



# Introducing Religion & Worldviews

# Adopting a Religion & Worldviews approach in Religious Education

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Guidance for Trainers  
Primary Schools



Welcome to the “Introducing Religion and Worldviews” training package. This package has been co-designed by 4 primary school teachers and 3 university academics - supported by an advisory board - to help school leaders and teachers as they seek to (further) adopt a Religion and Worldviews approach in the Religious Education classroom<sup>1</sup>.

The authors of these resources acknowledge that schools may use different names for their subject, such as Religious Education, Religion Values and Ethics, or Religion and Worldviews - to name but a few. For ease of read, this training pack will solely refer to Religious Education (RE). Similarly, there can be different acronyms used to refer to the Religion and Worldviews approach, such as R&W, RW, RWV, or RWE (Religion and Worldviews Education). This training pack will use R&W. Trainers are free to amend the text in this training package to use their preferred subject title and acronym, should they wish to do so.

The aims of the training are:

- For teachers to have a better understanding of the R&W approach in RE,
- For teachers to be given the opportunity to assess where their curriculum already touches on and follows a R&W approach and where there might gaps,
- To help teachers understand the benefits of adopting a R&W approach and how this can strengthen the teaching of religion and non-religion in schools,
- To start thinking about classroom practice that is anchored in a R&W approach.

This training package has been designed to be delivered in school - by teachers and for teachers. As such, it includes a number of suggested activities and videos, which have been created to help whoever is delivering the training support colleagues as they make sense of the R&W approach, and how this can inform their

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<sup>1</sup> This pack was co-designed by Dr Céline Benoit, Dr Rachael Shillitoe, Zoe Higgins, Alida Weeks, and Liz Wooldridge, with contributions from Dr Tim Hutchings and Nadia Nadeem.

The team is grateful to the Advisory Board for their guidance and feedback.

Special thanks go to the Coventry & Warwickshire REC / local Agreed Syllabus writing team, led by Jennifer Jenkins, for sharing some of their material and resources, which have been included in the accompanying slide decks.

practice moving forward. Trainers are welcome to add activities, and/or adapt some of the suggested activities, to better meet the needs of their audiences.

Each session builds on a [series of videos](#), which have been recorded by 3 university academics. The videos were created following a number of interviews with primary and secondary teachers, who explained where the gaps were when it came to R&W, and what conversations needed to happen to support a transition to a R&W approach in RE in schools.

It must be noted that the primary teachers who co-designed this training package advised that the videos were used in an order different to the one suggested on the University of Nottingham's webpage. Please see below for guidance.

The suggested format for this training is as follows:

- **Session 1, entitled “Introducing Religion and Worldviews”**, has been designed to help teachers engage with the concept of ‘religion’, and how the ‘World Religions Paradigm’ – a concept explain in the training – may have an impact on the RE classroom. This session builds on [Video 3 \(What is religion?\)](#) and [Video 2 \(What is this approach?\)](#).

This session should be no less than 90 minutes, and would ideally last 2 hours. We recommend spending approx. 45-60 mins on ‘what is religion’, 25-40 mins on ‘worldviews’ and 30 mins on ‘what is this approach’.

***NB:** Teachers have suggested that video 4 should only be used as a ‘greater depth’ activity should your school be at an advanced stage in its transition to R&W.*

- **Session 2, entitled “Personal and Organised Worldviews”**, has been designed to help teachers reflect on the lived expressions of religion and worldviews, and how a R&W approach in the RE classroom can help foreground the study of individual worldviews, which have traditionally received little attention – though this may not be the case in your own setting. For this session we recommend starting with [Video 6 \(What is a personal worldview?\)](#), followed by [Video 5 \(What is an](#)

[organised worldview?](#)) to emphasise the fact that RE can start with the personal, to then branch out to organised religion and worldviews.

This session should last 60-90 minutes, depending on the numbers of activities with which you choose to engage.

***NB:** Adopting a R&W does not mean that teachers must start with the personal – this is only one of the many ways in which R&W can be adopted. If this is something you would like to explore more, please see [this video](#) and [this resource for RE teachers and leaders](#) (Gillian Georgiou’s Teacher-Led Framework).*

- Session 3, entitled “What is a Religion and Worldviews Approach?”, builds on [video 7 \(What a R&W approach is not\)](#) and [Video 1 \(What does good RE look like?\)](#). The aims are to consolidate teachers’ learning, clarify what a R&W approach is (and isn’t), and start thinking about classroom practice. *Please note that video 8 is not being used in the training package for primary schools, given its emphasis on the transition to studying Theology and Religious Studies at university level.*

This session should last 60-90 minutes, depending on the numbers of activities with which you choose to engage.

Each session is accompanied by a slide deck. Please note:

- The trainer’s versions include detailed notes under each slide, to support you as you facilitate the training. **We recommend that trainers print each slide deck using the following settings: “print all slides” and select “notes pages” (instead of “full page slides”).**
- The teachers’ versions do not include any notes. We recommend that you share with colleagues the “teachers’ slides”, rather than those “including notes for trainers” so that colleagues are not overwhelmed with the amount of information shared with them.

A teacher handout is also available, to give to colleagues, alongside a copy of the slides, and a summary infographic with useful links. If you print and hand out documents to colleagues, we recommend also providing a digital version of the summary infographic so that links can be accessed more easily.

The format of this training package is flexible: as the trainer, you are free to choose the sections that suit your needs best. For instance, you may want to do an INSET training day based on sessions 1, 2 and 3. In which case we recommend watching the videos during the training day, for pace. Alternatively, you may choose to host a number of twilight sessions, focusing on different sessions. We recommend keeping session 1 to a minimum of 90 minutes where possible. While sessions 2 and 3 have been designed to last approximately 90 minutes each, these sessions can be shortened to 60 minutes (to fit within staff meetings, for example, and/or by asking colleagues to watch the videos ahead of the training).

Prior to delivering the training, you might find it useful to conduct a short audit prior to the training, to understand where teachers are at when it comes to Religion and Worldviews. Here are some questions you could put on an online form (such as Microsoft Form) to capture attitudes:

1. How confident do you feel delivering RE classes in general? 1-5 (1: not at all confident; 5: very confident)
2. How confident do you feel about adopting a Religion and Worldviews (R&W) approach in the RE? (1: not at all confident; 5: very confident)
3. How confidently would you be able to explain to colleagues the challenge of defining “religion” and the implications of this challenge for teaching RE? Scale 1-5 (1: not at all confident; 5: very confident)
4. How confidently would you be able to explain to colleagues the problems with the World Religions approach? Scale 1-5 (1: not at all confident; 5: very confident)
5. How confidently would you be able to explain to colleagues the concept of worldview and why this may change the way you teach RE? (1: not at all confident; 5: very confident)
6. How confidently would you be able to explain what a personal worldview is? (1: not at all confident; 5: very confident)
7. How confidently would you be able to explain what an organised worldview is? (1: not at all confident; 5: very confident)

The same questions should be asked after the training has been delivered - this will enable you to capture the impact of the training, and whether there are areas where more work will be needed in the future.

Depending on your local context, you may find that your priority is to reassure teachers - adopting a R&W approach is not about a complete rewrite of existing RE material - it is mostly about building on good practice, addressing possible gaps, and approaching topics differently. In many cases it may be that simple

tweaks are needed by adopting different activities or asking different questions to pupils.

If trainers are themselves new to the R&W approach, we recommend that they go through the training package prior to delivering the training, and watch all videos in their own time prior to delivering the training. The trainer's slide decks (which include detailed guidance in the note section under each slide) should provide sufficient background information to enable you to deliver this training. You might also find the video [Welcome to a Religion and Worldviews approach](#) useful.

Trainers may also find it helpful to visit the Religion and Worldviews FAQs, hosted on the Religious Education Council for England and Wales' website: <https://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/resource/worldviews-introduction-faqs/>

It is worth noting that further courses exist, which trainers might find useful as they support colleagues to adopt a R&W approach:

- Culham St Gabriel's Trust (CSTG) provides a [series of short courses](#), including 'Introduction to a Religion & Worldviews approach', and 'Digging deeper into a Religion & Worldviews approach'. Short courses can be accessed here: <https://courses.cstg.org.uk/>
- The Open University has a [free course, entitled 'An Education in Religion and Worldviews'](#). This is a good resource to help build confidence prior to delivering the 'Introducing Religion and Worldviews' training if you are new to R&W.

## What happens next?

Once you have finished delivering the training to colleagues, the journey towards adopting a R&W approach in the RE classroom truly begins! The summary infographic should be provided to teachers (an online version is better than a paper version as the document includes a number of hyperlinks).

It is recommended that you work with teachers to go over your units of work to ensure that a R&W is adopted throughout the curriculum. Reassure teachers: adopting a R&W approach is unlikely to mean you have to re-write the whole RE curriculum! The pedagogical change may simply mean approaching some

topics differently, and having to think of different types of activities and questions to ask children. Providing colleagues with examples of lesson plans is often useful, especially if your school is new to the R&W approach.

As the trainer, you may find it useful to reach out to colleagues in your locality who are also working on RE. You can reach out to your local RE Hub regional lead, or find out about local groups on the [RE Hub website](#).

You may want to have yours and your colleagues' achievements acknowledged by applying for the [RE Quality Mark](#) (REQM). This can be a great way to celebrate the great work that you and your pupils are doing, recognise your high quality RE and good practice, and help raise the profile of RE within your school. For more information, please visit: <https://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/our-work/reqm/about/>.

Finally, we would be grateful if you could leave us feedback by clicking [here](#) or scanning the QR code below:



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