Mystery Strategy- Jihad

The press portrayal of Islam has been polarised since the events of September 11th. Certain Islamic words have been misused by terrorists to suggest that their actions are supported by Islam. The media have also taken very narrow and sometimes incorrect definitions of words like Jihad. This lesson takes this misinterpreted and overused Islamic word and explores what the concept really means. It gives the children the opportunity to express their own ideas of what they think this concept means and find the true meaning of this Islamic word.

The concept of Jihad has several meanings:
- Personal struggle to improve your own life.
- Campaigning against injustice and for those who are oppressed.
- Helping the oppressed.
- Defence of the faith and the Ummah, the Islamic community.

Explain that the children are going to solve a mystery.

The mystery is - Should Ahmed go to war?
- Introduce the word Jihad to the class, explain that this word had been used a lot in the media, especially since the events of September 11th.
- Ask the children what their present understanding of the concept of Jihad is. Allow them a short thinking time and then ask them to share their ideas with a talk partner.
- Listen to any ideas that the children might have. Explain that you will see whether the suggestions are correct at the end of the lesson.

Introduce the following mystery scenario to the children.

Ahmed is an 18 year old young man living in Leicester. Until recently he thought he understood the idea of Jihad but recent events have made him realise that he needs to really address the meaning for himself. In a quest to find the meaning he emails members of his Mosque to see what advice they give. Some have sent back quotes or opinions and others have sent some of their own experiences.

- Ensure the children understand the scenario.
- Arrange the class into mixed ability groups of four and give a set of mystery cards to each group.
- Read through all the cards with the whole class to ensure that some of the more complicated words and concepts are understood. There are quite a few words and ideas that you will need to clarify as the ideas in this lesson are designed to challenge the children.
• Explain to the children that by the end of the lesson they will be expected to have come up with a reasoned answer to the question - Should Ahmed go to war?

• Explain to the children that they will need to discuss how they have come up with the answer.

• Allow the children about ten minutes to work in their groups reading and sorting the information on the cards. Go around the class and discuss with each group how they are sorting the cards and learning from the information. Stop the class and share some of the ways of working and ideas from the groups.

• After the children have had another, approximately twenty minutes to work with the information, ask them to come up with some group ideas to answer the question - Should Ahmed go to war?

• Share each groups answers and the reasoning behind their answers.

• After discussion ask the children to come up with their own responses to the following questions:

What do you now think that the concept of Jihad means?

What helped you learn in this lesson?

• Discuss with the children what, even though they may not be Muslims, they think they might have as a Jihad in their lives. Ideas might include things like these suggestions from children who have already taken part in this lesson:

Helping other people make their lives better because we all deserve a chance.

To help other people all over the world who don’t have food, drink or shelter.

Raising money for the poor people in Afghanistan.

Never start a fight with other people. In the playground if anybody is fighting do not join in with them.

To help all people to live peacefully.

To speak the truth all the time but not when we might upset someone.

Raising money for the poor people in Afghanistan.

Conclude the lesson by asking the children to record their ideas about their Jihad as a response to the sentence starter on the response sheet.
Should Ahmed go to war?

Ahmed is an 18 year old young man living in Leicester. Until recently he thought he understood the idea of Jihad but recent events have made him realise that he needs to really address the meaning for himself. In a quest to find the meaning he emails members of his Mosque to see what advice they give. Some have sent back quotes or opinions and others have sent some of their own experiences.

There must be no hatred or vengeance in the fighting as soon as peace is offered the fighting must stop. Once peace has been restored the differences between people must be sorted out.

“Hate your enemy mildly he may become your friend one day”

Muslims may fight in self defence but are forbidden from starting the fighting.

To me my Jihad is teaching in a school, struggling to make sure that all children get the best start in life.

Greater Jihad: The way in which every Muslim makes a personal effort to follow the teachings of Allah and fight evil within themselves.

Lesser Jihad: to fight physically.

I know that my struggle is against the horrible things that people say in the playground. I need to make sure that I am a good friend and don’t join in with that kind of thing but it is hard.

Muhammad (pbuh) said,” the person who struggles so that Allah’s word is supreme is the one serving Allah’s cause”

Jihad can mean war. A long time ago I fought in a jihad when Muslims were under attack. But the moment the other army stopped fighting we stopped too. Allah says you stop fighting when you are no longer under attack.

“There is no such thing as a holy war but there is a just war to establish justice, in self defence and to protect your life, family and home.”

Jihad is permitted in self defence and to fight against oppression.

I raise money for refugees and poor people all over the world. I think my jihad is to struggle to make peoples lives better.

According to Islamic teaching it is UNHOLY to instigate or start a war- however some wars are inevitable and justified.
A man asked Mohammed (pbuh), “What kind of jihad is better? ‘He replied, ‘A word of truth in front of an oppressive ruler!’” Hadith

“Fight in the cause of Allah against those who fight against you, but do not transgress limits. Lo! Allah loves not aggressors….And fight them until persecution is no more, and religion is for Allah. But if they desist, then let there be no hostility except against transgressors.” Qur’an 2:190,193

I fought in a war once- I thought it was a jihad but it wasn’t. The war was about the border between two countries. I felt sad that I hadn’t really understood what jihad meant.

Jihad is a great and noticeable effort for good and a striving(trying very hard) for spiritual good.

During military activities, ordinary people must not be killed.

Islam means submission and is based on the idea of peace.
Before this lesson I thought that Jihad was...

Now I think Jihad means...

I learnt this by...

I enjoyed learning in this lesson because...

I learn by...

If I were a Muslim my Jihad would be...

I think Ahmed should....