|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Strands** | Philosophy of Religion; The Bible and Christian Belief |
| **Stage of Development** | Lower Secondary (Year 7-9) | **Created** May 2021 | **Review** 2025 |
| **Aim** | This unit encourages students to think about the way we think. It requires students to engage reasoning skills and question what they know about the world around them. Students are encouraged to distinguish between arguments, finding similarities and differences in each. The unit requires students to think critically about what Christians believe about revelation.  |
| **Content Descriptions** | **Knowledge and Understanding*** What Christians believe about revelation
* How Christians believe God reveals himself through the world, Christians, religious experiences and Jesus
* The nature of general and specific revelation
 | **Religious Studies Skills & virtues*** Critical thinking
 |
| **Additional Resources** | Searching for Meaning by Paula Gooder | This book examines present scholarship on reading texts for meaning (teacher resource) |
| Centre for Public Christianity Resource Library<https://www.publicchristianity.org/> | There are several helpful articles that explicitly and inexplicitly demonstrate a relationship between faith and reason.  |

*This unit is based on a unit prepared by the Religion, Philosophy and Ethics staff at Guildford Grammar School.*

| **Lesson** | **Key Questions** | **Lesson Activity Ideas** | **Resources** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1** | The concept, form and nature of revelation.  | What is revelation?What are some different ways God may/has revealed himself? | 5min5min5min10min20min | Activity: Ask students to find a partner who is not well known to them. Ask the students to share one thing from their week with their partner. Discuss how we normally find out information about others. Game: Bring some mystery objects to class and cover them with a sheet or tea towels. Slowly pull back the cover and ask the students to guess what the objects are. Have some different mystery objects in a bag and ask students to come up a feel the objects (no looking) and guess what the object is.Game: play Hangman with the word ‘Revelation’. After students have guessed the correct word discuss the definition of revelation (disclosure of information).Activity: Ask students to list the ways they think God might communicate with people. Discuss the different types of information we might be able to gather from different forms of revelation (e.g. creation, Spirit/experiences, written word (Bible), person (Jesus), other people, the Church). Ask the students to think of some things they would like to know about God. Discuss what types of answers they could gather from some of the different types of revelation. Read: Genesis 41:15-30. Break the students into small groups and ask them to read the passage and discuss ‘Why God might communicate in picture language?’. Come back together and share answers with the class.  | Objects, bag, coverBibles or [www.Biblegateway.com](http://www.Biblegateway.com) |
| **2** | General and Special Revelation | What is meant be general revelation?What is meant by special revelation? | 5min5min20min10min5min | Share: Ask the students to share experiences that might make them think God exists e.g. childbirth, amazing natural beauty….Game: Ask for volunteers. Give students one minute to tell the class about themselves. If they can talk non-stop about themselves for 1 minute give them a prize. Discuss how we normally find out about people (ask them questions, listen to their stories about themselves).PowerPoint: Revelation. This PowerPoint considers the difference between general and special revelation. Activity: have the students create a Venn diagram in order to identify the similarities and differences between the two types of revelation. Discuss: What does Jesus reveal about the character of God? How does Jesus give people a new start with God? | PowerPoint: Revelation |
| 3 | Using reason to interpret a text | How can Christian’s use reason to interpret the Bible? | 5min10min30min | PowerPoint: Show the students a picture that can be seen in multiple ways. Ask the students what they see. If people, see different things (e.g. young women and an old women) ask if what both students see is true or really there? Talk about the different techniques we can use to ensure we interpret the picture well e.g. looking carefully, listening to others’ ideas about the picture etcExplain: That we will be asking three big questions about the stories/texts we look at.1. **What do we know about the author?**
2. **What happens in the story?**
3. **What does the story mean?**

The first question we will ask is ‘what do we know?’ This means asking questions about the story like:1. Who is the author of the story?
2. What do we know about the author of the story?
3. When was the story written?
4. Who was the story first told to? /who was the story written for?

Explain: The second question we will ask is ‘what happens in the story?’ This means asking questions about the story like:1. What characters are involved in the story?
2. What happens in the story?
3. Is there anything in the story I don’t understand?

Explain: The third question we will ask is ‘what does the story mean?’ This means asking questions about the story like:1. What do I think someone who believed in God would think about this story?
2. What do I think my friends and family would think of this story?
3. What do I think of this story?
4. How could this story change the way someone thought about this topic?

Worksheet: Interpreting texts. This worksheet asks students to apply these methods of interpretation to an extract from Origin of Species and the Gospel of John. This sheet would work best if students completed it in small groups and answers were discussed as a class at the end.  | PowerPoint: What do you see?Worksheet: Interpreting Texts |
| 4 | Revelation about the origins of the Earth | How can the creation story be interpreted and understood?What are some pros and cons of the different methods of interpretation? | 5min20min20min | Share: Ask the students to share the most outrageous story they have heard about the Royal family. Ask students to consider how we can know if these stories are true? What factors influence our interpretation of what we read? If someone from Jesus’ time was reading a newspaper article about a member of the Royal family what mistakes of interpretation could they be in danger of making?Read: The Purpose of Genesis 1: A historical Approach by john Dickson <https://www.publicchristianity.org/the-genre-of-genesis-1-an-historical-approach/?_sf_s=interpreting+> (Depending on your students’ prior knowledge you may also want to reread Genesis 1)Activity: break students into small groups. Ask them to write a list of as many different interpretations of the creation story as they can think of/find online. Allocate different interpretations to different groups and ask them to research the arguments in favour and against the method of interpretation they have been allocated.  | Article: The Purpose of Genesis 1 (available on Centre for Public Christianity webpage)Textas/large pieces of paper for recording group work.  |
| 5 | Religious Experiences | What is meant by religious experience?What effects do religious experiences have on people?Can we be sure that religious experiences are genuine? How do we decide?Can religious experiences be seen as proof for the existence of God? | 10min10min10min10min5min | Game: Everyone forms a circle, and someone begins counting from the number one. Counting proceeds right around the circle. If a person says just one number, counting continues right, but if someone says two numbers consecutively, the counting changes direction and moves left. The person who must say “21” is out of the circle. Additionally, if someone says a number out of sequence or does not change direction, they are also out. The goal for all players is to stay in the circle for as long as possible. Discuss what it means to change direction. Discuss experiences that might make people change the direction of their lives e.g. illness, a big move, the birth of a child.Read: the story of Saul’s conversion (Acts 9:1-31). You could also watch a YouTube clip of the passage (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rLZ67inPx-4>)Activity: Break the students into small groups and discuss ‘How could a revelation lead to a conversion experience?’ How might non-believers view conversion experiences?Watch: John 3:1-21 (<https://www.bible.com/videos/3334-john-3-1-21-from-lumoproject-dot-com>) and discuss what Jesus means when he said, “no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again”. Consider v16-21.Discuss: Can religious experiences be proof for the existence of God? Why? Why not?Extension: you could get students with a faith to share their experiences of God and what these experiences mean to them. This activity does not need to be limited to students with a Christian faith.  | Bible or Biblegateway.comBible or Lumo project (<https://www.bible.com/videos/3334-john-3-1-21-from-lumoproject-dot-com>) |
| 6 | Holy Spirit | What is the Holy Spirit?What is Pentecost and what is its significance?What do Christians believe about how the Holy Spirit reveals God? | 15min15min5min10min | Activity: break students into small groups and give each group a bubble wand and mixture. Have some competitions to see what group can produce the biggest bubble, the bubble that lasts the longest, the smallest bubble etc. Explain that even though we can’t see the wind it is there, and it carries the bubbles. Christian’s believe that while God can’t be seen he is present via his Holy Spirit.Read the story of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-13). You may want to watch the following clip that explains some of the historical background to Pentecost (<https://whatsinthebible.com/what-is-pentecost/>). Discuss what the different people in Acts 2 could have been thinking/feeling. Discuss: Why are the events recorded at Pentecost so important to Christians? What would have happened if the disciples decided not to spread Jesus’ teachings after this event? What does Pentecost teach us about the way God reveals himself?Activity: Ask students to use Google to find three different perspectives on the Holy Spirit. Discuss.  | Bubble wand & BubblesBiblesWhat’s in the bible Pentecost video (<https://whatsinthebible.com/what-is-pentecost/>)Internet  |
| 7-10 | Assignment | What is the relationship between faith and reason? |  | Worksheet: AssignmentThe assignment requires students to construct a 500 word extended response.  | Worksheet: Assignment |