

**Education Scotland
RME and outdoor learning webinar 19 November 2020
Follow up summary of discussion**

Links shared by facilitators and participants during the session:

- Interesting blog from Juliet Robertson about outdoor learning and learning outdoors <https://creativestarning.co.uk/interesting-issues-hot-topics/outdoor-learning-or-learning-outdoors-whats-the-difference/>
- Scottish Advisory Panel on Outdoor Education - <https://www.sapoe.org.uk/> Useful to identify your local authority link representative is
- Link to the new Education Scotland outdoor learning summary page which includes links to the SAPOE Teaching Learning Outdoors and Supporting Learning Outdoors online modules - see the Professional learning section: <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/a-summary-of-outdoor-learning-resources/>
- There's a nice wee book called the Walking Curriculum. Evoking Wonder.
- Labyrinths are great to create in school grounds - can be from bulbs that are spring flowering so can fit in with grass cutting regimes <https://creativestarning.co.uk/?s=labyrinth>
- Briefing on RME and outdoor learning <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/religious-and-moral-education-through-outdoor-learning/>
- [Yearly calendar of religious festivals](https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/religious-festivals) <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/religious-festivals> Outdoor learning wakelet <https://wke.lt/w/s/beXl3C>
- Free handbook and resources called The Common Cause Handbook The John Muir Award also have resources based upon the Common Cause handbook too <https://publicinterest.org.uk/download/values/Common%20Cause%20Handbook.pdf>
- Louise Chawla shares some of the benefits of nature at <https://www.csu.edu/cerc/researchreports/documents/BenefitsOfNatureForChildren2007.pdf> Louise has written a number of books and journal articles
- Samye Ling Monastery and Tibetan Centre has a fabulous clootie tree. Juliet has a blog post about a visit there <https://creativestarning.co.uk/c/rme-outdoors/>

Please note that the inclusion of any external website, good or service does not imply endorsement by Education Scotland.

A series of three pictures were shared:



Participants were encouraged to consider some of the questions/wonderings learners may have in relation to going for a walk in a space such as these. Some examples include:

- Could go on a fungi hunt - where will we find them?
- Who created the paths?
- What animals live here? Who/what lives here? Who does this belong to?
- Where are we going? Are we there yet?
- How long have the trees been here? Have they been here before my parents were born?
- Where does this road lead? What will we do if there is a fork in the road?
- Where do all the colours come from?
- What type of tree is this?
- Questions to do with types of trees, wildlife in the woods. The sunlight shining through, how does it make you feel to be here?
- why do leaves turn brown in autumn - change of season
- Who made these trees?
- Is the lake man-made or natural?
- Physical journey vs spiritual journey

Possible prompts were shared and participants reflected on which prompt stood out for them and how they might explore aspects with learners.

Some examples shared include:

- The importance of looking after the planet - we are caretakers - mentioned in lots of religions
- Concept of stewardship
- The first question stands out especially when thinking about working with kids in an inner city school
- A lot of religions have references to journeying or pilgrimage... and we also have the journeys of refugees who have had to go on a journey to become safe.
- Often have conversations based on justice and fairness - Who looks after the outdoors? Who can use the spaces? What impact do our actions have on the outdoors?
- Curiosity of the how this came to be.
- Links to climate change and environmental issues.

Linking RME to OL: An illustrative example

Prompts for use before, during or after a walk outdoors with learners...

- How often do you go for a walk outdoors? What's different about the outdoors compared to being inside? How does it make you feel?
- What can you see, smell, touch and hear? What questions do you have when you sense these things?
- Can you see any examples when you're outdoors of things which are: big, tiny, beautiful, amazing, interesting, strange?
- When you're outdoors, does it prompt you to ask questions about your beliefs or others' beliefs? Do you ask yourself any questions about what things matter in life?
- Do your experiences outdoors make you any more or less likely to believe that something made it all - or that it all just happened?
- In RME, you may have thought about things like fairness, kindness, compassion, equality, love- does being outdoors make you think of any of these things? In what way?
- In RME you may have heard stories from religions, does being outdoors remind you of any of these stories? Why do you think you're reminded of these stories?
- When you're outdoors can you see any examples of where people are caring for nature - or not caring for nature?

For Scotland's learners, with Scotland's educators

Examples from across beliefs, values and practices and traditions were shared and participants shared how they might connect RME and outdoor learning with learners.

- Links to climate change and environmental issues
- Aspects of nature and specific people in the bible e.g. David was a shepherd,
- Vandalised or bleak areas of outdoors - planting bulbs, flowers etc. to brighten up the area, how does this impact others wellbeing?
- Adults taking positive action e.g. even just picking up a piece of rubbish, commenting on something beautiful they have noticed, and so on.
- Concept of growth in Christian beliefs - parable of mustard seed, fig tree, crops and agriculture, harvests etc. - linking to nature and natural world
- Values of CfE include wisdom, justice, compassion and integrity -Scottish Government is committed to climate justice.
- Questions around love for neighbour - does this extend into the natural world as well?
- Birth-death-re-birth
- Environmental impact on the commercialisation of religious holidays.
- Going outside takes us to the origins of festivals which often stem from nature and the seasons and ways of coping through the winter, celebrating new life, thankfulness for harvest etc.
- Easter - rolling eggs down the hills, outside baptisms in local rivers etc.

RME & OL The Current Picture

Where is OL in RME? Illustrative 2nd Level focus: Beliefs

Experiences & Outcomes	Questions	Possible Learning Contexts
Through investigating and reflecting upon biblical and other Christian stories/stories of world religions, I can show my understanding of these stories. RME 2-01a; RME 2-04a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which religious stories have themes linked to the natural world? • What do these stories tell us about different approaches to nature/ the environment? • How do these stories guide followers of religion in their interactions with nature? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious stories – environmental messages – e.g. Parable of the sower, widow's mite, creation stories, tilling the water, Jataka tales, Hagar, Tikkon Chan, Dasvandh, Ahimsa • Explore stories and let learners draw their own meaning! • Outdoor experiences which prompt 'awe and wonder' (vastness/ complexity of nature)
I can show understanding of Christian beliefs/the beliefs of world religions and explore the similarities and differences between these and my developing beliefs. RME 2-01c; RME 2-04c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there 'universal' beliefs about nature which are shared across religions and belief-groups? • What do concepts like 'stewardship' and 'environmental responsibility' mean to religious groups and me? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do religions teach about 'ownership' and 'stewardship'? • Judaeo-Christian/ Islam – stewardship on behalf of God/ tension between use and abuse • Buddhist/Hinduism – Karma/Karmic consequences of actions
I can explain why different people think that values such as honesty, respect and compassion are important, and I show respect for others. RME 2-06c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can we 'respect' nature? • How can we demonstrate compassion for the natural world? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does compassion mean across religions and how can we show compassion for nature? • Individual actions and environmental consequences; sustainable practices • Care for the natural world – animal issues, biodiversity, sustainability
I am developing my understanding of how my own and other people's beliefs and values affect their actions. RME 2-06d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do our individual beliefs about nature/ the environment affect our actions? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How environmentally-friendly is my lifestyle? What could I change which would align better with religious teachings?

For Scotland's learners, with Scotland's educators

Discussion question 1 - How might I use the outdoors to support children and young people to explore their and others' beliefs, drawing upon religious and other beliefs?

- Outdoors can include looking at religious buildings too.
- Visit sites such as memorials, wells and cloutie trees and be led by pupil questions and experiences.
- When I look at religious buildings we walk through graveyards and there is lots of discussion

Where might children gain their values?

- Generally from their environment, their parents, family influences, media etc.
- Those around them. Parents. Local and wider happening issues.
- Their beliefs can come from exploring the outdoors themselves

Discussion question 2 - How might I use the outdoors to support children and young people to explore values drawing upon religious and other beliefs?

- caring for the environment as an individual or as a group - caring in many religions
- Looking at values mapping your outdoor space can be really interesting... peace gardens can be found in many countries but where in your space do you go to find peace? Conversely, what or where does conflict occur and in what ways can this be addressed? What does kindness look like outside?
- Where do we walk? Using paths and not creating short cuts across flowers etc. Litter picking. Planting. Creating 'safe spaces' for wildlife, bird boxes, bug hotels etc.
- Looking at habitats in local areas
- Outdoor group work and challenges encourage children to work together and to treat each other well.
- Considering the value of honesty - can we honestly reflect on the changes, or efforts we take to protect or conserve our planet/natural world?
- Many religious songs are linked to the natural world. Dovetail what they see to the song.

Discussion question 3 - How can I use the outdoors to illustrate and prompt thinking about practices and traditions which are linked to the natural world?

- Often young children show genuine empathy and compassion for living things e.g. huge discussions around spiders.
- Biodiversity and interdependence opens up all kinds of discussion about 'why should we ...'
- Perceived monetary value of the natural world -eco-system services
- Example of pupils looking for a local missing cat creating posters with the tag line 'What if this was your pet?'