

**SUGGESTED 'BIG QUESTIONS'**

|                                       |   |   |   |  |   |  |  |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| <b>Domestic church family</b>         | <b>Myself</b><br>Why am I precious?                     | <b>Families</b><br>Why do we have a family and who is my family?    | <b>Beginnings</b><br>Who made the world and everything in it?           | <b>Homes</b><br>What makes a house a home?   | <b>People</b><br>Where do I come from?  | <b>Ourselves</b><br>Who am I?                                      | <b>Loving</b><br>Do you have to earn love?                                     |
| <b>Baptism/confirmation belonging</b> | <b>Welcome</b><br>Why is welcome important?             | <b>Belonging</b><br>What does it mean to belong?                    | <b>Signs &amp; symbols</b><br>Are signs & symbols important?            | <b>Promises</b><br>Why make promises?  | <b>Called</b><br>What does it mean to be called and chosen?                   | <b>Life choices</b><br>Is commitment important?                    | <b>Vocation &amp; commitment</b><br>What is commitment in life?                |
| <b>Advent/Christmas loving</b>        | <b>Birthday</b><br>Why do we celebrate Birthdays?       | <b>Waiting</b><br>Is waiting always difficult?                      | <b>Preparations</b><br>Do we need to prepare?                           | <b>Visitors</b><br>Are visitors always welcome?                                    | <b>Gift</b><br>What's so special about gifts?                                 | <b>Hope</b><br>What does it mean to live in hope?                  | <b>Expectations</b><br>Should we have expectations in life?                    |
| <b>Local church community</b>         | <b>Celebrating</b><br>What and why do people celebrate? | <b>Special people</b><br>What makes a person special?               | <b>Books</b><br>Why do we need books?                                   | <b>Journeys</b><br>Is life a journey?  | <b>Community</b><br>What makes 'community'?                                   | <b>Mission</b><br>Do we all have a mission in life?                | <b>Sources</b><br>Are books enriching?   |
| <b>Eucharist relating</b>             | <b>Gathering</b><br>Why do people gather together?      | <b>Meals</b><br>What makes some meals special?                      | <b>Thanksgiving</b><br>Why should we be grateful people?                | <b>Listening &amp; sharing</b><br>What's so important about listening and sharing? | <b>Giving &amp; receiving</b><br>What's more important - giving or receiving? | <b>Memorial sacrifice</b><br>Why do we need memories?              | <b>Unity</b><br>Why are we happiest when we are united?                        |
| <b>Lent/Easter giving</b>             | <b>Growing</b><br>How and why do things grow?           | <b>Change</b><br>How and why do things change?                      | <b>Opportunities</b><br>How does each day offer opportunities for good? | <b>Giving all</b><br>What makes some people give everything for other people?      | <b>Self discipline</b><br>Is self-discipline important in life?               | <b>Sacrifice</b><br>Why do we need to make sacrifices?             | <b>Death &amp; new life</b><br>Can any good come out of loss and death?        |
| <b>Pentecost serving</b>              | <b>Good News</b><br>What is good news?                  | <b>Holidays &amp; holydays</b><br>Do we need holidays and holydays? | <b>Spread the word</b><br>Why should we spread Good News?               | <b>Energy</b><br>What's the use of energy?!  | <b>New life</b><br>What's so important about new life?                        | <b>Transformation</b><br>How can energy transform?                 | <b>Witnesses</b><br>What do I want to witness to in my life?                   |
| <b>Reconciliation Inter-relating</b>  | <b>Friends</b><br>Is it good to have friends?           | <b>Being sorry</b><br>Why should we be sorry?                       | <b>Rules</b><br>Do we need rules?                                       | <b>Choices</b><br>What helps me to choose well?                                    | <b>Building bridges</b><br>Why are bridge-builders important in life?         | <b>Freedom &amp; responsibility</b><br>How do rules bring freedom? | <b>Healing</b><br>Who needs healing?   |
| <b>Universal Church world</b>         | <b>Our world</b><br>What makes our world so wonderful?  | <b>Neighbours</b><br>Who is my neighbour?                           | <b>Treasures</b><br>Is the world a treasure?                            | <b>Special places</b><br>What makes a place special?                               | <b>God's people</b><br>Why do some people do extraordinary things?            | <b>Stewardship</b><br>Can I be a steward of creation?              | <b>Common good</b><br>How can we work together to build a just and fair world? |

## 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.

