Key Question: U2.1 Why do some people believe God exists?

This investigation enables pupils to learn in depth from different religious and non-religious groups about belief in God. Pupils enquire into the key question- raising questions about the nature and existence of God focussing on Christian ideas about God. Pupils will consider why people do or don't believe in God and the impact that might have on the way they live their everyday life. This investigation provides an opportunity to meet Christians, agnostics and atheists and ask questions about why they do or don't believe in God.

The investigation implements the **principal aim of RE,** which is to engage pupils in systematic enquiry into significant human questions which religion and worldviews address, so that they can develop the understanding and skills needed to appreciate and appraise varied responses to these questions, as well as develop responses of their own.

Step 1: Select a key question	**U2.1 Why do some people believe God exists** **Year group:** Recommended Year 5 **Strand**: Believing **Questions in this thread:** 1.1-3 Who is Christian/ Muslim / Jewish and what do they believe? L2.1 What do different people believe about God? 3.1 Do we need to prove God's existence? **Religions and worldviews:** Christians, non-religious e.g. Humanist Make sure that you can explain where this unit/question fits into key stage planning e.g. how it builds on previous learning in RE; what other subject areas it links to, if appropriate.
Step 2: Select learning outcomes	• Use the learning outcomes from column 2 of the key question outlines on p.60. • Select learning outcomes appropriate for the age and ability of your pupils. • Being clear about these outcomes will help you to decide what and how to teach.

Emerging	Expected	Exceeding
• **Define the terms theist, atheist and agnostic and give examples of statements that reflect these beliefs (B1).** • **Give two reasons why a Christian believes in God and one why an atheist does not (A3).**	• **Outline clearly a Christian understanding of what God is like, using examples and evidence (A2).** • **Give examples of ways in which believing in God is valuable in the lives of Christians, and ways in which it can be challenging (B2).** • **Express thoughtful ideas about the impact of believing or not believing in God on someone's life (B1).** • **Present different views on why people believe in God or not, including their own ideas (C1).**	• **Explain how Christians sometimes disagree about what God is like, giving examples of how they interpret texts differently (B3).** • **Enquire into what some atheists, agnostics and theists say about God, expressing their own ideas and arguments, using evidence and examples (C1).**

Step 3: Select specific content	• Look at the suggested content for your key question, from column 3 in the unit outlines.
	• Select the best content (from here, or additional information from elsewhere) to help you to teach in an engaging way so that pupils achieve the learning outcomes.
	This plan has selected the following content to exemplify the learning outcomes. Pupils will:
	• Find out about how many people in the world and in your local area believe in God – using global statistics and the 2011 UK census. Ask pupils why they think so many people believe in God. Collect these reasons. Find out about how many do not believe. Learn the words 'theist' (believes in God), agnostic (cannot say if God exists or not) and atheist (believes there is no god).
	• Set up an enquiry to explore the key question. Ask pupils to raise questions about the existence and nature of God. Focus on Christian ideas of God, in order to make this more manageable. Start by clarifying what Christians believe God is like. Build on learning from Key Question L2.1, and explore some of the names of God and metaphors for God in the Bible (e.g. God as Father, Spirit, Son, eternal, almighty, holy, shepherd, rock, fortress, light). If this God exists, what difference would 'he' make to the way people live? Make links with prior learning about the Bible and its 'big story' (Key Question L2.2).
	• Explore some reasons why people do or do not believe in God. Consider some of the main reasons. These include: family background – many people believe (or don't believe) because of their home background; religious experience – many people say they have experienced a sense of 'the presence of God' or had prayer answered; many would argue that the universe, the Earth and life are extraordinary and are best explained as the result of an all-powerful Creator. Many people who do not believe in God point to the existence of terrible suffering as a key reason. Some argue that there is no need to use a Creator to explain the existence of the universe and life.
	• Consider ways in which Christians read the Genesis account of creation. Explore why some Christians read it literally; explore how lots of Christians read it as expressing some truths about God and human beings without reading it literally. Find out about Christians who are also scientists (e.g. Jennifer Wiseman, John Polkinghorne, Denis Alexander).
	• Invite some Christians, agnostics and atheists in to answer questions about why they do or do not believe in God.

NOTE: This unit of work offers around **8 hours** of classroom ideas. You need to select from it in order to achieve the learning outcomes set out in Step 2 above.

Step 4: Assessment: write specific pupil outcomes	• Turn the learning outcomes into pupil-friendly 'I can' or 'You can' statements. • You might adapt these specific outcomes to form 'I can' statements (for pupil self-assessment), 'You can' statements (for teacher assessment), and 'Can you…?' statements (for next steps or challenge) • Make the learning outcomes specific to the content you are teaching, to help you know just what it is that you want pupils to be able to understand and do as a result of their learning. • These 'I can'/'You can' statements will help you to integrate assessment for learning within your teaching, so that there is no need to do a separate end of unit assessment.

Emerging	Expected	Exceeding
I can… You can… Can you…?	I can… You can… Can you…?	I can… You can… Can you…?
• Give two reasons why some people believe in God, one reason why some people do not believe in God and one reason why some people have not decided. • Define the terms; theism, atheism and agnosticism. • show understanding of the difference between a fact, belief and opinion.	• Give several examples to show how believing in God can affect people's lives differently • Give examples of ways in which believing in God is valuable in the lives of Christians, and ways in which it can be challenging • Express their own ideas about theism, atheism and agnosticism. • Suggest answers to some of the Big Questions about the existence of God • Consider reasons that people might believe or not believe in God • Respond thoughtfully to the question, "Is God real?", giving evidence to back up my ideas • consider how facts, beliefs and opinions come about and how they are interpreted. • respond thoughtfully to the question, "Is God real?", giving evidence to back up my ideas.	• Describe and explain some of the differences between people's ideas of what God is like and whether God exists • Consider the different ways in which sacred text can be interpreted. • Express and explain similarities and differences between Christian beliefs about how the world began. • reflect upon the argument that God cannot be all-powerful and all-loving if the world is like this – full of suffering. • Understand why the natural world is seen by many Christians as evidence for belief in God. • some of the differences between people's ideas of what God is like and whether God exists

Step 5: Develop teaching and learning activities	• Develop active learning opportunities and investigations, using some engaging stimuli, to enable pupils to achieve the outcomes. • Don't forget the skills you want pupils to develop, as well as the content you want them to understand. • Make sure that the activities allow pupils to practise these skills as well as show their understanding.