

Aims

- *To suggest ways in which reading can be used effectively to enhance learning in RE*
- *To extend the range of teaching strategies used for reading in RE*

3.1 The range of reading in RE and reading strategies

Before looking at reading strategies in detail, it is worth considering the range of texts that pupils will need to read in RE.

The range of texts used in RE

- *sacred texts*
- *stories*
- *history texts*
- *poetry*
- *prayers*
- *creeds*
- *liturgy*
- *media texts: newspaper/magazine reports and articles*
- *textbooks*

Other possibilities are:

- icons
- vestments and other religious clothing
- liturgical colours
- colour in, for example, blue/green/white in Islam
- buildings
- paintings or sculptures
- stained glass windows.

A lot of the reading in RE is as much about signs and symbols as words.

The purposes for reading in RE are to:

- retrieve factual information, e.g. about the life of a key figure
- understand more about a belief system
- gather information prior to a report, recount or discursive piece of speaking and listening or writing
- understand about the views people hold on a controversial topic
- understand the various ways in which belief can be represented in signs and symbols and to be able to understand the meanings of those signs and symbols.

Possible difficulties accessing the texts are as follows.

- Many religious texts contain archaic language or very abstract language which pupils may find difficult to understand.
- Many texts make strong cultural assumptions of knowledge that may not be shared by the reader, e.g. concerning the symbols of Christianity or Islam, or a piece which assumes an understanding of life after death.
- Pupils may be able to decode the texts but their ability to use them to infer and deduce may be more limited.

Reading strategies needed for RE

- *Skimming to gain an overall impression*
- *Scanning for particular pieces of information*
- *Close reading for meaning*
- *Continuous reading*
- *Reading to evaluate – for making judgements*

- Skimming involves glancing quickly through a passage to get the gist of it – e.g. looking through a newspaper to see what is worth reading; glancing at sub-headings in a book; or quickly looking in a building to gain an idea of what is inside.
- Scanning involves searching for a particular piece of information – e.g. looking for information about Ganesh on a page of text.
- Close reading involves careful study reading and usually includes pausing to think or look back in order to examine the text in detail – e.g. to gain an understanding about a set of beliefs or the reasons for those beliefs.
- Continuous reading usually involves uninterrupted reading of an extended piece of text – e.g. reading about a personal hero for pleasure.
- Reading to evaluate involves making judgements about what is read: about a text's effectiveness, reliability, validity, e.g. to consider the truth of a belief system, or the relative validity of arguments for and against euthanasia.

3.2 A teaching sequence to support reading

There is a sequence for teaching reading and accessing text that will support pupils and ensure the desired outcomes.

The EXIT (extending interactions with text) model provides a useful approach to incorporating reading into subject teaching.

Stages in reading for learning (adapted from the EXIT model) involve the following processes

Stage 1

Establishing purposes
Activating prior knowledge

Stage 2

Locating information
Adopting an appropriate strategy

Stage 3

Interacting with the text
Monitoring understanding
Making a record

Stage 4

Evaluating information
Shaping and communicating information

It is commonly used in structuring research activities. However, it contains elements that help pupils to read challenging texts about unfamiliar ideas and concepts. Stress that the model is to be used flexibly, depending upon the teaching objectives, the range of learning activities planned and whether pupils are involved in independent research or being presented with texts by the teacher.

Consider yourself in the role of a Year 9 pupil as you interact with the texts and worksheets. The purpose of your reading is to begin to gather views on old age and whether faith makes any difference to attitudes in old age. The material is interspersed with comments designed to be helpful to you as a teacher.

The RE objectives are to:

- *identify Christian beliefs in the text which underpin attitudes to old age*
- *begin to compare these with other Christian texts and place them within a historical and cultural context*
- *respond to and evaluate these beliefs.*

The reading objectives (adapted) from the Framework for teaching English, Years 7, 8 and 9 are:

- *Reading 2: synthesise information from a wide range of sources, shaping material to meet need*
- *Reading 6: comment on the authorial perspectives offered in texts on individuals, community and society, in texts from other cultures.*

The example text is a section from Cardinal Basil Hume's book, *To be a Pilgrim*.

Activity 1: Starter – accessing prior knowledge or thinking

Consider how you would fill the gaps in this chart.

Stages of life chart			
	What young people think about ...	What middle-aged people think about ...	What old people think about ...
Childhood/ youth			
Middle years			
Old age			
Life after death			

Activity 2: Shared read – adopting an appropriate strategy and locating information

Now read the first paragraph from a passage in *To be a Pilgrim*. (There are two versions of this text – the second is annotated to show features that a teacher could draw attention to in a shared reading session.)

from *To be a Pilgrim*

The evening of life

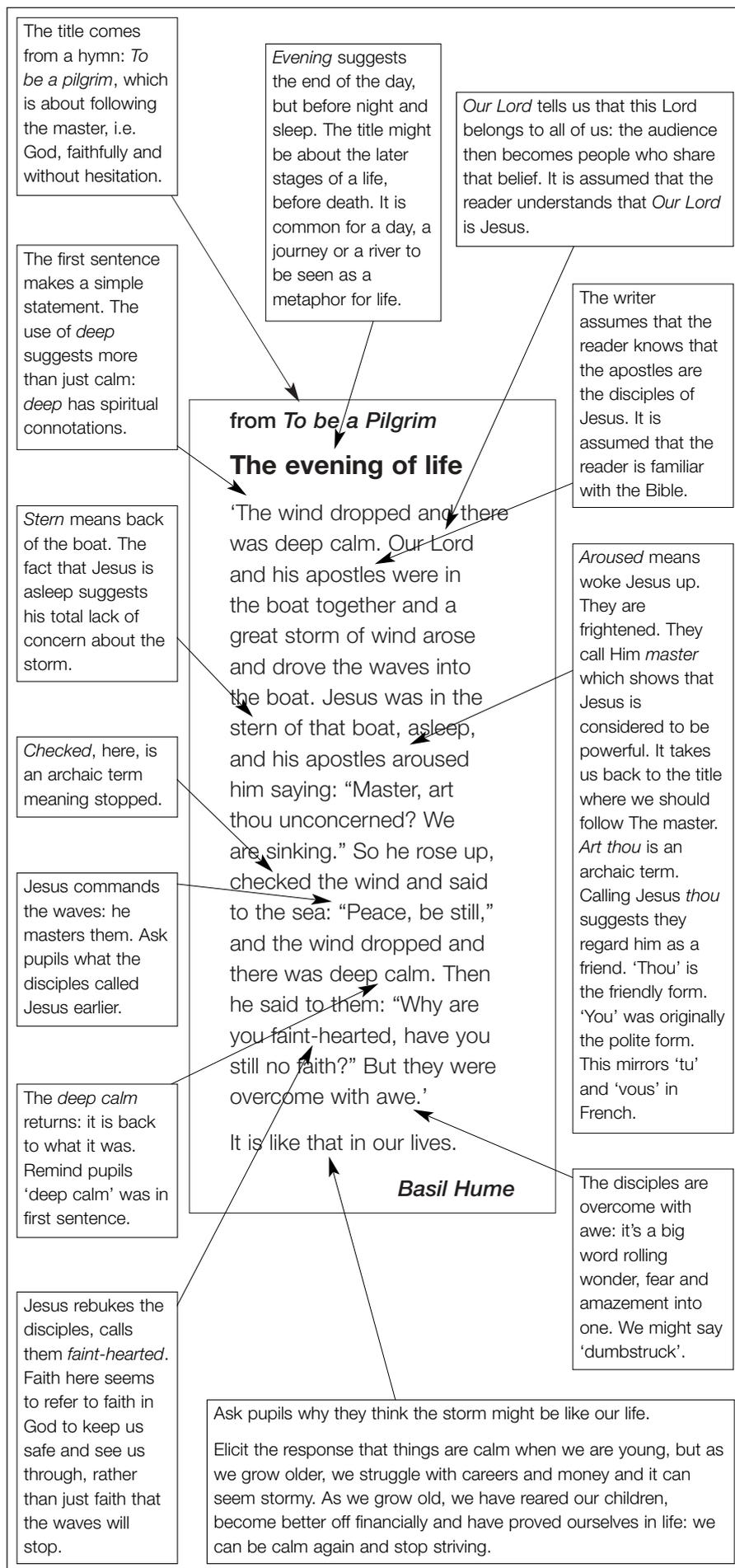
'The wind dropped and there was deep calm. Our Lord and his apostles were in the boat together and a great storm of wind arose and drove the waves into the boat. Jesus was in the stern of that boat, asleep, and his apostles aroused him saying: "Master, art thou unconcerned? We are sinking." So he rose up, checked the wind and said to the sea: "Peace, be still," and the wind dropped and there was deep calm. Then he said to them: "Why are you faint-hearted, have you still no faith?" But they were overcome with awe.'

It is like that in our lives.

Basil Hume

The purpose of shared reading is to demonstrate to pupils how a passage should be read to gain information. During this process, any difficulties are dealt with through focused questions from the teacher which encourage pupils to respond in detail. The appropriate reading strategy here is close reading, which means taking account of the context of the text, considering the connotations of words, and reading back and forwards in the text to check understanding.

Pupils being given this text would need to be reminded that Cardinal Basil Hume's Christian beliefs will permeate everything he says. They might also need to know that the first paragraph is a quotation from the Bible so the language will seem old-fashioned or archaic. The annotated version of the text below shows aspects of the text that a teacher might draw out during the process of shared reading.



Activity 3: based on the passage from *To be a Pilgrim*

Read the passage 'The evening of life' using the strategy of close reading to locate information, interact with the text and monitor your understanding.

The evening of life

'The wind dropped and there was deep calm. Our Lord and his apostles were in the boat together and a great storm of wind arose and drove the waves into the boat. Jesus was in the stern of that boat, asleep, and his apostles aroused him saying: "Master, art thou unconcerned? We are sinking." So he rose up, checked the wind and said to the sea: "Peace, be still," and the wind dropped and there was deep calm. Then he said to them: "Why are you faint-hearted, have you still no faith?" But they were overcome with awe.'

It is like that in our lives. We leave the harbour where the sea is calm, as we grow from childhood into the adult world, and then we must begin to battle against the storms of everyday life, its problems and its conflicts. Then, surely, as the evening of our life approaches, we enter once again to peaceful waters, when the wind has dropped and there is deep calm. In the middle years – the high noon of life – the Lord may often seem to be asleep, or at any rate we think him unconcerned, uninterested. But of course there is another explanation. There is so much to do, so much to face that we have become too absorbed in our own activity and not sufficiently concerned about him. The hustle and bustle of life can squeeze him out of our thoughts and very far from our desires.

Words like 'hope', 'expectation' and 'looking forward' have, wrongly in my view, been stolen by the young from the old. Those are the words proper to the elderly, because by the very nature of things they now look forward to the vision of God. That vision is the fulfilment of all that they have ever wanted; they look forward to enjoying that ecstasy of love which is union with God. If such fulfilment does not come at the end of a life well spent, then the toils of life have been in vain. Such frustration is impossible to imagine. The joy and peace which we have known from time to time in a fitful fashion will be ours totally and for all time. We were made for that and that alone.

The senior citizens have, in God's providence, a kind of priority. They are in the outer chamber waiting for the final entry into the kingdom. That should be a cause of peace, a cause of joy; one day forward, one step nearer.

Is this too rosy a picture of what life is like, or should be like? After all, our energy and our strength today is not what it was yesterday. There are problems and there are aches and pains which we did not know in the afternoon of our lives. At such times, it is only by looking at Christ crucified on the Cross that we can ever make sense of what befalls us. When asked to share those sufferings we should accept it as a gift. All pain is mysteriously also a gift from God because pain can purify and prepare us for the vision of Him whose love is stronger than the strongest love of a woman for her child, or a lover for the beloved.

A well-ordered society honours and respects its senior citizens, cares for their needs, ensures their well-being. The old have a gift beyond compare. They have had the opportunity to learn wisdom in the school of life. Wisdom must be prized above skill, cleverness or expertise. In the Bible, in more settled times, the old were valued by the mature and by the young. We need to remember that.

'The evening of life' source: Cardinal Basil Hume, *To be a Pilgrim*, (SPCK 1984) ISBN 0281 04372 8, pages 225–26.

Complete the grid below and finally decide why Basil Hume feels we should value old people.

Chart for Basil Hume's teachings	
Stages of life	What Basil Hume teaches Christians through this text
Childhood/youth	
Middle years	
Old age	
Life after death	
We should value older people because ...	

Here are some responses from others.

Chart for Basil Hume's teachings

Stages of life	What Basil Hume teaches Christians through this text
Childhood/youth	A time of calm: we leave the harbour as we grow from childhood to adulthood.
Middle years	<p>The high noon of life. A stormy time; we battle against the storms of everyday life, its problems, its conflicts.</p> <p>God seems unconcerned, uninterested, or we think He is. However, we have really forgotten about Him, squeezed Him from our thoughts.</p>
Old age	<p>The old are associated with looking forward to seeing God in the afterlife and the joy of joining God in heaven. They have hope, expectation and are looking forward.</p> <p>In the outer chamber, they are waiting to enter heaven; the kingdom here; Kingdom of God. A cause for peace and joy.</p> <p>Not as strong as we were, aches and pains set in, making life more difficult, but focusing on the pain Jesus suffered will help minimise our own: sharing His suffering.</p>
Life after death	Joyful and deeply peaceful for all time.
We should value older people because ...	<p>They have much to offer, have learned wisdom; wisdom should be prized above skill, cleverness or expertise.</p> <p>The old were valued by all ages in biblical times: a lesson we should learn.</p>

The next step for pupils carrying out this task would be to evaluate what they have read by comparing it with their completed stages of life chart to see whether the text had encouraged them to change their minds. They could also read other Christian texts on a similar topic and place them in their cultural settings. To work at level 7, they could evaluate the findings further by discussing what difference Christian faith might make to attitudes to the elderly and how valid these attitudes are.

3.3 Video sequence: Reading lesson

For this next section, you will need video sequence 2 included on this CD. The Grange School in Bradford has a very high percentage of ethnic minority pupils, some of whom are stage 1 learners of EAL. Lorraine Gill is teaching Sikhism to a Year 8 group and wants them to answer the big question: What do Sikhs believe about God? Talib Hussein, an ethnic minority achievement support assistant, is working with two pupils in the early stages of learning English. Lindsay Backhouse is supporting one pupil who is on the special needs register. In the previous lesson, pupils have used the Apostles Creed to prepare them for this lesson.

Now watch the sequence, considering how the teacher uses the stages of reading for learning to support the pupils in answering the big question.

When you watched the video, did you notice the following?

- The pupils know why they are reading: they have a big question to answer.
- The pupils are prepared for some very difficult concepts by the starter activity, which also cues them in to the focus of the lesson.
- The paired work gives pupils confidence as they develop their understanding and monitor what is being learned.
- Those needing support are given it through carefully targeted guided work.
- The pupil who is new to English has the concepts explained to him in his first language, so that he can reach the same level of understanding as the other pupils.
- The plenary session encourages the pupils to share their learning and answer the big question as well as to begin to compare and evaluate what they have learned.
- The use of an OHT provides a convenient way of making a record as well as supporting the communication of what has been learned.

3.4 Conclusion

Reading for information: possible challenges

- *Prior knowledge required*
- *Subject-specific grammar*
- *Grammar*
- *High levels of information (dense texts)*

The solution lies in:

- having a clear purpose for reading
- preparing pupils to read the text by giving appropriate contexts and vocabulary
- teaching pupils how to read a particular text
- ensuring the activities make them engage with the text through transforming it in some way
- taking feedback on the reading and developing it beyond note-taking.

Activities which encourage close reading

These activities are most effective when worked on by a pair or small group as the discussion of possibilities leads to a closer look at the text.

Cloze tests

Filling the gap involves the reader in actively constructing meaning.

Skills include:

- paying close attention to the meaning of the sentence
- choosing a word that fits grammatically
- using one's existing knowledge of the topic
- working out what is likely from the rest of the text
- working out what will fit with the style of the text – e.g. whether a word has already occurred in the sentence
- attending to the sense of the whole sentence by reading and rereading.

Sequencing

Sequencing activities involve reconstructing a text that has been cut into chunks.

Skills include:

- reading and rereading
- paying close attention to the structure of the genre
- paying close attention to link words
- hunting for the logic or organising principle of the text – e.g. chronological order
- using previous experience and earlier reading.

Text marking

Text marking includes underlining, annotating or numbering the text to show its correct sequence.

Skills may well include:

- skimming or scanning to find specific information
- differentiating between different categories of information
- finding what is relevant information
- finding the main idea(s)
- questioning the information presented in the text.

(continued)

Text restructuring

Text restructuring involves reading and then remodelling the information in another format. For example, flow charts, diagrams, Venn diagrams, grids, lists, maps, charts, concept maps or rewriting in another genre. Depending on the format, skills used will include those of being able to:

- identify what is key and relevant in a text
- apply what they know in a new context
- remodel the content and the format of the text
- spot the characteristics of different genres
- read critically
- summarise and prioritise
- write as well as read.

Further support can be found in:

- *Literacy across the curriculum* (DfEE, 0235/2001) Module 5: Active reading Strategies, Module 6: Reading for Information, and Module 9: Making notes
- *Training materials for the foundation subjects* (DfES, 0350/2002) Module 14: Big concepts and skills.

Supplement 3.1

This Supplement takes account of the detail of the EXIT model and ways of approaching each stage in general terms; and prepares in detail various ways of approaching the Cardinal Hume text with pupils. It suggests a variety of differentiated activities for each stage in the reading process.

The following table goes through the stages in the reading process and explains them for classroom use.

Stages	Activities	Strategies for support	Pupil questions
Stage 1 – Establishing purposes and activating prior knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Generate and follow an enquiry ■ Define audience and form of outcome (e.g. poster, oral presentation, leaflet, PowerPoint, report) ■ Generate a range of ideas – activate prior knowledge in relation to a topic ■ Ask questions which narrow down the field of enquiry and make it manageable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tree diagrams, spider diagrams ■ Diagrams ■ KWL*, QUADS** grids (teacher can model these) ■ Teacher models deductive questioning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>What do I already know about this subject?</i> ■ <i>What do I need to find out and where will I go for the information?</i> ■ <i>Who is this for?</i> ■ <i>What will it look like?</i> ■ <i>Who would it be good to talk to about this?</i>
Stage 2 – Locating information and adopting an appropriate strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Locate and list useful sources: texts/websites/experts ■ Recognise and use page layout and organisational patterns of information texts ■ Use search engines such as contents/index/glossary/keywords/hotlinks ■ Use active reading strategies: skim a text for overall impression and main points; scan a text to pick out specific information using keywords ■ Select relevant information, reject irrelevant (however interesting), use highlighting, textmarking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lead a session on evaluating texts – which texts are useful? ■ Teacher models through shared reading of different texts and verbalising selection decisions ■ Teacher models scanning, skimming and noting pages to return to ■ Compile a grid of essential/useful/optional information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Where and how will I get this information?</i> ■ <i>How should I use this source of information to get what I need?</i> ■ <i>What does the reader need to know?</i> <p style="text-align: right;">(continued)</p>

Stages	Activities	Strategies for support	Pupil questions
Stage 3 – Interacting with the text, monitoring understanding and making a record	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cluster information under headings and sub-headings: create categories/classifications ■ Make notes: collect evidence under specific headings ■ Identify bias, discriminate between fact and opinion ■ Select visuals and draw diagrams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Teacher models note-taking, introduces abbreviations and symbols ■ Teacher prepares pupils for technical and specialist vocabulary ■ Teacher demonstrates how to identify bias, makes explicit the ways of interrogating a text ■ Teacher models checking, cross-referencing and how to deal with difficult or confusing material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>What should I make a note of?</i> ■ <i>Which items should I believe and which should I keep an open mind about?</i> ■ <i>What can I do to help me understand this better?</i> ■ <i>What can I do if there are parts I do not understand?</i>
Stage 4 – Evaluating, shaping and communicating information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Organise and re-present notes and references as a coherent text (oral or written): shaping/clustering /creating categories of information ■ Consider needs of the audience – create introduction, links between sections, and a conclusion ■ Evaluate own and peer results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Teacher shares effective examples ■ Teacher ensures time allowed for discussion; rehearsal before writing ■ Shared writing of an introduction or conclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>How can I best communicate this? Does it need to be on paper? (Could it be a taped radio programme? A wall-display?)</i> ■ <i>Which is the best section?</i> ■ <i>What might I have done differently?</i> ■ <i>What have I learned about research?</i>
<p>* KWL = three-column grid entitled:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What do I already know about this topic? – What do I want to know about this topic? – What have I learned about this topic? 		<p>**QUADS=</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Questions – Answers – Details – Source 	

Literacy across the curriculum (DfEE 0235/2001)

The following table goes through the stages in reading applied to the Cardinal Hume passage. It suggests a variety of differentiated activities.

Stages	Process stages	Teaching focus and activities
Stage 1	Establishing a purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Explain the RE objective: that pupils are going to read the teachings of a religious leader, the late Cardinal Basil Hume, to learn about how a Christian leader related 'the evening of life' to a miracle from the New Testament. ■ Explain that they will be reading a text closely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – using their developing skills as active, critical readers who search for meaning using a range of reading strategies (Year 8, Reading objective 4) – tracing the development of themes, values or ideas in a text (Year 8, Reading objective 5). <p>Speaking and listening will also be important skills in discussing and reporting their findings.</p>
	Activating prior knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ This step involves providing hooks for developing further understanding about the RE objective by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – establishing what pupils already know about <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) relevant Christian teaching, ii) attitudes to different stages of life – ensuring pupils become familiar with some of the vocabulary that Basil Hume uses, so that they can make sense of what he says. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish what pupils already know about: miracles and the calming of the storm (Mark, Chapter 4, verses 36–41); Christian teachings about the stages of life. 2. Establish what pupils consider are the range of attitudes people hold about different age groups, using the Stages of life chart (see p.23). Ask pairs to spend 3 minutes completing one column or row. Gather ideas on a large version of the chart. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Familiarise pupils with key vocabulary from the text (see activities set out in chart on p.37) Tell pupils to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – circle words in red if you understand them and can explain the meaning to someone else – circle words in green if you have some idea of what they mean – circle words in blue if you don't understand them. <p>Gather blue words on a whiteboard. Ask for explanations from pupils who have circled the words in red.</p> b) Ask pupils to explain the following words, showing the differences between them: our Lord, God, Jesus, Christ. <p style="text-align: right;">(continued)</p>

Stages	Process stages	Teaching focus and activities
Stage 2	<p>Locating information</p> <p>Adopting appropriate strategy</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Briefly remind pupils of the conventions of capitalisation for God and titles for Jesus within the Christian tradition. 2. Give background information about Cardinal Basil Hume and the purpose of his book, <i>To be a Pilgrim</i>: a spiritual notebook to enable Christian people to reflect on issues of concern in their lives. 3. Show pupils how to skim the first paragraph of the text (shown on p.24) to gain an overall impression: write the jumbled headings given below on the whiteboard; model skimming the first paragraph and selecting an appropriate heading, 'The Lord's example', to summarise the paragraph. Ask pupils to match the rest of the headings to the remaining paragraphs using the chart for Basil Hume's teachings – responses on p.28, to get the big picture of the chapter. Take feedback and explain that skimming is a useful way of getting an overall impression of a text before close reading. <p>Pain prepares us</p> <p>The old have a gift</p> <p>Like ourselves</p> <p>Cause of joy</p> <p>the Lord's example</p> <p>Hope of God</p>
Stage 3	<p>Interacting with the text, monitoring understanding and making a record</p>	<p>Differentiated independent close-reading activities to engage with the ideas in the text. Allocate the following activities to different ability groups in the class. You may need to model the highlighting activity depending on pupils' previous experience.</p> <p>A. High attainers – sequence ideas and evaluate the message</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In pairs, pupils put the ideas within each paragraph into the correct sequence (see chart on pp.37–39); they identify Basil Hume's message, noting the clues they used to sequence the ideas. ■ Pairs join to make fours and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – agree what they understand about the message of the passage by comparing the clues which helped them sequence the ideas – identify the link between paragraph 1 and the rest of the text by highlighting the metaphors/ images Hume uses – discuss why they think that he uses these metaphors/how the metaphors help readers to understand the message <p style="text-align: right;">(continued)</p>

Stages	Process stages	Teaching focus and activities
Stage 3 cont.	Interacting with the text, monitoring understanding and making a record	<p>B. Low attainers – highlight characteristics of different stages of life; do a card-sort activity to anchor understanding of what Basil Hume considers are the features of the stages of life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – highlight in four different colours what they learn from Basil Hume’s text about being young, middle-aged and old; and what they learn about life after death. – sort the statements on the chart on p.41 into order and onto the Stages of life grid (p.27) and make links to the calming of the storm. <p>C. Average attainers – highlight characteristics of different stages of life; chart Basil Hume’s teachings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – highlight in four colours what they learn from Basil Hume’s text about the characteristics of childhood/youth; the middle years; old age and life after death. – transfer what they have learned to the chart illustrating Basil Hume’s teachings (p.40).
Stage 4	Evaluating, shaping and communicating information	<p>This is when pupils demonstrate what they have learned. This might involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ organising and re-presenting notes and references as a coherent text (oral or written): shaping/clustering/creating categories of information ■ considering the needs of the audience – creating an introduction, links between sections, a conclusion ■ evaluating their own and their peers’ findings/ conclusions ■ considering the way in which Basil Hume provides insight into the miracle of the calming of the storm (in this case).

Understanding key vocabulary

Key Christian concepts

desires

hope

ecstasy

union with God

God's providence

the kingdom

sufferings

purify

Unfamiliar vocabulary

toils of life

in vain

befalls

Activity

- Circle words in red if you understand them and can explain the meaning to someone else.
- Circle words in green if you have some idea of what they mean.
- Circle words in blue if you don't understand them.

Sequencing ideas within paragraphs

Note to trainer: Copy each paragraph on different coloured card so pupils focus on sequencing ideas within each paragraph. Laminated cards can be stored and re-used on subsequent occasions.

Paragraph 1

The wind dropped and there was deep calm. Our Lord and his apostles were in the boat together and a great storm of wind arose and drove the waves into the boat.

Jesus was in the stern of that boat, asleep, and his apostles aroused him saying: 'Master, art thou unconcerned? We are sinking.'

So he rose up, checked the wind and said to the sea: 'Peace, be still,' and the wind dropped and there was deep calm. Then he said to them: 'Why are you faint-hearted, have you still no faith?' But they were overcome with awe.

Paragraph 2

It is like that in our lives. We leave the harbour where the sea is calm, as we grow from childhood into the adult world, and then we must begin to battle against the storms of everyday life, its problems and its conflicts.

Then, surely, as the evening of our life approaches, we enter once again into peaceful waters, when the wind has dropped and there is deep calm.

In the middle years – the high noon of life – the Lord may often seem to be asleep, or at any rate we think him unconcerned, uninterested. But of course there is another explanation. There is so much to do, so much to face that we have become too absorbed in our own activity and not sufficiently concerned about him. The hustle and bustle of life can squeeze him out of our thoughts and very far from our desires.

Paragraph 3

Words like 'hope', 'expectation' and 'looking forward' have, wrongly in my view, been stolen by the young from the old. Those are the words proper to the elderly, because by the very nature of things they now look forward to the vision of God.

That vision is the fulfilment of all that they have ever wanted; they look forward to enjoying that ecstasy of love which is union with God. If such fulfilment does not come at the end of a life well spent, then the toils of life have been in vain.

Such frustration is impossible to imagine. The joy and peace which we have known from time to time in a fitful fashion will be ours totally and for all time. We were made for that and that alone.

Paragraph 4

The senior citizens have, in God's providence, a kind of priority. They are in the outer chamber waiting for the final entry into the kingdom. That should be a cause of peace, a cause of joy; one day forward, one step nearer.

Paragraph 5

Is this too rosy a picture of what life is like, or should be like? After all, our energy and our strength today is not what it was yesterday. There are problems and there are aches and pains which we did not know in the afternoon of our lives.

At such times, it is only by looking at Christ crucified on the Cross that we can ever make sense of what befalls us. When asked to share those sufferings we should accept it as a gift.

All pain is mysteriously also a gift from God because pain can purify and prepare us for the vision of Him whose love is stronger than the strongest love of a woman for her child, or a lover for the beloved.

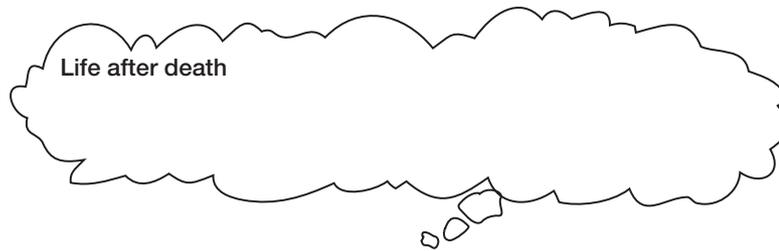
Paragraph 6

A well-ordered society honours and respects its senior citizens, cares for their needs, ensures their well-being. The old have a gift beyond compare.

They have had the opportunity to learn wisdom in the school of life. Wisdom must be prized above skill, cleverness or expertise.

In the Bible, in more settled times, the old were valued by the mature and by the young. We need to remember that.

Charting the stages of life



Key messages of the passage about old age	How the calming of the storm applies
	Old age is like being in peaceful waters, in the presence of Jesus.



Key messages of the passage about the middle years	How the calming of the storm applies



Key messages of the passage about childhood and youth	How the calming of the storm applies

Questions I want to ask:

**Phrases and statements for card-sort activity
on the stages of life**

sea is calm

We must begin to battle against the storms of everyday life, its problems and conflicts.

We enter peaceful waters.

There is so much to do, so much to face.

The Lord may often seem to be asleep ... we think him unconcerned, uninterested.

The hustle and bustle of life can squeeze him out of our thoughts.

They now look forward to the vision of God.

They look forward to enjoying the ecstasy of love which is union with God.

The joy and peace which we have known from time to time ... will be ours totally and for all time.

They are in the outer chamber waiting for the final entry to the kingdom.

There are problems and there are aches and pains.

a cause of peace

All pain is mysterious. Also it is a gift from God because pain can purify us.