

Learning with the Artefacts

A religious artefact represents a part of a faith tradition. The artefact is a window, a way of looking at a faith, helping pupils to engage with and understand about religion and learn from others about beliefs and values.

Artefacts can provide a sensory, active and memorable way of learning about and from religions. They can help to develop RE skills such as:

Observation
Questioning
Investigation
Experience
Reflection
Response

Before introducing the artefacts to the class use the background information to ensure that you are familiar with the contents and what each artefact represents.

Consider how you want to use the artefacts, for example:

1. **For decoration/visual stimuli** - Demonstrate and explain each artefact before creating the display using the background notes provided and consider displaying images on the wall to create visual impact. Refer to the images and artefacts at different times during the study and encourage pupils to create labels and additional information as they develop understanding.
2. **As an educational tool to support learning** - Individual artefacts can be linked to concepts or themes such as Festivals & Celebrations/Rituals & Ceremonies. They can then be investigated at different points during the learning journey and used as a research focus helping pupils to ask and answer questions about the religions. There are many ways to use artefacts. We have included some activity ideas here as a free download, along with example exploring artefacts sheets to encourage close observations of the items. We hope you enjoy using them.

Introducing the artefacts

- Teach the children how to handle the artefacts carefully and store them safely and securely.
- Some artefacts you use will be replicas. The first time that children encounter a replica, ensure that you explain that these are replicas rather than originals and discuss why this is so.

- Talk about materials/fragility/location/size/value/age of originals and explain that old and sacred objects are getting rarer, and they must be preserved for others to use in the future.

In RE children learn about and from religion. Learners should be encouraged to enquire, investigate and evaluate. Questions can be asked about the artefact's origins, uses and importance.

Religious artefacts generate empathy and respect helping us to learn about one another and begin to understand beliefs and faiths.

Discuss what the artefact is? Learn how to pronounce the name. Which religious belief is it used by? What does it represent? How might it be used?

Pupils can learn to recognise and name various features of religions. They can express their own and other's views and responses to religious questions.

Ideas and suggestions

Artefacts can be used in a variety of ways. They are perfect for discussions, creative writing, art, drama and questioning. Here are some examples of ways you could use them.

1. Special Objects

Talk about special objects. Concentrate on each artefact observing closely and using senses to describe the items.

2. Getting Close Up

Observe and make drawings of the artefact. Look closely, thinking about what makes this object special to someone. Design and make a replica of it from clay.

3. Matching

Match an image of the artefact to its correct name and definition of the object. This is useful to assess children's knowledge and reinforce what they have learnt.

4. Developing Vocabulary

Learn the names of the artefacts. Lay them on a cloth and play Kim's game.
Who can remember all the items?

5. Be an Expert

Research the artefacts and find out how they are used. Use books, photographs, the internet, video clips and interviews with people. Present findings in different ways.

6. Interview

Exploring artefacts is an excellent opportunity to make contact and engage with people in school, and in the wider community. Invite people to talk about the artefacts and explain how they use them. Children could prepare three questions to ask the user about the object.

7. Storytelling

Artefacts can be helpful in storytelling. Through hearing and telling stories the pupils will learn more about the objects and gain a deeper understanding. Use the artefacts as a focal point for the story, a way of helping bring the story to life.

8. Sharing

Share experiences. Do they have any similar objects at home or in their place of worship? Encourage children to talk about their own faiths and beliefs.

9. Reflection

Artefacts can be used as a focal point for thinking and reflecting. They can help to create a sense of awe and wonder. Allow opportunity for reflection. How does the artefact make them feel? Create a special reflection area in the classroom to focus on the artefacts.

10. Concept Mapping

Link and compare the artefacts. Choose a special object and describe its significance. Give thoughtful responses. Compare it with other objects and look for similarities and differences.

11. Sort

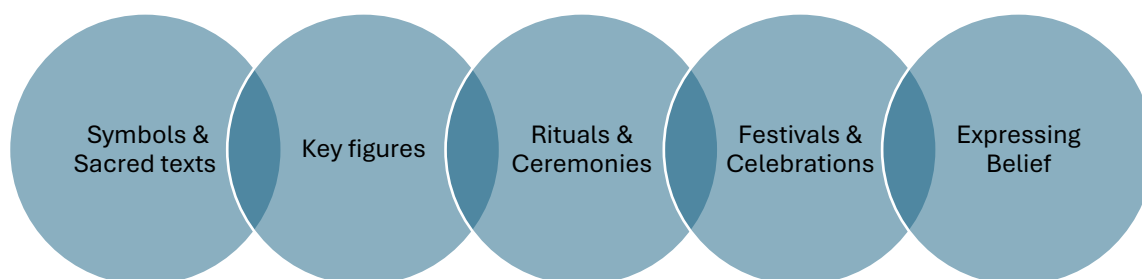
Carefully sort the artefacts in different ways to learn more about them. Create a Venn diagram using hoops and sort according to different criteria e.g., religion, festival.

12. Role-Play

Use role-play and drama techniques to explore the artefacts. Show with mime and still images how the artefact can be used.

13. Comparing

Lay out the artefacts and compare them noting similarities and differences. Sort the artefacts by religion or by their purpose. For example:



Symbols & Sacred Texts	Key figures	Rituals & Ceremonies	Festivals & Celebrations	Expressing Belief
Hanukkiah Torah Scroll Crucifix Crosses Qur'an rack Khanda Chauri	Buddha Crucifix Icons Krishna stories Hindu figure Stories of Muhammad	Hanukkiah Mezuzah case Puja bowls Chalice & Paten Puja Thali Chauri	Hanukkiah Sedar plate Rosh Hashanah cards Certificates Eid Cards Hindu Greeting cards Diya candles	Incense sticks Prayer Beads Prayer Flags Rosary Beads Prayer mat Henna 5 Ks

14. Ask Questions

Ask questions about the RE artefacts.
Which of the artefacts do you particularly like?
Do any hold any importance to you?
What further questions would you like to ask about the artefacts?
What is the name of the artefact, how is it used and by whom?
How should this artefact be used and handled?

15. Artefact Investigation

You may want to explore the artefacts in more detail by carrying out a deeper case study investigation into one of the artefacts your class find particularly interesting.

Observe & Investigate

Image or drawing of artefact:

Describe using your senses:

- What does it look and feel like?
- Does it make a noise?
- What is it made from?
- How big is it?
- Has it got any detail on it? Markings? Writing? What do they mean?
- Does the object remind you of anything?

Explore & Discover

What religious tradition might the artefact be connected to?

What do you think it is called? _____

What do you think the object was used for and by whom?

What does this object represent in that religion?

How might this object make someone feel?

What difference did the object make to people's lives? _____

Are there any symbols on the artefact, what do these symbols mean?

What can this object tell us about this faith? _____

Reflect & Evaluate

Why might this object be important to someone who follows that religion?

How does this object make you feel about your own beliefs?

What questions does this object make you want to ask?

Other things to consider

How does this object connect to other things you have learnt about the religion?

What other religious artefacts are similar or different?

How might this object be used in a place of worship?

How does this object help people connect with their faith or beliefs?

Are there any stories or festivals that connect to this object?

Express what learnt from the artefact in different ways. These might include creative expression with drama or dance, visual expression with paintings or collage, oral expression with a presentation or quiz and written expression using poetry or a story.