

## 5.2 Guidance to develop Religious Education in the EYFS

This guidance takes account of the principles of the Curriculum Guidance for the EYFS “Setting the Standards for Learning, Development and Care for Children from birth to five” (DCSF 2008).

The principles which guide the work of all early years practitioners are grouped into four themes:

- **A Unique Child** - every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.\*
- **Positive Relationships** - children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.\*
- **Enabling Environments** - the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.\*
- **Learning and Development** - children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and inter-connected.\*

These four guiding themes work together to underpin effective practice in the delivery of the EYFS. They put the legal requirements into context, and describe how practitioners should support the development, learning and care of young children.\*

The EYFS promotes opportunities for children to become aware of themselves and others and to reflect on their experiences and feelings. It helps them to explore and share ideas about beliefs and practices. It encourages children to use their imagination, to observe, to

question, to wonder and to develop an appreciation of the world in which they live.

Included in the above are the Characteristics of effective learning. “The characteristics of learning run through and underpin all the areas of learning and development, representing processes rather than outcomes” (EYFS Profile Handbook 2013).

### Characteristics of Effective Learning

- **Playing and exploring – engagement**  
Finding out and exploring  
Playing with what they know  
Being willing to ‘have a go’
- **Active learning - motivation**  
Being involved and concentrating  
Keeping trying.  
Enjoying achieving what they set out to do
- **Creating and thinking critically – thinking**  
Having their own ideas  
Making links. Choosing ways to do things\*\*

### Meeting the diverse needs of children

Practitioners should promote positive attitudes to diversity and difference within all children. In doing this they will help them to learn to value different aspects of their own and other people's lives. This includes making sure that all children and families feel included, safe and valued; that all children and adults are treated as individuals and are not discriminated against; and that all children are listened to and respected.\*

Practitioners must plan for the needs of children from black and other minority ethnic backgrounds, including those learning English as an additional language, and for the needs of any children with learning difficulties or disabilities. Providers must actively avoid gender stereotyping and must challenge any expression of prejudice or discrimination, by children or adults.\*

### Assessment

Please see page 49 (4.4)

### Delivery of Themes 1, 2, 3

The activities have been designed to build upon the experience of the child. This will vary between and within settings. Whilst many of the activities will support a developing knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith, it is anticipated that practitioners will adapt the activities to support an introduction and developing awareness, knowledge and understanding of other faiths as and when appropriate, eg replacing references to church with mosque or synagogue and figures such as Mary and Joseph with Rama and Sita.

The following pages on the themes:

1. My World - Me, My Family, Other People
2. Special Times
3. Special Places are included as illustrative material to support effective planning and provision for religious education in the EYFS.

NB \* Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage (May 2008) DCSF

\*\* Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Sept 2012)

Early Years Foundation  
Stage:

Theme 1

My World – Me, My Family,  
Other People

LEARNING INTENTIONS

ELG 06	<b>Self-confidence and self-awareness:</b> Children are confident to try new activities and to say why they like some activities more than others. They are confident to speak in a familiar group, will talk about their ideas and will choose the resources they need for their chosen activities. They say when they do or don't need help
ELG 07	<b>Managing feelings and behaviour:</b> Children talk about how they and others show feelings, talk about their own and others' behaviour and its consequences and know that some behaviour is unacceptable. They work as part of a group or class and understand and follow rules. They adjust their behaviour to different situations and take changes of routine in their stride
ELG 08	<b>Making relationships:</b> Children play co-operatively, taking turns with others. They take account of one another's ideas about how to organize their activity. They show sensitivity to other's needs and feelings and form positive relationships with adults and other children
ELG 01	<b>Listening and attention:</b> Children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity.
ELG 02	<b>Understanding:</b> Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events
ELG 03	<b>Speaking:</b> Children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events
ELG 13	<b>People and communities:</b> Children talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members. They know that other children don't always enjoy the same things and are sensitive to this. They know about similarities and differences between themselves and others and among families, communities and traditions
ELG 14	<b>The world:</b> Children know about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things. They talk about the features of their own immediate environment and how environments might vary from one to another. They make observations of animals and plants and explain why some things occur and talk about changes
ELG 17	<b>Being imaginative:</b> Children use what they have learnt about media and materials in original ways, thinking about uses and purposes. They represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through design and technology, art, music, dance, role play and stories

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Suggestions for adult interaction, adult initiated experience and activities

Group Session

- Invite an extended family in to the setting to talk about who they are – which family they belong to
- Invite an identifiable group into the setting eg a dance group in uniform, a few

members of the church choir to sing, the school dinner ladies in their uniforms, two or three police officers, firefighters or nurses. Encourage discussion about the rules of the group and the consequences of doing something wrong

- Investigate why names are special – who gives us our names – introduce some names from the Bible and other relevant faiths

Adult Interaction

- Encourage the children to create rules for areas of the setting which support everyone being comfortable when playing there
- Challenge any negative attitudes regarding children’s identity, opinions, ideas or feelings

Expressive Arts and Design

Group Sessions

- Circle games using sound and percussion –matching facts about identity to sounds – using movement to demonstrate facts about identity
- Watch videos, listen to music, share stories, photographs and artefacts that represents

- Christian acts of worship eg Christmas, Sunday family service etc

- Acts of worship from a variety of cultures and family traditions

Adult Interaction

- Support children sensitively when they are painting or drawing themselves eg demonstrate how to mix various flesh shades using paint

Communication and Learning

Constant Provision

Role Play

- Add resources to basic home corner to encourage acting out different family situations eg tea time, cleaning the house, relaxation etc
- Provide experiences and resources to enable children to explore and discuss familiar and new cultural and community traditions

Mark Making Area

- Provide a range of materials and resources to enable children to respond to and record their experiences of their world

Creative Area

Ensure a good range of colours are available for drawing and painting eg flesh coloured crayons

Display/Book Corner

Ensure that our diverse world is represented eg posters and books with pictures of children from different parts of the world, in different dress, different identities, people with disabilities

Theme 1: My World - Learning Intentions

For Learning Intentions please see overleaf

KEY VOCABULARY

Feelings (sad, happy, comfortable), words (special words), stories (special stories), question/answer/ understand, finding out (look, listen, talk, think), right/wrong (rule, law), believe/not believe, faith, same/different, actions

(kneeling, closed eyes, praying singing), wonder, world, exciting, surprising, people (me/you, friend, family, stranger, teacher, carer), living/dead now, then, community and traditions

Listening Opportunities

Use photographs, masks, or a mirror to look at their own face to prompt recognition of different feelings.

Puppets/Small World

Provide puppets or small world toys that reflect a range of people from immediate community and beyond. Add props to suggest different parts of the world eg a forest, the sea, an island, a dark place, a very hot place etc

Group Sessions

- Use photographs, videos, stories, music from around the world to encourage children to ask and answer how and why questions
- Read stories about families and communities
- Read stories and poems about a range of feelings
- Invite people from different cultural backgrounds to come and tell the children stories about their life, what makes them happy/sad and about their beliefs
- Read stories from the Bible – invite a member of local clergy or children’s worker to come and read/tell their favourite stories
- Look at Bibles and other Holy/cultural books

Adult Interaction

- Encourage children to think about what their life is like – who helps and cares for them. Think about someone else’s life –is it the same/different
- Be a positive role model when talking to and working with colleagues
- Talk to children about special words and why we use them eg love, peace be with you, protect, thank you etc

Group Session

- Use Curiosity display to discuss belonging to groups and ask questions such as, “Why are these people a group?” “What is the same about them?” “Do they do anything that is the same?”

Understanding the World

NB Please refer to “Characteristics and Effective Learning” - Page 61 (5.2)



# Early Years Foundation Stage:

## Theme 2

## Special Times

### LEARNING INTENTIONS

ELG 06	<b>Self-confidence and self-awareness:</b> Children are confident to try new activities and to say why they like some activities more than others. They are confident to speak in a familiar group, will talk about their ideas and will choose the resources they need for their chosen activities. They say when they do or don't need help
ELG 07	<b>Managing feelings and behaviour:</b> Children talk about how they and others show feelings, talk about their own and others' behaviour and its consequences and know that some behaviour is unacceptable. They work as part of a group or class and understand and follow rules. They adjust their behaviour to different situations and take changes of routine in their stride
ELG 08	<b>Making relationships:</b> Children play co-operatively, taking turns with others. They take account of one another's ideas about how to organize their activity. They show sensitivity to other's needs and feelings and form positive relationships with adults and other children
ELG 01	<b>Listening and attention:</b> Children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity.
ELG 02	<b>Understanding:</b> Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events
ELG 03	<b>Speaking:</b> Children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events
ELG 13	<b>People and communities:</b> Children talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members. They know that other children don't always enjoy the same things and are sensitive to this. They know about similarities and differences between themselves and others and among families, communities and traditions
ELG 14	<b>The world:</b> Children know about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things. They talk about the features of their own immediate environment and how environments might vary from one to another. They make observations of animals and plants and explain why some things occur and talk about changes
ELG 17	<b>Being imaginative:</b> Children use what they have learnt about media and materials in original ways, thinking about uses and purposes. They represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through design and technology, art, music, dance, role play and stories





Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Suggestions for adult interaction, adult initiated experience and activities

Group Session

- Pass around a bag of 'special things' and invite children to take an object out of the bag and decide which is special and which is not. The collection of objects will be determined by interests and maturity of children or linked to a topic

- Encourage children to bring in an artefact celebrating a special time in their lives
- Visit a church or other celebration venue for a key celebration - does a special time such as a wedding always have to be in a church - what makes an event a 'Special Time'?

Adult Interaction

- Ask questions such as, 'Why is this special?' 'Does everyone think it is special?' 'How would this be used?' 'When would it be used?' 'Have you seen something like this before?' 'How does it make you feel?'

Constant Provision, child initiated experiences and activities

Role Play

- Provide additional resources such as birthday cake, wedding cake, party food, presents in appropriate wrapping paper, decorations and dressing up clothes
- Create a role play area or interactive display linked to a celebration or cultural event

Outside Play

- Provide resources such as picnic equipment to encourage children to act out family group outings
- Provide materials to encourage music making and dance

Mark Making

- Provide materials and tools to make special labels for displays, home bay eg star shaped card for labels.
- Flap books to record ideas about Christmas, glitter pens etc

Craft Area

- Provide a range of exciting materials eg gold paint, shiny paper, luminescent paper, printing equipment, peel off decorations etc

Music Area

- Provide tapes, music and a selection of relevant musical instruments

Malleable Materials

- Provide play dough in colours that encourage making party food, add glitter etc.

Water Play

- Provide resources for children to act out a baptism etc

Snack Table

- Provide a range of foods linked to a celebration for snacks

Construction Area

- Provide construction kits to encourage building a picture or model of the key places on a special journey or event relating to their own or others' experience

ICT

- Use appropriate ICT programmes to record and respond to community events
- Listen to story tapes, DVDs and the internet to listen to a variety of stories about special times
- Use a programme such as '2 simple' to design a card for a celebration
- Use a karaoke machine/CD player to encourage singing songs related to celebrations - creating own songs

Theme 2: Special Times

For Learning Intentions please see overleaf

KEY VOCABULARY

Special (special time), ceremony, feelings (joy, happy, sad), family, friends, excitement, waiting, preparation (get ready), take part in (join in), happening (music, sing, dance, eat, remember, watch etc),

Celebrations, (wedding, baptism, Eid, Divali, christening, Christmas, Easter, party etc) festival, community and traditions

Group Sessions

- Use stories and poems to encourage interest in festivals and celebrations
- Invite children to explore items of clothing and artefacts that represent celebrations

Adult Interaction

- Adult can model and talk about experiences such as preparations for a party
- Encourage children to explore descriptive vocabulary – put children's words into sentences
- Encourage and model skills of making Christmas cards, birthday cards – talk about appropriate messages using pictures and words
- Encourage children to ask and answer how and why questions

Group Session

- Invite a member of the local clergy (or other appropriate person) in to talk about and demonstrate a baptism or other important event
- Make mince pies, a birthday cake or decorations for a Christmas tree

Adult interaction

- Using curiosity table arrange objects, photographs, artefacts and pictures linked to a special time such as baptism. Encourage children to think about what makes an occasion 'special' eg do babies/people get baptised everyday, what happens at a baptism, who is there?

Expressive Arts and Design

Group Sessions

- Teach children party songs, games. Listen to music linked to festivals such as a carnival
- Show children a variety of stationery and decorations associated with special times
- Look at a variety of artists' interpretations of a festival of celebration and discuss preferences.
- Provide streamers to encourage children to respond to music with movement

Adult Interaction

- Instigate small groups forming to make special music or dance or to accompany the role play

Communication and Learning

Understanding the World

NB Please refer to "Characteristics and Effective Learning" - Page 61 (5.2)



Early Years Foundation  
Stage:

Theme 3

Special Places

LEARNING INTENTIONS

ELG 06	<b>Self-confidence and self-awareness:</b> Children are confident to try new activities and to say why they like some activities more than others. They are confident to speak in a familiar group, will talk about their ideas and will choose the resources they need for their chosen activities. They say when they do or don't need help
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Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Suggestions for adult interaction, adult initiated experience and activities

Group Session

- Read stories, poems or ask an adult to describe 'my special place' – encourage responses using all the senses

Adult Interaction

- Adult model empathy for different ideas, preferences when talking about special places

Expressive Arts and Design

Group Sessions

- Explore examples of colour, texture used in places of worship eg tapestry, vestments, altar-cloths, architecture such as windows, carvings etc – do they tell a story? Mix some of the colours together eg purple, make a group collage using a range of materials
- Discuss paintings by famous artists who have contributed to places of worship, such as \*Leonardo or \*Michelangelo
- Provide dough, clay for children to create responses to the artefacts they have seen

Adult Interaction

- Model skills such as paper folding and cutting, threading needles etc
- Participating in children's imaginative play linked to Special Places

Communication and Learning

Group Sessions

- Children bring in photographs/ artefacts etc reflecting a special place within their experience to discuss similarities and differences
- Share images of special places/buildings from around the world and a range of faiths

Adult Interaction

- Model and explain representation of symbols

Group

- Use how and why questions to talk about their meaning and explore why a place is special
- Look at photographs of places of worship, identify shapes and how they are used
- Look at use of decorative tiling such as mosaic

Constant Provision

Outside Play

- Following discussion about, 'my special place' provide resources for children to create a special place eg a tent with decorations, drapes and cushions, an identical area under some bushes, very large cardboard boxes and paints etc, an old boat, a willow structure, a bench.

Creative Area

- Provide ribbon, special fabrics, gold thread and large needles or bodkins, buttons, foils etc to encourage representation of objects seen in places of worship
- Provide materials and tools for children to explore use of shapes to create pictures linked to places to worship eg the seating, a window, a mosaic design etc

Theme 3: Special Places

For Learning Intentions please see overleaf

KEY VOCABULARY

Special (places, buildings, areas), object (artefact, statue, pictures, paintings), group meeting (gathering together), worship (sing, dance, pray, prayer), listen (quiet/noisy,

think, be still), belief (same/different), comfortable, place of worship (church/chapel) Community and traditions

Mark Making and Craft Area

- Provide a range of tools and resources to encourage children to express their understanding of Special Places

Sand Tray

- Provide a range of tools to make symbols in the wet sand – add small pebbles, marbles to provide variety

Role Play

- Provide resources for children to create a special place

Curiosity Area

- Link a display of photographs of 'special places' in the world, including the natural world and buildings, to artefacts that children can handle

Construction Area

- Provide photographs of a variety of places of worship that represent a range of building materials. Use artefacts or provide photographs. Ensure children feel free to spend time on a construction and know they can borrow resources from other areas to complete models

Group Session

- Visit a local place of worship – ask a member of the faith community to be on hand to answer questions and draw attention to hidden treasures. Don't forget to explore any outside area if possible – talk about how people get to the place of worship, why there is a bell etc

Adult interaction

- Adult to play alongside eg become the vicar or parent bringing child to church service etc. Model handling of artefacts on curiosity table – draw children's attention to picture of special places in the world when creating their own special place. Model appropriate behaviour when visiting places of worship
- Demonstrate tolerance of different views when talking about places of worship and contents
- Help children to verbalise their plans when building models – encouraging developing use of appropriate vocabulary

- Ask questions such as: how big will your place of worship be, why, what will happen there, what will people need, how did all the things get here, can you see something old, can you see something new?

Understanding the World

NB Please refer to “Characteristics and Effective Learning” - Page 61 (5.2)