue on Saturdays during Shabbat. Shabbat (the Sabbath) is the most important time of the week for Jews. It begins on Friday evenings and ends at sunset on Saturdays. During Shabbat, Jews remember that God created the world and on the seventh day he rested. Jews believe God's day of rest was a Saturday. The services in the synagogue are led by a religious leader called a rabbi, which means 'Teacher' in Hebrew.

Festivals - Passover and Hanukkah

Sikhism

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zsjpyrd/articles/zkjpkmn>

Sikhism was founded by Guru Nanak around 500 years ago in a place called the Punjab. This is an area which spans part of India and Pakistan in South Asia today. Sikhs believe in one God who guides and protects them. They believe everyone is equal before God. Sikhs believe that your actions are important and you should lead a good life. They believe the way to do this is:

- Keep God in your heart and mind at all times
- Live honestly and work hard
- Treat everyone equally
- Be generous to those less fortunate than you
- Serve others

Guru Nanak is the founder of Sikhism. Guru means 'Teacher'. Sikhism is still based on his teachings and those of the nine Sikh Gurus who followed him.

The Five Ks

The Sikh community of men and women is known as the Khalsa which means the 'Community of the Pure'. In order to become a Sikh and join the Khalsa, people need to follow the Five Ks.

The Sikh holy book is called the Guru Granth Sahib. The tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, said that after him there would be no other living gurus. Instead, Sikhs could look at their holy book for guidance. This is why Sikhs call their holy book the Guru Granth Sahib. The Sikh place of worship is called a Gurdwara which means 'Gateway to the Guru'. A Gurdwara is any building where the Guru Granth Sahib is kept.

In the UK, Sikhs usually go to the Gurdwara on Sundays. During the services they listen to teachings based on the Guru Granth Sahib. They also chant and say prayers from the gurus. These are called Keertan. The service ends in a langar (a shared meal). Everyone is welcome to share the meal.

Festivals - Vaisakhi, also called Baisakhi

The information provided in this document is not exhaustive; therefore, if you wish to let us know of anything you feel should be included in this document please contact the school office.

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