

Key end points for this Christianity unit, parables of Jesus:

- To know parables can be found in the Bible
- To know that Christians believe parables are the teachings of Jesus
- To know that parables teach a lesson such as forgiveness.
- To be able to explain at least two parables (Lost Son, Lost Sheep, Good Samaritan)

This unit focuses on Jesus' teachings from a Christian perspective. It is important for teachers to understand that Muslims and Jews also acknowledge Jesus, though their beliefs about his life and status differ. Teachers should model clear language, using phrases like "from a Christian perspective," or "many Christians believe..." when discussing the content of this unit to avoid creating a misconception that all followers of a faith believe the same thing. This is the fourth Christianity unit, following on from the Year 2 unit, Life of Jesus. Children will already have basic knowledge about Jesus and key events in his life. This unit introduces a significant moment in Jesus' timeline—the Sermon on the Mount, marking the start of his ministry (the time in which Christians believe that Jesus spread God's message). After this sermon, Jesus continued to share many parables, teaching important moral lessons to many people at that time.

This unit builds on previous learning about Christianity and prepares children for future RE topics, such as the Year 3 unit Jesus as an Inspiration. Now that children know who Jesus is, and his importance in Christianity, they will focus on his teachings through parables—stories with moral lessons. Children will explore the origins of these teachings by reading stories from child-friendly versions of the Bible.

Each lesson in this unit will focus on a different parable, helping children understand its moral lesson. Although this unit teaches about Christian beliefs, the values in many parables are universal and relevant to all children, regardless of their faith and can provide a structure for meaningful discussion.

Throughout the RE curriculum, children will reflect on their learning as a personal response. Teachers should create an inclusive and respectful classroom where children feel comfortable sharing different viewpoints.

This unit encourages all children to engage in discussions about themes like forgiveness, kindness, and selflessness, regardless of their religious background.

Lesson sequencing:

In lesson 1, children learn that the Bible is the Christian sacred text, split into the Old and New Testaments. The New Testament contains stories about Jesus' life and teachings, including parables—short stories with moral lessons. Pupils explore the Bible as a source of guidance for Christians and are introduced to the parable of the mustard seed, which teaches that small acts of kindness or faith can grow into something powerful. They begin to understand how Jesus used stories to help people learn about God's Kingdom and how to live well.

Lesson 2 Building on their understanding of parables, children explore the story of the Good Samaritan. They learn that Jesus used this story to teach the importance of loving others, even those who are different or unexpected. The lesson introduces the idea of “loving your neighbour” and challenges pupils to think about kindness, compassion, and not judging others. The historical context of conflict between Jews and Samaritans helps children understand the radical nature of the Samaritan's kindness.

Lesson 3, This lesson focuses on forgiveness and second chances. Children hear the story of a son who wastes his inheritance and returns home ashamed, only to be welcomed by his father with love and celebration. The father is seen as representing God, who forgives those who are truly sorry. Pupils reflect on the emotional experience of being forgiven and forgiving others, and link this to Christian beliefs about God's mercy.

In lesson 4, children explore another story about being lost and found. In this parable, a shepherd leaves 99 sheep to search for one that is missing. When he finds it, he celebrates. This story reinforces the idea that every person matters to God, and that Christians believe God rejoices when someone chooses to return to Him. The lesson deepens understanding of forgiveness and personal value, linking closely to the previous lesson.

In lesson 5, children learn about one of Jesus' most famous teachings, delivered to a crowd on a mountainside. The Sermon on the Mount includes the Beatitudes, which bless qualities like humility, mercy, and peacemaking. Pupils explore how Christians believe that Jesus taught that true greatness comes from kindness and love—not wealth or power. They reflect on how these teachings guide Christians in everyday life and link back to earlier parables about compassion and forgiveness.

In lesson 6, for an assessment, children will compare two parables, identifying their similarities and differences. Teachers may scaffold this task by demonstrating links between The Lost Son and The Lost Sheep, helping children reflect on Christian beliefs about forgiveness and repentance.

The key concepts: kindness, forgiveness

Key terms: Bible, Jesus, parable, moral