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## Announcing the amazing new NATRE membership scheme

We are excited to announce the **NEW NATRE membership scheme** which has been designed to provide you with loads of additional benefits. Alongside your termly REToday magazine, Curriculum publication, REsource journal, NATRE membership area, RE Today subscriber area and access to NATRE affiliated local groups, you will now receive **month-by-month benefits** including **exclusive offers and discounts** on resources, **FREE monthly downloadable resources** written by RE advisers and sent directly to your email inbox, as well as **huge discounts on all NATRE and RE Today courses** - ranging

from £30 to an entirely free course place, **discount on webinars**, **termly head teacher briefings** and much more.

We are also significantly upgrading the NATRE website, so there will be better access to all the useful resources, links and support that can help you deliver even more outstanding RE!

**It is NATRE's vision to support excellent provision for RE nationally**, so please check out the NATRE website to explore all these new offers in more detail.

Ed Pawson, NATRE Chair

E: [chair@natre.org.uk](mailto:chair@natre.org.uk)



## Hurray - the Government accepts our argument!

We are delighted that the Department for Education has accepted the case for the reform of GCSE and A level examinations in Religious Studies on the same time scale as EBacc subjects such as History and Geography, with first teaching from 2016.

GCSE Examinations (short course and full GCSE) in RS are taken by around 450,000 candidates each year, having become rapidly more popular in recent years. GCE A level RS is a valued academic qualification which has been described by the Russell Group as a good preparation for university generally. This decision amplifies the signal that the government recognises the importance of Religious Education alongside the EBacc group of subjects. This is to be welcomed.

We have been pressing for more than 3 years for parity between different GCSE subjects and this is a vindication of our campaign. GCSE RS is recognised to be an academically challenging subject, with more students sitting a Full GCSE in RS in 2013 than in either History or Geography, so it is welcome news that it can continue to stand alongside other Humanities subjects in the secondary school curriculum

When Michael Gove's plans were first publicised we potentially faced a crisis of being put into the lower division of exams at KS4, with the specifications for EBacc subjects being reviewed and examined on a new 9 point scale, while RS and other arts subjects remained unreformed. Happily, this is no longer to be the case.



## Join the monthly Twitter chat for informed teachers of RE #rechatuk



*#rechatuk,  
hosted by  
Fiona Moss*



**#rechatuk** is a monthly Twitter chat which gives teachers of RE an opportunity for real time discussion about various RE related issues. It takes place on the **first Monday of every month from 8pm-9pm** and the discussion always features a pertinent issue facing RE teachers. Past discussions have included forms of assessment, applying for the RE Quality Mark and making the most out of visits and visitors. It's great fun and a fantastic opportunity for free CPD and networking.

You can find the complete storify at

<http://t.co/SHBELSUyzL>

but, here's a couple of tweets from the latest #rechatuk, so you can sample the discussion we had on Mon 7<sup>th</sup> April. We were discussing "using visual media in RE":

Vygotsky promoted experiential education which I believe visual media brings [#rechatuk](#)

I tend to use clips from TV shows cut up using windows movie maker [#REchatuk](#)

The only thing you need to take part is a Twitter account so get yourself signed up and **join us at 8pm on 12th May** (5th May is a Bank Holiday).

You won't regret it!

## RE Quality Mark

- Do your learners have great, high quality, authentic experiences in RE?
- Do these experiences contribute to whole school outcomes?
- Would you like this to be recognised?

Outstanding RE can now be acknowledged, celebrated and publicised through the RE Quality Mark, providing national recognition for the work you do in RE.

The RE Quality Mark has two purposes:

- to recognise good practice in RE
- to provide a powerful tool for development.

Schools which have applied for the award have found that it affirms the work they are already doing raises the profile of the subject and gives them ideas and confidence for developing their practice even further.

W: [www.reqm.org](http://www.reqm.org)



*Superb new film  
resource: A Question of  
Faith*

## Outstanding film resource: A Question of Faith

This is an outstanding compilation of five short films for GCSE Religious Studies where twelve students, made up of Christians, Muslims and non-believers, explore some big questions of faith.

Programmes can be found on the BBC website at:

<http://www.bbc-now.co.uk/programmes/b03zf45d>

The group takes part in a Christian healing service and questions if God can heal today. Following a visit to a children's hospice they discuss why innocent children suffer.

On the theme of marriage, they are guests at a Muslim wedding to explore the value of marriage. Taking part in a Christian church service for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community, they ask where religion stands when it comes to homosexuality. Finally a visit to a Humanist funeral triggers the debate about what happens after we die.

Accompanying resources are available at:

<http://retoday.org.uk/resources/18/read/163>

## Introducing Chelsey Miller-Brown at RE Today offices

Hi  
I have worked for RE Today for 3 years. I look after all things membership, as well as RE Today subscriptions. I process all the membership applications which come into the office and handle any enquiries or problems that members may have. I'm probably the person who picks up the phone if you have a query about your membership. Currently I am involved in creating and launching the new NATRE membership packages; these offer some amazing new benefits to really support RE teachers which I'm really excited about.

I also log all the Spirited Arts entries and help judge the competition - which I love!

The best part of my job is hearing from teachers that we have really helped- from attending one of our courses which has reignited their confidence to teach RE, or putting together a lesson their pupils loved with help from one of our publications.

Chelsey Miller-Brown



*Chelsey Miller-Brown at RE Today offices  
The friendly face behind the phone!*

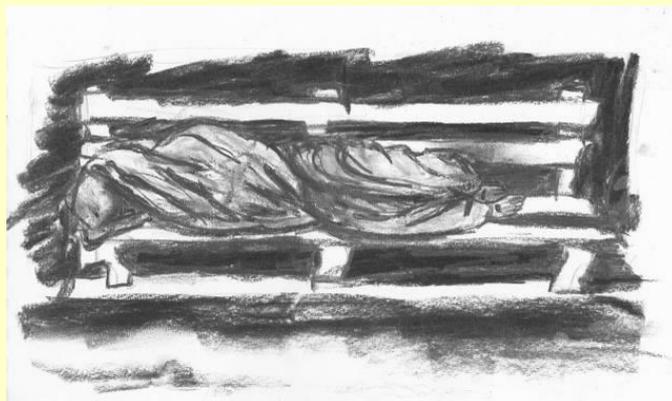
## Sculpture of Jesus as a homeless man sleeping on a bench sparks outrage

Inspired by Matthew 25, where Jesus says "whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" this sculpture represents the idea that Christ cares for the most marginalized in our society.

The figure is shrouded in a blanket; the only indication that it is Jesus is the visible wounds on the feet. The life-size version of the work has enough room that someone is able to sit on the bench.

Rev D Buck comments "We're reminded of our ultimate calling as Christians ... to eliminate homelessness. Part of our faith commitment is to care for the needy."

But not everyone is happy. Resident Cindy Castano Swannack called police the first time she drove by it. 'I was concerned for the safety of the neighbourhood,'



She did not like how it portrayed Jesus as a 'vagrant'.

'Jesus is not a helpless person who needs our help,' she said, 'We need someone who is capable of meeting our needs, not someone who is also needy.'

However, Pope Francis thinks otherwise, and has recently given the statue his blessing, although several Catholic Cathedrals in the US have refused to display it!

*On a bench: Homeless Jesus. Original artwork by Hannah Pawson Story:  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/04/17/homeless-jesus-sculpture-davidson\\_n\\_5167418.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/04/17/homeless-jesus-sculpture-davidson_n_5167418.html)*

## Small grants for RE

The **Jerusalem Trust's Small Grants Scheme** is designed to support the teaching of Christianity within RE.

On completion of a short online application form schools may be eligible for a **grant of up to £500** to enable them to purchase resources

to support learning about Christianity within RE.

The Scheme is open to primary and secondary schools. Priority however will be given to **state secondary schools without a religious affiliation**.

W: <https://www.regrants.org.uk>



## 'Respect for all through RE' conferences at Aston Villa, Wembley, Arsenal and West Ham



Respect for all through RE conferences



NATRE is continuing its programme of pupil and teacher conferences on 'Respect for all through RE', some of which have been generously hosted at major football grounds, thanks to links with the 'Kick it Out' programme to tackle prejudice in football. The format brings 80 pupils, 9-10s working with 13-14s, together for a day of highly interactive learning on religion and respect, and sometimes includes a stadium tour! 7 of these events are running this year, including at Thurrock, Aston Villa, Arsenal, Redbridge, Havering and Leicester. Last year we ran 5 of these at Wembley Stadium (with Brent SACRE), Arsenal (with Islington SACRE), Thurrock, West Ham (Newham SACRE) and Bradford. Earlier venues have included Barking & Dagenham, Walsall, Durham. This is a great way to show some teachers a

dozen good RE ideas in action, and all those who attend get a package of materials to take back to school and use.

The aim is inspiring teachers through participation in excellent practice - INSET and pupil days combined. Two of last year's funded events have gathered more funds from other sources to repeat this year - well done Sandwell SACRE and Islington. The funding model encourages SACREs or other school groups to commit support in kind, while spreading NATRE's working reputation to include more work directly with pupils. We have been delighted that this enables us to work with 'hard to reach' schools, where RE may be struggling. The project has reached about 320 teachers and over 1400 pupils since it began.

We thank Culham St Gabriel's for this generous support.

## Hockerill/NATRE Award for Innovation in RE teaching

The Hockerill Educational Foundation and NATRE have joined forces to offer a new prize for RE teachers in primary and secondary schools.

The prize is in two parts:

- a monetary sum to buy new RE materials (£600)
- an educational bursary to part fund a specialist RE course of your choice (£600)

To enter, all you have to do is download the application form from the Hockerill website.

The entry form asks you to complete a short description of an interesting piece of RE that you have been involved with developing, explaining how it brings innovation to a specific part of the RE syllabus that you are teaching.

Additionally, you need to supply a

sample of the materials created and some evidence of children's work arising from its completion.

Closing date: 31<sup>st</sup> May 2014

We **welcome enquiries** from schools who want to talk over their ideas for entry to see if they meet the criteria for the award. Please contact **Fiona Moss** (NATRE) or **Derek Humphries** (Hockerill).

E: [Fiona@retoday.org.uk](mailto:Fiona@retoday.org.uk)

E: [info@hockerillfoundation.org.uk](mailto:info@hockerillfoundation.org.uk)  
(01279 420 855)

To download details:

W: [www.hockerillfoundation.org.uk](http://www.hockerillfoundation.org.uk)



## New NATRE local groups are starting up everywhere!

### Why not start one where you are?

If you are thinking of setting up a NATRE-linked local group in your area, take confidence from these reports below, where local group leaders tell us how their new groups are going:

Rachel Kemp, Manchester

“Just to let you know what a great meeting we have had.

I had 20 people there and 18 apologies!

There seems to be a real need for RE support, so we are going to have termly meetings.

We did loads of talking, so really I did very little input.... and our plan is to share good practice together.”

Angela Brady, North Shields

“The theme we focused on was using film and TV in our teaching. Thanks for the goodies box, although we didn’t actually have time to go through the pack in the session, but people took it away for reading later.

Next event in Newcastle area is: The RE specific TeachMeet on 1<sup>st</sup> July.”

Caryn Hickson, Cheltenham

“We had a discussion on ‘What is the Purpose of RE?’ linked to the Ofsted report on ‘Religious education: realising the potential’ and ‘Reflections on the 2013 Ofsted report’ by Alan Brine HMI.

Also discussed:

- What makes an RE co-ordinator successful?
- Sharing of the NATRE resources
- 10 ideas for better visual learning: images for better RE
- Ten beginnings for RE in the Reception class



North East NATRE group held its first meeting on 1st April



## Keeping in touch...



Please do keep in touch by emailing me with your local group news; NATRE-linked groups are growing by the day and we are always pleased to hear about your activities.

If your role changes, PLEASE remember to contact me with the name and contact details of your successor.

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