

# Lessons on Humanism



1st / 2nd Class



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# Lessons on Humanism



**1st and 2nd Class**  
**Lesson 1**  
**What is Humanism?**

## Strand: Belief Systems

Moral & Spiritual, Cultivating Spiritual growth

## Strand Unit: Beliefs and Values

### CONTENT OBJECTIVE: To identify key values associated with Humanism

## LESSON 1

## WHAT IS HUMANISM?

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To recognise that Humanists have asked the same questions as other groups.
- To explore how we can all come up with different answers to the same questions.
- To reflect on how we can find answers to ours.

### Background to lesson:

(For teachers' information)

Humanists believe that they are part of nature and as such have a responsibility of stewardship towards the environment as well as a duty of respect towards their fellow human beings. Humanists do not believe in a god or gods. Instead they value evidence-based investigation.

Humanists also derive a sense of awe and appreciation from positive aspects of life such as art, music, sport, nature and time spent with family and friends.

Humanists are just one group of people who have this viewpoint. There are others e. g people who identify as atheist or agnostic.

As with any philosophical outlook or religious affiliation, it cannot be said that all Humanists think or behave in a particular way.

If children reflect during the lessons and say 'I think I am a Humanist' or 'Am I a Humanist if...?' it may be useful to let them know that people from different beliefs and philosophical viewpoints often share principles or values. Humanism incorporates beliefs which are shared by many religious and secular groups. It should also be pointed out that it is, of course, acceptable not to identify with a particular group, as it is to be uncertain and still questioning e.g. agnostics have not committed to the existence or lack of existence of a god or gods.

### Introduction

Teacher explains '*what we're going to learn today*'.

Humanists ask questions about the world around them and come up with answers by themselves and not from a god or gods. Atheists are also a group that does not believe in a god or gods. Sometimes atheists call themselves Humanists and sometimes they don't and sometimes Humanists call themselves atheist and sometimes they don't.

**Group discussion:** The teacher writes the following question on the board. "What do you think is the best colour and why"? In pairs the children discuss their answers and then share with the whole class. The teacher asks;

- Did everyone come up with the same answer?
- Why not?
- Is that okay?

## Development

**Story:** Teacher reads the story 'The First Snow'.

**Think-pair-share:** The teacher leads a discussion on how the children in the story all had different ideas about where the snow came from. Questions could include:

- What did you learn from the story 'The First Snow'?
- What questions did the characters ask?
- Did everyone come up with the same answer?
- Why do you think they didn't?
- Who do you think had the correct answer? Why?

## Conclusion

**Reflection: Think-pair-share**

- What do you think when you hear answers that you don't agree with or that are very different to your own?
- What's the best thing to do?

Teacher reminds children that Humanists believe people should ask questions and find out the answers for themselves.

Teacher concludes the discussion by asking the children what they have learned about Humanism today

## Differentiation

### Lower Order Questioning

- How do you learn things?
- How do you find answers to questions you have about the world around you?

### Socratic Questions

- Should you always believe what you read in books or what other people tell you? Why? Why Not?
- Who or what can help you make up your mind?

### Linkage and Integration

- Oral Language: Sequencing activities orally or pictorially
- Art: The children could provide an artistic response around their favorite things to do in the snow
- Oral Language: WOW words work
- Writing: Extending the story e.g. What happens next?

## LEARNING RESOURCE

A copy of the story  
"The First Snow"

## Assessment:

- Teacher observation
- Teacher's questions/  
Children's questions

It is recommended that Assessment for Learning (AFL) strategies be incorporated into lessons. Examples below:

### Increase 'wait/thinking time'

- Increase time for learner response to at least 5 seconds

### No hands up

- All learners are expected to contribute and all answers valued. Teacher may select any pupil, therefore all pupils need to frame answer in their head.

### Traffic Lighting/thumbs up and thumbs down

- Pupils assess own learning  
**Red**/thumbs down: can't do this/don't understand  
**Amber**/thumbs level: unsure  
**Green**/thumbs up: Can do this/understand

### Ask for feedback/teaching ideas

- Pupils are regularly asked: 'How can we learn even more about Humanism? What ideas do you have?'



## The First Snow

Suzanne Smith

Squeals of excitement could be heard in houses everywhere, as children all over town woke up and opened their curtains.

The sun shone brightly and a thick, soft blanket of shining snow covered everything in sight.

The morning bell chimed out at Sunshine Educate Together School. The children who had arrived on time, lined up to go inside.

Their eyes sparkled and the steam from their breath rose in the air as they chattered excitedly in the line.

Once inside, the children peeled off their hats, gloves and coats. Some went straight to their tables. Others clustered around the windows, watching the laughing latecomers arriving to school.

Rasha and Ade were at the window. Their eyes were wide with excitement. It was the first time both children had seen snow. The sight before them was so new and beautiful that they didn't dare to speak in case it was a dream.

Eventually, Ade asked in a quiet voice 'Where do you think it all comes from?

Rasha was quick to answer in a steamy, breathless rush, 'Oh, I think there is a great, giant Snow King somewhere who can turn the air into snow. To surprise the people, he sometimes blows snow everywhere.' Turning to Ade she asked, 'what do you think?'

Ade thought for a moment. 'There is so much of it and its everywhere,' he murmured. Suddenly his face lit up.

'Remember we learned how bees and birds spread seeds and pollen everywhere? Well, I think lots of birds and animals spread the snow around at night while we were asleep.'

Rasha nodded slowly. She wasn't sure if the birds and animals could do so much work in one night, but maybe they did.

'It comes from the sky,' said Sally, who had been standing nearby. Rasha and Ade turned and looked at Sally questioningly.

'The snow,' Sally repeated, as she pointed outside. 'It is water from the clouds in the sky. When it gets

very cold the water freezes into tiny flakes and down it falls. If the ground is cold enough, all the snowflakes make a big pile of snow.'

Rasha and Ade looked at each other, then back at Sally. 'When it melts it turns back into water', she added, nodding towards the puddle inside the classroom door.

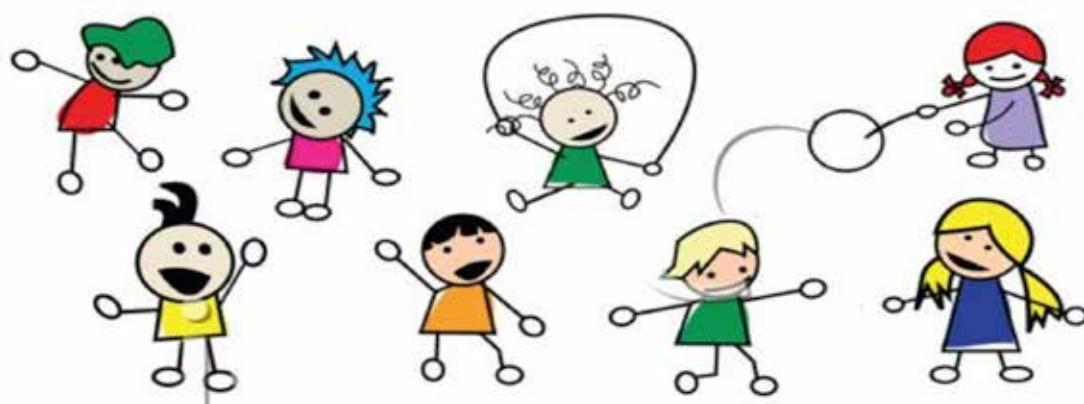
Just then, the teacher announced that everyone was going back outside to play in the snow because it could all be melted by tomorrow. The children cheered.

Rasha and Ade looked at Sally and turned again to look outside at the soft, white blanket. It was inviting them to play like they had never played before.

'Come on!', urged Sally, 'I'll show you how to make snowballs. You can be on my team.'

Rasha and Ade rushed to join Sally and their friends. Outside, the jingling sound of the children's fun joined with the whizzing of snowballs flying through the chilly air.

Maybe it would just be water tomorrow, but for today it was their magical, first snow. It didn't matter how it got there.



# Lessons on Humanism



**1st and 2nd Class**  
**Lesson 2**  
**The Humanist logo**

## Strand: Belief Systems

Moral & Spiritual, Cultivating Spiritual growth

## Strand Unit: Beliefs and Values

### CONTENT OBJECTIVE: To identify key values associated with Humanism

## LESSON 2 THE HUMANIST LOGO

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To explore a variety of logos and what it is they represent
- To identify and discuss the term Humanism.
- To design a logo to illustrate the concept 'Happy Human'

#### Background to lesson:

(For teachers' information)

Humanists believe that they are part of nature and as such have a responsibility of stewardship towards the environment as well as a duty of respect towards their fellow human beings. Humanists do not believe in a god or gods. Instead they value evidence-based investigation.

Humanists also derive a sense of awe and appreciation from positive aspects of life such as art, music, sport, nature and time spent with family and friends.

Humanists are just one group of people who have this viewpoint. There are others e.g. people who identify as atheist or agnostic.

As with any philosophical outlook or religious affiliation, it cannot be said that all Humanists think or behave in a particular way.

If children reflect during the lessons and say 'I think I am a Humanist' or 'Am I a Humanist if...?' it may be useful to let them know that people from different beliefs and philosophical viewpoints often share principles or values. Humanism incorporates beliefs which are shared by many religious and secular groups. It should also be pointed out that it is, of course, acceptable not to identify with a particular group, as it is to be uncertain and still questioning e.g. agnostics have not committed to the existence or lack of existence of a god or gods.

#### Introduction

Teacher explains '*what we're going to learn today*'.

Humanists ask questions about the world around them and come up with answers by themselves and not from a god or gods. Humanists do not believe in a god or gods. Atheists are also a group that does not believe in a god or gods. Sometimes atheists call themselves Humanists and sometimes they don't and sometimes Humanists call themselves atheist and sometimes they don't.

#### Think / Pair / Share: Logo Worksheet.

In pairs, children match each logo to corresponding word/concept.

Alternatively, teacher uses other logos, (preferably non-commercial) that are likely to be familiar to the children e.g. school logo or logo of local sports team.

The children share their answers with the whole class. Children assess logos. Are they successful in representing particular group / organisation / concept?

Whole class discussion: The teacher leads discussion about logos – what they are, why they are used and where we can find them. A quick logo hunt on books, bags and clothes might be interesting.

## Development

### Think / Pair / Share

Teacher displays the logo of the Humanist Association of Ireland (HAI) and asks the children to discuss what it means, using the following questions as prompts:

- What does this logo look like?
- Has anyone seen it before?
- What do you think it's trying to say?

The teacher explains that the logo is that of the Humanist Association of Ireland. It means 'Happy Human'. Does it work as a logo? Is it a good logo? What does the logo make the children think about?

## Conclusion

### Artistic Response:

Children design their own 'Happy Human' logo.

Teacher concludes the discussion by asking what the children have learned about Humanism today.

### Differentiation

- Look at signs used in and around the school. What do they mean / what do they represent?
- Listen to music from advertisements. What is the advertisement for?

### Lower Order Questioning

- Where can you find logos?
- Do you like logos? Why?
- When you see the logo for Lego / Star Wars (film, toy etc. that is currently popular with class) what do you think about?

### Socratic Questions

- What does 'happy human' mean?
- Are we always happy?
- What things can we do to make ourselves happy?
- Would it be good to be happy all the time? Why / Why not?

# LEARNING RESOURCE

## The Humanist Logo Logo Worksheet

### Assessment:

- Teacher observation
- Teacher's questions/  
Children's questions

It is recommended that Assessment for Learning (AFL) strategies be incorporated into lessons. Examples below:

#### Increase 'wait/thinking time'

- Increase time for learner response to at least 5 seconds

#### No hands up

- All learners are expected to contribute and all answers valued. Teacher may select any pupil, therefore all pupils need to frame answer in their head.

#### Traffic Lighting/thumbs up and thumbs down

- Pupils assess own learning  
**Red**/thumbs down: can't do this/don't understand  
**Amber**/thumbs level: unsure  
**Green**/thumbs up: Can do this/understand

#### Ask for feedback/teaching ideas

- Pupils are regularly asked: 'How can we learn even more about Humanism? What ideas do you have?'



## The Humanist Logo



compassion • equality • reason

### Logo Worksheet - match the logo to the correct name



Dublin Zoo



Irish Rail



RTE Junior



GAA

# Lessons on Humanism



**1st and 2nd Class**  
**Lesson 3**  
**Each person is special**

## Strand: Belief Systems

Moral & Spiritual, Cultivating Spiritual growth

## Strand Unit: Beliefs and Values

### CONTENT OBJECTIVE: To identify key values associated with Humanism

## LESSON 3

# HUMANISTS BELIEVE EACH PERSON IS SPECIAL

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To appreciate that Humanists value the uniqueness of each person.
- To identify what makes us similar to and different from each other.
- Reflect on the unique contributions we all make to school and family life.

### Background to lesson:

(For teachers' information)

Humanists believe that they are part of nature and as such have a responsibility of stewardship towards the environment as well as a duty of respect towards their fellow human beings. Humanists do not believe in a god or gods. Instead they value evidence-based investigation.

Humanists also believe that by enjoying the positive aspects of life such as art, music, sport, nature and time spent with family and friends people can grow and develop.

Humanists are just one group of people who have this viewpoint. There are others e. g people who identify as atheist or agnostic.

As with any philosophical outlook or religious affiliation, it cannot be said that all Humanists think or behave in a particular way.

If children reflect during the lessons and say 'I think I am a Humanist' or 'Am I a Humanist if...?' it may be useful to let them know that people from different beliefs and philosophical viewpoints often share principles or values. Humanism incorporates beliefs which are shared by many religious and secular groups. It should also be pointed out that it is, of course, acceptable not to identify with a particular group, as it is to be uncertain and still questioning e.g. agnostics have not committed to the existence or lack of existence of a god or gods.

### Introduction

Teacher explains '***what we're going to learn today***'.

Most Humanists believe that each person is unique or special. People are unique because everyone has different skills and talents.

**Think / Pair / Share:** Teacher asks the children to find something that they have in common with their partner and then something that is different. Children share these with the class. Explore with the children what makes them unique.

### Development

#### Think / Pair / Share

The children fold a page in two. Ask them to draw some things they do at home on one side and some things they do in school on the other. Discuss. Reflect on how we all make a contribution at home and at school.

Pair children who do not usually work together or do not know each other well or pair girls with boys.

Humanists see each person's contribution as being valuable and important. Teacher leads a discussion on why this might be so.

## Conclusion

What contribution do you make to your class? (Encourage the children to recognise that we all make contributions in different ways e.g. by being quiet, reflective or still we help to create an atmosphere of calm, by discussing issues with a friend, we exchange ideas and learn new things).

**Group work:** Teacher gives out a large flipchart page to table groups. Each group member draws something that is special or unique about another child in the group.

**Whole Class Discussion:** Each group reports back to the class. How do we all contribute to the class?

Teacher links this to how Humanists value everyone's unique contribution to society.

Teacher concludes the discussion by asking what the children have learned about Humanism today.

## Differentiation

- Storybooks that explore concepts of being unique e.g. Elmer.

## Lower Order Questioning

- Do all the adults have the same job in the school?
- What different jobs are there?
- What are some teachers /SNAs particularly good at?
- What about the secretary / caretaker / cleaner?

## Socratic Questions

- Why doesn't everyone do the same job in the school?
- Why do people do different jobs?

## Cross Curricular Links:

- Reading: Storybooks
- Art: Children draw a picture of something they do that makes them unique. Pictures are arranged as a collage entitled 'Our class is unique because everyone is unique'.

## Extension Activities

- Over a day/week children identify the contributions others make in the school
- Children examine a variety of jobs in their school or local community and role-play some of these.

# LEARNING RESOURCE

## Paper/Pencils/Crayons

## Assessment:

- Teacher observation
- Teacher's questions/ Children's questions

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### Ask for feedback/teaching ideas

- Pupils are regularly asked: 'How can we learn even more about Humanism? What ideas do you have?'



# Lessons on Humanism



**1st and 2nd Class**

**Lesson 4**  
**Each person is unique**

## Strand: Belief Systems

Moral & Spiritual, Cultivating Spiritual growth

## Strand Unit: Beliefs and Values

### CONTENT OBJECTIVE: To identify key values associated with Humanism

## LESSON 4

# HUMANISTS BELIEVE EACH PERSON IS UNIQUE

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To appreciate that Humanism values the importance of questions and questioning.
- To discuss how different people ask different questions which may relate to their job or role.

### Background to lesson:

(For teachers' information)

Humanists believe that they are part of nature and as such have a responsibility of stewardship towards the environment as well as a duty of respect towards their fellow human beings. Humanists do not believe in a god or gods. Instead they value evidence-based investigation.

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### Introduction

Teacher explains '*what we're going to learn today*'.

Humanists value the unique contribution each person makes to their community.

Examples are elicited from home, school and community.

### Whole Class Discussion:

- What would you like to be when you grow up?
- Does everyone agree on this?
- Does everyone want to have the same job?

## Think / Pair / Share

The teacher asks the children to imagine themselves in a role (e.g. farmer, plumber, scientist, car mechanic, doctor, bus driver, dancer, house painter, pilot, vet etc.). The children must answer the following questions as if they were that person for a day:

- What will I wear today?
- What will I have for lunch?
- Who will I see today?

## Development

**Loop Activity:** Loop game encourages the children to think of the unique questions that people may ask. It is most effective if connected to the roles in their community and school. (Game instructions on page 4).

## Conclusion

### Whole Class Discussion:

- Does everyone come up with the same questions? Why / Why not?
- Do all teachers come up with the same questions? Why / Why not?
- How does asking questions help us all to get along?

The teacher leads a discussion on how people have different questions, depending on their interests or their job. People see the world in different ways. Humanism values this diversity and the very concept of questions and questioning.

Teacher concludes the discussion by asking what the children have learned about Humanism today.

### Differentiation

- Think about the roles in the community or local village.

### Socratic Questions

- Are we all the same?
- What makes us all unique?
- We're all different and we all think in different ways – is this good or bad?

### Cross Curricular Links:

- **SPHE:** Children draw a picture of their family and the unique contributions each family member makes.

# LEARNING RESOURCE

## Loop Game Cards

### Assessment:

- Teacher observation
- Teacher's questions/ Children's questions

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#### Ask for feedback/teaching ideas

- Pupils are regularly asked: 'How can we learn even more about Humanism? What ideas do you have?'



## Loop game (May need to be adapted for 1st class)

1. This game can be played as a whole class or in groups.
2. There are 15 cards.
3. Child reads out the question on the back of the card but begins with 'Who asks...' e.g. Who asks 'When will I take the bread out of the oven?'.  
4. Appropriate child responds 'I am a baker' and then asks the question on the reverse of their card.  
5. The game continues until everyone has had a turn.

Print out the page. Cut along the solid lines and fold along the dotted line.



## Loop game

Print out the page. Cut along the solid lines and fold along the dotted line.

<b>Actor</b>	<b>Who is ringing me on the phone?</b>
<b>Garda</b>	<b>What will I give the children for homework?</b>
<b>Baker</b>	<b>Where are the spare parts for that car?</b>
<b>Cleaner</b>	<b>What part did I get in the play?</b>
<b>Artist</b>	<b>When will I bring the animals into the shed?</b>
<b>Singer</b>	<b>What is the best way to get stains out of this floor?</b>
<b>Hairdresser</b>	<b>What are the words to the song I have to sing later on?</b>
<b>Plumber</b>	<b>What will I paint today?</b>

# Lessons on Humanism



**1st and 2nd Class**  
**Lesson 5**  
**Using senses to figure things out**

## Strand: Belief Systems

Moral & Spiritual, Cultivating Spiritual growth

## Strand Unit: Beliefs and Values

### CONTENT OBJECTIVE: To identify key values associated with Humanism

## LESSON 5

### HUMANISTS BELIEVE IN USING THEIR SENSES TO FIGURE THINGS OUT

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To identify the senses we use every day.
- To discuss how we can use our senses to answer questions.

### Background to lesson:

(For teachers' information)

Humanists believe that they are part of nature and as such have a responsibility of stewardship towards the environment as well as a duty of respect towards their fellow human beings. Humanists do not believe in a god or gods. Instead they value evidence-based investigation.

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If children reflect during the lessons and say 'I think I am a Humanist' or 'Am I a Humanist if...?' it may be useful to let them know that people from different beliefs and philosophical viewpoints often share principles or values. Humanism incorporates beliefs which are shared by many religious and secular groups. It should also be pointed out that it is, of course, acceptable not to identify with a particular group, as it is to be uncertain and still questioning e.g. agnostics have not committed to the existence or lack of existence of a god or gods.

### Introduction

Teacher explains '**what we're going to learn today'**.

Teacher recaps on how people think in different ways. Most Humanists believe that this is very important as this is what makes humans unique.

- Who likes porridge? Why do you like it?
- Who likes pizza? Why do you like it?
- Who likes getting a hug from someone they love? Why?
- Who likes wearing soft clothes or feeling a blanket? Why?
- Do we all like the same things?
- Why / why not?

Teacher elicits responses that reference different senses. Teacher records senses on the board.

## Development

**Think / Pair / Share:** Teacher uses variety of materials to test children's senses (see list). Items are set up at different 'stations' around the classroom. Children are guided to use their senses to identify items.

Teacher elicits discussion about use of senses.

*If suggested materials not available, attached pictures of food can be used instead. The children suggest questions prompted by pictures: Is it hot? Is it cold? Is it spicy? etc.*

**Whole Class Discussion:** Which senses were used and when?

- How would you know whether you had woken up in the country or in a city?
- If you were in a tent, how would you know if it was raining outside?
- How would you know how close someone was to you? What if you couldn't see them?

## Conclusion

Humanists believe that using their senses is the best way to answer questions. Other people may believe this as well but also believe that answers are found in the Bible, Koran etc.

Teacher concludes the discussion by asking what the children have learned about Humanism today.

## Differentiation

- Children shut their eyes. Someone walks around classroom. Children guess where he/she is.
- Investigate others senses using activities.

## Lower Order Questioning

**Teacher asks:** How do you know if...

- you can lift a box?
- a blanket is soft?
- your socks are clean?
- someone is at the door?
- it is morning?
- someone is near you when your eyes are closed

## Socratic Questions

- Can you learn without one of your senses?
- What is a baby's most important sense?
- What sense do you think is most important? Why?

## Cross Curricular Work:

- **Science:** Animals with particularly good senses.
- **Art:** Children make a collage using a variety of fabric, photos, pictures etc. The Collage illustrates senses such as touch and vision.

## LEARNING RESOURCE

Pictures on page 4

## Assessment:

- Teacher observation
- Teacher's questions/ Children's questions

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### Ask for feedback/teaching ideas

- Pupils are regularly asked: 'How can we learn even more about Humanism? What ideas do you have?'

## Asking Questions

What questions come into your mind when you look at these pictures?



Sense	Ideas
<b>Taste</b>	Variety of different textured fruits or vegetables <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Banana</li> <li>● Apple</li> <li>● Celery</li> </ul> Children identify taste
<b>Touch</b>	Variety of different materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Muesli</li> <li>● Porridge</li> <li>● Bread</li> <li>● Dry rice/beans/lentils</li> </ul> Children close their eyes and place fingers in a bowel. Classroom materials could be placed in a feely bag e.g. paper, sandpaper, card, wool etc.
<b>Smell</b>	Variety of strong smelling liquids <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Vinegar</li> <li>● Lemon</li> <li>● Washing up liquid</li> </ul> Children smell the liquids with their eyes closed
<b>Sight</b>	Optical illusion pictures available online. Where's Wally or similar look-and-find books.
<b>Hearing</b>	Objects in a box or under a table. Find objects that make a noise and children shake / move objects. Other children must identify objects.

# Lessons on Humanism



**1st and 2nd Class**  
**Lesson 6**  
**The importance of questions**

## Strand: Belief Systems

Moral & Spiritual, Cultivating Spiritual growth

## Strand Unit: Beliefs and Values

### CONTENT OBJECTIVE: To identify key values associated with Humanism

## LESSON 6

**HUMANISTS  
BELIEVE THAT BY  
ASKING QUESTIONS  
PEOPLE CAN CHANGE  
WHAT THEY KNOW  
ABOUT THE WORLD  
AROUND THEM**

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To appreciate the importance of questions and why Humanism values asking questions.

### Background to lesson:

(For teachers' information)

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### Introduction

Teacher explains '*what we're going to learn today*'.

### Think / Pair / Share

In pairs ask the children to reflect on the previous lesson and brainstorm some of the senses we have. Pairs can either draw or write. Share these answers and discuss what senses the children might use for a feely bag activity.

## Development

**Whole Class Activity:** Feely bag with everyday objects. Teacher explains that by using our senses we can answer questions about the objects and figure out what they are.

The teacher invites children to ask questions about the object a volunteer child is feeling in the bag.

Prompt questions for after the activity:

- Did the questions help you?
- Had you already figured out what it was in your head?
- Imagine you couldn't ask questions in school, what would that be like?
- Is there such a thing as a silly question?

## Conclusion

- Why do you think Humanists believe that it's good to ask questions?

Questions have changed the world e.g. when explorers asked 'What if I go that way where nobody has gone before?'

There are still explorers and inventors today. What kind of questions do they ask?

Teacher concludes the discussion by asking what the children have learned about Humanism today.

## Differentiation

- Play an activity where children are not allowed to ask questions.

## Lower Order Questioning

- When was the last time you asked a question?
- What was that question?
- Do you always like the answers to questions?
- Tell me about an answer to a question you didn't like? (e.g. 'Yes' to the question 'Is it raining?' when you wanted to go outside to play)

## Socratic Questions

- What do you use to find answers to our questions?
- Does everyone have the same questions?
- How do questions help you?
- What might you do if the answer to a question is not what you expected?

## Cross Curricular Links:

- **SPHE:** Children make a list of some questions a child might have on their first day in a new class.
- **Writing:** How question words are very useful, especially when writing news.



## LEARNING RESOURCE

Feely bag with some everyday objects from the classroom

## Assessment:

- Teacher observation
- Teacher's questions/ Children's questions

It is recommended that Assessment for Learning (AFL) strategies be incorporated into lessons. Examples below:

### Increase 'wait/thinking time'

- Increase time for learner response to at least 5 seconds

### No hands up

- All learners are expected to contribute and all answers valued. Teacher may select any pupil, therefore all pupils need to frame answer in their head.

### Traffic Lighting/thumbs up and thumbs down

- Pupils assess own learning  
**Red**/thumbs down: can't do this/don't understand  
**Amber**/thumbs level: unsure  
**Green**/thumbs up: Can do this/understand

### Ask for feedback/teaching ideas

- Pupils are regularly asked: 'How can we learn even more about Humanism? What ideas do you have?'

# Lessons on Humanism



**1st and 2nd Class**  
**Lesson 7**  
**Make the most of being alive**

## Strand: Belief Systems

Moral & Spiritual, Cultivating Spiritual growth

## Strand Unit: Beliefs and Values

### CONTENT OBJECTIVE: To identify key values associated with Humanism

## LESSON 7

### HUMANISTS BELIEVE THAT PEOPLE SHOULD MAKE THE MOST OF BEING ALIVE

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To identify what children like about school.
- To begin a discussion about what it means to be our best self.
- To understand that Humanists believe we have one life and should live it to the full.

### Background to lesson:

(For teachers' information)

Humanists believe that they are part of nature and as such have a responsibility of stewardship towards the environment as well as a duty of respect towards their fellow human beings. Humanists do not believe in a god or gods. Instead they value evidence-based investigation.

Humanists also believe that by enjoying the positive aspects of life such as art, music, sport, nature and time spent with family and friends people can grow and develop.

Humanists believe that people have one life. For Humanists, making the most of life is about being the best person they can possibly be.

As with any philosophical outlook or religious affiliation, it cannot be said that all Humanists think or behave in a particular way.

If children reflect during the lessons and say 'I think I am a Humanist' or '*Am I a Humanist if...?*' it may be useful to let them know that people from different beliefs and philosophical viewpoints often share principles or values. Humanism incorporates beliefs which are shared by many religious and secular groups. It should also be pointed out that it is, of course, acceptable not to identify with a particular group, as it is to be uncertain and still questioning e.g. agnostics have not committed to the existence or lack of existence of a god or gods.

*'If this is the only life we have it makes sense to try as much as possible to live life to the absolute full...' Stephen Fry (Rosen & Young 2015, p14).*

### Introduction

Teacher explains '**what we're going to learn today**'.

Humanists believe people have this one, wonderful life and that they should make the most of it in a kind and good way.

They also believe that by living this way, it makes life better for themselves as well as their whole community.

### Discussion:

- What do you like about school?
- Why do we come to school?
- What would it be like if we always did the same thing in school?

- What makes school fun for you?
- Would you like to change school in any way?

Teacher chats to the class about different aspects of school life: activities, subjects, assemblies etc. The teacher aims to focus on how pupils get the best out of school life.

## Development

### Think / Pair / Share

Children work on thinking of all the things they love to do - things that make them feel good about themselves, happy, pleased or satisfied. Examples:

- **Activities:** playing a game of football with my friend, painting or colouring, playing imagination games with toys, family days out etc.
- **Traits:** being kind, being a good friend, giving compliments, helping others etc.

**Artistic Response:** Children draw a picture of a time when they were enjoying themselves.

## Conclusion

Discuss with the children what being 'their best self' means and how doing the things they enjoy and are good at helps them be their best self.

- What happens to you when you are absolutely doing your best at something you really enjoy?
- If you are enjoying yourself, doing something you really like, how do people around you feel? (playing football, playing an instrument, painting a picture, telling a funny joke etc.)

A microphone or large sheet of paper is passed around. Children tell/write/draw how they benefit from another child's best self.

Teacher concludes the lesson by reminding the children that Humanists believe that by being their best selves they support others and contribute to other people's enjoyment and happiness. Humanists believe we should all support each other in this world.

Teacher concludes the discussion by asking what the children have learned about Humanism today.

## Differentiation

'How full is your bucket?' is useful in helping children to visualise how their actions affect others.

## Lower Order Questioning

- What is your favorite song?
- What is your favorite sport?
- What is your favorite thing to do at the weekend?

# LEARNING RESOURCE

### Paper & coloring Pencils

Rosen, M. & Young, A. (2014) *What is Humanism? How do you live without a god? And other big questions for kids.* London: Wayland

## Assessment:

- Teacher observation
- Teacher's questions/ Children's questions

It is recommended that Assessment for Learning (AFL) strategies be incorporated into lessons. Examples below:

### Increase 'wait/thinking time'

- Increase time for learner response to at least 5 seconds

### No hands up

- All learners are expected to contribute and all answers valued. Teacher may select any pupil, therefore all pupils need to frame answer in their head.

### Traffic Lighting/thumbs up and thumbs down

- Pupils assess own learning  
**Red**/thumbs down: can't do this/don't understand  
**Amber**/thumbs level: unsure  
**Green**/thumbs up: Can do this/understand

### Ask for feedback/teaching ideas

- Pupils are regularly asked: 'How can we learn even more about Humanism? What ideas do you have?'

## Socratic Questions

- Why do you like to play with your friends?
- Can you enjoy yourself when you are on your own?
- What can you do on your own to enjoy yourself?
- How does it feel when you can have fun all on your own?

## Cross Curricular Links:

- Oral Language: Children choose a piece of music or work of art, demonstrate a game or read a story etc. which gives them the opportunity to talk about something they enjoy doing that makes them happy.
- Drama: Children act out what they are good at. Partner acts out their response.
- Writing: Children write an acrostic poem about others in the class. Children focus on how other people's feelings, traits and actions make up their best-self.



# Lessons on Humanism



**1st and 2nd Class**  
**Lesson 8**  
**Celebrations**

## Strand: Belief Systems

Moral & Spiritual, Cultivating Spiritual growth

## Strand Unit: Rites and Ceremonies

### CONTENT OBJECTIVE: To identify key values associated with Humanism

## LESSON 8

### HUMANIST CELEBRATIONS INCLUDE FAMILY AND FRIENDS

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To identify and name events or occasions we celebrate.
- To explore a special celebration in the lives of the children.
- To understand that Humanist celebrations affirm, celebrate and support family and community.

### Background to lesson:

(For teachers' information)

Humanists believe that they are part of nature and as such have a responsibility of stewardship towards the environment as well as a duty of respect towards their fellow human beings. Humanists do not believe in a god or gods. Instead they value evidence-based investigation.

Humanists also believe that by enjoying the positive aspects of life such as art, music, sport, nature and time spent with family and friends people can grow and develop.

Humanists mark the major rites of passage in life such as births, marriages and deaths. Marking these rites of passage is a means of celebrating, supporting and affirming family and community.

As with any philosophical outlook or religious affiliation, it cannot be said that all Humanists think or behave in a particular way.

If children reflect during the lessons and say 'I think I am a Humanist' or 'Am I a Humanist if...?' it may be useful to let them know that people from different beliefs and philosophical viewpoints often share principles or values. Humanism incorporates beliefs which are shared by many religious and secular groups. It should also be pointed out that it is, of course, acceptable not to identify with a particular group, as it is to be uncertain and still questioning e.g. agnostics have not committed to the existence or lack of existence of a god or gods.

*Humanists believe that we humans have one life: we are born, we change from being children to being adults...some people make babies, some don't, and we all die. These different stages are sometimes thought of as 'rites of passage' and many Humanists like to mark these moments with ceremonies.'* (Rosen & Young 2015, p13).

### Introduction

Teacher explains '*what we're going to learn today*'.

**Think/Pair/Share:** Ask the children to think of all the things they like to celebrate e.g. birthdays, holidays, arrival of relations etc.

### Discussion:

- What do you like about celebrating?
- How does it feel?
- Why do you think we celebrate events or occasions?

- Do you like to celebrate alone or with other people?
- Who do you like to celebrate with? Why?

## Development

Teacher explains that ceremonies mark occasions in a special way for members of a family or community. But not all Humanists celebrate the same events or occasions or mark these events or occasions in the same way. Poems and stories are often read out and family members or friends may talk about the person or people at the centre of the event. If it is a wedding ceremony the couple getting married usually make their promises out loud in front of everyone. If it is a funeral, family members and friends may talk about the person who has died.

**Discussion:** Humanist ceremonies may include:

- Flowers
- Poetry
- Candles
- Music
- Pictures
- Stories
- Items of personal value
- Jokes
- Informal locations – outdoors or indoors

## Conclusion

**Artistic Response:** Children are invited to draw a picture of a celebration.

Examples:

- A relative visiting from another country
- An anniversary or birthday
- Celebrating the arrival of spring / summer / autumn / winter
- Welcoming a new pupil to the class
- Moving to a new home
- A going away or retirement celebration for a principal or teacher
- Arrival of a new pet

Pictures are shared with the class. It can be pointed out, where applicable, that children have illustrated different ways of marking the same celebration.

This can be linked to earlier lessons on how Humanism values the uniqueness of each person. Humanist ceremonies are especially planned for the people involved.

Teacher concludes the discussion by asking what the children have learned about Humanism today.

## Differentiation

- Teacher reads books about various celebrations around the world.

## Lower Order Questioning

**Teacher asks:** What do you like to celebrate?

## Socratic Questions

- What would happen if we celebrated everything?
- Is there anything you think people shouldn't celebrate? Why?

## Cross Curricular Links:

- **SESE:** Geography – celebrations around the world.

# LEARNING RESOURCE

## Paper and coloring pencils

### Assessment:

- Teacher observation
- Teacher's questions/ Children's questions

It is recommended that Assessment for Learning (AFL) strategies be incorporated into lessons. Examples below:

#### Increase 'wait/thinking time'

- Increase time for learner response to at least 5 seconds

#### No hands up

- All learners are expected to contribute and all answers valued. Teacher may select any pupil, therefore all pupils need to frame answer in their head.

#### Traffic Lighting/thumbs up and thumbs down

- Pupils assess own learning  
**Red**/thumbs down: can't do this/don't understand  
**Amber**/thumbs level: unsure  
**Green**/thumbs up: Can do this/understand

#### Ask for feedback/teaching ideas

- Pupils are regularly asked: 'How can we learn even more about Humanism? What ideas do you have?'



compassion • equality • reason



# Lessons on Humanism



**1st and 2nd Class**  
**Lesson 9**  
**Humanist naming ceremonies**

## Strand: Belief Systems

Moral & Spiritual, Cultivating Spiritual growth

## Strand Unit: Rites and Ceremonies

### CONTENT OBJECTIVE: To identify key values associated with Humanism

## LESSON 9 HUMANIST NAMING CEREMONIES

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To examine the concept of a Humanist naming ceremony.
- To explore the importance of names

### Background to lesson:

(For teachers' information)

Humanists believe that they are part of nature and as such have a responsibility of stewardship towards the environment as well as a duty of respect towards their fellow human beings. Humanists do not believe in a god or gods. Instead they value evidence-based investigation.

Humanists also believe that by enjoying the positive aspects of life such as art, music, sport, nature and time spent with family and friends people can grow and develop.

Humanists mark the major rites of passage in life such as births, marriages and deaths. Marking these rites of passage is a means of celebrating, supporting and affirming family and community.

As with any philosophical outlook or religious affiliation, it cannot be said that all Humanists think or behave in a particular way.

If children reflect during the lessons and say 'I think I am a Humanist' or 'Am I a Humanist if...?' it may be useful to let them know that people from different beliefs and philosophical viewpoints often share principles or values. Humanism incorporates beliefs which are shared by many religious and secular groups. It should also be pointed out that it is, of course, acceptable not to identify with a particular group, as it is to be uncertain and still questioning e.g. agnostics have not committed to the existence or lack of existence of a god or gods.

*Humanists believe that we humans have one life: we are born, we change from being children to being adults...some people make babies, some don't, and we all die. These different stages are sometimes thought of as 'rites of passage' and many Humanists like to mark these moments with ceremonies.'* (Rosen & Young 2015, p13).

### Introduction

Teacher explains '**what we're going to learn today**'.

*Children could be asked beforehand to find out the significance of their names – if their name has a meaning, if they are named after someone etc.*

At a Humanist naming ceremony, parents introduce their child to the community and ask their family and friends to help them and their child as she or he grows up. Humanists believe that people have a responsibility to help and support each other.

## Discussion:

- Have you ever been to a naming ceremony or a ceremony (a big, important event) that welcomes a baby into the world and gives it its name?
- What was it like?
- Do you know who chose your name?
- Do you know why were you given this name?

## Development

**Whole Class Activity:** Children access the internet to find out meaning of their name.

Alternatively, children have researched meaning or significance of their name beforehand. Report back to class.

- Is your name important?
- How do you feel when people call you by the wrong name?

## Conclusion

Teacher explains that a Humanist naming ceremony is where family and friends gather together to welcome a new baby into their community. A name is an important part of who a person is. It is usually the name by which they will be known for the rest of their life.

Why do you think parents who are Humanist might do this?

Teacher reminds the children of previous lessons where they learned that family and friends are important to Humanists.

**Artistic Response:** Attached templates.

Videos of Humanist Naming ceremonies available online.

Teacher concludes the discussion by asking what the children have learned about Humanism today.

## Differentiation

- Investigate the right to a name.

## Lower Order Questioning

- What do you like to celebrate?
- Is your name special?

## Socratic Questions

- What do people usually do when they are celebrating?
- What celebrations are important?
- Do we always need to celebrate big events or occasions?
- Is it okay not to celebrate things?

## Cross Curricular Work:

- **SPHE:** Children bring in pictures from celebrations that they attended.

# LEARNING RESOURCE

Paper, name templates, coloring pencils

Rosen, M. & Young, A. (2014) *What is Humanism? How do you live without a god? And other big questions for kids.* London: Wayland.

## Assessment:

- Teacher observation
- Teacher's questions/ Children's questions

It is recommended that Assessment for Learning (AFL) strategies be incorporated into lessons. Examples below:

### Increase 'wait/thinking time'

- Increase time for learner response to at least 5 seconds

### No hands up

- All learners are expected to contribute and all answers valued. Teacher may select any pupil, therefore all pupils need to frame answer in their head.

### Traffic Lighting/thumbs up and thumbs down

- Pupils assess own learning  
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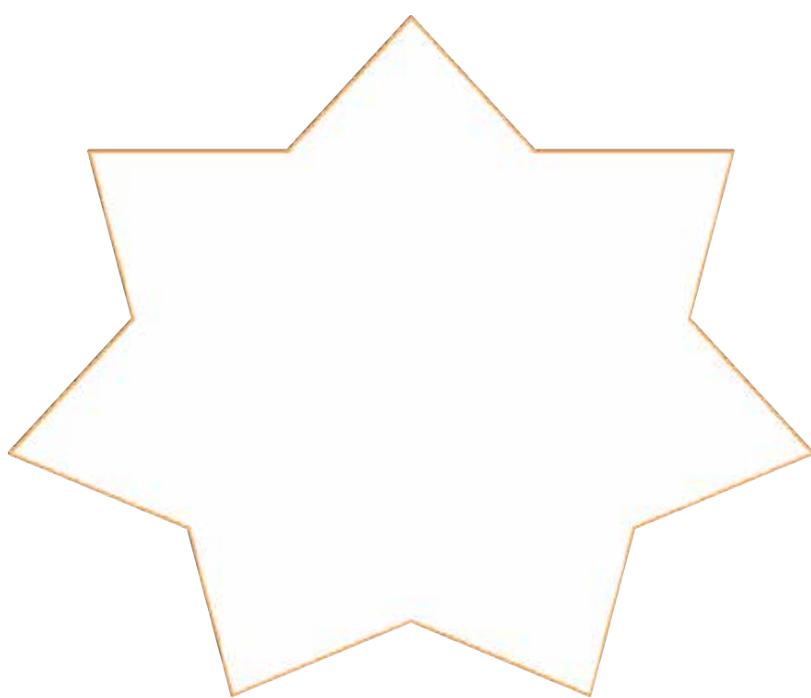
### Ask for feedback/teaching ideas

- Pupils are regularly asked: 'How can we learn even more about Humanism? What ideas do you have?'

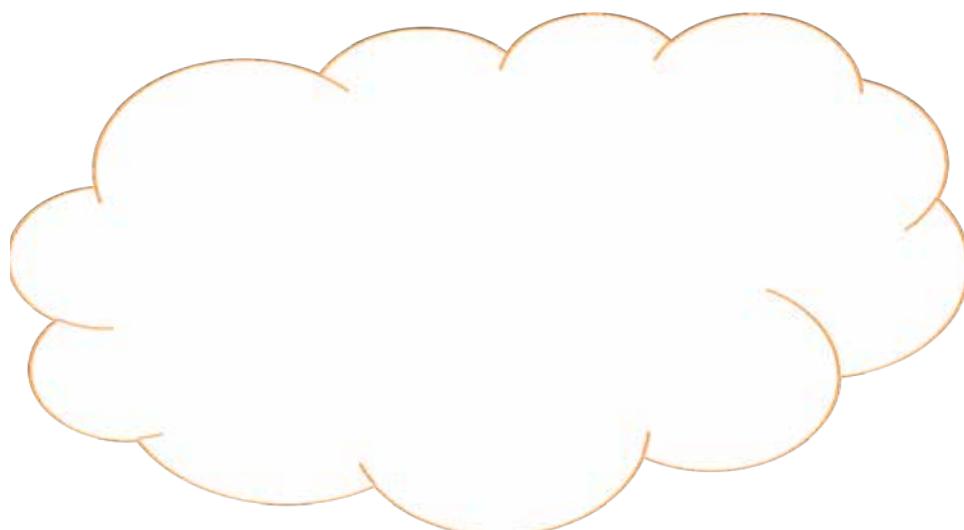
**My Name  
is Special!**



**My Name  
is Special!**



**My Name  
is Special!**





# Lessons on Humanism



**1st and 2nd Class**  
**Lesson 10**  
**Be kind and fair**

## Strand: Belief Systems

Moral & Spiritual, Cultivating Spiritual growth

## Strand Unit: Rites and Ceremonies

### CONTENT OBJECTIVE: To identify key values associated with Humanism

# LESSON 10

## HUMANISTS BELIEVE PEOPLE SHOULD BE KIND AND FAIR BECAUSE IT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To identify what it is that makes a good friend.
- To explore how being a good friend helps us enjoy life.

### Background to lesson:

(For teachers' information)

Humanists believe that they are part of nature and as such have a responsibility of stewardship towards the environment as well as a duty of respect towards their fellow human beings. Humanists do not believe in a god or gods. Instead they value evidence-based investigation.

Humanists also derive a sense of awe and appreciation from positive aspects of life such as art, music, sport, nature and time spent with family and friends.

As with any philosophical outlook or religious affiliation, it cannot be said that all Humanists think or behave in a particular way.

If children reflect during the lessons and say 'I think I am a Humanist' or 'Am I a Humanist if...?' it may be useful to let them know that people from different beliefs and philosophical viewpoints often share principles or values. Humanism incorporates beliefs which are shared by many religious and secular groups. It should also be pointed out that it is, of course, acceptable not to identify with a particular group, as it is to be uncertain and still questioning e.g. agnostics have not committed to the existence or lack of existence of a god or gods.

### Introduction

Teacher explains '*what we're going to learn today*'.

Humanists believe that people should try to be kind and fair because it is the right thing to do and not because a god or gods tells them to do this.

**Think/Pair/Share:** Pictures of people/person are distributed to class. The children must identify how he/she/they are feeling.

### Development

**Role Play:** Children role-play the feeling from their picture. Other children identify the feeling.

- If you saw a child fall in the yard, what would you do? Why?
- If you saw something had been spilled on the floor in the bathroom, what would you do? Why?
- If a bird got into the classroom and was banging against the window trying to get out, what do you think should be done? Why?
- Do you think you should help at home? Why? What kinds of things could you do to help at home?
- What other ways can you help your friends or family?

## Conclusion

**Artistic Response:** Children draw a kind act or acts e.g. a comic strip of things good friends do.

Teacher wraps up the session by asking the children what they learned about Humanism from all 10 lessons. Teachers draws attention to all 10 lesson titles which may have been highlighted or displayed throughout period of lessons.

## Extension Activity

### Carousel Brainstorming

The class is split up into groups of four to five pupils. Each group gets their own chart and coloured marker and writes down what they know about a particular aspect of Humanism that has been addressed over past few days/ weeks e.g. history of Humanism, Humanist ceremonies etc. A time limit is placed on each group and when the time is up, each group passes their chart along to another group and moves to the next chart. Pupils read what the other groups have recorded for answers and then add to the list. They also circle or highlight answers that they feel hit the mark or add question marks to answers they feel missed the mark.

## Differentiation

- Children list ways they can be kind.

## Lower Order Questioning

- Where can we make friends?
- What things can we do with friends?

## Socratic Questions

- Can we be a good friend to everyone?
- Why? Why not?
- What do we need friends for?
- Do friends make things better? Why, Why not?
- Why do Humanists believe people should be good and kind to each other?

## Cross Curricular Work:

- **SPHE:** Children could make a list of qualities that make a good friend
- **Learn Together:** People who made a difference

# LEARNING RESOURCE

Paper and coloring pencils

Pictures on pages 4, 5, 6.

## Assessment:

- Teacher observation
- Teacher's questions/ Children's questions

It is recommended that Assessment for Learning (AFL) strategies be incorporated into lessons. Examples below:

### Increase 'wait/thinking time'

- Increase time for learner response to at least 5 seconds

### No hands up

- All learners are expected to contribute and all answers valued. Teacher may select any pupil, therefore all pupils need to frame answer in their head.

### Traffic Lighting/thumbs up and thumbs down

- Pupils assess own learning  
**Red**/thumbs down: can't do this/don't understand  
**Amber**/thumbs level: unsure  
**Green**/thumbs up: Can do this/understand

### Ask for feedback/teaching ideas

- Pupils are regularly asked: 'How can we learn even more about Humanism? What ideas do you have?'



## How would you react?

Look at the pictures and describe how the children are feeling. Think about what you would say or do if you met these children. Maybe you don't need to say or do anything!



## How would you react?

Look at the pictures and describe how the children are feeling. Think about what you would say or do if you met these children. Maybe you don't need to say or do anything!



## How would you react?

Look at the pictures and describe how the children are feeling. Think about what you would say or do if you met these children. Maybe you don't need to say or do anything!





# Lessons on Humanism

