

Lesson 6: R.E.

What do the major religions have to say?

AIM:

To explore and understand what the major religions say about the relative values of animal and human life and the use of animals for medical research.

OBJECTIVES:

To learn about what the different religious viewpoints are.

To voice a particular religious viewpoint as if it is your own.

To understand how a religious viewpoint might influence someone making a decision about using medication tested on animals.

To understand the value of religious viewpoints in the wider debate about animals in medical research.

NATIONAL CURRICULUM LINKS

RE: KS3: 1a & e. 3i, j, k, o & p **KS4** 1a, 2a, b & c

RESOURCES:

PLAY EXTRACTS: Scene 7 – Hospital

INFORMATION SHEET – Religious views

DISCUSSION STARTER:

The character of Raz in EVERY BREATH is “thinking about becoming a Buddhist.”

How does this affect his view on animals?

What impact does this have on Sonny and his decision about whether or not to take his Asthma medication?

You might like to look at INFORMATION SHEET - PLAY EXTRACTS: Scene 7 - Hospital to refresh your memory.

ACTIVITY:

- 1) Divide the class into pairs. Distribute INFORMATION SHEET - RELIGIOUS VIEWS and allocate to each pair one of the major religions to focus on.
- 2) Ask the pair to read the information for the religion they have been allocated and note down the major points about that religion's view of:
 - a) the way animals should be treated
 - b) the value of animal life in relation to human life
 - c) experiments on animals
- 3) Role-Play

Ask the pairs to label themselves A and B and give them the following information:

A is a friend of Sonny's who holds the religious faith/ or is in the process of considering the religious faith they have just been studying.

B is Sonny, in hospital considering whether or not he should take his Asthma medication.

A comes to visit Sonny in hospital. Sonny asks, "What's your view about Animal Rights?"

Ask them to role-play the scene. They should aim to make the scene: a realistic portrayal of a conversation between two friends and informative to the rest of the class about the view of the religion they are representing.

They might like to discuss beforehand the kinds of things A might say. They should bear in mind that most of the religions do not have a clear-cut right or wrong view, so they should simply select some ideas from the information given.

After letting the scene run for 2-3 minutes, ask them to review how it went and re-run bearing in mind their two aims.

- 4) Ask representatives from each religion to present their scene to the rest of the class.

After each one discuss:

- A) What were religious ideas presented?
- B) What impact did the conversation have on Sonny?

Extension Activity

- 5) An Independent Ethics Committee advises the Government about whether or not certain experiments involving animals should be allowed.

Discuss:

Do you think representatives from the major religions should have a place on such a committee? Why?/Why not?
What other voices should be represented?

As a class draw up a list of who you think should be represented on the Independent Ethics Committee.

- 6) You can either run this exercise as a whole class or in small groups of 5-6. Present them with the following scenario:

You are the independent Ethics Committee deciding if the research that Anita wants to do in the play, researching mice in the new lab, should be allowed (we are taking a step back in time here in the imaginary world of the play).

Anita's research involves examining mice to discover more about how the genes in their hearts and livers work at different times of the day. As part of this work, the mice are killed, and their organs removed. This type of research is known as basic research and its purpose is to gain knowledge about how the body works. It is not directly linked to a particular illness, but its outcomes may lead to improvements in medicine or care further down the line.

Using the religious views considered earlier in the lesson, debate whether or not you think the research should go ahead.

If done in small groups, feedback the main points discussed in your debate to the rest of the class.