

a different view

a manifesto from the Geographical Association



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To the ends of the earth

This photograph can be used in several ways – the role of water (ice) in shaping the earth is one possibility. But the real reason for this family of photographs is its 'wow' factor, or what some call 'awe and wonder'. The school curriculum is supposed to develop a 'spiritual dimension' to learning. Whilst it is not difficult to see how geography is a way into moral, social and cultural dimensions, the spiritual sometimes is seen as less geography (and more RE).



If we can agree that this spiritual dimension is about taking us outside ourselves, perhaps just for a few moments, then in fact it is easy to see how a geographical perspective can contribute to this. It does not have to be confused with religiosity. It is helpful, if not a little challenging, to be reminded (not least through stunning imagery if we cannot make the visit in person) that our lives are short and the individual is relatively small in the scale of things.

More controversially, this opens an opportunity to discuss the ways in which lifestyle choice relates to world views (sometimes sedimented to become rather fixed 'worldviews', which often do link to religious belief). This of course can link to the National Curriculum citizenship concern to promote 'responsible action' – the realization that though an individual life is small and short, it nevertheless has impact.