

RE

Christianity and non religious views – why do some people believe in God and others do not?

How many people believe in God?

We used the 2011 census to see how many people belonged to a religion

Notes:

Buddhists do not believe there is a God.

Note also that not all religious believers agree about what 'God' is like; some say all religions are worshipping the same God, they just have different views of God; others say that there is one God but not all religions have the correct understanding.

Chapter 1

The envelope landed on my desk. 'It's for you,' said the boss. 'This case has been hanging around for a long time. Clear it up. I want a report on my desk in 7 days.'

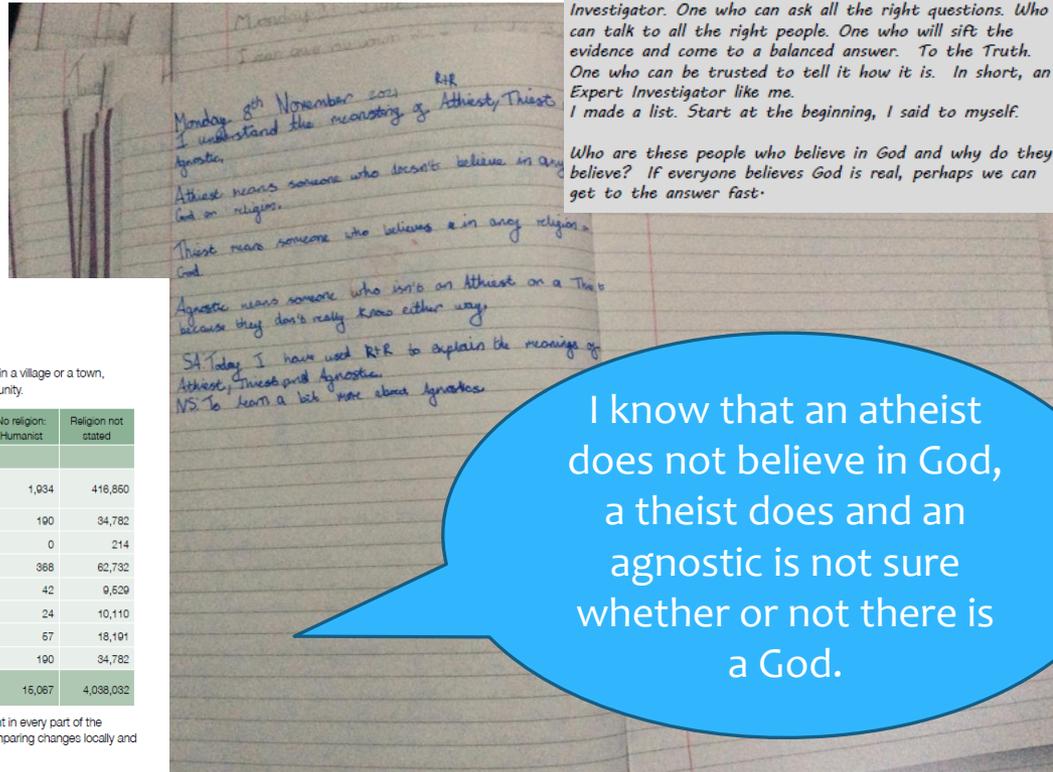
I opened the envelope and drew out a single sheet of paper. Printed in big letters:

Is God real?

A Big Question, I thought.

Sure, I thought; this is the job for an Expert Investigator. One who can ask all the right questions. Who can talk to all the right people. One who will sift the evidence and come to a balanced answer. To the Truth. One who can be trusted to tell it how it is. In short, an Expert Investigator like me. I made a list. Start at the beginning, I said to myself.

Who are these people who believe in God and why do they believe? If everyone believes God is real, perhaps we can get to the answer fast.



I know that an atheist does not believe in God, a theist does and an agnostic is not sure whether or not there is a God.

E.5 The demographics of religion and belief in Cornwall, the region and the nation

The 2011 census information sets the demographic context for the county, the region and the nation. We do not intend to educate pupils only for their current life, perhaps in a village or a town, but also for a plural nation and a diverse world. The purpose of RE includes enabling pupils to be ready to live well in a wider world: the region, the nation, the global community.

ENGUSC 2011:	Population	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	Other religion	Pagan	No religion	No religion: Humanist	Religion not stated
South West England	6,288,935	3,104,066	19,730	16,324	8,365	61,228	6,892	29,279	8,953	1,649,201	1,934	416,850
Cornwall	428,234	200,254	2,640	2,712	777	22,016	2,133	2,793	1,429	160,216	190	34,782
Isles of Scilly	2,203	1,218	9	1	4	3	0	12	3	742	0	214
Devon	748,399	458,778	2,726	816	685	3,091	283	4,261	1,316	213,045	368	62,732
Exeter	117,773	63,486	683	372	165	1,855	160	671	200	40,862	42	9,629
Torbay	130,969	82,924	380	128	109	621	41	702	177	36,035	24	10,110
Plymouth	266,384	148,917	881	667	168	2,078	89	1,198	418	84,295	67	18,191
Bristol	428,234	200,254	2,640	2,712	777	22,016	2,133	2,793	676	160,216	190	34,782
ENGLAND AND WALES	66,076,912	33,243,176	247,743	816,633	263,346	2,706,066	423,158	240,630	66,820	14,007,220	15,087	4,038,032

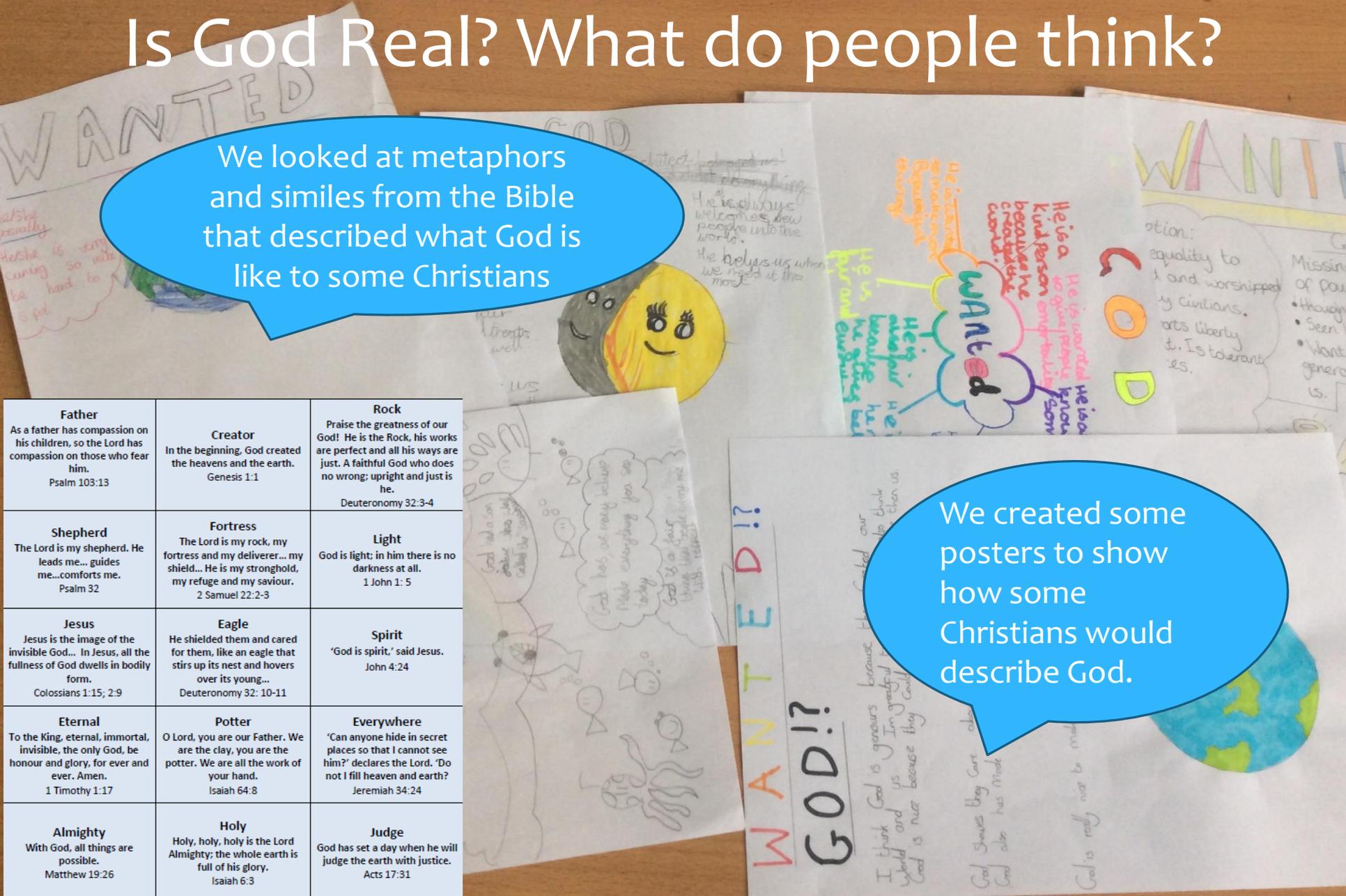
This table selects data for religious affiliation from the 2011 Census, providing a context for RE in Cornwall and the surrounding region. Diversity is not always evident in every part of the county or the region, but pupils might learn much from seeing this regional picture and understanding it. During the lifetime of this syllabus, there will be a new Census. Comparing changes locally and nationally will be a valuable exercise in RE.

Is God Real? What do people think?

We looked at metaphors and similes from the Bible that described what God is like to some Christians

<p>Father As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him. Psalm 103:13</p>	<p>Creator In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1</p>	<p>Rock Praise the greatness of our God! He is the Rock, his works are perfect and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong; upright and just is he. Deuteronomy 32:3-4</p>
<p>Shepherd The Lord is my shepherd. He leads me... guides me... comforts me. Psalm 32</p>	<p>Fortress The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer... my shield... He is my stronghold, my refuge and my saviour. 2 Samuel 22:2-3</p>	<p>Light God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 1 John 1: 5</p>
<p>Jesus Jesus is the image of the invisible God... In Jesus, all the fullness of God dwells in bodily form. Colossians 1:15; 2:9</p>	<p>Eagle He shielded them and cared for them, like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young... Deuteronomy 32: 10-11</p>	<p>Spirit 'God is spirit,' said Jesus. John 4:24</p>
<p>Eternal To the King, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen. 1 Timothy 1:17</p>	<p>Potter O Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter. We are all the work of your hand. Isaiah 64:8</p>	<p>Everywhere 'Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?' declares the Lord. 'Do not I fill heaven and earth?' Jeremiah 34:24</p>
<p>Almighty With God, all things are possible. Matthew 19:26</p>	<p>Holy Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory. Isaiah 6:3</p>	<p>Judge God has set a day when he will judge the earth with justice. Acts 17:31</p>

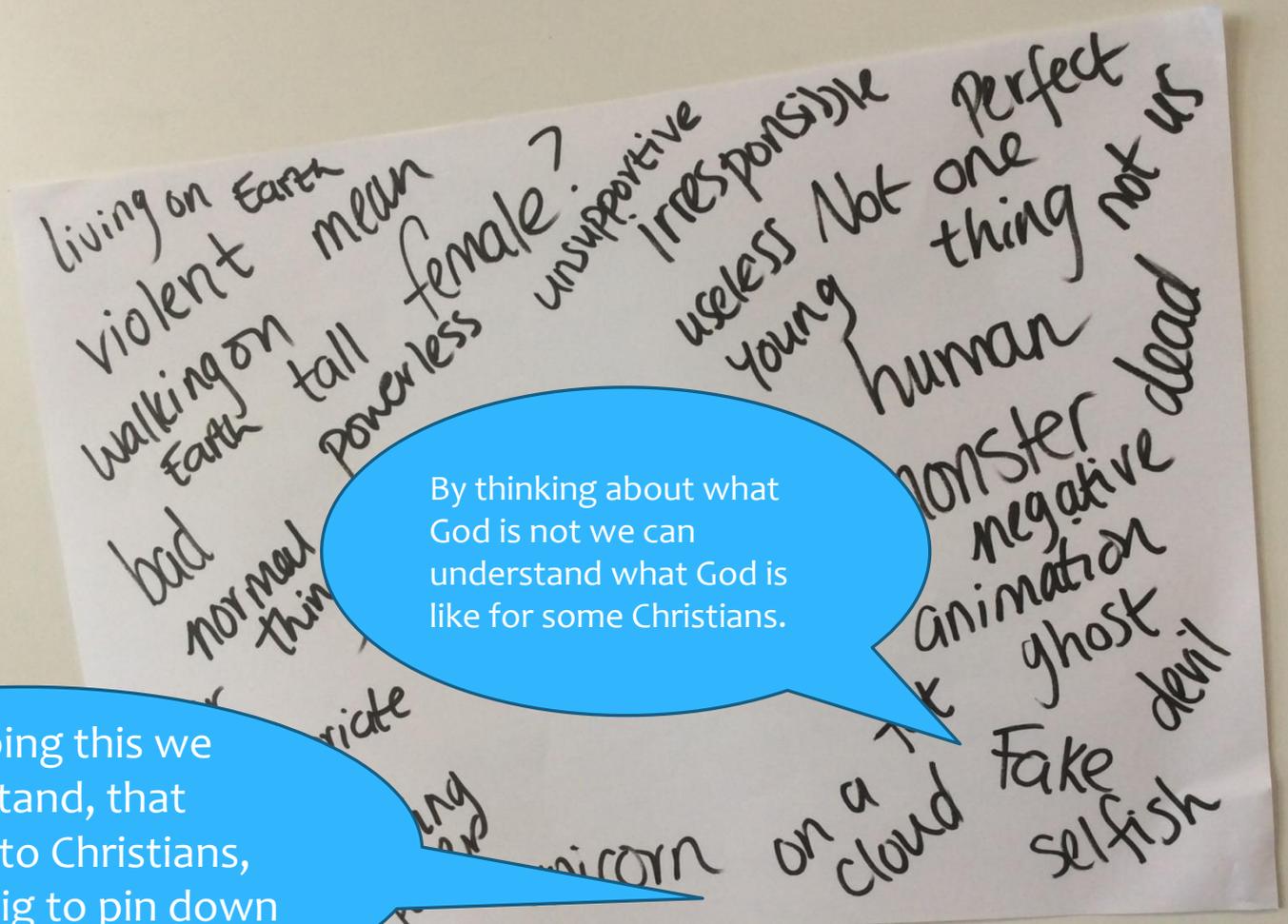
We created some posters to show how some Christians would describe God.



What is God like to some Christians?

Chapter 3

So, I've got an idea of this God of Christianity but it's not very clear. I think I'll try and clear my thinking a bit, using the Negative Way. Remember that? Medieval thinkers like Moses Maimonides said that you can't talk positively about God, because God is beyond our ability to make sense of the idea. So we need to use the Negative Way, and say what God is not. I wonder if that will help...



By thinking about what God is not we can understand what God is like for some Christians.

So By doing this we understand, that according to Christians, God is too big to pin down as one thing

Why do people believe or not believe in God

People live different experiences and that can impact on their beliefs

I need proof to believe something is real, I need to see it.

I challenge as you cannot see everything to know it is real – we cannot see every particle in the air but we know they are there

We asked questions as to why some people do and do not believe in God.



What impact does believing in God have on people's lives and how they think?



Investigation File 4:
I asked a load of folks, "Do you think that God is real?" Here are some of their responses. An interesting bunch. Not sure how reliable they all are, so you might need to find some of your own witnesses.

I believe that God is real. I believe that the Bible describes what God is like, and that God came to earth in human form, in the person of Jesus. If I want to know what God is like, I look at Jesus. For me, the only sufficient explanation of the power of Jesus' life, death and resurrection is that it is true. When I look at the amazing, beautiful creation, I see God's work in it. I have also experienced God's love and care in my life. I try to worship God through my words and actions.
Chris

I was brought up in a Roman Catholic family, so the idea of God has always been part of my life. When I was younger, I didn't really question whether it was true, I just got on with living a Christian life. It seemed to make sense. Now I am sure that it is true. The Church gives me a pattern for my life, reminding me that I need to say sorry for bad things and to try to put them right. Taking care of people in need is an important part of being a Christian.
Marie

I was christened as a baby. My parents took me to our local Anglican church regularly and I used to enjoy it. As I got older I drifted away. I suppose I had an idea that science explained life and you don't need God. But I can't let go of the idea completely. I'd like God to be real. Even if God doesn't exist I still pray every now and again. I think that there probably is more to life than just living and dying and that's it.
Shelley

I came to know that God exists when I was 21. I had no religious beliefs. I knew about religion from RE lessons but I wasn't interested at all. Other people were doing what they wanted. I was going through a difficult time with my own illness and a good friend dying. I was really upset and desperate, I would say. So I called out to God. I didn't believe in God before, but

I can't believe that God is real – it doesn't make sense! The universe happened by chance, we exist because of evolution. People believe in God because they want some protection in the universe – they are scared of dying and there being no life after death. Religion stops people from making the most of life. I think this life is

I can only speak from my own experience and in the uncertainties of the world and in my own life I need something to hold on to. For me that rock is Jesus – and about everything else I try to keep an open mind. It is in the life and teaching of Jesus that I begin to see the spirit of Ultimate Truth in a human form. With that simple statement I may seem to be a Christian. As a Christian, my life as a spiritual journey starts to

God makes Christians believe they belong to a community

Having faith in God can get people through difficult times such as a loss

Some Christians believe that taking care of people in need is an important part of being a Christian.



Final report – Is God real? Why do some people say yes and others say no?

I believe God is not a being he is a meaning

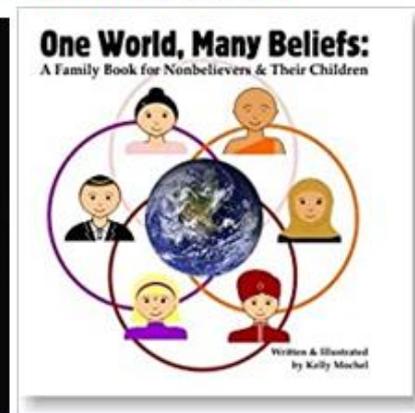
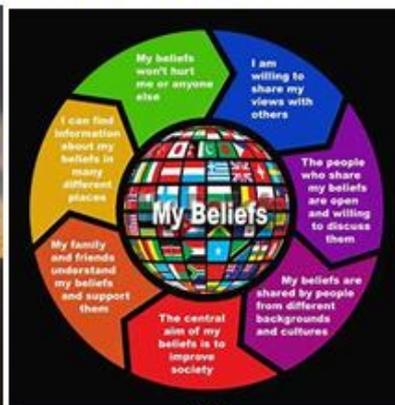
I am an Agnostic because I cannot say God is real or not as there is no proof

You cannot say God is real as messages in the Bible might have been missed as written after the fact

On the other hand I believe he may be real as he created people who then became scientists.

Final Report: Is God real?			
Introduction	On the one hand...	On the other hand...	Conclusion
This question is...	Most Christians say that God is...	Some people believe that God is not real because...	For most people the strongest evidence seems to be...
This is an important question because...	This means that God is not...	Another reason is ...	For atheists, the strongest evidence that there is no God seems to be...
This is a big question because...	Some people believe this God is real because...	This is a strong /weak argument because...	Believing in God is a big part in millions of people's lives because...
When the question says "God", most Christians mean...	Others believe because...	Some people think no one should believe in God because...	Arguments don't always persuade people to believe or not to believe...
The answer I have...	Believing in God is very important for some people, for example...	Some people are quite happy for others to believe, even if they don't, because...	This is a good way to explain...
...and my question for other people such as...	Believing in God can have a big impact for some people because...	Believing that there is no God might affect how a person lives, for example...	I think... because...
	Many people who believe in God don't think you can actually prove God's existence but they say...		I am not sure about the answer to this question because...

What I have learnt in LKS2: earlier learning about God in Judaism, Christianity and Islam – three monotheistic traditions with common roots



Facts within religion

Imagining the **UK** and/or **your area** shrunk to 100 people:

UK 2011 Census: Christians 59; No religions 25; Muslims 5; Hindus 2; other 9 (includes Sikhs 0.8, Jews 0.5, Buddhists 0.4; answer not given 7)

Many Christians believe God is Spirit, omnipotent (all-powerful), omniscient (all-knowing), benevolent (allgood), eternal, compassionate, just, loving, creator and sustainer of the universe and all life

RE is not just for the religious, but for all pupils.

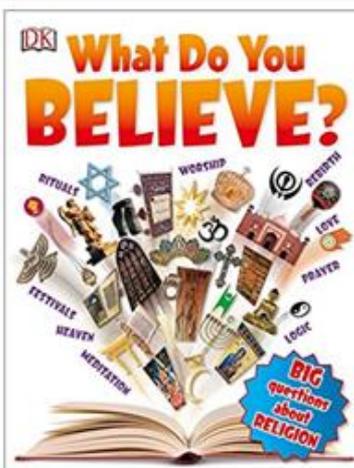
Skills

Make clear connections between what people believe about God and the impact of this belief on how they live

Identify and explain what religious and non-religious people believe about God, saying where they get their ideas from

The ability to debate issues of religious significance with reference to evidence and argument

Exciting Books



Our Endpoint

I can explain why some people believe in God and some people not?

Subject Specific Vocabulary

Theist	A person who believe in God
Atheist	A person who says there is no god
Agnostic	A person who says they don't know or cannot know if there is a god or not, (from Greek <i>theos</i> , god; <i>a-theos</i> - no god; <i>a-gnosis</i> , no knowledge).
Worldviews	Your way of explaining life and the world
Beliefs	something one accepts as true or real; a firmly held opinion

Culture Capital:

Including developing awareness of their own and others' beliefs, increasing ability to reflect on the impact of faith in people's lives, and an increasing desire to explore their own and others' views