

SUGGESTED 'BIG QUESTIONS'

Domestic church family	Myself Why am I precious? Next time I see or hear my name, how will I feel?	Families Why do we have a family and who is my family? What can I do to show love and care at home?	Beginnings Who made the world and everything in it? It's really important to begin well. What do I need to begin well...?	Homes What makes a house a home? How I can contribute to family life?	People Where do I come from? How can I show respect for the people in my family?	Ourselves Who am I? How can I develop a quality I would like to have?	Loving Do you have to earn love? How can I appreciate the love of those who care for me and how can I show care and love to others?
Baptism/confirmation belonging	Welcome Why is welcome important? How can I welcome others?	Belonging What does it mean to belong? What does it mean to belong to a group and to the Church family?	Signs & symbols Are signs & symbols important? What signs and symbols are important in daily life?	Promises Why make promises? Is there a promise I would like to keep?	Called What does it mean to be called and chosen? When I am chosen, how will I respond?	Life choices Is commitment important? How can I be of service to others?	Vocation & commitment What is commitment in life? How can I be more committed in my love and service of others?
Advent/Christmas loving	Birthday Why do we celebrate Birthdays? What shall I do while I wait each year for Jesus' birthday?	Waiting Is waiting always difficult? How do I use the time of waiting to prepare for Christmas?	Preparations Do we need to prepare? What does it mean to prepare for Christmas?	Visitors Are visitors always welcome? How can I show love and care for visitors at Christmas?	Gift What's so special about gifts? What gift of love can I show towards my family and friends this Christmas?	Hope What does it mean to live in hope? How have they used the waiting time during Advent purposefully to show love and service?	Expectations Should we have expectations in life? What are my expectations for celebrating Christmas well?
Local church community	Celebrating What and why do people celebrate? Next time I am invited to a celebration, how will I show I am happy to celebrate with others?	Special people What makes a person special? What can I do to show my appreciation of the special people in school, at home and in the parish family?	Books Why do we need books? How can I show reverence for the Bible?	Journeys Is life a journey? How can I appreciate my journey with Jesus throughout the year?	Community What makes 'community'? How can I be a more loving, serving member of the parish community?	Mission Do we all have a mission in life? What can I do to live out Jesus' mission in a simple way each day?	Sources Are books enriching? Can Books open up new worlds?
Eucharist relating	Gathering Why do people gather together? When I gather together with my friends, how do I show God's love?	Meals What makes some meals special? What can I do to make family meals happy times?	Thanksgiving Why should we be grateful people? How can I find ways to say thank you today?	Listening & sharing What's so important about listening and sharing? How can I listen more attentively to the Word of God and share more generously of myself with others?	Giving & receiving What's more important - giving or receiving? What can I do at school and at home to live in communion with others?	Memorial sacrifice Why do we need memories? Is there a way of keeping alive a special memory?	Unity Why are we happiest when we are united? How can I live and grow in communion with others?
Lent/Easter giving	Growing How and why do things grow? What can I do to grow in love?	Change How and why do things change? In what ways will I try to change today?	Opportunities How does each day offer opportunities for good? What good deed can I do today?	Giving all What makes some people give everything for other people? How can I be more giving?	Self discipline Is self-discipline important in life? How can I practise self-discipline this week or today so that I can bring joy to others?	Sacrifice Why do we need to make sacrifices? Can we be more willing to make sacrifices in our lives, especially during Lent?	Death & new life Can any good come out of loss and death? What does 'new life' mean?

Pentecost serving	Good News What is good news? How can I share good news?	Holidays & holydays Do we need holidays and holydays? How can I help to make a holiday a happy time? How will I let the Holy Spirit help me and guide me this week?	Spread the word Why should we spread Good News? 'How can I spread a word of love?'	Energy What's the use of energy?! How can I use my gift of energy for my own good and to help others?	New life What's so important about new life? How can I spread the Good News, bringing life through the power of the Holy Spirit?	Transformation How can energy transform? How can I develop a quality I would like to have?	Witnesses What do I want to witness to in my life? In what ways can I witness to love and care of others?
Reconciliation Inter-relating	Friends Is it good to have friends? How can I show friendship to someone today?	Being sorry Why should we be sorry? How can I choose well? What can I do to show I am sorry for the wrong choices I have made?	Rules Do we need rules? Which rule will I keep today?	Choices What helps me to choose well? What will I do the next time I have difficult choices to make?	Building bridges Why are bridge-builders important in life? How can I build a bridge towards someone today?	Freedom & responsibility How do rules bring freedom? How can I be aware that with freedom comes responsibility?	Healing Who needs healing? How might I help someone who is sick?
Universal Church world	Our world What makes our world so wonderful? How can I take care of God's wonderful world?	Neighbours Who is my neighbour? How can I be a good neighbour today?	Treasures Is the world a treasure? What can I do to care for and protect God's treasure – the world?	Special places What makes a place special? How can you help to make the world a special place?	God's people Why do some people do extraordinary things? How can you live your daily life really well?	Stewardship Can I be a steward of creation? How might you respect the environment and become a steward of God's creation?	Common good How can we work together to build a just and fair world? How can I help to bring about justice?

THE USE OF 'KEY QUESTIONS' IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

One of the main aims of curriculum Religious Education is to promote a knowledge and understanding of the response of faith to ultimate questions about human life, its origins and purpose. The Bishops of England and Wales said, 'Religious Education is about engaging with deepest questions of life and finding reasons for the hope which is within them' (Religious Education in a Catholic School, 2000)

In RE we want to provide children with 'compelling learning experiences' which demands a more active and engaging approach to learning where children solve something, investigate reasons for things rather than be the mere recipients of knowledge.

By giving the learning in Religious Education direction through the use of key questions, mysteries or puzzles to answer or solve, the curriculum appears much more compelling, imaginative and challenging. A key question should also be relevant to the children's interests and concerns. Topics such as 'Rules' which explores The Sacrament of Reconciliation may not capture the attention and interest of a student in the same way as a question such as 'How do rules bring freedom?'

It is for this reason that a good approach to the Religious Education curriculum is to use key questions as headings for each unit of work. At the end of each lesson teachers could ask what the children have learned to help them answer the big question. The grid suggests some big questions for each topic. They are only suggestions and schools may come up with their own grid. Teachers may even want to approach each lesson or groups of lessons with a question which will help to answer the big question

