




Strand | Europe and the wider world

Strand Unit: People and places	
Stage	Stages 3 (Third and fourth classes)
Subject	History/Geography – Religions, Beliefs and Worldviews
Learning Outcome	<i>Through playful and engaging learning experiences, children should be able to explore the ethnic and religious backgrounds of children and young people from other countries.</i>
Relevant Key Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AL – Being an active learner C – Being creative CL – Being a communicator and using language
Topic: The diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds of children in France	<p>France is one of Europe’s largest and most diverse countries, shaped by its rich history, colonialism, migration and culture. Its population includes people of French, European, North African, West African, Asian and Caribbean ethnicity and heritage.</p> <p>France follows the constitutional principle of ‘Laïcité’, meaning secularity and the explicit neutrality of the state in religious matters. In practice, this principle restricts explicit displays of religious signs or clothing (<i>such as large Christian crosses, the Muslim Hijab, the Jewish Kippah, etc.</i>) in public institutions, including schools. Religiously, France is primarily home to Christians, Muslims, Jewish, Buddhists and people of no religion, reflecting a rich mix of traditions, beliefs and worldviews. Celebrations, festivals, food and cultural practices from around the world are part of everyday French life, especially in large cities such as Paris, Lyon and Marseille. This diversity makes France a vibrant, multicultural society where many identities, beliefs and worldviews coexist.</p>

Why is learning about this topic important?	What will this look like in the classroom?
<p>Learning about the different ethnic and religious backgrounds of children in other countries helps children appreciate the diversity of human experience in different times, places and circumstances. By exploring the different ethnic and religious traditions in France, past and present, they can see these traditions as a lived reality that have helped to shape people’s identities, cultures and daily lives in France.</p> <p>Through engagement with stories, artefacts, places of significance and cultural practices across different ethnic and religious backgrounds in France, children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop curiosity, empathy and respect for people of diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds • encounter and challenge stereotypes about different ethnic and religious traditions • understand that although cultures and traditions vary, certain values such as family, empathy, kindness and community are common across different ethnicities, religions, beliefs and worldviews. 	<p>Children have opportunities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore how children and families of different ethnic and religious backgrounds in France celebrate festivals and observe traditions • engage with stories, images and digital resources that reflect the daily life of people from diverse communities in France • inquire about different ethnic and religious backgrounds, demonstrating an awareness and understanding of France’s multicultural identity.



A menu of content ideas for religious and/or belief systems for children to engage with in working towards the Learning Outcome:

- the origins of an associated religion, belief or worldview
- key beliefs and teachings
- guiding principles
- historically important texts/writings
- sites of pilgrimage
- key beliefs and teachings
- rites of passage
- main countries of worship/importance
- key figures and leaders
- major festivals and celebrations.

Ideas for children working as historians

Concept	Ideas
Time and chronology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a timeline of major French cultural, ethnic and/or religious events (e.g., <i>Bastille Day</i>, <i>Christmas (Christian)</i>, <i>Eid (Islam)</i>, <i>Hannukah (Jewish)</i>, etc.) showing when they occur throughout the year
Change and Continuity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and discuss how one or more French festivals and celebrations were observed in the past (e.g., <i>Bastille Day</i>, <i>Mardi Gras</i>, <i>Christmas</i>, <i>Eid</i>, <i>Hannukah</i>, etc.) • Compare images of traditional French life (e.g., <i>old markets</i>, <i>village festivals</i>, etc.)
Sense of place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design a postcard from a French cultural, ethnic and/or religious landmark in Paris (e.g., <i>Eiffel Tower</i>, <i>Notre Dame</i>, <i>Sacré Coeur</i>, <i>Grand Mosque</i>, <i>Le Marais District</i>, etc.)
Sense of space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate and map major French cities/regions in the context of their learning about the ethnic and religious backgrounds of children in France (e.g., <i>Paris</i>, <i>Marseille</i>, <i>Lyon</i>, <i>Perpignan</i>, <i>Biarritz</i>, <i>Rouen</i>, <i>Alsace</i>, etc.) • Identify where people gather for religious and cultural celebrations or festivals in France (e.g., <i>Christmas markets in Strasbourg</i>, <i>Eid in the Grand Mosque (Paris)</i>, <i>Chinese New Year/Spring Festival parades in Paris</i>, etc.)
Multi-perspectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with stories about how and why children from different religious backgrounds celebrate important events (e.g., <i>Christmas</i>, <i>Eid</i>, <i>Hannukah</i>, <i>Vesak</i>, <i>Diwali</i>, etc.)

Skill	Ideas
Using evidence and sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine images of one or more of the following: French festivals (e.g., <i>Bastille Day</i>, <i>Nice Carnival</i>, <i>Strasbourg Christmas Market</i>, <i>Fete de Lumieres</i>, etc.); markets; and places of worship, looking for clues and evidence (e.g., <i>clothing</i>, <i>food</i>, <i>symbols</i>, etc.) to work out what's happening and who might be involved • Create questions that one could ask in an interview to a French child to learn about their family, beliefs and daily life
Questioning / investigating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch a short recording or slideshow about children's everyday life in France and generate 'I wonder' questions (e.g., 'I wonder what food they eat?' 'I wonder what their school is like?' 'I wonder how they celebrate?' etc.) to discuss as a class • Explore artefacts and images related to different French cultural, ethnic and/or religious groups (e.g., <i>rosary beads</i>, <i>Basque txapela (red beret)</i>, <i>menorah</i>, <i>traditional Moroccan pottery</i>, <i>buddha statue</i>, <i>Alsatian bonnet</i>, <i>model of a minaret</i>, etc.) and discuss why they are important to that group
Historical thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a storyboard exploring festivals over time comparing how the festival was celebrated in the past with how it is celebrated today • Showcase a classroom museum of different artefacts, images, maps and symbols associated with different ethnic and religious beliefs in France
Visual interpretation and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine a set of images showing symbols from French festivals/religious celebrations (e.g., <i>candles for Hanukkah</i>, <i>crescent moon for Eid</i>, <i>Christmas decorations</i>, <i>Diwali lamps</i>, etc.) and describe what each symbol represents and why it is important • Design a poster that describes how to be kind and respectful to children of any religion or ethnicity

Ideas for children's learning through the elements:

Inquiring	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investigate key aspects of life for children from different ethnic and religious backgrounds in France• Explore symbols linked to French communities (e.g., <i>the French flag to all French people, the crescent moon to Muslims in France, the cross to Christians in France, or the menorah to Jewish people in France, etc.</i>)
Communicating	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a short presentation about a French festival or celebration• Express personal thoughts and feelings about the importance of festivals, celebrations, food, clothing, community, etc., to children in France
Understanding and connecting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore similarities and differences of life in a French city or town with their own lives today looking at aspects such as festivals, celebrations, food, clothing, community, etc. (e.g., <i>Eid celebrations in France and the annual Eid celebration in Croke Park</i>)• Reflect on the importance of rituals, significant places and celebrations/festivals to members of different ethnic and religious communities

Ideas for teaching:

Pedagogical approach	Ideas
Dialogic pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select stories, texts, artefacts, images, audio and videos about French children from different ethnic and religious backgrounds (e.g., <i>a Christian child celebrating Christmas, a Muslim child celebrating Eid, a Jewish child preparing for Hanukkah, a Caribbean-French child enjoying Carnival, a Basque child celebrating Herri Urrats, etc.</i>). After each story, children discuss the stories in small groups ('What did this child's life look like?' 'How might they feel during their celebration?' 'What connects their experience to yours?') • Provide opportunities to reflect on their thoughts and views from before learning about the ethnic and religious backgrounds of children in France compared to after
Inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model generating open-ended inquiry questions about life, beliefs and culture in France (e.g., 'What is life like for children in France?' 'What festivals do children in France celebrate?' 'What ethnic and/or religious groups might children be a part of in France?' etc.) • Provide opportunities for children to generate open-ended questions about life, beliefs and culture in France (e.g., 'What celebrations/festivals do they have in France?' 'Where do children go to celebrate these?' 'Do they celebrate the same things as we do in Ireland?' 'Why do some people celebrate differently?')
Story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read short biographical stories about children from different regions of France. After each story, they place a picture or label on a large classroom map to show where each child lives, adding relevant symbols for festivals or traditions mentioned in the story • Prepare small story bags containing objects or picture cards linked to a child's personal festival story (e.g., <i>a diya lamp for Diwali celebrated by Indian-French families, a lantern for Chinese New Year in Paris, a small Torah scroll picture for a Jewish Bar/Bat Mitzvah tradition, etc.</i>). Children select an object from the bag and read the accompanying short story about a child celebrating this festival in France

Ideas for integration:

Subject	Learning Outcome	Ideas
Arts Education	<p>Strand: <i>Responding and connecting</i></p> <p>Connect arts-making to their lives and to traditions from local, national and international communities and cultures with sensitivity to and understanding of the context.</p>	<p>After exploring examples of artworks, crafts and music from different communities in France (e.g., <i>Christian stained-glass windows/choral music; North African pottery/Rai music; Romani metalwork/gypsy jazz, etc.</i>) children may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore the musical (<i>pulse, tempo, duration, rhythm, pitch, dynamics, timbre, texture and structure</i>) and art (<i>space, line, shape, colour, tone, form, texture, pattern and rhythm</i>) concepts of the pieces • find similarities and differences between dance, music and arts works associated with local and Irish traditions with those from different French ethnic and religious cultures.
SPHE	<p>Strand: <i>Community and belonging</i></p> <p>Recognise examples of stereotypes (including gender stereotypes), inequality and discrimination, and explore appropriate responses to stand up for oneself and others.</p>	<p>After learning about one or more ethnic or religious groups in France, children may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore some common misconceptions and stereotypes (e.g., <i>“All families from a religious belief or worldview follow the exact same traditions”</i>) • discuss potential actions that could be taken to respond to and challenge stereotypes.
Language - MFL	<p>Strand: <i>Building an awareness of language and cultures - Developing intercultural awareness</i></p> <p>Develop an awareness and appreciation of their own culture, and the cultures and traditions within the classroom and the wider world; compare them and discuss them sensitively and respectfully.</p>	<p>While generating potential interview questions that one could ask in an interview to a French child to learn about their family, beliefs and daily life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • become familiar with simple greetings and questions in French • use simple French phrases and role cards to act out interview interactions.

Ideas for assessment:

Assessment method	Ideas
Conferencing	After learning about specific French ethnic or religious backgrounds, the teacher holds short conferences with each child to discuss what they have explored, asking them to explain the people, places and important events involved and why they are important.
Portfolios	Children compile their drawings, maps, festival posters, diary entries and postcards, etc., into physical or digital portfolios, demonstrating evidence of learning about ethnic and religious traditions in France.
Project-based learning	Children work in groups to research a specific French ethnic or religious community, creating a short presentation/poster/classroom exhibit showing key traditions, foods, festivals, celebrations, music, art, or symbols from that community.

Progression

Progression in Social and Environmental Education involves the gradual development and extension of key concepts and the skills of working as a historian and geographer, enabling children to question, investigate and interpret the world around them - past and present - with increasing depth and confidence. Please note that more detailed, specific guidance on progression within Social and Environmental Education will follow in due course.

For example, in the case of the concept of 'Multi-perspectivity', children's learning across the four stages could be described as follows:

'Multi-perspectivity' involves considering different viewpoints, opinions, or perspectives when analysing specific events, themes and topics.



The child:

becomes familiar with stories from different and similar cultures, religions, beliefs, worldviews and times

listens and simply responds to stories about other places and different cultures, religions, beliefs, worldviews and traditions

independently engages with a wide range of stories reflecting on cultures, religions, beliefs, worldviews and traditions

analyses and critically responds to a range of stories ruminating on the cultures, religions, beliefs and worldviews of people in other places

For example, in the case of the skill of 'Using evidence and sources', children's learning across the four stages could be described as follows:

'Using evidence and sources' involves the ability to select, evaluate and apply reliable information to support ideas or arguments inquiry



The child:

explores simple evidence and sources with guidance, showing curiosity

uses simple evidence and sources to gather information about people, places and events

selects evidence and sources to inform research and investigations

selects and uses relevant evidence and sources to explore social and environmental topics and issues in depth

Ideas for resources

- Books and Stories based on France; biographical accounts of children in France; diverse celebrations; festivals; religious practices
- Appropriate websites with articles and photographs
- Age-appropriate videos about celebrations in France
- Traditional songs and melodies (e.g., *Diwali songs and Hanukkah melodies etc.*)
- Artefacts or images of artefacts (e.g., *menorahs, diyas, crucifixes, etc.*)

Glossary

Diwali

A Hindu festival of lights where people celebrate with lamps, fireworks, sweets and family time.

Eid

Muslim celebrations marking the end of a period of fasting with prayers, feasts and giving to others. There are two main Eid celebrations, Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha.

Hannukah

A Jewish festival of lights celebrated in late November or early December for eight nights by lighting candles, playing games and sharing food.

Hijab

A headscarf worn by some Muslim girls and women as a sign of faith and modesty.

Kippah

A small cap worn by some Jewish boys and men to show respect for God.

Vesak

A Buddhist festival celebrating the birth, life and teachings of the Buddha, often with candles, flowers and acts of kindness