

## Using Artefacts in RE

An artefact is an object that is actively utilised within religious and non-religious communities, not simply a historical object. Artefacts are filled with meaning and symbolism: they might be used as part of worship, to express identity, gratitude or remembrance, or as a focus for reflection.

Using artefacts in the classroom can support children and young people to explore the different ways in which people live and the beliefs and concepts that underpin their ways of living. Artefacts can also function as mechanisms for promoting discussion about the ways in which people think about and engage with the world around them.

### How Should We Use Artefacts?

First and foremost, pupils need to understand that the objects with which they are engaging have great significance to members of a religious or non-religious community. A respectful atmosphere must therefore be promoted; pupils should be supported to engage with and talk about the artefacts with care and sensitivity.

It is also important to ensure that pupils understand that not all people will interact with these artefacts in the same way; it is helpful to avoid generalisations (e.g. “all Christians will use a rosary to help them pray”).

The use of artefacts should actively support pupils to build on prior learning and unlock the next stage of learning. It is important that their use in teaching and learning clearly supports meaningful progression for learners.

Questioning is key: artefacts should be used as a stimulus to help pupils connect their knowledge of key concepts and beliefs with the diversity of practices, rituals and traditions that exist within and between religions and worldviews. The sorts of questions pupils might be encouraged to ask of an artefact include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Can I describe this artefact?
- How do I think this artefact might be used? Can I find out whether everyone uses this artefact in the same way?
- Who do I think might use this artefact?
- Where might I find this artefact?
- What might this artefact mean or symbolise to the people for whom it is important?
- Might this artefact mean or symbolise different things to different people?

- Is this artefact unique to one religion or worldview?
- How does this artefact connect with important concepts and/or beliefs?
- How does this artefact connect with the ways in which people live – the decisions they make and the actions they carry out in their lives?
- How does this artefact help me understand how a particular group of people think about the world around them?

### What Artefacts Might We Use in the Classroom?

Below is a list of artefacts that you might find helpful to use in the classroom to support effective teaching and learning in RE. This is not an exhaustive list, but it provides a starting point for building a collection of resources.

Buddhism	Buddha sculpture Prayer beads	Prayer wheel/flags Singing bowl
Christianity	Cross Icon Bible Chalice	Crucifix (e.g. rosary) Baptism candle Prayer card Paten
Hinduism	Om (aum) symbol Puja set Prayer beads (mala)	Dewa (deva/diva) lamp Murtis (images/statues of Hindu deities) Rakhi (red thread that is tied around the wrist)
Humanism	Monuments to key Humanist figures Artworks that help humanists explore an understanding of human spirit and value Naming ceremony card Humanists UK pin badge Remembrance wreath (Defence Humanists)	
Islam	Qur'an Prayer mat Subha (prayer beads) Headscarf and taqiyah/topi (head covering for men)	Qur'an stand Compass
Judaism	Torah scroll Kippah/yarmulke Seder plate (used during the festival of Passover/Pesach) Mezuzah	Yad Tallit (prayer shawl) Shofar
Sikhism	5Ks Guru Granth Sahib	Chauri Turban

### Where Can We Purchase Artefacts for Use in RE?

Many of the major education suppliers (e.g. [TTS](#), [GLS](#), [Hope Education](#) and [Consortium](#)) provide some religious artefacts, although many have a limited range. [Artefacts to Order](#) specialises in providing artefacts for RE and History. If you wish to purchase religious artefacts, it is also worth contacting places of worship directly. You can find the details of places of worship in the East Midlands region in Appendix 8 of the Lincolnshire locally agreed syllabus for RE [here](#). Some Humanist artefacts can be purchased directly from [Humanists UK](#). If funds are limited, it is also possible to borrow artefacts from the [Religious Studies Resource Centre](#) in Nottingham, although you will have to arrange to collect and return the artefacts.

### Further Information

For further information about using artefacts in RE, the following documents and websites may be of use:

<https://www.natre.org.uk/about-re/guidance-on-resources/artefacts-and-visual-images/>

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/documents/rme23-using-religious-artefacts.pdf>

**The Diocesan RE Adviser is able to support teachers and subject leaders of RE in *all* schools and academies in Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire. If you would like further support to develop the use of artefacts as part of teaching and learning in RE in your school or academy, please email her at [gillian.georgiou@lincoln.anglican.org](mailto:gillian.georgiou@lincoln.anglican.org).**

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