

Playful RE: A lego menorah



Playful RE: dens and tents



Playful RE: Small world nativity



***Planning Support:
Exemplar units of study.***

***Playful RE:
An approach for Early
Years***

***EYFS - AGE GROUP: 4-
5s***

***Non-statutory
exemplification of RE
through play for the
Reception Class
Wolverhampton SACRE
2021***

***"In early RE, children learn
more from play than
anything else. Songs, stories,
visits, experiences and
artefacts can be stimulating,
but in play children make
meanings for themselves. For
better RE with 4-5s, play
more."***

***Planned from the early
learning goals, these
examples of playful RE will
help teachers to set up good
early RE learning about
different communities and
beliefs***

Playful RE: Making opportunities for RE through continuous provision and guided play. **YEAR GROUP: Reception, ages 4-5**

About this approach to EYFS RE

This is not a 'curriculum plan' in the ways RE Today usually makes and provides plans for teachers. Instead, it provides a series of examples for the teacher to use and to develop, focused on the integrated provision of RE in the Reception class through play.. Many of these develop in continuous provision. In the Reception Class, opportunities for RE often occur most naturally through play. The Early Learning Goals that relate to RE are highlighted here in ways that we hope teachers will find useful in setting up situations where young children can explore some RE content for themselves. It is very good for RE if children can explore, question and respond to religious stories, celebrations, objects, music and experiences in play, talk and experience.

Hence the creation of this set of planning suggestions for EYFS RE for the Reception Class, in which a range of different ideas for children's playful RE are provided, alongside relevant ELGs and suggestions for teachers to develop the learning.

The focus is on developing children's enjoyment of and engagement with RE experiences, stories, music and activities through talk and play.

RE Aims. Children will be enabled:

- To know and understand simple facts and ideas about some different religions
- To know and understand some religious stories
- To express ideas and emotions of their own in relation to the RE content they encounter
- To gain and deploy skills of talking and playing together especially as they relate to religion and belief.

Where this unit fits in:

This unit will help teachers to build high quality RE from the beginning of children's time in school. It will provide clear and realistic foundations for the RE that follows by making children's first encounters with RE both fun and intriguing. The unit anticipates a further study of different religions and celebrations, stories, music and play. The planning envisages a mix of adult guided and child initiated activity through the 7 areas of learning (5 of which have strong connections to early RE learning – connections to Mathematics and physical development are less significant).

Time for RE in the Reception Class.

When planning RE curriculum units for key stages 1 and 2 we often suggest a teaching time slot of 8 or 10 hours. In this case, there is no suggested time, because the play opportunities will be best used in continuous provision, and through children's imaginative engagement. In some circumstances, teachers may choose not to teach this unit all at once but to place lessons from it at points throughout the school year which suit and are helpful for their particular class.

Developing attitudes in RE

Children will be encouraged to:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be curious • Explore • Find out • Take notice of what is interesting • Use all their senses to learn • Ask questions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have fun • Develop confidence • Say what they think • Listen to what others think and say • Listen to and join in with songs • Enjoy teamwork | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take turns • Appreciate different experiences • Wonder at the wonderful • Thank and be thanked • Praise and be praised |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Vocabulary + concepts	Resources: teachers might use...
<p>Through this work - and play - pupils will have opportunities to use words and phrases related to RE:</p> <p>Christian Muslim Sikh Jewish Jesus Moses Guru Nanak Prophet Muhammad</p> <p>They will talk about faith stories and 'special' times, objects and foods.</p>	<p>RE Today Services (www.retoday.org.uk) publish relevant items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring a Theme in RE: Founders and Leaders (RE Today) • Opening Up Belonging, Opening Up Islam, Opening Up Christianity ed. Fiona Moss, RE Today • 'Say Hello to...' 'Share a story with...' (2014) (Interactive CDs and books – 6 religions and easy ways to begin, using stories of children's lives and from traditional sources) • Talking Pictures: Stephen Pett and Fiona Moss, a visual learning disc and picture pack, 2012. <p>Web:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The BBC's clip bank is a major source for short RE films that can be accessed online and shown for free: http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/subjects/zxnygk7 ▪ New Bitesize 4-7 RE materials from the BBC are available in 2022. ▪ Teachers are especially enjoying using the BBC series 'Religions of the World' (2017), ten short octonaut style animations of stories from 6 different faiths. ▪ The BBC also offers lots of information and material on its main religion site: www.bbc.co.uk/religion ▪ The best gateway for RE sites is: www.reonline.org.uk ▪ You can find and use searchable sacred texts from many religions at: www.ishwar.com ▪ Good quality information and learning ideas on Christianity: www.request.org.uk/restart ▪ The websites of REToday and NATRE are useful places for pupils and teachers to see examples of work. www.retoday.org.uk and www.natre.org.uk/spiritedarts ▪ www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/holydays/eid ul fitr.shtml ▪ www.bethanyroberts.com/Easter Customs.htm
<p>Contributions to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and to exploring and promoting British values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opportunities for spiritual development come from thinking and talking about big questions and from reflecting on what is wonderful and awesome ▪ Opportunities for moral development come from talking about what is fair and from working in teams and co-operating ▪ Opportunities for social development come from playing together collaboratively with other children ▪ Opportunities for cultural development come from finding out about different cultures and beliefs ▪ Opportunities for development of British values by enabling pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem, self-confidence and mutual tolerance. 	

RE can be taught through all areas of the Reception class curriculum, developing children's key skills and knowledge through the following possible opportunities.

Prime area: Communication and Language. RE enables children to:

- Develop their spoken language through quality conversation in a language-rich environment, gaining new vocabulary about religion and worldviews
- Engage actively with stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems from the RE field, taking opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts
- Share their ideas via conversation, story-telling and role play, responding to support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate their thoughts in the RE field
- Become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures in relation to RE content.
- Offer explanations and answers to 'why' questions about religious stories, non-fiction, rhymes, songs and poems.

Prime area: Personal, Social and Emotional Development. RE enables children to:

- Observe and join in warm and supportive relationships with adults and learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others
- Manage emotions and develop a positive sense of self, understanding their own feelings and those of others e.g. through religious story
- Talk and think about simple values as they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably
- Notice and respond to ideas about caring, sharing and kindness from RE content including stories, sayings and songs.

Prime area: Physical Development. RE enables children to:

- Use and develop their motor skills through RE based arts and craft activities and, for example, small world play, visual representations of their ideas and thoughts, role play

Specific area: Literacy. RE enables children to:

- Build their abilities in language comprehension through talking with adults about the world around them, including the world of religion and belief
- Engage with stories and non-fiction in RE settings and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together.
- Build their skills in RE-related word reading, recognizing religious words and discovering new vocabulary in relation to religions and worldviews
- Articulate ideas and use RE examples to write simple phrases or sentences that can be read by others.

Specific area: Mathematics. RE enables children to:

- Develop their spatial reasoning skills, noticing shape, space and measures in relation to RE content
- Look for patterns and relationships and spot connections, sorting and ordering objects simply.

Specific area: Understanding the World. RE enables children to:

- Make sense of their physical world and their community, e.g. on visits to places of worship, or by meeting members of religious communities
- Listen to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems to foster understanding of our culturally, socially and ecologically diverse world.
- Extend their knowledge and familiarity with words that support understanding of religion and belief
- Talk about the lives of people around them, understanding characters and events from stories.
- Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read and experienced in class.
- Explore the natural world around them making observations of animals and plants, environments and seasons, making space for responses of joy, wonder, awe and questioning.

Specific area: Expressive Arts and Design. RE enables children to:

- Develop artistic and cultural awareness in relation to RE materials in relation to art, music, dance, imaginative play, and role-play and stories to represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings.
- Build their imagination and creativity by exploring and playing with a wide range of media and materials using RE content, responding in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, smell, touch and taste.
- See, hear and participate in a wide range of examples of religious and spiritual expression, developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts.
- Create work drawing from religions and beliefs with a variety of materials and tools, sharing their creations and explaining the meaning of their work.
- Adapt and recount religious stories inventively, imaginatively and expressively, and sing, perform and learn from well-told stories from different religions.

LEARNING INTENTIONS from the Early Learning Goals, applied to RE	IMPLEMENTATION: TEACHING AND LEARNING IDEAS: Including informal, play based learning and RE as part of continuous provision.	IMPACT: LEARNING OUTCOMES	<i>Points to note</i>
Find out about leaders and followers: games and stories			
<p>Communication and language: children answer 'who', 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences in response to stories, experiences or events from different traditions and communities;</p> <p>Understanding the world: children begin to know about some similarities and differences between their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people;</p>	<p>Follow my leader:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You could begin by talking about the school crossing patrol. Invite the lollipop lady or man to come and show the class what they do. Everyone follows the lollipop, to be safe, and it can be friendly as well. ▪ Alternatively start with the game 'Simon says' and think and talk about following a lead, and following instructions. ▪ There are lots of 'lead and follow' games which children enjoy. Show them some of these, including those where we sit in a circle and copy a leader, or do a walking 'follow my leader' with hands on each other's shoulders, or follow a leader who knows some dance moves. Take some photos to talk about later. ▪ Teach children that we all follow leaders sometimes. Examples from sports, school or family life can be talked about along with an example of a religious leader: Jesus, Moses or Guru Nanak. These leaders had followers called 'disciples' – it is just another word for 'follower'. <p>Faith story: being a disciple</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tell a story of a disciple in an engaging way, such as through use of a story sack or drama. A good example would be Jesus finding and calling his first followers, four fishermen. Talk about why they wanted to follow Jesus. Another example would be a story about Guru Nanak and Mardana, his faithful follower who was a musician. A Jewish example could be about Moses leading the people through the parted waters of the Red Sea to escape from slavery. ▪ Opportunity for continuous provision: Show children how to make a person from a card outline, or a peg, or straws, pipe cleaners, or in some other simple way. Can they dress the person in coloured tissue, and give them a happy face (sharpie pens work well)? Individual pupils can make a crowd of followers and a leader, although this takes lots of effort, so pupils may want to work with their friends to do this. Set the play ideas loose, and encourage the children to work in teams. <p style="text-align: right;">CONTINUED</p>	<p>All pupils listen to and enjoy religious stories about faith leaders.</p> <p>Many pupils listen to and begin to respond to religious stories about faith leaders through play and classroom talk.</p> <p>Some pupils listen to and respond to religious stories about faith leaders through play and classroom talk. They can recall at least 1 religious story.</p> <p>NB In order to meet these outcomes, pupils should all have the opportunity to use imaginative and co-operative play to explore, find out for themselves and learn about religion.</p>	<p><i>Some children aged 4 already know their own faith well, but others are confused by the word 'religion'.</i></p> <p><i>Make it clear and simple.</i></p> <p><i>Use all the adults in the classroom to get involved in the talk and questioning.</i></p>

PSED: children work as part of group, taking turns and sharing fairly, understanding that groups of people need agreed values and codes of behaviour. They respond to ideas about caring and sharing.

- Children might talk about who they follow and why: friends, teachers, lollipop crossing patrollers, parents, family members, carers and others.
- Children might hear and sing a song that retells a religious story, making up actions and drawings to go with it.

Questions for classroom talk:

- Who was a good leader? Who had fun being a follower?
- I wonder if it is more fun to be leader or follower? Are there times when it is a bad idea to follow someone else (e.g. if they are doing something silly or wrong)? What makes someone a good leader?
- I wonder why Jesus, Nanak and Moses have millions of followers all over the world?
- I wonder who wants to be a leader? How and why?



Liam's picture shows Jesus and his followers

LEARNING INTENTIONS from the Early Learning Goals, applied to RE	IMPLEMENTATION: TEACHING AND LEARNING IDEAS: informal, play based and part of continuous provision.	IMPACT: LEARNING OUTCOMES	<i>Points to note</i>
Role play church: after a visit (also applies to other religious buildings of course)			
<p>Communication and language: children use talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking, ideas, feelings and events;</p> <p>Literacy: children build their abilities in language comprehension through talking with adults about the world around them and discover and use some examples of new religious vocabulary.</p>	<p>Be explorers!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take the children on an exploration visit to a church or another place of worship. Before you go talk about it. Take the class teddy or toy with you and take photos of the toy in the sacred building. ▪ Ask all the children in pairs to set the toy up for a photo – with a Bible, with a cross, at a font or in front of some stained glass. ▪ Use these as reminders back at school, and to talk about symbols, meanings and activities. Can some pupils match single word flashcards to the photos, recalling what they saw at Church? <p>Tell a story, play a song</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hear a faith story while you are at the church or other holy building. ▪ If appropriate, play or sing a simple song which children who frequent that place of worship would sing there. Ask at the place of worship if they have a simple CD of children’s worship songs you could borrow and use. ▪ Sing the song back at school, and talk about how and why songs are used to worship God: ask ‘do you think the people sing to God for a reason? I wonder why?’ ▪ Ask children to imagine, and to draw what they think the holy place is like when everyone is there to worship God. This provides an opportunity for literacy work with simple words and phrases. <p style="text-align: right;">CONTINUED</p>	<p>All pupils join in with a trip to a holy building and play in the role play area</p> <p>Most pupils join in with and respond well to a trip to a holy building. They play in the role play area and may be able to name or talk about some of the features of the holy building.</p> <p>Some pupils join in with and respond well to a trip to a holy building. They can correctly name and talk about important features during role play and setting up of the role play area.</p> <p>NB ‘Experiential RE’ is important in helping pupils to achieve these outcomes. Children should have the opportunity to learn about what happens in a church or another holy building through experience. They should have time to respond imaginatively through play to their trip and stories and any songs heard.</p>	<p>If children can meet some Christians at the church, this is always good: it is not a museum! Have a story and a song while you are there, do some drawing, take some photos, play a game about co-operation, caring, sharing or kindness.</p>


Expressive arts and design: children develop artistic and cultural awareness in relation to RE content. They use their creativity in imaginative play, rôle-play and stories to represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings. They adapt and recount religious stories inventively, and imaginatively.


Back in the classroom, set up a role play place of worship


- Make a space in the classroom into a place of worship (base this on the place of worship that you visited - so if you visited a church, make a church) for a week or two. Use whatever you have for role play, and add some coloured fabric, some photos from the real place of worship, some simple artefacts to handle, some ways of dressing up. Can there be a music player with some songs from the religious community? Ask children to come up with ideas about how to make the play place of worship more like the real one.
- Donna from Warwickshire contributes these ideas: "After exploring our local church we have both indoor and outdoor role play areas as a church. This area really takes off after we've had an enactment of a wedding and a baptism for our reception children as the children then act out their experiences in the role play area. Over the years we've been doing this children have acted out Christmas and Easter services which we attend at All Saints and Sunday School experiences as well. Baskets of props are good: the children use these to develop their play. Amongst things we've found children playing with are Bibles and crosses in dens ("it's a church. It's a quiet place to talk to God"). Once, I noticed the children wading across a large piece of blue fabric, escaping from Pharaoh's armies! As well as promoting RE, these kinds of play develop personal and social skills and communication skills including expanding vocabulary. Most of all play is fun!"




Lauren has made her own scarf, decorated with symbols, like the one she found about when she visited the church and met Father David the priest.


LEARNING INTENTIONS from the Early Learning Goals, applied to RE	IMPLEMENTATION: TEACHING AND LEARNING IDEAS: informal, play based and part of continuous provision.	IMPACT: LEARNING OUTCOMES	<i>Points to note</i>
Find out about religious artefacts and what happens in holy buildings: model making			
<p>Understanding the world: Children make sense of their community. They talk about similarities and differences between themselves and others, among families, communities and traditions;</p> <p>They explore, observe and find out about places and objects that matter in different cultures and beliefs.</p> <p>PSED: children talk and think about simple values. They respond to significant experiences showing a range of feelings when appropriate.</p>	<p>What objects are used in religions for people to worship God?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin with children’s own experience – you could ask when we light candles, and make a little list of examples. Sit in a circle round a table full of candles of different sizes and light them one by one, asking children to stare at the flames, and see what thoughts come. Show some candles (or images of them) used in Jewish or Christian worship – a seven branched candlestick, a Menorah, is used by Jewish people as a sign of their religion. Show children one of these. Christians use candles on an altar in a church, a sign that they believe God is with them. Use a feely bag to introduce pupils to a selection of religious objects: use three or four from, Jewish community life on one day, and three or four from Christian community another day. Examples of objects from Judaism could be: a menorah, scroll, 6 pointed star of David, kippah (skull cap). Examples of objects from Christianity could be: a cross, bread and wine cup, font, bible or many more. Tell the background stories of the objects one by one – who makes, buys, uses and likes these? What do they remind people of, and why are the important? <p>Continuous Provision: Clay Crosses, Lego Menorahs Play Doh Fonts, Cardboard Candles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show children how to make their own simple versions of objects like those that were in the feely bag. Leave them to play. Claire, from Sussex comments: “We make fun use of modelling materials to recreate artefacts, e.g. from our church visit, making a play-dough font. It is an easier medium for young children to make things that look realistic, which they enjoy. Being tactile & physical makes the learning more memorable. Construction kits can also be used for e.g. making a stable, building an ark.” <p>Additional ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why not a play doh ‘Seven Days of Creation’ from the story in Genesis or a lego ‘Visit to the Mosque’ or ‘Three scenes from the Parable of the Lost Sheep.’? Why not play a song about God and talk about it? A simple Christian example goes like this: ‘Who’s the king of the jungle? Who’s the king of the sea? Who’s the king of the universe? And who’s the king of me? I’ll tell you: J-E-S-U-S is, he’s the king of me. He’s the king of the universe, the jungle and the sea.’ 	<p>All children are introduced to objects that are important in different religions and can respond appropriately in relation to and when questioned about objects that are familiar to them. They respond to at least one object that is unfamiliar.</p> <p>Many children learn about objects that are important in some different religions. They build up their ideas of what religion means and why it is important to some people. Classroom activities help them to notice we are all different, and all similar too. They respond in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, smell, touch and taste.</p> <p>Some children can correctly name and talk about a range of objects from more than one faith. They can talk and find out about what religion means and why it is important to some people. They independently notice ways in which we are all different and all similar too. They respond thoughtfully in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, smell, touch and taste.</p>	<p>Good practice intervenes to guide and direct children’s play, models ideas, and always leaves freedom with the child. They don’t have to make a font!</p>
			<p><i>Dan and Andrew made this lego church. The vicar, dressed in paper robes, stands by an altar with a large cross on it as other worshippers arrive. Look at the lego menorah on the cover of this planning guide</i></p>
		<p><i>as well</i></p>	

LEARNING INTENTIONS from the Early Learning Goals, applied to RE	IMPLEMENTATION: TEACHING AND LEARNING IDEAS: informal, play based and part of continuous provision.	IMPACT: LEARNING OUTCOMES	<i>Points to note</i>
An example of using faith stories: Jesus' story of 'the house on the rock'			
<p>PSED: Children will talk about their own and others' behaviour and its consequences;</p> <p>Communication and language: children will develop their own narratives in relation to stories they hear from different communities.</p> <p>Expressive art and design: children use imaginative play and stories to represent their own ideas.</p> <p>Literacy: children use new vocabulary to articulate ideas and use RE examples to write simple phrases or sentences that can be read by others.</p>	<p>Building well and building badly: a story by Jesus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Begin with Jesus' story of the wise and foolish house builders. There's a super version by Nick Butterworth and Mick Inkpen, but lots of different versions available, including some in songs. Two people build a house, one takes care to build on strong foundations, the other builds quickly on sand. When the storms come, one house falls. An engaging storytelling method like the ones found in 'A Gift to the Child' and in 'Godly Play' is really useful. ▪ Give children the chance to talk about the story. Do they think we could build a strong house and a weak house from jenga blocks? Demonstrate this by building two structures on a table. Invite children to 'bump' the table, gently at first, to see what happens. Then bump it a bit harder. All fall down is fun. Encourage children to tell and retell stories about buildings that are strong – and those that fall down! ▪ Ask the children how they would build a stronger house: Wood or card? Duplo? Use glue? ▪ Construction Continuous Provision: Suggest that pupils play at building strong and weak houses during the week. They should ideally have lots of different types of construction equipment and lots of space so that they can experiment and find out how to make houses really strong or really weak. Can they build houses which are very large and still standing without wobbling? ▪ Set a team challenge: each group of 4 children gets a bag of things to build a tower from. How high and how strong can they build? ▪ Music and songs: there are several fun versions of this story made into songs which can be sung in class. Whenever tumbling down occurs, have some sort of tower ready to fall! Make it fun. <p>Seeking deeper meanings in stories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Come back to the story later in the week, and get children talking about the different strong and not-so-strong buildings they have been making. ▪ Ask them some questions: do you think Jesus' story has a good lesson? We are all building our lives: what makes our lives strong? Love? Trust? Care? Friendliness? What might make our lives weak? Unkind words? ▪ Writing simple phrases or sentences in RE can enable and use pupils' developing literacy skills. 	<p>All pupils join in with a retelling of the wise and foolish builders.</p> <p>Many pupils join in with a retelling of the wise and foolish builders and from this begin to respond to questions about building in our lives.</p> <p>Some pupils join in with a retelling of the wise and foolish builders and can clearly talk about building in our lives in response to questions.</p>	<p>Make it fun: There are great opportunities in these learning ideas for teamwork, work outside the classroom, and work on a big scale – cardboard boxes and masking tape add joy to the play.</p>
		<p>Jenga blocks, or similar toys, are great for this work</p>	

LEARNING INTENTIONS from the Early Learning Goals, applied to RE	IMPLEMENTATION: TEACHING AND LEARNING IDEAS: informal, play based and part of continuous provision.	IMPACT: LEARNING OUTCOMES	<i>Points to note</i>
Celebrating Sukkot, making dens: learning about Jewish life			
<p>PSED: children notice and respond to ideas about caring, sharing and kindness in relation to RE content; they work as part of group, taking turns and sharing fairly, understanding that groups of people need agreed values and codes of behaviour, including adults and children, to work together harmoniously;</p> <p>Understanding the world: children begin to know about their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people.</p> <p>Literacy: children engage with stories and recognise religious words.</p>	<p>Making dens, always fun: Sukkoth at school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tell the children the story of Sukkot. Jewish people, long ago, lived in tents when they escaped from the wicked king / Pharaoh. Today, they remember those days by making and living in a shelter in the garden for the time of the festival of tents, Sukkot. ▪ The shelter is made by the family. It must have just leaves for a roof. There will be some gaps, so at night time stars can be seen through the roof. ▪ Ask children, in teams, to make their own Sukkah, shelters. Decorate them with fruits and leaves. Can children have their snacks in the Sukkah for a couple of days, and hear more stories of the Jews and their great leader Moses? ▪ Comment from a teacher who did this: "The children were able to explore natural materials and construction through the building of Sukkahs. The range of designs varied greatly and some were more successful than others but learning through playing is all about experimentation, making connections, negotiating with others, discussion and questioning. I am always delighted when children ask questions, challenge and are prepared to listen to the views of others, which play opportunities provide. I have found that the role of the adults working with the children in their play is of key importance as they will help to take the play forward through expert interaction, questioning and challenge." ▪ Draw out the connections between the Jewish festival and the children's activities carefully – use pictures of actual sukkot, for example – there are thousands on Flickr. ▪ Stephen Melzack's Jewish Children's music includes the song 'Let's Build a Sukkah' on the CD 'Two Candles Burn' – on I-TUNES. A good one to sing and to learn from. ▪ Give children the chance to ask for themselves about how Jews celebrate and remember, and find answers to their questions. 	<p>All pupils join in with listening to the story of Sukkot and building their own sukkah with 2 or 3 other learners.</p> <p>Many pupils can begin to recall the story of Sukkot and start to think about why Sukkot is a special time for Jewish people. They join in with others, actively helping to build a sukkah and remember some of its features.</p> <p>Some pupils can recall the story of Sukkot and talk about why Sukkot is a special time for Jewish people. They correctly name and talk about features of a sukkah whilst collaboratively building their structure.</p>	<p>This activity seems to work best if there is time to design and make, and then to redesign and remake. It needs lots of space and is a great opportunity for outdoor play.</p> <p>This is an excellent activity for PSED, allowing pupils to learn from working in teams to make a sukkah, show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings and form positive relationships.</p>
		 <p><i>Children worked in teams to create their own Jewish 'Sukkah' – an outdoor shelter to remind Jewish people what it was like to live in the desert.</i></p>	

LEARNING INTENTIONS from the Early Learning Goals, applied to RE	IMPLEMENTATION: TEACHING AND LEARNING IDEAS: informal, play based and part of continuous provision.	IMPACT: LEARNING OUTCOMES	Points to note
Outside the classroom: a pilgrimage activity with some playful follow on learning			
<p>Communication and language: children talk about how they and others show feelings; They develop their own narratives in relation to stories they hear from different communities</p> <p>Literacy: children build their abilities in language comprehension through talking with adults about RE content.</p> <p>Mathematics: Children recognise, create and describe some patterns, sorting and ordering objects simply.</p>	<p>A story on a journey. A pilgrimage with 5 places to stop and hear a story.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Begin with a faith story you want to tell from a religion children are going to learn about. This example uses Jesus' story of the Lost Sheep, but many different faith stories from a number of different faiths could use the method. Tell children that a pilgrimage is a religious journey. Some people go to see where Jesus was born, or where Prophet Muhammad lived. Tell them we will go on a journey round the school and ground to tell a story, we will be 'story pilgrims'. Play some 'follow the leader' games in circle time or in the classroom first, and talk about leading and following and taking turns. Use a toy sheep if you like, to help you tell the story. Take chalk, and leave patterns and pictures on the playground after each bit of the story. Talk about feelings at every point in the story. Whatever props you can find or make, use them! ▪ You could get the children to dress up for their pilgrimage. Give each one a little bag to collect a picture from each place where they stop. Have a class set of pictures, preferably hidden in envelopes at your stopping points. You might need these pictures: a flock of sheep / a shepherd / a lonely sheep / the shepherd and sheep together / a shepherd's crook. ▪ Walk with the class to a place near the school gates. Tell them about the shepherd with 100 sheep in his flock. Pupils search for and each get a picture of the flock. ▪ Walk together to a place in the school grounds where you can imagine a sheep fold. Tell the children the part of the story where the shepherd counts his sheep. Everyone gets a picture of the shepherd. Sing as you walk, if you can: it adds to the experience and is often practice on pilgrimages. ▪ Go to the place in the grounds where you can see a long way. Tell the part of the story where the shepherd searches for his lost sheep. Everyone gets a picture of the lonely sheep. ▪ Go to a cosy place in the building or grounds. The shepherd and sheep together, everyone gets a picture. ▪ To finish, all walk to the place which might be a good place to party, and tell the children Jesus made up this story to show that when anything – anyone – gets lost, God will find them. Take a shepherd's crook picture. ▪ Share something to eat and drink. Have a song. ▪ Focus Activity Opportunity: Can children order their pictures? Perhaps they could put one on top of each other (in order) and fasten them together to make a pilgrimage/lost sheep book. What did they like about the story? This could be completed as a Focus Activity and children who are able may be encouraged to add to their book with words or sentences of writing. ▪ Children can use the books to become 'storytellers'. They might want to tell the story of the Lost Sheep to others in their class during the day and if appropriate could even take the books home instead of reading books one evening and be 'storytellers' for their parents. 	<p>All pupils are able to take part in the story telling (generally as part of a group).</p> <p>Many pupils are able to order the story fairly accurately. They can take part in the story telling and recall some elements of it correctly using the books they have made.</p> <p>Some pupils will be able to order and recall the story well and talk about its meaning when they take on the role of 'the storyteller'.</p>	<p><i>This can become an elaborate learning journey, but it really is best to start simple. See what you think will work for your children, and develop it in your own directions</i></p>
		 <p><i>RE work can add dynamic and interesting activities when learning outside the classroom</i></p>	

LEARNING INTENTIONS from the Early Learning Goals, applied to RE	IMPLEMENTATION: TEACHING AND LEARNING IDEAS: Informal, play based and part of continuous provision.	IMPACT: LEARNING OUTCOMES	<i>Points to note</i>
Find out about weddings: colours, dressing up and promises			
<p>PSED: Children understand that they can expect others to treat their needs, views, cultures and beliefs with respect;</p> <p>They respond to significant experiences showing a range of feelings when appropriate;</p> <p>They have a developing awareness of their own needs, views and feelings and be sensitive to those of others;</p> <p>Communication and language: children develop their spoken language through quality conversation gaining new vocabulary about religion and worldviews</p>	<p>To set up some purposeful play, you could arrange looking at reminders of special days</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill a 'Celebrations Box' with a selection of cards and wrapping paper depicting different occasions e.g. birthday, wedding, christening, Christmas, Mother's Day. Include several things to do with weddings • Pass the box round for the pupils to choose an item and describe it. Who would you give the card and gifts to? Can they guess when we send each card or which wrapping paper we would use? Run a 'let's make cards' and 'let's play post boxes' activity. Children give cards to each other. • Talking about some well known celebrations – birthday, Christmas, Eid Diwali and others – is good, but will be developed more fully in subsequent units. <p>Weddings and dressing up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask children who have attended a wedding to share their experiences with the rest of the group • What feelings do we have when it is a wedding? Look at some pictures of different wedding celebrations and talk about what happens. Photos to represent more than 1 religious tradition (and those from weddings of well-known members of staff are often appreciated by pupils). Promises are made, and everyone supports the new bride and groom. Explore feelings about celebrations. • Wedding cakes can be baked and wedding ceremonies can be enacted. Some schools go as far as to enact wedding ceremonies in a church with members of the class taking roles of the wedding party and parents dressing up and attending as guests. <p>Time to choose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a 'Feelings Box' containing 'feelings' pictures or simple words – happy, full of fun, joyful, glad, together, excited: when do we feel these emotions? Can they choose pairs of things from the celebration box and the feelings box. • Ask children to choose presents and cards for people celebrating different festivals and events: what would they give to someone for a wedding, birthday, baby naming, Christmas, Eid, Diwali celebration? <p>The image shows pupils using fabric – and imagination - to explore what happens in weddings for Muslims.</p>	<p>Some pupils join in with finding out about weddings. They may be able to talk about their feelings at a celebration they have experienced.</p> <p>Many pupils talk about how we can tell a wedding is a special day, and about what matters on a day like this and how people might feel at a wedding.</p> <p>Some pupils can talk about how we can tell a wedding is a special day, and about what matters on a day like this, saying why it is especially important for the bride and groom. They demonstrate good understanding of how people might feel at specific celebrations.</p>	<p><i>Good teachers are always sensitive to the variety of families from which children come to school. Not everyone gets married and family life is usually complicated!</i></p> <p><i>Allowing pupils the opportunity to dress up and be part of both and event and team is enjoyable and can be a great learning experience.</i></p>
			<p><i>Children learned all about Muslim weddings. Dressing up carried the learning into play</i></p>

LEARNING INTENTIONS from the Early Learning Goals, applied to RE	IMPLEMENTATION: TEACHING AND LEARNING IDEAS: informal, play based and part of continuous provision.	IMPACT: LEARNING OUTCOMES	<i>Points to note</i>
A special opportunity – mixed age activities! Finding out about Diwali			
<p>Communication and language: children talk about how they and others show feelings; They develop their own narratives in relation to stories they hear from different communities.</p> <p>PSED: children have a developing respect for their own cultures and beliefs, and those of other people. They show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings, and form positive relationships.</p>	<p>What is special about the Hindu festival of Diwali?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With reception children: Begin with (what have become) school traditional activities for Diwali – make Diva lamps, light candles, make cards, With reception children and older pupils: tell the story of Rama and Sita really well. Make it exciting. Give children the chance to ask questions about the story and the festival. What other festivals and celebrations is it like? It's lovely to bring some Hindu sweets to the classroom, and share them together. With the older pupils: Draw out the key ideas from the story? Do the goodies win, or the baddies? Does light win, or darkness? Is Sita brave? Patient? Is Rama wise? Courageous? Talk about what makes Rama and Sita heroes for Hindu people. <p>Diwali in the forest, with storytelling, lamps and marshmallows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get older pupils to plan a 'Diwali celebration' for younger children in the forest (if you have some outdoor 'forest school' type land you can use). If you do not have forest land, outdoor space can still work well. The teacher who contributed this idea said: "Our 7-8 year olds have just completed a learning journey based on 'Festivals of Light' and most of their learning was play based giving the children the opportunity to play with and explore stories, cookery, art and crafts and poetry. As with all outstanding personalised learning, which I see as a tree, the staff plan the 'trunk' of the tree, which is displayed for children to see, and the children are encouraged to take the learning off into their own 'branches'. The children planned independently a special celebration to be shared with Reception pupils, parents, carers and friends which was to be held in our own SMILE (St Mark's Ideal Learning Environment-named by a child) Meadow. It's an acre and three quarters of meadow, woods and stream. The Meadow was lit with 30 individually designed diva lamps. We had a bonfire, toasted marshmallows and hot chocolate with story-telling, poetry readings linked to movement and a Diwali song. I love it when RE is shared with the community in this way when the power of nature and aesthetic experience linked to the play of the children bring us all together in a very special way which more formal RE would never do." 		 <p><i>The 'Forest' area at Ferncumbe CEPS in Warwickshire made a great space for older children to tell and dramatise the Diwali story for younger ones in Reception. They made a ten headed demon with faces of mud and leaves on the trunks of ten trees!</i></p>

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