

Lesson Plan:

The Book of Truth

Lesson Aims

- Students to reflect on the significance of a book that purports to contain answers to ultimate questions about Life/Universe
- To reflect on ultimate questions
- To express creatively a sense of mystery/awe

Long term aim

- To foster awareness of the significance of religious 'Holy books'
- To stimulate appreciation of awe/mystery

This lesson works well as an introduction to subsequent lessons on specific religious books from any faith community, or it can be used as a one-off.

It can be a fun lesson that students normally remember.

It is an opportunity for students to express opinions about the merits of such writings without attacking any particular religious text.

The lesson also encourages students to consider the great unanswerable questions about life the universe and everything...

1) Show 'The Book of Truth'

Use a large, old 'mysterious' looking book; something with no obvious title on the front. The teacher must be prepared to 'spin a yarn' and convince students that it is a unique Book. Students suspect that they are being 'tricked,' but in an enjoyable way. Something along the lines of:

"This is a very rare book and today you are privileged to have the opportunity to see it. This book is unlike any other. In fact mystery surrounds it. It has been borrowed from the British Museum and must be returned after this lesson. I've been shown how to use the book. It has a strange story behind it..."

Fragments of paper were found about 150 years ago, buried in caves in an area of the Middle East. On these fragments were strange drawings and writings in a language that no one knew. After years of experts studying the writings, they were slowly, slowly translated and what they said was written into this book. The closest translation the experts could find was 'The Book of Truth'

No one knows exactly when the writings were made or who wrote them. All that is known is that they are extremely old, possibly thousands of years old. So what are they all about?

This book, appears to be a book that contains the answers to questions about Life and the world – not what the winning lottery ticket number will be – but things like,

- What happens after we die?
- Is there a God?
- Have we lived before?

This book claims to have answers to questions like this. Answers that it would be hard, if not impossible to find the answers to. Where would you look for answers to questions like this?

Now, looking up answers is quite a complicated process and you have to know how to look things up, so only I can do it. IF we have time, I might be able to look up the answers to one or two questions you may have...”

2) Thinking of ultimate questions

Ask students to write down three – five questions that they would like to be answered by ‘The Book of Truth’, and, if possible, why they want to know the answers to those particular questions.

Invite students feedback examples to share with group – write on board.

Ask students the following (discussion or individual written responses)

How would it help you to know the answers to the questions you asked?

3) Questions about the Book

Ask students to consider the significance of such a book. Discussion / written

- Could such a book be of benefit to the world – how?
- What should happen to such a book? should it be made freely available to all, or destroyed? Reasons?
- What questions about the Book would you want answered?
e.g. who wrote it? What is the source of the knowledge it contains?

4) Design a cover

Students design a new front cover for ‘The Book of Truth’ that reflects its content and significance.

NB Reveal to students the true identity of ‘The Book of Truth’ – i.e. a ‘trick’. Point out that next lesson they will be finding out about what *some* claim to be a real Book of Truth (Bible, Koran etc)

