

UPPER KEY STAGE 2/UNIT 2B.3

PEOPLE OF GOD

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HOW CAN FOLLOWING GOD BRING FREEDOM AND JUSTICE?

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★ OUTCOMES

BY THE END OF THIS UNIT, PUPILS ARE EXPECTED TO BE ABLE TO:

-  Explain connections between the story of Moses and the concepts of freedom and salvation, using theological terms.
-  Make clear connections between Bible texts studied and what Christians believe about being the People of God and how they should behave.
-  Explain ways in which some Christians put their beliefs into practice by trying to bring freedom to others.
-  Identify ideas about freedom and justice arising from their study of Bible texts and comment on how far these are helpful or inspiring, justifying their responses.

KNOWLEDGE BUILDING BLOCKS

PUPILS WILL KNOW THAT:

- The Old Testament pieces together the story of the People of God.
- The story of Moses and the Exodus shows how God rescued his people from slavery in Egypt; Christians see this story as looking forward to how Jesus' death and resurrection also rescue people from slavery to sin.
- Christians apply this idea to living today by trying to serve God and to bring freedom to others; for example, loving others, caring for them, bringing health, food, justice, and telling the story of Jesus.

NOTE: Teachers should read the Essential Information pages before teaching this unit.

➔ YOU MIGHT LIKE TO START WITH...

Imagining life as a slave in ancient Egypt. Look at Exodus 1:8–14 and Exodus 1:22 and find as much evidence as possible about what life must have been like for a Hebrew slave in Egypt. Hot-seat pupils in the role of slaves to find out a) what they have to do as slaves; b) what they would like to do but can't due to their status.

MAKING SENSE OF THE TEXT

- Help pupils to learn the first four of eight events from Moses' life (see Resources for where to find these stories): **1)** being put in the basket and found by Pharaoh's daughter, **2)** killing of the taskmaster, **3)** fleeing Egypt, **4)** the burning bush. Focus on the burning bush. What are Moses' feelings about going back to Egypt? Why do pupils think this is? Pupils think of adjectives to describe Moses' feelings throughout the story of the burning bush and create emotion graphs. Recap their learning about the People of God (see Unit 2a.2). Explain that Moses and the children of Israel were part of the People of God. Exodus 3:6 shows their link to God and Abraham.
- Continue learning the eight events in Moses' life by looking at event number **5)**, the ten plagues. Ask pupils to put themselves in the positions of Moses and Pharaoh after the eighth plague (locusts) and create a 'conscience alley' for each of these men.
 - *Moses' conscience alley:* Pupils on one side give reasons for Moses to continue following God's will and attempting to get the slaves released; the other side state reasons why Moses should give up.
 - *Pharaoh's conscience alley:* Pupils on one side give reasons why Pharaoh should keep the Hebrews as slaves, the other side give reasons why Pharaoh should grant their freedom.
- Learn the last three of the events from Moses' life: **6)** leading children of Israel out of Egypt, **7)** crossing the Red/Reed Sea, **8)** the covenant on Mount Sinai.
- Give pupils tasks to consolidate their knowledge of the story; for example, 'quick draw': spending 30 seconds drawing each of the eight events (four minutes in total) or verbally summarising each event in ten seconds.
- Help pupils to identify some main themes in the story of Moses' life; for example, freedom, God, suffering, leadership, vulnerability, obedience, evil. Ask groups to make two tableaux representing a theme – one showing it within the story, the other within the world today. Which theme do pupils think is most central to the life of Moses and why?
- Remind pupils that God rescues his people in the story of Moses by delivering them from Egypt and *then* making the covenant with them – not demanding that they obey the commands first and only rescuing them *if* they manage it. What difference does this make? Talk about the key question: from the story of the Exodus: how far does following God bring freedom and justice?
- Many Christians see the story of the Exodus as looking forward to salvation, being freed from slavery to sin through Jesus. Make use of the Frieze artwork to show making the connection between the liberation of the People of God from slavery, and the Christian belief that Jesus brings salvation from sin (see Units 2b.6 and 2b.7). Talk about the parallels.



MAKING CONNECTIONS

- Look at the Ten Commandments given at Mount Sinai (see Resource Sheet 1) and remind pupils of their learning about in previous units. For each commandment, ask pupils to work out what some people must have been doing, if the People of God had to be given that command. (You don't need rules to make you do something if you are doing it already!)
- Ask pupils how similar or different the world is now: how many of those things are still going on? From this, ask pupils to give three good reasons why Christians (and Jewish people) argue that the Ten Commandments are still important today; compare this with what an atheist might say about the value of these commands today.
- Ask pupils to work out which of the Commandments they think would be hardest for a Christian to keep. Is it possible to keep all ten, always? Is it hard not to kill? Is it harder to never be greedy, or to always tell the truth? What happens when humans fail to live up to the standard? Should a person be punished or helped? Why? Ask them to weigh up which Commandments would have most impact on the world, if everyone followed them.



UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT

- Introduce the idea that many Christian people see Jesus as bringing a new covenant – a new relationship with God. His teachings and actions showed how to live. Look at the two greatest commandments Jesus reminds listeners of in Matthew 22:37-40. Ask pupils to spot links between these and the Ten Commandments. (For example, Love God = 1-4; Love your neighbour = 5-10.)
- Give scenarios for pupils to role play with two endings – the first when Jesus' great commandments are followed, the second when they are not. For example, how to respond to: someone who never lets you join in, someone who is in your group for project work but mucks about and is unhelpful, someone you have never met before but is in a bad situation (hurt/homeless and so on), when you yourself are finding something difficult to master, when you fall too ill to do something really important to you, when your friends are poking fun at religion. Discuss what might happen in the scenarios if the commandments were followed but not fully. For example, God was loved but not with all heart, soul and mind, and neighbours were loved but not as 'yourself'. How do these commands help to bring freedom and justice?
- Choose a Christian charity that seeks to bring freedom and justice. Unit 2a.4 recommended Christian Aid and TearFund; these would work here too, but you might use a local alternative, or have a look at Toybox. Toybox is a Christian charity supporting and liberating street pupils in South and Central America, India and Africa. Show pupils appropriate pages and video clips from the Toybox website [NB: PLEASE check them out first.]. Imagine pupils are asked to write for the Toybox website to encourage Christians in the UK to support their work. What ideas from their learning so far would they use to persuade supporters? Make links with the story of Moses, the children of Israel, the Ten Commandments and Jesus' two great commandments.







MAKING CONNECTIONS

- The story of the Exodus has inspired Jewish and Christian people for centuries. Ask pupils to give at least three reasons why this might be the case. Ask pupils to identify any parts of the story that are inspiring and why. What lessons could there be for all people about resisting injustice and tyranny?
- Ask pupils to address the key question: How can following God bring freedom and justice? They should answer in the light of their learning about God bringing freedom to the people of God, but also how believers try to bring justice today.
- It is not only Christian and Jewish people who want freedom and justice, of course! Reflect on why ideas of freedom and justice are so important in the world today. Find some local people who are involved in working for freedom and justice (or look at some more global examples; for example, Desmond Tutu, Malala, Aung San Suu Kyi and Pandurang Shastri Athavale). How inspiring and helpful are these examples?
- In groups and then as a class, don't write Ten Commandments, but write Ten Lessons for Living, where pupils show what we can *all* do to bring more freedom and justice, explaining why these are good Lessons for Living. See if there are three easy steps that pupils can take toward justice themselves.

★ OUTCOMES

BY THE END OF THIS UNIT, PUPILS ARE EXPECTED TO BE ABLE TO:

-  Explain connections between biblical texts and the idea of God's covenant with his people, using theological terms.
-  Identify examples of Law texts and suggest how believers might interpret them.
-  Show how Christians put their beliefs about living as the People of God into practice in different ways; for example, through the Five Marks of Mission, in community and individually.
-  Weigh up how Christian ideas about justice relate to the issues, problems and opportunities of their own lives and the world today, developing insights of their own.

🧱 KNOWLEDGE BUILDING BLOCKS

PUPILS WILL KNOW THAT:

- The Old Testament pieces together the story of the People of God. As their circumstances change (for example, from being nomads (Abraham, Jacob) to being city dwellers (David)), they have to learn new ways of following God.
- The story of Moses and the Exodus shows how God rescued his people from slavery in Egypt.
- Christians apply this idea to living today by trying to serve God and to bring freedom to others; for example, loving others, caring for them, bringing health, food, justice, and telling the story of Jesus.
- Christians see the Christian church as the People of God, and try to live in a way that attracts others to God; for example, as salt and light in the world.

NOTE: Teachers should read the Essential Information pages before teaching this unit.

➔ YOU MIGHT LIKE TO START WITH...

Talk about all the kinds of agreements we have with people:

Look at a bank note – what does it say? 'I promise to pay the bearer on demand the sum of...'

Look at some rules from the Highway Code and the Green Cross Code: these are agreements between drivers and pedestrians – not just rules for the sake of it but to keep people safe.

Can pupils think of other agreements that try to look after both parties? School rules; home-school agreements; rules of sport, or games...



➔ MAKING SENSE OF THE TEXT

- Remind pupils of the agreements made between God and his People (see Unit 2a.2 for background) – e.g. with Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3), and Moses (Exodus 20, see Core Learning in this unit). These were two-sided agreements – God promised to be with his People; they were required to live in a way that stood out from their neighbouring tribes and nations.
- Use the Frieze and the Essential Information to tell pupils some more background details about the People of God, from Moses to David. Using ideas from the Frieze, they could do a simple story map outlining some key events.
- Explain that the Old Testament contains many more commandments than those given in the three covenants. Some traditions say there are 613 commandments in all. Present pupils with 12 cards, each containing a commandment from the 'Law' texts in the Old Testament (see Resource Sheet 2, and Essential Information), all of which are traditionally believed to have been given by God to Moses. You might like to do this using 'chat stations' set up around the class, to get pupils thinking and talking together. Talk about why the People of God might need to be given these commands.
- After chat stations, talk about the meaning of the commandments. See if pupils can identify which areas of life they are mainly focusing on. Once pupils have settled on three or four areas of life, classify the commandments under these headings. (Areas might include God, food, religion, the poor, how to treat others, lifestyle, behaviour and so on.)
- With pupils, pick out all the commandments that have implications for how to treat others. Discuss the word 'justice' and define together. Set pupils an agenda (see Resource Sheet 2a) for a group meeting/conference to gather their ideas about how these laws may have brought justice to people in society. Debrief, discussing whether all the groups had similar or different ideas.
- Remember that these are part of an agreement or covenant: there are two sides – God's side and the people's. Get pupils to think about why keeping these commands would be good for the people. Try and sum up what kind of society these commands would create. Think of three ways in which this kind of society would be attractive to the neighbouring nations. In what ways might it be attractive today?



UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT

- Christians believe their lifestyle should be appealing to others too. Look together at Jesus' words in Matthew 5:13-16. Pupils list all the reasons why salt is useful to people, then do the same with light. Explore how necessary these were in biblical times. Explain that today, many Christians think it is really important that people have a close relationship with God so try to attract others to him by being 'salt and light' in their actions. Use dialogic talk to help pupils work out what each metaphor means ('salt' includes preserving the good things in the world and 'light' includes setting a good example of Christianity and showing people who are in the dark about Jesus to help them find their way to him). Can pupils think of examples of times when Christians might act as salt/light/both? Consider if pupils play this role at any point.
- Explore what Christians might do as People of God by looking at TELL, TEACH, TEND, TRANSFORM, TREASURE (see Resource sheet 3). These are a shorthand for the 'Five Marks of Mission' of the Church of England. They are five things that Christians can do to serve and transform society; being salt and light in the world.
- Split pupils into five groups. Using web resources and/or written texts, each group finds out about what one Mark is, and actions that Christians might do to fulfil it, both in community and individually. Put pupils into new groups with one pupil who has learnt about each Mark in every group. Use jigsaw discussion – each member of the group teaches the others about the Mark they have been focusing on.
- Ask pupils to produce a visual representation of the Five Marks of Mission as a reminder to be displayed on a church notice board for members of a Church of England community – it should contain reminders of why the Five Marks are important, what each of the Marks are and what can be done to fulfil each. Some words can be used, but visual aspects are crucial – how will church members see and quickly understand this reminder when many other notices may be on the board in church?



MAKING CONNECTIONS

- Focus on the fourth Mark of Mission. Play a game looking at how Christian charities worldwide bring about justice through fair trade. (For example, Traidcraft's Orange Trading Game or Christian Aid's Chocolate Trading Game). Think about how Christians in this country support initiatives such as this and discuss whether pupils feel only Christians should support Christian initiatives.
- Think about some of the issues around injustice today. Think about some other ways in which Christians work for justice including giving to/working for appropriate charities, praying for the end of injustice, promoting harmony, joining in with campaigns such as those for clean water, national practice such as food banks, as well as localised practice. Ask pupils to consider what they themselves can do to bring freedom and justice at a class, school and local level, and further afield. Pupils choose a cause they feel to be exceptionally important at a local level and further afield (this may very well be an initiative they have seen linked to Christian action but does not have to be – the brilliant Toilet Twinning project from TEARFund is one example mentioned already) and write a persuasive letter to champion it. You might choose a class charity: ask pupils to choose by listening to each other's persuasive reasons for choosing theirs. Vote for the charity whose work does most to bring freedom and justice, and perhaps choose a way of supporting the charity. Talk about the impact of this for the charity, those they support and for pupils themselves.

SELECT AND WEAVE TOGETHER ACTIVITIES TO ACHIEVE THE OUTCOMES

MAKE SENSE OF THE TEXT

UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT

MAKE CONNECTIONS

OUTCOMES

BACKGROUND FOR TEACHERS

The Old Testament tells the story of the ‘People of God’. Genesis introduces Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, who were all wandering nomads. God frees the people from slavery in Egypt and they arrive at the ‘Promised Land’ with Moses and Joshua (although Moses does not enter); eventually, under King David and his successors, they establish a land and a kingdom. By the end of the reign of Solomon, God even has a house – a grand temple in Jerusalem. This was literally seen to be the place where God dwelt and where the presence of God was strongest.

King David was the son of Jesse and one of the People of God. The Messiah was expected to come from his line. Both the Gospels of Matthew and Luke show the genealogy of Jesus in an attempt to show that he was indeed a descendent of David.

This unit focuses on Moses and builds on the idea of covenant introduced in Unit 2a.2. The People of God are chosen by God to be his special people: he enters into an agreement with them, promising to love and

guide them. In return, he gives guidance on how to remain in a relationship with an almighty, holy God. The people have to keep their side of the agreement. Forgiveness is on offer for failure, but it should not be taken lightly.

Through the stories in the Old Testament, Christians see a model of God having a relationship with people. Many Christians are inspired by examples of Bible characters’ faith, and also learn more about the faithfulness and character of God. These stories can be seen as attracting people of other nations into a close relationship with God.

Through choosing to follow Jesus, Christians see themselves as becoming members of the People of God with a mission that includes being salt and light in the world.

NB Many of the biblical characters and stories in the People of God units are important in other religions too. This unit puts a Christian emphasis on the interpretation of the stories as they are being taught in the context of Christianity.

**COMMENTARY ON THE TEXT AND ITS MEANING(S):
STORY OF MOSES**

Moses features in four out of the five books in the Pentateuch – his story lasts from Exodus 2 all the way until the end of Deuteronomy. He is seen to be a great prophet and leader of his people; as the end of Deuteronomy says: ‘Never since has there arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses.’

Freedom is an important theme in Exodus. God delivers the children of Israel from Egypt, but the story definitely does not stop there. Importantly, he makes a covenant with them at Sinai. Moses is a key figure in both the Exodus narrative and the receiving of the law before leading the children of Israel to the Promised Land.

From a Christian perspective, God rescues humankind through sending Jesus. Moses lives hundreds of years before this time and is seen as foreshadowing Jesus. Christians would say that God’s rescue mission for humanity is already planned by the time Moses is alive and is indicated through his story.

The episodes in the life of Moses selected as key knowledge for pupils at this age are:

- Birth narrative, Exodus 2:1–10
- The killing of the taskmaster and fleeing Egypt, Exodus 2:11–15
- Burning bush, Exodus 3:1 – Exodus 4:17
- The ten plagues, Exodus 7:14 – Exodus 12:32 (select appropriate parts for your class)
- Leading the children of Israel out of Egypt, Exodus 12:33–42
- Crossing the Reed Sea, Exodus 14:1–31 and you could also use Exodus 15:1–20
- Covenant at Sinai. This text is very long, so use Exodus 19:3–6 and Exodus 20:1–21.

Some pupils in Year 5 may respond to looking at parts of the text straight from a traditional version of the Bible whilst others will need more child-friendly versions – please choose texts appropriate for the pupils in your class.

As pupils learn about several different events in Moses’ life, the stories do not all have to be taught at the same time but can be broken up. Imaginative storytelling techniques should be used where possible to make the stories memorable for pupils.

COMMENTARY ON THE TEXT AND ITS MEANING(S): COMMANDS IN LEVITICUS AND DEUTERONOMY

The first five books of the Bible are called the Torah in Jewish practice, meaning 'teaching' or 'instruction'. It is referred to as the Pentateuch (from the Greek meaning 'five scrolls') in Christian practice. Sometimes called the 'Law' as shorthand, these books set out the origins of the relationship between God and his people, and the guidance on how to live in this relationship. Leviticus and Deuteronomy set out lots of diverse guidance.

This guidance reflects the situation of the people at the time – i.e. some commands suit a wandering tribe, some are more suited to more settled farming communities. The commands cover many aspects of life, including:

- **ethics** and how to live together in harmony, with a notable concern for the poor and the 'alien' or the stranger;
- **ritual**, such as the practice of sacrifice, as offerings to God for thanks or to say sorry. (To get close to a holy God, a person must be pure. Sin separates a person from God, so offering a sacrifice shows a person is sorry, it cleanses the person from sin and brings someone back to God. See Unit 2b.1);
- **regulating the calendar** – festivals remind people of their story and their relationship with God and each other.

RESOURCES

- Extracts from the film 'The Prince of Egypt' are still a good way to introduce the story of Moses and the Exodus.
- Toybox is a Christian charity with a mission of ending the injustice of children living and working on the streets. Their website is: www.toybox.org.uk/ **NB: Make sure you check the pages out first before showing them to pupils.**
- The Five Marks of Mission: www.churchofengland.org/media/1918854/the%20five%20marks%20of%20mission.pdf
- Some churches have plans showing how they will work toward each of the Five Marks of Mission. Some of these can be found online.
- Traidcraft's Orange Trading game and accompanying activities can be found at: www.traidcraftschools.co.uk/media/aaa8d308-2b49-46be-a226-e329037beda5
- Christian Aid's Chocolate Trade game and accompanying activities can be found at: http://learn.christianaid.org.uk/YouthLeaderResources/choc_trade.aspx
- Information about Toilet Twinning can be found here: www.toilettwinning.org



GOING FURTHER

Many additional texts could be suitable here. Pupils could learn extra stories about a number of characters to explore their relationship with God, and how God fulfils the covenant with his people. For example:

- The birth of Esau and Jacob to Isaac and Rebekah, Genesis 25:21–28
- Joseph being sold into slavery, Genesis 37:1–28 leads to Joseph ruling in Egypt, Genesis 41
- Saul being proclaimed king, 1 Samuel 10:17–26
- David becoming king over all Israel and making Jerusalem its capital, 2 Samuel 5:1–7
- King Solomon building the first temple in Jerusalem, 1 Kings 6:1–14
- Daniel sticks with God, even in exile in a foreign land, Daniel 1.

YOU MIGHT LINK WITH...

You might take the opportunity to find out about how Moses is viewed in Islam and in Judaism. Perhaps look at how Jewish people remember the story of the Exodus at Pesach.

