

## Schools and Inter Faith Week

From 15-21 November this year a national Inter Faith Week will be taking place in England and in Wales. Information about the Week is available at [www.interfaithweek.org.uk](http://www.interfaithweek.org.uk). Its aims are to:

- strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels;
- encourage local faith groups and communities to reach out to each other and build stronger bonds of understanding and cooperation;
- increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, with a particular focus on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society;
- to gain positive profile for inter faith initiatives, locally, regionally and nationally, as well as for the overall work of building good inter faith relations;
- increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs;
- to encourage the development of new partnerships within local communities and by faith communities with statutory and third sector partners.

[The Week](#), is being facilitated by the Inter Faith Network for the UK working with its member bodies, in partnership with the Department for Communities and Local Government, in consultation with the Department for Children, Schools and Families, the Local Government Association and the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

This is not a Week with a programme of centrally organised or officially 'badged' events. It is a week in which faith groups and their places of worship, inter faith bodies, schools and institutions of further and higher education, local authorities and other public agencies, as well as others, are encouraged to hold their own events and to highlight the importance of inter faith understanding and cooperation and greater awareness about the faith communities and their engagement in building community.

Pupils, teachers and staff in schools around England will be playing a big part in the Week through classroom activities and whole school activities. On the Inter Faith Week website there are some resources for schools specially created for the Week. But each school participating will be choosing its own way to mark this exciting Week. If you carry out an activity for the Week the Cohesion Unit of DCSF would be pleased to hear about it. You can email [community.cohesion@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:community.cohesion@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk)

DCSF, CLG and the Inter Faith Network are keen that teachers should be involved in Inter Faith Week and wish to encourage teachers in all phases of education to participate. There is support available either locally through your RE Adviser, Lead/AST RE teachers or local SACRE.

It is important that the distinctiveness of the different faiths is respected during the Week and the educational aims of any activity are considered. In the light of this, it is important when using visitors in the classroom to check issues relating to school policy and that the visitor understands the aims of RE and does not proselytise. There is a leaflet which can be downloaded free from <http://shop.retoday.org.uk/re-downloads> called 'Religious Believers Visiting Schools', which provides useful information about speaking with religious believers in a school context.

Teachers should note that Inter Faith Week overlaps with [Islam Awareness Week](#). The organisers of the two weeks have been involved in careful consultation, the respective aims being complementary.

This note has been produced to accompany material prepared by NATRE and NASACRE on activities for schools in England, which is available to download separately on the Inter Faith Week website.

In Wales, the Inter Faith Council for Wales in conjunction with the Welsh Assembly Government is leading on the Week: [post@cytun.org.uk](mailto:post@cytun.org.uk)

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