

# Junior Cycle Religious Education Newsletter - April 2022



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Dear RE Colleagues,

Welcome to the April edition of the Junior Cycle RE newsletter. The JCT RE team was delighted with the level of engagement at our cluster days since January. This month, we will focus on Inclusive Education as one of the Junior Cycle Principles. We also have our regular articles on technology in the classroom and one focusing on RE and the Arts

## Upcoming April events and celebrations from the interfaith calendar:

2nd Ramadan begins—Islam

6th SOLE event

15th Passover begins—Judaism

17th Easter Sunday - Christianity

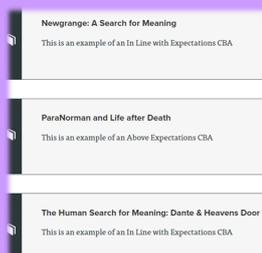
SOLE



Video [link](#):

Examples of students' learning in RE CBA2 can now be viewed [online](#). To tie in with this, the JCT RE team will host their Spring online learning event (SOLE) for teachers on 6th April 2022 from 5-6pm. The focus this year will be *CBA2: Exploring Samples of Student Work*. This workshop will NOT be recorded.

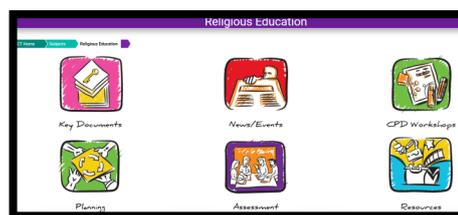
Register for the event on <https://t.co/w2TbcPCONh>



## CPD Cluster Day 2022 resources

Our CPD cluster day 2022 presentation with the accompanying resource booklet are online in the CPD workshops section of our website and available to download. Please follow the link to view:

[https://www.jct.ie/religious\\_education/cpd\\_workshops\\_2021\\_2022](https://www.jct.ie/religious_education/cpd_workshops_2021_2022)



## Junior Cycle Principles: Inclusive Education

This month, we will focus on the key principle of Inclusive Education. The *Framework for Junior Cycle* (2015), page 11, notes: “the education experience is inclusive of all students and contributes to equality of opportunity, participation and outcomes for all”.

In view of this, as teachers, we try to creatively explore ways to truly engage all learners in their education by reducing barriers and increasing the ways that students can participate in their learning.

In the next section, we will look at this principle's relevance and application in the RE classroom.





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### Inclusive Education in RE

On our recent cluster day, we focused on supporting all our learners in the RE classroom with Universal Design for Learning (UDL). We also explored a self-directed learning pathway focused on the Level 2 Learning Program (L2LP), which is available [here](#).



During the day, we also looked at how the CBA process itself is a fine example of this principle in action with both CBAs offering students the opportunity to explore, research and report on a person or a topic that engages and challenges their interests. In terms of inclusivity, CBAs therefore encourage students to find and express their own voice and diverse backgrounds in the RE classroom. In creating such an inclusive flexible learning environments, we as teachers can better support and represent the needs of all our students.

### Technology in the Classroom

Accessibility in education helps create better opportunities for learners. Put simply, if learning materials are accessible to learners, then learners' abilities will be accessible to educators. Many devices and applications already have built-in features that students can use to mitigate any number of challenges, from dyslexia to hearing impairment.



On our cluster day, we designed two learning experiences using the digital platform, Thinglink, with its built-in accessibility tool, the immersive reader. The latter provides students with the ability to hear the contents of images and video annotations. It also helps students become fluent in expressing themselves in the RE classroom using multiple **thinglink..**  forms of media, not only text but also images, videos, and their own voice. Both of these learning experiences can be accessed on page 12 of our cluster day resource booklet on this [link](#).

### RE and the Arts

**Of Mice and Men**, a novella by John Steinbeck, published in 1937, tells the tragic story of the complex bond between two migrant labourers in the midst of the Great Depression, who dream of one day owning a small farm. As one of the prescribed texts for 2nd and 3rd year students, teachers of junior cycle English may be already quite familiar with Steinbeck's work.



In terms of junior cycle RE, the novel explores a number of themes which link to a range of learning outcomes across the three strands. In particular, teachers might like to focus on the characters and their search for meaning and purpose in life throughout the novel. Moreover, the complex moral dilemma faced by George at the conclusion of the novel may provoke some lively and interesting discussions among students, providing possible links to Strand 3 *Living Our Values* LOs such as 3.1, 3.2, 3.5, 3.6, 3.9.

### Quote of the Month

*We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their colour—Maya Angelou*

### Mailing List

If you know of any colleagues who have not received this newsletter, please share this with them and encourage them to join our mailing list [here](#):

*Sincerest appreciation for your continued collaboration,*

*Religious Education Team*