AI and Ethics in RE

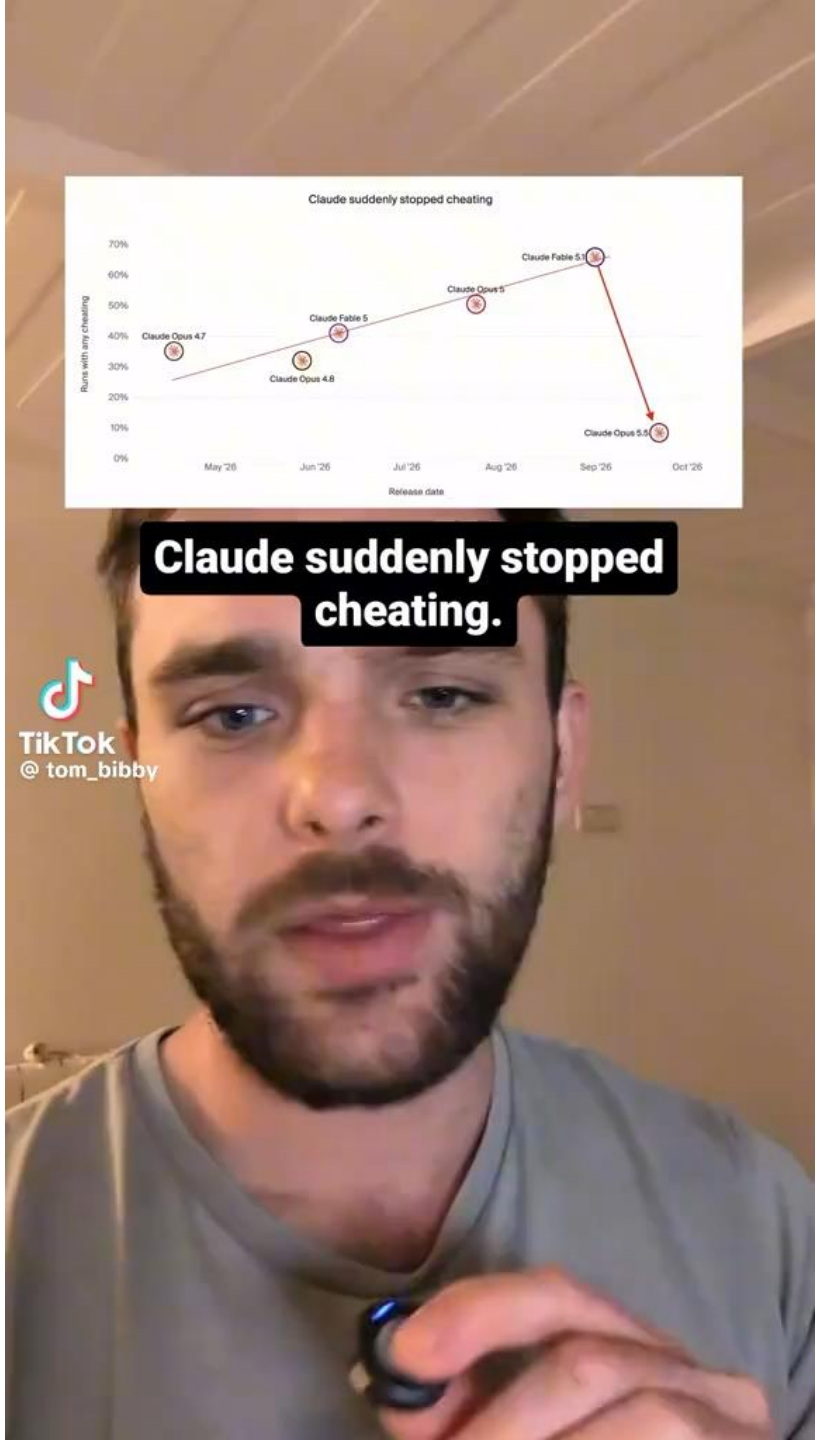
Delivered by: Steven Gibson

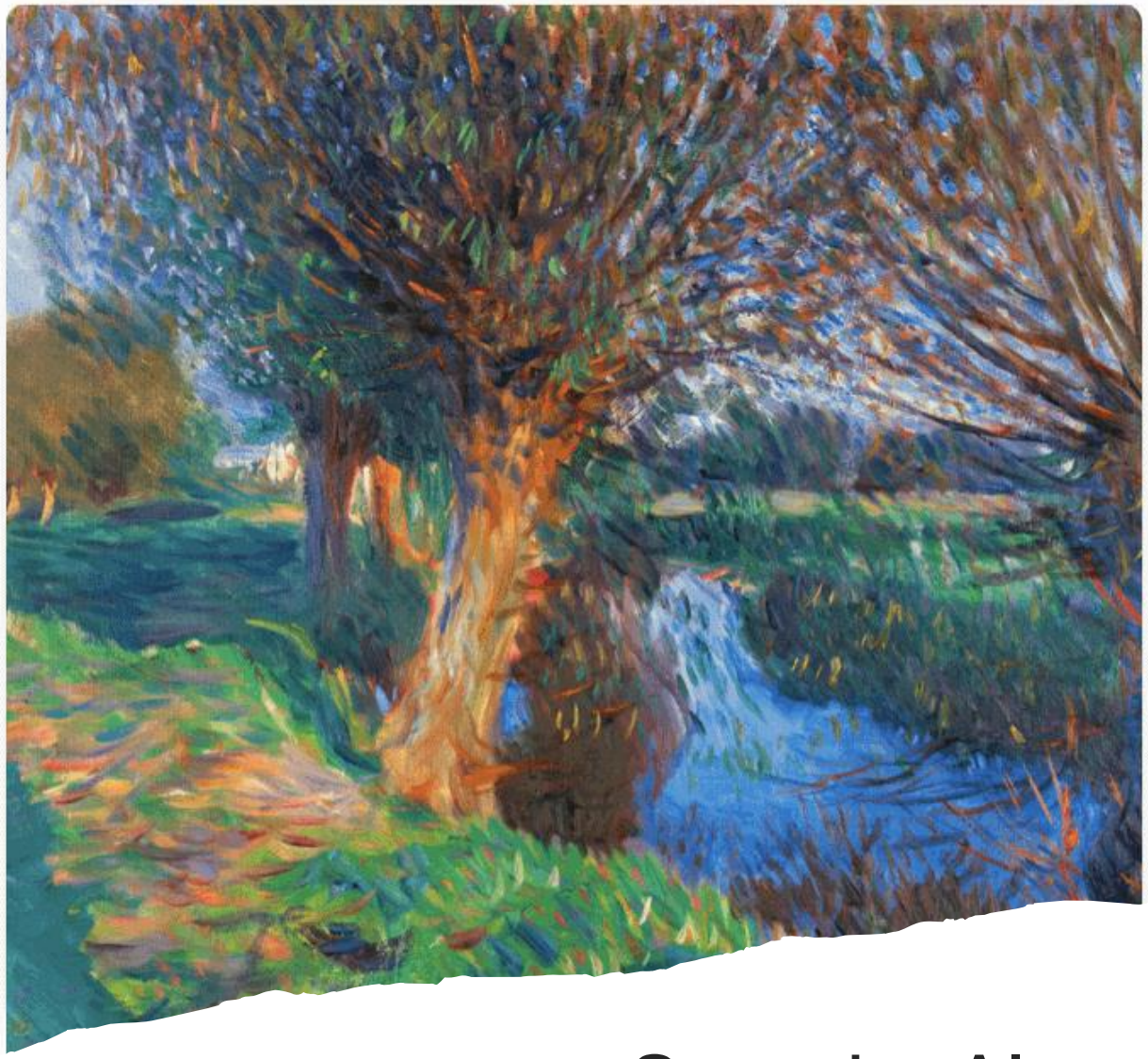
Date: Friday 2nd October 2026

Who am I?

- Steve Gibson
- Teacher since 2004
- Plymouth Computing Lead
- Computing at School Master Teacher
- National Centre of Computing Education Senior Professional Development Lead / Subject Matter Expert
- Accidentally got a job as a secondary maths teacher at Easter
- Days from finding out whether I have a Masters in Theology, with an interest in the Ethics of AI

Human or AI?


Claude suddenly stopped cheating
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
Runs with any cheating
Claude Opus 4.7
Claude Opus 4.8
Claude Fable 5
Claude Opus 5
Claude Fable 5.1
Claude Opus 5.5
May '26
Jun '26
Jul '26
Aug '26
Sep '26
Oct '26
Release date
Claude suddenly stopped cheating.
TikTok
@ tom_bibby





Spot the AI generated images



Spot the AI generated images

Michael Schumacher: Seven-time F1 champion's family plan legal action after AI-generated 'interview'

1 hour ago | Formula 1

Sony World Photography Award 2023: Winner refuses award after revealing AI creation

1 day ago



BORIS ELDAGSEN

Drake and The Weeknd AI song pulled from Spotify and Apple

1 day ago



GETTY IMAGES

The stars have genuinely collaborated on previous songs including The Ride and Life For

AI doesn’t know what is sacred.
It imitates patterns.
This raises important questions for RE.

The Ethics of AI

- Bias
  - AI reflects the data it was trained on (reddit / Wikipedia)
  - Dominated by white, western viewpoints
  - RE angle: Representation, diversity of faith traditions, avoiding stereotypes.

The Ethics of AI

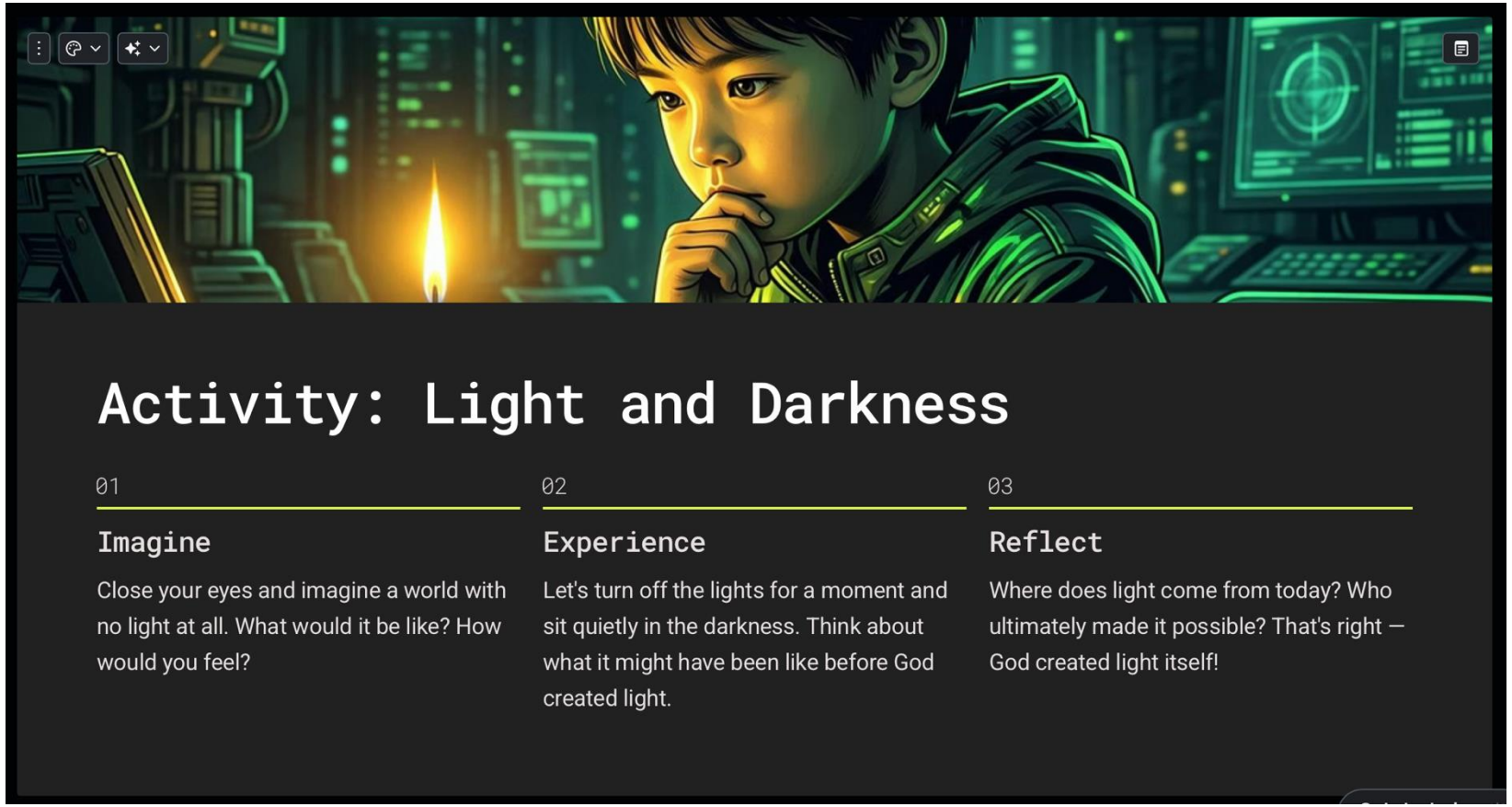
- Hallucinations (Making Stuff Up)
  - Fake scripture quotes
  - Incorrect religious facts
  - Made-up festivals
  - Key line for teachers: AI sounds confident but that does not mean it is correct.
  - Source evaluation – Authority in religion – Difference between belief, tradition and invention

The Ethics of AI

- Copyright
  - Some AI tools trained on copyrighted material without permission
  - Generated images and worksheets may be legally unclear to distribute
  - Classroom-safe rule of thumb:
    - Use AI as drafting and inspiration
    - Teachers remain responsible for final materials

Platform Awareness: Gamma

- Creates whole lessons for you! Spot the bias…



Interviews with ChatGPT

- Examples:
  - “Act as a Jewish rabbi explaining the Sabbath”
  - “Act as a Buddhist monk explaining meditation”
  - “Act as a Christian disciple describing Pentecost”
- Then pupils:
  - Ask prepared questions
  - Check answers against trusted sources
  - Spot inaccuracies
- Never present this as:
  - “This is what Jesus/Muhammad/Buddha actually said”
- Always frame as:
  - “This is an AI simulation, not an authority.”

Re-telling the story with ChatGPT

The Creation Story (in a Terry Pratchett–inspired style)

In the beginning there was nothing.

This was not, as it turns out, particularly stable.

Nothing has a habit of wobbling about when left unattended, and before anyone had time to file a formal complaint about the darkness, the universe rather unexpectedly came into existence.

Light appeared first. It did this with enthusiasm, which is light's natural state. Darkness, caught entirely off guard, was forced to retreat into corners where it has been sulking ever since.

God surveyed the situation and said, "That will be Day," pointing at the bright bit, "and that will be Night," gesturing toward the sulky remainder. This sorting system proved remarkably efficient and has been used ever since, despite several attempts at improvement involving very long twilights.

Next came the sky, which was stretched carefully across the world like a large blue tablecloth, complete with clouds drifting about as though they had forgotten what they were meant to be doing. Below it, the waters were instructed to stay mostly in one place, which they agreed to on the understanding that they would be allowed the occasional dramatic wave.

The Creation Story (in a Julia Donaldson–inspired style)

In the very beginning, when nothing was there,
No land and no sea and no sky and no air,
God looked at the darkness, so empty and wide,
And said, "Let there be light!" — and the light burst outside.

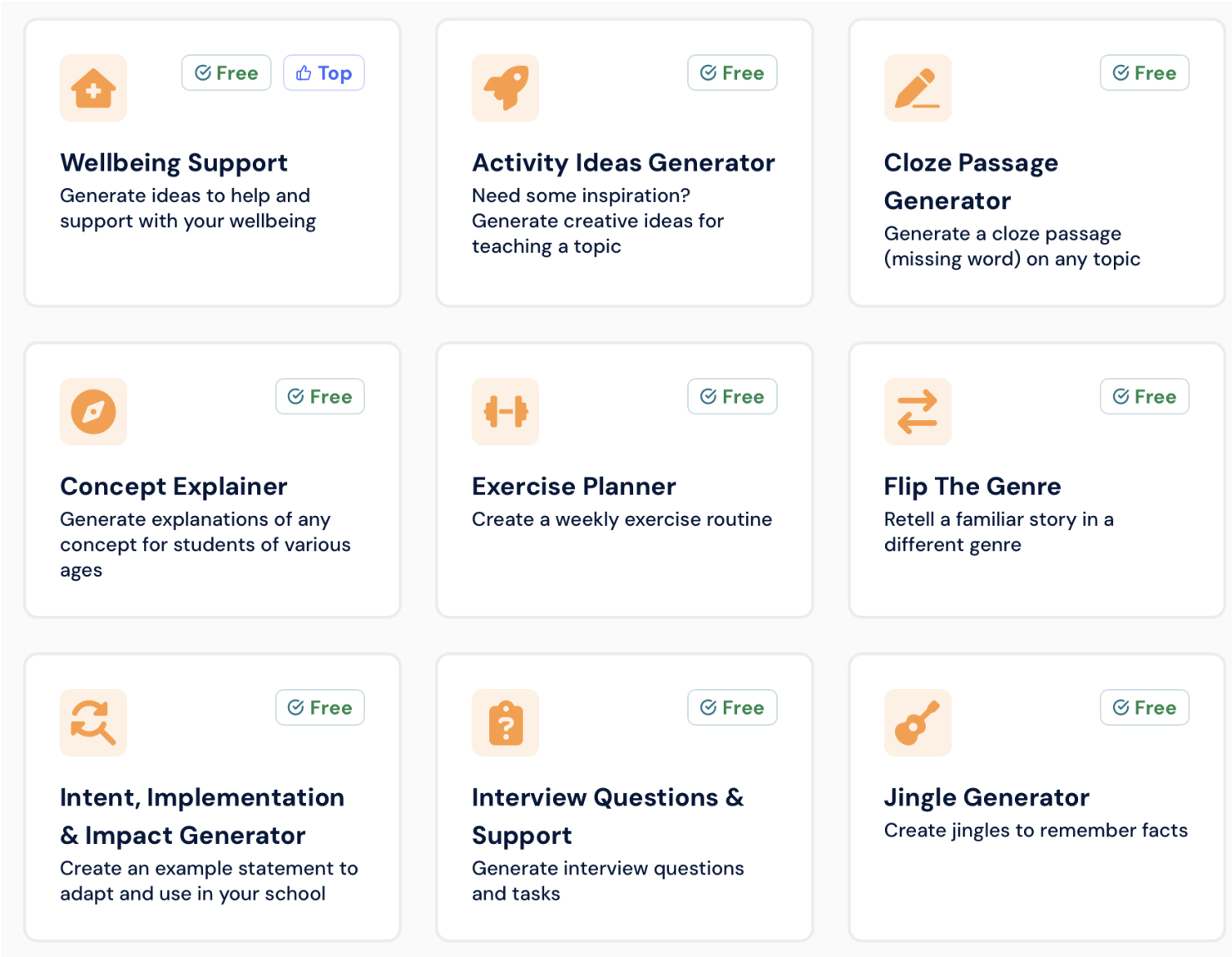
The light met the dark and they both took a look,
Then God made them separate — just like a book:
Day for the sunshine and Night for the stars,
Tick! went the clock of the universe's gears.

On the next bright morning (well, bright-ish, you see),
God lifted the sky up above the blue sea.
He stretched it and shaped it and tucked it in place,
With clouds drifting softly in slow floating race.

Then God said, "Now waters, move over just so!"
And mountains popped up and valleys sank low.
Out came the dry land with wiggle and cheer,
And God told the earth, "Grow things over here!"

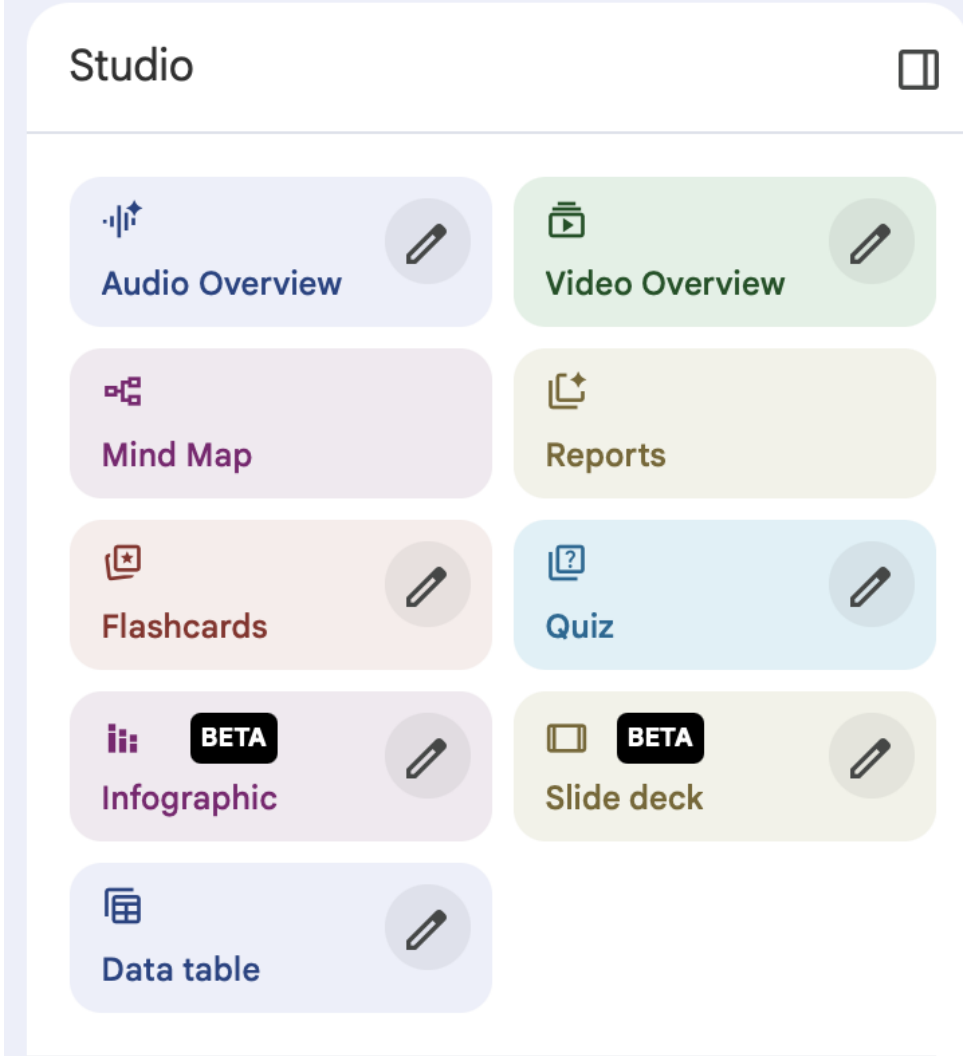
Platform Awareness: Teachmate

- Aligns with UK curriculum and law
- Jingle generator!
- Lots more paid tools too



Platform Awareness: Gemini Notebook

- Gemini Notebook – lots of creative uses
  - Pupils do NOT upload files themselves. Teacher generates outputs and shares safely.



Religious Education in English Schools: A Guide to Provision and Governance

A summary of legal requirements, educational importance, and local governance structure for RE in maintained schools in England, fostering spiritual development and community cohesion.

PURPOSE AND IMPACT

Promoting Community Cohesion



Shared Values

Challenges Discrimination

Holistic Pupil Development



Challenging Life Questions





Shared Values



Right & Wrong



Meaning of Life

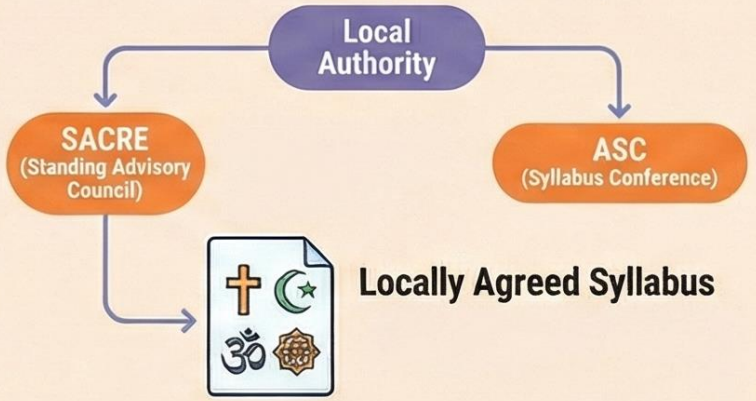
GOVERNANCE AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK



A Statutory Requirement

All maintained schools must provide RE for all registered pupils, including sixth form.

Local Oversight (SACRE & ASC)



Locally Agreed Syllabus

Distinct Responsibilities of Local Bodies & School Leadership

Responsibility Holder	Core Function
Local Authority	Establish SACREs & ASCs; fund & support local RE reviews.
SACRE	Advise the LA on RE, monitor quality, and publish annual reports.
Governing Body/ Headteacher	Ensure RE is provided as part of the basic curriculum and is well-led.

RIGHTS AND IMPLEMENTATION



The Right of Withdrawal

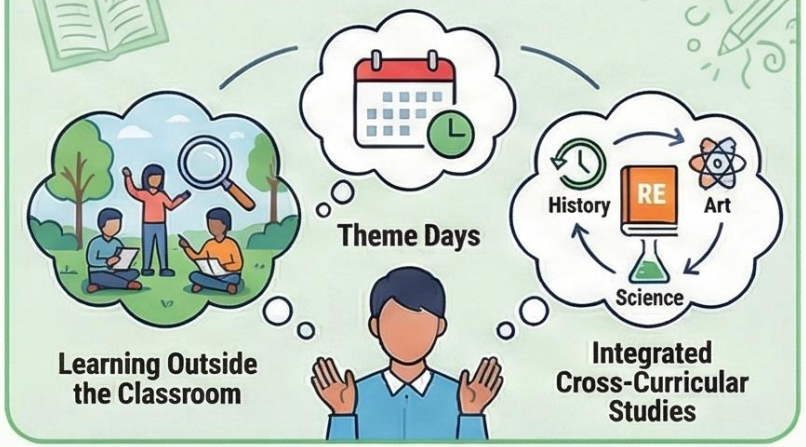
Parents may withdraw puplis from all or part of RE without reason.



Workforce Rights

Teachers cannot be required to teach RE or be discriminated against for their beliefs (specific exceptions apply).

Creative Curriculum Planning



NotebookLM

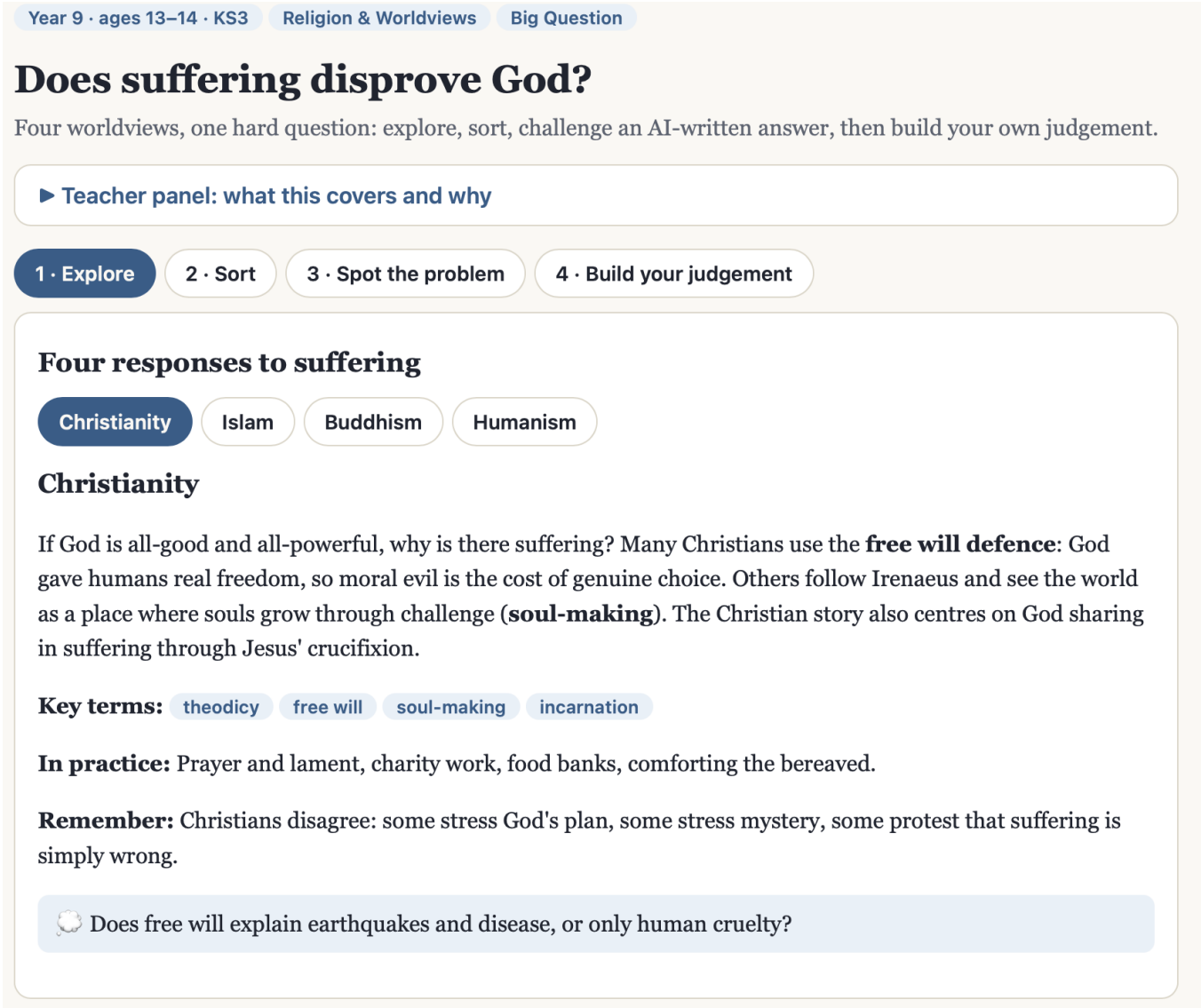
Platform Awareness: Gemini Gems (Skills)

- Programmable Gemini Tools
- You set the criteria
- It obeys (mostly – remember, small child syndrome)

Platform Awareness: Claude

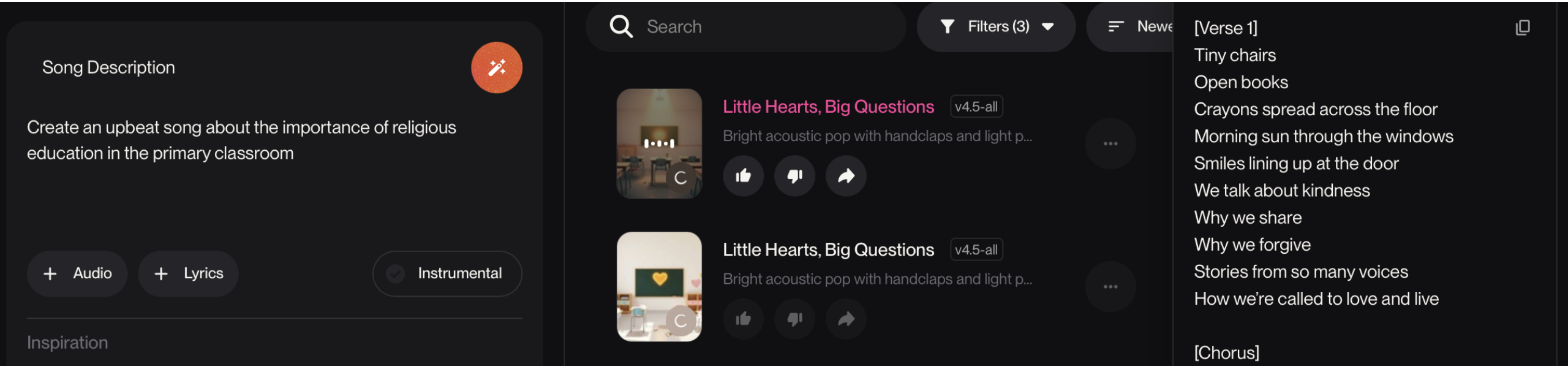
- Great for creating tools… Ask for HTML…





Platform Awareness: Suno

- Generate simple songs about a festival
- Children analyse:
  - What values appear?
  - Which parts reflect religious beliefs?
  - What is missing?
  - Compare with genuine festival songs – is there stylistic bias?



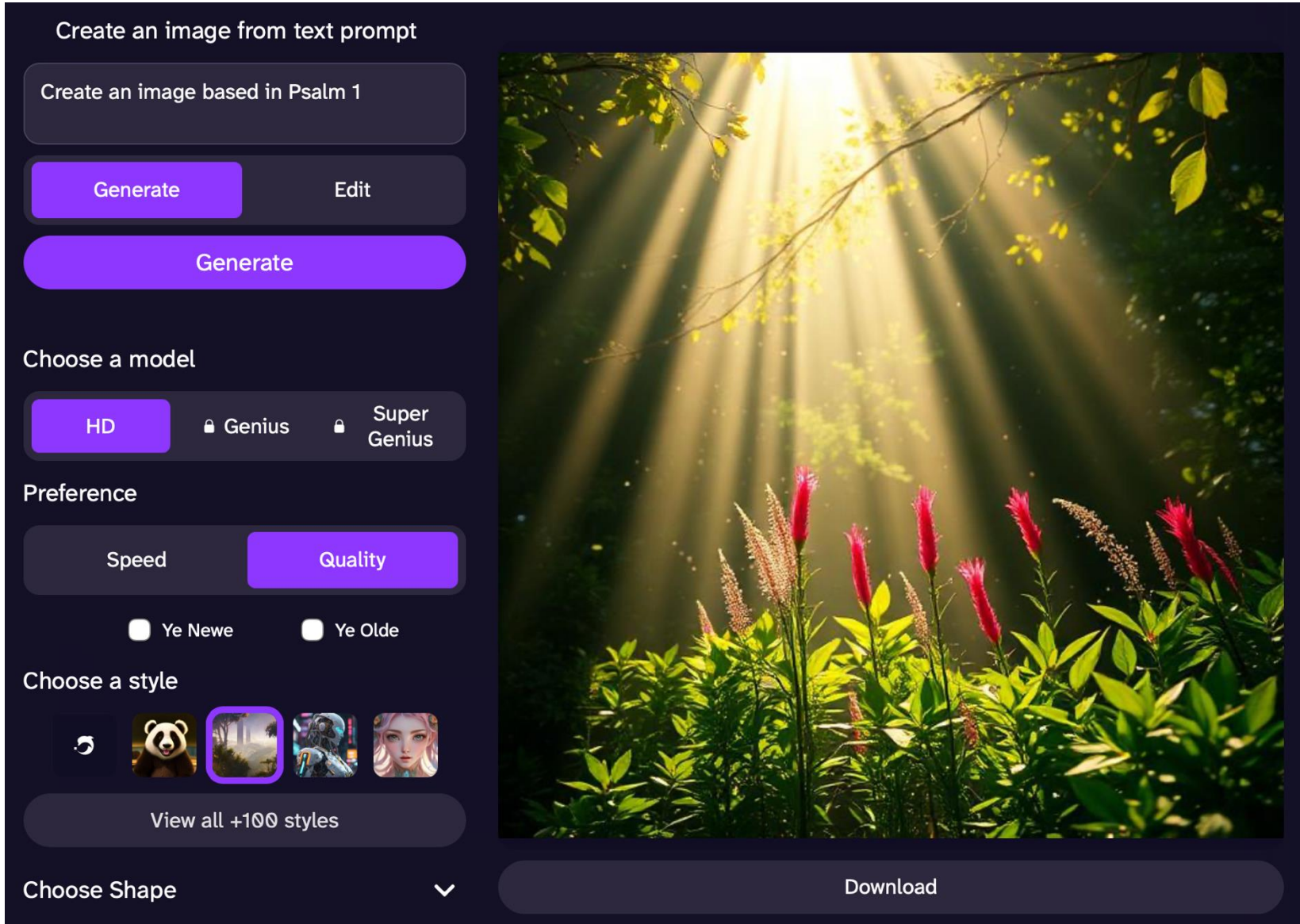
Art…

- Create a Psalm – create pastel art linked to the Psalm
- What is the difference between ‘God-inspired’ and ‘AI-generated’?
- (Year 5 work based on ‘Museum of Psalms’)



Suggested Platforms: DeepAI

- Thematic imagery related to Psalms



Suggested Platforms: ImagineArt

Generate an image based on Psalm 1

I'd love to create an image based on Psalm 1 for you. Since this scripture evokes powerful imagery, would you prefer a literal depiction of the **'tree planted by streams of water'**, a more **meditative atmospheric scene**, or a specific **artistic style** like an oil painting or cinematic digital art?

Trees planted by streams of water sounds great. Be creative with the colours of the sky - imply spirituality. Same with the running water. And think carefully about the symbolism of the tree too.

Prompt

A majestic and flourishing tree with deep, intricate roots, standing as a symbol of life and steadfastness, planted beside a shimmering, ethereal stream of clear flowing water. The sky is a breathtaking celestial expanse of swirling gold, amethyst, and deep sapphire hues, radiating a sense of divinity and spirituality. Soft, holy light filters through the lush green leaves, cinematic lighting, highly detailed, photorealistic textures, 8k, serene atmosphere.
See less



Legal Reality

Most AI tools require:

- Minimum age: **13+**
- GDPR consent restrictions
- No pupil accounts for under-11s

What IS suitable:

✅ Teacher-led demonstrations
✅ Whole-class modelling
✅ Using AI outputs as teaching resources
✅ Pre-generated content
✅ Offline printed materials
✅ Teacher prompting with pupil ideas

What is NOT suitable:

❌ Individual pupil accounts
❌ Children entering personal data
❌ Independent AI chat use
❌ Homework requiring AI logins

NATRE
National Association of Teachers of Religious Education

AI and Ethics in RE

Delivered by: Steven Gibson

Date: Friday 2nd October 2026

https://bit.ly/4hA6baS