



KS3 VOCABULARY LIST: RELIGIOUS STUDIES

This list consolidates key vocabulary in the subject, making it easier for you to know, understand and use it accurately. Your teacher will use this vocabulary frequently, and you will encounter it in reading. You will be expected to learn meanings and spellings.

Year 7

Anicca	The belief in Buddhism that all things are impermanent and constantly changing
Anatta	The belief in Buddhism that humans have no permanent, underlying substance that can be called the soul; that there is no permanent 'you' or self
Baptism	A Christian ceremony in which a person is baptised and joins the Christian community
Belief	A person believes that something is true. This might be based on evidence, experience, what they've been taught, tradition or feelings
Bible	Christian Holy Book
Buddha	The title given to Gautama Siddhartha, the religious teacher and founder of Buddhism. It means 'enlightened one'
Buddhist	A follower of Buddhism and the teachings of Buddha
Buddhism	The religion Buddhists follow
Christian	A follower of Christianity, the teachings of Jesus
Christianity	The religion Christians follow
Confirmation	A rite in several Christian churches that confirms a baptised person in their faith and admits them to full participation in the church
Crucifixion	A way of killing a person by nailing them to a cross; it was common in the Roman Empire. Jesus was crucified
Dharma	The teachings of the Buddha

Dukkha	In Buddhism the suffering that is caused in life by craving
Enlightenment	In Buddhism, it is a final spiritual state in which everything is understood and there is no more suffering or desire
Faith	Trusting in something, even when a person can't necessarily prove it
Five Skandhas	Buddhist belief that beings are composed of five 'heaps' or components: form, feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness. These change and are not permanent. This relates to the Buddhist belief of anatta
Four Noble Truths	In Buddhism, the teaching that 1. Dukkha (suffering) is part of everyday life, 2. That suffering is caused by craving, 3. That is the cause of suffering is craving, then the end of suffering is to stop craving, and 4. The cure for suffering is to let go of craving by following the Noble Eightfold Path
Hindu	A follower of Hindu Dharma (Hinduism)
Hindu Dharma / Hinduism	The religion Hindus follow
Humanism	A philosophical and ethical worldview that believes that people can live their lives and work out what is the correct thing to do by looking within themselves and using reason, kindness and science
Humanist	A follower of Humanism
Incarnation	Taking on human form. In Christianity, the belief that God took on human form in Jesus; Jesus being God on earth
Initiation	The action of admitting someone into a group or society
Islam	The religion Muslims follow
Jew	A follower of Judaism
Jesus	The name of the man who Christians believe was the son of God, and whose teachings are the basis of Christianity.
Judaism	The religion Jews follow

Meditation	A method used to train the mind to become calm or more mindful/aware
Messiah	A promised saviour and leader
Miracle	An extraordinary and welcome event that is not explicable by natural or scientific laws and is therefore attributed to a divine agency
Muslim	A follower of Islam
Noble Eightfold Path	In Buddhism, a path/practical guide comprised of 8 aspects advising a Buddhist in how to treat others, how to act and think themselves, and how to see the world: right understanding, right attitude, right speech, right action, right effort, right livelihood, right mindfulness and right contemplation
Parable	A parable is a short story, which is told to make a moral or religious point, like those told by Jesus
Pharisee/s	A member of an ancient Jewish sect, teaching strict observance of Jewish tradition
Qur'an	The Holy Book of Islam
Religion	A system of beliefs and practices formulated around belief in a god, gods or supernatural power. Followers do activities connected with this belief, such as prayer or worship
Resurrection	Coming back to life after death; believers have different views about the format this takes, e.g. physical or spiritual
Sangha	The Buddhist community
Theology	The study of the nature of God and of religion and religious beliefs
Three Marks of Existence	In Buddhism, concepts highlighting the fundamental nature of reality and experience: dukkha (that everyone suffers), anicca (impermanence), anatta (no permanent soul or self)
Three Poisons	In Buddhism, the three things that are taught that poison people and cause them to experience suffering: greed, hatred and ignorance
Via Negativa	The process of trying to explain what God is by saying what God is not

Year 8

Anointing	The process of making something holy using water or oil
Apparition	A vision of the spirit of a dead person
Antisemitism	Fear of or hatred towards Jews
Belief	A person believes that something is true. This might be based on evidence, experience, what they've been taught, tradition or feelings
Bible	Christian Holy Book
Buddha	The title given to Gautama Siddhartha, the religious teacher and founder of Buddhism. It means 'enlightened one'
Buddhist	A follower of Buddhism and the teachings of Buddha
Christian	A follower of the teachings of Jesus
Conservative (interpretation)	Interpretation of religious stories and teachings that says they are real and happened, but that the way they were written down following being passed on orally may have altered some details. They still contain important lessons for people's lives
Crucifixion	A way of killing a person by nailing them to a cross; it was common in the Roman Empire. Jesus was crucified
Dependent arising	The Buddhist concept that nothing exists independently; all things arise in dependence on/of other things. If you change one part, the whole is affected
Dharma	The teachings of the Buddha
Discrimination	Acting on prejudices; doing negative actions to a person/people based on an unfair and unsupported point of view, e.g. because of race, gender, sexuality etc.
Dukkha	In Buddhism the suffering that is caused in life by craving

Enlightenment	In Buddhism, it is a final spiritual state in which everything is understood and there is no more suffering or desire
Fundamental (interpretation)	Interpretation of religious stories and teachings that says they are literally true down to the last detail, exactly as written
Ghetto	An area if a city, especially a very poor area, where people are made to live closely together and apart from other people
Heaven	A place regarded in various religions as a physical or spiritual paradise after death
Hell	A place regarded in various religions as a physical or spiritual realm of evil and suffering after death
Holocaust	A very large amount of destruction, especially by fire or heat, or the killing of very large numbers of people. The term is used to refer to the treatment of the Jews and others killed by the Nazis in WW2
Humanism	A philosophical and ethical worldview that believes that people can live their lives and work out what is the correct thing to do by looking within themselves and using reason, kindness and science
Humanist	A follower of Humanism
Islam	The religion Muslims follow
Islamophobia	Fear or hatred towards Muslims
Jew	A follower of Judaism
Jesus	The name of the man who Christians believe was the son of God, and whose teachings are the basis of Christianity.
Judaism	The religion Jews follower
Judgement	In many religions, judgement is associated with the belief that a higher power, such as God, holds humans accountable for their behaviour and intentions, weighing these up to determine their ultimate fate after death (e.g. Heaven or Hell)
Karma (kamma)	Means 'action' and refers to the natural law of cause and effect.

Liberal (interpretation)	Interpretation of religious stories and teachings that says they are not literally true/real but are instead intended to put across specific beliefs and meanings
Mahayana Buddhism	A term used to describe a number of different Buddhist traditions that share some overlapping characteristics. Practised mostly in China, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Mongolia and Bhutan
Mass	A central service/type of worship in the Catholic Church in which bread and wine are used
Miracle	An extraordinary and welcome event that is not explicable by natural or scientific laws and is therefore attributed to a divine agency
Muslim	A follower of Islam
Nirvana (nibbana)	Means 'blown out'. When Buddhists reach Nibbana it is a state of eternal peace and happiness where they are free from all pain and suffering.
Pardes	A strategy developed within Judaism to help interpret, analyse and understand stories or texts
Parinirvana	In Buddhism, parinirvana is what happens when a person who has achieved nirvana (perfect peace) dies and leaves the cycle of life, death and rebirth (samsara)
Penance	An act showing that you feel sorry about something you've done
Philosopher	Someone who studies or writes about 'big questions', e.g. what is real?
Philosophy	Means 'the love of wisdom' – the study of fundamental questions about existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind, and language, employing critical thinking and rigorous analysis.
Prejudice	Having a preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience/prejudging a person or a group of people without knowing them
Procession	A line of people moving forward together in an organised manner as part of a ceremony

Purgatory	In Catholic doctrine a place or state of suffering inhabited by the souls of sinners who are expiating (removing) their sins before going to heaven.
Rebirth	An individual being born again into a new life without there being a permanent self or soul, e.g. karmic energy in Buddhism
Reincarnation	The re-embodiment of the same soul in different body after death
Resistance	Refusing to accept or comply with something
Qur'an	The Holy Book of Islam
Resurrection	Coming back to life after death; believers have different views about the format this takes, e.g. physical or spiritual
Sacrament	A ceremony, ritual or symbol of sacred significance, believed to impart God's grace upon a believer
Samsara	The cycle of birth, death, and rebirth
Tafsir	A strategy developed within Islam to help interpret, analyse and understand stories or texts
Theravada Buddhism	One of the oldest schools of Buddhism. Practised mostly in Thailand, Sri Lanka, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar
Tibetan Buddhism	A type of Buddhism that falls within the school of Mahayana Buddhism

Year 9

Cultural relativism	Right and wrong is decided by looking at the way others in the same culture are behaving and fitting in with it – this will be different for different cultures at different times
Ethical veganism	A philosophical belief, protected by law under the Equality Act 2010. Ethical vegans eat a plant-based diet and avoid contact with products derived from any form of animal exploitation, e.g. not wearing wool, leather or using products tested on animals

Genetic engineering	The process of changing the structure and characteristics of an embryo's cells (genes/DNA), e.g. to remove the gene that causes a genetically inherited disease
Hedonism	A person's view of right and wrong is decided by working out what gives them the most pleasure and the least pain
Natural law	A person's view of right and wrong is decided by working out what is natural for us as human beings
Philosopher	Someone who studies or writes about 'big questions', e.g. what is real?
Philosophy	Means 'the love of wisdom' – the study of fundamental questions about existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind, and language, employing critical thinking and rigorous analysis.
Situation ethics	Right and wrong is decided by working out which action is the most loving thing to do. There are no absolute rights and wrongs, the situation needs to be considered
Speciesism	A term used by Peter Singer meaning that humans can be biased towards their own species, therefore being prejudiced or discriminatory towards other species (animals)
Theism	A person's view of right and wrong is decided by finding out what God would like them to do
Utilitarianism	What is right and wrong is determined by calculating the greatest pleasure (and least pain) for the greatest number of people.