

Key end points for this unit include:

- To know symbols represent ideas quickly.
- To know water can be a symbol for being clean.
- To know bread can be a symbol in religions.
- To understand that artefacts can be special objects used in religions.

This unit introduces children to the idea that religions often use symbols and artefacts to express deep meanings, values, and beliefs. Building on prior learning about Christianity in Year 1, and preparing for Judaism (Year 2) and Islam (Year 3), pupils explore how ordinary things; images, water, bread, light, and objects, can become special when linked to worship, stories, or celebrations.

This unit aims to help children:

- Recognise that symbols and artefacts are used across faiths to represent important ideas.
- Understand that symbols can be everyday items (bread, water, light) or special objects (cross, menorah, prayer mat).
- Develop religious understanding by connecting practices to meaning (e.g., bread = remembering Jesus, menorah = miracle of light).
- Reflect on their own experiences of special objects and symbols, making personal connections to the concept of meaning and belonging.

Lesson Sequence:

This unit begins by introducing children to the concept of symbols. They start by recalling familiar examples from everyday life, such as logos or signs, before moving on to religious symbols. The cross in Christianity, the Star of David in Judaism, and the crescent moon and star often associated with Islam are explored as ways of showing belonging and identity. **This first lesson** establishes the foundation that symbols are images or signs which represent ideas quickly and meaningfully.

The second lesson develops this understanding by focusing on water as a symbol. Children learn that water is not only important in daily life for cleaning and refreshment, but also carries spiritual meaning in religion. In Christianity, baptism uses water to represent cleansing, forgiveness, and new life, while in Islam, Muslims perform Wudu before prayer to show purity and readiness to stand before God. The story of Zam Zam water in Makkah is introduced as a miracle linked to Abraham's family, helping children see how water can be both ordinary and extraordinary.

The third lesson turns to bread, a universal food that takes on symbolic meaning in different faiths. In Christianity, bread is central to Communion, reminding believers of Jesus' sacrifice and love. In Judaism, challah bread is blessed and shared on Shabbat, symbolising joy, rest, and thankfulness. Children reflect on their own experiences of sharing food, making connections between everyday life and religious practice, and recognising how bread can represent community and remembrance.

The fourth lesson explores light as a powerful symbol across religions. Children consider how light makes them feel—safe, calm, joyful—and then learn how it is used in worship and celebration. In Christianity, candles represent Jesus as the “light of the world.” In Judaism, the menorah at Hanukkah recalls the miracle of oil lasting eight days. In Islam, light is often understood as a metaphor for Allah's guidance, with lanterns used during Ramadan to symbolise hope and spiritual brightness. This lesson reinforces the idea that ordinary things, like light, can carry deep symbolic meaning.

The fifth lesson shifts from everyday elements to artefacts, showing how physical objects are used in worship and celebration. Children encounter examples such as the cross, chalice, and Bible in Christianity; the Kiddush cup, menorah, and Torah scroll in Judaism; and the prayer mat, Qur'an stand, and lantern in Islam. They learn that artefacts are not valuable simply because of their material form, but because of what they represent—faith, community, remembrance, and belonging. This lesson connects the earlier exploration of symbols with tangible objects, helping children see continuity between ideas and practices.

Finally, the unit concludes with an assessment lesson that brings all the learning together. Children are asked to explain how symbols and artefacts are important in different religions, using sentence stems and examples to support their writing. Through this extended task, they demonstrate their understanding that symbols and artefacts help people worship, celebrate, and remember important ideas, and that ordinary things can become special when linked to faith.

Key concepts: symbols, belonging, cleansing, community, celebration, artefacts

Key vocabulary: symbol, cross, Star of David, crescent moon and star, water, Holy water, baptism, Wudu, Zam Zam water, Challah, artefact