



Book review: The Life of Pi

Anti-racist religious education



RE TODAY AND NATRE WORKING WITH THE FREE CHURCHES GROUP
AND METHODIST SCHOOLS





The Life of Pi by Yann Martel

Review by: Sean Greenhow

What is this book about?

A young boy stranded at sea, who hallucinates, helping him to stay sane.

What did you love about it?

- It shows somebody showing critical thinking, making religious decisions for themselves, despite their family's wishes.
- It shows how one can have an interest in belief systems outside of their own, and learn from them.

How did this book have an impact on you as a teacher of RE? Does it imply new ways of doing your job?

- It has shown me that I can be a bit of every faith – I can see what appeals to me, and matches my ideals, and shows how interwoven all faiths are (even the choice to be atheist).
- I now always try to teach the crossover of different faiths, and ask children to make links between key teachings from a range of faiths and their own lives; it helps children to understand that religion is a living, being concept, and that it is theirs to craft and mould to their lives.

I would recommend this book to other teachers of RE because...

It is highly engaging for kids, has an amazing twist, but more importantly it illustrates that being religious does not mean you have to be one thing. You can listen to many different faiths, and take inspiration from them all.

Could the book be used for teacher development and / or for and with pupils themselves? How?

- It could be used to show how you can show interest in different religions and be respectful of the beliefs of others.
- It could be used to show some of the practices of some religions (it does not go into major depth but gives some insights).
- You could use this to show the process of conversion between faiths, which a lot of pupils does not realise is an option; they often think that, if their parents have a faith, they are stuck with it for life.

Can you give an example of a key quote from the book (keep to about 50 words), and why you chose it?

The whole of **Chapter 15** inspired me greatly. It shows such a healthy interest and respect of a range of faiths. Longer than the 50 words, but there is none of it that I don't love.