

Year: 8
Term: 2
Topic: Big Questions

Lesson Concepts

1. What is religion?
2. Why do people believe and where does religion come from?
3. Life and Death – The Abrahamic faiths
4. Life and Death – The Dharmic faiths
5. Exam
6. Good, Evil, and Ethics
7. Why do people suffer?
8. Religious responses to suffering
9. The existence of God
10. Religion and Science (Part 1)
11. Religion and Science (Part 2)
12. Agnosticism and Athiesm

Key Words:			
Belief	An acceptance that something exists or is true.	Ethics	Moral principles that govern a person's behaviour.
Community	A group of people living in the same place or who share a particular characteristic.	Morals	Standards of behaviour; principles of right and wrong
Symbolism	The use of symbols to represent ideas or qualities.	Omnipotent	All powerful
Supernatural	Something beyond scientific understanding or the laws of nature.	Omniscient	All knowing
Transcendent	Beyond or above the range of normal or physical human experience	Omni - benevolent	All loving
Spiritual	Something concerning the human spirit or soul as opposed to material or physical things.	Theodicy	An attempt to answer the question of why a good God permits evil and suffering in the world.
Resurrection	The act of coming back to life after death.	Evolution	The process by which living things can gradually change over time through natural selection.
Reincarnation	The rebirth of a soul in another body.	Creationism	The religious belief that the universe and life began due to acts of God or gods.
Heaven	A place regarded in various religions as the abode of God (or the gods) and the angels, and of the good after death.	Philosophy	The study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence.
Hell	A place regarded in various religions as a spiritual realm of evil and suffering.	Positivism	Positivism is a philosophy which accepts only things that can be seen or proved.
Nirvana	In Buddhism, the transcendent state attained as a result of being released from the cycle of rebirth.	Atheism	Disbelief or lack of belief in the existence of God or gods.
Moksha	In Hinduism, the transcendent state attained as a result of being released from the cycle of rebirth.	Agnosticism	The belief that it is not possible to say definitely whether or not there is a God

‘Religion is a difficult word to define as many religions are so different from each other. However, most religions centre around a community that share particular beliefs and practices. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Sanctified/holy places
- Texts
- Prophecy
- Ethics
- Belief in supernatural elements.
- Rituals

Thomas Aquinas’s ‘five proofs’

Thomas Aquinas was a Christian monk alive during the 13th Century. He was famous for writing a great deal and is a saint in the Roman Catholic church. Amongst his writings are ‘the five proofs’, which were five reasons that Aquinas believed proved the existence of God. These are

1. **The argument from motion** (everything that moves has been moved by something else. God must be the ‘prime mover’)
2. **The argument from causation** (everything has been caused by something else. God must be the first cause)
3. **The argument from contingency** (everything that exists must have a reason for its existence. This reason must be God)
4. **Argument from degree** (goodness truth and perfection all exist. If they exist they must also exist to the maximum degree. This maximum degree must be God.
5. **Argument from final cause** (everything has purpose, or ‘final cause’. That purpose must have been decided by something and this must be God).