

Junior Cycle Religious Education Newsletter - May 2022

An tSraith Shóisearach do Mhúinteoirí
JuniorCYCLE
for teachers



@jct_RE



www.jct.ie



info@jct.ie

Dear RE Colleagues,

Welcome to the May edition of the junior cycle RE newsletter, the last in our school year. The JCT RE team were delighted with the level of engagement throughout what has been a busy year. This month, we will explore the last of the eight principles of junior cycle, Continuity and Development, in addition to articles on technology in the classroom and RE and the Arts.

Upcoming May events and celebrations from the interfaith calendar:

1st-2nd	Eid al-Fitr - Islam
8th	Birthday of Buddha - Buddhism
9th	Europe Day
16th	Vesak - Buddhism
26th	Feast of the Ascension - Christianity

Europe Day

The European Union celebrates Europe Day on May 9th. The date marks the anniversary of the Schuman Declaration of 1950, considered to be the first official step in the creation of what is now the European Union. To coincide with this, the RE team have created a resource celebrating Europe's religions, beliefs and values, with a particular focus on learning outcomes 1.11 and 3.1 including resources for L2LP students.



Please click [here](#) for instructions on how to access the resource which will enable students to explore the values of the European Union and the diversity of religious belief found in the EU. It is an interactive learning experience that will engage all learners in the RE classroom.

Digital Strategy for Schools

The Department of Education has just launched its new Digital Strategy for Schools aimed at embedding digital technologies in our schools.



The strategy envisions a future where our students will have ample opportunity to benefit from technology in their learning, and develop key skills for the digital world. Follow the link [here](#) to gain a brief overview of the strategy. The full text of the report is available [here](#).

In our monthly newsletter, the RE team have introduced a number of technology tools to support engagement with creativity and the other key skills in the RE classroom. These digital tools can also be used to enhance teaching, learning and collaboration both online and in the physical classroom: <https://www.jct.ie/perch/resources/religiousedu/re-digital-technology-resources-2020-2022.pdf>

JC Principles: Continuity and Development

This month, we will focus on the key principle of Continuity and Development. The *Framework for Junior Cycle* (2015), page 11, notes: "Curriculum, assessment, teaching and learning enables students to build on their learning to date, recognises their progress in learning and supports their future learning". The idea underpinning this principle is that previous learning experiences lay the groundwork for later achievements where earlier competencies build on each other over time.



In the next section, we will look at this principle's relevance and application in the RE classroom.



Continuity and Development in RE

A practical example of this principle in action in the RE classroom can be seen in the RE team’s spiral planning document which asks us to consider not just what students need to learn but also the connections they can make with the other areas of the RE programme of learning and their own life experiences.

With the spiral approach to planning, therefore, each time a student encounters a topic, they expand their knowledge and develop skills in the process. To access our spiral planning document, click [here](#).

Another practical example of this principle is the establishment of cross-curricular links with other subjects, for instance, our Europe Day resource has cross-curricular links with junior cycle History, English and CSPE. By forging links between two or more discrete subjects, we facilitate our students in building upon their existing knowledge of RE.



Technology in the Classroom: Google Forms

In this month’s technology tip, we will look at a strategy which encourages students to gather information relevant to a particular topic. With Google forms, students learn to design quality questions and subsequently analyse the results in order to come to valid conclusions. It is particularly relevant to the junior cycle key skills:

- Managing information and thinking
- Communicating
- Being literate
- Being creative
- Working with others



Google Forms



In terms of its use in the RE classroom, Google Forms could be completed as a homework exercise to form the basis of a discussion in the next class.

Overall, Google forms—and similar online questionnaires—could be an effective tool for gathering feedback or in the design of questionnaires on a specific aspect of RE.

RE and the Arts

On our recent cluster day, we created an architectural learning experience using the Thinglink platform, where participants explored the Buddhist Boudhanath Stupa in Kathmandu, Nepal. This particular learning experience allowed for multiple means of engagement with integrated links for the L2LP as well.



Buddhism also featured in news recently with the first dedicated Centre for Zen Buddhism in Ireland opening in Dublin. Like Christianity, there are a number of branches of Buddhism. According to the last Census, there were approximately 10,000 followers of Buddhism in Ireland. Half of those who practice Zen Buddhism are Irish-born. The main centre is in Dublin but there are members nationwide who can either practice online or at the new Zen Centre.



In terms of junior cycle RE, both the architectural learning experience and the Zen Buddhist centre might be of interest when we explore the five major world religions in the RE specification.

Quote of the Month

“Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization.” M. K. Gandhi

Mailing List

If you know of any colleagues who have not received this newsletter, please share this with them and encourage them to join our mailing list [here](#):

Sincerest appreciation for your collaboration throughout 2021-2022,

Religious Education Team