

# Junior Cycle Religious Education Newsletter - February 2022



@jct RE



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## Dear RE Colleagues,

Welcome to the February edition of the Junior Cycle RE newsletter. Our RE cluster days have begun and it is great to hear so much positive feedback from teachers sharing their experiences of Junior Cycle RE on these days. This month we are focusing on the Junior Cycle principle *Learning to Learn*. We also have an exciting update about our collaboration with Chester Beatty Library.

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

- 1st Saint Brigid's Day - Christianity
- 1st World Hijab Day - Islam
- 14th St. Valentine's Day - Christianity
- 15th Nirvana Day - Buddhism

### CPD Cluster Day 2022

Our CPD cluster days continue to run up until the end of March where we will further explore assessment in Junior Cycle RE. The following video is a guide to preparing for your online cluster day:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sePOmOH\\_xTk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sePOmOH_xTk)

If you wish to print the booklet in advance or if you have already been with us and want to revisit the material, you will find all our material here:

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

### Junior Cycle SEC Examinations

The Minister for Education Norma Foley TD on 1 February announced that the Junior Cycle SEC examinations will take place this summer, for the first time since 2019. Further information in relation to Junior Cycle 2022 can be found [here](#)

### Junior Cycle Principles: Learning to Learn

This month, we will focus on the key principle Learning to Learn. The *Framework for Junior Cycle* (2015), page 11, speaks about the need to "support students in developing greater independence in learning and in meeting the challenges of life beyond school, of further education, and of working life."



Learning to learn in RE encourages students to understand themselves better as learners and help them to become more confident, connected and engaged in their learning. As RE teachers, therefore, we aim to put the student at the centre of the teaching and learning by developing more active and collaborative learning opportunities for students. In doing this, we create a balance between the development of the subject knowledge and the development of key skills.

The JCIS has a number of learner-centred and experiential strategies that RE teachers can draw upon to promote greater collaborative and independent learning opportunities for students. They are available for download on [https://jct.ie/jcis/classroom\\_strategies](https://jct.ie/jcis/classroom_strategies).



## Chester Beatty Library Resources

The Chester Beatty Learning and Education Department has collaborated with the Junior Cycle Religious Education Team and co-produced a number of learning resources for the RE curriculum.

These include access to an updated resource Ways of Seeing II, tailor-made for the Junior Cycle curriculum; online image bank and a dedicated space with information on core areas of the curriculum.



Follow the link below to access these resources:



<https://chesterbeatty.ie/learning/schools-page/junior-cycle-religious-education/>

## Technology in the Classroom

Podcasts are spoken word, audio episodes, all focused on a particular topic or theme and a great way of increasing student engagement in the RE classroom. Getting students to make their own RE podcasts can be an effective way to consolidate their knowledge.

Podcasts can also be used to provide information in a fun and entertaining way and extend student learning with critical links across the learning outcomes of the RE specification.

Instead of relying solely on written material, podcasts can allow students—particularly those with visual impairments or learning difficulties— more options in how they work and complete assignments.

Overall, as a digital learning tool, podcasts are an effective way to take in and present information which can help keep students engaged for longer.



## RE and the Arts

On our recent cluster days, teachers shared examples of religious themes in contemporary film, literature, art and music. This month, we will focus on music and song as a potentially powerful and creative tool that can be incorporated into the RE classroom.



One of the most popular music choices from our cluster days so far was U2's 1987 release, "Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For".

The song describes the journey that we as humans are on in our quest to find meaning and purpose in life, suggesting that all worldly desires can never completely fulfil this particular search. The ways humans look for that "something" and the avenues in which we try to find it ultimately lead nowhere.



In terms of influences, "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For" exhibits influences from gospel music in its description of this spiritual yearning. The song is one of three U2 classics featured in a recent poll of the 500 greatest songs of all time by one of the world's most respected music magazines, *Rolling Stone*. In terms of JC RE, its themes could be used to explore a number of the learning outcomes in the specification.

## Quote of the Month

*"Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible."*

-Dalai Lama

## 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](#):

*We look forward to seeing you on Zoom in 2022.*

*Religious Education Team*