

Sam and Alisha asked a puzzling question:
'Where is God? They suggested answers in
their drawings



I Wonder...

Questions that puzzle us Year 1

*Telford & Wrekin RE Syllabus
Support
Unit of work*

*Non Statutory Exemplification: this unit is good
practice, but is not required by law*

I wonder...

Questions that puzzle us. Year 1

About this unit:

This unit uses material from Christianity and other religious traditions to explore 'big questions' that children might want to ask, including some religious or spiritual questions. It will enable pupils to see that some big questions have no certain answers, but they are interesting. The theme from the syllabus covered by this unit is about mysteries and questions. There are opportunities for pupils to share their own beliefs, ideas and values in simple ways. This unit will introduce some Christian answers to some of these questions, but the more important objective is to enable children to enjoy thinking about 'mystery' or puzzling questions.

Estimated time for teaching this unit is 7-8 short sessions of perhaps 30 or 40 minutes each. If these follow each other in reasonably quick succession (rather than once a week, a long gap), then learning may benefit from continuity.

Where this unit fits in:

This unit prepares pupils to think more about beliefs later in KS1 and KS2. The focus on questions is an ideal way of helping teachers to 'set the children's agenda' in the work they do in RE. Lots of RE lessons consist in teachers giving out pieces of information which children then often forget. Here, the children ask questions and the questions are explored. Later lessons may involve exploring questions children have raised in earlier sessions, perhaps through a story, or through looking at a range of answers. This approach asks teachers to be self-confident even when they say 'I don't know' to a child's question: in RE, where some answers are interesting but not provable, teachers should be relaxed about saying 'I don't know, but what can we find out?' The focus is more on AT 2 questions of meaning, purpose, value or truth, than on AT1 materials.

Key strands of RE addressed by this unit of work

In addition to meeting some early learning goals that relate to personal, social and emotional development, creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world, pupils will learn about:

- **Ways of expressing meaning:** what big and puzzling questions do we like? What answers do religions give to some of these questions?
- **Questions of meaning, purpose and truth.** What can we say about big puzzles and mysteries?

Attitudes focus

The work can help pupils to develop these attitudes:

- Feeling confident about their own beliefs and identity and sharing them simply
- Being sensitive to the different feelings and ideas of others.
- Developing their capacity to respond to questions of meaning and purpose
- Noticing that we don't all think the same, and respecting the difference.

Prior learning	Vocabulary	Resources
<p>It is helpful if pupils have been introduced to the idea that religions are many, and to the idea that we can answer a mystery or a puzzle with a belief.</p>	<p>In this unit, pupils will have an opportunity to use words and phrases related to:</p> <p>Beliefs Puzzles Mysteries Questions Big ideas</p>	<p>Teachers' TV</p> <p>There is a very useful programme from Teachers TV 'Big ideas for small people' that will provoke and inspire good work in this area. Have a look! http://archive.teachfind.com/ttv/www.teachers.tv/videos/ks1-ks2-re-big-ideas-for-small-people.html</p> <p>Paul Newbould, the teacher presenter has many good ideas for KS1 RE work on Big Questions. This has been moved to TES Website.</p> <p>Text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do Stars Come Out at Night? By Annalena McAfee (Pub. Red Fox ISBN: 0099264560) A great resource for this unit. • RE Today Services (www.retoday.org.uk) publish relevant items: • Say Hello to... (Interactive CD and book). Use two of these flashback stories about children from different religious communities to ask: what do they believe? How does it show? What questions have you got? • Exploring Puzzling Questions (Ed. Joyce Mackley) has good ideas for this work • The Swirling Hijaab by Na'ima bint Robert (Author), Niles Mistry (Illustrator) • PCET, Folens and Nelson publish some useful photo / picture packs on particular religions that can be used to raise questions. • A visitor from the faith community prepared to 'bring and show' some objects that make them think of puzzling questions, talk and answer children's questions. • Lion publish a range of children's Bibles • Homing In, by Angela Gluck Wood <i>Trentham Books</i>, 1998: a focus on home life in five faith traditions, with practical suggestions for teachers and learners in the early years and primary phase illustrated with original line drawings many of which can be used as patterns and templates <p>Web</p> <p>www.request.org.uk has a lot of materials about Christianity: for this work, try the section on Infants Prayer, and expect the materials to raise puzzling questions.</p> <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 free: http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone/clips ▪ 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/ks1 ▪ 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/infants/ ▪ There is some more TV material at: www.channel4.com/learning ▪ The site for Cumbria and Lancashire Education Online has many useful and well thought out resources for this unit of work: www.cleo.net.uk ▪ 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 <p>DVD / Video / visual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop, Look, Listen: Water, Moon, Candle, Tree and Sword video. DVD from Channel 4 Learning: the episodes from different religions could be used to raise questions. • Dottie and Buzz DVD from Channel 4 Learning. Puppet based approach to beginning to learn from Christianity

Contributions to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The unit enables pupils to develop:

- **Spiritually** by beginning to learn simply about and reflecting on important concepts and beliefs that are at the heart of religious traditions, and by sharing amazement and wonder. Noticing that a mystery can be answered by a belief.
- **Morally** by thinking about why people do bad things and what good things we choose.
- **Socially** by working with others and noticing our similarities and differences.
- **Culturally** by beginning to notice that people are all different and all similar, including in the ways they respond to mysteries and puzzling questions

Learning Expectations

In line with the aims of the work, pupils who can meet the early learning goals will:

- Recognise that religious beliefs can have an effect on what people do and feel (Personal, Social and Emotional Development)
- Communicate questions, feelings and thoughts about God, people and the world (Language and Literacy)
- Become aware that people have beliefs which help them to answer puzzling questions about life (Knowledge and Understanding of the World)
- Listen to stories and imaginative scenarios and create make-believe characters and stories of their own (Creative Development)

At the end of this unit:

Most pupils will be able to fulfil some of the relevant Stepping Stones / Early Learning Goals and be able to:

- Name a story or book that they like that has a mystery in it
- Name a book that a Christian thinks answers a mystery question (The Bible) (– or similar from other religious traditions)
- Talk about a puzzling question, for example: where do we come from?
- Talk about what Christians or Jews or Muslims say about God
- Experience a sense of wonder about stories, nature and questions

Some pupils will be able to work at level 1:

- Talk about puzzles and mysteries that are interesting, even if we don't know 'the answers'
- Identify some puzzles and mysteries about our lives and our thoughts
- Experience the sense of wonder and talk about it.
- Talk about stories that include mysteries and puzzling questions

ASSESSMENT SUGGESTIONS

- Give pupils a chance to ask a big question about the world we live in, and note the ways they do this, and respond to the questions.

Teachers might assess this work by:

- Put some questions in different coloured speech bubbles on the floor, in circle time, and read them simply together.
- Possible Questions to include in this activity: Why can't we fly? Who is God? Why was I born? Where does love come from? Why do we get older every day? What does it feel like to say thank you? Why do we live? Add to these any good ones that the pupils have discussed in the preceding sessions.
- Ask the children in twos to use 'think pair share' and say to each other which 'big question' they would ask the 'person who knows everything' if they could. Listen to all of the replies – have a vote on the top 5 if you like.
- Remind children that Christians (or Muslims, Jews, Sikhs) believe that God is the 'person who knows everything'.
- Give time and space for the children to share their ideas about the big questions, but remind them too that these are mysteries, and we answer mysteries like these with beliefs.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES Pupils should learn:	TEACHING AND LEARNING These ideas and sequences are all flexible: good teaching will be adapted to the needs of your class.	LEARNING OUTCOMES Pupils will be able to:	POINTS TO NOTE
What are the most puzzling questions we can think of? Who can help us answer puzzling questions? (Maybe 2 short sessions)			
<p>Learn that some questions are puzzling or interesting even when we don't know the answer.</p> <p>Think about the idea of 'big questions'</p> <p>Choose some questions they think are bigger than others</p>	<p>Puzzling Questions: getting started:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give children a big question mark each, or put a huge one in the centre of 'circle time'. Talk about what makes a 'big question' giving some examples to sort out: which of these is the biggest question: What colour is the chair? What is the chair made of? What is the story of this chair? • Ask children (think / pair / share is good) to think of four big questions, one each about themselves, other people, the Earth and God. Get them written into the question marks, or onto the whiteboard. Choose together which ones are the biggest of all. • Then introduce the idea that sometimes life makes us ask questions we don't know the answers to: encourage pupils to think of some examples from their own experience e.g. How does the oak tree get into the acorn? How do flowers grow? Why did my hamster die? What makes the sun come up in the morning? Why is food nice? • Use the book 'Why Do Stars Come Out at Night?' as an aid. Or a similar story. Children could suggest answers to the questions on each page before turning over to reveal the 'answer': whose answers do pupils like best? Can they think of some more questions? <p>The 'Why Book'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One way of collecting ideas from the children during this work is to make a 'Why Book' which collects their best questions together. Start now. • You might use riddles and jokes which pose questions to encourage children to start to realise that sometimes we just have to say, "I don't know!" when faced with a difficult question. Sometimes we can guess at possible answers, but the questions are still puzzling. <p>Plenary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the plenary, ask and remind children about the biggest questions they have asked. Remind them of the 'Why Book' 	<p>Communicate verbally feelings and thoughts about God, people and the world</p> <p>Become aware that people have beliefs which help them to answer puzzling questions about life</p> <p>Talk about what puzzles them.</p> <p>Identify 'big questions'</p>	<p>It is really important in early RE to get the sense of mystery and wonder working.</p> <p>This activity will help.</p> <p>Teachers need not be scared of saying 'I don't know' in RE.</p> <p>One way of getting children to choose the biggest question is to have three areas of the classroom, A, B and C, and label three questions on the whiteboard A, B and C. They run to the area that goes with what they think is the biggest question.</p> <p>The 'Why Book' is an important part of the unit from start to finish. Make it look great!</p> <p>Some children 5-7 don't get the jokes yet: it's worth explaining, but not too often!</p>

**Thinking about mysteries. What do we do if we don't know?
What questions would you put in a mystery box?
Travelling to find an answer**


Learn that sometimes puzzles and mysteries are interesting even if we 'don't know'.

Think about what is a mystery.

Suggest items to be put into a 'mystery box,

Using a mystery work of art to think about big questions.

- Begin this session with a mystery box. Teach pupils the word 'mystery': a puzzle that is important, but we can't be sure of the answer. In your box, you might have any of many mystery object. Here's one example. A picture postcard by Salvador Dali like this



one. Put it on the whiteboard and ask children to think of all the questions they would like to ask the painter. Again, consider together which are the biggest questions? When we don't know the answers, what can we do? How can we find out? One way would be to ask the artist, the maker.

- Teach the children that Christians believe God is the maker, so God knows the answers to mysteries and puzzles. Introduce the idea – to be elaborated in the next session - of asking God a question. Do some children have one already?

Travelling to find an answer: claim to fame

- One memorable and graphic way to help children think about puzzling out a mystery is to walk a 'clue trail' round school. This is quite easy to set up. Ask teachers and other adults what their claim to fame is.
- Use 6 clues to a secret about a member of staff – the Head was once on TV with Simon Cowell, or the premises officer has been swimming with dolphins in Florida. Tell the class we are going to walk round school looking for clues, which will all be hanging up on red cards, to find the answer to the mystery: what is Mr Jones claim to fame? Put the cards where sharp eyed children won't miss them, and take the walk together, collecting 6 or so pieces of information, and working out the secrets.
- Tell the children that there are some questions we have to live with for a long time before we are sure of the answers.

Plenary

- In the plenary, tell the children again what a mystery is. Remind them that bigger questions may take a longer time to answer. Ask the children to think of what they would put in the 'mystery box' – things which are interesting, but where it is hard to be sure of the answer.

Communicate verbally simple reactions to a puzzling picture.

Make up some questions to ask the artist, and decide if they are 'big questions'

Become aware puzzling questions can come from anywhere and anything in life.

Talk about the idea that God is the maker, like an artist.

Join in an activity that unravels a mystery.

The contents of the mystery box can be transferred to the '**Why Book**' from this lesson.

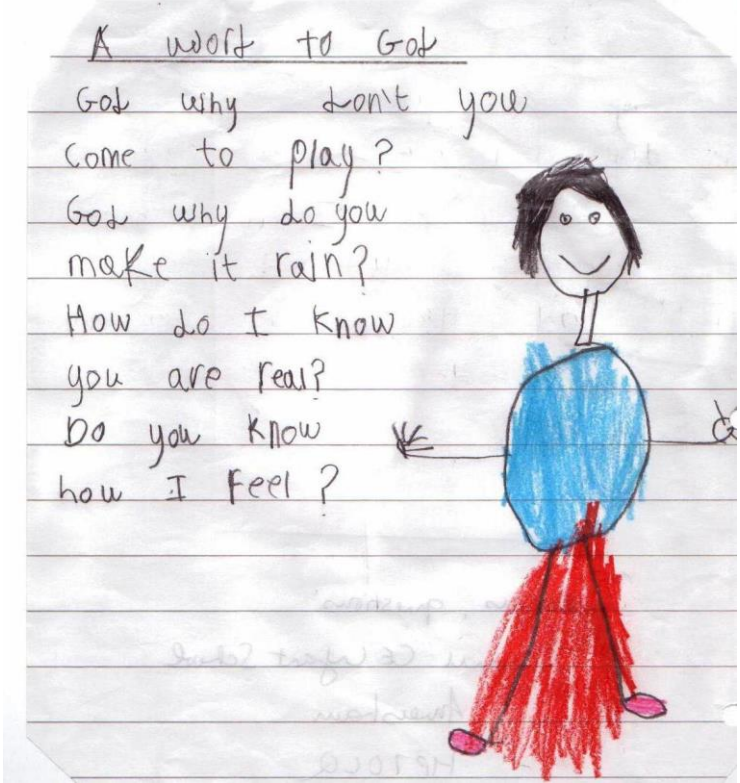
There are good links to both literacy and art in this work.

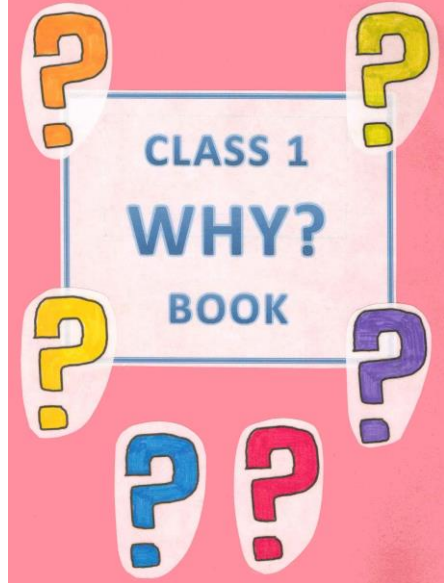
This activity is more about enquiry skills than directly about RE: if you want to, include a 'claim to fame' that has an RE dimension: Ms Jackson was married in a cathedral, or Mr Hassan went on pilgrimage to Makkah this summer.

**What questions would you like to ask the person who knows everything?
What are the biggest, most huge, giant questions you can think of?**


<p>To think about the questions they would like to ask God, or the person who knows everything.</p>	<p>If you could ask God four questions, what would you ask?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is worth spending some time on this, and having TAs to write down what children say, and put it on the whiteboard. • Remind children of the mystery box, from the last session, and tell them that today we want to put into the box the biggest questions we can think of. One way of thinking up these huge questions is to imagine we can ask them to the person who knows everything: some people say that's God. • Ask the children to think / pair / share and come up with the questions they would like to ask God. Celebrate them all, write them into question marks and talk about them. You might show the children Tom's poem. Do they think he is good at RE? Which is his biggest question? <p>Plenary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the plenary, remind children that Christians believe God knows all the answers. Ask them to keep thinking about their big questions. Add all the 'questions for God' to the 'Why Book.' 	<p>Respond sensitively to the ideas of other children</p> <p>Ask puzzling questions of my own.</p> <p>Recognise a Christian belief, e.g. in God, in Jesus.</p>	<p>If the children make any question-based poems, then these should go into the 'Why Book'</p> <p>This work links well to the Yr 1 poetry work in the literacy strategy on list poems and senses poems</p>
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Tom, age 6, wrote his 4 questions for God into a poem. Could some children in your class do the same? Could an able writer capture the questions for a whole group? Is it easier to have the TA write, and the children think? Tom's picture shows someone smiling and shrugging. This is 'body language' for puzzling questions. It's fun to practice it together.



<p>What would you like to ask God if you could have one question? Why did you choose that one? I wonder... What are your favourite questions of wonder?</p>			
<p>Children choose between different puzzles and mysteries.</p> <p>They learn to select the 'biggest mystery' from several examples.</p> <p>They talk about puzzles and mysteries in the setting of early RE.</p> <p>They learn that religious people can answer a mystery with a belief.</p>	<p>Asking someone who knows everything: big questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remind children of the questions they have been asking and the mysteries they have thought about. Put some questions in different coloured speech bubbles on the floor, in circle time, and read them simply together. Possible Questions to include in this activity: Why can't we fly? Who is God? Why was I born? Where does love come from? Why do we get older every day? What does it feel like to say thank you? Why do we live? Add to these any good ones that the pupils have discussed in the preceding sessions. Ask the children to suggest some more as you go along. You could tell a story in which someone asks a question of God: there are lots of these in different religious traditions. Ask the children in twos to say to each other which 'big question' they would ask the 'person who knows everything' if they could. Listen to the replies – have a vote on the top 5 if you like. Remind children that Christians (or Muslims, Jews, Sikhs) believe that God is the person who knows everything. Give time and space for the children to share their ideas about the big questions, but remind them too that these are mysteries, and we answer mysteries like these with beliefs. <p>Plenary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the plenary, recap some of the best questions. Point out that there are lots of different answers to these huge questions. Do children have some ideas? Are there any ways we could check out the ideas? Who could we ask? Where could we go? What could we look at? 	<p>Recognise that religious beliefs can have an effect on what people do and feel (Personal and social)</p> <p>Communicate questions, feelings and thoughts about God, people and the world (Communication)</p> <p>Become aware that people have beliefs which help them to answer puzzling questions about life (Understanding the world)</p> <p>Create questions and imagine new ideas from stories told (Creative)</p>	<p>It is not necessary to record assessment information for each pupil, but a teacher record of this final activity – photos, notes and quotes, for example, is powerful for the next steps in RE.</p> <p>This lesson is likely to contribute several pages to the 'Why Book'</p>
			

Asking puzzling questions about a religious story: How did Jesus help people? What does the story tell us about Christians and about Jesus?			
<p>Learn that religions sometimes answer puzzling questions with a story.</p> <p>Learn that a story can make us think about puzzling questions.</p> <p>Consider why Christians think Jesus was a healer, and cared for everyone.</p>	<p>Puzzling questions answered in a story: What do Christians think about Jesus?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce some questions which people ask and which religions offer answers to: <i>Who cares for me and who do I care for? What makes each person special? What makes life happy?</i> • Ask pupils to suggest their answers. Pick up on any answers the children suggest which could come from a faith perspective and explore these. Children may be able to say whether or not they believe in God, and why / why not. • Tell a story that shows some beliefs about Jesus or about God. The story of Jesus healing ten lepers is a good example, with themes of giving thanks and caring for others (Luke 17:11-18, in the Bible – usable version below, with ‘questions of wonder’). • Enable children to play at re-telling the story, using lego or playmobile people, or making some freeze frame photos (you could add speech bubbles and think bubbles to them). Ask them to imagine the thoughts of the people in the story at different times. • Point out that this story tells Christian people that God cares for everyone –including those who are foreigners or who are ill. • Point out that another message of the story is that saying thank you matters. <p>Plenary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the plenary, ask and remind children about the biggest questions they have asked. Ask them to think about how Christians answer big questions. Ask them if they want to be thankful people. Talk to the class about what, from this lesson, should go into the Why Book’ 	<p>Recognise that a story can show an answer to a puzzling question (L1).</p> <p>Recognise that religious beliefs can be used by some people to answer puzzling questions (L1).</p> <p>Notice that religious beliefs are not the only kind of beliefs (L1).</p> <p>Respond sensitively to a story that shows Christians the care of Jesus and the value of saying ‘thank you’ (L2).</p>	<p>Strategies called ‘Godly play’ (invented by Jerome Berryman) are useful in this work because they promote thinking about questions of wonder. These strategies are adaptable to plural settings, but originate in Christian education, so teachers need to think through how to use them in plural RE.</p>
<p>Ten men with leprosy come to Jesus. From Luke 17:11-18</p> <p>Long ago, when Jesus lived in Palestine, there was one illness that frightened everybody. It was called leprosy. The disease made a person’s skin look dreadful, and people were so scared of catching it that people with leprosy were not allowed to live in towns and villages. They were sent away. But Jesus was not scared of leprosy.</p> <p>One day Jesus was travelling when ten people with leprosy called out to him. They did not come very close. ‘Can you help us Jesus? Can you heal us? They called. Jesus replied with a smile and a shout: ‘Yes! Got to the priest and show yourselves to him. You will be well.’ (If someone got better from leprosy, then the priest could give them permission to return home and have a normal life again).</p> <p>The ten lepers went, and on the way, they were all healed. One of them was a foreigner. He ran back to Jesus praising God and crying ‘thank you!’ Jesus welcomed him. ‘But where are the other nine? he asked. ‘Is it only foreigners who know how to say thank you?’</p> <p>There is a very simple 2 minute animation of this story from the Leprosy Mission at: www.youtube.com/user/LeprosyMission#p/a/u/2/3aluCdtPR2l</p>			<p>Questions of wonder:</p> <p>I wonder why people were so scared of this illness.</p> <p>I wonder why Jesus was not scared.</p> <p>I wonder if Jesus was a bit like a doctor</p> <p>I wonder how they got better so quickly</p> <p>I wonder why nine of the people did not go back to say thank you.</p> <p>I wonder what the message of the story is.</p>

How do people's beliefs make a difference to what they do?			
<p>Learn that for Christians (or members of another religion) some objects show what they believe.</p> <p>Learn that an object can answer a question sometimes.</p>	<p>What do People who Believe in God do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin by asking children to think quietly for 30 seconds to come up with a puzzling question that really matters. Collect these from volunteers. • Take Christianity as an example, unless there is a different faith to which most children in the class belong. Fill a bag with artefacts from Christianity: a Bible and hymn book, a cross, a candle, a chalice, grape juice in a container and any other examples you have easily to hand. • Let the children feel the shapes inside the bag, then pull out each object in turn. Invite a local vicar to show the children the different clerical vestments: children could try on the clothes and explore the contents of the bag: allow time for pupils to familiarize themselves with these things through play, and discuss any questions they raise so that they start to build up a picture of what Christians do and believe. • A 'lego church' based on pictures or a visit, and some small world people to play with are often good imaginative starting points. • Remind them about the puzzling questions they have thought of, and talk about some of the answers Christians might give e.g. Christians believe <i>God cares for me</i>, and <i>each person is special because God made them and God loves them</i>, and <i>life is happier when we love each other</i>. • Introduce the idea that people who believe in God show this by meeting up with other believers at places of worship e.g. Christians go to church on Sundays. • Look at some pictures of Christians in church. Explore pupils' questions about what they can see to build up an understanding of what is happening in each picture. Some children may go to church regularly, or be a member of a different faith community, others may have been to weddings or baptisms: encourage children to talk about these times, and the feelings that go with them. Many children will have no experience of community worship. • Focus on feelings and experience here, leading to questions. 	<p>Identify puzzling questions for themselves (L1).</p> <p>Start to talk about questions such as: what makes life happy? Who do I care for and who cares for me? What do I believe? Does God have all the answers? (L1)</p> <p>Notice the connections teachers point out between a religious community and its objects and the beliefs that go with them (L2).</p>	<p>The main example used here is Christianity, but teachers can adapt this activity to use with a story and some artefacts from Judaism or another faith tradition.</p> <p>Again, teachers may feel that the questions are too big, but never worry about saying 'Wow, that's a good one: any ideas anyone?' in answer to whatever comes up. The lesson may then run itself!</p> <p>The 'Why Book' might need a chapter on 'our questions about Church and believing in God' here.</p>
			
<p>Thanks to Rachael Oates for her Year 1 Class's version of the 'Why Book' illustrated here. This is a page of creation questions.</p>			

What were our best 'big questions' in these RE lessons? What is a mystery? What do we believe? What good answers have we discovered?			
<p>Children suggest answers to big questions</p> <p>They learn to talk increasingly deeply about puzzles and beliefs.</p> <p>They use their imagination to ask questions and suggest answers.</p> <p>They make simple links to what Christians think about big questions.</p>	<p>Walk and chalk: A puzzling questions conversation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This lesson can be fun if you take the class outside. Walking time is thinking time, so tell them what you plan to do, then go and do it. In advance, chalk a huge question mark onto the school playground, big enough for the whole class to stand around the edge. A masking tape question mark in the school hall is a less exciting, but still useful alternative. Take the 'Why Book' that the class have been working on. Ask the class to stand round the question mark with their toes just on the line. Remind children of all the big questions they have been thinking about. Choose one question you know they have enjoyed first, and ask anyone who has got an answer –or even a bit of an answer – to step inside the question mark. Hear some of the answers, and praise the children who give them. Repeat the process with several questions, encouraging everyone to take some part. Can the children talk about some of the things they believe and some things which Christians believe? Reinforce Christian beliefs: <i>God cares for me, and each person is special because God made them and God loves them, and life is happier when we love each other.</i> <p>Plenary</p> <p>After the activity, you might remind children of some good questions and good answers. You could do this around the chalk question mark: ask them 'who can say what they enjoyed about our RE this time?' and 'What did we learn in our RE lessons?'</p>	<p>Listen to stories and imaginative scenarios and create make-believe characters and stories of their own (Creative Development)</p> <p>Identify some religious objects, stories and questions (L1).</p> <p>Talk about puzzling questions (L1)</p> <p>Notice what is of concern to themselves and to others (L1).</p>	<p>RE needs more learning outside the classroom. On a dry day, this is a memorable and interesting way to bring the work to a conclusion.</p> <p>Don't be too concerned about assessing the work for each child, but take a photo and use the Why Book as a record of the work and talking the children have done.</p>