

This unit introduces children to the concept of leadership in both religious and community contexts. Building on prior learning in EYFS (people who help us) and Year 1 (Christianity and Judaism), pupils explore how leaders guide, teach, and support others. The focus on vicars/priests, rabbis and imams provides insight into leadership within the three Abrahamic religions, while the inclusion of school and community leaders helps children connect abstract ideas to their own lived experiences.

The unit emphasises that leadership is not about power but about responsibility, service, and being a role model. Through stories, images, artefacts, and – where possible – visitors or visits, children encounter leaders as people who care for others, teach from sacred texts, and support communities at important life events. Vocabulary is carefully introduced and revisited to ensure pupils can articulate their understanding.

By the end of the unit, children will:

- Know that leaders are people who guide and help others.
- Understand that Jews, Christians, and Muslims have leaders who teach, guide, and support their communities.
- Recognise that leadership also exists in their own school and local community.
- Appreciate that good leaders show qualities such as kindness, fairness, and responsibility.

This unit supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development by encouraging respect for diversity, empathy for others, and reflection on their own responsibilities. It lays a foundation for future RE learning by introducing leadership as a unifying theme across religions and communities.

Lesson Series

Lesson 1: What Makes a Leader?

Children begin by exploring the general concept of leadership. They reflect on their own experiences of responsibility in school and home, and identify qualities of good leaders. This lesson lays the foundation for understanding that leaders guide, help, and support others, a principle that will be applied to religious and community contexts in subsequent lessons.

Lesson 2: Leaders in Christianity

Building on the general idea of leadership from Lesson 1, children now apply it to a specific religious context. They learn about vicars/priests in Christianity, exploring how these leaders guide their communities through worship, teaching, and care. This lesson introduces the first example of a faith leader, showing how the abstract qualities of leadership are lived out in practice. Teachers can tailor this lesson to a local context by using vicar/priest/minister if talking about a specific leader from the community.

Lesson 3: Leaders in Judaism

This lesson builds directly on Lesson 2 by introducing another faith leader – the rabbi – and encouraging children to compare similarities and differences with vicars/priests. Pupils see that while the context and practices differ, the underlying responsibilities of teaching, guiding, and supporting are consistent. This comparison strengthens their understanding of leadership as a shared concept across religions.

Lesson 4: Leaders in Islam

Progressing from Christianity and Judaism, children now learn about imams in Islam. They revisit the recurring theme of leaders as guides and teachers, while recognising distinctive practices such as leading daily and Friday prayers. By this point, pupils can make cross-faith connections, identifying common responsibilities while appreciating diversity in how leadership is expressed.

Lesson 5: Leaders in Our Own Community

Having studied leaders in three major religions, children broaden their perspective to include leaders in their own school, local, and national communities. This lesson consolidates prior learning by showing that leadership is not confined to religion but is a universal concept. Pupils connect the qualities and responsibilities of religious leaders to those of familiar figures such as headteachers, councillors, or coaches, reinforcing the idea that leadership is about service and responsibility.

Lesson 6: Assessment

The final lesson draws together all prior learning. Children demonstrate their understanding that leaders – whether vicars, rabbis, imams, or community figures – guide, help, and support others. They show progression by recalling specific examples, making comparisons across religions, and applying the concept of leadership to their own lives. Teachers must adapt this lesson to check for understanding in a meaningful way that offers all children, no matter their academic ability, to share what they know.

The key concepts: Leadership, teaching, community

Key terms: leader, vicar/priest, rabbi, imam, community, responsibility, church, mosque, synagogue