

Beliefs and values

At infant level, this strand unit specifies values such as caring and sharing, rules and feelings. All of these overlap comfortably with both the SPHE curriculum and the Moral and Spiritual strand of the Learn Together curriculum.

At each of the other three levels, the curriculum refers to key values associated with a range of religious codes of conduct, and to their impact on how people behave as well as how these values can benefit society.

Outlined on attached pages are religious codes of conduct for Buddhism, Judaism, Islam and Christianity. These codes could be explored at various levels within the school - they could be introduced in each of the four junior classes, and explored in more detail in the four senior classes. Comparisons and common links could be made as the knowledge of the children increases. It should become clear that there is a commonality between them, all aiming at improved choices with regard to how we live our lives, to the benefit of society at large.

Judaism: The Ten Commandments

Jews believe that the Ten Commandments were revealed directly to Moses by God. They were written on tablets of stone, and dealt with people's relationship with God, and with each other. "Every aspect of Jewish life, from birth to death is marked by actions performed in obedience to the Commandments, and serve as a reminder to Jews to be constantly aware of God and his laws." (Ref: Religions of the World – Wayland)

For Jews the first commandment (to love and honour God) is the most important. It has a special name – the Shema. The commandments outline the code of conduct expected of Jews and are part of the Torah, the religious writings read in the synagogue on the Sabbath and on festival days. (Note: The first two read as one, otherwise this picture makes it look like eleven commandments!)

<http://media.libsyn.com/media/blogrelations/tencommand.mp3> has a free audio of the ten commandments. It's 4mins long approx, suitable for more junior levels, though might suit for an older class to recite at a whole school assembly either. It's related in simple, rhyming language.

Transcription of the story, and other bible story links at <http://storynory.com/2006/08/07/the-ten-commandments> (There is a very junior sounding intro, but the recitation afterwards is worth the wait.)

Buddhism: The Eightfold Path

Over its long history, Buddhism has developed into a wide variety of forms. However, all share a great respect for the values and teachings of the Buddha. **The Eightfold Path describes the way to the end of suffering, as laid out by Siddhartha Gautama.** It is a **practical guideline to ethical and mental development with the goal of freeing the individual from attachments, finally leading to understanding the truth about all things.**

1. Right Views (1 and 2 relate to Wisdom)

This simply means to see, know and understand things as they really are

2. Right Intentions

Right thoughts means letting go of want and desire, and acting with kindness to avoid hurting

3. Right Speech (3, 4 and 5 relate to Ethical Conduct)

Telling the truth, speaking kindly and wisely - words can break or save lives, make enemies or friends, start war or create peace.

4. Right Action

Right action means to act kindly and compassionately, to be honest, to respect the belongings of others, not stealing or cheating

5. Right Livelihood

Right livelihood means that one should earn one's living in a way that doesn't cause bloodshed or harm to others - wealth should be gained legally and peacefully.

6. Right Effort (6, 7 and 8 relate to Mental Development)

Positive thought - same type of energy that fuels desire, envy, aggression, and violence can on the other side fuel self-discipline, honesty, benevolence, and kindness, in order to keep to the Path

7. Right Concentration

Right concentration is the peaceful state of mind which arises through correct practice of the Eightfold Path. The Buddhist method to develop right concentration is through the practice of meditation.

8. Right Mindfulness

Right mindfulness enables us to be aware of the thought process in that we actively observe and control how our thoughts and actions affect the world, now and in the future.

Christianity: The Beatitudes

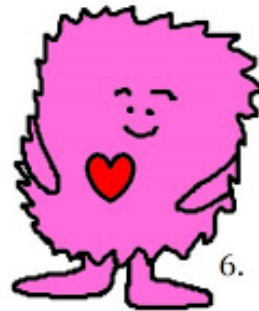
Christianity shares the Ten Commandments with Judaism. However it has another set of values, preached by Jesus, called the Beatitudes, which are written in Matthew's gospel in the New Testament.

The Beatitudes



7.

Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.



6.

Matthew 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Matthew 5:4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.



2.



3.

Matthew 5:5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Matthew 5:10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.



4.

Matthew 5:6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.



1.

Matthew 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.



8.



5.

Matthew 5:7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

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Muslim: The Five Pillars of Islam

Muslims have what they call the Five Pillars of Islam, these are the actions which arise out of their beliefs.

They are

1. Declaration of faith (Shahadah) There is no god but God and Muhammad is his prophet.
2. Prayer (Salah) Five daily prayer times are laid down, which are obligatory for all Muslims. Prayers must be said before sunrise, after midday, late afternoon, at sunset and during the night, in order to remember Allah in all their actions.

3. Fasting (Sawm): To abstain from eating or drinking what is against Islam, from sun rise to sunset, particularly during Ramadan. Fasting is seen to be a motivation to be kinder to fellow creatures.
4. Giving to charity (Zakat): This is the giving of a percentage of one's wealth (generally accepted to be 2.5%) to charity, to support the poor and the needy.
5. Pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj): This pilgrimage is a religious duty that must be carried out at least once in a lifetime by every able bodied Muslim, who can afford to do so. Muslims come from all over the world to join together for 6 days in a prescribed set of acts of worship.