

## **MORAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES 1**

### **MORAL EDUCATION - A FRESH LOOK**

**(Lesson plans for Moral Education for lower secondary children.)**

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#### **Introduction**

Concerns about moral development of children is currently, again, a topical issue. “Our moral wasteland” declares one recent Times article (Selbourne '98). “In a Britain ruled by evasion and cynicism, few dare to speak of right and wrong,” says David Selbourne, but the “few” are influential groups such as Government and Church leaders, journalists and academics. At present, the Government are discussing proposals for instituting lessons for state schools on Citizenship. An acceptance of some moral decline seems to be implicit in the Government’s proposals and newspapers’ reactions in the wake of the shootings and racist attacks in America and England. Concerns about “moral decline” seem to reach through all sectors of society, ranging from the staffroom comments on the current intake of children, to shoppers in the streets. Such concerns appear to be based upon differing criteria, ranging from the level of reported crime to concerns over the supposed experimentation on humans, plants and animals with genetics. Many argue that we may not be becoming less moral, rather than differently and diversely moral.

Certainly with the multitude of belief systems in British society, there is a range of opinions as to what is “right” or “wrong”. Whatever views one may hold, it is clear, however, that this is an issue which is pertinent to both the immediate society which functions in a school, as much as it is to the wider society outside its gates.

#### **Aims**

Within my work, as part of the Farmington Institute, I aim to investigate a number of issues raised by the term “Moral Education”. Firstly I will discuss the definition of the term “Moral”, and the implications on the “education” relating to it. I will also discuss the background philosophies which have influenced our views on morality. This is crucial in order to understand both the difficulties in educating children in morality, and the underlying aims and beliefs which current education philosophies perpetuate. I will also critically assess the current views of the stages through which children pass in their moral development. The influences which affect children's moral development will be re-evaluated, as well as the relationship between Moral Education and Religious Education. I will consider the role of the teacher in educating children and the problematic issue of assessment will then be discussed, as well as a critical look at current resources. All this will act as an introduction to a series of lesson plans, closely linked to my own proposals, for any teacher educating children from Year 7 – 8.

#### **Moral Education – a Definition?**

Downey and Kelly ('78) state: "Moral education is the concern of every teacher." Whilst this quote is inexact when taken out of context, its variety of interpretations and lack of clarity reflects much of the pressures teaching bodies face from government, parents and other interested groups. What exactly are teachers expected to instil in children who themselves come from a varied group of backgrounds and peers, which each instil varying standards in the children? The possibly conflicting interests from the various bodies who influence staff can be seen to also be reflected in the interpretations of "moral education". G.J. Warnock ('67) suggests, "'moral' is surely not, on any showing, a very exact word". Straughan (82) agrees that morality is an ambiguous word: "while it might be more convenient and satisfying to be able to define the form and/or content of morality as precisely as we can for subjects like geometry...the structure and scope of morality are too elastic to allow such precise analysis."

Many people, when asked what morality is, will offer a broad spectrum of opinions, ranging from doing the right thing, whatever that may be, through to having the mechanisms to make decisions about what is "right" and "wrong". Others will suggest that it is adhering to an established moral code, for example in various religions, or caring for the interests of others as well as, or in opposition to, their own interests. Commentators such as Wilson, a former Farmington Fellow, in order to reach a definition, have suggested the following guidelines:

Wilson ('73) considers that "Morality is a convenient title for a subject which deals with questions of a certain kind: questions about what to do, when what you do is a matter of great importance. Morality is about the principles, or values, or aims that govern your actions and behaviour in general...in ...life". Wilson, like many commentators, seems to imply that morality is very much to do with the individual's ability to bring his reason and sources of knowledge to choices in life e.g.: should I steal that pen? If I do, what will be the consequences to myself, and others? Is it right to steal the pen? The child is considered to be a rational being that uses his knowledge to each moral decision. Many child experts consider that if a child understands the issues which surround any moral decision, then he is better equipped to make his own decision based upon the information he has. There is an emphasis on the child acting upon what he thinks is right, rather than acting on other factors such as desire or even wilful obstinacy. I will be looking into this emphasis on the effect of the child's rationality in more detail when I consider the views on how a child develops morally.

At the back of any decision, a child will bring many value systems to bear, whether knowingly or even instinctively, as is possibly the case in many children. Wilson reflects that morality, unlike many other curriculum subjects, is more closely linked to what you do. If you believe something, then this should go hand in hand with what you do. However, as St. Paul testified, what one feels one ought to do and what one actually does do not always go together. Morality may involve children accepting a code of behaviour, whilst they do not always follow it. Wilson in 1998 reflected that children are brought up with a set of taboos, inhibitions designed to prevent them damaging other people: "we need the mechanism of morality to ensure...subordination, to prevent damage and chaos." However, as he later reflects on whether this means it is acceptable, therefore, to use scientific means to "inhibit" people's more violent urges, he suggests that the essence of what is human is the ability to choose, and that this is paramount.

Whilst conceding that we have great difficulties in defining what is right and wrong, Wilson ('73) attempts to focus on the abilities a child should develop in order to choose his own code of behaviour. Wilson encourages the teacher to develop certain principles which he states are reasonable and what qualities any person who is serious about morality should demonstrate. Wilson suggests a list of moral components, under the titles, PHIL, EMP, GIG and KRAT. PHIL refers to the philosophy of treating others as equals, a principle which he states is reasonable for all rational people. EMP describes the person's awareness of his emotions and feelings and the ability to empathise with others. GIG demonstrates the need for the person to know the relevant facts and KRAT is the process through which a person brings all the other categories to bear on the decision he makes.

Wilson goes on to define a morally educated person/child as having "the ability to translate one's principles into action, to have the insight into other people's feelings, and to identify with others in such a way that their interest count as equal to one's own." One has to applaud ambitious aims, and perhaps this should be the goal of every educator, or every human being. Wilson, like many other commentators, suggest morality should, in definition, involve the child's own decision making processes in order for him to choose the "right" path. However, there is an over reliance, perhaps, on the child's reasoning being the sole factor behind his actions. In the section on Moral Development I will be looking at how children's morality develops, and the effects that tradition, peer pressure, discipline and emotions also play on his moral education.

How then should the teacher "educate" the child in regards to morality? Downey and Kelly ('78,), reflecting on the inexact nature of morality, state that "the content of morality is changing...and people must be allowed to be autonomous moral beings, but in order to become such they must learn the language of morals and be shown what rationality can reveal about its form." There are wide reaching implications and suggestions which come from this statement. Firstly, Downey and Kelly seem initially to suggest that morality, or even truth, is a relative thing. Relativism and its effects on our society will be discussed at greater length in the next section, but in general it refers to all truths being subjective for each person. Whatever one may accept as moral is true for that person. Many commentators, when referring to autonomy, the ability to act and decide freely, appear to suggest that a child should be given the techniques to think and decide for himself. This in itself sounds fair enough, but the trouble with relativism is that whatever statement anyone makes is subjective in itself and has no more validity than someone suggesting that children should not be allowed to think for themselves. Therefore, Downey and Kelly refer to "rationality". However, this seems to imply that accepted rationality is indeed rational. Under the rules of relativism, if indeed relativism is allowed to have set rules, this is just an opinion with no more truth than any other opinion. We therefore have commentators attempting to define reason. Warnock ('67) goes further in saying that some moral judgements cannot be argued with – it is wrong to be tortured, starved, humiliated and so on. However, another thing that can be certain is that some commentators somewhere will contest this. Moral education seems to promote a lot of circular arguments when viewed in the context of a pluralist society which may threaten to scupper any real progress. Wilson ('73) suggests, however, that a school cannot sit on the fence with regard to certain issues such as respect, stealing etc. Some

issues, he implies, are clear-cut, whilst there are issues which have greyer areas (relative relativism?).

Certainly, many commentators appear agreed that moral education does not involve indoctrinating any child to any one particular viewpoint. Instead, children are urged to look at all the possibilities, in particular with those areas that have a variety of viewpoints, and consequences in order to come to their own “rational” decision. One might cynically suggest that as the adults can’t come up with a particular moral code which they can justify against all comers, then the responsibility is passed on to the children who can make up their own minds. This can be justified by saying that the children have used their own reasoning abilities to make rational judgements, which is the aim of moral “education” anyway. At best, on a superficial level, this is a tolerable procedure and is prescribed by many influential bodies. At worst, it could be argued that it is an abdication of responsibility, which leaves children receiving, whether directly or indirectly, a series of liberal attitudes towards the search for truth.

In practice, a teacher can use a variety of techniques, which will be discussed in the section entitled *The Role of the Teacher*, in order to allow a child to have the ability to see the far reaching outcomes; the “facts”; the choices available involved in making moral judgements and acting (or not) on them.

Education, therefore, in morality is seen by many not to be one of moral **instruction**. Moral education, Wilson ('73) says, should be tied to “the notion of improving people by increasing their knowledge, understanding and rationality.” He sees it as a process which **enables** children to view a variety of choices, to discuss the rationality of them, to understand consequences and act accordingly. One might also add, however, that other “hidden” influences play a major part in their decisions. Morality involves surely much more than just engaging the intellect. It is equally influenced by, and developed through, emotions, peer pressure and other authorities and forces besides our own. I will be looking further at these factors in the section: *Moral Development*.

### **Relativism, Pluralism and Child-Centred Education**

Before we begin to look at some of underlying philosophies which affect our society, it is important to give a brief, if simplistic, general view of what the terms relativism, pluralism and child-centred education are. That we are living in a plural society is a social fact. The term, plural, expresses the plurality of views, religious doctrines and beliefs which permeate our society. Relativism could be seen, as one of its possible definitions, as a philosophical doctrine which seeks to interpret plurality as an acceptance of the rights of an individual to hold “subjective” beliefs. This does not prevent an individual from making judgements, but allows the person to formulate his own preferred code, belief or “truth”.

Child-centred education is a philosophy which derives its roots from relativism and underpins much of the education system in Britain today. The work of philosophers such as Dewey (1859-1952) have had a great deal of influence over the philosophy of education in the West in the twentieth century. Dewey considered that humans begin life as “biological organisms, filled with unformed energy or impulse, ready to assume

whatever direction experience assigns; and since each environment generates a different experience of the world - a different set of patterns of response to it - human beings vary as much do their environments." (Price, '67) The teacher, therefore, should look at each child as an individual with individual interests and capabilities, which should be fostered by the educator. Whilst this view is still favoured in education circles, it is debatable whether it is always put into practice in the classroom.

As I have already discussed in the previous chapter, a child in today's society faces a plurality of different value systems. Children in his class will come to school with a multiplicity of views, values, belief systems and moral values. It is into this system where the child's individual ideals or codes are supposed to be respected, and indeed encouraged, that the government wants to begin its lessons on citizenship.

Historically, British society, as well as much of the western world, was influenced by Christendom. In fact, one could say that it was the Roman Catholic church which defined reality for population of the western world. Even other systems such as the monarchy needed justification by the church. Thus the kings and Queens were granted the divine right to rule by the church. It was only when the Reformation challenged the authority of the Pope that the seeds of pluralism were sown.

As religious divisions increased, this led to the birth of the Enlightenment with philosophers such as Descartes suggesting that real authority comes from reason (Backus, '99). The onus moved more towards the human being becoming autonomous. Kant emphasised the need for humans, as rational beings, to use their own judgement in life issues. There was a move from religion being central to people's lives: science and knowledge became the standard. Locke (Backus, '99), furthermore, implied that, whilst civilisation cannot survive without religion, it needs to be tolerant of other belief systems. Personal beliefs should not be placed on others, but be a personal matter only. Schleiermacher adopted this view, but added that science and religion need not clash. Religion expressed the inner feelings, which was not the province of science. He focused on the aesthetic, expressive, feeling side to human nature, suggesting that all religions are essentially the same: doctrines merely being the outward trappings which attempt to define the essence of the religion. (Backus, '99) Throughout this century, aspects of the traditional order, ranging from the class system to discipline, have been systematically challenged, creating a society where many views are prevalent and issues such as Moral Education struggle to find a definition. Education has been influenced to various degrees by the struggle to incorporate both a liberal view of the autonomous child who holds within himself the abilities and skills which need to be nurtured, and the traditional view of the fallen nature of mankind and the child, who needs to be trained and disciplined. Certainly within more recent journals in Moral Education, there is an acceptance that children will not necessarily do what they morally feel they should, even when they understand the issues involved. John Wilson (98), in a recent article, relates how Moral Education is needed in order to curb the more chaotic excesses to which children are prone, whilst reinforcing the desire for autonomy and reasoned choices.

At the root of many educational philosophies, largely ignored by many commentators, is the view of what humanity's nature is. Certainly the traditional Calvinist view which influenced early schools was that humans are born in original sin, and are therefore a

totally fallen species. Opposed to this is the relatively common, romantic view spread by philosophers such as Rousseau, that mankind is naturally good: affected by environmental and social conditioning (Backus, '99). Mankind therefore has the ability to achieve great things and make rational, informed decisions. Schools, however, appear to veer uneasily between the two. The ways in which errant children are treated, for example, are often contradictory; either being based on helping the child to deal with his problems, or to constantly praise, or, conversely, to reprimand and punish. Ofsted appear to view discipline as a subject to be explained to the children in a rational way. Recent guidance says:

“The essence of moral development is to build a framework of values which regulate personal behaviour through principles rather than through fear of punishment or reward. Pupils are able to make decisions through the application of reason, even though they may not cope quite so securely with problems in which they are emotionally involved: in other words, their learning about moral issues may be on a different plane from their behaviour.” (DFE '98)

Whilst there is an almost grudging admission to the possible irrationality of children's behaviour, rationality is clearly seen to be the goal. Punishments and rewards are seemingly relegated to an inferior position. Therefore schools are directed to work towards training the child's intellect with regard to morality. For example, a school dealing with a litter problem may spend a lot of time educating the children in assemblies or lessons to the issues which surround the dropping of litter. This may please many teachers who see reason being applied to the children, whilst many may feel that the children may not necessarily respond to words unless there is some more tangible force placed behind the argument.

Much of the Piagetian philosophy tends to direct schools towards a child-centred, rational view in schools, where the child is seen to be naturally evolving and education needs to nurture, rather than restrict with imposed views and discipline. At the same time, there are many experienced teachers and Heads who accept that children do not always conform to rational behaviour and, therefore, schools, at worst, give out a half-hearted attempt to please all views. Rules are seen to be “negotiated” by the teacher and the children, which, in general seems to be a superficial attempt to develop children's awareness of a rational approach to rules. In reality, children are not fooled by such approaches, and it could be argued that such an approach only serves to foster contempt for the teacher. At best, schools seek to find a wise compromise between the two positions, though this can often lead to a conflict towards a particular approach when dealing with, for example, late homework or Sex Education.

Many commentaries on Moral Education appear to presume a rationalist, child-centred view of children's development, without exploring other views of the state of human nature. The traditional Catholic or Protestant views of human nature are dismissed by some as containing views which are not reasoned and merely indoctrinate children. Rational autonomy is the key, they argue, to Moral Education. This is, however, also indoctrination of views. A purely relativist approach brings many contradictions and difficulties with it. For one thing, no statement can be taken as absolute as it defies the nature of relativism. Truth is, after all, a subjective thing, therefore no relativist can

impose his views on others. One could argue that because of the plurality of our society, then we have to use reason as a key to each child finding his own truth. However, this again raises the issues of what is reason anyway. Does it depend on a majority decision? If so, then were the Nazis correct? Or does it involve the rights of others having equal importance to one's own? If so, then how can we make decisions in a society which holds a plurality of views? Wilson (98) reflects the frustration and tensions in this area, when he says that some things are just **true**. If we stand on the fence, then we will achieve nothing.

Whilst accepting there are truths in the varying views of man's potential, it seems naïve to believe that just because a child knows the consequences of his actions, can see the reasons behind a decision, and even know that something is right or wrong in his own view, that he will act upon this information. We are both rational and irrational beings. We are capable of greatness, of achieving beauty and exceeding expectations, but we are all capable of selfishness, destructive acts and so on. There is more to morally educating a child than just offering skills in reasoning. The SCAA Discussion Paper on Spiritual and Moral Development ('93), for example, recognises the need for authority and discipline as having a major effect on children's behaviour and morality:

“There needs to be an insistence that pupils behave in an acceptable fashion towards staff and towards each other. All schools have rules about these matters with sanctions to ensure that they are observed. These rules provide an early opportunity for pupils to become aware of and accept that an effective and just society is based on the assumption that certain rules are acceptable to a wide range of individuals.” (SCAA '93)

The document goes on to talk about the consequences of breaking these rules, though optimistically adds that pupils should act upon rules from conviction rather than the fear of being convicted! Certainly there is an implication, however, that it is not merely reason which governs people's behaviour. Other factors such as fear of consequences play a part. The view that children are inherently good, which has held some sway in many of the institutions in this country, has been questioned more openly in recent years. It is important that any educator of children keeps a balanced view of this, realising that whilst many children can be challenged by rationality in their lessons, this does not necessarily mean they will do what others, or even they themselves, expect. Other factors involving the emotions, desires, hormonal changes, chemical reactions from outside sources such as drugs, amongst others are involved in developing their moral behaviour.

### **Moral Development**

Commentators have, inevitably, a wide range of views concerning the way children develop. For example, learning theorists (Downey & Kelly, '78) argue that young children do not have the capacity to make moral reasoned judgements. Downey and Kelly refer to Freud's "positive" notion "of modelling ... behaviour on that of an admired figure, albeit at an unconscious level." and children's use of precise models to shape their behaviour. Cognitive-developmentalists, such as Piaget (Downey & Kelly, '78), considered that children are able to formulate their own rules based on their ability to cooperate with their peers. Brennan ('65) even goes on to suggest that children should be allowed the opportunity to live without direct adult supervision. Piaget (Downey & Kelly,

'78) also seems to advocate that children should be released from constraints imposed on them by stronger adults and evolve their own, autonomous morality.

At the root of these contrasting views appears to be the important philosophical view of, what I described in the previous chapter as, the nature of mankind; ranging from whether children are inherently evil to whether they can rationally, and naturally, assume moral codes. Learning Theorists see the child as dependent on adults for their moral understanding. Cognitive development commentators appear to focus on the intellectual development of the child's view of morality (Downey & Kelly, '78). In fact, this view of moral development appears to be given almost exclusive weight. Downey and Kelly ('78) consider that Piaget's influence on teachers has meant they possibly "seem to regard the formation of moral judgements and the taking of moral decisions as a largely intellectual matter."

As a criticism of this presumption, Downey and Kelly refer to the studies of Hartshorne and May (1928-30) and Peck and Havinghurst (1960), who draw attention to the ways in which children bring their own emotional desires to moral decisions. Children are seen not to be simply rational beings who can be encouraged to respond in such a way to all moral decisions, much like the Vulcans in Star Trek. They also have emotions which can play differing roles in whatever situation they find themselves.

Kohlberg (66), in contrast, sees the development of the child as having an intellectual focus, following various rigidly set stages, with the child following different motivations in his behaviour. For example, the initial stage; the heteronomy stage, sees the child's motives orientated towards obedience and punishment. An example is given where a child does not run across the road because his father says. He knows he will be punished if he does so and therefore refrains. However, it could be argued that many factors are playing a part in the child's mind, not least the reasons behind wanting to run into the road. The child may be acting on desire, and even though he knows his father does not wish it, that is no guarantee that he will not do it. Curiosity, emotions, desire to test the boundaries placed on his world and even plain "devilment" may motivate him to break the rules. A recent newspaper article (The Times, 25/5/99) related how a father was prosecuted for smacking his child. In defence, the father stated that he had told the child several times not to run into the road. Knowing full well what the dangers were, the child continued to do so. Surely in such a case, a child could be seen to be acting against the imposed rules of the parent. One might even suggest he is acting autonomously of his father!

Many commentators refer to the early stage of heteronomy in ways which seem to imply indoctrination of views; an early immature stage which the child will hopefully grow out of, which works against the child's innate ability to reason and work out codes for himself.

In fact, imposed authority, especially from religious moral codes, is viewed with disdain by Downey and Kelley (78): "Primarily it is unacceptable because it denies to the individual the right to choose his own beliefs, moral principles and behaviour on his own terms, and in the light of his own thinking." With regard to Kohlberg's scale, they point to the work of Haan (68) who suggested that few college students, with whom he worked,



reached the levels associated with autonomy. These few are described as demonstrating the ability to be: “highly independent of their parents, to play an active part in social and political organizations, and to rely very little on religious doctrines for moral guidance... Those who came out at the level of conventional morality tended to be generally conservative, to play little part in social or political activities, and to conform to conventional standards set by parents and other authority figures.” The suggestion of conformity and blind acceptance of standards is implicit in the tone of the article, whilst those who are relying very little on religious doctrines are seen to be “independent” thinkers and actively involved in their society. It is, however, misleading to imply that people who have accepted moral principles from varying authority sources are not engaging other abilities such as rationality. Norman, Richards and Bear (98) in their study which compared an evangelical Christian school with a government supported public school, found a significantly higher proportion of children from the evangelical Christian school demonstrated higher moral reasoning abilities. It is a fallacy to suggest that acceptance of an authority may lead to lack of reasoning. Certainly, many religious people would argue that they have clear reasons why they accept their moral codes.

Freud stated the child at an early stage is egocentric (Downey & Kelly, '78) concerned with only his own issues. It could be argued that it is necessary due to the child's egocentric nature, for adults to impose rules and boundaries. This does not mean that the child at the heteronomy stage is not being encouraged to digest his experiences. A child who is told not to put his hand in a flame may, for any of the reasons previously stated, do exactly what he was told not to do. From the experience of the pain, he may learn not to do it again. He will come to appreciate that there are real reasons behind the rules. He will, at the very least, begin to grasp the principle of cause and effect: if I do something, it may have consequences for me. The authority figure in his life may already have instilled this principle into the child at an early stage through rewards and sanctions. (The scientific principle of every action having a reaction is possibly not too distant from moral issues.)

Kohlberg places the child's self interest and desire for approval at later stages. However, as I have attempted to show above, it would not be unreasonable to suggest that these factors may play a part, even in Kohlberg's initial stage of moral development.

Kohlberg describes the sixth and final stage as being where the individual is able to act according to his own conscience or principles. Whilst admitting that a “morally mature” person could be one who is able to assess the facts, consider the feelings of himself and others, and so on, it is still possible to assume, however, that a person who is acting according to the principles of the sixth level, is still also influenced by other forces from the other five stages. For example, how many “autonomous” or “intellectual” or “rational” people smoke, after all? It is ludicrous to assume that they do not have the necessary information – it's written on the packet! One could argue that the individual has weighed up the facts and consequences and is operating under an autonomous right to act according to his own beliefs, but it is naïve to suggest that other influences may not be playing their part; whether they be peer pressure, desires and emotions. How many individuals operating on any level will break the speed limit in order to get home in time for their favourite television programme? What effect will fear of legal consequences from authority have over curbing our actions, no matter what level we have reached on

Kohlberg's scale? Education may help people understand many things, but it is no guarantee that people will act upon their understanding, whatever level they may have reached. There are perhaps no easily found answers to any of these questions, but the fact that these questions exist suggests that other characteristics from other levels, besides rationality, play a part in our moral processes at all stages of our lives.

Many educationists seek to suggest that children are inherently rational beings, as seen in the constant struggle to define and explain behaviour according to environmental conditions, science, etc. Whatever stance one takes as to the state of human nature, it is clear, however, that many factors such as peer pressure, emotions and desires, eagerness to please (and, one might add, even wilful obstinacy) play a part in shaping the child's morality and moral behaviour and, therefore, it is highly inadequate to focus on children's rationality alone when teaching Moral Education. Many characteristics from a variety of Kohlberg's levels may play a part in defining any moral choice that an individual will face at **any** stage in his life.

### **Factors Which Affect Moral Development**

Kohlberg, as we have already seen, has stipulated that a child proceeds through a fairly linear process of six levels to reach "autonomy" (Downey & Kelly, '78). However, it seems erroneous to assume that a child would rigidly adhere to a particular stage, without being heavily influenced by characteristics which define other levels. Whilst admitting that children at different stages of their own lives may be more heavily influenced by one particular factor, such as the toddler responding to the authority of the parent, it appears reasonable to suggest that a child or adult will continue to be influenced by various influences at any stage of his life. An adult may easily respond to a situation based on his parents' early influence as well as rationality or any other factor. A child may respond to the authority of the parent, whilst recognising the reason for their actions, or alternately because he wants to win approval.

If one accepts that many forces are involved in shaping a child's morality or moral judgements at any particular stage in his development, then it would be helpful to identify these forces. After all, educating children in the processes of developing a moral code should clearly involve them in knowing what these processes actually are.

### **Authority**

It seems universally accepted that a young child is influenced by the authority of parent figures; whether through the desire to please, fear of sanctions or understanding of the reasons behind their actions. The work of Piaget seems to have inspired some negative feelings towards the authorities which impose discipline on the child, such as parents, law and education systems. As a result, there have been a variety of views on child rearing which have their basis in a more liberal, relativist philosophy on the state on mankind. No longer is the child seen to be inherently sinful, as suggested by Calvinist interpretations of the Judaic/Christian/Greek philosophies, but a rational being, who should be nurtured into a position where he can accept and follow his own truth, whatever it may be. Such philosophies tend to permeate the education system in Britain and many groups who seek to change the law which affects how parents bring up their children. However, as I have

suggested in earlier chapters, there is a contradiction in how schools express a variety of philosophies towards discipline. Whilst some schools promote “negotiating” rules with the children, the reality is that many such attempts are half-hearted and it is dubious whether rules are really being negotiated or whether they are being subtly enforced. For the sake of running a school smoothly, sanctions and rewards are implicit in the structure. Even the use of both sanctions and rewards can sit uncomfortably with each other, with some teachers focussing on the punishments in order to maintain their authority over children who are liable to play up when taught by “weak disciplinarians”, whilst rewards can be used so freely in their attempt to enthuse and reinforce required behaviour that they lose meaning for the children.

Respect for the authority of the parents, teachers and other bodies is arguably important to provide a safe, secure environment for children and adults at all stages of their life. At the very least, it is an issue which will influence them, whatever views they may hold in their lives, and, as such, it is one which must be explored in any scheme of work for morality studies. Reasons behind rules, their implementation in so many levels of our society and their effect on moral development need to be a starting point for the children and teacher, whether this be with reference to school, home or society in general.

### **Reason**

The rationale behind rules, whether it be for safety, co-operation or efficiency should not be avoided in lessons. As said by so many educationists, reason is a major factor in the development of many children’s morality whether this be in the form of understanding the consequences of actions on the perpetrator, how moral or immoral actions affect others, the need for equality or to understand more than side to an argument. Certainly the teaching of moral education should contain a high proportion of intellectual, rational thinking, though it is not the only factor in all children’s development and the influence will vary from child to child. It is, perhaps, necessary to state that not all children will become rational, “autonomous” people. Too many other factors play their part in the child’s development. Any teacher will know that no matter how hard they drag the horse to water, it does not guarantee that the horse will drink. Children are sometimes all too willing to act on their own individual, “autonomous” wills!

However, this does not preclude the importance of demonstrating rational reasons and exploration, and questioning, of rules. As Straughan (p.76) says when discussing issues involved with authority and discipline; “the fact remains that a system of control which tries to transmit a particular code of conduct to children, simply by pointing to the fact that the code is prescribed by some authority, cannot claim to be called either moral or educational.” The whole point of education is that we educate, and rationality is implicit in all the lesson plans I have developed. However, whilst reasoned discussions and arguments should run through the scheme of work, so do other factors. Any scheme of work which tries to focus on just one factor at any time could be considered to be half-baked and insubstantial. The recognition of other factors such as authority and emotions is always important.

### **Emotions/Desires**

Children are emotional beings, as are all human individuals. It is pointless to assume that any child can control his emotions and become a wholly rational, reasonable being as he walks into the classroom. Sometimes it takes other factors, such as effective authority to do that! Certainly writers such as Downey and Kelly ('78) agree that "there is an important emotional dimension to morality and moral development." In the past, as Downey and Kelly point out, there has been a tendency to deplore the effects of emotions on children's thinking and actions. There is certainly a tendency in religious experience to focus on the very real conflicts which can exist between what one thinks and what one does. The focus which appears to exist on rationality seems to prescribe that children become like Star Trek's Vulcans, who control their emotions with reasoned intellectualism.

Emotions and desires have a very strong effect on people's judgements; so much so that we can convince even ourselves that a course of action is right, when in reality we feel conflict within. Of course, this is not by all means always negative. It would be easy to convince a child that dropping litter is wrong, but unless he cares about it, it may make little difference to his actions. One could argue that, again, more than one factor plays a part at any time.

An honest approach to such things should be contained within any study of morality, as could the wider issues which are involved with this. What is the nature of mankind? Why do we sometimes do what we know is wrong? What do religions believe about desires? What is sin? What influence do emotions and desires have on us? These are all important questions that need to be asked.

### **Peer Pressure and the Desire for Approval**

This factor is to some degree linked with the emotions, the desire to fit in with others and be accepted, but also deals with outside influences on our behaviour. Whilst some try to remove the influences of religious or parental or authoritarian "indoctrination", others try to lessen the effects of following the crowd, or the effects of violence on television. However the argument goes, it seems clear that many people believe that children are easily influenced by other forces. Certainly this needs to be looked at in an open way. One could strongly argue that there is no such thing as an influence free vacuum. Children are sensitive to what others, such as peers, think and do. They are influenced by their friends. There are many studies on the effect of crowd or group mentalities. However, despite the title of this section, children, as well as adults, pick up messages from all kinds of different sources. Of course some messages will be rejected, whilst others will be internalised. Governments seek to influence children's behaviour when they propose Citizenship lessons; advertisers understand the power of the media to influence children and spend large amounts of money developing powerful messages; writers who feel strongly about certain issues will use their texts to present a view; those who seek to rid texts or television of politically incorrect stereotypes realise the influence such things have on the mind. Often the people who don't know the power of such influences are the children themselves. How peers, and wider influences, affect our thinking is one area that needs to be explored. An individual may understand the reasons not to smoke, but the desire to fit in with his friends may dictate more strongly than his reason. Behaviour in a classroom is very much influenced by the group dynamic, too.

That is why one lesson may need to be changed before being taught to a different class. A child moving from school to home may adapt his behaviour to suit the approval, or otherwise, of the different influences there. Outside influences from the media or from education, may be more subtle, but it is important for the children to see that such influences exist, whether they be positive or negative.

Four factors have been outlined here. No categorisation can always be complete; sometimes the definitions are blurred, but one thing should be clear. There are a number of factors which play a part in the development of the children and an understanding of these factors needs to be both available to the children and to many of the institutions that exist in our country. It is futile to assume that all people are rational beings at all times. Other factors have an affect and need to be catered for, whether it be in the running of a school or in the running of an office. There is, however, one other important, but problematic or even controversial, factor; that of spiritual influences, which will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

### **Moral Education as a Part of Religious Education**

There is a clear concern that, as moral instruction and religious instruction have been so closely linked in the past, whilst many people have questioned and dismissed certain traditional religious institutions, they have also rejected many of the moral principles which are implicit in them. Disillusionment with the established church in the west appears to have gone hand in hand with a suspicion or mistrust of traditional moral standpoints; for example, on such issues as sex outside of marriage or discipline of children.

Wilson states that morality can and should be taught outside religious education in order to avoid throwing the baby out with the bath water. Yet, the issues about why people hurt each other, why we even do things that we firmly believe we should not or vice versa, are ones about which religion has a lot to say. As I have stated previously when outlining the philosophies which affect western society, the view of mankind's nature lies at the root of many, if not all, belief systems. Are we inherently sinful? Is there a God? Is there truth? Are there consequences for our actions in this life or the next? If there is no God, then does it matter how we behave? All these questions are crucial to both moral education and religious education. At the very least, these issues should be raised in religious education. Those who argue that morality should be explored outside of R.E. are merely skimming the surface of some deeper, important life issues. It is all very well to talk about consequences of stealing, but the issues of why we are all tempted, and our basic human nature need to be explored. Religious Education allows the child to investigate spiritual answers to life's questions.

In the Kent Agreed Syllabus Consultation Draft, 1999, there is a clear emphasis being placed on morality being a part of Religious Education: "the syllabus should not be confined to information about religions and religious traditions, practices and teaching, but extend in a religious context to wider areas of morality." Whilst the children are exploring morality within the "religious context", the proposals suggest that they develop "their own beliefs and values". One would presume that this implies that work pertaining to moral education will contain a broad, general view of morality, with reference to what

different religions believe about particular issues. The text of the proposal is not particularly clear, presumably giving a sense of openness and “plurality” to the document. There are suggestions that children look at religious stories such as the Good Samaritan in order “to illustrate the way we might treat those less fortunate than ourselves”. R.E. teachers are also expected to “promote the development of certain attitudes”. Here there is a clear sense of a value system being promoted. Children are encouraged to develop a willingness to “...recognise the needs, feelings and hopes of other people, listen to and to learn from the experiences and insights of others...reflect on their own beliefs and values, reflect on their own experience, acknowledge their own biases, preferences and prejudices, be challenged by the views of others, exercise their imagination.” These are all admirable qualities which should be nurtured, if possible, in children.

Despite the linking of Religious Education and Moral Education in this document, and the admirable qualities propounded in the above statement, the suggestion that children should look at stories such as The Good Samaritan as an example of caring for others less fortunate than ourselves seems rather a bland suggestion for linking the two. It tends to ignore the far deeper questions about human nature, God or “sin”. Children need to be aware that views and opinions about such questions lie at the very heart of institutions such as education, the prison service, civil liberties groups, the media, the General Synod, soap operas, to name but a diverse few which may affect their lives.

It is also important that children are aware of the sometimes dual acceptance in western society of both science and religion as both complementing and contradicting each other. It is a subject which needs further examination as it reflects a sometimes difficult, conflicting state of the Western mind set. Belief in supernatural forces influencing or guiding lives is often dismissed out of hand or not even considered in education circles, yet, ironically, for the majority of people in the world there is a sometimes undeclared acceptance of such forces ranging from the perusing of daily horoscopes, to strong beliefs in God, the Devil, angels, demons, Ying and Yang, ghosts, heaven, hell and so on. Whilst many, even those who passionately believe in outside forces, have tried to explain away such beliefs or even occurrences with more “rational” explanations, there is still an acceptance of the supernatural existing side-by-side with the natural. Many people can relate incidents which have happened in their lives which cannot be explained by accepted knowledge, whether they come from a particular religious group or not. A belief in God, itself, is an acceptance of a supernatural force, yet those who claim to have received insights or messages from a higher being are often dismissed as cranks by even those who believe and follow the guidance of prophets who were dismissed as madmen in their own day. For many years in religious thinking miracles were explained in scientific terms. Nowadays we have the accepted use of alternative medicines, such as Homeopathy, which defy scientific rationalisation and have their roots in spiritual or supernatural forces. Yet, in the Western consciousness, even those who use such products remain in a seemingly contradictory state of accepting and denying spiritual forces being involved in their lives. There is even a rather vague acceptance of “spirituality”, however it may be defined, in much of the Ofsted directives, especially related to the ethos of the school. How it is defined seems to be up to those who are in charge of spiritual development of the school. Children need to be aware that the majority of the world do

actually believe in such forces influencing their lives and the problems with the seemingly underlying scientific approach to life.

Even if children do not accept that supernatural or spiritual elements exist, then they need to be aware that, for many, such elements are an important part of their lives in such a way that it affects the way they live and think. Straughan ('82) points to:

“...the undeniable fact that religious beliefs are capable of exerting a powerful influence upon how one *feels* and *behaves* towards other people, not simply because of the divine sanctions which may motivate some believers, but also because of the distinctive view that a religion may convey of *what man is*.”

Straughan points to the ability of religions to explore human beings' nature and allow the Children to ask important questions about who and what they are. How religions have influenced people's actions for good (and evil) is also of importance and can at least partly explain many of the systems which exist today, such as education for all, Barnado's, Red Cross/Crescent or the removal of systems that now no longer exist (in the West) such as slavery.

Depending on one's experience or view of religion, it is seen to be either a repressive form of indoctrination or a means to broaden the imagination and stimulate a response to the physical and spiritual world. Either way, it is clear that throughout history religion has had an effect on the way people view the world, whether morally or spiritually or any other way. Certainly there are many testimonies from various religions in many of the religious textbooks which relate how beliefs have affected the way individuals act. Rarely does this seem to involve blind obedience, but suggest that there are rational reasons behind religious codes. For example, a text on arranged marriages will often discuss the positive rationale behind such practices.

### **The Role of the Teacher**

The role of the teacher is multi-faceted. It would be useful to take each of the five factors I have specified one at a time in order to suggest how the teacher can practically explore relevant issues. However, as I have previously stated, the factors are often inter-linked and defy such easy categorisation. As much of education involves the intellect, there may appear to be a natural bias in favour of rationality. All the lessons have a rational basis. However, at the back of all lessons the teacher is expected to be involved in establishing authority, engaging the emotions and desires of the pupils to explore morality, encourage children to relate to others in the class with respect and co-operation and so on.

Firstly, the teacher needs to enable the children to explore reasons behind, and issues involved with, authority, whilst, as I suggested above, maintaining authority in the classroom. It is not enough to talk about, and explore, the reasons behind authority and discipline if the teacher does not practice it effectively. How this should be done is something which would involve a lot more discussion, but it is enough to establish the fact that children need to respect the authority of the teacher in order to understand many of the issues that the teacher is raising. If children do not have respect for the teacher, then they will invariably have difficulties in respecting the issues which are being raised.

Whilst discussing such issues as the need for rules in a classroom, the effective use of rules should be evident to all. If the teacher does not have control over a class, then lessons about the need to treat others with respect are likely to be treated with contempt. An honest view of the children's potential, both positive and negative, is perhaps required! If a child is bringing emotional, peer pressure or any other factors with him to the lesson, then he may easily bypass rationality and ignore any attempts to engage his reasoning ability. At least, with good management from the teacher, he may learn the effectiveness of authority, if he learns little else!

To take this further, it may be that a teacher who inspires contempt in the children will have a detrimental effect on the child's moral development. On the other hand, if the children are simply driven to listen through fear, then this would also be detrimental. As suggested previously, authority is but one factor of many which help to develop the child's morality. A balance is clearly needed and this may be changed to adapt to any particular class. For example, a class with the potential to be unruly may need the force of discipline and sanctions more than another class. Therefore, it may be necessary for the teacher to adapt lesson plans in order to allow for less potentially disruptive lessons. It is up to the skill and judgement of the teacher to use the most sensible balance.

The lesson plans themselves focus on the rationale behind rules, though it is clear that other factors become involved. For example, why rules need sanctions or rewards is a question that will be raised. There is also, as stated above, the need to show the effectiveness of authority in the classroom, underlying all that is being explored by the children. There is room for class discussion and group or paired debates. There is also opportunity for the children to put themselves in the shoes of parents. If appropriate, many of these activities can be adapted into opportunities for drama if the class has suitable maturity to cope. Alternately, the lessons can be more teacher-led – though it is important that children have some opportunity to explore issues for themselves. Whilst my aims are clearly set out towards the children exploring certain “truths”, the lessons should be flexible enough to allow original thought to be investigated. Not all children will agree with the emphases of the lessons, but a school should challenge set ideas and allow itself to be challenged.

Lessons in rationality will explore the consequences of actions, something, which arguably, few children seem to be able to grasp. The idea that one event can influence many others, for good or ill, is a concept which many religions hold to and is a concept which should be explored. Likewise, children's imagination should be deepened by exploring how things feel for others. Many Religious Education texts, reading books, television programmes and various other media texts examine how things feel for others. Including testimonies and accounts from other individuals in varying circumstances may engage the children's minds or feelings. Drama may assist this. Exploring how others feel may bring a deeper understanding for the children. For example, being a victim of bullying or theft may bring sympathy and help develop compassion in children's moral understanding. This can help understanding of the standpoints and experiences of others and is a valuable technique to gain information. Children need to be aware of how listening to, or reading about, other people's experiences can enrich their experience and understanding. On the other hand, children need to be aware of the ways in which stories and other means can be used to persuade people to accept an alternate view, which may



not necessarily be fair or just. As an example, if a writer shows a character overcoming odds when he wants to take drugs, the ways in which an author portrays characters and outcomes can influence the moral codes which the reader is forming. Television, books, films and other media forms such as advertising are very good at manipulating their audience. Otherwise, why would businesses spend so much time and money on promoting their products? The power of the media to change opinions is also used by political, religious groups. Allowing the children to explore such influences as peer pressure and the desire to fit in is a good way of drawing their attention to the possible negative or positive aspects to such means. It is good that children can understand other people's positions, but they need to be aware that an element of propaganda exists in many forms. An example of two scripts which may give alternate interpretations to a moral act are therefore included in one of the lessons.

Other aspects of peer pressure or the desire for approval can be explored in the tasks about the need to work co-operatively in a class. However, there is also the need to respect individuality. This can, of course, lead to conflict. Such areas of conflict and how to solve them can be discussed in the lessons.

In Personal Social Education lessons children are often invited to examine their emotions, especially whilst in their early teens when body changes have an affect on their moods. Whilst this is helpful for the children to see how their emotions play a strong part in their lives, within Religious Education lessons we have the opportunity to explore different beliefs about the state of man's nature. This can range from the division of mind and body postulated by Plato or the division of soul and body in Hinduism, to the Buddhist aims of transcending sensual desires, to the Judaic, Christian, Islamic issues of sin and its consequences in this life and beyond. Such opportunities for learning and discussion are written into some of the lesson plans. The spiritual aspect of how religious beliefs affect actions, or how religious practices have roots in how human nature is viewed, is an important factor in many lives.

Positive aspects of emotions are explored. By having strong feelings over moral issues such as those involving justice and injustice may galvanise someone into action. The teacher needs to show that believing something is right or wrong simply in an intellectual capacity is not enough to ensure things will change. Emotions, desires and feelings play their part. How religious beliefs and views about how God sees people can motivate individuals and groups into action is an area which can be explored through the final sections of the lesson plans.

### **Assessment**

In order to judge what we mean when assessing Moral Education, it may be useful to begin looking once again at Ofsted's "Guidance on the inspection of SECONDARY SCHOOLS ('98). In this document, inspectors are told:

"The essence of moral development is to build a framework of values which regulate personal behaviour through principles rather than through fear of punishment or reward. Pupils are able to make moral decisions through the application of reason, even though they may not cope quite so securely with problems in which they are emotionally

involved: in other words, their learning about moral issues may be on a different plane from their behaviour."

This quote needs some unpacking. Firstly, Ofsted seem to take the common approach that rationality is, and here it is implied that it should be, the one beneficial factor in pupils' moral development. As I have argued in previous sections, this is not the only factor and, whilst it is important that reason is used to explore moral issues and education, human beings are not always rational and therefore the school needs to understand how to engage other factors such as authority and the desire for approval in order to maintain an ordered, for want of a better word, atmosphere. There is acknowledgement of the pupils' ability to understand moral issues, whilst operating on a different level when meeting problems "in which they are emotionally involved." We then have the rather dramatic statement: "their learning about moral issues may be on a different plane from their behaviour." Is this a moment of insight, where the writer realises that what one person believes or understands may not always govern his behaviour? If so, then why is this not reflected earlier instead of the statement about behaviour being governed by reason and not fear of punishment. If fear of punishment is a factor to be avoided in schools, then how should a school demonstrate it is dealing with children whose behaviour lies on a different "plane from their behaviour"? There seems to be a contradiction here, or at least a part denial of human nature and the influences of other factors, beside reason, on their behaviour and moral understanding. In all areas of the curriculum, inspectors are asked to assess the children's ability to express their understanding of such issues as "personal rights and responsibilities and equal opportunities." However, it is surely possible, as indicated by the previous quote, that children will be more than happy to discuss such issues in depth, whilst their outward behaviour may demonstrate another thing. If an inspector asks a child about stealing, the child may give lucid reasons why, or when, it is wrong, and then happily go off with his friends to perform a little extra-curricular shoplifting!

Therefore, how should, or indeed, can, we assess children's moral understanding? In a study by Host, Brugman, Tavecchio and Beem (98), they write; "Basing ourselves on Kohlberg's educational theory, we regard moral atmosphere as an important link between individual's competence in moral reasoning and their moral behaviour (Higgins, Power & Kohlberg, 1984; Kohlberg, 1984, 1985)." They speak of a moral atmosphere reflected in such things as the children's value of the school, shared understanding of the community, shared values, commitment to seeing that shared norms are upheld and complementary factors such as caring, trust, procedural fairness and so on. Of course, when referring to such issues as the atmosphere of a school, it is clear that there is a distinct level of subjectivity involved. What may seem like quiet order and shared ideals to one may seem like oppression and indoctrination to another. However, there is a very real sense that one can feel an atmosphere in a school, and even focus on certain areas in the daily running of the institution which can reveal whether it has a safe, beneficial working atmosphere overall. This is an area which deserves further study, but it is surely common sense to realise that certain aspects of a school will reveal how effective their moral education is. For example, how do children treat their school environment? Is it well cared for, or is it cluttered with litter? Do children care about how they look, or the state of their work? Do the staff show value to the work, by such things as good displays or thorough marking and assessment? Do the children value the work on display? How does school as a whole

react to bullying? Are policies in place to deal with this? If it is all based on children being rational, does it work? Do the staff and children feel it is working? Do children (and staff!) feel safe in school? Is there calm yet active learning taking place? And so on. Yes, atmosphere can be subjective, but a certain degree of wisdom is able to be used in assessing a school's moral atmosphere.

However, understanding and the development of reason in children are still key elements in a child's moral development, as Ofsted rightly stress. But this must not be the only factor explored, as in practice Ofsted do seem aware, as they often comment on the moral ethos and environment of the school.

In order to assess children's understanding of morality and their concepts of right and wrong, how should we proceed? Perhaps it is appropriate to begin to reassess what we want to achieve from Moral Education. It is important that children do understand there are many factors that influence their, and others', moral development: the influence of peers; authority figures; their own rational processes; their desires and emotions and so on. Understanding of these processes is the key to seeing their benefits, and otherwise, and is the key to understanding more about our own nature. At the very least, children should be demonstrating at the end of a particular course, the ability to question the rationale behind rules and the state of their own nature. How this influences their behaviour is a harder thing to assess, but one would hope that through the proper application of authority, and the understanding of consequences of their actions, both to themselves and others, that this would at least cause children to pause before embarking on a potentially undesirable action. Engaging children's ability to imagine what situations are for others, and to put themselves into other people's shoes is perhaps a desired aim too, as without this ability, children are more likely to operate at a singularly selfish level. Certainly such lessons as those which enable children to speak of how they will cope with being an authority figure such as a parent, can be a learning experience for many children who have never considered this reversal of positions.

It is customary for some schools to follow a National Curriculum style of assessing children's progress through Religious Education. This, of course, has its problems. Are we assessing children's spirituality or behaviour or effort or a combination of them all, when we give a level?

In the Standards of Attainment of the Kent Draft Proposals for RE (1999) children's understanding of morality is linked very much to the religions they have studied. For example, by the end of Key Stage 3, children should be able to:

- **give coherent account of "how beliefs affect behaviour". (KS 3 AT1 Understanding 1c);**
- **give expression to their own beliefs and values and offer fuller reasons for their views on religious and moral questions. (KS3, AT2 Evaluation, 2);**
- **evaluate some of the strengths and weaknesses of different viewpoints on religious and moral issues, including ultimate questions. (KS3, Evaluation, 3);**

- appreciate the reasons put forward by those who hold views which may be different to their own on religious and moral questions. (KS3, Evaluation, 3a);
- identify the moral issues and considerations involved in a range of situations and suggest ways of addressing them (KS3, Evaluation, 4);
- appreciate that there are different views about the rightness or wrongness about some courses of action (KS3, Evaluation, 5);
- identify a range of ultimate questions that are difficult to answer and display some awareness of different answers that have been given to them, with reference to the teachings of different religions (KS3, Application, 1);
- appreciate the personal value of a range of religious beliefs, values and practices which could inform their own values... (KS3, Application, 2)
- appreciate the way that religious beliefs and values may challenge their own beliefs and values (KS3, Application, 6)

Much of the above could be reached through the work I have proposed, though the work is based on the current Kent Agreed Syllabus (as of June '99). It certainly makes room for discussions of ultimate questions, discussions about the strengths and weaknesses of various approaches to issues, exploring others' beliefs and so on. However, whilst room is made for students to explore Moral Issues in the Selected Units in RE, the Level Descriptors do not identify specific targets in regards to Morality. Where it is mentioned, it often seems linked to a particular faith. e.g. **AT2, Evaluation, Level 3: Pupils can express their own view on a religious and moral issue, e.g. why men and women sit separately in an orthodox synagogue.**

At other times, there is more room for discussion on moral issues as separate (or linked, if they prefer) to religion; **AT2, Evaluation, Level 4: ...express their own views on a religious and moral issue with reasons, e.g. on why Jews keep Shabbat or why stealing is believed to be wrong.**

The linking of the two seems to unbalance the issues involved. It would be far better to treat the religious and moral as separate when the two do not fit neatly together. For example, a question on stealing may well bring in religion with regards to views, for example, on what human nature is like, or it may raise other factors in the development of morality such as peer pressure, desire and so on. To ask children to comment morally on whether a Jew should follow a religious ceremony seems to be expecting a lot and I would question the purpose of this.

Some schools, at the end of a particular topic, will give an open-ended question about which the children can write an essay. From this, the teacher can assess their understanding of the topic and their personal thoughts about any relevant issues. This task can have benefits in solidifying or expressing opinions, and can give the teacher a view as to how the child's understanding is developing. This is a purely rational task and cannot necessarily predict the behaviour of a child by itself. However, understanding of principal is one desirable goal. How we assess the results and give an arbitrary level is, perhaps, a little more difficult. It reminds one of the progressive, rather rigid, levels suggested by Kohlberg. However, rather than throw the baby out with the bath water, it is an

interesting, if questionable, method of assessing children's intellectual understanding and I can offer no acceptable alternatives.

With this in mind, I have proposed a question to be used for assessment purposes: "Why do different societies all seem to have rules and punishments?"

In your answer think about the following:

- a) The different places where you have to obey rules
- b) The reasons behind many rules
- c) Why there are punishments
- d) What different people believe human nature is like
- e) What different things influence our behaviour
- f) Your own views/opinions

How we assess the answers could involve the following:

| Level | AT1 Interpretation                               | AT2 Evaluation  | AT3 Application   |
|-------|--|---|---|
| 2     | Some basic reasons for rules are given.          | Thinks rules are good or bad.   | Say or imply rules affect their life.   |
| 3     | Mention of reasons being for safety.             | Can understand basic reasons for rules.   | Can state examples of how rules affect people's lives.  |
| 4     | Other reasons for rules mentioned.               | Can picture what will happen if there are no rules.   | Demonstrate understanding of human nature related to punishments/rewards.   |
| 5     |  | Clear statement about the need for rules with examples.   | Relates what any religions might say about human nature.  |
| 6     | Examples of various reasons why rules are given. | Gives an opinion relating to rules and punishments, either for or against, with clear arguments. Opinions are generally related to areas of argument. | Talks in detail about state of human nature, giving examples, for example, of a difference between what one might think and do. |

The above table is, of course, open to re-assessment, much of which will come when the children actually write their essays. Certain aspects, missed above, may come out. Children with special needs can be catered for with a variety of methods, from verbal assessment to scribes being used, depending on resources being available and the nature of their needs.

How one assesses any changes in behaviour is really a whole school issue, but one might state some areas which need looking into. The headings are based in part on those suggested by Host, Brugman, Tavecchio and Beem (98).

### Valuing of the School

- Are visitors welcomed by representatives of the school?
- Is the school well kept and cared for by the adults and children?
- Are displays looked after and regularly updated?
- Do children use the corridors safely?
- Is equipment treated with respect?
- Do children and staff value their work, with regards to presentation and general accuracy?
- How well is work marked? Is it generally constructive? Does the marking ignore mistakes?

### Mutual Understanding and Acceptance of Rules

- Do the staff, children and parents, as well as other interested bodies, understand the rules and are they generally put into practice?
- Are the sanctions clear, and accepted by the school as a whole?
- Do the children, and staff, feel secure?
- Are there clear procedures for dealing with bullying? Do the children, parents and staff generally understand and accept the procedures?

### General Ethos

- Are the children generally polite? Do they use accepted terms of "Please" and "Thank you"?
- Are they generally keen and co-operative?
- How do children wait for lessons or go into assembly? Are they respectful, patient and polite? How do staff encourage such attitudes?
- Do children value their own, or others' success?

In summary, whilst it is hard to assess both understanding of moral education and moral behaviour, it is possible with some subjectivity and some wisdom, to at least use procedures I have suggested, plus any others, to assess areas where children are developing or where the school needs to be re-evaluating its methods. However, it needs to be remembered that understanding of moral issues does not necessarily mean that it is put into practice. Other factors in the running of a school, such as discipline, ethos, attitudes amongst peers, parents and so on, need to be taken into account. Where it is possible to strengthen approaches to any of these factors, then they should be considered as a priority.

### **Resources**

There are a number a resources available, many based around Personal Social Education rather than Religious Education. Amongst the resources I have found, there is a mixture of emphases on teaching styles, philosophies and foci. I have endeavoured to understand the beliefs or educational philosophies which underlie each book. Unless the author states what the philosophy is, I have had to make assumptions based on the evidence suggested in the textbook. Most of the books touch on issues and factors I have raised, to varying degrees.

### **Issues (1-5) John Foster Collins Educational 1993, reprinted 1994**

These books are designed to be used on a year-by-year basis, ranging from Year 7 - Year 11. These are set out in a manner very similar to the Lifeline series which preceded them (reviewed below). They cover a number of varied issues ranging from bullying to shopping!

Foster takes a pluralist/relativist approach, for example in asking the children to express their own individual beliefs (Book 3, p.7). This is seen to be an individual thing, which helps to influence what friends they make and how they live their individual lives. Children are encouraged to form autonomous values.

In sections dealing with such issues as, "Sex or Friendship?" (Book 3, p.9) a text from another source is taken, telling children that this "is something that can only be resolved by talking about it together. By doing this you will soon discover whether the relationship is a worthwhile one. " Children seem to be viewed as rational beings. This sounds like a common sense attitude, but the only alternate viewpoint relates to safety and the law. Other factors, such as the force of desires and emotions, or alternate moral codes are ignored. Possibly, however, the author means that at the point of where sexual desire is at its strongest, the law and whether the relationship is a worthwhile cause, are the two things two "rational" children will be talking about! To be fair, each article is open to discussion, but in the above case, other moral stances on sexual activity are not considered by the text, despite the plurality of religions or viewpoints which can have codes of practice in such areas.

Interesting questions are raised after most articles are presented: for example, looking behind the rationale for rule and law (Book 3, p.15); the issue of whether people would break the law if there were no police is raised (an area explored in Golding's "Lord of the Flies"). This relates indirectly to a root belief about human nature, but does not actually specify this.

The series is colourful, attractive, with a variety of useful questions being asked. On issues such as Nature Conservation, a right and wrong is implied, and on issues such as sexual behaviour, rationality and autonomous values are seen to be the right way to proceed. It is curious how certain things seem to go through trends of being right and wrong. Racism and sexism are deemed wrong in any context in the West, and are therefore used constantly as popular absolutes. Care of the Earth is another sacred cow. It is deemed by many writers to be a universally accepted "right". It makes one wonder if there is a contradiction implicit in the way issues such as sex are left to individuals to work out, whereas sexism is universally condemned by most modern texts.

Within the wide range of topics, important root issues regarding human nature, the liberal philosophies covered in the books, whether values are absolute or not, do not seem to be covered.

### **Lifelines Book 1 John Foster (1986) Collins Educational**

Lifelines sets out to be a flexible system of units to allow teachers to use selections at will during Personal Social Education lessons. It takes an active approach to learning, encouraging whole class discussions, as well as individual and group work. It claims (Introduction) to allow for a wide range of teaching strategies. The topics range from covering starting at Secondary School, to general behaviour. There is an onus on children taking "responsibility for their own learning" (Introduction). The work is well set out, and the flexibility of tasks allows teachers to suit the work to any class appropriately.

The emphasis is again on rationality. For example, on the effective work about the reasons for rules (Book 1, Unit 2, p.8) it focuses on safety. Here the writer has a clear opinion on the necessity for a good discipline structure, and he invites children to think of sanctions for specific misdemeanours. He does not question the need for sanctions. Foster clearly feels that there are common standards or codes which are possibly based on common sense and cause and effect. Questions seem designed at times to ascertain a specific answer, though at least this, arguably, has a more honest approach, as the writer is making it clear what he believes. It is within these "rational" codes that children are given opportunities to express their own feelings or find other answers. For example, the issue of whether homework is really necessary is not looked at in any great depth, but children are invited to find solutions to the problems of doing it.

There are a lot of attempts to allow children to step into other people's shoes, ranging from victims of bullies to parents. This is done, for example, through role-play or discussions. On paper, it seems to allow for interesting and effective learning to take place.

Whilst taking a "commonsense" approach to the work, Foster seems to believe that children will respond in a rational manner, especially when he invites them to suggest nicknames for children in a photograph on page 25, Book 1. One can only imagine the response in many classrooms! To be fair, Foster suggests that teachers select relevant sections for each class, according to suitability. For this reason, and the exploration of good rationale behind many of the sections, this book contains useful resources, especially in the areas of rules and responsibilities and allowing children to explore other people's situations.

**One World: Many Issues Ed. B. Williams, G. Langtree, L. Clarke, M. Kennick (1997) Stanley Thorne (Publishers) Ltd**

Like some other seemingly relevant books for my dissertation, this book is written primarily for GCSE in R.E. However, in its six sections that relate to moral issues and how six major faiths relate to them, there are useful ideas which can be adapted to lower secondary students. In particular, there are useful sections which relate to the spiritual influences on moral development.

The book has a primarily, an emphasis on Christianity, (reflecting the emphasis of Religious Education in Britain). However, other religions such as Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, are fairly well presented. The book attempts to be objective, giving various sides to an argument without obvious prejudice.



Much of the work is, of course, for the older child, however this book is a good resource for exploring what the major religions believe. It makes room to explore how followers of a particular faith could be expected to view such issues as poverty, violence, discipline, genetic experimentation and so on (p.33). It does not explore through testimonies, as a separate section, whether faith in a religion or God affects the way people behave or develop. There is, however, a section which relates the values of various world religions (p.16 & 17)

**Looking Inwards/ Looking Outwards - Exploring Life's Possibilities  
Christian Education Movement Sponsored by the John Templeton Foundation,  
1998**

The book begins with a series of pertinent questions such as, "Is anyone innocent?" and "What does human nature mean?" which reflects some of the work in this dissertation. The author goes on to state (p.3) that "These questions, or questions like them, probably been asked as long as humans have existed. They are deep questions about the nature, meaning and purpose of human life. They are at the heart of the religious teachings of the world. This quest for understanding is at the heart of being human." The spiritual side being as important as the mental or physical side, is stressed. Recognition of spirituality being a questioning force is acknowledged, though other outside spiritual forces are not necessarily named openly.

Two sides of human nature are considered (p.10), which both relate to doing unto others as you would have done to yourself, etc. Both seem to rely on rational choice. Christian principles of a good tree bearing good fruit, and vice versa, are related, with a brief nod to Chinese Taoism in order to back up the Christian teaching! (p.11) Throughout the book, other world religions are given brief space. Certainly the positive aspects of humanity are expounded (pp. 13-25) which seems to imply a humanistic/rational approach at times. The negative aspects to human nature are also stated in the section on "dealing with feelings" (pp. 25-56) and discussed in a rational manner. There is a clear assumption that human beings are not perfect, or fallen in some way. (p.27). There is a lot of good exploration about what people say about issues such as anger, forgiveness and so on from a variety of sources. Advice is often given in Viewpoint sections. Influences from outside and inside are explored as relating to moral behaviour (p.25).

The strengths of this book lie in the fact that it is, on one hand, clear where the author stands in regard to imperfections in human nature and influences on our behaviour, whilst there are good objective questions. Possibly, there is, arguably, an over reliance on the human ability to rise above imperfection. There is too much searching for similarities in religions, whilst ignoring the differences. However, it asks real questions and does not assume a secular, rational, humanist approach as being the only way.

**Tutorial Topics (1988) Alison Leake John Robottom Longman**

This somewhat older book was based around a television programme, to which I do not have access. There is a lot of work on understanding reasons behind written and unwritten rules. It appears to take a rational approach to life and does not take into account different religious views. It tends towards a secular approach. A lot of the work

involves the children finding their own answers with emphasis on children working out how to solve problems. In order to do this, the children work either on their own or in groups. There is a lot of interesting group work involving drama or mime. Choices are sometimes expressed, but they are generally open-ended.

The rationale behind the work appears to be that children are rational beings who can work out their own answers to moral dilemmas. There is some work on feelings, but no real work on the power of emotions and desires. There is also a section on television violence. Children are given an article written by Mary Warnock arguing that fictional violence has an effect on children. Here the children are asked to investigate influences through surveys and discussions. There is also a section asking children who influenced them, but the writers actually stress their opinion which is (p.41); “Although you are brought up with certain ideas set for you by adults, it is important to be able to form your own ideas even when they coincide with those you were given.” There are clearly some occasions where the views of the writers do come through.

When discussing such issues as sexual assault it says (p.32); “The numbers are very tiny and the problem is not getting worse. But it is not getting any better either.” This seems typical of a book which stands in the middle of many issues, though this statement in itself is a view that seems to suggest things don’t change. It does, however, offer advice with how to deal with sexual assault.

Overall, the book does contain a lot of interesting work, but though it attempts to be open minded, there are a number of views which come through, highlighting the difficulties any writer has in preparing work. It is very difficult to suggest a moral vacuum. Should a writer do that anyway? Certainly the book is against racism, though there is a rather dubious task where children are asked to change their colour and act as a black or white child!

### **2YO - The Two Thousand Years On Trust (1993)**

This book has a definite Christian basis and focuses on the life of Jesus. The questions, however, attempt to remain objective; though certain Information Points stress a particular view, such as the evidence for Jesus having lived (p.7).

With regards to moral issues, there is a short photo-story told in the manner of many 'teen magazines, telling the story of a girl who is put in a moral dilemma over whether she should help out her enemy (pp.10-11). This is then put into the context of Jesus' teachings. The implication that there is a rationale behind what followers of Christianity believe is ever present.

There are some useful testimonies from ordinary or famous people regarding how their beliefs have influenced their lives. There is also a good balance of testimonies from different ethnic groups as well as those with special needs such as cerebral palsy (p.25-26). It does not necessarily discuss deeper issues of human nature or moral influences, but there are useful testimonies which relate the influence of belief on behaviour.

### **Values and Visions Ed. Team - Angel, Brown, Andrew & Sally Burns (1993)**

The material here comes from a variety of sources, including The World Council of Churches and various individuals such as R. Richardson, D. Hicks, M. Steiner. Much of the work reflects on values and "spiritual" development: "Values and Visions encourages the development of the whole person... It uses play, imagination, stillness and contemplation alongside reason and analysis. It nurtures us spiritually, creatively, physically...". Its basis is rather uniquely specified: "Spirituality is a thread that runs through our life, bringing hope, compassion, thankfulness, courage, peace and a sense of purpose and meaning to everyday... It drives us to seek and stay true to values not ruled by material success." The state that "spiritual" is not synonymous with "religious". It wishes to find a common spiritual thread which underlies all faith traditions. It claims that scientists and artists all draw from this thread: "It opens us to life and to each other." (Introduction pp. xi-xv) This does tend to leave us with the question of "Does it?" and to ask what the authors have based this "truth" on. They state the impetus is Christian, though teachers "from other perspectives have shared in its creation". It appears that the authors are trying to find a common "truth" which underlies all faiths and beliefs, which is itself a complicated issue. Focussing on similarities and ignoring differences is a difficult premise to maintain. Humanistic similarities between issues are propounded: "Be it Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism or the wisdom of the first nations people, the verdict is quite consistent: the human being is a creature of infinite value and great potential called to be something much more than a passer of tests.(p.4)" It is a view that many would subscribe to; it is certainly bland enough, but it does conveniently ignore the multitude of beliefs about human nature itself and the nature of the universe. Many such platitudes are expressed through the book; "The secret of education lies in respecting the pupil" Circle times are used in order to help children grow together as individuals and a community. Rights and wrongs are considered to be clear. Sexism and racism is again considered to be universally wrong. Those with opposite views are encouraged to listen to others (p.37) so that a "mutually satisfactory solution" can be reached. One wonders whether this does work in practice.

Children are encouraged in one session to imagine a utopian planet (p.172) and such seems to be the thrust of the work, focussing on positive aspects of life. Where suffering exists, it exists side by side with joy as two sides to a coin (p.57). Children and teachers are encouraged to meditate on beautiful things (p.167). One may feel the book is naïve. Certainly when the beliefs of different religions are explained at the back of the book, the exclusivity of many world faiths is ignored. The male terms of the Christian God is denounced (p.202) and the emphasis of building "human relationships and establish understanding" is emphasised, when talking about Islam (p. 207). There is a blurring of absolutes in the world faiths. All these actions can be questioned from various standpoints and the book is riddled with too many omissions. Children are seen to be rational beings, joined to some hidden web of life or energy. Though the authors state their views about life, much of the work appears naïve and appears to gloss over many alternate beliefs about human nature.

**It's Dark Inside David Day Lion Educational (1998)**

The emphasis of this resource is on the state of human nature, focusing on feelings, emotions and asking questions about why people do what they do. There is an acceptance of sin and overall, appears to hold a more "realistic" view of how people relate towards each other. Clearly the writer has a belief in the depravity of many human values when he relates such newspaper headlines as, "MIDNIGHT SEX ORGY IN OLD FOLK'S (sic) HOME" though, perhaps, this is a little too "realistic" for a class at school! (Likewise, giving score ratings for the nastiest things students have done, or thinking up situations to shock an unmarried priest (pp. 7 & 16) also seem to be asking for trouble) Alternately, one might view the author's view that: "If we are honest we know that the thing which overpowered us was us all the time. We have to accept the dark side of our character, not pretend it doesn't exist." as a refreshing change from the more liberal stances that are also included. Factors which may influence bullying are shown to be many, including stating the obvious fact which seems to be rarely mentioned in school documents - because people get "a buzz" out of "seeing fear in the victim's face"(p.9).

Whilst the book is clearly aimed at older students, there are some interesting explorations of the human condition.

**Personal and Social Education - An Integrated Programme Mary Gurney Stanley Thornes (publishers) (1991)**

Gurney reflects that the best P.S.E. lessons are ones in which pupils are encouraged to participate actively through appropriate activities (Book 3, p.3). Much of her work uses role-play in order to help children experience what things are like from other perspectives, and discussion. The teacher is seen to be an "enabler"(p.6), which could be interpreted in a variety of ways, but probably means that he allows certain freedoms in which children can explore issues. Whilst engaged in "enabling" discussion and sharing of personal information, the teacher is advised to "discriminate between fact and fantasy and be wary of being manipulated." (Book 3, p.6) which strikes a note of realism in its approach to education.

Primarily, there are promising statements about peer group pressure, where Gurney states that it is not enough for pupils to know the facts "since it is frequently peer group pressure which influences the behaviour of young people."(p.6) Gurney sees an answer to this through influencing peer group attitudes in a "positive way." Gurney feels that building up a positive classroom climate, encouraging "respect and mutual esteem", will help influence behaviour. Rational lessons on moral issues are not enough in themselves. The teacher is seen to be establishing ground rules for such things as discussion. The teacher is also encouraged to listen to children's experiences and draw from these. (p.3) Where possible, teachers are encouraged to bring in visitors related to a specific topic area, such as alcoholism. The work follows well-trodden paths of investigating moral issues such as vandalism, smoking, etc. Influences of the media are discussed (Book 3, p. 98) with regards to sexual pressure. However, outside influences such as peers and the media are not given specific lesson plans.

Gurney clearly sees the effect of peer pressure as an effect on moral development, as well as the importance of rational lessons, coupled with effective authority/management from

the teacher. However, these factors tend to be related in the teacher's section rather than being given lessons of their own.

### **Points of View Redvers Brandling Edward Arnold (Publishers Ltd) (1984)**

The first chapter begins by exploring how perceptions are relative to each individual. The book contains lots of pieces from multicultural sources. There are many "common sense" sayings which have an Eastern flavour, complete with an oriental looking cartoon. There is a strong focus on how different people think in order to challenge opinions about moral issues. For example, the book contains text from a diary relating how a Russian lady gave bread to a starving German prisoner (p.23). It invites children to explore prejudices from another perspective. Through one story, there is a suggestion that thieving is an environmental, circumstantial issue (p.39).

A mixture of rationality and relativism seems to be the root emphasis. This book can come across as being a little too open ended. It could be seen to encourage the belief that there are no absolutes, but it challenges concepts and encourages discussion. It contains useful work in exploring other points of view.

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### Lesson Plans

These lessons follow the pattern of exploring five influences, or factors, which affect moral development and behaviour.

The lessons are split into the following sections:

|            |   |  |
|------------|---|--|
| Eac        | <b>Authority -</b>                          | e.                                     |
|            | <b>Section One</b> Introduction to Morality |  |
| The        | <b>Section Two</b> Parenting                | a more difficult class, then you       |
| nee        | <b>Section Three</b> Ten Commandments       | such things as role-play at too early  |
| a st       |   |  |
| I wo       | <b>Reason -</b>                             | children up into groups gradually.     |
| Alt        | <b>Section Four</b> Choices                 | ork in groups, if this is appropriate. |
| The        | <b>Section Five</b> The Ripple Effect       | t Agreed Syllabus, County Core         |
| Uni        |   |  |
| <b>Les</b> | <b>The Desire for Approval</b>              |  |
| <b>Sec</b> | <b>Section Six</b> Fitting In               | city                                   |
|            | <b>Section Seven</b> The Power to Influence |  |
|            | <b>Emotions and Desires</b>                 |  |
|            | <b>Section Eight</b> Human Nature           |  |

**Aims:** - To begin to explore some of the reasons why different societies and religions have rules for those who play a part in them  
To enable children to “step into the shoes” of parents and teachers who often enforce rules on their children, and begin to understand their point of view.

**Resources:** - No particular resources needed. **Lifelines**, Unit 2 “Rules and Responsibilities” contains complementary work.

**KAS Study:- Taking Responsibility - Responsibility to Others**

- Family, friends, social groups, the disadvantaged

## LESSON CONTENT

**INTRO** – Ask children what rules they are expected to obey in their home. Do they all have clear rules, or do they pick them up as they go?

Encourage the children to relate incidents in their own lives when they broke a “written” or “unwritten” law. Did they learn anything from this experience? *The teacher could relate an incident themselves e.g. an experience in my own life is when I ran straight across the road as a toddler. My mother’s response can be imagined! Why did she react – was she just angry? What was the reason behind her reaction?*

Talk about how many rules are concerned with the safety of those to whom they apply.

**Task 1** – Children in pairs or singly (depending on the maturity of the class) write 5 rules that they would give to a class for behaviour in a science lab. Each rule must have a reason for its implementation (with examples if wished).

**Feedback** – Volunteers or one from each pair could read one rule out, with the reason. Clarify any reasons behind the rules suggested.

**Teacher** – *“Many of the rules are obvious, surely? Any child of 13 would **know** that it is silly to run in a classroom or that they should not throw acid around! So why then are the rules necessary?”*

You may get a range of answers ranging from, “*Don’t know*” (surprisingly common) to “*Because some kids will do it anyway*”.

Reference here could be made to what many religions believe about human nature e.g. the Christian view that mankind is inherently sinful, or the Hindu belief in the body’s desires for the material world.

This could be a rich source of views being expressed. The teacher could refer to the reasons for the 30mph speed limits and how many, if not all people, break it.

**Teacher** – “So, to tell a child not to do, or do, something **may not** always have the desired effect. What else can people do to make sure the rules are obeyed?”

Conversations will probably range from the teacher demonstrating how to work in a science room safely, to punishments and rewards for certain behaviour.

**Task 2** – a) Using their original list, children need to make a list of punishments for children who break the rules. Remind them that it is no good giving a child a detention, or excluding him for just talking out of turn. Why not?

b) What reward systems might be appropriate in a classroom?

Neat work can go into their R.E books.

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|  | <p><b>Plenary</b> – Ask why rules are given.<br/>Ask why children break rules.<br/>What else can we do to ensure rules are obeyed?</p> |  |
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**Aims:** - To continue to explore some of the reasons why different societies and religions have rules for those who play a part in them  
To enable children to “step into the shoes” of adults, particularly parents who often enforce rules on their children and begin to understand their point of view.

**Resources:** - Worksheet; "**Being a Parent**"

**KAS Study:- Taking Responsibility** - Responsibility to others:

- Family, friends, social groups, the disadvantaged

## LESSON CONTENT

**INTRO** – Recap from the last lesson by asking children to remember the reasons rules are given. Why is not enough to just explain rules to children?

It may be helpful to give examples of where and when children and adults have rules which they break. What else plays a part in helping children to follow rules, apart from knowledge of the reasoning behind them?

**Teacher** – Relate an imagined or true incident when as a child you yourself were tempted to do something wrong and were caught out. e.g. stealing a sweet. Relate what happened and how your own parents dealt with it. What if you had not been caught, or if you were not disciplined for doing this action?

**Discussion** - Tell the children that it is possible that one day many of them may have children. What will they do when their child deliberately does something wrong? How will they deal with it in order to ensure that



- a) **their child understands that what they did was wrong?**
- b) **they will not do it again?**
- c) **they will repair any damage they may have caused?**

**Task –** Children in pairs or individually prepare a talk under the title: “**What I will do if I was a parent**” The talk will take between one and two minutes. Of course this depends on the ability of the children involved.

Give them the sheet titled “**Being a Parent**”. They will need plenty of time in order to answer the questions and use the answers as part of their talk. The questions are designed to help them think through the answers. They need to give reasons for their answers.

(You may choose selected questions for the children if you wish. The sheet can be used as solely as reference material, if you prefer.)

**Talks –** Children present talks. (Before this you may like to ask/remind them of codes of behaviour for listening to talks!)

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| <p><b>Plenary –</b> Ask the children what they have learnt from the work. For many, it may have been the first time they have put themselves in their parents' position. Discuss any issues which arise from the talks.</p> |
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## **BEING A PARENT!**

**Imagine that you are now a parent!**



**What rules would you think are important in the home in order to protect your child from harm?**

*e.g. Do not eat/drink harmful substances such as tablets/bleach.*

**How would you make sure they obey them?**

*e.g. Keep them out of harm's way. Make sure they have special child tops. Explain what these substances are for, tell them off if they try to touch them, etc.*

**Will you tell the child rules or let him/her learn them as they go along?**

**What general rules might you have in the house?**

**How much television would you allow them to watch?**

**Do you think it is important to read to your child and talk to them? Why/why not?**

**Your child has a sweet in his pocket. You know you have not bought it and that s/he did not have any money? What will you do?**

**As your child grows older, what activities will you encourage him/her to do? If they want to do other things, what will you do?**

**Is it important for children to eat with you or on their own?**

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| <b>Section 3 - Authority - Ten Commandments</b> |
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**Aims: –** Children to learn that our society, as many other societies, was greatly influenced by the Middle Eastern religions of Judaism and Christianity. Children to learn that in relatively recent years, moral rules such as those laid down in the Bible are no longer accepted as absolute by many. Introduce concepts of democracy.

**Resources: -** A3 size paper, one for each child.

**KAS Study:- Taking Responsibility - Responsibility to God:**

- The will of God
- Responsibility to others:
- Social groups

### **LESSON CONTENT**

**Intro: –** Introduce the information that in our society, many of our laws were based on the Biblical laws. Does any one know any of the Ten Commandments?

However, whilst for 2000 years many people in the West accepted that the Biblical rules were absolute, our modern society has many people from different backgrounds and beliefs. Many people question Biblical traditions and no longer follow these laws. Therefore a lot of Biblical standards have been challenged in the laws of our country.

Laws tend to be based on what people decide in a more democratic fashion, rather than any overall standards in our more liberal, Western society. However, many people within this society still believe that their views, whatever they are, are correct.

**Teacher: -** Ask the children to imagine that they have landed on a hypothetical island where they have been elected to be leaders of a new society.

**Discussion: -** Would they institute rules? Why?/Why not?

Task 1: - What rules would they institute, if they had to?  
Children in small groups, pairs or any other suitable form need to discuss what ten main rules they would implement for the smooth running of the society.

Try to think of reasons behind the laws.

**Teacher: –** Once the groups have finished their allotted time, ask each group to give a law. Write these on the board. Are there any common laws which seem to be agreed by many groups? Does the whole class agree with each law? How can we decide if there are dissenters? Introduce idea of democracy. Agree on ten laws

If there are people who disagree with the laws, what should we do? Even if everyone agrees, what if someone breaks the law? How will the laws be enforced?

Task 2: - Students write down the ten laws under the title, "Our Ten Commandments". These could either go straight into their books, or a poster designed for display on A3 paper. (Students could additionally write down what will happen to someone who breaks the law.)

**Discussion: –** Discuss the ways the children have chosen to enforce the laws. Does the class agree on the methods that groups have decided to enforce the laws?

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| <p><b>Plenary: –</b> Ask the children what problems might occur in a liberal society where many views can conflict. What should happen in such a society when people disagree?</p> |
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| <p><b>Section 4 - Reason - Choices</b></p> |
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**Aims: –** To look at moral, and other, choices which we make every day, which may have a large effect on our own lives.  
To begin to see how choices we make can affect both our, and others', lives for good or ill.

**Resources:-** 2Yo Text Books pp. 9-11, "**Difficult Decision**", any relevant version of "**The Good Samaritan**"

**KAS Study:- Taking Responsibility - Responsibility to themselves:**

- Freedom and obedience
- The development of self-discipline

**LESSON CONTENT**

**Intro: –** Read through the story in 2Yo, "Difficult Decision", which relates the story of Becky, who is given information that may help a girl who has been accused of cheating in a test. The trouble is that the girl has been an active enemy of Becky's. (Any similar story will do) The story is told in photos, and the parts can be read by different children. Otherwise, a similar story in play form may be helpful)

**Task 1: –** Children write a brief piece suggesting how they would expect the story to end.

**Discussion:-** Children relate back their view of how the story will end, giving reasons. Ask what would they do?

Ask children who say that Becky should keep quiet and let the girl get in trouble for something she didn't do, if they think there is an actual **right** answer.

**Do emotions cause us to make a choice sometimes which we don't necessarily think is the right answer?**

**Teacher: –** Read the Parable of the Good Samaritan, as told by Jesus.  
Ask "*Do you think Jesus expected too much from people?*"  
"*What do you think he would have wanted Becky to do in the story? What effect could this have on Becky and the other girl's life - What might the consequences have been if Becky had told the truth? "*

**Teacher: -** Relate how even the smallest of choices may have an effect on our lives, from choosing to sit next to one person rather than another, to deciding which career to follow.

**Task 2 –** Think of a moral situation for the students; e.g.  
How might choosing to follow friends in stealing, or to not, affect our lives from that point on?

Students write possible views of what would happen in either case. Ask them to think of all possible repercussions that may follow and affect them from just one choice such as this. Relate some examples if this will help.

**Plenary:** – Ask students what decisions they have made in their lives, ranging from friends they have chosen to moral decisions, which have had an effect on their lives.

### Section 5 - Reason - The Ripple Effect

**Aims:** – To explore the idea that our choices have an effect on others, as well as ourselves.  
To examine the “ripple effects” that one choice can make.  
To help children understand that they can have a positive or negative effect on events around them.

**Resources:** – Story: “**The Ripple Effect**”; newspaper article: “**Thief Steals...**”; worksheets for S.N: “**The Ripple Effect - The Shop**”

**KAS Study:- Taking Responsibility - Responsibility to others:**

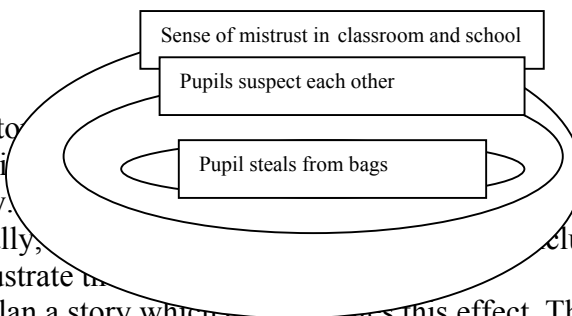
- Family, friends, social groups, the disadvantaged;
- Local, national and global communities

### LESSON CONTENT

**Intro:-** Discuss stories which have been shown on T.V. or films, where someone who is shown the effect his life has had on others for good or bad. A classic example is Dickens' "A Christmas Carol", or "It's a Wonderful Life", or even the last episode of Dallas. If not, make up a short story about someone whose life influenced others.  
Ask what figures in history have had an effect on many others- both religious and non-religious figures.  
Talk about real life decisions that have had a direct or indirect effect on others. This could range from a decision by an individual to steal from classmates' bags to the abolition of slavery! As you name the effects, draw a ripple style diagram on the board.

**Teacher:-** Read the story.  
Ask the children to identify the cause and effect in the story.  
(Additionally, a ripple diagram can be drawn on the board, which can be used to illustrate the effect.)

**Task:-** Children plan a story which demonstrates this effect. They plan who is directly and indirectly affected by the character/s in the story, and write it up in their R.E. books.



**Differentiation:-** “**Ripple Effect - The Shop**” sheet with similar work detailed.

**Plenary:-** Ask children to share their story ideas. Ask what effects their choices can have on others.  
Tell another example of “the Ripple Effect” happening in the local area – e.g. vandalism of park

**Story - The Ripple Effect** (adapted from “Chain Reaction” by Floella Benjamin,)

It was Monday morning and Wayne and Nick had bunked off school again. As they turned the corner near Nick’s house, they both spotted the car at the same time. It was parked outside the old people’s flats. It only looked a few months old and its GTI radiator badge sparkled in the sun.

The car’s owner was a young lady doctor called Claire. She had worked and saved hard to buy it and this was the first day she had used it. she was out visiting a sick patient who was too ill to leave her flat on the top floor.

Wayne had seen his brother get into and start cars loads of times, and within thirty seconds he was inside and had the engine started. “Hey, have you ever driven a car before?” asked Nick as Wayne crunched the gears and spun the wheels in a cloud of burning rubber. “Na, but I’ve seen my brother do it; it’s easy.”

Inside the flats, Claire was examining old Mrs Ryan. The old lady was in a bad way; her breathing was shallow and every few minutes she had a coughing fit. Claire could see that her condition was becoming more and more serious, and it looked as if she was going to need an ambulance quickly.

“This’ll do a hundred and twenty!” shouted Wayne over the sound of the blasting stereo. “There’s a bit of a duel carriage-way up ahead; we’ll see what we can get it up to.”

P.C. Nevin was starting his shift in his panda car, when he spotted the GTI speeding in the opposite direction. He could tell immediately that it was being driven by someone young and inexperienced. He radioed in the number and quickly turned round to give chase.

Back at the flats Claire was frantically pleading with the ambulance controller. “But she needs an ambulance now, not in forty-five minutes!” Old Mrs Ryan started another coughing fit. “Oh, never mind!” snapped Claire, looking at her patient anxiously. “I’ll take her myself!” It was a long struggle, but Claire managed to get the old lady into the lift and down to street level.

Supporting her with one hand, Claire fumbled in her bag for her car keys. Then she looked up and down the street in disbelief...her car had gone!

P.C. Nevin was closing in fast on the GTI. He could see now that it was being driven by a young boy, no more than thirteen years old. He glanced at the speedometer; they were doing seventy miles an hour in a built up area! He knew there was a short piece of dual-carriageway coming up, but he also knew there was a school at the end of it. The procedure was to back off and keep the car in sight until other police units could join the chase, but just then the driver of the GTI spotted him and accelerated hard, swerving madly across the road. P.C. Nevin had to work hard just to keep up as they joined the dual carriageway.

Mrs Hamley, the school teacher, was tired. She had just taken her class to the museum and was herding them off the coach. "Line up, and stop messing around!" she bellowed at the laughing school kids. In that instant she heard the screech of tyres, a red blur came from behind the coach and slammed into the wall scattering the kids like nine-pins.

Meanwhile, back at the flats, Claire took off her coat and covered the now still body of Mrs Ryan. She had tried the kiss of life for ten minutes, but it was hopeless: Mrs Ryan was dead.

P.C. Nevin surveyed the scene. The driver of the car had not been wearing a seat belt and had been thrown through the window. He was still alive – just. The passenger was not so lucky. Neither was one of the school children; she had taken the full force of the crash. There were children and adults in various states of injury. It was the worst accident P.C. Nevin had seen.

Report from Bath Chronicle, Wednesday April 14, 1999-05-17

### **Thief steals woman in labour's car**

A couple were horrified to see their car being driven off by a thief this morning – minutes after the woman had gone into labour.

Peter and Sarah Coombs, were staying Mrs Coombs' mother's house in Peasedown St John when contractions started at about 4.30am.

The opportunist theft happened when the couple started preparations for the drive to the Royal United Hospital in Bath. As it was cold and icy, Mr Coombs started the engine of his Rover, de-iced it and packed the bags for his wife in the car.

He then went back into the house to help his wife outside but when the couple came to the door they saw the car being driven away.

Mr Coombs said he could not believe what had happened. "It was awful because all the bags that we had packed had everything in them – all the baby's clothes and all my wife's stuff for the hospital.

"Luckily we were at my mother-in-law's house and we were able to get a lift from a relative. But it was terrible when we saw the bags disappear because it had all the stuff in for the birthday."

The couple said they were treated brilliantly by the staff at the Princess Anne Wing when they eventually arrived.

The police also paid them a visit this morning after retrieving the items. Two officers brought the bags straight to the hospital.

Sarah Coombs was still in labour this morning.

Mr Coombs said: “The baby was due today, but this episode set things back a bit.

“My wife’s contractions were regular and now they aren’t.

“She was very upset when it happened and I think she has been distressed.”

After the theft the car was seen a short while later near Radstock.

It was followed by Radstock police and the car eventually crashed outside Norton Hill School in Midsomer Norton.

A 29 year old Peasedown man has been arrested and is being questioned at Bath Police Station.

### **The Ripple Effect - The Shop.**

**One day a boy called John went to a sweet shop with his friends, Paul and Sally. He saw some sweets which he liked. He had no money on him. Paul and Sally were buying their sweets. While they did this, John took the sweets off the shelf and put them in his coat pocket.**

The sweet shop was run by Mrs. Smith. She had been running the shop for many years and just about made enough money to get food for her two children. She had been losing money, however, because children were stealing sweets from the shop. She had to buy a camera to put in the shop. This cost her a lot of money.

John did not know that the camera was on him. Mrs Smith watched the film later on. She saw John steal the sweets. She sent a copy of the film to their head teacher and told him that all children from that school were no longer allowed to go in the shop.

The head teacher sent a copy of the film to John’s parents. He also saw that Sally and Paul were with John in the shop. He sent a copy to their parents as he thought they might have helped John steal the sweets.

- 1) Who was affected by John stealing sweets?
- 2) How was Mrs Smith affected by children stealing sweets?
- 3) Now that John had been stealing, how were other children from the school affected?
- 4) How would John’s parents feel when they got the video film?
- 5) How would Sally and Paul feel about being with John?
- 6) How would the Head teacher feel?



7) Write a short story based on the plan below. Show how one action can cause a lot of other effects on other people.

e.g.. Child A picks on Child B at school.

↓  
Child B is upset and runs away from school.

↓  
Police have to go out and look

↓  
Parents have to come home from work and worry.

↓  
Other children tell the head how Child B was being bullied.

Tell it as a story, with names, where the boy went and who else was affected.

### SECTION 6 - Desire for Approval - Fitting In

**Aims:-** To explore issues involved with being an individual and fitting in with others: i.e. to consider the positive or negative aspects of each.

**Resources:-** Task sheets: "**Who Am I?**"; "**Being Different**"

**KAS Study:- Taking Responsibility** - Responsibility to themselves:

- Dependence and independence
- Freedom and obedience

Responsibility to others:

- Family, friends, social groups

### LESSON CONTENT

#### Intro

**Teacher:-** *"We are all individual people. We all have things that we like to do, and things which we dislike doing. Other people sometimes like the things we like and dislike things we dislike. For example, I like to ... The reason I like this is ... (focus on influences which have helped to make your choice)."*

*"What do you like?"*

Ask for volunteers to relate favourite things they do. Get them to focus on why they started. Did their parents introduce them to a particular hobby or interest, was it through friends, or can they simply not remember.

**Task 1:-** Move into friendship groups, where applicable, of four.

From the "**Who am I?**" sheet, look at the task.

Children draw a grid, four spaces across and five down. They fill in the spaces as suggested on the sheet.

Each take it in turn to read out their answers. Any which are similar to others should be crossed through by any children who have the same.

Any who finish should write down the things which make them individual on a piece of paper.

**Feedback:-** Teacher ask each group to share some of the things that some have in common.

**Discussion:-** *"What are the benefits if all of you in the group have the same or similar interests?"*

Discuss issues of sharing interests with like minds, companionship, etc.

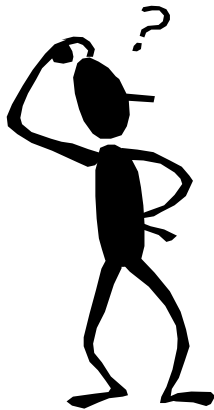
*"When might there be difficulties in a group of friends?"*

**Task 2:-** As a class, read through the role-play task on the sheet; **"Being Different"**. Children take it in turns in their groups to play the "odd one out".

**Feedback:-** Focus on the following questions:

- Why is it sometimes difficult to be different from the "crowd"?
- What is the best way to hold onto and present a view that you believe is right for you?

Who Am I?



**Task 1 -** Each person in your group should draw a grid similar to the one below.

Write the headings at the top of each column.

Fill in each cell as indicated below.

**Names**  
**Favourite T.V.**

**Colours**

|             |                |    |                  |             |
|-------------|----------------|----|------------------|-------------|
| Yours       | Your eyes      | 1) | Favourite male   | Best soap   |
| Mother      | Your hair      | 2) | Favourite female | Best comedy |
| Grandmother | Your favourite | 3) | Best group       | Best film   |

|             |            |    |           |            |
|-------------|------------|----|-----------|------------|
| A favourite | Your shirt | 4) | Best song | Best actor |
|-------------|------------|----|-----------|------------|

When finished, each person in the group should read out his/her answers.

If anyone has a similar answer, cross it off so that you are all left with the answers that are unique to you.

- What kind of things do more than one of you have in common?
- Are there any things that you all have in common?
- What are the answers which are unique just to you in your group?

### **Being Different**

**Adapted from Tutorial Topics, by Alison Leake & John Robottom, '88**

1. In groups of four, role-play these scenes in which one person wants to be different from the rest. Take it in turns to be the 'odd one out'. (You may think of another situation you want to try out too.)
  - Two of you have decided not to smoke, but the others try to persuade you.
  - You decide to become a vegetarian and have to explain to your family how you propose to make it easy for them and yourself. One of you enjoys a hobby or club that the others say is stupid. Stand your ground.
  - Two of you believe in God. The other two don't. Argue it out.
- 2) Extension:
  - In your group, imagine you are going to set up a business. All of you have to contribute in a positive way. Talk about your different interests and skills in order to decide what you will do, who will be responsible for what. Describe your plans to the entire class.

## **Section 7 - The Desire for Approval - The Power to Influence**

**Aims:-** to investigate the fact that what we watch, who we mix with, where we come from, what we believe can have an influence on our decisions, moral or otherwise.

**Resources:-** Worksheets: "**What is in!?**"; "**Strange Hill**"; "**Strange Hill 2**"

**KAS Study:- Taking Responsibility - Responsibility to themselves:**

- Dependence and independence
- Freedom and obedience

Responsibility to others:

- Friends, social groups, the disadvantaged

## LESSON CONTENT

### Introduction

**Teacher:-** *"Imagine I am new to the class, perhaps having arrived from a far away country or having been in hospital for the best part of last year, unaware of what has been happening in school. If I were to come back and wanted to fit in, what clothes would I need to be wearing?"*

*"What pop groups are popular?"*

*"What should I be doing with my spare time?"*

**Task 1:-** Children work on the first section of the sheet, "What's In?"

**Feedback:-** Give the children 5 – 10 minutes to finish the sheet. When they have finished, ask them to count up the amount of times different factors influence their decisions.

**Discussion:-** Discuss the outcome. It may be that some children will say that some factors do not influence them at all. Try to get them to think deeply about this. You could mention how when a particular football team are doing well, suddenly lots of people have always supported them, or how friends can come with us to help choose clothes.

**Teacher:-** *"We are going to look at just one of the possible influences on our lives. Does the media, such as television or books influence the way we think about things?"*

*"Listen to this account from Doctor who lives in Surrey."*

My parents first lived in Uganda until the 1970s. At the time, there was a man who led the country, named Idi Amin who wanted to get rid of all Asian people from his country. Because my parents were Asian, they were given one month to get out or die. My dad was a very successful business man who owned a lot of shops in his town. He had to leave everything behind. Even before he left, he had to watch looters break in and steal everything from his shops. At the time, both he and my mum were very frightened, both of what was happening in Uganda and what was going to happen to them. My sister and I were only very young and I can't remember much about what happened.

My dad decided that a safe place to come was England, and even though he could speak no English, he was able to come over. It was terrifying for my parents. They didn't know anyone here and could not speak any English at all, so they had little means of communication. When they arrived, they found it was hard to make friends. People often ignored them or were rude. From time to time they even had bricks thrown at their window. This was because they were different from the other people in the town. My sister and I were sent to school where we were able to learn English quite quickly.

Though I had to put up with a lot of racist comments, I managed to get on with the others and made some friends. I still see some of those friends now. At the time I found that some of my friends weren't allowed to bring me round to their homes. I found out it was because I was what they called "coloured".

My dad eventually managed to get work on the Underground . It was very different from running a business, which he was very good at, but dad was glad to get some money. I feel really proud of how hard my parents worked to bring me and my sister up properly. I am now a Doctor and am married with my own family.

**Discussion:-** Can you imagine how it must have felt for the family?  
 Why was it that bricks were thrown against the window?  
 What do you think of that sort of behaviour?  
 Did you feel any sympathy for the family? What might you have done to make the family feel more welcome?

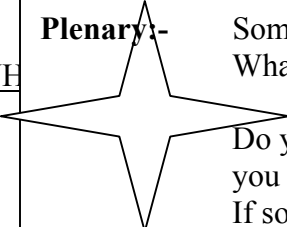
Why is it a good thing to find out about other people's experiences?

**Teacher:-** *"The media is often used to enable us to explore how other people feel. (Name some examples such as soaps, where people go through difficulties or racism or bullying, etc.)"*

*"But is all media influence good?"*

**Task 2** Children work as a class through the work sheets; **"Strange Hill" 1 & 2** (You can get children to take on the parts in order to read out, or if practical and suitable for the class, ask groups to take the scripts and practise the scenes.)

**Teacher:-** Often the way a writer uses characters in a soap opera or a book can make us decide something is right, when normally we may think the opposite.

|    |   |  |
|----|---|--|
| WH |  | <p><b>Plenary:-</b> Someone once said that telling stories is the same as telling lies. What do you think he meant by that?</p> <p>Do you think television or films or books can influence the way you think?<br/>         If so, how?<br/>         If not, why not?</p> |
|    |   |  |

| Clothes Brands? | Pop Groups? | Interests/<br>Hobbies? | Football Team? | Sweets? |
|-----------------|-------------|------------------------|----------------|---------|
|                 |             |                        |                |         |

2 Using this graph, tick what you think influences you in your choices. For example, in the Clothes column, if you think that your friends, adverts, television and yourself influence your decisions then tick those boxes.

|            | Clothes | Music | Hobbies | Religious Beliefs |
|------------|---------|-------|---------|-------------------|
| Parents    |         |       |         |                   |
| Friends    |         |       |         |                   |
| Religion   |         |       |         |                   |
| Yourself   |         |       |         |                   |
| Television |         |       |         |                   |
| Pop Music  |         |       |         |                   |
| Adverts    |         |       |         |                   |
| Magazines  |         |       |         |                   |
| Other      |         |       |         |                   |

### Strange Hill

Three young children are walking along Broad Street, a very busy road, towards their school, Strange Hill. A pedestrian crossing is situated 200 yards away from them.

**Scott** is a lively, popular boy who likes a laugh. He can be cheeky to teachers, but is liked by everyone. From the Head down to the school cat.

**Andrew** is a lot quieter usually, but has a good sense of humour.

**Leah** is Andrew's sister. She tends to be very much a goody-goody and tells on other children. She is not very popular, but Scott tolerates her because he is good friends with Andrew.

Scott – (looking across the busy road) **Come on, let's cross here.**

Andrew – **Come on Leah. Hurry up!**

Leah – **No! There's a pedestrian crossing down there. Mum always tells us to use that, Andrew.**

Scott – **What are you on? There's nothing on the road. Come on.**

Leah – **You think you're so clever, don't you. I'm going to tell my mum.**

Andrew – **Oh leave her, Scott. She's always telling on me. She's such a creep.**

Leah – **I'll tell mum you said that! You're always sucking up to Scott.**

Andrew – **See what I mean. Come on, she can get to school on her own.**

Leah – **Just you wait!** (She walks off moodily.)

(Scott and Andrew wait for a car to pass then cross safely to the other side)

- 1) Who got on your nerves more? Why?
- 2) Should Andrew have followed Scott or Leah? Why?
- 3) Who was in the right?
- 4) Did the way the children behaved and spoke influence the way you judged whether the boys were right to cross the road?

## Strange Hill 2

Now read this version. Here, the writer has changed the characters around. However, the choice they face is still the same.

**Leah** is a lively, hyperactive child. She tends to act without thinking.

**Scott** is a boastful boy, always leading Leah on.

**Andrew** is quite quiet, but popular in his way.

Leah – **Let's cross here!**

Scott – **Come on, Andy, we can make it.**

Andrew – **Um, I don't know.**

Scott – **Don't be such a woose!**

Leah – **Yeah, he'll never make it. Too frightened.**

Andrew – **Whatever! You know what happened to Tom when he played chicken!**

Scott – **You're just too scared.**

Leah – **Come on, Scott. Chase you!**

Andrew – **Leah, don't be so thick!**

Scott – **Oh, shut up!**

Leah runs into the road behind a parked car. As Scott and Andrew glare at each other, there is a screech of brakes and the sound of something being hit. They both look up.

- 1) Who was right in this version?  
Why might we think differently now?

**Aims:-** To allow children to explore the possibility that humans are capable of doing a mixture of good and evil.

**Resources:-** Worksheet: "**Human Nature**"

**KAS Study:- Taking Responsibility** - Responsibility to themselves;  
 • The development of self-discipline

## LESSON CONTENT

### Introduction

**Teacher:-** *"The human being is a complex animal. It is capable of great good and evil. Think of some of the good and evil things, however large or small they seem, that people have done through history. Write them on the first table on the worksheet."*

**Task 1:-** Students do first task on "**Human Nature**" worksheet. Ask volunteers for a selection of ideas.

**Teacher:-** *"Once, in the Natural History Museum, they had a sign that said: "Come and see the most dangerous animal in the world!" When people went up to look, all they could see was a mirror. What did this mean?"*

**Task 2:-** Work through Task 2 on the worksheet with the students.

**Teacher:-** *"Many people have suggested in the past that if you tell a child that something is wrong, and if you explain to it why, then the child will do the right thing. (Think of an example)*  
**/Discussion** *Others believe this is naive."*

*"What do you think? Why?"*

*"What do authorities such as governments and schools, and even parents do to make sure that children or adults obey the rules. Do they need to do this?"*

**Task 3:-** Students read the Debate section of the worksheet. (Organise this in a relevant manner, according to your experience of holding debates with the students.)

|   |
|---|
| <p><b>Plenary:-</b> Take a vote on the debate. Why has the class decided what they have decided? Are there any detractors? Have they changed their view at all?</p> |
|---|



1) Think of some good and evil things that we have done. They seem, that people have done in the past. Write in the boxes on the worksheet.

| Good Things                            | Evil things |
|--|-------------|
| 1 Example – charities to help starving | 1 - wars    |
| 2                                      | 2           |
| 3                                      | 3           |
| 4                                      | 4           |
| 5                                      | 5           |
| 6                                      | 6           |

\*\*\*

2) We can see some examples of good and bad in our lives. For example, many people accept the Jewish/Christian Ten Commandments.

|                                   |
|-----------------------------------|
| Do not lie                        |
| Do not swear                      |
| Respect your parents at all times |
| Do not steal                      |

Which of these “rules” (Commandments) have you ever broken?

|                                    |
|------------------------------------|
| Give some of your money to charity |
| Help a new person in class         |
| Say “Thank You”                    |
| Help someone with homework         |

Which of these “rules” have you ever obeyed?

\*\*\*

3) **Debate** – Some people think that human beings are steadily getting better; in other words we are understanding each other more, are treating each other more fairly and helping each other more. A lot of unfair things we once did, we no longer do.

Others think that people are getting worse. They say there is more crime, more bullying, more theft and so on.

Other people think that nothing has really changed. People are no better or worse than people years ago.

What do you think? Prepare a one minute argument about what you have decided. Think about both the advances and negative things that people have done recently.

“The class thinks that people are getting worse ”– argue for or against.

### Section 9 - Spiritual Dimension - God & Morality

**Aims:–** To allow children the opportunity to realise that many people in the world accept there is a spiritual dimension to life, whatever form that takes.

**Resources:-** Worksheets: "Is There a God?"; "The Atheist and the Believer 1"; "The Atheist and the Believer 2"

**KAS Study:- Taking Responsibility - Responsibility to God:**

- The will of God
- Duty, reverence and service to God in religious traditions

## LESSON CONTENT

### Introduction

**Teacher:-** *"Many, if not the majority, of people in the world believe that there is an extra dimension to life – that life is not just chemicals and things which we can only see and touch."*

Ask how many have read horoscopes or believe in ghosts. If so, or if they believe there is a God or an afterlife, then one could argue that they believe in a spiritual dimension.

**Teacher:-** *"The majority of the world's population are either actively religious or believe, to differing degrees, in supernatural forces such as God, angels, demons or ghosts or other powers. "*

*"We can see this reflected in magazines which we read and television which we watch, or even in every day life. "* (Give examples of television programmes such as Friends where Ross & Monica are Jews, to Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Home & Away and various soaps where characters follow particular religions. Even films such as Star Wars and Pocahontas explore religious themes.)

Many people can recall events in their lives which they can't explain scientifically (as yet?) (Give examples, if appropriate.)

**Teacher:-** Many people in history, including famous scientists and leaders, believe there is a God.

**Task:-** Read through quotes on "Is There a God?"

Then, look at, and read through, the short stories: "The Atheist and the Believer" and "The Atheist and the Believer 2"

Children answer questions in their books.

Many famous scientists, entertainers and leaders have believed in the existence of a God:

Some people argue that if there is no God, then there is no real meaning in life, and life itself is futile. People can behave however they want, and if they are not caught then it doesn't make any difference.

**However, many humanists who do not believe there is a God argue that there can be meaning without God. They believe in the ability of humans to develop their own moral codes and overcome crime, murder, injustice, prejudice. The trouble is, if there is no God, then who's to say what is right and wrong?**

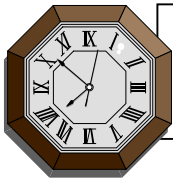
**Other people, such as Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, etc, believe that what we do in this life can have consequences in the next. Many religious people believe that there is a God who cares about humanity, but that humans often do things wrong.**

People who believe there is a God are called **theists**.

People who believe there is no God are often called **atheists**.

People who are not sure are often called **agnostics**.

People who believe in more than one God are called **polytheists**.



This story is about a conversation between a theist, who believes there is a God, and an atheist, who believes there isn't.

A believer and an atheist were walking through a wood. The theist stopped suddenly and looked around them at the plants, the sun and the sky.

“Isn't this all so amazing! God is a brilliant designer to make such beauty and plan all the plants and animals.”

“It is amazing,” replied the atheist, “but this has just evolved naturally. There is no God who made all this. It's a part of a universe that has happened on its own.”

“But look how everything works,” argued the believer. “The rain and the sun feed the plants, the plants feed the animals who eat the fruit which contains the seeds. The animals move on and pass the seeds back into the ground, and so it goes on. That is a design, not just chance.”

“No, it has evolved like this. The plants and animals have adapted to survive here. You can see that.”

The believer thought for a moment as he looked around the wood. “But what about the eye?”

“What do you mean?” the atheist replied.

“Well, who planned it to be able to see? Did it just happen by luck or did it evolve by itself over thousands of years? If so, how did it know what it was trying to become?”

The argument went on for some time. Suddenly they came upon a watch lying in the grass.

“Oh look,” said the atheist, “someone's dropped this watch. It looks like an expensive one.

Look at the design and planning that have gone into it. I wonder who made it.”

“Oh no,” said the believer suddenly, “I don't believe anyone made it. It just evolved from the ground.”

“What are you saying?” shouted the atheist. “You can see that it is artificial. It has a mechanism; it is still telling the precise time. It's obvious that it's been made.”

“Exactly!” said the believer. “And you were the one saying that the wood was not planned or designed! If the watch could not have evolved naturally from nowhere, then how could this wood have done the same?”

What do you think the writer of this story believed and was trying to show?

What did the Believer believe?

What did the atheist believe?

What do you think?

# The Atheist and the Believer 2

Based on a story by A. Antony Frew (1955), developed from a story by John Wisdom (1944)

Once upon a time, two explorers - a believer and an atheist - came upon a clearing in the jungle. In the clearing were growing many beautiful flowers and many weeds. The believer looked at the beauty around him and said, “Isn’t this all so amazing! There must be a wonderful gardener to have made and looked after such a beautiful garden.”

The atheist disagreed.

"There is no gardener," he said.

The two began to argue. The believer argued that beauty like this could not exist without a gardener to tend it. The atheist thought it was a natural development of the land.

At long last, the atheist thought of a plan.

"Let us stay here tonight and see if anyone comes to visit the garden."

So they put up their tents, set their watch and waited. And waited. They saw no one all night. Two days later, the believer argued, "Well, perhaps he is an invisible gardener. We need to find something which he cannot cross without making a noise."

They spent the next day making and putting up a fence, tying lots of stones and even their water bottles to the wood.

No sounds ever came. There was no evidence that anyone even tried to get over the fence. No movements were seen. Yet still the believer was convinced that there was a gardener.

"But there must be a gardener," he said, "But he must be one who is not only invisible, but he has no form to touch the wood, no sound to make; a gardener who comes secretly to tend the garden he loves."

The atheist despaired. "But what are you saying? If the gardener cannot be seen, cannot feel or be felt, makes no sound, and no one ever knows if he has been, then what is the difference between a gardener like that and no gardener at all?!"

What do you think the writer of this story believed and was trying to show?

What did the believer believe?

What did the atheist believe?

What do you think?  
Has your view changed since reading the first story?

## Section 10 - Spiritual Dimension - Belief and Morality

**Aim:-** To explore the idea that belief in an ideal, or God can inspire people to act on their moral code.

**Resources:-** Worksheet: "**How my Beliefs Affect my Life**"; "**Slum Doctor**" photocopy from 2YO (The Two Thousand Years On Trust, 1993, p.17)

**KAS Study:- Taking Responsibility** - Responsibility to God:

- The will of God
- Duty, reverence and service to God in religious traditions

### LESSON CONTENT

**Intro:-** Relate back to the previous section, when we explored the fact that many people believe in a God, whilst others do not.  
Tell the students that today they will be exploring how beliefs and ideals can inspire people to act.

**Discussion:-** If the students were granted a wish which could help improve the world, what would they wish for?

**Teacher:-** Relate how people such as Rev. Martin Luther King, who believed in a God who loved all people the same, had a dream of a world where people could live together, despite the colour of their skin. This led to many people adopting a peaceful process against institutionalised racism.

**Task:-** Read through, as a class, the two sheets; "**Slum Doctor**" and "**How my Beliefs Affect My Life**"

Students answer questions from the second sheet.

## How My Beliefs Affect My Life

Adam, a Muslim:

**"Being a Muslim very much affects the way I live and treat others. Muslims should behave as it is written in the Qur'an and the Al Suna (which contains all the talks of the Prophet, Muhammad).**

**As Muslims, we are expected to treat each other as brothers; no discrimination between people. For example, there is no difference between a black Muslim or a white Muslim. Some Muslims today, though, are abusing their beliefs, as they fight against other Muslims. This is not allowed in the Qur'an. Other religions should be appreciated."**

A Muslim girl:

**" There are some verses in the Qur'an that say how children should be kind to their parents and do what they say and look after them when they get old because they looked after us when we were little and couldn't do anything for ourselves. I can't really imagine my parents being very old, but my grandmother is very old and she lives with us. She can't walk very far, but she helps in the house and she does a lot of the cooking. She tells me stories, a lot of stories about when she was little. I wouldn't like her to go and live in a home or a hospital. It would feel very bad and she would be lonely. I would be, too. She will live with us until she dies."**

#### A Sikh Perspective

Helping others, whether by sharing thoughts, time and energy or something more tangible such as food or money, is an important expression of the Sikh vision of life. When they go to their place of worship, the gurdwara, they join together to provide a meal which anyone can share:

#### Satamba Singh Lakhpuri:

**"There are always a lot of people willing to help, because service to others has an important role in Sikhism. Worship alone is not enough; we must put God's teachings into practice. Preparing and serving the meal at the gurdwara is a practical expression of our belief that everyone is equal and that we should always share what we have with others."**

#### The British Humanist Association:

**"Humanists study human nature in order to understand morality (Knowing right from wrong); they do not look to a god. Morality...reflects what really is important in life, and what is good in human nature. It is about doing good and feeling good. If we got morality right, people would be happier. Morality guides us towards making the best of ourselves and of our society."**

- 1) Is there anything which you feel strongly about?
- 2) What action could you take to change your answer to number one?
- 1) How has the Qur'an's view of how parents should be treated affected Muslim's lives?
- 2) How has Kiran's (The Slum Doctor) life changed since she became a Christian?
- 3) What benefits could the Sikh's communal meal have in society?
- 4) What sort of things do you think a humanist would believe you should do to make yourself and others happy?