

Using *Living Difference IV* 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 IV* 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 *Living Difference IV*, the locally agreed syllabus. 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 *Living Difference IV*, the locally agreed syllabus for RE, together with recommendations for using *Understanding Christianity*.

Further guidance can be obtained from the syllabus itself which is available here: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/hias/curriculum-support/living-difference-re-syllabus>.

***Understanding Christianity* resource pack**

The *Understanding Christianity* resource pack 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 IV*. It is a resource to be used to add extra information about Christianity to deepen children’s learning. The *Living Difference IV* syllabus itself has many plans for teachers to use and these should be used as a framework 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 a link to *Living Difference IV*, a RE policy as well as 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 IV*

Living Difference IV is the locally agreed syllabus for RE in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Southampton and Portsmouth 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 IV* 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 IV*

The syllabus *Living Difference IV* was launched as a legal document for schools in November 2021. 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 IV*.

The syllabus recommends the following time allocations for RE:

- 36 hours per year in the Foundation Stage
- 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 concepts with a Christian context and two concepts where the context is the other religion explored in depth at KS1.

At Key Stage 1, children are required to study Christianity and one other religion in depth. There are also opportunities for children to study a further religion or

non-religious tradition as an overview study. If both Christianity and the other depth study in religion are Abrahamic (Jewish, Christian or Muslim traditions in the syllabus), then schools should ensure that children study a Dharmic religion (Hindu, Sikhi or Buddhist traditions in the syllabus) in depth in KS2. Further advice on this is given in the syllabus.

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

- in Years 3 and 4, this will be Christianity and one other religion in depth
- in Years 5 and 6, children are required to study Christianity and a different religion in depth.

There are also opportunities for children to study further religions or non-religious traditions as overview studies in KS2. If both Christianity and the other depth studies in religion are Abrahamic, then schools should ensure that children study a Dharmic religion in depth in KS1. Further advice on this is given in the syllabus.

Teachers at KS2 **must** liaise with KS1 teachers to ensure three religions in addition to Christianity are explored through the primary years. They should also liaise with KS3 teachers in their local secondary feeder school(s) to ensure that their RE curriculum helps children make a successful transition to secondary school RE.

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

The most important thing to bear in mind is that the *Living Difference IV* syllabus is your legal requirement for RE. Integral to the syllabus is the requirement to teach according to concepts/words 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. The Church of England guidance recommends that three or four cycles of enquiry should focus on study with a Christian context.

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 IV* syllabus and there are three main groups of concepts to be aware of:

- **A concepts** - that are common to all people eg *remembering, special, celebration*. In addition *Living Difference IV* highlights four A concepts that are *golden threads* throughout a child's study of RE. These are *community, belonging, special* and *love*. One of these should be studied in Year R, two in Year 1 and the other two in Year 2. This should be repeated in lower KS2 and upper KS2, with the nuances of the concepts/words being developed, for example studying *sacred* or *God* in lower KS2.
- **B concepts** – that are shared by many religions eg *God, worship, symbolism*.
- **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 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 A concepts, specifically *celebration, special* and *belonging*.
- **Key Stage 1:** children are mainly introduced to further A concepts, which should start to increase in complexity eg *changing emotions, storytelling, symbol of light*, and simpler 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 A concepts with more complexity along with B concepts. In upper KS2, simpler C concepts are introduced eg *freedom, belief, authority* and *interpretation* (A), *discipleship, myth* and *rites of passage* (B), *Church, Umma* and *Torah* (C).

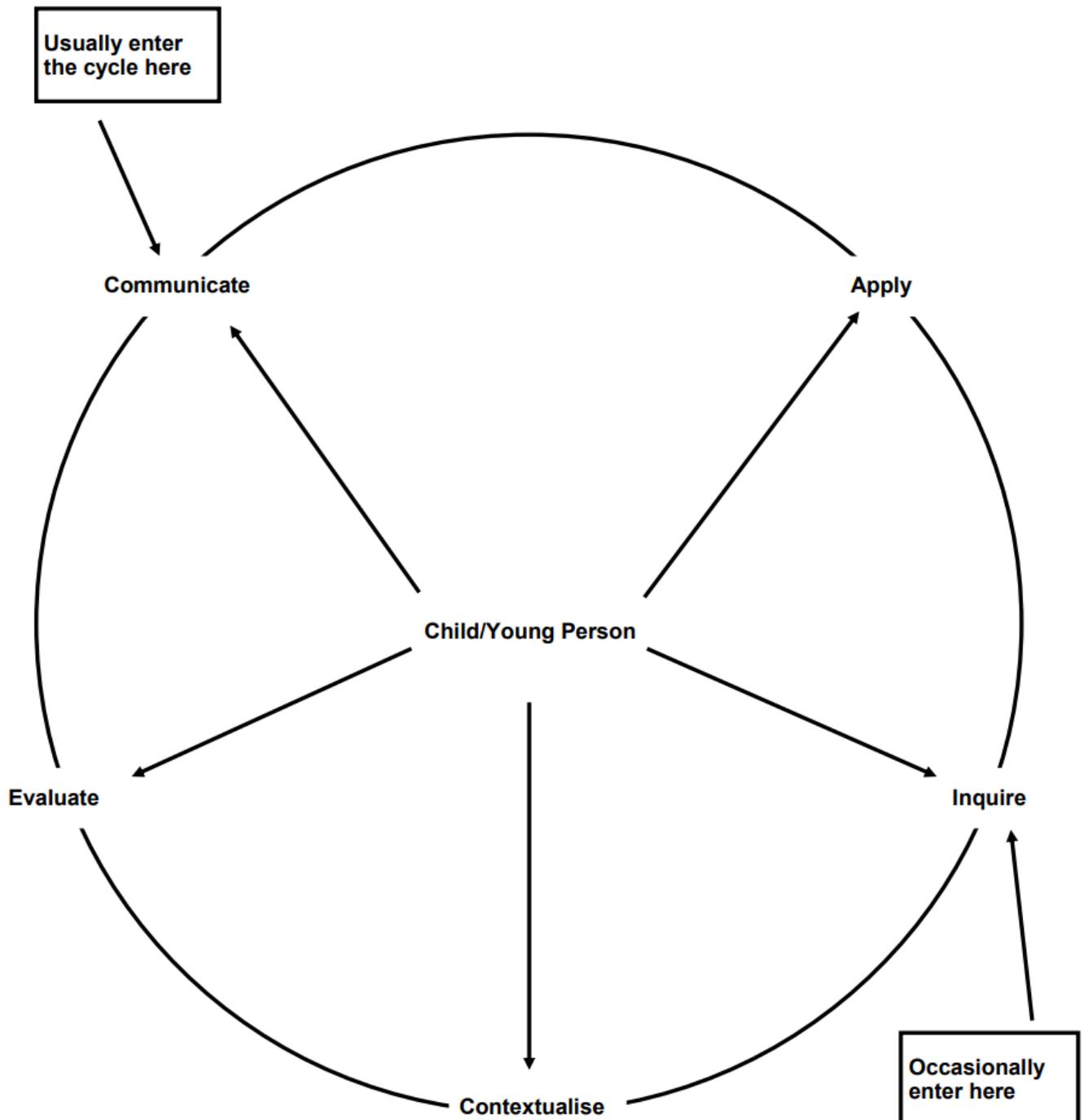
Therefore, when using *Understanding Christianity*, it is important you bear this progression in concepts in mind when selecting units of work from it to use with the syllabus. This is especially important for Foundation and KS1 children, who are looking **only** at everyday A concepts until introducing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

It is central to the *Living Difference IV* 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 IV* 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 IV*



The circle illustrates how the concept in focus is explored. This 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 **Inquire** step. It can sometimes be best to begin the cycle at **Inquire** when the concept is beyond the experience of most of the children.

If beginning at the **Communicate** step, the teacher will bring the child to attend first to their own experience of the concept/word 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 **Inquire**, material that is new to the children is introduced in varying complexity, depending on the age of the children. At **Inquire**, children may also reflect collaboratively, for example in a community of philosophical enquiry (P4C).

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 discern the value 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.

Long term plan incorporating parts of the *Understanding Christianity* resource

The plan overleaf leaves spaces for you to include concepts for your chosen religion in depth and overview studies with your children, as well as some suggestions for the concepts you might like to consider.

Exemplar long term plan incorporating *Understanding Christianity*

Year	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
R		<i>Celebrating birth - Jesus</i> [UC foundation incarnation plan]	Special people – Jesus Hampshire planning	<i>New life at Easter</i> [UC foundation salvation plan]		Special place
1	<i>Creation</i> [UC KS1 creation plan]	<i>Waiting</i> [UC incarnation plan]	Belonging [UC Gospel KS1 <i>People Jesus met</i> plan]	<i>Welcoming at Easter</i> Hampshire planning		Community
2		<i>Journey's end</i> (nativity journey) Hampshire planning	<i>Remembering</i> Passover Hampshire planning	Love Easter [UC KS1 salvation plan]	Special book	Special place
3		<i>Angels</i> Christianity Hampshire planning		Love as <i>changing emotions</i> [UC salvation plan] and Hampshire planning	Special as <i>sacred place</i>	
4	Community Neighbour [UC Gospel KS2 digging deeper <i>Jesus' teachings & message</i>)	<i>Warning</i> The Magi Hampshire planning		<i>Remembering</i> Easter [UC lower KS2 digging deeper salvation plan]		Belonging
5	<i>Creation</i> [UC KS2 creation plan]	Community Interpretation birth narratives Hampshire planning		Love as sacrifice [UC salvation plan]		
6		<i>Messiah</i> [UC incarnation plan]	Love	<i>Resurrection</i> [UC salvation plan]	Special as <i>God</i> [UC God plan] and Hampshire <i>God talk</i> pack across traditions	

Further advice and training

- Further advice on using *Living Difference IV* with *Understanding Christianity* is available from the **Hampshire RE team**.

Most church schools subscribe to the **County RE Centre** and are welcome to borrow resources; please visit:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/hias/curriculum-support/resource-centres/re-centre>

For further help with planning and delivering your RE according to *Living Difference IV*, please contact:

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

- **Using *Understanding Christianity* with *Living Difference IV* (webinar)**

Looking for further help in integrating *Understanding Christianity* with the *Living Difference IV* syllabus? There is a termly course available for RE leaders, bookable via LMS (ESS/Learning Zone).

Further details including upcoming dates are available from the Learning Zone and the course directory on the HTLC website: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/htlc>

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