

This unit builds on pupils' prior learning about religious leadership, moral decision-making, and ethical responsibility across a range of worldviews. It draws together key themes—freedom, authority, rule of law, and free will—allowing pupils to explore how different religious and non-religious traditions guide behaviour and shape moral choices. Through a sequence of six lessons, children examine how beliefs influence decisions, how rules and laws are understood, and how individuals balance personal freedom with responsibility to others.

The unit includes perspectives from Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, and Humanism, enabling pupils to compare and contrast ideas across traditions. Pupils revisit familiar concepts such as commandments, karma, dharma, and conscience, while deepening their understanding of how these relate to justice, fairness, and ethical choices. For example, Christians may view free will as a gift from God, paired with moral guidance through scripture; Hindus believe choices shape karma and future lives; Humanists trust reason and empathy to guide decisions. These comparisons help children recognise both diversity and shared values across belief systems.

The concept of authority is explored through religious figures, sacred texts, and human reasoning. Pupils reflect on how authority influences beliefs and actions, and how it differs across traditions—for instance, Jesus in Christianity, the Dharma in Buddhism, and personal conscience in Humanism. Freedom is examined not just as personal liberty, but as a principle that carries responsibility—highlighted in stories such as the Jewish Exodus and the Sikh formation of the Khalsa. The rule of law is introduced as a societal framework that promotes fairness and safety, with links to religious moral codes and secular ethics.

Free will is a central theme that encourages pupils to think critically about choice, consequence, and moral reasoning. Through discussion, reflection, and debate, children explore whether freedom should have limits, how laws are formed, and who decides what is right. The unit culminates in a structured debate and assessment task, allowing pupils to articulate their understanding, express personal views, and engage respectfully with differing perspectives.

This unit supports religious literacy by encouraging thoughtful comparison, ethical reasoning, and respectful dialogue. It is designed to be inclusive and reflective—helping pupils understand how beliefs shape behaviour and how individuals and communities navigate freedom, authority, and law in everyday life.

Lesson 1: Pupils explore the concept of **authority** across Christianity, Buddhism, and Humanism. They learn how religious figures, sacred texts, and personal conscience guide beliefs and behaviour. Through discussion and comparison, children reflect on who or what influences their own decisions and how authority can be rooted in faith, wisdom, or empathy.

Lesson 2: This lesson introduces **freedom** as the ability to make choices, paired with responsibility. Pupils examine Jewish, Sikh, and Humanist perspectives—linking freedom to the Exodus story, the formation of the Khalsa, and the Humanist emphasis on rights and fairness. Children reflect on how freedom is used wisely and how values shape ethical choices.

Lesson 3: Pupils investigate the idea that fair **laws** apply equally to all. They compare Christian teachings (e.g. Ten Commandments), Hindu concepts of Dharma and Karma, and Humanist views on reason-based lawmaking. The lesson highlights how laws protect freedoms, promote justice, and guide moral behaviour across traditions.

Lesson 4: This lesson focuses on **free will** as the human capacity to choose. Pupils explore Christian ideas of sin and forgiveness, Hindu beliefs about karma and dharma, and Humanist reliance on reason and empathy. They reflect on how free will interacts with moral guidance and consequences, and how choices shape personal wellbeing alongside the wellbeing of the wider society.

Lesson 5: Children engage in structured discussion, applying their knowledge to real-world ethical questions. Topics include freedom vs. responsibility, the role of authority, and whether laws should ever be broken. Teachers can select a suitable question for the discussion. Pupils practise respectful dialogue, reasoning, and reflection, developing oracy skills and deepening their understanding of diverse perspectives.

Lesson 6: During this assessment lesson, pupils consolidate their learning through written reflection, vocabulary recall, and analysis. They demonstrate understanding of key concepts; authority, freedom, rule of law, and free will, while expressing personal views. The lesson encourages children to think deeply about their knowledge of religious and non-religious perspectives and offers an important opportunity to express their own thoughts too.

Key concepts; freedom, authority, rule of law, free will

Key vocabulary includes; free will, conscience, justice, commandment, karma, Dharma, forgiveness, law