



Oide

Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim
Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí
Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional
Learning of School Leaders
and Teachers

Religious Education

Professional Learning Booklet

2023-2024



Table of Contents	Page
Glossary of Terms	2
What is the Value of RE?	3
The Big Questions	4
Worlds Apart Activity	5
Instructions for Visual Thinking Strategy (VTS)	6-7
Enquiry in Action Groupwork Instructions	8
Session 1 Reflection	9
Object-Based Learning Lesson	10
Discussion Instructions	11
Big Questions Activity	12-14
“What is Happiness” Collage	15
Concept Corner	16
Exploration Activity Instructions	17
“What is Happiness?” Activity	18-19
“How Should I Live?” Activity	20
Session 2 Reflection	21
Student and Teacher Reflection	23
Supporting Reflection-Stop and Jot	24
Elements in Action Big Questions	25
Departmental Reflection	26
Appendix 1: VTS Card	27
Appendix 2: Unit of Learning for Object-based Learning Lesson	28
Appendix 3: Junior Cycle Religious Education Learning Outcomes	29

Glossary of terms

Classroom-Based Assessments (CBA)

Classroom-Based Assessments are best described as the occasions when the teacher assesses the students using the specific tasks set out in the subject specification. The tasks are clearly described, as are the criteria for assessment to support teacher judgement. The criteria are found in the features of quality linked to each Classroom-Based Assessment. Although the assessment is similar to the formative assessment that occurs every day in class, in the case of the Classroom-Based Assessment the teacher's judgement is recorded for Subject Learning and Assessment Review and is used in the school's reporting to parents and students.

Features of Quality

The features of quality support student and teacher judgement of the Classroom-Based Assessments and are the criteria that will be used by teachers to assess the student work.

Formative Assessment

The Junior Cycle will be underpinned by the further integration of formative assessment as a normal part of teaching and learning in classrooms. Formative assessment involves teachers and students reflecting on how learning is progressing and deciding next steps to ensure meaningful outcomes. A vital part of formative assessment is the feedback that teachers provide to their students. Through a range of assessment activities, the teacher helps the student to identify what has been achieved and where there is room for further learning and development. To facilitate the type of learning envisaged above, the role of the teacher and the dynamics of the teacher-student relationship will evolve. Teachers will place a greater emphasis on integrating assessment into their teaching, so they can better monitor students' progress in learning and identify how they can support students to reflect on and critically analyse their own learning.

Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement

The JCPA will reward achievement across all areas of learning as applicable: Subjects, Short Courses, Wellbeing, Priority Learning Units, other areas of learning. The JCPA will draw upon and report on achievement across all elements of assessment including ongoing, formative assessment; Classroom-Based Assessments; and SEC grades which include results from the state-certified written and practical examinations. The JCPA will have a nationally determined format.

It will be compiled by the school and received by students in the autumn following third year, when all assessment results from the SEC and the school are available and confirmed.

Learning Intention:

A learning intention for a lesson or a series of lessons is a statement, created by the teacher, which describes clearly what the teacher wants the students to know, understand and be able to do as a result of the learning and teaching activities.

Learning Outcome:

Learning outcomes are statements in the curriculum specifications to describe the knowledge, understanding, skills and values students should be able to demonstrate after a period of learning.

Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR)

In Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings, teachers will share and discuss samples of their assessments of student work and build a common understanding about the quality of student learning. Each Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting will be subject-specific and will focus on the Classroom-Based Assessments undertaken by the particular year group.

Success Criteria

Success criteria are linked to learning intentions. They are developed by the teacher and/or the student and describe what success looks like. They help the teacher and student to make judgements about the quality of student learning.

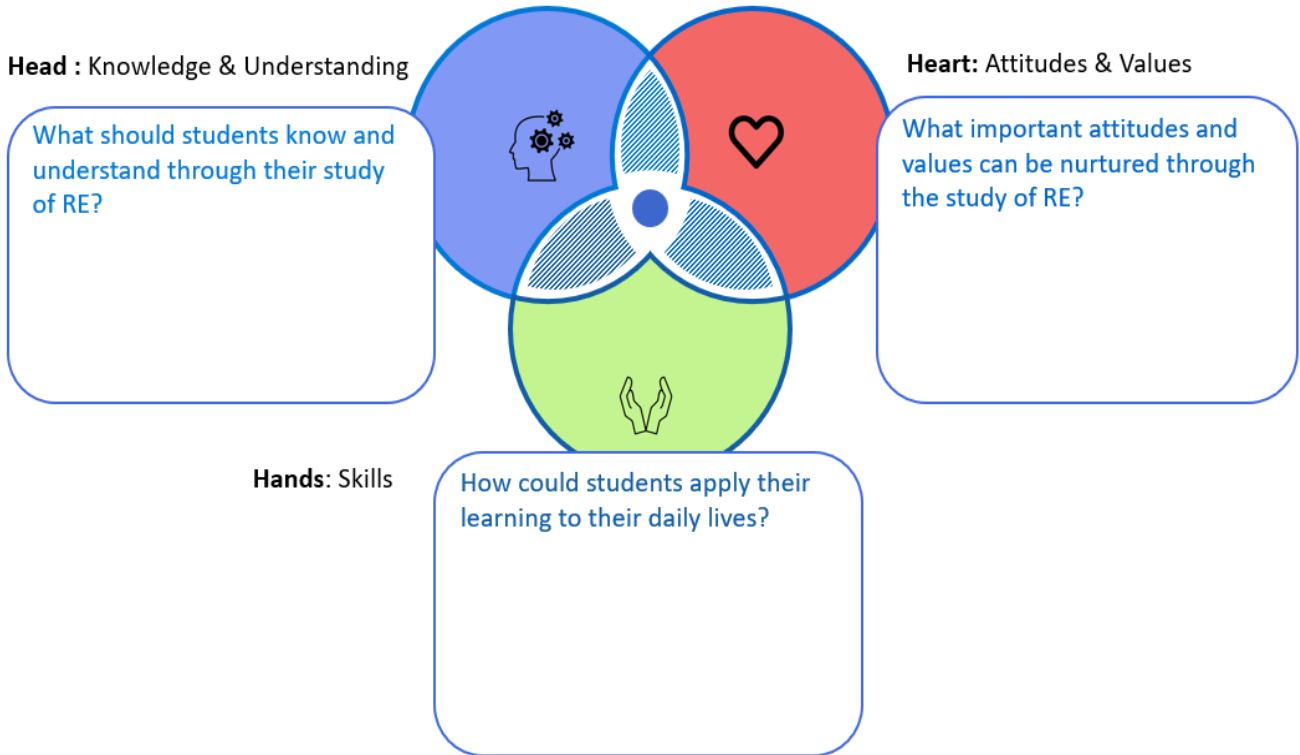
Summative Assessment

Assessment is summative when it is used to evaluate student learning at the end of the instructional process or a period of learning. The purpose is to summarise the students' achievements and to determine whether and to what degree the students have demonstrated understanding of that learning by comparing it against agreed success criteria or features of quality.

Unit of Learning

A unit of learning links learning outcomes which clearly set out what the students should know, understand, and be able to do as a result of the learning and teaching activities within that unit.

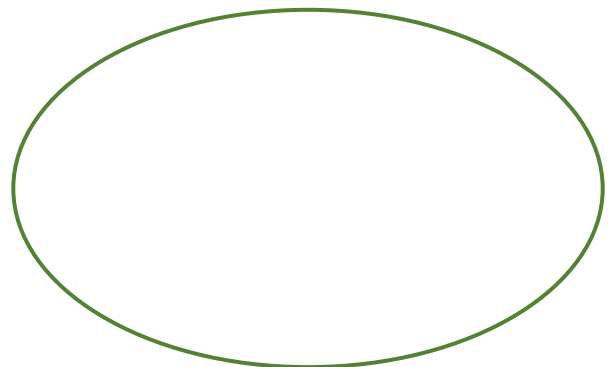
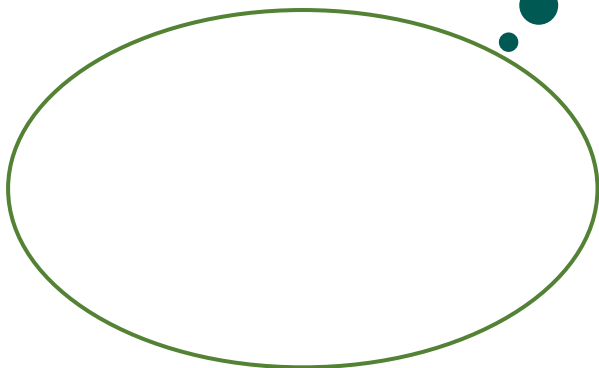
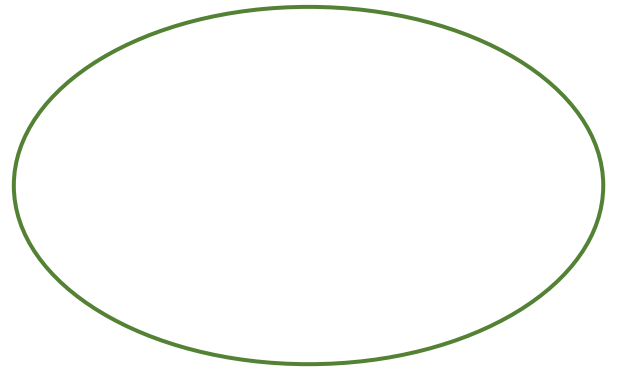
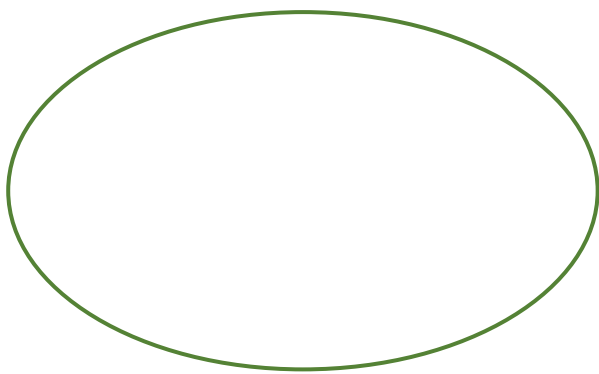
What is the value of RE?



The Big Questions

“Foundational questions which relate to the human search for meaning. These questions are common (shared by everybody); central (help us understand ourselves and our world); and contestable (can lead to different and sometimes competing understandings).”

NCCA Junior Cycle Religious Education Specification, p.28



'Worlds Apart' Activity

Having watched this short animation 'Worlds Apart' from Theos available [here](#), consider one of the Big Questions that resonated with you and how this question is explored in the clip.

Big Question:

Why does it resonate with you?

How was it portrayed in the animation?

How can we support students to generate their own Big Questions?

Enquiry in Action Instructions



Step by step guide to VTS

In VTS, the teacher is not teaching the group but is actively facilitating a conversation and a shared experience through looking and discovering.

Setting up:

Image selection is very important, prior learning will assist greatly. Choose an image with clearly identifiable objects/people. Ensure the scene in the image is not too complex as students may feel overwhelmed. If the image is too simple, the conversation will be over quickly. Aim to choose an image that everyone in your class will be able to engage with. Use a whiteboard, large screen, or large piece of artwork that everyone can see at the same time.

Step 1 Begin with a **Silent Moment**, duration about 60 seconds. Encourage students to pause, focus and look at the entire image.

Step 2 Ask the following question, do not deviate from this wording: "**What is going on in this picture?**" (This question is used to open the conversation and will be used once, only at the start of the discussion). Await responses.

Step 3 Point exactly to where the student is commenting on in the image. If unsure exactly where they are focussing their attention, seek clarification from the student. Continue to point to areas in the image that are being discussed through the whole process.

Step 4 Paraphrase or summarise the response: "David thinks this could be....." This will keep the conversation open to other possibilities that other students may want to comment on.

Avoid adding your own opinion or links to anything else; **ONLY** paraphrase/summarise.

Don't say that the information is right or wrong: you do not want to devalue one student's opinion or what they see over another student's opinion, even though the latter opinion may be more accurate or correct.

Step 5 Ask the 2nd question: "**What do you see that makes you say...?**"

(fill in the space with whatever the student has said)

Again, do not deviate from the wording of the question. This question encourages students to back up their comments with evidence and by making links to prior knowledge or evidence from the picture.

Again, do not agree, disagree or offer opinions but simply repeat or paraphrase.

Step 6 Ask the 3rd question: "**What more can we find?**"

Once more do not deviate from the question's wording. This question encourages differing opinions or elicits more that can be identified from the picture. At this point, the process starts again: refer to steps 3, 4 and 5 above.

Step 7 As more and more responses are offered, feel free to make links to what other students have said and identified in the earlier parts of the conversation but only do this by using the language they have used and what they have said exactly to you.

Step 8 For the purpose of exploring the Big Questions in the RE classroom we have included an 4th question: "**What Big Questions could you link to this picture?**". This question should only be asked after several cycles of questions 2 and 3 this way students have had a chance to slow down their looking and deepen their thinking.

Note

Literacy Moments

There may be opportunities for important **literacy moments**. These are moments where you can change a word a student has said while you are paraphrasing, moving from basic, simple language to words of higher complexity.

Ending the conversation

Conversations can continue for 10-15 minutes or may finish where nothing more can be found, or students are no longer responding to "What more can we find?".

There is no need to validate anyone's comments. Students may seek clarification and wish to know what was the "right" answer and seek your opinion. Do not give your opinion as it is their opinions and comments that count and the evidence that they can see.

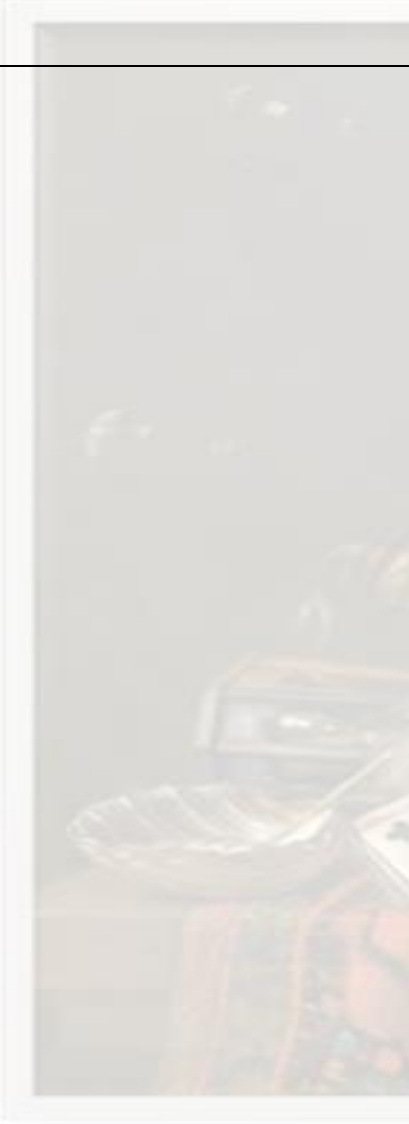


Encourage students to seek clarity to their comments by investigating independently. Curiosity will be piqued.

Enquiry in Action Groupwork Instructions

- We will be using VTS to examine the picture assigned to your group
- Consider the big question(s) associated with your picture and why that might be the case
- Record your observations with your group.

The screenshot shows a digital workspace with three main columns. The left column is titled 'Visual Thinking Strategy-focus questions' and contains two cards. The top card is titled 'Visual Thinking Strategy (VTS) Learning to Look in the RE Classroom'. The bottom card is a diagram with four steps: 'Silent Moment', 'What's going on in this picture?', 'What do you see that makes you say...?', and 'What more can we find?'. The middle column is titled 'Try VTS with your group' and contains three cards. The top card says 'CLICK ON THE IMAGE TO SEE IT IN GREATER DETAIL'. The middle card is 'Step 1: To try VTS, one person will volunteer to use the 4 questions to facilitate VTS with the group. Everyone is asked to participate.' Below this is an image of a person holding up a large white cloth with a yellow and green pattern. The bottom card is 'OUR VTS QUESTIONS' and lists the same four questions as the diagram. The right column is titled 'GROUP 1' and contains three cards. The top card is 'Step 2: Write your Big Questions here.' with a 'Write here' prompt. The middle card is 'Step 3: Upload or share images/sources/links to material that could meaningfully engage students with the Big Questions you have recorded above.' with a 'Write here' prompt.

Session 1 Reflection

How	Now	Wow
<p>How can visual art help to pique students' curiosity when engaging with life's Big Questions?</p>	<p>When might I use Visual Thinking Strategies for slow looking and deep thinking in my RE classroom?</p>	<p>Is there anything new that surprised me or challenged me that I will think more about?</p>
		

Object-Based Learning Lesson

Consider how Enquiry is encouraged through the use of solo time and group work to harvest questions and share ideas. What other ways could you enable students to enquire about the sacred artefact?


Consider how further Exploration is supported through the card-sorting activity and the use of web-based research which was supported by guiding questions. Are there other strategies that can support students to delve deeper into their exploration of these topics?

Consider why it is valuable to ask the students about the ways in which their poster can reflect successful learning. Is there another dialogical activity that could replace the Gallery walk?

Consider how the reflective questions relate to both the learning task and the process? Why is this sort of reflection valuable? Are there other reflection models you use with your students?

Stop and Jot activity

In your groups, we will actively listen to each other's contributions to consider the two questions below.

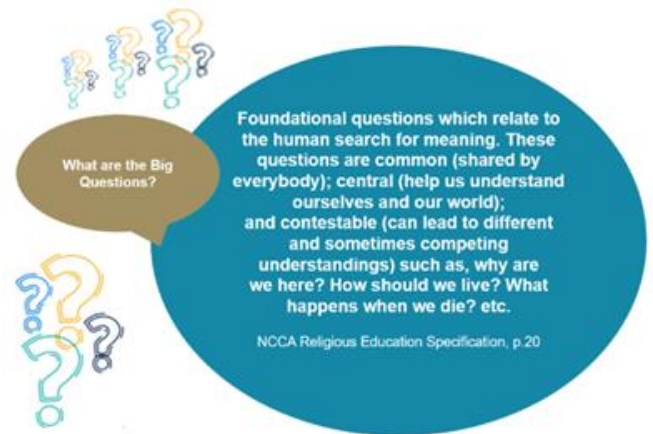


What direction could the learning take to engage students in Big Questions?

Big Questions in the RE specification

With your group, read through your assigned Learning Outcomes and, in terms of knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and values, and consider:

- a. What learning will students engage with through interaction with these learning outcomes? (KUSAV)
- b. What Big Questions could be explored in these Learning Outcomes?



Breakout Room 1	
Learning Outcomes	Key Learning? Big Questions?
1.1 present the key religious beliefs of the five major world religions found in Ireland today.	
2.4 research and present the understanding of the Divine found in two major world religions drawing upon their origins in sacred texts and/or other sources of authority.	
3.3 examine a moral code in two of the five major world religions and discuss how each code could influence moral decision-making for believers.	

Breakout Room 2	
Learning Outcomes	Key Learning? Big Questions?
1.1 engage with members of a faith community associated with one of the five major world religions studied in the specification and show an appreciation of how the religious beliefs of the community influence the day-to-day life of its members.	
2.3 explore how different narratives/stories, religious and non-religious, express an understanding of creation/the natural world, and consider their meaning and relevance for today.	
2.7 explore how the religious teachings of a major world religion address an issue of concern for the world today.	
3.8 explain how an understanding of care for the earth found in a major world religion promotes the wellbeing of all people and the planet and discuss its relevance for today.	

Breakout Room 3	
Learning Outcomes	Key Learning? Big Questions?
1.11 research religious or other organisations, working at a national or international level to promote justice, peace and reconciliation and consider how their work is an expression of their founding vision.	
1.8 describe the role of prayer in the lives of people of faith.	
2.8 present stories of individuals or of groups in the history of two major world religions that have had a positive impact on the lives of people because of their commitment to living out their beliefs.	
3.7 research the understanding of compassion, justice, peace and reconciliation found in two major world religions and ways in which these understandings can be seen in action.	

Breakout Room 4	
Learning Outcomes	Key Learning? Big Questions?
1.2 investigate two communities of faith that have a significant presence in their locality/region (the communities of faith chosen must be associated with two of the five major world religions studied in the specification)	
2.8 present stories of individuals or of groups in the history of two major world religions that have had a positive impact on the lives of people because of their commitment to living out their beliefs.	
3.4 investigate what living a morally good life means with reference to two major world religions and compare with a non-religious world view.	

Breakout Room 5	
Learning Outcomes	Key Learning? Big Questions?
1.3 engage with members of a faith community associated with one of the five major world religions studied in the specification and show an appreciation of how the religious beliefs of the community influence the day-to-day life of its members.	
2.3 explore how different narratives/stories, religious and non-religious, express an understanding of creation/the natural world, and consider their meaning and relevance for today.	
2.7 explore how the religious teachings of a major world religion address an issue of concern for the world today.	
3.8 explain how an understanding of care for the earth found in a major world religion promotes the wellbeing of all people and the planet and discuss its relevance for today.	



What is Happiness?



Concept Corner

Happiness

The image of 'happiness' you have chosen...

Phrases or sentences where we use the concept of 'happiness'..

Related ideas or associations...

Words or phrases of similar or opposite meaning...

Examples or contexts where the concept of 'happiness' applies...

CC BY NC

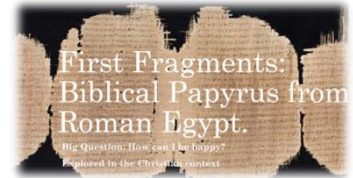
Oide Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí Scoile agus Múinteoirí Supporting the Professional Learning of School Leaders and Teachers

Exploration Activity Instructions

Evidence of the Search for Meaning

Archaeological: **First Fragment**

Link to the virtual exhibition '**First Fragments; Biblical Papyrus from Roman Egypt**' at Chester Beatty Library:



Link to '**A Virtual Tour for Schools**'

In this activity, you will be considering the Big Question of “What is happiness?” through an exploration of a biblical fragment from the Chester Beatty Library’s virtual exhibition ‘First Fragments; Biblical Papyrus from Roman Egypt.’ The focus of this activity will be to consider how we can support students’ exploration of this evidence.

“What is Happiness?” Activity

Lk 12:22-34: Do Not Worry

Then Jesus said to his disciples: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them.

And how much more valuable you are than birds! Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest...

“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

What connections can be made between the Big Question: 'What is Happiness?' and the teaching of Jesus in this fragment?

What questions might help students explore the distinction Jesus makes between material and spiritual happiness?

After examining the fragment, explore and discuss these questions with your group

How can we use this fragment to develop students' learning on the role of prayer in the life of a Christian?

What parallels might students draw between this Christian understanding of happiness and contemporary ideas of wellbeing and happiness?

“How Should I Live?” Activity

Architectural: Clonskeagh Islamic Centre and Mosque

In this activity you will be considering the Big Question “How should I live?” through an exploration of a virtual tour of the architecture of the Islamic Cultural Centre in Clonskeagh.




This is a solo activity. When you have finished touring the Mosque using the Thinglink, we will come back together to complete a reflection task.



Click on the link [Clonskeagh Islamic Centre/Mosque](#) to access this activity or scan the QR code:



Session 2 Reflection

How	Now	Wow
<p>How can a deeper exploration of an object(s) enhance my students' learning experience?</p>	<p>What might I need to do to use OBL in my RE classroom now?</p>	<p>Is there anything new that surprised or challenged me that I will think more about?</p>
		

Student and Teacher Reflection – Object-based learning (OBL)

Stop and Jot activity

Having listened to student and teacher feedback, take a few moments to Stop and Jot some thoughts, focusing on the following two questions:


1. Consider opportunities for reflection before, during and after learning in this lesson.

2. How do you support reflection on learning in your RE classroom?

Supporting Reflection

Stop and Jot activity

Take a moment to think about how we can develop reflection for personal response to learning. You can use the Stop and Jot section here to record your thoughts on the following:



1. What meaningful questions do I ask my students to encourage them to personally engage with Big Questions in life?

2. In what ways can students express their personal response to Big Questions?

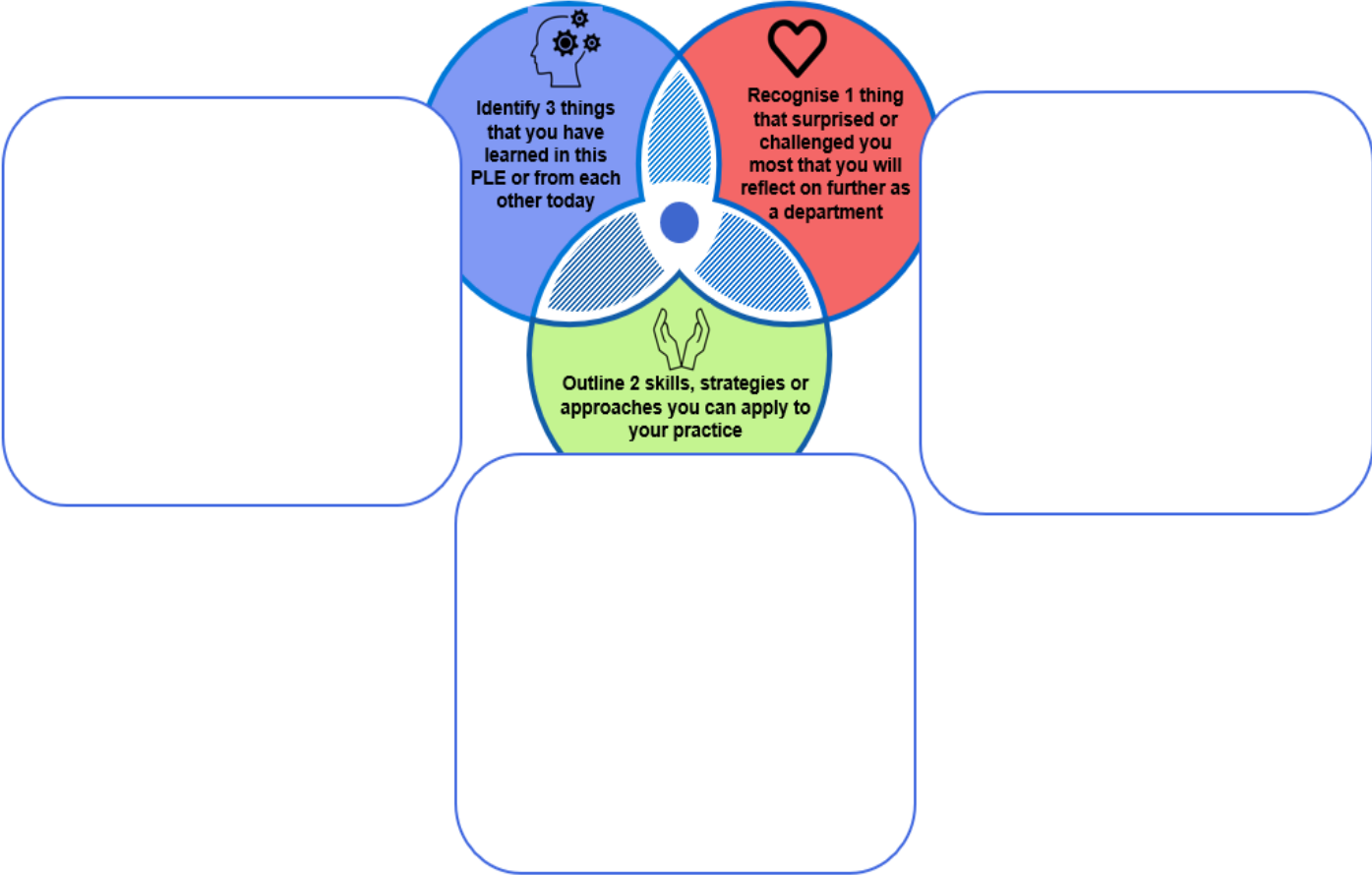
Elements in Action Big Questions

In this activity, you will be exploring **one** of five Big Questions in our activity.

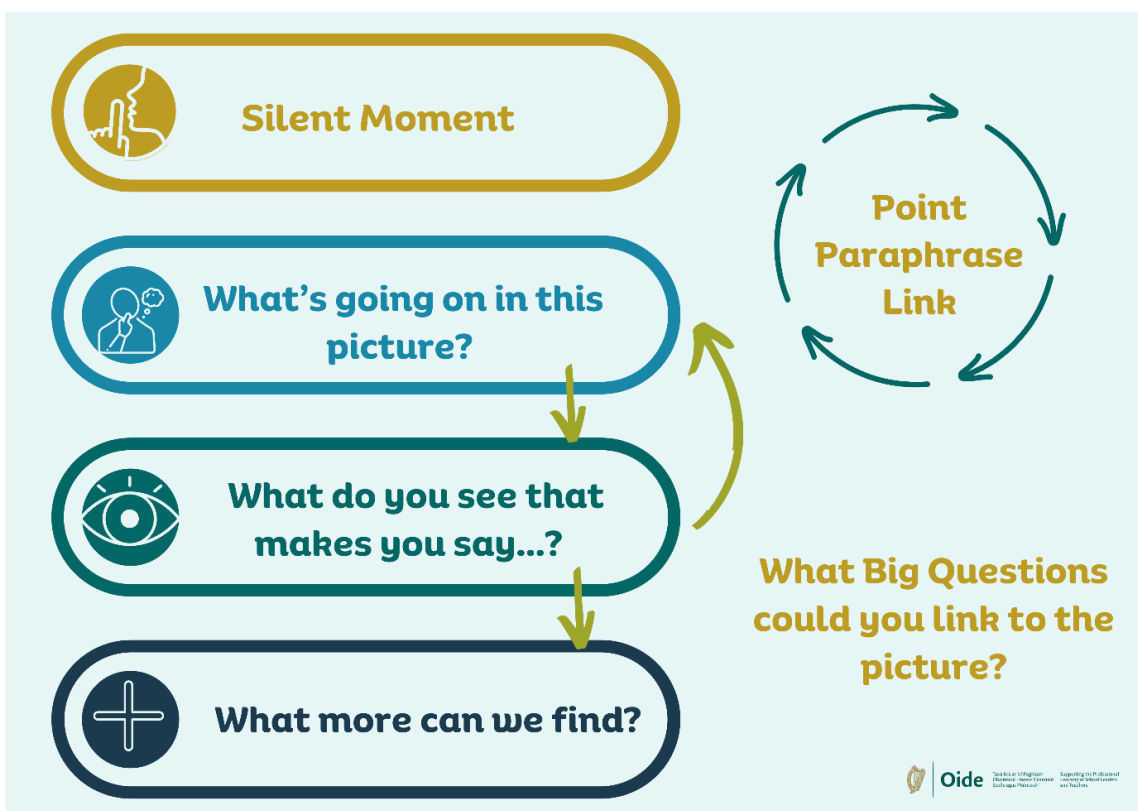
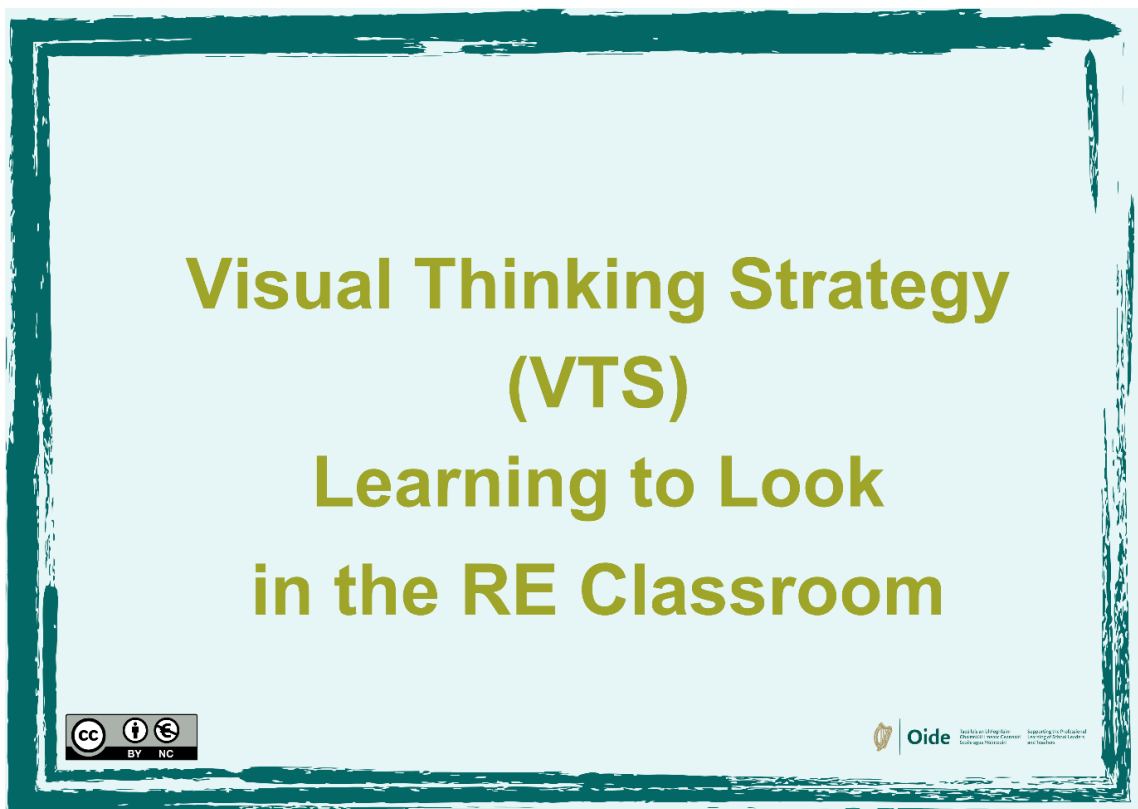
You will be given **one** object to explore related to one of five Big Questions below:

Big Question	Medium	Object
Why does suffering exist?	Sculpture	Famine memorial, Dublin 
What is love?	Visual image	Hindu wedding ceremony 
Are we all equal?	Street art	Street art by Banksy 
Why do we exist?	Poem	"Who made the world?" by Mary Oliver 
What happens when we die?	Song	"Marjorie" by Taylor Swift 

Departmental Reflection



Appendix 1: VTS Card



Effective Planning for Teaching, Learning & Assessment



Oide

Learning Outcomes

- 1.6** examine and appreciate how people give expression to religious belief in religious rituals, in formal places of worship and other sacred spaces.
- 1.8** describe the role of prayer in the lives of people of faith.
- 2.2** consider responses from one major world religion and from a non-religious world-view to some big questions about the meaning of life, such as, How should we live?
- 3.2** reflect upon and discuss what it means to be moral, why people living in society need to be moral and what are the influences on and sources of authority for a person's moral decision-making

Key Learning

- Students will**
- identify objects associated with prayer and religious ritual.
 - understand the role of prayer in people's lives.
 - encounter ways in which people use objects to express their relationship with God/gods and the Divine.
 - examine ways in which prayer can relate to the everyday choices of a person of faith.

Ongoing Assessment

- Students will**
- choose one object associated with prayer.
 - share observations about this object in a group.
 - craft questions they would like to ask their peers.
 - identify and research facts relating to that object.
 - create a poster and share their learning with other groups.

Level 2 LP

- 1.2** Ask questions to obtain information.
- 1.15** Find key information from different forms of writing.
- 1.17** Write notes and messages needed for simple tasks.

Reflection

- How would this object be used in a religious ceremony or ritual?
- How does this object help people to express their beliefs?
- How does this object show that people value prayer in their lives and in choices they make on a daily basis?

Learning Experiences

- Students will**
- engage with see- think -wonder prompt questions about the sacred artefact and its relationship with prayer.
 - share their observations using the Placemat activity.
 - explore the object further by engaging in a card-sorting activity, a dialogical tool to encourage discussion.
 - create an information poster and share their learning.
 - explore other sacred artefacts in a gallery walk activity
 - using the reflection prompts to consider how people of faith use objects to express their beliefs and how this is expressed in their everyday choices.



Appendix 3: Junior Cycle Religious Education Learning Outcomes

