



ST EDMUND'S SCHOOL CANTERBURY

PREPARING FOR A-LEVEL

PHILOSOPHY, ETHICS AND RELIGION

Many of the ideas in this course will be new to you, so initial research and thought is important. Start with the Ethics section.

Ethics:

One of the best introductions to Ethics is to look what is going on around us. Ethics looks at how we treat each other. It can involve how governments treat different sections of society and what protection they are giving to the Environment. You might think about whether they act provocatively towards other countries or factions within their own country. Four of the topics which we look at in Ethics are: Environmental Ethics, Equality, War and Peace and Sexual Ethics.

Look on "The Day", there is a link from the School portal or any newspaper or news site that is impartial. The headlines are often topical and relevant. I would like you to start by looking at the headlines each day for a week, and if there is nothing which you find particularly interesting go on the RS link. Pick 3 issues and try to identify what the ethical issues are, and then explore your thoughts on the issues. One of the skills you will learn is how to identify an ethical issue and it will also enable you to start exploring your own view.

A central question for the course is what makes an action right. You might think how you would define a 'good life'? If you write a list of what you think you would put under that heading we will compare them when we start the course. Is it just a question of happiness and pleasure?

Later on we look at Medical ethics. These issues are very much alive in what is happening in the world around us. Do some research to find out the different issues that are involved and formulate a **written argument** backed up with evidence you would use to argue either in favour or against a particular topic e.g. the ethical ideas surrounding gene therapy.

Podcasts: A good introduction to ethics is The Moral Maze on BBC Sounds: [The Moral Maze](#). There are many episodes to choose from but do try at least two.

Christianity: The focus of this course is the life and teaching of Jesus as recorded in the New Testament. A good background knowledge of the Bible is important and this is the focus of your research and study here. [The Bible Project Series](#) on YouTube will help you with this.

Watch the Biblical Themes playlist – in particular the titles below. Using these and your own research, make **notes** on the following:

1. The Story of the Fall.

What happens? How does this story link with Christian ideas about Jesus?

2. The story of Exile

Where, when and why were the Israelites exiled to? What does the prophet Jeremiah teach about exile in Babylon? What is the link with Jesus?

3. The Suffering Servant passages of Isaiah

Who was Isaiah? What is the background to Isaiah's writings? What does Isaiah write about the suffering servant?

What is the link with Jesus?

4. The Messiah

What does the Old Testament teach about the Messiah? Why do Christians believe that Jesus was the Messiah? What Jewish expectations of the Messiah does Jesus not fulfil?

5. Jesus

What are the main events in Jesus' life? What are the key teachings of Jesus? What does Jesus mean when he calls himself the Son of Man?

Philosophy: There are various videos on YouTube which can give you an excellent introduction to what Philosophy involves. These are good introductions – [here](#) and [here](#). You can slow the speed of the delivery. If you have not watched them look at them now.

A good place to start is to think about the arguments which aim to prove the existence of God. Find out about the Design Argument and the Cosmological Argument and then think about them critically. What problems do they raise? There are some good videos on Philosophy of Religion. The *Crash Course Philosophy* videos on YouTube are good and well researched (use the link above).

- [Pansycast Philosophy Podcasts](#) – Have a listen to Episodes 8 and 9, focusing on the question 'do these arguments prove the existence of God?' and 'what problems do they raise?'

Another topic you should think about is Religious Experience. Research the 'Toronto Blessing'. Would you consider this as a 'religious experience'? Why/why not? Does the number of people involved make a difference to your view?