

**Religious Studies C: Religion and Belief in Today's World
(pilot) - J622**

and

OCR GCSE (Short Course) in Religious Studies C J122

Unit B611: Religion and Belief in the Modern World
Key area 3: The Rise of and Interest in Religious Movements
Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids

Teacher's Notes and Suggested Lesson Plans

Introduction

These resources have been produced by the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids (OBOD) to enable teachers to cover the elements of the syllabus that refer to the Order. The contents of this resource pack are only suggestions of course, and you may find that for your particular classes and ability ranges the resources need to be adapted. You are free to adapt these resources as you see fit for your own use in the classroom, but please do not redistribute your adaptations on public forums.

You will find the following elements included in this Teacher's Resource Pack:

Teacher's Notes (incorporating suggested Lesson Plans)
Lesson Hand-outs
Videos

If you have any questions about the material contained in this resource pack, please email the following address:

teachers@druidry.org

There is also further information on the Order's website:

<http://www.druidry.org>

A note on YouTube videos

Throughout these lesson plans, reference has been made to videos that are available on YouTube. Many schools find it necessary to block this site behind a firewall. For this reason, the videos cited have also been included in this resource pack. The videos in this archive are all either in AVI or FLV format. To play videos in FLV format you will need a video player that can play Flash Videos. A good example which is free to install is available from:

<http://www.applian.com/flvplayer/index.php>

...be wary when installing this however to uncheck the boxes that install other applications that you will not need.

Suggested Lesson Plans

These lesson plans have been produced with a lesson length of 1hr in mind. Of course, some schools have longer lessons and some have shorter lessons, so with that in mind in you may choose to omit, shorten or adapt these lessons to suit your needs. Timings are only suggestions, and you may feel it appropriate to spend more or less time on each section depending on the circumstances of your class.

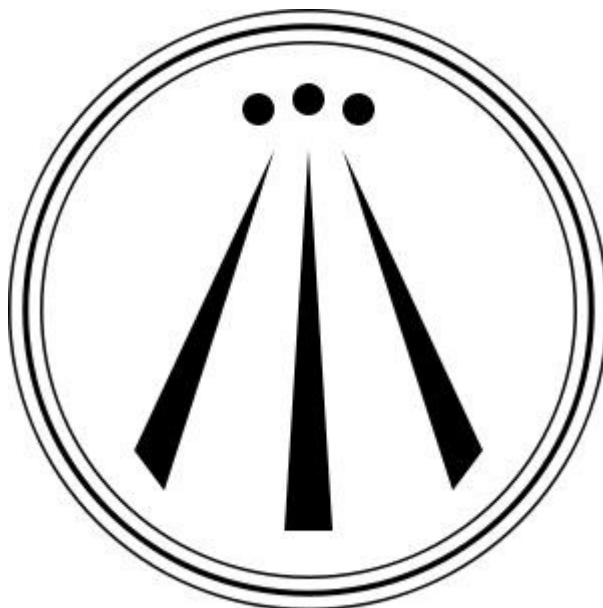
The lessons have been broken into four sections to cover the main elements of the syllabus. The draft specification suggests that the following areas are covered:

- History;
- Beliefs and teachings;
- Practices;
- Acceptance as a religion and its impact upon culture and society.

In broad terms, the four lessons cover these four areas. However, the suggested lesson plans do attempt to blend the themes somewhat in order to ensure that the teaching and learning is balanced and engaging.

An excellent resource to read in preparation for the teaching of these lessons is Philip Carr-Gomm's "What do Druids Believe?" Paperback: 100 pages, Granta Books (3 April 2006), ISBN-10: 1862078645, ISBN-13: 978-1862078642, RRP £6.99. Ideally copies of this would be made available to students for background reading or revision.

Our thanks to OBOD member and teacher Andrew Brennand who prepared these materials. We hope you find them useful.



Lesson 1

Introduction to and Brief History of OBOD

Starter (10 mins)

What do you think of when you hear the word “Druid”? On your own or in pairs try to produce a mind-map of all the ideas you can come up with. Students can either draw this on sugar paper or in their books.

Based on what the students suggest, draw a summary of their ideas on a mind map on the board. Students are likely to suggest some of the following:

- Getafix from the Asterix books
- White robes
- The Wicker Man
- Tree Huggers
- Human Sacrifice
- Magic
- Video games such as World of Warcraft
- Stonehenge
- Time Team

Explain that we are going to look at a religious movement that claims that Druids are not just to be found in history, books, films and games, but are real and practising their religion today. Druidry is a very broad spirituality, but we are going to look at the largest organisation practising Druidry in the world today – The Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids (OBOD).

Activity 1 (15 mins)

Ask students to read “About the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids” and either write down in their books or highlight on the sheet what they think are the three most important points that it makes. Ask students to share with the rest of the class what they thought the three most important points were, and check for understanding if there are any ideas that are hard for them to grasp. Of particular note will be the idea that some people combine Druidry with other religions, and some people do not think that Druidry is a religion.

Activity 2 (10 mins)

Watch the video “What is Druidry?” and answer the questions on the sheet. The answers are

- 1) it is a nature based religion
- 2) because we are at a time of environmental crisis
- 3) it went underground and went into folklore and tradition
- 4) animals and plants
- 5) Glastonbury
- 6) 10,000
- 7) Through a “Distance Learning Programme” on audio CD and written materials

Activity 3 (15 mins)

Ask students to arrange the events listed in the “History Card Sort” in the correct order. They can either number them if time is short, or cut out the cards and attempt to arrange them (this will appeal to more kinaesthetic learners). This will enable them to see the history of how Druidry has

evolved and how the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids came about. When the events are placed in the right sequence the students can represent the information however you choose – they could draw and label a timeline, make a bullet-point list or just stick the cards into their books.

Plenary (10 mins)

Ask the students the following question:

In the video, the Chosen Chief of the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids said that with Druidry you are “not in the restaurant you are in the kitchen?”. What do you think he meant by this? Clue: he is talking about a person’s role in creating their own spirituality.

If time is short then oral responses will suffice, but it would be vastly preferable to get a written response. This can be finished off for homework. If they want to watch the video again it can be found here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-xnLtHpt3I>

Extension

Anyone who finishes any task early can be given the hand-out “Ross Nichols: Founder of OBOD” to read through. Everyone will need a copy of this for their files or folders.

Lesson 2

Beliefs and Teachings of OBOD

Starter (10 mins)

Watch the video “The Seven Gifts of Druidry” (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-NccJ89BupI>) and ask the students to try and remember as many of the seven gifts as they can. Then hand out the sheet containing the description of the Seven Gifts.

Activity 1 (15 mins)

The aim of this exercise is to encourage comparison with other religions and to look at the aspects of OBOD belief teachings that are in tension with religions that students might already be familiar with.

Ask students to read through the Seven Gifts and think about which ones they think are common to all religions and which ones sound unique to OBOD and Druidry. Are there any that leap out as particularly interesting? Any that you think should not be part of a religion at all? Discuss these questions in pairs and write down two sentences: one that says what you think about the Seven Gifts, and one that asks a question you would like answering.

Activity 2 (30 mins)

Beliefs and Teachings Carousel. Each student is given a copy of the “Skeleton Notes”. Divide room into six stations and place laminated copies of the resource sheets in each station. Students spend five minutes at each station writing bullet-point notes under each heading. When five minutes is up, they rotate to the next station. Teacher needs to actively circulate amongst the groups, asking for opinions on what they are reading, whether they agree or disagree with what they are reading etc.

If 30 minutes is judged to be too long for a lengthy activity that centres on note taking, it is possible to present the information in different ways. You could split the class into six groups and ask them all to read one section of the resource and make a brief presentation to the rest of the class.

Alternatively, if the groups are more artistically inclined they may choose to make a poster that summarises the main points. These posters could be pinned up in the classroom and then each group could fill in their “Skeleton Notes” based on these posters. You may need to adjust the timings of the lesson to accommodate these alternatives.

Plenary (5 mins)

Ask students to identify the belief or teaching that they find the most and the least appealing. If the previous activity finished early there might be time to write a sentence to explain their opinion, if not then verbal responses will suffice.

Lesson 3

What Do Druids Do?

Starter (10 mins)

Discussion about how we experience festivals and celebrations and the shape of the year. You could ask students to think, pair, share, or to just note down brief answers if you prefer silent starters.

- 1) What special celebrations do students enjoy throughout the year?
- 2) Are there any they look forward to particularly? Why?
- 3) Is there a pattern to how you experience a year? Think about the school year!

Activity 1 (25 mins)

Explain that OBOD follows the same basic pattern of festivals that the majority of Pagans follow – known usually as the “Wheel of the Year”. Although OBOD uses some slightly different names for some of the festivals, the meanings and significance of each festival is commonly accepted and understood. It is important to stress that the Wheel of the Year in its current form is quite a recent confection, and only since the 1960s has this format been universally accepted. Although there is strong historical evidence for most of these festivals being celebrated throughout British history in at least some parts of the British Isles, they were not *all* practised *everywhere*. However the words spoken by OBOD members at the festivals do draw upon a vast reservoir of folklore and magical knowledge. The content of each festival is very much in the spirit of tradition and customs that reach back much further than the 1960s.

This exercise is best conducted in a large space, free of clutter. You might want to try it outside, in a large communal space such as a hall, or to clear the tables and chairs to the sides of your classroom. Ask all students to stand in a circle that is large enough to accommodate everyone and identify the people stood at the eight cardinal compass points of N, NE, E, SE etc. The student stood at each of these points will be given a sheet to read from. Other students could either be given just the diagram or nothing at all – this depends on whether you judge more pieces of paper to be a distraction or not. Some students may find this exercise easier to follow if they have the Wheel diagram to refer to – but you could just project it onto the board. You will be starting with Samhain (pronounced “Sow” like a female pig and “Wain” to rhyme with rain) at the NW point. Explain that the readers stood at the main compass points represent the Equinoxes and Solstices, and the readers stood at the points in between represent the “Fire Festivals”, sometimes known as “Cross-Quarter Days”.

Once the eight festivals have been described by the readers, ask students if they have noticed anything about the dates or spacing of the festivals, or anything else that they think is worth remarking upon. Points to try and elicit in discussion are:

- 1) they are evenly spaced at about 6 weeks apart, so unlike other religions which have irregularly spaced festivals (eg. Easter and Christmas) there is something to celebrate on a regular basis.
- 2) the dates often coincide approximately with Christian festivals. Some people think that this is because all Christian festivals are dated from a pre-Christian Pagan calendar, but this point is not proven. Possible correspondences are:
 - a. Samhain/All Hallow’s Eve (Halloween)
 - b. Alban Arthan (Winter Solstice)/Christmas
 - c. Imbolc/Candlemass

- d. Alban Hefin (Summer Solstice)/St John's
- e. Lughnasadh/Lammas (Loaf Mass – early harvest festival)

- 3) the arrangement can be thought of as a wheel that turns, much like the turning of the seasons. Just as our lives have a cycle of birth, growth, maturity, old age and death, the year has this too.

Activity 2 (10 mins)

Explain what happens at these festivals. They tend to follow a set structure of an “opening” rite, the main rite which is themed to the particular festival being celebrated and then a “closing” rite to end proceedings. Some Druids prefer to conduct ceremonies alone, some operate in small gatherings (between six and twenty people) called “Groves” and celebrate with a small number of people that they are used to working with. Others prefer to participate in larger public gatherings at places of pilgrimage such as Stonehenge or Glastonbury. Most Druids will mix all three – solo, small group and public ritual. Common to all are prayers, chanting and an acknowledgement of deities and spirits. Although a lot of videos of Druids performing rituals show them wearing white robes, not all Druids do, and many perform their rituals in every day clothes. The videos below show large public rituals which involve a lot of drama. Not all Druid rituals are like this, and some are very quiet, personal and meditative.

There are a variety of videos showing OBOD rituals on YouTube. You can browse their channel here: <http://www.youtube.com/user/obod>

Two that are particularly good for showing what Druids do are an extract from the BBC from 2005 here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fkcupk8nv5E>

And a montage of the gathering on Glastonbury Tor in the year 2000, which can be found here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uR41PONJAEw>

Plenary (15 mins)

Ask students to choose one of the eight festivals to describe in depth in their books. They might like to think back to the start of the lesson when they decided what celebrations in a year were special or meaningful to them. They could choose the Druid festival which is either closest in time to their favourite celebration, or which they think is similar in what it signifies. For example if their favourite celebration is Christmas they might choose Alban Arthan. If it is their birthday, choose the festival closest to that date. If they like breaking up from school and enjoying Summer they might choose Alban Hefin or Lughnasadh. Ask them to make notes on what the festival is called, when it happens, and what it means. An optional extra would be to ask them to imagine what it would be like to join in with such a ceremony.

Extension

Anyone who finishes any task early can be given the hand-out “Druidry, Shamanism and Magic” to read through. Everyone will need a copy of this for their files or folders.

Lesson 4

Acceptance of OBOD as a religion and its impact on culture and society

Starter (10 mins)

Druid wisdom is often encapsulated in sayings called “Triads”. These attempt to express an idea or teaching by breaking things into threes. Many of them are so old we don’t know their origins. One such triad is:

The three foundations of spirituality: hearth as altar, work as worship and service as sacrament.
A Compilation of Triads, Volume I by John F. Wright

Show this triad to your students and ask them what they think it means for how Druids should behave. Can they put it into their own words?

Activity 1 (15 mins)

For many members of OBOD, Druidry is not just about beliefs and festivals, about prayer, magic and “inner work”. It is also about living ethically and responsibly, and making a positive contribution to society. This is what the “work as worship and service as sacrament” section of the triad is about. Druids need to “walk the walk” as well as “talk the talk”. Ask the students to mind map as many ways that they can think of that Druids could have a positive effect on the natural world and society given what they have learned so far. You could ask them to work in groups, or just take suggestions from the class and compile a central mind map. Hopefully they will come up with some of the following:

- Shopping ethically
- Recycling
- Supporting alternative energy projects
- Growing their own food
- Keeping their local environment tidy
- Picking up litter
- Using public transport
- Being sensitive to how meat is produced and buying accordingly
- Doing volunteer work
- Studying natural healing techniques
- Creating a sense of peace and harmony amongst family and friends
- Having a job that helps others – nurse, fireman, teacher etc
- Working as judges, scientists, philosophers and advisers
- Supporting environmental charities such as The Woodland Trust, Greenpeace etc.
- Working as a Hospital or Prison Chaplain
- Learning crafts and trades that use natural materials – anything from woodcarving to welding

...they may well come up with many more! It is important to stress that not all Druids do all these things, but that many do give up considerable time and resources to support causes that are sympathetic with the teachings of Druidry. Another important point to note though is that none of these activities are exclusive to Druids – all of them could be pursued by people of other faiths or of no faith at all.

Activity 2 (15 mins)

Split the class into groups of three (if you prefer you can have people working in pairs and therefore split the class into groups of six). Tell them that some Druids go further than the actions described above and take an active stance in protesting against projects they think will be damaging to the natural environment. Although OBOD does not formally endorse the actions covered in the handouts, many Druids who participate in such actions believe the same sort of things as members of OBOD, and some may incidentally be members of OBOD. Give them the handouts and ask them to read through their own sheets and then explain what happened to other members of the group. Then each group as a whole should decide what they think about what they have read and prepare a statement to the class about whether they agree or disagree with the actions of the protestors described.

Activity 3 (10 mins)

Druidry and the mainstream. Explain that Paganism in general and Druidry in particular is enjoying an unprecedented period of growth. The 2001 census suggests that Paganism is probably the seventh largest faith grouping in the UK after the usual “Top Six” world religions, with estimates varying from between 100,000 and 200,000 practising Pagans in the UK. The 2011 census will hopefully clarify the numbers further. Of course not all Druids are Pagans, but many do consider Druidry to be a denomination within Paganism. There are probably somewhere in the region of 50,000 practising Druids in the world. Of course you don’t have to be a member of OBOD to consider yourself a Druid, but OBOD itself has around 12,000 members.

If you are in hospital or prison you can now get a Pagan or Druid Chaplain to visit you.

Druids are beginning to get representation on local SACREs – these are the official bodies that determine what appears on the RE syllabus.

Druids appear on TV and radio with increasing frequency. Show clip from Paul O’Grady, which can be found here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xu4BF8xoKA>

Plenary (10 mins)

Philip Carr-Gomm, the Chosen Chief of OBOD wrote the following:

“Druidry’s strength lies in its inclusivity and its tolerance of diversity. Just as Nature is generous and bio-diversity is a sign of health, so in the worlds of culture and spirituality differences of opinion create a healthy and exotic environment, with the potential for the cross-fertilisation of ideas. Druidry is not simply Paganism, or religion or philosophy.”

Ask the students to write a sentence in their own words that summarises what he meant in the last sentence by the words “Druidry is not simply Paganism, or religion or philosophy.”

You are looking for the following ideas, already covered in these lessons:

- Druidry is not thought of as a religion by everyone who practises it
- For some Druidry is more a philosophy or a way of life
- It is possible to be a Christian Druid, a Buddhist Druid etc
- Druids have no desire to convert other religions and respect all religions