**INTERPRETATION OF PRIMARY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION EXPECTATIONS**

**AUTUMN SECOND HALF TERM**

**YEAR 5**

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| UNIT | EXPECTATION | OUR UNDERSTANDING | PROMPT QUESTIONS |
| 5.2 Commandments  God’s Covenant | **Have a detailed knowledge of the story of either Noah, Abraham or the Covenant with Moses and an understanding of what a covenant is** (new book)**.** | Pupils following the new book 5 will need to show a detailed knowledge of, at least, one of the following: the story of Noah, Abraham or the giving of the Ten Commandments (PB pp 34-36). This means that pupils can compose a retell as part of a group or as an individual task. Information in the PB will need supplementing through reading of the bible text. While this expectation is restricted to one story, it is important that pupils are taught the holistic picture of covenant (see new TB pp. 24-27). That through covenants with these figures, and a chosen people (Israelites) God is drawing a people to Himself which, for Christians, culminates and is perfected in Jesus.  If choosing the story of **Noah** this story shows that God acts to rid the earth of human wickedness that has spread throughout the world since the Fall (Adam and Eve). The story of Noah is best understood by reading *Genesis* ***6****:9-22;* ***7:****11-12, 17-24;* ***8****:1-11, 15-19;* ***9****:8-17*. It is best to start the reading at Genesis **6**:9 even though the first 8 verses will spike an interest with their talk of heavenly beings, giants and people living so long that God limits a mortal’s life to 120 years!  Pupils could organise the story by story boarding or sequencing the story. Those pupils who choose Noah could be grouped together to bring different parts of the story together to make one story that all derive their detailed knowledge from or individual pupils could write their own.  Pupils will need to show an understanding of covenant by contrasting it with a contract (see PB p. 24), but also specifically through Noah. What do we learn about this covenant that God made after the flood? At Genesis **9** v.9 it says that God makes His covenant with *all living things* not just Noah (see also new PB p.24). This signals a new beginning: God is *renewing* his commitment to all of His creation. So all life is – as in the Creation story – precious to God. But you may ask – and some pupils may ask – wasn’t it precious before in the Creation story and yet He destroyed it? Well yes – and this is where the GD expectation comes in - but after the Flood God now specifically says he will not again destroy the world. God is committed to life – to the continuance of life, and no matter what happens, God will not let life on earth disappear. Here God shows His love for his creation. The covenant, symbolised by the rainbow, is a sign of the faithfulness of God i.e. God will keep his promise. For our part we must trust in God’s promise and act as co-creators preserving creation not destroying it. The rainbow also reminds us to live a good life like Noah by growing in friendship with God. Finally a rainbow is a sign of the importance of living with hope for a better future, a better world, hence why a rainbow is often used as a symbol of hope.  A detailed knowledge of the story of **Abraham** needs to go beyond what is stated in the new PB and be based on a reading of *Gen.* ***12****:1-2, 5-9;* ***15****:1-6;* ***17****:1-9, 15-19, 21-22;* ***18****:1-15;* ***21****:1-8.* If the class watch the story of Abraham from the *Bible in Animation* series (on *You Tube* or CD) the teacher will need to give a summary of the story of Abraham that includes Abraham’s nephew Lot, Hagar, Abraham’s slave and her son Ishmael which is omitted from the references above. Pupils could organise the story by story boarding or sequencing the story. Those pupils who choose Abraham could be grouped together to bring different parts of the story together to make one story that all derive their detailed knowledge from or individual pupils could write their own.  Pupils will need to show an understanding of the covenant in general, usually in contrast with a contract (see PB p. 24), but also specifically through Abraham. The covenant with Abraham and his descendants is different from the covenant made with Noah. God’s covenant after the flood is made with all living things, but God’s covenant with Abraham is a promise to *gather* *together a people* (the Israelites) out of the human nations.  Just before the story of Abraham, Genesis **11**:1-9 tells the story of the Tower of Babel that results in the scattering of people all over the earth. The call of Abram (Gen. **12**:1-9) shows that God has a plan to gather a (chosen) people together through Abram. It is in the story of Abraham that the importance of *faith in God* becomes very important (see new PB p. 27). While the covenant with Abraham continues to show that God keeps his promises e.g. God promised a son to Abram and Sarai and they had a son, Isaac – the real focus is on the **faith of Abraham in God’s *future promise* *of a land and a people that Abraham will never see realised.*** This is why it is important that teachers emphasise the difficulties and challenges that Abraham and Sarah faced, because Abraham’s faith is faith in the promise of God – something not yet even imagined by Abram and Sarai (both Abram and Sarai are old, childless) - for a land and a people (the Israelites) in the future. Also God’s later request (not part of this unit) that Abraham sacrifice Isaac, his only son, (God’s angel stops Abraham at the last moment) shows the challenge of this promise – without Isaac there would be no people, no land, but Abraham obeys God and goes ahead with the sacrifice: Abraham is not mad or bad, he has faith!  To show a detailed knowledge of the story of the **covenant with the Israelites** (new PB p. 34-36) pupils will need to have worked through the call of **Moses** and the **Exodus** as background. The knowledge of the giving of the commandments will go beyond what is in the new PB (though pages 34-35 provide a useful summary) and be based on a reading of Exodus **19**:1-8; **20**:1-17; **24**:12-18; **32**:1-4, 7-19; **34**:1. Pupils could organise the story by story boarding or sequencing the story. Those pupils who choose the covenant with the Israelites could be grouped together to bring different parts of the story together to make one story that all derive their detailed knowledge from or individual pupils could write their own.  Pupils will need to show an understanding of the covenant in general, usually in contrast with a contract (see new PB p. 24), but also specifically through Moses and the Israelites. The covenant God makes with Moses and the people is clearly stated in Exodus **19**:2-8. In this covenant God makes the Israelites his chosen people: that part of the promise which God made with Abraham is fulfilled. God forms this people and gives it an identity through worship and by the giving of rules – the ten commandments. This covenant is a two-way relationship: in return for being chosen by God, the Israelites must live up to particular standards of behaviour – summarised in the Ten Commandments. | What’s the difference between a contract and a covenant?  What is a covenant based on? (see new PB p. 24)  What is amazing about the promises God makes?  What do we do as part of a covenant?  What has commitment got to do with a covenant?  Why was Noah and his family chosen?  What happens in the story of the Flood?  Who are the main characters?  As the flood water stops rising or begins to go down, what does Noah do?  What covenant did God make after the flood?  What was the sign of the covenant?  At the end of the story of Noah, God makes a covenant, but who with?  What does that tell us about God or about all living things?  Why is the rainbow a good symbol of God’s covenant?  What did God want Abram to do (Gen. **12**:1-2)  What promises did God make to Abram? (Gen. **12**:2; **15**:4; **17**:19, 21)  What happens in the story of Abraham?  Why is God a God of surprises?  What is the single most important thing we learn about Abraham?  Is it always easy to wait for something in the future?  Give some examples of the challenges or difficulties that Abraham and Sarah faced.  What is similar and what is different about the covenants God makes with Noah (Gen. **9**:8-17) and Abraham?    What happens in the story of the Covenant with the Israelites?  What part of the promise to Abraham is completed by this covenant?  What part of the covenant with Abraham is not complete?  What two things does God require of his chosen people? (Worship Him alone and keep his commandments)  What adjectives – as well as stubborn - would you use to describe the Israelites? |
|  | **Jesus shows us that God is a loving God, but some actions of God in the Old Testament are very disturbing (flooding the world [Noah], Death of the first born and drowning the Egyptians in the Red Sea [Moses]). Express a point of view about this giving a reason (GD)** (new book) | For some pupils following the new book 5 the omission of any consideration of the behaviour of God from these stories will be quite strange while for other pupils any problem with God’s behaviour won’t even arise. *This greater depth expectation is for those pupils who feel the need to question God’s behaviour. However, it is up to individual teachers to decide whether pursuing this avenue is fruitful or a recipe for further confusion. In any case, this expectation is useful for teachers to show possible ways of dealing with difficult biblical texts.* Having read about the drowning of the whole world, the plagues, the death of the first born and the drowning of the Egyptians – great stories all - some pupils may articulate a view that God’s behaviour is confusing or contradictory – isn’t God a loving God, so why does He do such things? How as teachers might we go about supporting children in their puzzlement? Firstly, each teacher will need to consider this issue for themselves.  Isn’t it amazing how the stories of Noah and Moses and the Exodus are a staple of children’s stories from their earliest days given that the biblical text is shot through with very disturbing events like total genocide and the sanctioning of murder (see Gen. **9**: 5-6)!  One approach for dealing with this question is to say that God is mystery and we will never understand God. Unlike God, we cannot know everything, our knowledge of God will always be incomplete. Therefore we do not know why God does such things but we should not question God’s actions because there are things about God we cannot understand and simply must accept on faith: like Abraham who, on God’s command, sought not to question God but went ahead with the command to sacrifice Isaac, his only son.  This approach alerts us to the utter mystery of God which is a good thing in itself. However, used as a justification of God it makes all actions of God or commanded by God good because God does them or commands them. This approach needs to be used carefully, because while it could satisfy the pupils’ questions at this particular stage in their understanding, as a general principle it can be used to excuse evil or sanction evil in the name of God.  Another approach, which is often implied in the text itself, is that the punishment God gives is justly deserved. All the people of the earth, excepting Noah and his family, were wicked and so God wanted to deal with their wickedness by wiping it out. The Egyptians had been oppressing the Hebrews for 400 years and sought to kill all the Hebrew first born, God inflicts the same punishment on all the Egyptians. In each case, the people got what they deserved. Human sinfulness results in divine violence. This contradicts our understanding of God’s approach to sinfulness that we know from Jesus: God does not deal with human sinfulness by visiting violence on the perpetrators, instead God allows his own Son to die for our sins. Christians believe that Jesus shows us what God is like. *Jesus is the interpretative key through which we look at Old Testament narratives*: Jesus shows us that God isn’t really impulsive or cruel: God has a constant, faithful, tender love for His creation! God does not regret making his creation, he is an all-loving God who is always ready to forgive.  *There are further aspects to the issue of disturbing divine behaviour that teachers could explore to provide a fuller response to this issue for themselves*. The main one is to notice that the question “Why did God destroy ….” supposes that God is directly involved in all the actions narrated and supposes that the narrative, as presented, is historical in the same way a modern historical account is historical. Whether something is historical as we understand today is a key issue as is the question of the inspiration of scripture: what do we mean when we say the Bible is inspired by God and what role do human writers play?  If we take up the question of history and apply it to the story of the Flood we could simply, in view of our modern understanding of history, discount it as a fable – it never happened! However, the question of the origin of the story actually suggests that it is based on a prehistorical event in the near east. There are many flood narratives in the ancient near east that can be traced back to the prehistoric flooding of the area now known as the Black Sea. The rise in world temperature of 4C at the end of the last ice age (10,000 years ago) would account for the rise in sea level and the flooding of the area of the Black Sea through the Bosporus. The historical rise in sea level and the quick rise at the Bosporus was probably the historical memory at the origin of the flood narratives. The writer of the Noah story uses it to provide a theological view which shows that God is almighty and in control of nature and His creation and punishes human wickedness with a great flood which is the occasion of a new beginning. So there is a wider theological context in which the flood narrative is situated: that of the unfolding of the covenant that God makes with the human race. |  |
|  | **Show some understanding of how the decisions of Abraham *or* Moses were informed by their beliefs** (new book). | This expectation can be met through the first expectation: *Have a detailed knowledge of the story of either Noah, Abraham or the Covenant with Moses and an understanding of what a covenant is* if the pupils chose **Abraham**. Pupils will show that the key decision Abraham makes which appears very odd even crazy by normal standards – his leaving of his very comfortable life, riches and home in Haran at the age of 75, not only to a foreign land (inflicting refugee status on himself and his family), but to a very uncertain future (God really took His time, Abraham was 100 by the time Sarah gave birth to Isaac!) – is based on i.e. informed by his belief in the promise God made to him that he will have descendants and they will have their own land. What faith Abraham had!  If pupils choose to show how the decisions of **Moses** were informed by his beliefs, this will be based on the work of the call of Moses, the plagues and the Exodus from Egypt (new PB pp. 29-33). At first the contrast with Abraham is telling: whereas Abraham is steadfast and faithful to the last – even to the sacrifice of his only son – Moses is wholly lacking in confidence. His fear of the consequences after he kills the Egyptian informs his decision to flee Egypt and become a shepherd. His belief in his own weakness informs his decision to say he can’t go and tell Pharaoh what God asks of him because he can’t speak well. However, Moses grows in confidence because he realises that God is with him (in his shepherds staff, the cloud, the pillar of fire) and this allows his friendship with God to grow to such an extent that Moses is, uniquely, allowed in the presence of God (up the mountain). Moses’ friendship with God becomes so close, perhaps even closer than Abraham’s. | What is surprising, even odd, about God’s choice of Abraham and Sarah as the people to carry out His plan for a people and a land? What does this tell you about God?  By normal standards, what is unusual about Abraham’s decision? What does this tell you about Abraham?  ’Why did Abraham continue to say ‘yes’ to God, despite the challenges he faced? |
|  | **Suggest answers to questions like, ‘What’s surprising about God’s choice of people?’ e.g. Abram, Sarah, Moses, the Israelites. Why does God choose them?’ Compare responses** (new book) | This expectation could be met when pupils are working on *Show some understanding of how the decisions of Abraham or Moses were informed by their beliefs*.  In comparing responses, pupils will come to some understanding of why God chooses them. Some examples: God is a God of surprises. God makes the impossible possible. God chooses the weak and makes them strong. You don’t have to be perfect to be a follower of God. Faith and trust in God is more important than anything else. God loves his people very much.  This expectation can be met through a pair/share or small group work. | What is surprising, even odd, about God’s choice of Abraham and Sarah as the people to carry out His plan for a people and a land? What does this tell you about God?  Read Exodus **2**:11-16 and **4**:1-17. What impression does this give of Moses? What sort of character is he?  Read Exodus **15**:22-25; **16**:1-5; **17**:1-3; **32**:1-4. What impression does this give of the Israelites?  Why does God choose them? |
|  | **Have an accurate knowledge of the Ten Commandments** | Pupils will be able to complete an unfinished list of the Ten Commandments or learn the Ten Commandments and be able to recite them. | Can you fill in the missing parts of the list of commandments?  There are ten commandments, which ones are missing?  How are the Ten Commandments organised or structured?  Which commandments are about loving God? Can you tell me what they are?  Which commandments are about loving other people? Can you tell me two, or four, or all of them? |
|  | **Show how own and others’ decisions are informed by the Ten Commandments** | Using PB p. 21 and 30 and new PB p. 35-36 pupils will show how some decisions they and people make can be based on i.e. informed by, the Ten Commandments. |  |
|  | **Show some understanding of what the Ten Commandments tell us about God and human beings (GD)** | This will be answered in general terms and specifically by taking some of the commandments in turn.  In general terms, the Ten Commandments are one of the signs of the Covenant that brings God and a specific people (first the Israelites and then the followers of Jesus – Christians) into a relationship. God wants His people to grow ever closer to Him and one of the means of this is through keeping the Ten Commandments. God promises to be the God of his people, to love them tenderly, to watch over them like a shepherd and to guide them. For their (and our) part, the people promise to live by the commandments God has given (see Exodus **19**:5-6). The commandments tell us that human beings need rules to live well with God and one another. We are prone to temptation and are inclined to act on our own self-interest so the commandments are there to guide us in the right path.  Looking specifically at the commandments, pupils could pick two, one about loving God and one about loving other people : e.g. the first commandment *‘I am the Lord your God. You shall have no other gods before me.’* The historical context is that the Israelites were living in Egypt and God brought them out of Egypt rescuing them by His power. The first commandment reminds us of God’s mighty deeds. He is the one true almighty God not a false god like the Egyptians worshipped. The Egyptians worshipped many false gods associated with nature. The Israelites also succumbed to this temptation to worship created things – by their fashioning of the golden calf/bull. So, pupils can understand this in a very concrete way: instead of putting God first people often (in the past and present) worship created things: this could be actual things like money, digital technology, one’s country etc. but also less concretely, how we put ourselves first by our selfishness. | What does God promise when making the covenant with the Israelites?  What promise do the people make?  What is the sign of the covenant?  Why are the Ten Commandments necessary?  Pick a commandment about loving God. What does it tell you about God? What does it tell us about ourselves?  Pick a commandment about loving others. What does it tell us about ourselves? |
|  | **Begin to show some understanding of the New Covenant by making links between the birth of Jesus and the covenants with Abraham and Moses.**  (new book) | By working through the material in the new PB pp. 37-41 pupils will gain an understanding of the links between the New Covenant in Jesus and the older covenants with Abraham, Moses and the role of the prophets.  In the first place, a link between the covenant with Abraham and the New Covenant is not only the link between the faith of Abraham and Mary in God’s promise: both were unwavering in their steadfast faith, their ‘yes’ to God. The key is what was promised. Not only a son, but the promise to Mary of the Son of God shows the importance of the New Covenant.  The link between the covenant through Moses and the New Covenant in Jesus is that the Ten Commandments are not replaced but fulfilled in Jesus. He shows that the Ten Commandments are still valid by summarising them in Luke **10**:27: “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself.” But Jesus goes beyond this by stating that the way to God is not simply by following the Ten Commandments given through Moses but now the path to God is Jesus himself: ”I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through me” (John **14**:6). | What’s similar about the response of Abraham and Mary to God?  So this link shows the importance of ….. |
|  | **Show understanding of a liturgy to celebrate the Incarnation** (old book) | Composing a liturgy is part of the PB p. 33. In a small group pupils can compose a four part liturgy (Welcome, Word, Response to the Word, Mission) on the theme of celebrating the Incarnation. |  |
|  | **Suggest answers to a question like, ‘What matters most at Christmas?’ comparing responses** | This question is a question of meaning and purpose. Pupils can be asked to think about what happens 1. In preparation for Christmas and 2. At Christmas. These lists can them to prioritised using target maps to sort the most important from the less important. From the most important things on the two lists, pupils can be asked to compose a response to the question: “what matters most at Christmas?” Pupils then compare their responses gaining insight from their peers about the true meaning of Christmas. Pupils working from the old PB (pp. 32-33) and new PB (pp. 40-41) may incorporate some of the key messages about the Incarnation from these pages into their responses. | What things do people do to prepare for the celebration of Christmas?  What do people do at Christmas?  What beliefs are expressed in the decisions or actions of people at Christmas? (Why do people do what they do at Christmas time?)  Can you have Christmas without Jesus?  What has the Incarnation got to do with Christmas? |