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PRESS RELEASE - 27 NOVEMBER 2012

Teachers ill-equipped to teach RE, says new University research

Teachers across England are struggling to deliver quality Religious Education lessons, according to a new survey conducted by Oxford University, despite that fact the public still want RE to be on the curriculum.

The survey indicates that nearly two thirds (64%) of adults say the teaching of Christianity to pupils is essential, whilst over a third (37%) thought that Religious Education teachers didn't know enough about the subject to teach it effectively! The majority believe that the teaching of the major Christian festivals of Easter and Christmas and Christian values is vital and many also wanted to see the teaching of Bible stories as a key element in RE lessons.

In another survey conducted by the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) it was revealed that 1-in-10 RE lessons are delivered by teachers untrained in the subject.

Better resources are needed

Ever since they first appeared on BBC Schools programmes in 2007, *Friends and Heroes* animated Bible adventures on DVD have become an essential resource for the teaching of Religious Education at Primary level, particularly at Keystage 2, where they have been highly acclaimed by many teachers.

"What RE teachers need are better resources" said David Dorricott, executive producer of Friends and Heroes. *"It's no use saying that RE lessons are incoherent or stereotypical if you don't give teachers the tools to teach it well."*

He went on to say "This is all the more important if you expect Geography and History teachers to teach RE! They need simple easy-to-use lessons with great visual aids to do justice to this important area of education."

Friends and Heroes DVDs introduce Bible stories in an appealing, fresh and memorable way, creating a clear connection between the biblical themes and the exciting animated adventure stories. The 39 episodes cover 78 Bible stories, each with a RE, SEAL, PSHE, Creativity and Literacy-linked lesson plan to use with them.

Here's what schools and educational experts are saying...

"The response from the children was incredible - they loved it! It took my RE lessons to a whole different dimension"

"The teachers also love teaching it and find the lesson plans easy to follow and cover everything as well as being cross-curricular"

"...the kids love Friends and Heroes. Miss a week and they are moaning"

"It is really difficult to find books and video materials that engage boys, but this has been outstanding"

St Leonards Primary School

One school - St Leonard's Primary in Preston, were so impressed with *Friends and Heroes* they took part in a video blog to highlight how they use the resource.

Headteacher Mike Philipson said *"Friends and Heroes is a versatile resource all schools should use."*

See St Leonard's blog about their experiences of using *Friends and Heroes* across the curriculum at

www.friendsandheroes.com/uk/school-resources

You can also view the *Friends and Heroes* programme and lessons at the same link.

Three Series Packs of *Friends and Heroes* are available at £90 each (includes access to lessons plans and Lifetime Public Display Licence.)

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Friends and Heroes TV Series

Episodes feature Bible stories from both Old and New Testaments woven into the adventures of Macky and Portia, two first century 14 year-olds. As children watch our heroes' exciting escapades, they come to understand that the Bible has a great deal to offer when trying to decide what is right and what to do in today's world. Friends and Heroes comprises three series, each of 13 episodes: Series 1 set in Alexandria, 69AD; Series 2 in Jerusalem, 70AD and Series 3 in Rome, 71AD. Every episode includes at least two Bible stories presented in amazingly engaging computer generated animation. Friends and Heroes has been shown on BBC TV.

FREE Original Schools' Lesson Plans!

Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 Lesson Plans have been specially commissioned to meet the needs of teachers in the UK. Every lesson provides all the guidance needed to deliver vibrant, involving, activity-based lessons for children including RE/SEAL/PHSE/Creativity and Literacy links to teaching curriculums and frameworks. Teachers report that these lessons are really engaging their children, especially the boys!

You can see St Leonard's Primary School video blog about their experiences of using *Friends and Heroes*, PLUS sample clips and lesson plans at this link:

<http://www.friendsandheroes.com/uk/school-resources>

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For more details of this exciting, dynamic programme please visit our websites:

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