

SERVICES FOR SCHOOLS

Using *Living Difference III* with *Understanding* *Christianity*

Guidance for Church of England schools in
Hampshire, Southampton, Portsmouth and
Isle of Wight

Introduction

This advice is for RE leaders in Church of England schools who use *Living Difference III* as their syllabus and use *Understanding Christianity* as a resource to help teach concepts in Christianity in greater depth.

The aim of this advice is to help you understand how to use *Understanding Christianity* with the *Living Difference* cycle of enquiry so that your RE fully complies with the requirements of the syllabus while also using aspects of *Understanding Christianity* that meet your class needs. If you are in a voluntary controlled school, RE **must** be taught in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus *Living Difference III* and it is worth noting that in a voluntary controlled school designated as having a religious character, Ofsted will inspect RE, but not collective worship.

The following information provides further advice on

- the legal requirements for RE and
- the methodology for teaching RE according to the locally agreed syllabus for RE *Living Difference III*, together with recommendations for using *Understanding Christianity*.

Further advice can be obtained from the syllabus itself which is available on the [Hampshire RE Moodle](#).

***Understanding Christianity* resource pack**

The *Understanding Christianity* resource clearly states “*it is a resource, not a curriculum or syllabus. It should be used in conjunction with your locally agreed syllabus*”.

It is therefore very important that *Understanding Christianity* is seen as a **resource**, not a syllabus or an additional syllabus to be used as well as *Living Difference III*. It is a resource to be used to add extra information about Christianity to deepen children’s learning. The *Living Difference III* syllabus itself has many plans for learning and these should be used for learning, with *Understanding Christianity* activities chosen to deepen learning where appropriate.

Therefore, if you use *Understanding Christianity* as a resource, it **must** be used within the overall context of a syllabus.

It is recommended that your website contains an RE policy and a long term curriculum plan for RE and that you state you are using *Understanding Christianity* as a resource for the teaching of Christianity.

Introduction to Living Difference III

Living Difference III is the locally agreed syllabus for RE in Hampshire, Southampton, Portsmouth and Isle of Wight schools.

What is it for?

The 1988 Education Reform Act, and later the 1996 Act, state that:

- RE is a statutory subject to be taught in all schools except nursery schools
- parents have the right to withdraw their children from RE lessons and this right should be identified in the school prospectus
- each County/City Council must have a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)
- each SACRE must arrange that an Agreed Syllabus Conference produces an agreed syllabus for RE
- the agreed syllabus for RE must reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the other principal religions represented in the country
- all schools (with some exceptions) must follow the agreed syllabus for RE. Academies are not required to follow any specific locally agreed syllabus, but mostly they follow *Living Difference III* as other schools do. RE in voluntary aided schools must be provided in accordance with the trust deed of the school and the wishes of the governing body
- in voluntary controlled schools, RE must be provided in accordance with the local agreed syllabus
- the SACRE should review its agreed syllabus every five years.

The legal position of *Living Difference III*

The syllabus *Living Difference III* was launched as a legal document for schools in December 2016. All schools (other than nursery, voluntary aided schools or academies) in Hampshire, the cities of Southampton and Portsmouth, and on the Isle of Wight are legally required to deliver RE in accordance with *Living Difference III*.

The syllabus recommends the following time allocations for RE:

- 36 hours per year in the Foundation Stage alongside the early learning goals
- 36 hours per year at Key Stage 1 (KS1)
- 45 hours per year at Key Stage 2 (KS2).

At Foundation Stage (Year R), children will engage with aspects of Christianity and the other religion being explored in KS1.

At Key Stage 1, children are required to study Christianity and one other religion.

At Key Stage 2, children are required to study Christianity and two other religions:

- in Years 3 and 4, this will be Christianity and one other religion
- in Years 5 and 6, children are required to study Christianity and a different religion. In upper KS2 a non-religious worldview may be included in addition.

Teachers at KS2 **must** liaise with KS1 teachers to ensure three religions in addition to Christianity are explored through the primary years.

Interpreting the agreed syllabus *Living Difference III* with *Understanding Christianity* as a resource

The most important thing to bear in mind is that the *Living Difference III* syllabus is your legal requirement for RE. Integral to the syllabus is the requirement to teach according to concepts and the use of the cycle of enquiry for all lessons of RE.

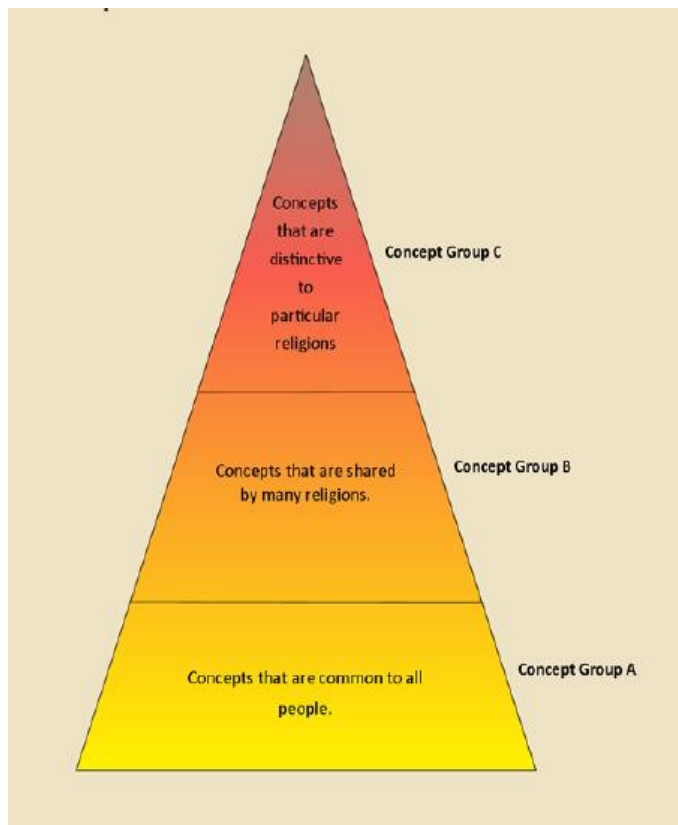
If you are choosing to use *Understanding Christianity* as an extra resource to help learning in Christianity, remember that you do not have to teach **every** *Understanding Christianity* unit or teach each unit in full. It is not your syllabus, simply a resource to add further depth to your teaching.

Therefore it is essential that you do not compromise your coverage of the concept or other religions by trying to fit in everything that is in *Understanding Christianity* – **you do not have to**.

Simply select the activities that you feel will really help your class learn more about the Christian approach to the concept in focus and remember to select the activities that will really extend your class, not just those which ask children to retell a story.

Concepts

The concept is the main vehicle for learning in the *Living Difference III* syllabus and there are three main groups of concepts to be aware of:



- **Group A concepts** - that are common to all people
eg *remembering, specialness, celebration*
- **Group B concepts** – that are shared by many religions
eg *God, worship, symbolism*
- **Group C concepts** – that are distinctive to particular religions
eg *dukkha, Trinity, umma.*

In Year R and Key Stage 1, children will have opportunities to respond to their experience of Group A concepts. As children move through primary school, they will have opportunities over time to engage with all three groups of

concepts. For example:

- **Foundation stage:** children are introduced to simpler Group A concepts, specifically *celebration, specialness* and *belonging*.
- **Key Stage 1:** children are mainly introduced to further Group A concepts, which should start to increase in complexity:
eg *changing emotions, storytelling, symbol of light*, and simpler Group B concepts as they progress to the end of the key stage, eg *God, angels* and *ceremony*.
- **Key Stage 2:** children are mainly introduced to Group A concepts with more complexity, Group B concepts and simpler Group C concepts:
eg *freedom, belief, authority* and *interpretation* (Group A),
discipleship, myth and *rites of passage* (Group B),
Church, umma and *Torah* (Group C).

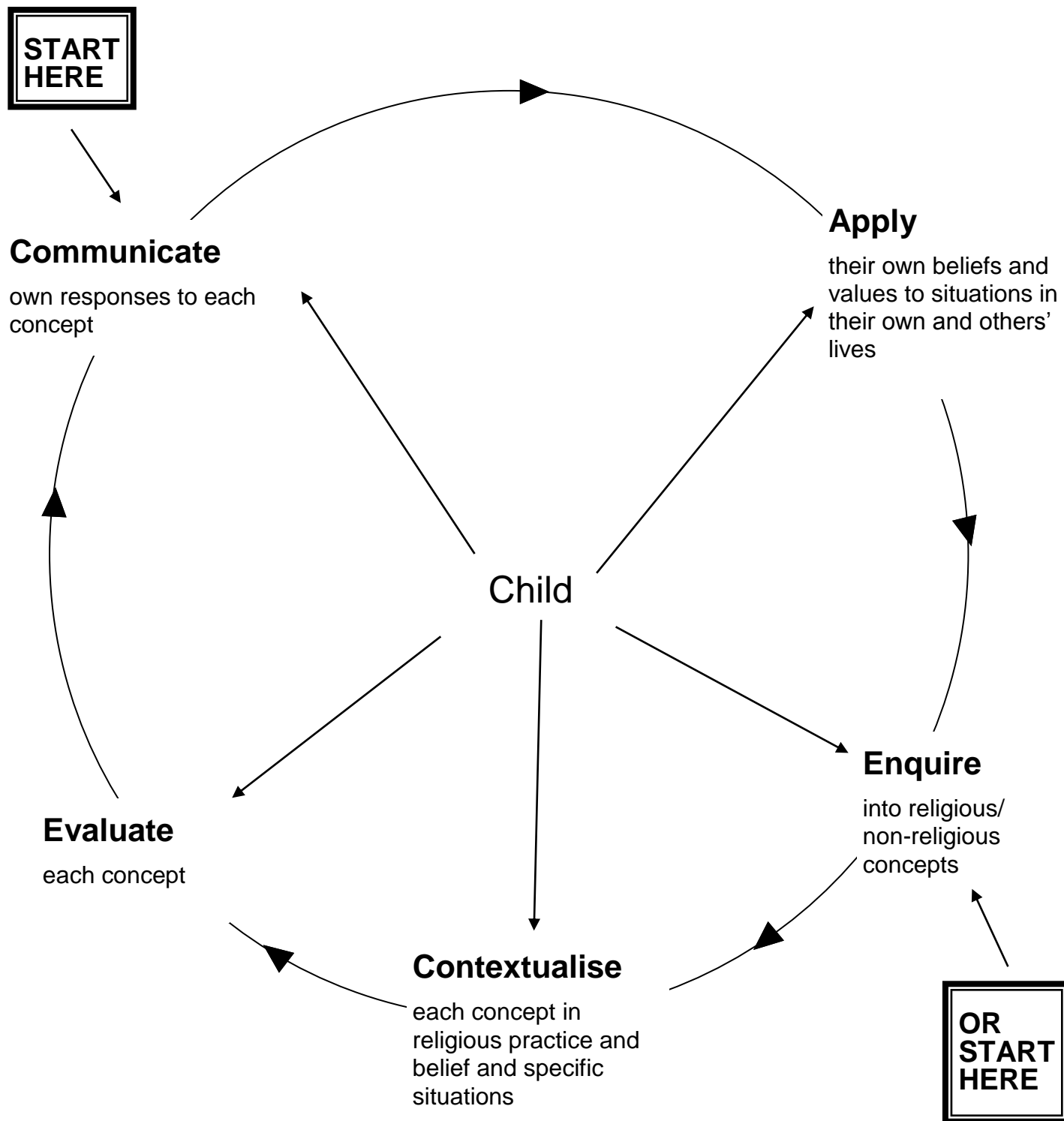
Therefore, when using *Understanding Christianity*, it is important you bear this progression in concepts in mind when selecting units of work from it to use with the syllabus. This is especially important for Foundation and KS1 children, who are looking **only** at everyday A concepts until introducing B concepts towards the end of Year 2.

It is central to the *Living Difference III* syllabus that the **concept** is the focus for learning in RE. For example, if *celebrating* is your concept in Year 1 at Christmas, choosing some of the activities from a unit in *Understanding Christianity* that help to show how Christians celebrate at Christmas at the **contextualise** step would be appropriate. Choosing further activities that explain why Christians feel these activities are important at the **evaluate** step would also be appropriate. In this way, you are ensuring that you are following the syllabus as your driver for RE.

If you feel a unit of work from *Understanding Christianity* does not fit the *Living Difference III* approach for the age of the children, leave it out.

The next thing to consider is the cycle of enquiry, which should be used for every unit of RE:

Conceptual enquiry methodology of *Living Difference III*



The circle illustrates how the concept in focus is explored. It is the process of conceptual enquiry and has five key steps.

Each enquiry begins with the teacher inviting the children into the enquiry, usually at the **communicate** but sometimes at the **enquire** step.

If beginning at the **communicate** step, the teacher will bring the child to attend first to their own experience of the concept through an activity, before exploring their own responses in relation to others' experience.

At **apply**, children become even more aware of others' responses and might give examples from their own experience of the concept in different situations.

At **enquire**, material that is new to the children is introduced in varying complexity, depending on the age of the children. At **enquire**, children may also reflect collaboratively, for example in a community of philosophical enquiry (P4C).

However, it can sometimes be best to begin the cycle at **enquire** when the concept is beyond the experience of most of the children.

If the concept is a B or C concept, material from *Understanding Christianity* may be included here if relevant.

At **contextualise**, children examine the concept in a specific context, for example, through investigating the activities of a local religious community. A non-religious context may be used if it enhances the enquiry. **It is recommended that two lessons be devoted to this step, so that the teaching has sufficient depth.**

It is here that activities from *Understanding Christianity* can be chosen if required.

At the **evaluate** step children are given the opportunity to weigh up their experience of the concept in two ways. First from the viewpoint of someone living a religious (or non-religious) life, as in the context studied. This is what is meant by **evaluate within**. For example, in KS2 the teacher may open a discussion about why the Eucharist is important for Christians anticipating an engagement with a range of Christian views and forms of expression. Secondly, the children will be enabled to discern what may be of value in the religious (or non-religious) experience of the concept for them, from their own point of view. This is what is meant by **evaluate without**. This should involve collaboration and dialogue.

Material from *Understanding Christianity* can also be used here if relevant.

Further advice and training

Further advice on using the syllabus with *Understanding Christianity* can always be obtained from the Hampshire RE team. For further help with planning and delivering your RE according to *Living Difference III*, contact:

Justine Ball, HIAS Primary RE Inspector/Adviser: justine.ball@hants.gov.uk

There is also a termly course available for RE leaders looking for further help in integrating *Understanding Christianity* with the *Living Difference III* syllabus. The next course is on **6 November 2019** at the RE Centre. Please book via LMS (ESS/Learning Zone) or <https://tinyurl.com/HTLCLMS>

For further specific guidance on *Understanding Christianity* units and Diocesan training, please contact Jane Kelly, Diocesan RE Adviser: Jane.Kelly@portsmouth.anglican.org.