

Junior Cycle Religious Education Newsletter - December 2021



@jct_RE



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Dear RE Colleagues,

Welcome to the December edition of the Junior Cycle RE newsletter. Over the coming months, we will continue to explore the 8 Principles of Junior Cycle and how they emerge in the RE classroom. In this month's edition, we highlight some important dates for your diary. We will again offer articles on technology in the classroom and one focusing on RE and the Arts.

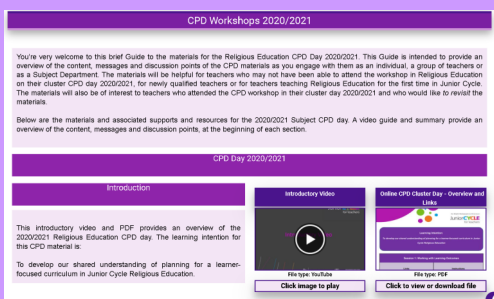
Upcoming December events and celebrations from the interfaith calendar:

- 8th Feast of the Immaculate Conception (Christian)
- 8th Bodhi Day (Buddhist)
- 10th Human Rights Day (International)
- 25th Christmas (Christian)

CPD Cluster Day 2020-2021

Video guides to the key content of our core CPD Day 2020/21, entitled *Developing a Shared Understanding of Planning for a Learner-focused Curriculum in Junior Cycle RE*, are now available online along with handy interactive PDFs to engage with the materials.

https://www.jct.ie/religious_education/cpd_works



CPD Cluster Day 2022

Our next CPD cluster days run from January to March where we will further explore assessment in Junior Cycle RE. The following video is a guide to preparing for your online cluster day:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sePOMOH_xTk

Junior Cycle Principles: Engagement and Participation

This month's focus is on the key principle Engagement and Participation. Regarding this principle, the *Framework for Junior Cycle* (2015), page 11, notes:

The experience of curriculum, assessment, teaching and learning encourages participation, generates engagement and enthusiasm, and connects with life outside the school.



Engagement and Participation in RE

This particular principle applies to the whole curriculum, including RE which we will look at in the next section of this month's newsletter.

Engagement in RE offers students opportunities to explore and engage with the range of diverse beliefs and cultures around them. In the RE specification, students are encouraged to think, debate and engage with a variety of topics. Our RE classroom should therefore be a place where discussion thrives and a space which can facilitate student engagement with the "BIG" questions and issues about the world around us. In doing so, the RE classroom can help foster values such as tolerance, respect and understanding in addition to promoting responsible citizenship.



Engaging with Sacred Artefacts

The JCT Religious Education team attended a national forum about the teaching of world religions in the Chester Beatty Library in association with MIC Limerick and the Dublin City Interfaith Forum. It was a most enlightening day of both reflection and discussion as we creatively explored symbolism and the use of artefacts in the different religious traditions. Click [here](#) for a short video that captures some highlights from the day.



JCT RE team leader, Dr Ailís Travers, presented a talk at the event about the use of sacred artefacts and online museum collections in teaching and learning. This centred on the role of creativity in Junior Cycle. In particular, she highlighted the importance of asking questions to spark creativity, curiosity and engagement in the Junior Cycle RE programme. Classroom strategies to support learning creatively with physical artefacts and digital resources developed by the JCT RE team were shared with participants.

The following screencast from our 2019-20 CPD day has a useful section on the effective use of questioning for engagement and participation with sacred artefacts https://youtu.be/6AeZPulMD_Q

Technology in the Classroom

Canva is a graphic design platform that can be used to create worksheets, presentations, posters, documents and other visual content. The app includes useful templates plus helpful guidance on how to design images and infographics for your classroom.

For your students, Canva can be used as one of your go-to creation tools for class projects, for examples, CBAs or classroom presentations. Most importantly, the app is free for teachers once they register with their credentials from the Teaching Council.



<https://www.canva.com/education/>

RE and the Arts

Taking its cue from Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, *It's a Wonderful Life's* central character is a despondent and despairing George Bailey who feels a failure for never having left his town of Bedford Falls. After inheriting his father's business and falling for the girl next door, Bailey finds himself stuck in a situation that will test his patience, his inner strength and his family's love. By staying at home, however, George doesn't realise how many lives he has touched throughout his existence. As the film develops, we see George embark on a journey of self-discovery as he learns about the really important and fundamental things in life.



Director Frank Capra's seminal work explores themes that are relevant to the JC RE classroom: the human search for meaning, the value of a human life, the importance of friendship and community.

Quote of the Month

"Christmas is built upon a beautiful and intentional paradox; that the birth of the homeless should be celebrated in every home." GK Chesterton

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](#):



We look forward to seeing you on Zoom in 2022.

*Nollaig Shona Dhuit,
Religious Education Team*