

## **Spiritual Leaders and the concept of authority**

- Explore the concept of authority as exercised by religious leaders.
- find out how these leaders are chosen.
- identify any common features which may exist between religious leaders.

The main emphasis in these objectives are giving the children time and methods to discover their own answers to the concept of “religious authority”. These objectives will work brilliantly if the class is encouraged to debate the issues, construct arguments after they have found the information. It is integral that the children can get access to the internet for these lessons.

The first objective is tricky enough, the child is being asked to explore the concept of authority. It is very important that you do not impose any particular opinion on them, either from the class or your own. They need to revisit the information that they have learned over the last years in this Strand. They also need to be given time to think and discuss these issues, without necessarily coming to any particular answer. Many of the English Oral Language objectives and skills can come in here. The SPHE curriculum also has some excellent exemplars that will facilitate the child’s own learning and decision. They include

- Open ended statements like using a statement where the children can play around with it- “Authority is like being in power because....”
- Brainstorming- Children can express their thoughts on the subject of “authority”. These thoughts can be collected in one place, you usually set rules like no negative input or put downs. This way, every idea can be counted and the creative ones are not immediately jumped upon!
- Agree or disagree-Children have the opportunity to say whether they agree or disagree on a discussion point like “Authority” or the various scenarios you might create. Posters with the words “Agree”, “Disagree” and “I don’t know!” can be used and children can write their name or move to the chosen word. Make sure that you give them a closed statement like “Religions need someone who is in authority.”

There are many more great exemplars on the NCCA website.

Because, the children are more mature, this subject can be covered by doing a project or presentation. They can work in groups, pairs or individuals depending on their learning style or preference.

They can use any form to present-video, digital camera, presentation, digital recorder, book, magazine, leaflet, song or question and answer style session.

### **Lesson: Religious leaders-How they are chosen, common features and authority.**

#### **Learning outcomes:**

- Child will be able to define what the words “power” and “authority” are when asked, either by discussion or written.
- Child will be enabled to complete a project/presentation on the subject of 2 of the given religious leaders.
- Child will be enabled to compare the 2 religious leaders by giving 5 common features.
- Child will be enabled to write/say/draw a diagram/presentation/written report that details the method of how their 2 religious leaders have been chosen by their community

## Learning Activities

**Introduction: Talk and Discussion, brainstorming, KWL-** Look at the 2 words “Power” and “Authority” In their pairs, get them to find out and discuss what these words mean. How does this link with the religious leader like the Rabbi or the Vicar? Write their suggestions around these words and leave them there for them to explore throughout the lesson/s.

*Power* is the capacity or ability to do or accomplish something.

*Authority* is the power to command, determine, influence or judge.

Begin a “think/pair/share” session.

Give students one minute to *think* about how to answer these questions.. Then have students *pair* with the person next to them and answer the questions together:

*What job or role does this leader have that puts them in a position of authority?*

*How does this leader influence others?*

*Can you think of any other authority figures in your school or community?*

*How do/did they use their authority?*

### **Development**

1. Introduce this scenario:

*The principal comes over the speaker with an announcement that no one is to play in on the football pitch today as they are repairing the area.*

a. Ask the following questions:

Does the principal have the authority to make this announcement?

How did he/she use to influence others to not use the yard?

b. Have students share responses and hold a whole-class discussion on the qualities of authority.

2. Introduce a second scenario:

*Later in the week, when the pitch has been completed, the principal allows students to play on the football pitch again, a small group of students went out to play. A big Sixth Class student blocks their way and said that no one but he and his friends were allowed to be on the pitch that day.*

a. Ask the following questions:

Does the Sixth Class student have the authority to keep others from playing where they want?

How did this person use to influence others?

How is this person’s power different from the principal’s?

b. Have students share responses and hold a whole-class discussion about bullying and why it is unfair.

(<https://dnet01.ode.state.oh.us/ims.itemdetails/lessondetail.aspx?id=0907f84c8053181b>-

These above ideas were taken from an American website, a lesson that covers authority and politics, I’ve adapted it slightly for age and religious leader content.

## Project work

Because, the children are more mature, this subject can be covered by doing a project or presentation. They can work in groups, pairs or individuals depending on their learning style or preference.

They can use any form to present-video, digital camera, presentation, digital recorder, book, magazine, leaflet, song or question and answer style session.

After, their presentation/project, ensure that the child can define “authority” or that they’ve begun to think about it. Can they answer the questions for assessment below? You can use a test or an oral discussion?

## Assessment

Have the children completed a project/presentation on their 2 given Religious leaders?  
Can the child tell you or write/draw what the word “authority” means for a religious leader?  
Has the child compared their religious leaders in 5 ways?  
Does the child know how their religious leader was chosen by their community?

**Differentiation**

Less able students may have difficulty in defining authority. Spend more time with them in smaller groups to discuss these words. Give smaller groups further study or homework including picture books, videos, news clippings, real-life scenarios, etc.

More able or faster students can write about real-life situations of authority and research religious authority figures using biographies, videos, news clippings, and/or create questions to interview authority figures such as principal, CEO, police inspector, Vicar or Priest.

The students will be able to work to their own level when carrying out project work.