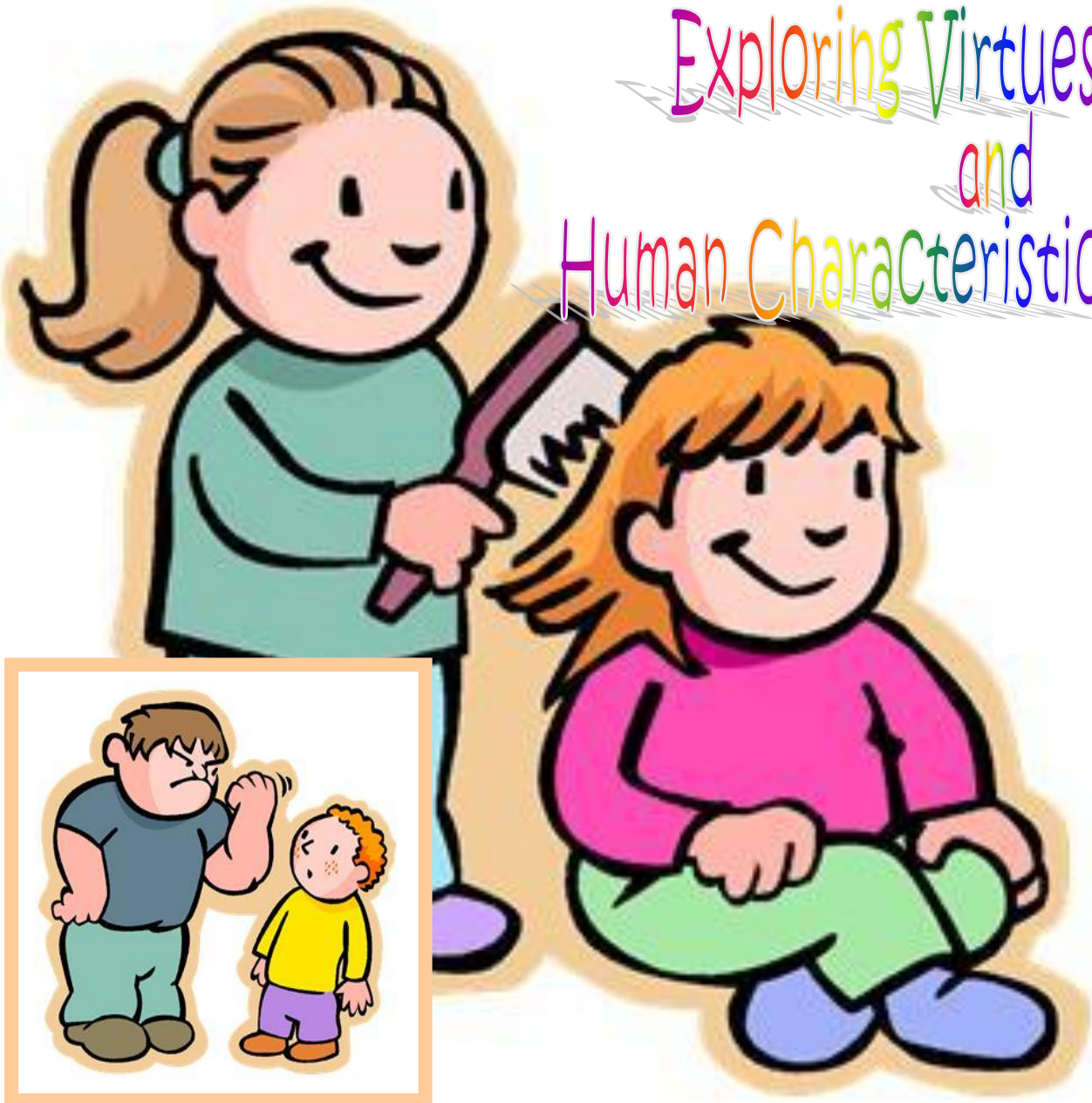
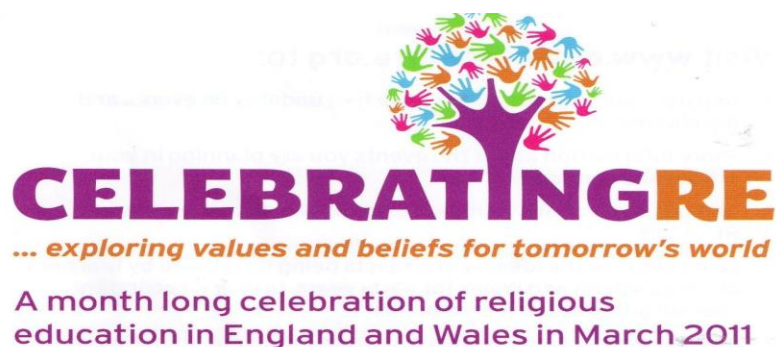


Exploring Virtues and Human Characteristics



'Regard man as a mine rich in **gems** of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit.'¹

Key stage 2 child centred activities where children can use their thinking and communication skills to discover and become aware of not only the virtues, the gems, they have within them, such as kindness, helpfulness and truthfulness but also the moral dilemmas posed by not being kind, or helpful or truthful. The aim is to bring awareness of the virtues needed for social life in the 21st Century. Reference is made to the spiritual principles embedded in the teachings of the world's religions.



EXPLORING VIRTUES AND HUMAN CHARACTERISTICS

"Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value..."^{©1}

The programme is a child centred activity where children can use their thinking and communication skills to discover and become aware of not only the virtues, the gems, they have within them, such as kindness, helpfulness and truthfulness but also the moral dilemmas posed by not being kind, or helpful or truthful. The activity also refers to the spiritual principles embedded in the teachings of the world's religions.

The intended age group is for Key Stage 2. Activities may be adapted and differentiated to suit the needs of individuals or groups of pupils.

Background

The programme is based on aspects of work which have been successfully implemented by the Bahá'ís of Swindon in collaboration with Mr V. Bartlett in helping young persons. This work incorporates only a narrow range of the above-mentioned educational experience under the title "Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value..."

The activity by the compilers Sue Cave and Ramez Delpak is chosen to be such that it:

- encompasses moral aspects identified and developed by UK society over the past many decades but highly relevant to 21st century living.
- is all "inclusive" as it incorporates Holy writings from many of the religions represented on the UK and the Welsh Assembly Governments' Inter-Faith Forums.
- includes nothing considered offensive to any section of British society or ethnic/minority groups.
- will bring awareness, in relation to moral teachings of all great world religions.
- fulfills one of the aims of Celebrating RE, to promote imaginative examples of exploring questions of meaning, purpose and moral responsibility.

Sue Cave and Ramez Delpak acknowledge the invaluable contribution of Gill Vaisey, Religious Education Consultant, to this project.

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1. Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings*, CXXII, p.260

THESE ACTIVITIES MAY BE PHOTOCOPIED FOR USE WITHIN THE SCHOOL SETTING

Activity 1 a: Exploring virtues and human characteristics

Teacher's notes:

- Use the *Gems/Happy/Unhappy* graphics on pages 7, 8, 9 to illustrate the explanation.
- The statement "Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value..."

Explain to the pupils that everyone has qualities or human characteristics. The light/good/spiritual qualities are called 'virtues' such as honesty, kindness, humility, patience and justice. Then there are those dark/low/negative human characteristics such as dishonesty, cruelty, arrogance, impatience and injustice, which can bring unhappiness. Now imagine that everyone is like a mine so full of precious and valuable gems that no one can estimate their value. These gems are their good qualities and if they make an effort to develop these gems, or virtues, within them, from a young age they can grow up to contribute positively to the happiness of their family, society and to humanity as a whole.

- Working in groups the pupils discover those good virtues, 'gems', as well those negative characteristics.

Pupils work in small groups

- Put a large sheet of paper on a table to make a chart and draw a line across the centre and then mark a midway line OR place a section of string along a table with a small piece crossing it as the midway line. (Example below)
- On the sheet write 'Happy', 'Good' and 'Light' and draw a happy face in the top left corner. In the top right corner write 'Unhappy', 'Bad' and 'Dark' and draw a sad face OR on two pieces of paper repeat the above and place above the string.
- Pupils have blank cards and discuss/brainstorm what positive virtues or negative human characteristics should be written on each card (one per card). (Blank card template page 5.) Pupils can compare words with teacher's list (page 6) and top up with words they do not have.

Happy Good/Light Nature	EXAMPLE		Unhappy Bad/Dark Nature
	truthful	honest	spiteful
loving	gentle	patience	helpful
impatient	rudeness	stealing	unkind
fair	justice	service	kind
	bullying	dishonest	gossiping
	cruel	selfish	lying
	forgiving		

Exploring virtues and human characteristics

Pupils talk about the statements below and use the prompt questions to help them decide which side of the midway line the good virtues and bad characteristics are placed on the chart. Pupils think of other statements and use the prompt questions.

I don't like sharing my games.

I like recycling things.

I only like my friends.

Sometimes I tell a 'white' lie.

When my friend is upset I feel sad.

Gossip is ok.

If someone hits me I hit them back.

Everyone should have enough food to eat.

I don't always take notice of what my parents say to me.

I try to tell the truth.

Prompt questions:

What virtues are associated with the statements?

What good virtues would be shown?

What bad characteristics would be shown?

Where would they be placed along the line?

Teacher's notes

- Pupils come together after the activity.
- Discuss with the pupils whether they found the task difficult or easy.
- What helped them make their choices?
- Did the activity make them think about their own actions?
- What virtues would they find most hard to show? What would be easy?
- What did they find interesting about the activity?

Practising the virtues

Pupils choose a virtue.

- The virtue becomes the 'Virtue of the Week'.
- Pupils practise the virtue during the week.
- At the end of the week the pupils share their experiences.

Example: Kindness

- Ask the pupils why they think it is important to be kind.
- What would happen if no one was kind?
- How will they practise being kind during the week?

Blank cards for virtues and human characteristics

Teacher's List: Examples of virtues and human characteristics

acceptance	justice		cruelty
ambition	kindness		hateful
bravery	love		disloyalty
caring	loyalty		arrogance
chastity	meeekness		meanness
compassion	mercy		immodest
confidence	modesty		backbiting
cooperation	moderation		disobedient
courage	obedience		impatience
consideration	patience		selfishness
courtesy	peacefulness		rudeness
creativity	perseverance		inconsiderate
detachment	reliability		unreliable
determined	respect		disrespectful
diligence	responsibility		irresponsible
excellence	self-discipline		lying
faithfulness	service		bullying
forbearing	tact		spiteful
forgiveness	thoughtfulness		thoughtless
friendliness	tolerance		prejudice
gentleness	trustworthiness		distrustful
helpfulness	truthfulness		unhelpful
honesty	unity		dishonesty
joyfulness	wisdom		injustice

Examples of virtues - the 'gems' of inestimable value within us

Virtues
Gems of inestimable value

Patience.....



Kindness.....



Friendliness.....



Wisdom.....



Honesty.....



Contentment.....



Respect.....



Compassion.....



Love.....



Justice.....

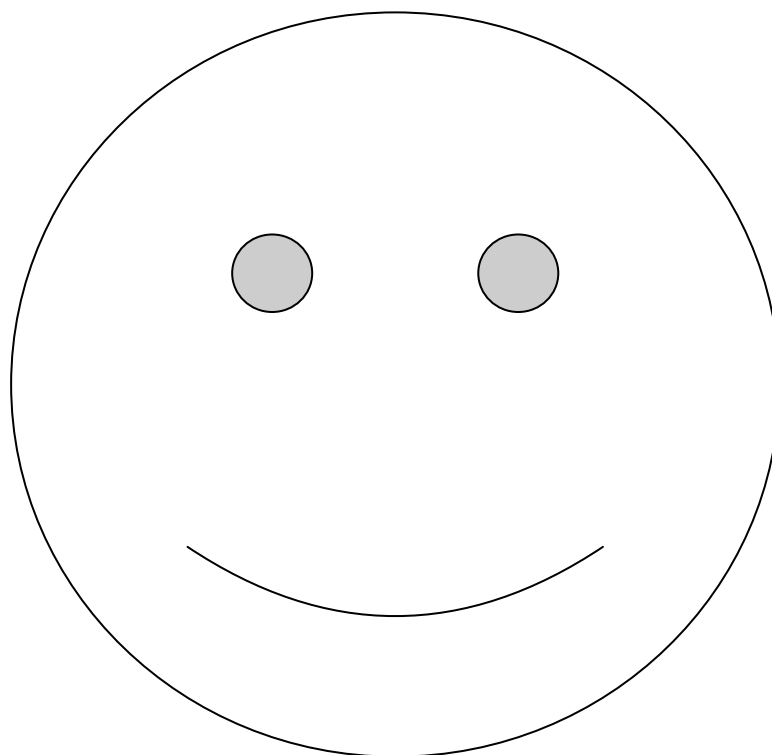


"Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit."

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings, CXXII, p. 260

LIGHT NATURE
HIGH NATURE
SPIRITUAL NATURE
GOOD SIDE

**PATIENCE, KINDNESS, FRIENDLINESS,
CONTENTMENT, WISDOM, HONESTY,
TRUSTWORTHINESS, MERCY, JUSTICE**



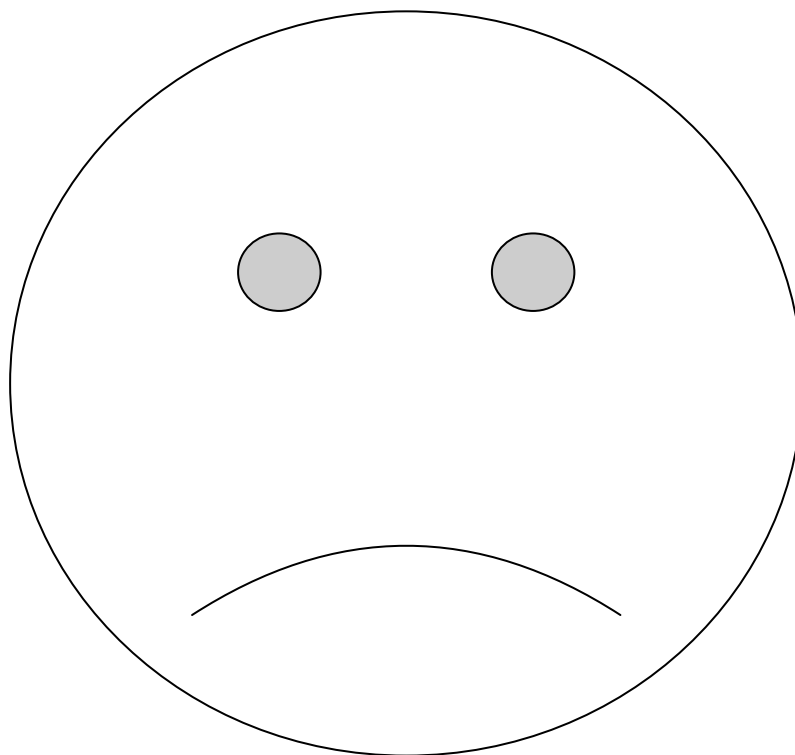
HAPPY

DARK NATURE

LOW NATURE

BAD SIDE

**IMPATIENCE, CRUELTY, SPITEFUL, LYING,
BULLYING, IGNORANCE, DISHONEST,
UNFAIR**



UNHAPPY

Activity 1 b: Sacred Writings from the World's Religions - The Golden Rule

'The *Ethic of Reciprocity* - often called the *Golden Rule* in Christianity - simply states that we are to treat other people as we would wish to be treated ourselves.' Most of the world religions have a similar teaching which gives guidance to their followers on how to act and behave everyday.

African Traditional Religions: One going to take a pointed stick to pinch a baby bird should first try it on himself to feel how it hurts. Yoruba Proverb (Nigeria)

Bahá'í Faith: And if thine eyes be turned towards justice, choose thou for thy neighbour that which thou chooseth for thyself.

Buddhist Faith: Hurt not others with that which pains yourself.

Christian Faith: All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Hindu Faith: This is the sum of duty: do naught to others which if done to thee would cause thee pain.

Jewish Faith: What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow men. That is the entire Law; all the rest is commentary.

Muslim Faith: No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.

Jain Faith: A man should wander about treating all creatures as he himself would be treated.

Zoroastrian Faith: Whatever is disagreeable to yourself do not do unto others.

Ten golden rules

- In groups pupils read The Golden Rule and then think of ten golden rules they would write for themselves and others on the right way to live.
- Put the rules in order of the most important and the least important.
- Each group compares their golden rules with the other groups.
- Were any rules different?
- Were any the same?
- What was the most common rule?
- Why would these rules make a difference to people's lives?
- What virtues would be shown?

Activity 1 c: Practising the virtues

- Photocopy the page on to card, cut the cards and, if possible, laminate.
- Working in groups match a virtue on a card to one of the action cards.
- Think of other virtues that could also fit the actions.
- On the blank card one half of the group writes down an action and the other half have to think of a virtue that matches the action. Does the group agree?

My friend tests me on my spellings.

Helpful

I broke a plate and told my mum.

Truthful

I noticed one of my friends looked sad so I asked what was wrong.

Caring

I found a purse in a shop and handed it to the shopkeeper.

Honesty

Some children asked me to play with them but did not want my friend to join in. So I said I would not play without him.

Loyalty

My mum wanted some peace and quiet so I turned down the music on my radio.

Consideration

My dad finds learning to swim hard but he keeps trying.

Determination

I get really nervous waiting to go on stage at school but I try to overcome them.

Courageous

I listen to my teachers at school.

Respectful

Guess the virtue

Group activity

The teacher shuffles the action cards and asks each group to take a card.

- Each group mimes the action to the other groups who have to guess which virtue they are describing.
- Each group mimes the action they have written on their blank card and the other groups have to guess the virtue.

Activity 1 d: What did I learn?

I enjoyed the activity on exploring virtues and human characteristics because...

.....
.....
.....

I found the activity on practising virtues interesting because...

.....
.....
.....

What surprised me about the Golden Rules was that

.....
.....
.....

One thing I learnt was.....

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Activity 2 a: Moral Dilemmas - Deciding what is good and what is bad

According to an old Native American proverb, there are two wolves in each of us. These are the good wolf and the bad wolf and whichever one we feed is the one that will survive.

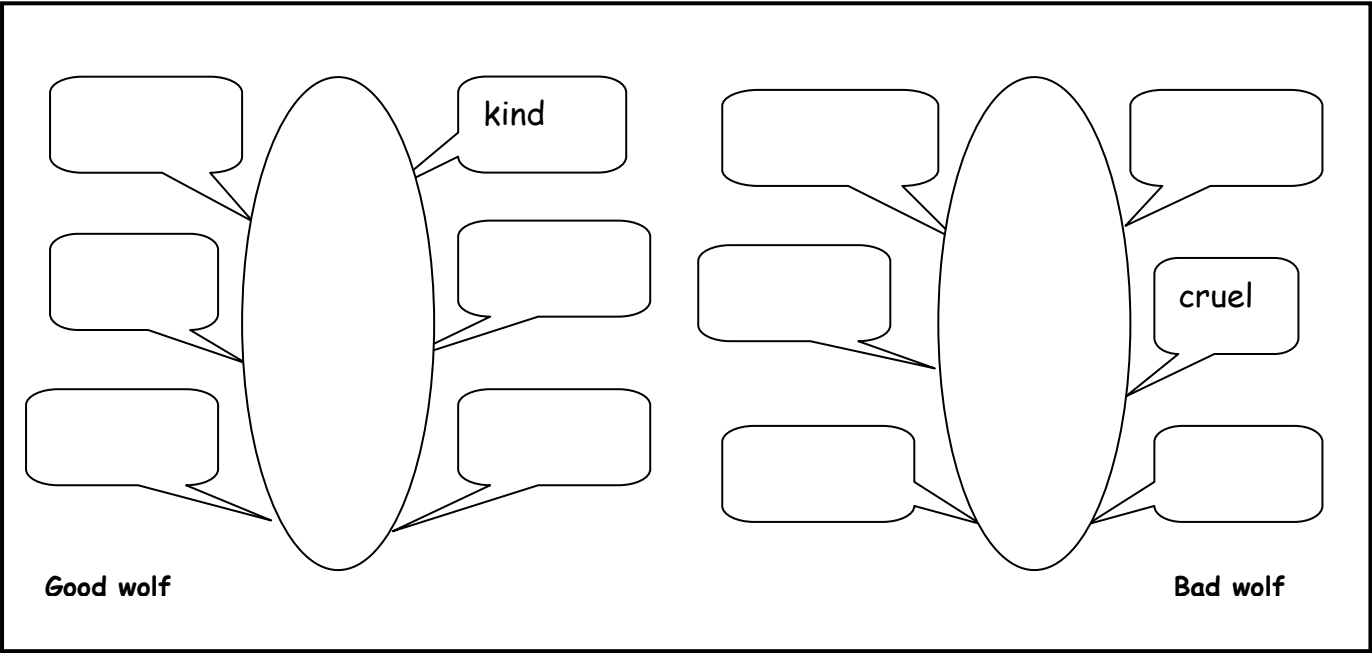
One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people.

He said, "My son, the battle is between two wolves. One is Evil. It is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego. The other is Good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, "Which wolf wins?"

The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed."

- Groups discuss what they think of this story and the message behind it.
- Is it a good way to get over a message?
- Draw a picture of the good and bad wolf in the bubble.
- Can you think of words to feed the wolves?
- Write the words in the bubbles. An example is shown to help you.



Activity 2 b: Moral Dilemmas - Deciding what is right and what is wrong

Finding out meanings and thinking about feelings
1. In groups pupils find out the meanings of the top two sets of words.
2. In groups pupils think of two words to describe their feelings if, for example, someone had been kind to them or had lied to them.

1. What do these words mean?

Gentle

.....

Kindness

.....

Helpful

.....

1. What do these words mean?

Unkind

.....

Dishonest

.....

Lying

.....

2. Think of a time when someone was gentle or kind or helpful to you. How did it make you feel? Alongside each of the words below write down two words that describe the feeling.

Gentle.....

.....

Kindness.....

.....

Helpful.....

.....

2. Think of a time when someone was unkind or dishonest or had lied to you. How did it make you feel? Alongside each of the words below write down two words that describe the feeling.

Unkind.....

.....

Dishonest.....

.....

Lying.....

.....

Activity 2 c: Moral Dilemmas - Sacred Writings giving guidance for living

Below are Sacred Writings from Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Jewish faiths. In groups read the quotes and using the virtue cards from the first activity find the virtue that you think matches the quotation.

What do you think the Writings are telling you? If there are words that you do not know or understand then write them down, find out and talk about their meaning.

Truthfulness is the foundation of all human virtues.

The Bahá'í Faith - 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá p.459

Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.

The Buddhist Faith - Udana-Varqa, 5:18.

One should not behave towards others in a way which is disagreeable to oneself. This is the essence of morality. All other activities are due to selfish desire.

The Hindu Faith - Mahabharata, Anusasana Parva11 3.8

One should utter the truth, one should not be angry.

The Buddhist Faith - Dhammapada, XV11, v.224. p.60

Find not fault with one another, neither revile one another by nicknames.

The Muslim Faith - Qur'an, XLIX, v 11-12, p.231

Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.

The Christian Faith - New Testament, Luke 16:10

Verily I say, the tongue is for mentioning what is good, defile it not with unseemly talk.

The Bahá'í Faith - Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 219

Do not refuse a kindness to anyone who asks it, if it is in your power to perform it.

The Jewish Faith - The Old Testament, Proverbs 3:27

He who is incapable of hatred toward any being, who is kind and compassionate, free from selfishness,...such a devotee of Mine is My beloved.

The Hindu Faith - Bhagavad-Gita 12: 13 - 14

Children, obey your parents; for it is only right that you should.

The Christian Faith - The New Testament, Ephesians 6:1-2

Do not steal. Do not lie. Do not deceive one another.

The Jewish Faith - The Old Testament, Leviticus 19:11

Pay homage to God...and be good to your parents and relatives, the orphans and the needy and the neighbours who are your relatives, and the neighbours who are strangers, and the friend by your side.

The Muslim Faith - Qur'an, 4:36

Use the internet and library to look up the teachings of these and other World Religions and discover what they have to say about how everyone should live our lives. Here is one: The Bahá'í pages on BBC religion website <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/bahai/>

Activity 2 d: Moral Dilemmas - Deciding on the right course of action

- Each group reads the moral dilemma cards and answers the following questions:
 1. What would you do and why?
 2. What would, for example, a Muslim faith member do (refer to their teachings from page 15) and why?
- Groups think of and write a moral dilemma question in the blank square and answer the two questions above.
- Towards the end of the lesson each group reads out their own moral dilemma question and ask the other groups what they would do and why.
- Each group then reads out their answers.

You are in a shop and a friend asks you to steal some sweets and they say you are coward if you don't.

A friend has invited you to a birthday party and you say that you can go.

The next day another friend invites you to go to the cinema on the same day as the party and it is a film you want to see.

You are working hard to finish your homework for the next day when a friend phones you to say they are finding the homework difficult and please can you help them.

You told your parents that you were going to visit a friend but you went to the park instead to meet another friend.

What could be the consequences of this action?

What would you do another time and why?

Someone you know starts to talk about your friend behind their back. What would you do and why?

Unkind things are being said about someone who is not your friend behind their back. What would you do and why?

Is there any difference between these two scenarios?

Can you think of ways talking about others can be hurtful and harmful?

You want to spend the night at a friend's house, but you are told by your parents that you can't as it is a school night. You feel they are being very unfair as your best friend is going.

Activity 2 e: Moral Dilemmas - The story of 'The Feathers'.

In 'The Feathers', a story found in the folklore of various faith traditions, the description of feathers being blown around by the wind is used to show what happens when people gossip and speak unkind words. This is one version of the story.

A woman in a small village went to see a wise man to ask his advice. She said that she wanted to be a good woman but she had a problem, and she hoped he could help her. The wise man said that her problem could easily be solved if she really wanted it to be.

The woman explained to the wise man that her problem was gossiping about other people. Although she tried very hard not to gossip she could not help herself. "How can you help me please?" she asked.

The wise man told her to go to the market and buy a feather pillow, cut it open and throw the feathers to the wind as she walked along. After she had done this, she had to go back to see him. The woman thought that this was a very strange thing to have to do, but she had asked the wise man for his help so she decided to follow his advice. The next day she went back to tell him that she had completed the task.

"That is good," said the wise man. "Now I want you to go back to the market and as you walk along the street I want you to pick up all the feathers you threw away."

"I can't do that," said the woman. "The wind has blown them away, it would be impossible to pick them all up."

"I agree," said the wise man. "But this is what happens when you gossip about others. The unkind words you speak are passed from one person to another and then another until it becomes impossible to stop the gossip spreading. A silent tongue is the safest."

The woman thought that this was a good lesson and she decided she would never gossip about anybody again.

- Groups discuss what they think of this story and the message behind it.
- Is it a good way to get over the message?
- Each group designs a poster that will help teach others not to gossip or say unkind things about each other. Decide which of the sacred writings quotations and virtues can be used in the poster. Distribute the posters around the school.

- Design and make a face mask/head piece to illustrate a virtue.
- Create a 1 minute skit to dramatise a virtue using the facemask/headpiece.

Activity 2 e: Moral Dilemmas - What did I learn?

I found the activity on moral dilemmas interesting because

.....

.....

.....

.....

What I discovered about the Sacred Writings was.....

.....

.....

.....

One thing I learnt was.....

.....

One thing that made an impression on me was.....

.....

.....

Useful Bibliography:

The Family Virtues Guide (Simple Ways to Bring Out the Best in Our Children and Ourselves Linda) by Linda Kavelin Popov

'Compiled by The Virtues Project, an international organisation dedicated to inspiring spiritual growth in young and old alike, this multicultural, interfaith handbook shows parents and teachers how to turn words into actions and ideals into realities.'

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Useful websites:

The Ethic of Reciprocity - often called the Golden Rule in Christianity

<http://www.religioustolerance.org/reciproc.htm>

Story Lovers World SOS: Searching Out Stories

<http://www.story-lovers.com/listsgossipstories.html>

The International Bahá'í World website <http://www.bahai.org/>

Bahá'í Reference Library <http://reference.bahai.org>

The BBC religion website <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/bahai/>

For other religions and beliefs <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/>

