Key question L2.5a: How do people from religious and non-religious communities celebrate key festivals?

This is offered as an alternative unit to unit L2.5. This unit offers a multidisciplinary focus using the lens of a sociologist and of a religious studies expert.
The unit implements the **principal aim of RE,** which is to engage pupils in systematic enquiry into significant human questions which religion and worldviews address, so that they can develop the understanding and skills needed to appreciate and appraise varied responses to these questions, as well as develop responses of their own.

<table>
<tr><td>Step 1: Select a key question</td><td colspan="3">2.5a How do people from religious and non-religious communities celebrate key festivals?
Year group: Recommended Year 3 and 4
Strand: Expressing

Questions in this thread:
F4 Which times are special and why?
1.6 How and why do we celebrate special and sacred times?
L2.5 Why are festivals important to religious communities?
U2.5 Is it better to express your beliefs in arts and architecture or in charity and generosity?

Religions and worldviews:
Christians, Jewish and non-religious worldviews (other examples can be selected by the school)

Make sure that you can explain where this unit/question fits into key stage planning e.g. how it builds on previous learning in RE; what other subject areas it links to, if appropriate.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Step 2: Select learning outcomes</td><td colspan="3">• Use the learning outcomes from column 2 of the key question outlines on p.59
• Select learning outcomes appropriate for the age and ability of your pupils.
• Being clear about these outcomes will help you to decide what and how to teach.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Emerging</td><td>Expected</td><td colspan="2">Exceeding</td></tr>
<tr><td>• Recognise and identify some differences between religious festivals and other types of celebrations (B2).
• Retell some stories behind festivals (e.g. Christmas, Chanukah) (A2).</td><td>• Describe how the way some people celebrate festivals might show something about their beliefs (A2).
• Identify some differences in the way festivals (e.g. Christmas) are celebrated within and between different religious and non-religious worldviews (A3).
• Identify why members of the same religious or non-religious worldview might celebrate festivals differently or for different reasons (B1).
• Raise important questions and suggest answers about how the celebrations studied might make a difference to how pupils think and live (C1).</td><td colspan="2">• Describe two different answers to ‘How do people celebrate Christmas?’ by a religious studies expert and a sociologist (C2).
• Suggest how and why religious festivals are valuable to many people (B2).</td></tr>
</table>

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Step 3: Select specific content	• Look at the suggested content for your key question, from column 3 in the unit outlines. • Select the best content (from here, or additional information from elsewhere) to help you to teach in an engaging way so that pupils achieve the learning outcomes. **This plan has selected the following content to exemplify the learning outcomes. Pupils will:** • Think about times in their own lives when pupils remember and celebrate significant events/people, and why and how they do this. Are there similarities and differences in practices across the class? Why might this be? • Be a Religious Studies (RS) investigator: provide pupils with inference grids with pictures showing some Christmas celebration practices, religious and secular. Ask questions about what pupils can see, what they guess is happening, and questions they would like to ask. • Be a Religious Studies investigator: choose a series of Christmas practices to explore, at least one celebrated at church and one from home e.g. nativity service, Christingle service, decorating the house, carol singing. Find out information about how, why and by whom these are done. Plan one of these activities e.g. a nativity service, explaining why certain parts of the celebration happen, who might join in or not join in. • Be a Sociology investigator: look at information about how many people in the UK celebrate Christmas and how they say they celebrate. What is interesting or surprising? Create a questionnaire as a class to find out how people celebrate Christmas and what is important to them about Christmas. Ask a variety of people from different religious and non-religious worldviews. Analyse the results. Can pupils see any patterns? Do lots of people give similar information in their response? Are all the responses different? • Compare answers gathered on the celebration of Christmas using the two disciplines. How were they different or similar? RS can help us to look at evidence to find out how Christians celebrate at Christmas; we don't answer questions about Christmas from the point of view of a Christian when we look through an RS lens. In Sociology we can look at data (e.g. on how Christmas is celebrated in the UK) from large groups of people, or small groups or individuals. • Choose another festival from another religious or non-religious worldview to study and apply similar strategies e.g. look at a Jewish festival such as Chanukah or Sukkot and how that is celebrated by religious and secular Jews and Jewish people from different communities. • Explore the benefits of celebration to religious communities by asking some local believers: why do they keep on celebrating ancient events? • Consider questions about the role of festivals in the life of Britain today: Is Comic Relief day a bigger festival than Easter? Should everyone be allowed a day off work for their festivals? Is Christmas for Christians or for everyone? Can the real meaning of a festival be preserved, or do the shops and shopping always take over? Is there a 'real' meaning of a festival?

NOTE: This unit of work offers around 4 hours of classroom ideas. You need to select from it in order to achieve the learning outcomes set out in Step 2 above, designing a coherent learning journey that will make sense to your pupils.

Note also that pupils should have multiple opportunities to encounter the content you wish them to remember. Single encounters will not enable them to embed what they learn in their long-term memory. Plan for pupils to revisit and build on their prior learning, applying it to the new context of exploring caring for others and the world.

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<table>
<tr><td>Step 4: Assessment: write specific pupil outcomes</td><td colspan="3">

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

</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Emerging</td><td>Expected</td><td>Exceeding</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>I can…
You can…
Can you…?

• Recognise and identify some differences between religious festivals and other types of celebrations (B1)
• Describe some simple similarities and differences between how Christians and non-Christians might celebrate Christmas (A2)</td><td>I can…
You can…
Can you…?

• Describe how the way people celebrate festivals might show something about their beliefs (A2)
• Describe how survey data and interviews might tell us something about people’s beliefs and worldviews (A1)
• Identify some differences in the way festivals (e.g. Christmas) are celebrated (B1)
• Describe how the way people celebrate Christmas might show something about their beliefs (B1)
• Suggest how the celebrations studies might make a difference to how pupils think and live (C2)</td><td>I can…
You can…
Can you…?

• Describe two different answers to ‘How do people celebrate Christmas?’ by a religious studies expert and a sociologist (A1)
• Suggest how and why religious or non-religious festivals are valuable to many people (B1)
• Suggest how the celebration of festivals (e.g. Christmas) might be changing over time (C2)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Step 5: Develop teaching and learning activities</td><td colspan="3">

Develop active learning opportunities and investigations, using some engaging stimuli, to enable pupils to achieve the outcomes.
Don’t forget the skills you want pupils to develop, as well as the content you want them to understand.
Make sure that the activities allow pupils to practise these skills as well as show their understanding.
Remember to incorporate opportunities to revisit and recall earlier learning as you go through this unit.

</td></tr>
</table>

NOTE: RE Today is not responsible for content on external websites. Please do always check content before showing to pupils.
Links were active and correct at time of publication, but they do not always last.

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LESSON OBJECTIVES	Teaching and learning ideas and activities	LEARNING OUTCOMES
How do people celebrate Christmas? Using a religious studies lens		
Pupils will learn: Give an example of how a religious studies investigator might learn from photographs Explain two ways in which people might celebrate Christmas at home and in church	**How do we celebrate significant events or people?** Begin with a class discussion. How do pupils remember significant events in their lives? (*for example, celebrating a birthday, attending a wedding or celebrating New Year*) What do they do, and why do they do it? What is similar and different about what people do at these times? **What is a religious studies lens?** • Explain to pupils that in for this part of the investigation they are going to be a Religious Studies investigator. Religious Studies is one of the lenses we can use to examine RE. Religious Studies investigators look carefully at how religions are practised and why. They try to look at evidence and answer a question not as if they are a member of a religion, but from an investigators point of view. • Play the clip from Dr Chris Cotter where he introduces the question 'How do people celebrate Christmas?' (68) How do people celebrate Christmas? - YouTube **What can we learn from photographic evidence?** ▪ Explain that pupils are going to try and answer the question in the same way as Dr Chris would. To do this, they will start by looking at pictures of people celebrating Christmas at home and at Church. ▪ In groups, give pupils A3 versions of the inference grids https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Member%20Resources/RE%20Today%20Resources/Primary%20curriculum%20Publications/Big%20Questions%20Big%20Answers%20(BQiC%20Primary)/2%20Investigating%20Worldviews/BQBA2%205_1%20Christmas%20Inference%20Grids.pdf Pupils look at the central pictures and fill in the nearest box with their observations. They fill in their next box with sensible speculations about what is going on. They add any questions to the outside. ▪ Compare the results. What have we learnt so far? What can we say about Christmas at home or church? **What can we learn from an information book?** ▪ Explain that another method used by religious studies experts would be looking at sources to gain factual information. ▪ Ask pupils to use the information in this resource book: BQBA2 5_2A Christmas Info Booklet ext.pdf (natre.org.uk) and find at least two facts about how Christmas may be celebrated at home or in Church. ▪ Using the information, pupils could plan a nativity service. They must decide what will happen and why, and explain who may want to watch it and why? Would it just be for Christians? Why might non-Christians want to see it?	**These activities will help pupils to work towards achieving the following outcomes:** **Emerging** **Recognise and identify some differences between religious festivals and other types of celebrations (B2).** **Expected** **Describe how the way people celebrate festivals might show something about their beliefs (A2** **Exceeding** **Describe two different answers to 'How do people celebrate Christmas?' by a religious studies expert and a sociologist (C2).**

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	What have we learnt so far? ▪ Discuss with pupils their learning so far. What do Christians do at Christmas? What might non-Christians do? What might both groups do, and why? Create a Venn diagram – what would go in the middle? Use sentence starters, such as 'One way Christmas is celebrated at home is…' **Notes**: Many of the resources for this unit can be found at: How do people celebrate Christmas? (natre.org.uk) Extended resources, including survey forms and pupil booklets can be found in 'Investigating Worldviews' BIG QUESTIONS BIG ANSWERS: Vol 2: World Views 200357 - RE Today	

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LESSON OBJECTIVES	Teaching and learning ideas and activities	LEARNING OUTCOMES
How do people celebrate Christmas? *Using a sociological lens*		
Pupils will learn: Describe how a sociologist might investigate Christmas Use survey data to analyse information about how people celebrate Christmas	**What is a sociological lens?** • Remind pupils that we are continuing to investigate the question, '*How do people celebrate Christmas?*' Explain that this time we are going to be using a sociological lens. Sociologists are interested in how society works; how people live and the relationships between groups and individuals. • Play the clip from Dr Rachael Shillitoe where she introduces the question 'How do people celebrate Christmas?' (69) How do people celebrate Christmas? - YouTube **What can we learn from data?** ▪ Explain that some people have collected information (data) to help us understand the number of people in the UK who celebrate Christmas. Put this in context by explaining that there are 61 million people, and 91% celebrate Christmas. This is higher than the number of people who identify as Christians. ▪ **See the survey at the end of this plan** ▪ Ask pupils to note what they found interesting or surprising? What is this data telling us about who celebrates Christmas? What do most people do? Write some sentences analysing the findings. **What can we learn from interviews?** ▪ Explain that another method used by sociologists is to interview individual people. ▪ Either as a class, or ideally in small groups, show a selection of interviews with different people: (69) Talking about Christmas - YouTube Ask pupils to note; what is their religion or worldview? How do they celebrate Christmas? What is most important about Christmas to them? Choose a range of people so pupils can experience a range of opinion. ▪ Discuss what was similar and different in people's practices and points of view? Who celebrates Christmas in the UK today? Why? **What have we learnt from survey work?** ▪ Explain that we are going to investigate people's attitudes to Christmas in our own area/school. ▪ Remind pupils of the survey they looked at earlier. How could we design a questionnaire to find out how people celebrate Christmas and what is important to them? ▪ Pupils design a questionnaire that ask some multiple-choice questions about what people do for Christmas, as well as their worldview and what is important to them.	**These activities will help pupils to work towards achieving the following outcomes:** **Emerging** **Recognise and identify some differences between religious festivals and other types of celebrations (B2).** **Expected** **Identify some differences in the way festivals (e.g. Christmas) are celebrated within and between different religious and non-religious worldviews (A3).** **Identify why members of the same religious or non-religious worldview might celebrate festivals differently or for different reasons (B1).** **Exceeding** **Describe two different answers to 'How do people celebrate Christmas?' by a religious studies expert and a sociologist (C2).**

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LESSON OBJECTIVES	Teaching and learning ideas and activities	LEARNING OUTCOMES
What have we learnt about how people celebrate Christmas? *Bringing the lenses together*		
Pupils will learn: Come to conclusions about how people celebrate Christmas using a religious studies and sociological lens. Compare and contrast religious studies and sociological methods and come up with own conclusions.	**What did we learn from our survey data?** • Remind pupils that we are continuing to investigate the question, '*How do people celebrate Christmas?*' Analyse the survey data that was collected last time. What does it tell us? How do people in our school – or local area – celebrate Christmas, and why do they say it is important? **Being investigators: reporting our findings** ▪ Explain that we now need to analyse and compare our investigations. If they have not done so already, pupils should record their conclusions to the question 'How do people celebrate Christmas?' ▪ Create an investigator report which answers the questions from both lenses: ○ As **religious studies** investigators: What did we learn? Use a sentence starter like: My investigations have found that some of the ways people celebrate Christmas are… ○ As **sociology** investigators: What did we learn? Use a sentence starter like: My investigations have found that some of the ways people celebrate Christmas are… ○ Sum up your conclusions: ▪ At home, some people… ▪ In Church, some people… ▪ The reasons some people celebrate Christmas are… ▪ For others it is…. ▪ In contrast, some people celebrate Christmas as…. **Religious Studies? Sociology? Both?** ▪ Ask pupils to examine the different answers they got from using the different lenses. Ask pupils: which gave you more information? Was one better than the other? What would have happened if you had only used one lens? Which lens did you personally find more useful? What was difficult in this investigation? What do you know now that you didn't to begin with? ▪ Finally, ask pupils to vote – perhaps by making a human bar graph. To answer the question 'How do people celebrate Christmas?' – is it best to use ○ A: the answer from religious studies? ○ B: the answer from sociology? ○ C: both?	**These activities will help pupils to work towards achieving the following outcomes:** **Emerging** **Recognise and identify some differences between religious festivals and other types of celebrations (B2).** **Expected** **Identify why members of the same religious or non-religious worldview might celebrate festivals differently or for different reasons (B1).** **Raise important questions and suggest answers about how the celebrations studied might make a difference to how pupils think and live (C1).** **Exceeding** **Describe two different answers to 'How do people celebrate Christmas?' by a religious studies expert and a sociologist (C2).**

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LESSON OBJECTIVES	Teaching and learning ideas and activities	LEARNING OUTCOMES
What can we learn about how people celebrate different festivals?		
Pupils will learn: Use a sociological or religious studies lens to investigate another festival Consider how different religious and non-religious people might celebrate a festival and their reasons for doing so.	**Can we design our own investigation?** • Recap investigation about Christmas. What were the lenses that we used to study Christmas? What sort of questions were they asking? What methods did they use? • What other festivals are celebrated in our local area, or nationally? How could we investigate them? • Clarify vocabulary around religious and secular, religious and non-religious so that pupils can use this vocabulary correctly and with confidence. **Investigating Easter** ▪ Pupils could look at the festival of Easter and ask a question like, '*Is Easter Christian, secular or a mixture of both*?' You might want to: ○ Use the YouGov survey How Britons celebrate Christmas and Easter | YouGov to look at what people do at Easter and how they celebrate it. ○ Invite in people from Christian and non-religious communities to describe how they celebrate Easter, and what they feel is important. ○ Have children examine Easter practices between different countries or denominations and see what is similar or different. **Investigating Chanukah or Sukkot** ▪ Pupils could investigate either of these Jewish festivals – invite in Jewish people from different communities. How might this festival be celebrated by orthodox, reform, liberal of secular Jewish people? What might be seen as important by all, what might be similar or different? **Investigating Diwali** ▪ Pupils could look at Leicester as a case study. Diwali Leicester - Visit Leicester The Diwali celebrations in Leicester are some of the largest outside India. Who goes to these? For extra information use this clip and listen to what the festival means to the young people in Leicester Religious Studies KS2: Diwali - the festival of light - BBC Teach ▪ Pupils could investigate the history of the festival: A brief history of the iconic Diwali celebrations in Leicester - Leicestershire Live (leicestermercury.co.uk) Why did they begin in Leicester? Why did so many people of South Asian heritage move there? ▪ Pupils could consider how the festival has become a city event attracting many people who are not Hindu or Sikh. What does this say about festivals today?	**These activities will help pupils to work towards achieving the following outcomes:** **Emerging** **Retell some stories behind festivals (e.g. Christmas, Chanukah) (A2).** **Expected** **Identify some differences in the way festivals (e.g. Christmas) are celebrated within and between different religious and non-religious worldviews (A3).** **Identify why members of the same religious or non-religious worldview might celebrate festivals differently or for different reasons (B1).** **Exceeding** Suggest how and why religious festivals are valuable to many people (B2).

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LESSON OBJECTIVES	Teaching and learning ideas and activities	LEARNING OUTCOMES
What is the role of festivals in Britain today?		
Pupils will learn: Consider why festivals are still important to people of different worldviews today Discuss how festivals in the UK may have changed in meaning and emphasis.	**What have we learnt from this unit about festivals?** • Recap some of the learning that has taken place during this unit. What has surprised pupils about festivals? What conclusions can we draw? Could this learning be presented in an assembly or exhibition of learning to other pupils or parents? **Have religious festivals become secular? Or remained religious?** ▪ Compare at least two of the festivals that you have studied. What did different people say was most important? ▪ Are most festivals in Britain today still purely religious? Or secular? Or a mixture of both? Does it matter if this is the case? Is there a 'real' meaning of a festival? Pupils could speculate or create artwork or sentences to show their opinions – is it about community, family, the individual, shared food, the religious meaning? ▪ Hold a class debate – Should everyone be allowed a day off for their festivals? What do pupils think? What about people with a non-religious worldview – which festivals might they want to have a day off for? At the end of the debate and have a vote or room divide – pupils must justify their reasons with examples if possible. **Why do we still celebrate ancient festivals today?** ▪ Alternatively, pose the question: 'Why do we still celebrate ancient festivals today?' Are festivals like Easter and Christmas just about presents and shopping? Look at some Christmas adverts, for example from John Lewis (69) Christmas 2020 Ad | Give A Little Love | Waitrose & John Lewis - YouTube – what is the message that they are trying to give? Are there some values that anyone can agree with? Is it important to mark the times of greatest darkness in the year? Is it important to have times that are not just about the usual rhythm of daily life? ▪ Pupils could answer the question 'What is the role of festivals in Britain today?' using mind maps, a short paragraph using sentence starters such as: ○ Festivals are important in the UK today because… ○ For many people, festivals have important messages. For example…. ○ Some people say festivals have become all about shopping and gifts. They say this because… ○ Others argue that festivals are good for society. They say this because… ○ In my opinion, the role of festivals is…	**These activities will help pupils to work towards achieving the following outcomes:** **Emerging** **Retell some stories behind festivals (e.g. Christmas, Chanukah) (A2).** **Expected** **Identify why members of the same religious or non-religious worldview might celebrate festivals differently or for different reasons (B1).** **Raise important questions and suggest answers about how the celebrations studied might make a difference to how pupils think and live (C1).** **Exceeding** Suggest how and why religious festivals are valuable to many people (B2).

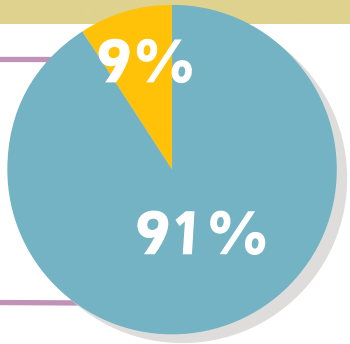
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HOW DO PEOPLE CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS?

In 2016 a survey showed how many people celebrated Christmas:

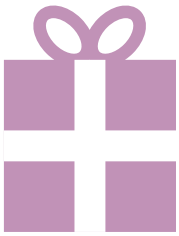
91 per cent celebrated Christmas, 9 per cent didn't. This survey asked 2,022 adults (people over 18), representing the population of England, Scotland and Wales.

Source: humanism.org.uk/2016/12/16/friends-family-food-and-giving-the-real-meaning-of-christmas-revealed/
used by permission of Humanists UK



In 2020, lots of people in the UK were asked about Christmas. Here's how they answered some questions:

What do you usually do for Christmas?



87%
Exchange gifts



81%
Get together with family



51%
Get together with friends



77%
Put up a Christmas tree



29%
Go to parties

20%
Go to church

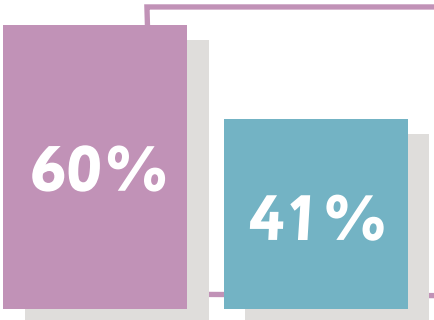


16%
Reflect on the birth of Jesus

29%
Pray

This survey asked 2,169 people aged 16+, representing all adults in the UK.

Source: yougov.co.uk/topics/philosophy/articles-reports/2020/12/29/how-britons-celebrate-christmas-and-easter
YouGov, by permission



A different survey in 2018 asked what people like doing at Christmas.

Along with some of the same ideas as the other survey, people also said they like:

singing carols (60 per cent)

watching Christmas adverts (41 per cent)

Source: yougov.co.uk/topics/lifestyle/articles-reports/2018/12/24/britains-favourite-things-about-christmas-family-f
YouGov, by permission

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