

Year Group: 5	Worldview: Christianity
Strand:	Reality and Truth
Key Question:	Does Wisdom look the same for every Christian?
Focus of study:	Truth, wisdom, Jesus, parables
Background information for teachers:	
<p>The Bible mentions wisdom at least 141 times. It occurs in the wisdom book of Proverbs alone about 41 times. Often contrasted with foolishness or folly, wisdom derives from more than just intellectual knowledge but also refers to character and the ability to live a godly life. Five Old Testament books specifically address many of life's fundamental questions. Known as Wisdom Literature, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon ground the reader in God's answers to big questions. They address many of the perplexing, paradoxical issues of life, drawing the reader beyond the "why" and turning the focus onto God as the answer.</p> <p><b>How Does the Bible Define Wisdom?</b></p> <p>The Book of Proverbs most often uses the Hebrew word 'Chokmah' to define wisdom. Filled with wise sayings, Proverbs defines wisdom as the ability to judge correctly and apply the best course of action based on knowledge and understanding. Another way to describe Christian wisdom is the moral skill for living revealed through God's Word, which instructs people about how to act as He desires.</p> <p><b>Difference between Wisdom and Knowledge</b></p> <p>Knowledge deals with information and intellect. Reasoning and experience add to what we know. Wisdom enables us to take that knowledge and make proper judgments and decisions. Skilful application of knowledge demonstrates wisdom. Therefore, while they are different in the view of the Bible, it is hard to have wisdom without knowledge of God and these ideas are inextricably linked.</p> <p><b>How Does the Bible say Christians gain Wisdom?</b></p> <p>The Bible says that wisdom belongs to God, so if Christians want to grow in wisdom they must first and foremost get to know God and what he is like. The Bible instructs Christians to pray for wisdom (James 1:5), pursue wisdom (Proverbs 4:7), and value wisdom (Proverbs 16:16).</p> <p><b>What was Jesus' ministry?</b></p> <p>Jesus' ministry began shortly after his baptism at the age of thirty. It consisted primarily of his teachings, often through parables, and his actions, through miracles.</p> <p><b>What is a parable?</b></p> <p>A parable is a tale that illustrates a moral lesson or ethical principle. Parables are concise, creative, expressive, and often appear in spiritual texts such as the bible. They use metaphor and simile to explain and illustrate often complex ideas.</p> <p><b>Why did Jesus use parables?</b></p> <p>They were stories which could be remembered easily, and which were rooted in images that the hearers in 1<sup>st</sup> century Palestine would have been able to relate to. They challenged people to work out the meaning for themselves. In the parable of the Sower (Matthew 13) the disciples ask Jesus why he is teaching in parables. His answer is not easy to</p>	

understand in some ways, but he implies that it is through faith that people will understand the parables. In v11 he says: 'The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven have been given to you but not to them.'

They showed that Jesus understood the problems in peoples' lives at the time. They were interesting and held the listener's attention.

#### **Some examples of the Parables that Jesus told. :**

Parable of Ten Talents - Matthew 25:14-30  
 Parable of The Ten Virgins - Matthew 25:1-13  
 Parable of Faithful and Wicked Servant - Matthew 24:45-51  
 Parable of The Tenant Farmers - Matthew 21:33-45 Mark 12:1-12  
 Parable of The Two Sons in the Vineyard - Matthew 21:28-32  
 Parable of Labourers in the Vineyard - Matthew 20:1-16  
 Parable of The Unforgiving Servant - Matthew 18:23-35  
 Parable of The Heart of Man - Matthew 15:10-20  
 Parable of Hidden Treasure - Matthew 13:44  
 Parable of The Weeds Among the Wheat - Matthew 13:24-30  
 Parable of the Speck and The Log - Matthew 7:1-5  
 Parable of the Lamp - Matthew 5:14-16  
 Parable of The Growing Seed - Mark 4:26-29  
 Parable of The Mustard Seed - Mark 4:30-34  
 Parable of The Friend at Midnight - Luke 11:5-13  
 Parable of The Rich Fool - Luke 12:13-21  
 Parable of The Prodigal Son - Luke 15:11-32  
 Parable of The Rich Man and Lazarus - Luke 16:19-31  
 Parable of The Persistent Widow - Luke 18:1-8  
 Parable of The Pharisee and The Tax Collector - Luke 18:9-14

There are parables in the Old Testament too. The Prophet Nathan uses a parable to make King David recognise his sin with regards to Bathsheba. Other prophets enacted parables to teach the Israelites what God was saying. Jeremiah 13 is just such an example. In these parables, the teaching is often explained as well, whereas Jesus does not always explain his meanings.

#### **What is a proverb?**

Proverb is a pithy saying that expresses a perceived truth. They are usually based on common sense or experience. Like a parable, the language is often metaphorical. Proverbs are often contradictory, even though they contain truth. Consider the following: 'Many hands make light work' and 'Too many cooks spoil the broth.'

#### **Proverbs in the Bible**

There is a whole book of proverbs, often called the proverbs of Solomon who was the King of Israel famed for his wisdom. Like more modern proverbs no one proverb contains full wisdom. The proverbs in the book set out with a specific purpose – that of 'attaining wisdom and discipline... for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair,' (Proverbs 1:2-3). There are characters who appear frequently: the wise person, the fool (someone who does not know God, in this context,) the young man, and the wife of noble character. Wisdom is personified as a woman who says, 'Choose my instructions instead of silver, knowledge rather than choice gold, for wisdom is more precious than rubies and nothing you desire can compare with her.' (Proverbs 8:10-11).

Perhaps the key phrase for wisdom for a Christian is the following: ‘The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.’ (Proverbs 1:7)	
Prior learning:	Year 2 – How do Christians know what is right? Year 3 – Does Art help with understanding stories?
Building Blocks:	The pupils need to know that: *Wisdom literature forms a key part of the biblical cannon *Christians believe that they can gain wisdom from God and following God is wisdom *Jesus taught wisdom through the parables *Different Christians interpret the parables in different ways,
Outcomes:	Pupils will be able to identify the wisdom literature in the Bible. Pupils will be able to name and retell a couple of parables from the bible and suggest the wisdom that Christians take from them. Pupils will be able to explain how Christians interpret the parables of Jesus in different ways. Pupils will be able to evaluate Biblical wisdom and compare it to worldly wisdom.
Resources:	The parables of Jesus information: <a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zh99jfr#z644wsg">https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zh99jfr#z644wsg</a> <a href="https://request.org.uk/resource/?view=resources&amp;cat=3&amp;resource_search_phrase=parables">https://request.org.uk/resource/?view=resources&amp;cat=3&amp;resource_search_phrase=parables</a> - this is the result of searching on the parables on RE Quest Bibles – especially the parables, the sermon on the mount. RE Quest also has information on the Sermon on the Mount.
Engage:	
<p><u>Parable of the wise and foolish builder - Matthew 7:24-29 (also in Luke 6: 47-49)</u> Read, act out, show the bible version or show the pupils a video version of the parable of the wise and foolish builder. Who is telling the story? When is it being told? Who are they telling it to? Why has it been written / told? What impact did the teller want on the reader/ listener? What does it mean? What are all the meanings? Which do you think is the most important meaning and why? Is it a real story? Is it true? Does it matter? What can you learn from it today? Have you heard it before? Where have you seen it? What does this parable teach about how Jesus understood wisdom? This story comes at the end of Matthew’s introduction to Jesus’ teaching, commonly referred to the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1 – 7:29). This collection of Jesus’ teaching, containing the beatitudes, the parable of salt and light along with his interpretation of the law and the ten commandments are in effect what the ‘wise builder’ is being encouraged to use as foundations.</p>	
Enquire and Explore:	
<p><u>What is wisdom?</u> What does it mean? Use dictionaries and thesauruses to create a mind map for the word. Where do you go for wisdom? Who do you consider to be wise? Why? Do you think wisdom is important? Is it necessary for a good life? Why? Do you get wisdom if you’re only religious?</p>	

This might be a good place to create a list of questions that you might ask to test whether a piece of advice or information is ‘wise’. Are all sources of wisdom equally wise? Does wisdom look the same for everyone?

Parables

Pupils could compare two parables that Jesus told, and then explore a wider range of parables. Ask pupils to identify the wisdom in each of the parables. For each one they read they should ask the following questions:

Who is it for? Is it still relevant? Does everyone interpret the text in the same way? How would different Christians understand the texts? Why? Why did Jesus use parables/ stories to teach wisdom?

Can they summarise any of the parables that they have read? If you could only share 5 pieces of wisdom, what would they be? Why?

Other sources of wisdom for Christians

Explore some of the Old Testament sources of wisdom: Proverbs\*, Psalms\*, Ecclesiastes\*, Job. This should culminate in the pupils knowing that for most Christian wisdom comes from God and is found in knowing God.

\*Solomon is a key figure and is associated with these books and a good bible story referring to him is in 1 Kings 3:16-28.

The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1 – 7:29) also contains much teaching that Christians would count as wise: not worrying, not judging other people, giving to the needy without making a show of it, praying, and loving your enemies. How much of this kind of wisdom is like the wisdom of the world?

Are there other ways that Christians seek after wisdom? Consider church attendance, prayer and worship, talking to other Christians and reading as well as studying the Bible. How do those actions compare to the way that other people seek wisdom? Is every source of wisdom equally reliable and trustworthy?

What kinds of questions can we ask about Christian wisdom? Refer to the list of questions created earlier in the unit. Are there any that have not yet been answered about the sources of wisdom explored?

Evaluate:	
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<p>Which parable gives the best wisdom? Most wisdom? Wisdom that applies most today? Does everyone agree? Why or why not?                  Why might some Christians disagree?                  What do all Christians have to agree on?                  What makes a Christian a Christian?                  Is there actually such a thing as wisdom or is it different for everyone? Is it the same all the time?</p>
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Reflect and communicate:	
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Comparing wisdom

Use quotes or extracts from a range of religious texts such as the Bible, Qur’an and non-religious texts such as Confucius, political leaders and civil rights activists. The pupils could then compare and contrast them using Diamond 9, Venn diagrams or Carroll diagrams. They could sort them based on:

\*Where have they come from, which are important or not, religious or not, which are most relevant for today. The pupils need to discuss why they have made their choices.

What one piece of wisdom would you pass on to someone else and why?

Assessment opportunities:

Write a modern parable or proverb to teach someone else some wisdom.  
 Write a title or suggest a meaning for a parable not previously read or studied.  
 Write a guide for a Christian seeking wisdom.

Notes

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