Lesson plan

Resources
- Resource A – copy of the poem
- Resource B – film clip of The Lamb
- Resource C – copy of the poem with Bible passages
- Resource D – task sheets
- Highlighters

Learning objectives
- To analyse the poem closely
- To consider a biblical interpretation of the poem

Starter activity – asking big questions
- Working in pairs or groups, students generate a list of all the ‘big questions’ they can think of (e.g. Why am I here? What is the purpose of life? Is there a God? How did life begin? etc.)
- Share ideas with the class
- Discuss: At what age do people start asking these sort of big ‘why?’ questions? (anyone with younger siblings will know that even very young children start to question everything)
- Consider how these childish questions can be very simple and innocent, but have very complicated answers e.g. Why is it raining? Why is Mummy crying? Where do I come from?

Introduction – reading and understanding the poem
- Read the poem [Resource A] and establish the basic situation (i.e. a child is asking a lamb a ‘big question’ - if the lamb knows who made it)
- Looking at the first stanza, students identify five details used to describe the lamb e.g. where it lives, what it looks like, what it sounds like
- Divide the poem up into three sections:
  - The questions
  - The answers
  - The final blessing.

Main activity 1 – whole class analysis of the child narrator
- Teacher leads whole class analysis and annotation of things in the poem which make the speaker seem childlike (e.g. use of repetition, big questions, simple words, pastoral imagery, use of rhyming couplets, direct pronouns, shortness of poem, short and mostly regular lines, etc.)
  - Consider: What does the child have in common with the lamb? (innocence, youth)
  - Do we find the character of the child
    - Cute or just too twee?
    - Convincing as a character or more symbolic?
  - At what point of the poem do the ideas become too complex for a child narrator? (In the second stanza, the child answers his own question, making the question rhetorical; in the second stanza, it moves from description to teaching, and the themes become more explicitly religious/spiritual.)
  - Why might Blake have chosen to use a child narrator? (innocence, to simplify big ideas, symbolic, etc.)
  - Establish that this is a deceptively simple poem – it seems to be just a whimsical child’s song but in fact has deeper significance.

Main activity 2 – group work: applying a biblical interpretation
- Watch the film clip [Resource B] in conjunction with the poem with Bible passages [Resource C].
  - Are we surprised by how much biblical allusion is contained in one short childlike poem? (or perhaps we are used to Blake’s very spiritual style)
Intertextuality and the context of reception: 
*The Lamb* by William Blake

- Divide the students into groups and give out task sheets
  [Resource D]
  - More able students could be given responsibility for leading a group and feeding back ideas.

Plenary – the poem’s significance

- Teacher writes on board: 'Blake wrote this poem:
  - As a gentle and entertaining song for children.
  - To show his wonder for the natural world.
  - As an expression of his views on God.’
- Either get groups to debate the different statements, or ask students to choose a statement and then to justify with quotations and convincing analysis.
Intertextuality and the context of reception: 
*The Lamb* by William Blake

**Resources**

**Resource A**

*The Lamb*

Little Lamb, who made thee?  
Dost thou know who made thee?  
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed  
By the stream and o’er the mead;  
Gave thee clothing of delight,  
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;  
Gave thee such a tender voice,  
Making all the vales rejoice?  
Little Lamb, who made thee?  
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little Lamb, I’l tell thee,  
Little Lamb, I’l tell thee:  
He is called by thy name,  
For he calls himself a Lamb.  
He is meek, and he is mild;  
He became a little child.  
I a child, and thou a lamb.  
We are called by his name.  
Little Lamb, God bless thee!  
Little Lamb, God bless thee!

**Resource B:** [http://www.crossref-it.info/articles/475/Songs-of-Innocence~~~The-Lamb](http://www.crossref-it.info/articles/475/Songs-of-Innocence~~~The-Lamb)
Intertextuality and the context of reception: 
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**Resource C**

*The Lamb*

Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

**Genesis 1:25** And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind,

Gave thee life, and bid thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;

**Psalm 23:1-2** ¹The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. ²He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;

**Psalm 65:13** The pastures are clothed with flocks; ... they shout for joy, they also sing.

Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?

**1 Kings 19:12** the L ORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little lamb, I'll tell thee,
Little lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is called by thy name,
For He calls Himself a Lamb.

**John 1:29** The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God ...
He is meek, and He is mild;

Matthew 5:5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth

He became a little child.

Luke 2:40 And the child [Jesus] grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

I a child, and thou a lamb,

We are called by His name.

Luke 18:16-17 16But Jesus called the children to him and said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 17Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.'

Little lamb, God bless thee!

Little lamb, God bless thee!

Mark 10:16 And [Jesus] took the [little children] up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.