**Discover and Explore Humanism at KS1/2**

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**Curriculum Links**

**RE, PSHE, SMSC, Promoting British Values** *(‘mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and those without faith’)*

Could also be useful for an Early Years setting if the children were interested – my Reception class were fascinated by the idea that some people were not religious. **(Understanding the World; Personal, Social, Emotional Development)**

**Resources Needed**

*Please note that if actual objects are impossible to source, pictures can be used instead, either printed or displayed on whiteboard (although this takes away from the interactive nature of the lesson plan).*

* Large blanket or scarf for covering the objects, or a ‘feely bag’/box if you would rather do it that way
* Magnifying glass
* Animal figure or toy
* Small globe
* Fossil, rock or shell
* Rocket/astronaut toy
* Small bundle of books (these could be related to humanism, science, the earth, nature)
* Small bundle of human figurines/peg dolls
* A printout of the Happy Human symbol (can be accessed on the Understanding Humanism website)
* A copy of ‘*What is Humanism? How do you live without a god? And Other Big Questions for Kids*’ by Michael Rosen and Anne-Marie Young (a free copy has been sent to every school in England)

**Lesson Plan**

**Before the lesson:**

* The session ideally takes place as a circle time – arrange the objects in the centre of the circle, under the blanket/scarf. If you are presenting at a more traditional assembly with children seated in rows, putting the objects in a ‘feely bag’ will be more convenient.
* The teacher or teaching assistant might like to scribe any significant/interesting questions or thoughts posed by children during the lesson to inform future planning and perhaps to add to a classroom display about Humanism.

**Let’s discover!:**

Children are gathered in a circle around a series of objects which are hidden under a blanket/large scarf. If in Assembly mode, they will usually be sitting in rows.

***Ask:*** *Has anyone heard the word Humanism before? What do you think it might mean?*

Model wondering what this word might mean, encourage children to share their ideas.

***Explain:*** *A humanist is someone who cares about the world and all the living things in it, tries their best to live a good and happy life and make others happy too, and doesn’t believe in any gods. Today we are going to discover a little bit more about what Humanism is by playing a game.*

***Play:***Each object provides information about or represents an aspect of Humanism. Choose children to come up and remove an object from under the blanket or from out of the feely bag. Discuss each object asking children for their ideas as well as giving your own explanation.

**Magnifying glass**: humanists use evidence from the world around us and the universe to make their own decisions about what to believe. They are like detectives, searching for answers about our world from everything we can see and find in it.

**Animal figure:** humanists care about all living creatures and believe we should show kindness to the other creatures we share our planet with.

**Fossil/rock/shell:** humanists accept the theory of evolution - that humans have come to exist on our planet after many millions of years of evolving from our animal ancestors.

**Rocket/astronaut toy:** humanists look to science for knowledge and understanding of our world and our universe.

**Small bundle of books:** in many religions, people follow the rules set out in their holy book. Humanists don’t follow a holy book but instead have all the knowledge in all the books ever written to help them understand their world and live their lives well.

**Small bundle of human figurines/peg dolls:** humanists value humans; they don’t believe in or pray to any gods and instead try to treat other humans as they would like to be treated themselves.

**Small globe:** humanists believe it’s important to look after our planet to make sure it survives for future generations.

**Happy Human symbol:** humanists think it’s important to try to be happy and to try to make others happy during their one life on planet Earth. There is no one way to be happy, there can be lots of ways. What makes you feel happy?

***Reflect on what we have learned:*** We have discovered some of the ideas which are important in Humanism. Decorate a Happy Human symbol with some of the ideas we have learned about.

***Ongoing Classroom Provision***: all of the objects discussed in the activity could be used to create an interactive display on Humanism, with paper and pens included for children to write down their thoughts/questions about Humanism, and books included to encourage children to do their own reading research about the topic. Decorated symbols could be added to the display to show children’s work, with scribed quotes/questions/thoughts from the lesson added too.

