

# **Inter Faith Week Activities for Secondary Schools**



This resource is available  
from the Inter Faith Week  
website:

**[www.interfaithweek.org](http://www.interfaithweek.org)**

# **Inter Faith Week Activities for Religious Education – Secondary**

## **A) Whole School Activities**

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**Activity 8: Places of worship in the Classroom**

**Activity 9: What do young people say about beliefs? (year 9 or KS4)**

**Activity 10: How do beliefs influence responses to people in need?**

## **A) Whole School activities**

**The activities are listed broadly in order from those that are quick to organise through to those that take more time.**

## Activity 1: Assembly - inter faith cooperation as a catalyst for positive action

**Rationale:** The aim of this assembly is to reflect Inter Faith Week's encouragement of faith groups and communities to reach out to each other and build stronger bonds of understanding and cooperation; to strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels; and to learn about people who have worked to build good inter faith relations. It focusses on the lives of six people:

1. Martin Luther King Jnr (<http://www.thekingcenter.org/about-dr-king>),
2. Abraham Joshua Heschel (<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/abraham-joshua-heschel-a-prophets-prophet/>)
3. Thich Nhat Hanh (<https://plumvillage.org/about/thich-nhat-hanh/biography/>)
4. Mahatma Gandhi ([http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/hinduism/people/gandhi\\_1.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/hinduism/people/gandhi_1.shtml))
5. Badshah Khan (<https://wagingnonviolence.org/2013/07/who-was-badshah-khan/>)
6. Julia Neuberger (<http://examined-life.com/interviews/rabbi-baroness-julia-neuberger/>)

**Activity:** Encourage pupils to consider how people have been inspired by others from different faiths to make a difference in their locality. The pupils could be given a brief introduction to the five individuals and the non-violent action below that has marked their lives. Individual pupils could read pertinent quotes from the website to illustrate these men's beliefs and values. In talking about the lives of these five men the commonality between the faiths in respect to non-violence, social action and how they encouraged people of different faiths to work together can be highlighted.

The five people all believed that all people are created in God's image or that people should work together. The Revd Dr Martin Luther King Jr. (Baptist minister) worked with Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel (Orthodox Rabbi) who believed in the principle of '*Tikkun Olam*,' or healing the world. Another person known of by King was Thich Nhat Hanh, a Buddhist who believed in the principles of compassion and nonviolence and that people should work together to heal the world. Mahatma Gandhi was a Hindu who promoted the concept of *satyagraha*, or 'love force'. He believed that all religions were equal and the core of all religion was love and truth. Gandhi greatly influenced the work of King. Fifthly, Badshah Khan, a Muslim who was also influenced by Gandhi and who believed in non-violence. Finally, Baroness Rabbi Julia Neuberger, who has made significant contributions to public and political life in the UK through her social commentary, writing and activism.

Where the opportunity exists for follow up work students might like to look at other examples of people of different religious backgrounds who have worked with others to heal the world and spread compassion, such as Helen Prejean.

In a time for reflection at the end of the assembly ask the pupils to consider how they can as individuals or collectively as a form group, year group or school make a difference to a situation of injustice locally.

**Resources:** See the web-links above.

**Time frame:** Assembly

**Possible links with other subjects:** Citizenship, History links.

## Activity 2: Visits to places of worship

**Rationale:** One of the aims of Inter Faith Week is to encourage places of worship to ‘open doors’ to other members of the community. Organising a visit to a place of worship encourages the faith community to reach out and enables pupils to experience what is distinct about different faith communities.

**Activity:** If you go to the Engaging Places website and click on ‘Lat Blaylock’s, RE Adviser, 6 activities to inspire learners in RE’ section then you can uncover suggestions to help your visit as a class, year group or school be an example of excellent RE. Rather than naming the features of the place of worship the focus should be on questions about how beliefs are expressed in practice, perhaps considering passages from the religion’s sacred writings, how, if and when faiths share beliefs, practices and even buildings.

As an activity linked to such a visit, pupils could imagine themselves as welcoming others to their place of worship (possibly hypothetically). How would they explain the importance of the building to others? What guidelines, if any, might be needed to help visitors dress and behave appropriately? An extension activity could be to plan a prayer space for use by people of different faiths, such as a multi-faith quiet room in a new shopping centre or airport. How could the space be used? How would the space be looked after? What challenges may there be in accommodating the needs of different groups? (Consider images and art as a starting point) How may these problems be overcome?

Another activity which could be linked to a visit could be learning about how the people of the faith community being visited contribute to the local community and work to build relationships with others.

If you look at the REonline website and click on places of worship there are a number of suggested activities, planning and assessment information available.

When travelling to the place(s) to be visited pupils could look out for evidence of religious and cultural diversity in the area and give evidence for their conclusion. They might think about some of the reasons for the diversity (or lack of it). If pupils are able to speak to a member of the faith community at the venue they could discuss the benefits and difficulties faced in living in that particular area. Resulting work could focus on how the faith communities make an impact on the local communities they are part of.

### Resources:

<http://www.reonline.org.uk/specials/places-of-worship/>

**Time frame:** this will depend on journey time, the number of places of worship visited and the number of pupils involved.

**Possible links with other subjects:** Citizenship, History and Geography links.

### **Activity 3: ‘Encountering Faiths’ - with the Faith and Belief Forum**

**Rationale:** The aims of this activity are to encourage local faith groups and communities to reach out to each other and build stronger bonds of understanding and cooperation and to increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, with a particular focus on the contribution their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society.

**Activity:** The Faith and Belief Forum runs workshops for students in schools. These activities are designed to help young people build religious literacy, empathy, and skills for dialogue and communication. Our workshops also support the RE, PSHE and citizenship curricula, as well as SMSC, British Values and pastoral provision. The workshops enable students to consider the ethical, practical and civic implications of living in a multi-faith society. Pupils are given the opportunity to reflect on their own beliefs and roles within the communities, and develop a respect for difference wherever it may occur. This programme promotes community cohesion and the Every Child Matters agenda in that pupils are encouraged to deal with difference and conflict in a constructive way.

The ‘Encountering Faiths’ programme focuses on how faiths can work together in dialogue and how understanding breeds friendship. The themes of respect and understanding underpin the discussion and dialogue that takes place during the day. Other bespoke programmes can be organised if you contact the Faith and Belief Forum. There are also tools to help deal with controversial issues in the classroom on the website. To book either of these events contact Faith and Belief Forum.

**Resources:**

<https://faithbeliefforum.org/a-diplomatic-approach-to-religious-conflict/>  
<https://faithbeliefforum.org/programmes/>

**Time frame:** 1 day activity

**Possible links with other subjects:** Citizenship links

## Activity 4: KS4 conference - Promoting Engaging Dialogue

**RATIONALE:** The activity aims to increase the awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, with a particular focus on the contribution which members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society. In addition it aims to increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs.

**Activity:** To introduce the day pupils could watch the Cumbria and Lancashire KS4 Burnley conference clip. This shows how visitors can be used with a year group or key stage to promote engaging dialogue. The activity on the video is an example of KS4 students meeting a Christian, Muslim, Atheist and Agnostic and asks questions about their beliefs. The questions asked in the example included questions on ‘What are the similarities and differences between the beliefs represented and how do they work to achieve social cohesion?’ and ‘How does faith/belief influence your sense of social justice?’ In response to the video clip students could:

- a) Choose one response shown in the video. In pairs, ask them to identify the evidence and arguments they would use to challenge the point of view expressed.
- b) Plan a new question for each of the four participants that develops the aims of Inter Faith Week.

For example, the students could consider how the individuals or faith groups work to build a sense of community. How do they think their questions would be answered? What would their response be to the question?

Teachers could select faith representatives from any of the faith traditions, whether Abrahamic (Christianity, Islam, Judaism) or ‘Dharmic’/of Indian faith traditions (Hindus, Buddhist, Jains, Zoroastrians, Sikhs) to be the visitors on a panel held at the school. Students could ask their own pre-prepared questions of the visitors, questions that are focused on the aims of Inter Faith Week. In the afternoon students could work together to produce their own video demonstrating the aims of the local agreed syllabus and Inter Faith Week and the learning from the morning’s question panels. This could be shared with other schools and faith communities in the area to explore further the ideas of people of religious and non-religious world views working together for the benefit of the local community.

This type of event develops many skills including evaluation, listening skills, questioning and reflection. It builds bridges between faith communities and promotes understanding of commonality between faiths and beliefs systems. This example uses two Abrahamic Faiths and two non-religious views as the basis for the discussions.

### Resources:

Local faith communities and local Humanist Society/Association

The Inter Faith Network’s publication aimed at 16 – 25 year olds CONNECT: A YOUTH INTER FAITH ACTION GUIDE: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/connect>

Your local SACRE



[http://www.cleo.net.uk/resources/displayframe.php?src=525/consultants\\_resources%2Freligiouseduc%2Fdebate%2Fdebate.html](http://www.cleo.net.uk/resources/displayframe.php?src=525/consultants_resources%2Freligiouseduc%2Fdebate%2Fdebate.html)

**Time frame:** 1 day activity

**Possible links with other subjects:** Citizenship , ICT and PSHE links.

## Activity 5: Inter faith day

**Rationale:** The activity is designed to 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.

**Activity:** Before the event prepare the students by using a traffic light system (red means not committed to, amber means having some commitment to, green means very committed to) and selection of statements relating to people's commitments, the reasons for those views and invite them to think carefully about the commitments of religious people. Carry out a reflection activity with the pupils before the day itself so they can have some experience of this type of learning and have started to develop the skills needed to participate in some of the activities on the day.

The teacher needs to organise speakers from 4 faiths/non-religious world views so the students can learn about these by getting involved in creative workshops including music, art, dance, story-telling and role-plays. Given that Inter Faith Week falls in the autumn it may be appropriate to get visitors to focus on something they are celebrating, such as Diwali for Hindus, Sikhs and Jains or Sukkot for Jews, drawing out the ways that these festivals help to shape the way religious believers understand the world and their place in it. There are different ways of learning about different faiths, there are on-line videos such as those found on RE Online <http://www.reonline.org.uk/> or True Tube <https://www.truetube.co.uk/> which could be used beforehand to prepare pupils for the visitors and enable them to ask better questions. To learn about Judaism the children had the opportunity to participate in dancing, singing, dreidel games and tasting traditional challah bread used on Shabbat in the Jewish home as well as being shown Jewish artefacts and participating in a role-play. They explored Islam through Arabic Calligraphy, the prayer sequence, meditation and a presentation. Whilst the example on the video is of the four faiths mentioned teachers organising such an event could include any faith that is represented locally including Baha'i faith, Jainism and Zoroastrianism.

During the day the pupils would benefit from having the opportunity to ask the members of the faith communities questions about their life, practice of their faith including how their communities work for inter faith dialogue and areas of commonality between their faiths. This should be built into the workshops with the speakers being prepared to share and have activities to illustrate how their faith community works together with others. If there is a person of non religious beliefs who is one of the speakers, similar questions can be put to them although the language of a 'community' may not be relevant. The building of bridges across communities and the aims of Inter Faith Week could also be a focus of a question panel activity, held as the last workshop/plenary to the day.

The outcome of the day could be audio, visual or artistic responses - possibly using digital media - demonstrating the experience of learning from faiths and faiths in dialogue and collaboration. These could be used as a school competition and an exhibition put on that members of the council, local faith communities, parents and governors could visit.

**Resources:**

<https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/schools>

**Time frame:** 1 day and one afternoon or 2 lessons

**Possible links with other subjects:** Citizenship, ICT, Art, music links.

## **B) Classroom RE**

The activities on the following pages use web based materials entirely and require little preparation. The first three can be taught in one lesson and the last two activities could take two lessons.

## **Activity 6: How do beliefs influence views on faith and society?**

**Rationale:** This work aims to build good inter faith relations by increasing the understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs. Also it aims to strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels in our increasingly diverse society.

### **Activity:**

There are 4 belief perspectives illustrated in the video clip; Christian, Muslim, Atheist and Agnostic. People representing these views respond to certain questions. The three questions identified below are the ones that relate best to the aims of Inter Faith Week.

1. What are your similarities and differences and how can we achieve social cohesion?
2. What does living life to the full mean to you?
3. How do your beliefs affect your attitude to the environment?

Pupils are to watch the video clip and consider how people holding these beliefs could find areas of similarity to help them to work together. What possible issues may result from these 4 individuals trying to work together? What would you suggest as solutions to these differences or the compromises that could be reached?

**Resources:** <http://www.cleo.net.uk/resources/index.php?ks=4&cur=15>. Use clip called 'Christian, an Atheist, a Muslim and an Agnostic answer questions on faith and society.'

**Time frame:** 1 lesson

**Possible links with other subjects:** Citizenship link

## Activity 7: How communities work together

**Rationale:** This activity supports Inter Faith Week strengthening good inter faith relations in our increasingly diverse society; encouraging local faith groups and communities to reach out to each other and building stronger bonds of understanding and cooperation and seeking to achieve positive profile for inter faith initiatives.

### Activity:

Students could read on-line the New York Times article: In Indonesia, a Mosque and a Church Foster Friendship Amid Religious Tensions, explore the work of the Interfaith Encounter Association in the Middle East or the work that LSE is doing to promote interfaith encounter in Israel/Palestine or the community initiatives highlighted by Ben and Jerry's

Pupils could discuss these questions:

1. Can inter faith dialogue bring enough insight so people of different beliefs can understand each other?
2. In what ways can inter faith dialogue bring to solutions to the issues faced by the groups in the web pieces? Are solutions always possible? Give reasons for your answer.
3. What do some see as the root of inter faith dialogue?
4. What elements are important in considering successful inter faith dialogue?

To extend this further students could consider how inter faith dialogue could be promoted in their own local area or school. Perhaps a visiting speaker from a local inter faith group could be approached to talk about inter faith dialogue in the locality (see Inter Faith Network web site and the regional lists).

### Resources:

New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/04/world/asia/indonesia-muslims-christians.html>

Interfaith Encounter Association: <https://interfaith-encounter.org/>

LSE: <https://info.lse.ac.uk/current-students/Faith-Centre/Programmes/Interfaith-Encounter-Israel-and-Palestine>

Ben and Jerry's: <https://www.benjerry.co.uk/whats-new/2016/religions-work-together>  
<http://www.interfaith.org.uk/local/directory.htm>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/subjects/zb48q6f> each major faith has a section called Global Issues and information about each faiths attitude to prejudice and discrimination can be found there with other topics.

**Time frame:** 1 lesson

**Possible links with other subjects:** Citizenship, History, media studies links

## **Activity 8: Places of worship in the Classroom**

**Rationale:** This activity supports Inter Faith Week in developing an increased awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK. It would also help pupils to see similarities and differences of the places of worship and could lead to the development of local faith community links.

**Activity:** Video tours of places can be watched on the REonline website. The places of worship featured are representative of the six principal religions in this country. However, the videos don't present the variety within these faiths. Students could watch these (or a selection of these tours of places of worship) and consider the following questions:

1. How are worship practices similar between different faiths? (consider: offerings, images, practices, postures and clothing).
2. What points of commonality can be seen and heard in the videos?
3. What is one universal symbol that connects many of the faith practices seen in the clips?

Following on from this activity, the school could develop links with local faith communities and seek to build long term relationships with visitors from faith communities in the classroom talking more about their place of worship and experience of inter faith work and how they practise their faith in today's world.

### **Resources:**

<http://www.reonline.org.uk/specials/places-of-worship/videos.htm> click on the video links.

**Time frame:** 1 lesson

**Possible links with other subjects:** Citizenship links

## **Activity 9: What do young people say about beliefs? (year 9 or KS4)**

**Rationale:** This task aims to build good inter faith relations and increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs. This can be achieved through an increased knowledge of beliefs and understanding of shared values.

**Activity:** The True Tube clip ‘Religion Unified’ could be used as a starter activity. The students in the video are asked to decide which faith a particular passage of scripture comes from. The students in the class could make their own decision and hear the students’ views on the film. Questions could be asked about why there is uncertainty about the source of the text, leading to ideas of beliefs, values and in some cases histories that are shared.

The People of Faith website includes video clips of young people from the following faiths, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism and Judaism expressing something about belief, belonging and 'being'. Having identified areas of commonality and difference from the videos the pupils could discuss the statement: ‘All people share the same common values.’ In a discussion group of no more than 8, students could take on the role of a representative from a different faith and some from non-religious stances for example, humanist, atheistic or agnostic views. They could argue for this statement drawing on knowledge from the video clips and other RE lessons. Further research on the faith perspectives the student is representing may be necessary depending on prior learning.

Students could email questions to a believer representing one of the 6 largest principal religions in this country (Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism and Buddhism,) on the People of Faith website. This could be used as an evaluative tool in considering the accuracy of their representations of the faith in the group discussion and may focus particularly on finding out more about inter faith working in that faith.

### **Resources:**

<http://pof.reonline.org.uk/>

<https://www.truetube.co.uk/film/religion-unified>

[www.humanism.org.uk](http://www.humanism.org.uk)

**Time frame:** 1 – 2 lessons

**Possible links with other subjects:** Citizenship links



## Activity 10: How do beliefs influence responses to people in need?

**Rationale:** This work aims to encourage pupils to see how local faith groups and communities can reach out to help each other and to 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.

**Activity:** The work and beliefs of three charities is illustrated in the video clip: Christian Aid, CAFOD, and Muslim Global Relief. There is also an example of work that is carried out by volunteers in Brazil. Pupils can discuss the answers to these questions.

1. How do faiths respond to issues of world poverty?
2. How are the responses similar or different?
3. What motivates people to take action to help those in poverty?
4. What responses do you make individually/collectively to issues of poverty and injustice?

To extend this work further pupils could research other charities' responses to poverty or find out from a local inter faith group how local issues of deprivation are being addressed by inter faith work. The ideas could then be developed by the pupils as a toolkit for inter faith charity work with feedback on the work being given by a representative of a local inter faith group.

**Resources:** <http://www.cleo.net.uk/index.php> select KS3/KS4 RE. Use clip called 'Interviews with charity workers'.

<https://www.islamic-relief.org.uk/>

<http://www.muslimaid.org/>;

<https://cafod.org.uk/>

<http://sewauk.org/>

<https://www.khalsaaid.org/>

<https://humanism.org.uk/>

'Religion, Justice and Equality' edited by Rosemary Rivett, ISBN 1-90424-71-8 is a publication which draws on The Act of Commitment developed as part of the Millennium celebrations. It contains thinking skills activities titled 'Development charities – the ways they change to world' using both religious and non-faith based charities as a starting point. This can be brought from <http://shop.retoday.org.uk>

**Time frame:** 2 lessons

**Possible links with other subjects:** Citizenship, geography links

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