'Bringing Learning to Life: No Limits.No Barriers.'

Ocean Academy Poole
an Aspirations Academy
Self-Worth | Engagement | Purpose

Learning Journey Map

Year: **6** Term: **Spring**
Subject: **R.E** Topic: **Humanism**

Key Question: How do Humanists decide what is right and wrong and how do inspirational humanists of the past impact on how Humanists live today?
Power Skill: Communication Students explain known ideas about Humanism clearly and thoughtfully. They express opinions about ethical living using appropriate language and examples

BCP SACRE Learning Objectives

- How do Humanists decide what is right and wrong? What do humanists think about human beings? Do Humanists believe life has a purpose?
- Expression - How do Humanists celebrate important moments in life e.g. marriage
- Action - How do inspirational Humanists of the past impact on how Humanists live today?

Key Vocabulary

worldview | humanism | rational thought | reason | free will | empathy | celebrant

Key Learning

What is a belief?
A belief is trust, faith or confidence in something or someone or an acceptance that something exists or is true, especially one without proof.

Thinking Point
What is the difference between a belief and a fact? Is one more difficult to understand than the other and why?



What is a worldview?
A world view is the way in which someone views the world and what shapes their thoughts and behaviours. Religions are world views and these can affect how people choose to live their life. Alternatively, some people choose to have a purely non-religious view but other things may influence the way in which they live their lives.

Thinking Point
What are your world views? What has influenced them? Have they changed over time? What skills can we use to help us to understand other people's world views? How many different worldviews do you know?



ACTIVITY: What is my worldview? Give children the opportunity to record this and what they think has influenced their view. How does it affect their life?

What is Humanism?
Humanism can be described as an approach to life or a way of thinking.
Humanists do not believe in a god. They believe it is possible to live a good and fulfilling life without following a traditional religion. They do not follow a holy book either. Instead, Humanists value traits like reason and rely on science to explain the way things are.Humanists believe that people have one life to live - there is no afterlife. As a result they focus on being happy and making the most of their life. They also believe they have a duty to support others.

Humanism was the major intellectual movement of the Renaissance. In the opinion of the majority of scholars, it began in late-14th-century Italy, came to maturity in the 15th century, and spread to the rest of Europe after the middle of that century. In many countries, humanism became part of the mainstream during the second half of the 20th century. Many prominent 20th-century thinkers were humanists.
Organised Humanism is roughly 150 years old. There were secular groups and ethical societies in the mid to late 19th century. Humanists UK was founded in 1896 as the Ethical Union.

Humanism facts:



- Deity: None
- Holy Book: None
- Place of worship: None
- Important symbols: The Happy Human which represents human potential and the possibility of a fulfilling life for everyone.
- Approximate worldwide followers: 4-5 million
- Countries where Humanists live: The three countries with the highest numbers of Humanist International member organisations are the UK, India, and the US. The largest humanist organisation is the Norwegian Humanist Association.
- Denominations (examples of): Liberal, Socialist and Evolutionary.

Key Learning

Who is a Humanist?

A Humanist is someone who does not believe in a God, or follow a religion. They are a person who has a strong interest in or concern for human welfare, values, and dignity. They do not believe in the afterlife and believe that we should look after others as we wish to be treated.

Humanists believe that…

- science explains how the universe was created and how the universe works;
- there is no grand purpose to the universe, or an afterlife, but that humans have the ability to give their own lives meaning and make themselves and others happy;
- decisions are made on experience, reason, empathy and respect for others.

Being a humanist means trying to live by the values of Humanism such as applying rational thought to human problems and being kind to the people around you. Elements of the good life include love and friendship, achievement and fulfilment, a sense of belonging to the human community, and enjoying pleasures that do not harm others.

A Humanist believes in celebrating life here and now, living full and happy lives and helping others to do the same.

Thinking Point

What is Humanism? What makes somebody a Humanist? How may their belief in Humanism affect their life?



Main Beliefs: The Golden Rule, Human Reason, Free Will and Science as evidence

The Golden Rule

To Humanists, the most important rule is 'Treat others as we ourselves would like to be treated'. This rule, however, is not unique to Humanists and in fact, is common to most world views/religions.

- Christianity: Treat others as you would like them to treat you
- Islam: None of you 'truly' believe until you wish for your brothers and sisters what you wish for yourself
- Judaism: What is harmful to you, do not do to other people
- Sanatana Dharma: Do nothing to others, which if done to you, would cause you pain
- Sikhism: As you wish for yourself, so wish for others.

The Golden Rule promotes kindness and care for those in difficulty, because this is what we would want in their situation. It encourages fairness, equality, and respect for other people. It discourages lying, bullying, cruelty, and theft, because no one wants to suffer in this way. The Golden Rule has appeared independently in many places around the world and throughout history. Many humanists believe this is because it evolved naturally from the fact that we are social animals who live together in communities and who can imagine each other's feelings. Treating others well helped social groups to build trust, to work together, and to survive.

The Golden Rule has been criticised for not giving enough information about exactly what we should do. Many humanists accept that the Golden Rule is not perfect (all rules have problems). Often there are no simple answers to the question of what we should do. However, many believe it is a good place to start from and that it is helpful in many situations. Some say we should not treat other people the way we would like to be treated because other people may not like the same things as us. They might not share our tastes and desires. We might prefer chocolate; they might prefer cheese. We might be excited by danger; they might be afraid. However, another way to think about the Golden Rule is, instead of thinking about our own specific likes and dislikes, to think about our general desire to be happy and avoid pain, to have our wishes taken into account and our fears avoided. We should not just think about what we would want, but try to imagine we were the other person, with their tastes and preferences, and think about how they would like to be treated.

Thinking Point

What is the Golden Rule? Can it only be applied to Humanism? How do Humanists use the Golden Rule to help them decide what is right or wrong? Are there any negatives to following the Golden Rule?



Key Learning

Human Reason and Free Will

From the article 'Introducing Humanism: Non-religious Approaches to Life' created by Humanists UK:

'Reason alone may be incapable of determining right and wrong, but that is not to say that establishing what is right and wrong has nothing to do with reason.' Stephen Law, The War for Children's Minds

We have earlier said that reason cannot justify our basic moral principles. Nonetheless, once we have decided on our moral beliefs, on whatever foundations we base them, reason can support us to think critically about them.

Scientific reasoning can help reveal new facts about the world that can inform our morality. The argument that girls should be entitled to the same education as boys, for example, is supported by research that reveals their equal intellectual capacity. Slavery can no longer be defended on the claim that human beings can be divided into different species. Refuting the previously accepted scientific claim refutes the moral position that was built on it. If the consequences of our actions are important to us, then reason can support us to deliberate about what they will be. It can support us to sift the evidence and form rational conclusions. Reason allows us to consider what the world would be like if everyone were to act the same way. For example, if everyone chose to lie whenever it suited them, then trust in human communication would break down.
It can also help reveal unacknowledged consequences of our existing moral beliefs. It may not have dawned on us that our moral commitments place requirements on us that we simply weren't aware of. If, for example, we believe a reason we should not harm other human beings is that causing pain is to be avoided, then does that not mean we must also avoid harming non-human animals for the same reason?
Reason can support us to make our moral views more consistent with each other. We can become more willing to universalise our principles when we recognise that there is no relevant difference between different cases. For example, one might argue that the suffering of those on the other side of the world is equally as bad as the suffering of those near to us, hence they are just as worthy of care.
Reason does not force you to believe one thing over another. However, reason shows you what you ought to believe if you want to give your beliefs the best chance of being true.

Humanistic psychologists believe that humans have free will. Humans are able to make their own decisions and are not determined by biological or environmental factors.

Thinking Point
How does human reason and free will affect how a Humanist decides if something is right or wrong?



Science as Evidence

Humanists believe that the universe came into being 13.8 billion years ago as a result of the 'Big Bang.' They believe that the Earth is about 4 billion years old and that life on earth started to evolve about 3 billion years ago. They believe that humans have lived on the Earth for around 200,000 years and that we came from a long process of evolution. We base these beliefs on the latest scientific findings which are the culmination of hundreds of years of human learning and collaboration.
Humanists believe that human beings were not created, but instead evolved naturally. They believe that humans go on evolving, along with the rest of the species on our planet today. Evidence shows how human welfare is heavily dependent on the natural world and on the continued existence of many other species.
Humanists like to have scientific evidence of something before truly believing in it.

Thinking Point
What do Humanists believe about how the world began? How is this different to the belief of someone who follows a religion e.g. Christianity, Judaism? How does their trust in science shape their world views?



Decision Making

When making decisions humanists don't have a written set of clear rules to follow. Instead, they make decisions based on experience, reason, empathy and respect for others.



Thinking Point
What do Humanists use to help them decide what is right or wrong? What are their main beliefs? How is Humanism different/similar to other worldviews/religions you have studied?



Key Learning

Main Practices - Ceremonies, Caring for others and the environment

Ceremonies
Just like the religious world-views, Humanists celebrate and mark main life events with a celebration such as birth of a child, weddings and funerals. However, humanist ceremonies, unlike those conducted in places of worship, are extremely individual to the person.

Naming Ceremony:

What do non-religious people do if they want to celebrate the arrival of a new child? Obviously a christening or baptism wouldn't feel appropriate. Thankfully, another option has been around for many decades and it's something that has become an increasingly popular trend in recent years, particularly as society becomes less religious: a humanist naming ceremony. Simply put, a humanist naming ceremony is a way of celebrating and welcoming a new addition to a family.
Also known as a welcoming ceremony, a naming day is perfect for newborns, one-year-olds, or toddlers, but they don't have to be limited to a child of a young age. In fact, naming ceremonies can welcome babies, adopted children, or step-children, and for older children they can be seen as a rite of passage and a day of celebration. People choose to have naming ceremonies because they want to bring family and friends together in one place to commemorate someone important in your life, and reflect the role that key people will play in the lives of the child.

Humanist naming ceremonies can be held anywhere and can either last 20 minutes or all day! They can be completely individualised and include rituals such as tree planting, candle lighting or certificate signing.
As in the world view of Christianity (godparents), Humanists nominate up to three people to be the child's mentor or guide parent. They normally make promises to the child during the ceremony.

Wedding: A humanist wedding is a non-religious ceremony that is welcoming, inclusive, and personally tailored. A humanist wedding is led by a celebrant and focuses on a couple's love story and the things that are important to them as a couple.

The wedding ceremony is conducted by a trained humanist wedding celebrant. They take the time to get to know It can be as traditional or non-traditional, formal or informal as you like. It can include unique vows, readings, poems, music, and any rituals such as handfasting or hand-binding, symbolic knot-tying, or lighting a unity candle. A Humanist ceremony is different to a civil ceremony as it doesn't have to happen in a place of worship or a registered building. In fact, it can take place anywhere that is important to the couple e.g. the beach, wood or even at the couples home.

Humanist weddings enjoy legal recognition in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Jersey, and Guernsey – meaning it's extremely easy to get married in one perfect, heartfelt humanist ceremony.In England, Wales, and the Isle of Man, the situation is different. You can still have a humanist wedding (as thousands of couples do) but you will need to register the marriage separately at a register office in the days before or after the wedding ceremony.

Funeral:

Humanist funerals offer a personal and fitting way to say goodbye to those who have lived without religion. They honour the person who has died, focusing on the life they led, the relationships they forged, and the legacy they left.
A humanist non-religious funeral is led by a celebrant, rather than a religious official. It is a testament to a unique life. Humanist funerals often include non-religious music and readings as well as time for reflection. THey can be traditional - or not. As Humanists do not believe in the after life, their life on earth is celebrated and there is no talk or where they have gone unlike other religious world views e.g. heaven in Christianity or reincarnation in Sikhism.

Caring for others and the environment
Humanists try to use evidence,empathy, and a concern for the happiness and wellbeing of sentient life when thinking about ethical questions. They believe this is the one and only life and world we have. We should try to support everybody to live happy and fulfilling lives, both those alive today and future generations. Because humanists have no belief in a god or in any higher power, they believe that human beings alone have responsibility for solving the problems we face. Solutions to our problems will only come through action. YouGov polling found that 84% of humanists think that climate change is the biggest threat to civilisation, compared to 63% of the general population.
Today many humanists are supporters of Humanist Climate Action, which aims to

- promote environmental policies,
- support the work of other environmental campaigning groups,
- challenge beliefs that are not evidence-based and disinformation about environmental issues, and…
- encourage humanists to adopt greener lifestyles, following the best available scientific evidence. 'Humanists, by definition, are guided by science and recognise a moral duty towards the welfare of our fellow beings.

Science reveals that we are part of the natural world and that our welfare depends on it. The evidence is overwhelming that human activity is changing the climate and that this could lead to potentially catastrophic consequences for many human beings and other animals. Empathy is of great importance to humanists when deciding how to act. They believe that we should show compassion for those who are already suffering the consequences of climate change, and we should extend our empathy to future generations. Humanists believe future generations are entitled to the same rights as we are - to lives that are happy, healthy, and safe. Many humanists believe that we should also extend our empathy to other animals. They argue that, when considering how we treat the environment, we should take the consequences for other species into account, not just the consequences for human beings.

Thinking Point
What do Humanists celebrate? How do they celebrate? How are these celebrations the same as or different to celebrations held by other worldviews and religions? What do Humanists care about? How does this influence their life?



Key Learning

Influential Humanists

There are many famous people who consider themselves to be Humanists.

- Stephen Fry
- Albert Einstein
- David Attenborough
- Brian Cox

Thinking Point

How did these influential people live their lives following Humanist thoughts? Did their thinking change anything? WHat do they all have in common? What are their differences? How have they changed Humanism today?

