

## Special Religious Education Curriculum – Alstonville High School

All lessons are drawn from a mainstream Christian world-view and philosophy reflecting the Biblical perception of human meaning, dignity and purpose and incorporate the following principles:

- Interactive exploration. The subject encourages students to share their own experiences and ideas (students deserve to be heard and must be allowed to respond freely to the ideas discussed). Every student's level of experience, level of knowledge, and stage in moral/spiritual development is respected e.g. possibly hostile to religion and faith, indifferent to religion and faith, questioning or exploring religion and faith, or actively pursuing religion and faith).
- Different learning styles – A variety of different learning styles is catered for, for example, linguistic and written (e.g. worksheets, written response), linguistic and verbal (e.g. debating, discussing or sharing out loud), visual (e.g. powerpoint or video clips), kinetic (e.g. active game, object lesson, change of environment, movement), and reflective or meditative (e.g. silent contemplation, invitation to reflect but not having to comment or respond).
- Grounding Beliefs and Concepts: This describes the process whereby any idea, concept, piece of information, story, or document is *grounded* in history. Someone, somewhere, expressed, wrote, recorded, or documented the idea. This is referenced to the best of our historical knowledge and ability whether it is a youtube clip, author, Bible quote, famous incident in history, newspaper article, religious document, etc. The fact that the idea exists is an incontestable fact and a product of human history. Faithful education is the explanation of the origin and meaning of the idea or concept to the best of our ability. There is nothing prescriptive in *grounding* an idea. The teacher's task is to facilitate the transfer of information so that an idea or concept and its implications may be understood. Increased knowledge and understanding should be the outcome of the process. A student is not compelled, forced, or manipulated into adopting or appropriating the idea at a personal level. A student *is* invited to reflect on the meaning of the idea or concept, and is free to appropriate it as a personal value, belief, source of meaning or comfort, if they so desire. This is made clear in introductory lessons in all years.
- Owning Beliefs and Concepts: *Owning* an idea or value is the process whereby a student may express their personal response to an idea or concept. The student "takes ownership" of their personal values and attitudes and is able to articulate them and take responsibility for them. "I think," "I believe," "I disagree with," "I don't like it when..." "I think that sounds cool," "It annoys me when," "That sounds unfair to me," "I do not get that!" "I find that idea helps me when..." These *owning* statements are expressed as "I" statements and do not force conformity or agreement upon anyone else in the room. People must "own" beliefs and concepts freely, in their own time, as they come to understand them, and appreciate their value or personal relevance. The teacher explains and models the language of *grounding* and *owning* beliefs.
- Respecting Personal Space: This is part of our class code ("The Hand Deal") and ensures that no student is forced to divulge an opinion, any personal family or emotional information, that makes them feel awkward or embarrassed, or violates their privacy. This is explained at the beginning of every year. The nature of the subject means that intensely personal, and even controversial areas of life are touched on – spiritual beliefs, values, emotions, and opinions. The classroom must be a safe forum where such personal, and even potentially

divisive, ideas and concepts may be shared and expressed without fear or anxiety. Where anxiety does exist, the student may excuse themselves from participating if they wish.

**NOTE:** The curriculum represents lessons that have been provided. These represent more lessons than a timetabled year permits so no one year will be able to cover every topic each year. Each year group's lesson may also be presented to the year group above it if circumstances or time warrant it.

## **Year 7**

### 1. Introduction

Class values/ expectations/welcome

"The Hand Deal" – Values that make groups function well

Supportive

Respectful

No Abuse

Participate positively and properly

Encourage, Thanks and Praise

Respect Personal Physical Space – equipment and people

Respect Personal Emotional Space – different levels of confidence and privacy

### 2. Personal Profile (Getting to know each other)

Designing a personal Herald or Coat of Arms

My greatest achievement – talent, passion, personal accomplishment

My family members – we are part DNA and influenced by family of origin

Someone I admire – we are influenced by mentors, role models, the famous

A place I would like to go to – dreams, experiences, travel

A job I would like – future aspirations, planning, learning, preparing

My greatest fear – our areas of struggle or weakness

My favourite leisure activity – our sense of fun, joy, peace, excitement, sport, art

My motto – a short statement of belief or attitude to life, a code, a moral, a value

We discuss all the above as some of the characteristics of being human and being an individual. A good belief system (philosophy or religion) should also have something to say about each of them for it should embrace all of life and being – skills, weaknesses, hopes, values, family, relationships, purpose and pleasure.

### 3. Fear

Good and bad fear (The rope game)

Good fear protects us and gives us security (don't touch the snake, go too close to the edge of the cliff)

Bad fear holds us back from trying or having a go – fear of failure, embarrassment, rejection, ridicule – and can deny us experiences where we learn and grow. These fears may inhibit our growth but may also be overcome and surprise us.

## Fear and religion (The Stealth Cat)

How did the cat behave? (Curious but cautious)

Why? (To keep safe)

Curious but cautious is a good motto for approaching religion. Why? (Religious history, war, terrorism, inquisitions, cults, hypocrisy, manipulators, burnings, child abuse, not allowed to ask questions in religion! – these are the answers year sevens give)

Fear and religion: Where might religion cause anxiety or fear today?

Good fear in religion – it keeps you safe.

Bad fear in religion – it may prevent you learning new and significant things.

Rules for safety in our class – be curious but cautious.

Answer all queries honestly but do not manipulate or force agreement upon someone else.

## Pebbles Story

The Angel and the Bedouins – the pebbles turned into diamonds.

Education is a process of picking up pebbles. You never know when it will show its value and turn into a diamond! So: be safe, be curious, be open minded...and see what you discover!

## 4. Footloose – Exploring the Meaning of life

### Video: “Ray of Light”

- \* If that was the only information you had about Earth, how would you describe life? (Fun, crazy, party, weird, fast, hectic, busy)
- \* Give an example of each of these categories in your life (Fun, Different, Helpful, Smart, Boring, Risky)
- \* A balanced life may include all – even a *boring* thing can still be *valuable!* (e.g. exercise before a game, changing nappies, finishing an assignment). To see life as purposeful is to see more than just fun.

### Chaos, Chance, Luck (La Chance video)

- \* When have you had a “La Chance” moment in life (stories shared)
- \* Where does life seem to be chaotic, uncontrolled, and random (crime, terrorism, natural disasters, DNA, etc) This can be cause for insecurity/ fear/ anxiety.
- \* Are things getting worse or are more bad things getting filmed and reported?
- \* Where in the world do we find order, planning, security, reliability? (Seasons, tides, DNA reproduction, time, governments, rules, laws, planning, calendars, timetables, instructions, patterns, games, uniforms, education, families, cultures, customs, manners, etc. Note: In nature *and* human behaviour, we seem to find an incredible amount of order and purpose.
- \* Many creation stories, including the Genesis story, stress the idea of order coming out of chaos. Things are designed to *work!*  
Where do you see humans creating order out of disorder?  
Where do you see human behaviour creating disorder out of order?
- \* Personal Life snapshot: Fill in the patterns in your life, the routine, the order, the activities, that fit into the different time slots given.

- \* QUESTION! Write down something about life that has always puzzled you, or that you have always wondered about, or would love to know the answer to. (Read out anonymously)

The Thinker (Image of Rodin's Sculpture – let's be thinkers! Philosophers!)

- \* Man On Wire Video – cinema short for film. Did he take a risk?  
Yes – if he fell he would have died.  
No – he had prepared for 6 years! He trained until it was easy and so not a risk for him. Clue to success – train, study, work, & practise hard and you remove a lot of the risk of failure!
- \* X-Box Add video – “Life is short. Play More Xbox”
- \* What do you think the purpose or meaning of life is? (Read answers anonymously)
  
- \* Video – The Byrds “Turn, Turn, Turn”  
The song was a big 60s anthem celebrating life, complexity, and the search for peace in a world of chaos and turmoil. They wrote it from a quote they took from a book called *Ecclesiastes* in the Bible.
- \* Introduce Ecclesiastes – a philosophical meditation on the meaning of human existence. He explored the good and bad of human existence, much like we have done in our unit on order and chaos.
- \* Write out conclusive meditation on life (Ecclesiastes 2: 12-17)  
Where did he agree with some of your answers earlier? (Have fun, seek happiness, do good, live life to the full, work hard).
- \* Where did he have some different ideas? (Religious elements, Life is a gift from God. Life is also unfair, and corrupt, and sometimes evil people get ahead)
- \* What was his hope? (That eventually God would sort it out and judge evil. But meanwhile, get on with being good and enjoying your life).
- \* Welcome to the world of religious thought! It covers the big issues of life – meaning, purpose, work, happiness, morality, justice, God, the afterlife). Some of those topics were the very same questions you wrote that you sometimes wished you could know the answers to. Welcome to a class where get to ask those questions without feeling silly, and get to look and discuss the answers that great thinkers in history and the Bible have come up with.

5. You are Special (Max Lucardo parable)

Created and Loved

Who is Eli? What is your Name?

Praising and Judging

Personal Value and Resilience

Ruby Bridges Civil Rights Story – Personal Faith in adversity

6. Treasure

What do we Value – what do our treasures tell about our priorities?

Your treasure

Jesus on treasure

7. Let's Get Physical - Body Image

More than bodies – heart, soul and mind

Samuel Choosing a King – conflict in values/ “God Looks at the Heart”

Appearance versus substance

8. The Book – Introduction to the Bible  
Genre/ interpretation/ OT and NT  
David and Goliath  
Archaeology
- 9 Living in a Spiritual World  
Definitions of spirituality  
Personal stories and experiences  
Can you trust the labels?  
True and False spirituality  
Safe and unsafe spirituality  
Jesus on false prophets  
Fruits of the spirit
10. Jesus Quiz  
Outlines brief biography of Jesus Christ
11. World Vision Lesson
12. Lifeline: Personal Journeys  
Your journey so far.
13. Year 7 Movie Option  
  
The Iron Giant  
Outcast, Falsely accused, Sacrifice, saving humanity

## **Year 8**

1. Introduction to Year 8
2. Wisdom for Life Series – Failure and Growth  
2.1 Fails!  
  
2.2 What is Wisdom?  
  
2.3 Learning Wisdom  
Rules/ Advise/ Experience  
The Bible on Rules/ Advise/ Experience  
Jesus on Rules/ Advise/ Experience  
  
2.4 Growth from failure/ Wisdom from experience  
Failure and personal growth  
Failure and forgiveness  
  
2.5 Wise friends  
  
2.6 Book of Proverbs – Ancient Wisdom Manuel  
Solomon and Wisdom
3. Wisdom for Life Series – Dealing with “Sin”

### 3.1 What Happened in the Garden?

Choosing/Hiding/Blaming

Alternative responses to shame

### 3.2 Granny Smith Apple Story – Hope for change

Stories of repentance and change

John Newton and Amazing Grace

### 3.3 Cars on ice

Escaping the grip!

If you feed it, it grows – what are you feeding

Gospel “magic pen” analogy

Galatians quote – life in the spirit

### 3.4 Video clips

Songs of repentance/ growth and change

### 3.5 Teenage Wall of Shame!

Jesus and woman caught in adultery

### 3.6 Home and Away – A story from Bible times

Jacob and Esau and the story of Israel

### 3.8 Wrestling with God (Jacob’s new name)

Bethany Hamilton story

Personal stories and responses

### 3.9 Interactive Drama – Boy judged as a loser and reject

Jesus and Nicodemus – born again/ hope

## 4. Power: Use and Misuse (3 Lessons)

Types of Power (The Incredibles)

Jesus, Spiderman and power

Temptations of Jesus

Use and Abuse of Power

- in the world
- in religion
- in relationships

## 5. Parables Series (12 Lessons)

### 5.1 Introduction: Funny and strange fables

### 5.2 The Prodigal Son (1)

### 5.3 The Prodigal Son (2)

### 5.4 The Lost Sheep

### 5.5 The Good Samaritan

### 5.6 The House on the Rock (Life as a House)

Bear Grills Alpha testimony

## 5.7 Parable of Sower

### 6. Love

## Year 9

### 1. Introduction

### 2. How Morals and Rules Work:

#### 2.1 The Bounty

Chaos versus order

The discovery of rules

Bounty Island 10 commandments

Good and bad rules/ Purpose of rules

#### 2.1 Dumb USA Laws

Moral and spiritual themes

Famous Rule breakers in history

Jesus and rules – two sum it up!

#### 2.2 The Ten Commandments

Understanding polytheism

Understanding monotheism

#### 2.3 Miracles and the Ten Commandments

Clash of cultures

Respecting God/ respecting People

Miracles, the Bible. God, and Nature

#### 2.4 Bart Simpson's Miracle/ Prayer

Prayer and Life's Problems

Change circumstances or change people?

### 3. "Life Lottery" Series: Issues of Life, Death and Purpose

#### 3.1 Introduction

Life lottery game

Facing mortality/ Making life choices

#### 3.2 Homer Simpson's Last day on Earth

Homer reads the Bible

#### 3.3 Judgement/ Judgementalism

Just Judgement

#### 3.4 The Aron Rolston Story: Facing Death #1

Experiences of Grace

"If your hand causes you to sin..."

#### 3.5 The Third Man Syndrome

Encounters with true life miracles/ “saviours”

3.6 Life as a Road Trip

Breakdown, Detours, Arrival, Home  
Revelation vision of Heaven

3.7 The Hudson River Emergency Plane Landing: Facing Death #2 (2 Lessons)

God, faith, love, and facing death  
Plain crash story – man dies to save others

3.8 Parable of the Rich Fool (4 Lessons)

Material and Spiritual Priorities  
Alfred Nobel/ Andrew Chan Testimony  
Lincoln Park song – “Let mercy come and wash away what I’ve done”

3.9 Parable of the Talents: Introduction

Nature/ Nurture

3.10 Parable of the Talents #2

Exploring the parable – what does it mean?

3.11 Parable of Talents #3

Applying the parable  
Kelly Roland Stole and reflection

3.12 Parable of Talents #4

World examples – Nickleback song, The Script song  
Romanian orphans story – Healing love  
Salt and Light

4. Reputations and Goal Setting

5. Year Nine Movie Studies

5.1 Groundhog Day

Finding Meaning - Learning to love, to give, to serve others

5.2 Flatliners

Sin, judgement, atonement, forgiveness

5.3 Bruce Almighty

Nature of free will  
Learning to love

5.4 Alive

Body, soul, morality, deepest friendship

**Year 10**

1. Worldviews

## 1.1 Introduction

### 1.2 World-Views (The thing viewed and the viewer)

Epistemology

### 1.3 Worldviews: Increased Complexity/ Reduced interpretive options

Beliefs matter. Beliefs affect behaviour

### 1.4 Leunig Powerpoint and Student Response

Beliefs and choices

Coping with life

### 1.5 Worldview: Chance or Design?

Creation matters: Different worlds. Different meanings.

### 1.6 Worldviews: Making sense of Life (4 Stories)

A spiritual world?

Sin and suffering – a response

### 1.7 The Ku Klux Klan: A case study

Romans 13 – the KKK code!

## 2. Worldviews Test Case: The Family

### 2.1 Introduction

#### 2.1 Two Buckets of Responsibility

#### 2.3 Pre-Christian and Post-Christian Family

Paul on the difference Christ makes

Paul's extended "family" – build community

## 3. Life is a Search For Meaning

Grand Canyon

Open to a bigger story – spiritual dimension of meaning

Personal responses

## 4. The Jesus Manifesto

Jesus on fulfilling Isaiah

### 4.1 Product Launch

Famous "isms" from Western history

Products that serve human wellbeing

Jesus as the product

### 4.2 Jesus: The Image Problem

Pop-culture and Jesus

Pictures of Jesus

Render to Caesar, Render to God - Jesus on "image."

## 5. Living in a Material World

### 5.1 Human Progress

Material and Financial progress

Moral and spiritual progress

Lily Allen/ Pink Floyd songs

Heroes of moral and spiritual progress

### 5.2 The Narrow Gate

Powderfinger, Leunig and Jesus' parable

### 5.4 Physical or Spiritual? (Materialism/ Dualism/ Reductionism)

### 5.5 I Have a Dream (Renewed Futures)

Boom (System of a Down) and Rage Against the Machine – Angry men and money!

Martin Luther King

Micah 6

Revelation

## 6 Is God a Delusion?

### 6.1 Introduction:

Famous people on God

Students identify attitudes that resonate with them

### 6.2 Would I Lie to You?

Lying about God

Ricky Gervais and God – “The Invention of Lying”

Freud and God

God as wish fulfilment

The psychology of belief/ unbelief

### 6.3 Clues for God /What Kind of God?/ Near or Far God?

## 7. Origins Series

### 7.1 Origins 1 (Universe)

The nature of science/ the nature of faith

Different questions/ different “evidences”

How? Who? And Why questions

### 7.2 Origins 2 (Life on Earth)

Understanding what Genesis is about

Purpose versus method

Evolution – questions it answers, questions it doesn't.

## 8. Forgiveness Series

Forgiveness and Positive Psychology

What forgiveness isn't

Parables on forgiveness – Simon the Pharisee/ Pharisee and Tax Collector

Simon Weisenthal and Holocaust forgiveness

Corrie Ten Boom story  
Forgiving Judge pays the price  
Kolbe story – dies to save fellow prisoner

9. Happiness Theory

The search for happiness  
Hedonism or wellbeing?  
Positive Psychology on happiness  
Jesus on happiness – the Beatitudes

10. Play

Why become like a child?

11. Terminator II – Christ, Sin and Self-Sacrifice

Images of atonement and redemption from Hollywood

12. Steve Turner Poetry Series

13. Salvatore Zofrea Psalm Paintings

14. Year 10 Movie Studies

The Matrix – materialism versus the spiritual; Saviour figure

Romero - Biography of Archbishop Romero of El Salvador

Amazing Grace - Biography of William Wilberforce and Abolition of the Slave Trade

Unbroken - Biography of WWII POW and Olympic athlete, Louis Zamperini, who found faith and forgave his captors.