

Unit 8B What does the Resurrection of Jesus mean for Christians today?

About the unit

This unit looks at the ways in which Christians today find meanings, hopes and challenges in the New Testament Gospel accounts and stories of Jesus, particularly those associated with Easter and the Resurrection. The unit encourages pupils to examine and reflect on other sources of human meaning, challenge and hope in the light of their study of elements of the Christian tradition, and so facilitates learning from religion.

This unit structure could be applied to studies of other stories and festivals from different religious traditions, focusing on contemporary celebrations and their meaning and importance to believers/adherents.

This unit is expected to take approximately 7 hours, plus homework/private study.

Where the unit fits in

Building on earlier study of the festival of Easter and the story of Jesus in the gospels, the unit focuses on the contemporary meanings of belief in Jesus for Christians.

The unit prepares pupils for GCSE RE/RS by broadening their understanding of celebration and sacred text and helping them to reflect on meaning in the Christian tradition.

Where 'Jesus: today, tomorrow, forever?' fits in

The Curriculum notes have been adapted to show how the Video, Jesus, today, tomorrow, forever? and the accompanying web-site, www.Jesusfortoday.co.uk can be used when doing this Unit.

Expectations

At the end of this unit -

Most pupils will: compare and contrast some of the stories, beliefs and teachings associated with Easter and show that they understand some of the ways the Easter stories offer meaning for the lives of Christians today; respond in writing to questions about life after death, and to some Christian answers to these questions, and explain some Christian perspectives, *eg on the purpose of Jesus' life and death*; compare and contrast some responses to the biblical Resurrection stories; identify other people's beliefs and express their own views, explaining their reasons; express their own values and commitments, and relate their insight to their study of Christianity; explain why they agree or disagree with other views about life after death

Some pupils will not have made so much progress and will: show their knowledge and understanding of Easter and Christian beliefs; identify and consider some basic questions about human experience posed in the Easter stories and celebrations

Some pupils will have progressed further and will: evaluate the Christian belief that Jesus is alive; explain some Easter celebrations; begin to explain the development of Christian practice and ways of life in relation to their historical and cultural contexts; express their understanding of Christian perspectives on hope

Prior learning

It is helpful if pupils have:

- been taught about the life of Jesus as a starting point for the Christian religion
- been taught about the ways festivals are celebrated, including examples such as Christmas, or festivals from other religious traditions
- learnt to interpret celebrations in the light of traditional stories
- had an opportunity to develop skills of empathy, interpretation and reflection

Language for learning

Through the activities in this unit pupils will be able to understand, use and spell correctly words relating to:

- Christian belief and celebration, *eg resurrection, ascension, miracle, believer, sceptic, Easter, life after death*

Speaking and listening – through the activities pupils could:

- describe and evaluate how the work was undertaken and what led to the conclusions

Reading – through the activities pupils could:

- distinguish facts from hypotheses/theories/opinions and how far information is complete and helpful

Writing – through the activities pupils could:

- group sentences into paragraphs that are clearly focused and well developed
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Resources

As well as a range of textbooks and published resources, this unit will be enhanced by:

- accounts of the views of present-day believers – the page of Questions of Life and Death on the web-site www.Jesusfortoday.co.uk contains helpful interviews on this topic.
- biblical accounts of the Resurrection of Jesus
- modern accounts of the celebration of Easter in a variety of Christian communities – eg the Video, Jesus, today, tomorrow, forever? and the Cheltenham Passion Play. The web-site www.Jesusfortoday.co.uk contains a summary of the story of Jesus, using stills and video clips of the Passion Play.
- source material from people questioning or disputing the accounts given by Christian believers – e.g. the vox pop material in Jesus for Today – there are some video clips of this material on the web site.
- resources from a variety of media – visual, musical, video and poetic – which exemplify a range of responses to religious hopes for life after death – eg Jesus for Tomorrow
- source material from Christian people reflecting on the idea that ‘Jesus is alive’ and exploring the meaning of this conviction – eg interviews on the Web site and in the Video

Out-of-school learning

Pupils could:

- visit a church or Christian community for an interview or to discuss what the Resurrection means. Links on the web site, www.Jesusfortoday.co.uk help pupils to explore different ways of celebrating Easter.
 - do some wider reading on Easter customs through history and from around the world – there are particularly valuable links to various Stations of the Cross on the web site, www.Jesusfortoday.co.uk
 - use the internet and e-mail, *eg one of the ‘Interact’ options in www.re-xs.ucsm.ac.uk*, to talk with young people around the world about their beliefs about the physical resurrection of Jesus
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Future learning

Pupils could go on to:

- look in greater depth at the similarities and differences between gospel accounts of the Easter story analysing what these accounts tell us about the authors and their beliefs
- talk to a range of Christians from different denominations about what the Resurrection means to them. This could complement the interviews on the Video – Jesus ... today, tomorrow, forever?
- research in greater detail Easter symbolism and celebrations from around the world
- explore Christian theology on life and death. Some of the links on the links page of www.Jesusfortoday.co.uk have good sites to visit to explore theological questions further. The page of Questions of Life and Death on the web site is another helpful resource.
- speak to a Christian worker from a hospice about beliefs on life and death. Both Peter and John were played by Doctors in the Cheltenham Passion Play. Dr David Lyle is Doctor at the Sue Ryder home, Cheltenham’s hospice, and helped to put together the meditation on death. There are useful links on the web site to Winston’s Wish, a Gloucestershire bereavement support service for bereaved children.

| What happened at the first Easter? | | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about the biblical accounts of Jesus' Resurrection and appearances to his followers • about a range of contemporary responses to these accounts, <i>eg Josephus</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show two film/video versions of the Easter story – <i>eg Jesus... today, tomorrow and forever?</i> Ask pupils to compare a cinema-style version of the story of Jesus with a community street theatre presentation and answer a range of questions, <i>eg Which version did they prefer and why? How were the versions different and similar?</i> • Encourage pupils to investigate two of the Gospel accounts of the Easter story, <i>eg Mark 16 and Luke 24</i>, comparing and contrasting their details, and answering a range of questions, <i>eg produce a storyboard telling one version of the Easter story; create a table to list the similarities and differences between the two Gospel accounts.</i> • Ask small groups to work on solutions to what could have happened to Jesus' body. Think about the disciples/Roman soldiers/Josephus/Jewish leaders and God. Share solutions as a class and make a table where solutions can be displayed and then critically evaluated. Pupils weigh up respective claims and write in their solution, explaining why they hold to it. They answer the question <i>Why do Christians believe in the Resurrection of Jesus?</i> Interviews on the Video and the website will be helpful. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • express and explain why they prefer different accounts • list similarities and differences in the Gospel accounts of the Resurrection story • describe and evaluate explanations of the disappearance of Jesus' body • discuss how far we can distinguish between facts and hypotheses/theories with regard to the Resurrection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This aspect of the unit develops many of the same skills as the history curriculum, <i>eg interpretation</i>, as well as RE skills in studying belief. There may be links to build on here. • Language for learning: pupils might tackle a sequencing exercise to check and reinforce their understanding of the Resurrection stories. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.Jesusfortoday.co.uk has a useful links page which has easy access to a number of valuable web sites which will help in this process of historical research. • It also contains a guided tour for use by pupils in ICT |
| What does the Resurrection mean? | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about some of the ways in which Christians express their hopes and beliefs about the Resurrection, <i>eg through art, music or in words</i> • about some of the ways Christians link Easter to their hopes for the future | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask pupils to research the meanings Christians find in the stories of the 'risen Jesus' today, <i>eg by preparing questions, and interviewing a Christian visitor, or by studying written material.</i> Discuss concepts such as: life after death, hope, presence of Jesus, triumph of Jesus over death. Use interviews in Jesus for Tomorrow and on the web site. • Listen to some examples of the music Christians use to celebrate the Resurrection and their belief in heaven/life after death. Ask pupils to express their own reflections and beliefs about the end of life. When I survey accompanies the meditations on Death and Resurrection in Jesus for ever the same. • Discuss some Christian and other ideas about the purpose of Jesus' life, and destiny. • Encourage pupils to analyse some of the ways that Christian artists have responded to the Resurrection, <i>eg in visual art or drama.</i> Identify concepts of the Resurrection that are shown in pieces of art and ask pupils to express and explain their feelings and responses to the different interpretations. See section on art on the links page at www.Jesusfortoday.co.uk | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain some Christian ideas about life after death in speaking or writing • explain their responses to these ideas giving reasons for their views • discuss the idea of destiny, and the influence and significance of Jesus • describe what they like and dislike about pictures of the Resurrection, explaining their reasons • identify Christian meanings in works of art and music | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language for learning: when pupils are asked to express their own ideas, it is good practice to rely not only on written language for responses, but also on art, poetry, conversation or other ways of expressing meaning. • Using music in the lesson could link to music. • Choose examples of art and music from a range of periods and cultures. • The links page of www.Jesusfortoday.co.uk has a section devoted to Jesus in art, and some fascinating links to the Chester and York Mystery play cycles. |

| What about life after death? | | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about the variety of ways in which human experiences associated with death, loss and hope, and meaning in life are expressed • to consider the question <i>Where do people find hope for the future?</i> • to reflect on their own response to human experience of life and death | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite small groups to organise a survey of opinions about life after death from a group of their choosing (parents, friends, members of a faith community). They would need to plan questions, collect and organise responses, discuss and record how the responses help clarify their own thoughts or influence them to a change of view. Surveys and responses can be fed back to the whole class through display or summary. Groups can also be asked to explain the processes they followed in the survey and discuss how they managed the sensitivities of the work. • Ask pupils to classify the responses under the headings of 'religious' and 'non-religious'. Discuss the reasons why there can be no 'right' answers to the questions they have asked, only beliefs. The contrast between the Vox Pop interviews and the interviews with those who took part in the Passion Play in Jesus for Today are very interesting. • Consider examples of people who rescue others from despair, including stories of Christian conversion. Ask pupils to write about one example from the point of view of a friend of the person involved. A number of stories are told on the Video that could be used to illustrate this point. • Pupils could design or plan a 'window of hope' for a sacred space of their own choosing. Ask pupils to consider colours, symbols and words that they might want to include. Show the class some examples of art/stained glass windows/banners/wall hangings which express 'hope' to help them with their own ideas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cheltenham Passion Play used banners to depict the Stations of the Cross. The links page on the web-site, www.Jesusfortoday.co.uk has a section devoted to the Way of the Cross. It includes links to two sites which describe the custom of using Stations of the Cross. Children could be invited to visit a local church and look at the Stations of the Cross on the wall of the church. Pupils could be invited to design their own stations of the cross. • The guided tour of the web-site could be used by pupils at the computer to guide them around the web-site as they answer the four key questions posed by this unit. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • question and survey other people's opinions and consider their relevance to their own thinking • describe how they undertook a sensitive task and arrived at their conclusions • classify responses as religious and non-religious • suggest reasons why questions about life after death are unanswerable • give a response to stories from Christianity about hope or conversion • express in art their own sense of hope for the future | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language for learning: explaining the survey processes provides opportunity for pupils to describe and evaluate how the work was undertaken and what led to the conclusions. • ICT: pupils could use a spreadsheet or database to record, present and analyse the data. • There are potential links with art and design, and design and technology. • This lesson could be upsetting to a pupil who has recently suffered a bereavement. Care needs to be taken to check whether any pupils are in this situation. In these circumstances teachers might find the Winston's Wish Web site helpful. Winston's Wish is a bereavement support service for children who are bereaved based in Gloucestershire but serving other areas as well. For a link to Winston's Wish click on the word 'grief' in the section about the meditation on Death on the Jesus for ever the same page of the web site. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matt Medhurst who played the part of Christ and Wendy Dawson who played the part of Mary, the Mother of Jesus both have moving stories to tell of their own experience of bereavement. Wendy's prayer meditation on Death in Jesus for ever the same is a moving exploration of the grieving process. |

| What does the Resurrection of Jesus mean for Christians today? | | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about how the events of the first Easter Day are celebrated by different groups of Christians in the contemporary world • why Christians celebrate Easter | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage research into Easter celebrations and customs from around the world, and their meanings, with groups making presentations to the class. Some of the links in the Jesusfortoday.co.uk web site will help pupils to carry out this research. • Pupils could examine the celebration of Easter in their own community from a range of newspaper articles, looking at two or more varieties of Christian practice, then write about similarities and differences. • Show pupils some artefacts and symbols associated with Easter and use them to explore questions, <i>eg In what ways might a Christian family celebrate Easter? How does Easter affect the life of a Christian? What does the cross symbolise for Christians?</i> Ask them to record their answers for use in the next task. The section on the Way of the Cross on the links page of the www.Jesusfortoday.co.uk web site has interesting links to the practice in some churches of following the Stations of the Cross. • Revisit concepts to do with the Resurrection identified earlier. Display them in a list, then ask pupils to answer the question <i>What does the Resurrection of Jesus mean for Christians today?</i> using each concept as a separate paragraph heading or topic and giving examples and explanations of how Christians reflect each idea. Interviews in the programme, and Questions of life and death on the web site are a useful resource for this exercise. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe in detail some Easter customs • identify and explain some symbols of new life • ask and answer questions about the meaning behind symbolic words, actions, objects and foods • compare different Easter practices • explain the significance of Easter for Christians today | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils might link work using artefacts to art and design, <i>eg by making close, observational drawings</i> • Teachers may be able to link work on celebratory food to design and technology, although the RE focus needs to be clear. • Language for learning: developing paragraphs around each concept provides opportunity for pupils to group sentences into paragraphs which are clearly focused and well developed. • Links to the Easter page, and to the use of art and drama on the links page of the web site www.Jesusfortoday.co.uk provide a number of useful resources. |

| Other ideas for using the Video, Jesus ... today, tomorrow, forever? and the Web Site www.Jesusfortoday.co.uk | | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore the themes of friendship, conflict, betrayal, death and resurrection • themes of gender, violence, breaking barriers down • the people of the passion – Jesus, disciples, women, religious leaders, civic leaders • link between story of Jesus then and the church in the world of today | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus for Tomorrow is divided into the five Acts of the Passion Play: friendship, conflict, betrayal, death, resurrection. Each section finishes with a question on the screen for discussion. Pause the programme at the end of each section and invite inter-action from the class. • Before watching the video take the class to the ITC room – the web site www.Jesusfortoday.co.uk contains an on-line guided tour of the web-site and a worksheet which can be downloaded, photocopied and handed out to the class. It suggests a route through the web site, exploring the four questions posed in this unit. • The web site contains an inter-active version of the Guide. One page tells the story of Jesus using video clips from the Passion Play; another includes audio or video clips of Questions about Life and Death. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the web site www.Jesusfortoday.co.uk to research topics for this unit. • Use the people page of the Web site to explore the main characters of the Gospel story. • Use the text page to explore the biblical text. • Use the on location page to plan a passion play in your community. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The guide which comes with the video is the basis of the www.Jesusfortoday.co.uk web site. • In addition the web site contains extracts from the play, together with audio and video clips in realtime video from the Video. • To make the Web site user friendly there is an on-line tour of the site, and a downloadable worksheet to help pupils explore the site and its links. |