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| **Strands** | Philosophy of Religion; The Bible and Christian Beliefs; World Religions | | | |
| **Stage of Development** | Upper Secondary (Years 8-10) | **Created** Feb 2020 | | **Review** 2023 |
| **Aim** | This unit aims to explore some of the possible answers to common questions students may have about faith, God, life after death and science. There is the option of adding on a film study at the end (5 extra lessons). | | | |
| **Content Descriptions** | **Knowledge and Understanding**   * Some of the big questions that have been asked by generations of human beings * Some of the possible answers to these big questions and an understanding of why possible answers are contested | | **Religious Studies Skills & virtues**   * Critical thinking * Concept cracking | |
| **Additional Resources** | Centre for Public Christianity Big Questions Resources <https://www.publicchristianity.org/big-questions/> | | Videos and articles that seek to answer some of the big questions people ask about life from a Christian perspective. | | |
| Science and Christianity: Understanding the Conflict Myth by Chris Mulherian | | A short book aimed at High school students that seeks to demonstrate that there is not an irreconcilable conflict between science and the Christian faith. | | |
|  | But is it Real? Answering Common Objections to the Christian Faith by Amy Orr-Ewing | | Seeks to help people see what the Christian faith has to say amid all the pain, confusion and complexity of life. | | |

This unit was prepared using material developed by Rev’d Nick Russell from Christ Church Grammar School.

| **Lesson** | | **Key Questions** | **Lesson Activity Ideas** | | **Resources** |
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| **1** | The Existence of God | Can we know if God exists? | 5min  10min  20min  10min | Activity: Students place themselves on a line between ‘absolutely no God’ to ‘absolutely there is a God’. Discuss with students who are willing to share the reason why they have placed themselves at a point along the line.  Activity: Ask the students to work with another student who holds a similar view to them to brainstorm arguments for their perspective. Share possible arguments with the rest of the class.  Factsheet: Arguments for the Existence of God. Read and discuss.  Class vote: ask the students to vote on the most convincing reason for God’s existence and the most convincing reason for their being absolutely no God (you may want to limit the vote to 5 arguments for each side from previous discussions). Discuss why students voted on the reason they did. | Factsheet: Arguments for the existence of God |
| 2 | Meaning | Does life need meaning? | 5min  30min  10min | Watch: Pulse video (vox pop asking people what they think the purpose of life is) <https://www.exploregod.com/pulse-of-the-world-on-purpose> or you could make your own video on your phone in the playground before class (or ask some keen students to do so)  PowerPoint: Exploring purpose and meaning  Activity: Give each student a small piece of paper and ask them to write down two questions they would like to explore during this unit. Collect the bits of paper and later go through them and determine the two most popular questions. At some point during the unit ask the chaplain to come to the class for a lesson to address these two questions with the students (alternatively you could seek to develop your own lessons to answer these questions). | Video: <https://www.exploregod.com/pulse-of-the-world-on-purpose>  PowerPoint: Exploring purpose and Meaning  Small piece of paper for each student |
| 3 | Science and Religion | Are science and religion in conflict?  Can science and religion coexist? | 10min  5min  15min  5min  10min | Think, Pair, Share: what do you think Science is? What do you think Religion is? Record this discussion to refer to as you progress through the lesson.  Watch: The ASC produced video titled ‘Science and Religion’ (2:35min). Ask students to discuss how the video confirms or challenges their answers to the first activity.  Read: Genesis 1-3. The PowerPoint provided has Genesis 1-3 from the Action Bible scanned and placed on slides. Students identify potential conflicts with Science and brainstorm the different options for resolving these conflicts.  Activity: Bring a kettle to class and pretend to boil the kettle. Ask the students why is the kettle boiling? Hopefully you get a range of answers e.g. to make a cup of tea and heat energy transferred to molecules. Discuss how the same question can be answered in different ways and not necessarily contradict each other e.g. creation story v big bang.  PowerPoint: The conflict thesis. This PowerPoint should answer some of the questions raised in the discussion above. | General Resource: Science and Christianity (understanding the conflict myth) by Chris Mulherin  ASC video: Science and Religion  PowerPoint: The Creation Story  PowerPoint: The Conflict Thesis |
| **4** | The Bible | What is the Bible?  What type of truth does the Bible contain? | 10min  10min  5min  20min | Activity: hand out a class set of Bibles. Give the students 5min to discover as much about the Bible as possible (no superficial answers). Discuss.  Internet activity: Students complete some individual internet research. What is the Bible? How many different works are in it? Who wrote it? What kinds of writing are in it? When was it written? What languages was it written in? Discuss.  Discuss: Can you trust the Bible? How would you answer? Ask students to write their answers individually then share.  PowerPoint: Can I trust the Bible? | Bibles or Bible Gateway  PowerPoint: Can I trust the Bible? |
| **5** | The Afterlife | Is there an afterlife?  What difference would the existence of an afterlife make to our lives? | 10min  5min  10min  10min  10min | Activity: ask the students to share stories of the supernatural they have heard e.g. ghosts, psychics, magic etc or ask students to Google funniest strangest stories of the supernatural and share.  Activity: Draw a line on the board or use a physical line. Ask students to nominate the degree to which they believe there is life after death. Discuss why.  PowerPoint: Is there an afterlife?  Watch: The video “An Historian Examines the Resurrection” and discuss. <https://www.publicchristianity.org/an-historian-examines-the-resurrection/?_sft_category=resurrection-of-jesus> (4min 46sec)  Worksheet: Does the afterlife make a difference? This worksheet asks students to comment on the possible impact of a belief in the afterlife for different scenarios. | Clip: Centre for Public Christianity <https://www.publicchristianity.org/an-historian-examines-the-resurrection/?_sft_category=resurrection-of-jesus>  Worksheet: The impact of the afterlife |
| **6** | The impact of religion on society | Has religion been a force for good or evil in society? | 10min  35min | Activity: Draw a table on the board with two columns. Label one column good and one evil. Ask students to contribute evidence that religion has worked for good and/or evil in society.  View episodes from the Love of God and discuss <https://www.publicchristianity.org/fortheloveofgod/#stories>. There are plenty of options. Students could select the ones of most interest to them. | Watch: For the Love of God <https://www.publicchristianity.org/fortheloveofgod/#stories> |
| **7** | Doubt and Faith | Can doubt and faith coexist? | 10min  15min  5min  15min | Activity: one a Post-It note ask students to write a doubt they have about the Christian faith. Display these anonymously in the classroom and discuss.  PowerPoint: Doubt and Certainty. This PowerPoint seeks to promote a class discussion on doubt and certainty.  Watch: The “Role of Doubt in the Life of Faith” (1min 22 sec) <https://www.publicchristianity.org/youth-resource/place-doubt-life-faith/> and discuss.  Reflection: Ask students to write a reflection explaining their doubt about the Christian faith and how they could further wrestle with this doubt. | Post-It notes  PowerPoint: Doubt and Certainty  Watch: Doubt in the Life of Faith <https://www.publicchristianity.org/youth-resource/place-doubt-life-faith/> |
| **8** | Suffering and evil | Why is there suffering and evil in the world? | 5min  5min  10min  20min  5min | Share: ask the students if they are happy or sad today. What makes them happy and what makes them sad? What is suffering? What are some of the different ways people respond to suffering?  Discuss: Does suffering prove there is no God?  PowerPoint: Suffering. This PowerPoint considers the question above using logic.  Activity: Provide students with the following web address (www.publicchristianity.org) and get them to search the site for article and videos on suffering. Let them watch and read what interests them.  Discuss: What can we conclude about suffering in the world? | PowerPoint: suffering  Internet, students’ earphones and devices |
| **9-14** | Optional Film Study | Where do we look for answers to our questions about meaning and purpose?  Where do we look for connection through relationship? |  | Watch: Avatar (2h 42min) This film considers where we look to find answers about meaning and purpose. It also considers where we go to find connection and relationship.  Some possible discussion starters   * Is God portrayed as personal or remote in the movie? * How do the people of Pandora connect with God? * How does the God of Pandora compare with Jesus? * Where do the different characters in the movie find their meaning and purpose? * Where can we look to find answers to our questions about meaning and purpose? What are the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches? * What does the movie say about hope and where we can find it? How does this compare with the things our own hope is in? Where else do people find hope? |  |