



Sacred Texts interactives

Teachers' notes

These interactives introduce students to the histories, meanings and stories contained in sacred texts from a range of religions. Users are encouraged to examine crossovers and contrasts between religions, and relevant connections are highlighted in order to enable them to do this.

'Sacred' online is suitable for use as a core resource for a Key Stage 3 Scheme of Work on 'Sacred Texts in the Abrahamic Faiths' or 'Religious Stories from the Six Main World Religions.' In addition to this, it can be incorporated into a variety of Schemes of Work in Key Stages 3 – 5.

The website is divided into two sections, *Sacred Stories* and *Understanding Sacred Texts*. Both sections enable students to learn both about different religions, and it is possible to assess many of the tasks using the level descriptors from the Non-statutory Framework.

Sacred Stories

The interactive presents stories from six of the world's main world religions: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism. Each story is accompanied by fascinating contextual information, allowing students to investigate the origins and meanings of the stories. The stories have been carefully selected to highlight the crossovers and contrasts between the religions.

How do I use this interactive?

The opening page of the interactive presents six revolving books, each representing one of the religions. You can select a religion by clicking on any of the books, at which point a choice of two stories is given. Once a story is selected, the book will open and within a few seconds, the story will be narrated, accompanied by animation.

In order to read the story as it is being narrated, click on 'Subtitles' at the top of the page. Simply press the pause button if you would like to stop at a particular point to have a discussion or ask students what they think might happen next.

By clicking on 'More Information', you and your students can access sections on 'Context', 'Did You Know?' and 'Questions'. The questions can be answered in writing or through discussion and many are suitable as plenary or homework activities, after the students have watched the story.

When you are finished with this story, the cursor can be used to navigate to the other story within the chosen religion or to go back to the opening page.

Sacred Stories is designed for Key Stage 3, although the stories themselves could be used with Key Stage 2 students. Some stories are particularly relevant to key beliefs and practices, e.g. The Khalsa in Sikhism and The Lost Son in Christianity.

Extension activity

Show your students the animations without the sound turned on and ask them to research and re-write the story themselves.

Alternatively, use the audio to inspire them to create their own animations.

Understanding Sacred Texts

Understanding Sacred Texts enables students to explore the meanings that both believers and non-believers attach to the sacred texts of the three Abrahamic faiths. Students are invited to question a panel of interviewees compare their responses. The panel includes faith leaders, educators, young people, theologians and an atheist philosopher.

Each expert answers the questions from his/her particular point of view, and many users may not necessarily agree with the answers given. It is important to remember that the purpose of the site is to highlight the multiplicity of meanings within the Abrahamic scriptures.

Users should come away from the site understanding that the texts are multifaceted, and subject to the interpretation of different communities, individuals and historical periods. We hope that the interactive will provoke rich debate within the classroom.

How do I use this interactive?

Once a text has been selected, the panel appears beneath a list of themes. To identify each person (i.e. to see whether this is a faith leader or an educator etc) roll the cursor over the panel.

Click a theme to select it. A list of questions will appear. By moving the cursor to each question, you can find out which of the experts will answer - the other experts will disappear.

In order to put a question to one of the experts, use the cursor to drag the question to the expert. After a few seconds, you will see video footage of the expert answering the question. The question you have asked remains at the bottom of the screen as a reminder.

The answer can be paused to allow time for discussion, and there is an option to select 'Subtitles' from the right hand menu.

From this page, you can go back to ask the same question to another person, allowing you to compare responses. Do this by choosing 'Go back' on the left hand side. Alternatively, you can click on 'Ask another question about the Christian Bible' on the right hand menu, to reselect a theme within Christianity. In the right hand menu, you can also select 'Bibliography on' to find out about the expert you have chosen.

In many cases, this right hand menu also invites you to compare response, for example if the expert you have chosen is a 'Faith Leader' you will have the option to 'Ask another 'Faith Leader' this question'.

As a whole, this section is most suited to Key Stage 3. However, there are many thought-provoking and higher level questions and ideas raised, which are

suitable for Gifted and Talented students, as well as Key Stage 4 and 5 students. AS and A2 students may find the expert responses to questions such as 'What if your conscience disagrees with a 'rule' from scripture?' help to deepen their understanding by giving them access to some well-considered responses.

The questions and activities in downloadable format are designed to enable students to evaluate the ideas that have been presented. There is a separate document for each of the five themes.

Students are also asked to grapple with some of the moral and philosophical issues themselves. The questions and activities are pitched at various levels, ranging from Key Stage 3 – 5, and it is important to be aware of this when selecting material for your classes.

Some of the tasks focus on a particular interview and others require students to draw on answers to more than one question. This document should ideally be used in conjunction with the video interviews, perhaps with students being given a set of tasks and then are asked to watch the interviews in order to complete the tasks.

Alternatively, the students could be shown relevant clips and then be given a selection of tasks to complete. If you are unable to access the video clips, the transcripts of the interviews are available in PDF format.

There are likely to be some terms that are new to your students and so a glossary with clear and accessible explanations is available.