



# Connect

different faiths shared values

**As a young person in 21st century Britain you belong to an increasingly diverse society where people of many cultures and faiths live side by side.**

**This action guide is about making connections and friendships. It's about how it matters to build bridges of friendship and understanding between people of the different and distinct religions in this country today.**

## **Inside . . .**

- 2 3 Big Myths**
- 4 Shared values**
- 8 Making it happen!**
- 10 Planning for success**
- 12 Good to talk**
- 18 Celebrate!**
- 19 Let's talk over lunch**
- 22 Resources**

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# What's it all about?

- Making friends
- Helping to end prejudice and stereotyping
- Getting together and helping others
- Helping defuse tensions and resolve conflicts
- Helping your community
- Celebrating diversity
- Adding something extra to your own life

So, you may be a Christian, a Muslim, a Hindu, a Sikh, a Jew or a Buddhist. You may be a Jain or a Baha'i or a Zoroastrian, or a member of a different faith or belief. Whatever your background, if you want to help make the UK a place where respect, co-operation and trust exist between people of different faiths and beliefs, read on.

## Did you know?

Over 75% of people who answered the question about religion in the 2001 Census said they belonged to a particular religious tradition.

For example, 152,000 people identified themselves as Buddhist, 267,000 as Jewish, 336,000 as Sikh, 559,000 as Hindu, 1,591,000 as Muslim and 42,079,000 as Christian. 179,000 identified their religion as "other" and wrote in a wide variety of different religions.



# 3 BIG MYTHS

**Big myth 1: Well, they may say they're religious but no-one believes any of that stuff**



**They do and it makes a big difference to their lives:**

"My faith has given me the confidence and motivation to succeed in all aspects of my life. It has encouraged me to treat others with respect and understanding, as they too are part of God's creation."  
**Mohammed, *Muslim***

"My faith has provided me with strength when I've needed it, helped me to tell right from wrong, and given me a way of sorting out what really matters from what doesn't."  
**Viren, *Jain***

**Big myth 2: Religious people are just a bunch of fanatics**

Turn on the TV and you can see story after story about conflict and problems around the world.

A bomb has gone off. A presenter is saying that religious fanatics are the cause. Religion can receive a bad press.

Over the centuries, religious people have stood up for what they believed: from founders of faiths and prophets, to followers like Gandhi and

Martin Luther King Jr. Being strong in your views does not make you a "fanatic". Believing in the fundamental importance of the teachings of a faith does not make you a "fundamentalist" in the negative sense of a religious extremist.

**Most wars and conflicts have little to do with religion, but religion can get used as a justification by regimes and by terrorists.**

**// I think religion is being used as a source of conflict and not as a means of worship and every day guidance as it was when I was younger. This is becoming more of a problem when it never used to be... I think somehow we need to find the means whereby Sikhs and Muslims, and Hindus and Muslims, can integrate more and get a better understanding of each other, not seeing a person and just labelling them as a Sikh or Muslim, but seeing the person as they really are //**  
Kiran, Sikh



### **Big myth 3: Religion divides people. All the religions hate each other really**

Nothing puts people off like inter religious hatred and squabbling. It's true that there have been centuries of mistrust and out and out rivalry. People have sometimes killed or been killed in the name of religion (even though religion may well not have been the actual cause of the problem).

But followers of the different world faiths can live together peacefully.

**All of the major faiths have teachings which encourage co-operation with people of other faiths**

Across the UK many people of all religions can and do live alongside each other, get on well and work together on practical projects – like helping the homeless or the elderly or improving the local environment. There are many examples of inter religious harmony even if they rarely make the headlines.

**It's time for people of different faiths to speak up louder about all the good things connected with religion: about the ways that religions help people and about the benefits this brings to individuals and communities.**

**There are over 200 local inter faith initiatives currently running in the UK building better inter faith relations at a local level\*.**

\*source: *Local Inter Faith Activity in the UK: A Survey* published by the Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2003

**// Until different religions take a step back to understand each other, religious conflicts will go on. This is why it is increasingly important for members of different faiths to get on together and to understand the differences between their beliefs and practices and, more importantly, to acknowledge the similarities and work side by side to achieve their shared goals. //** Ashmi, Hindu

## The Golden Rule

Each faith has teachings about the importance of dealing rightly with other people. This principle – to treat others as we would wish to be treated ourselves – is sometimes called the “Golden Rule”.

## Bahá’í faith



Lay not on any soul a load which ye would not wish to be laid upon you, and desire not for any one the things ye would not desire for yourselves.

This is My best counsel unto you, did ye but observe it.

Baha’u’llah, Gleanings, 128

## Buddhism



Just as a mother would protect her only child with her life, even so let one cultivate a boundless love towards all beings.

Khuddaka Patha, from the Metta Sutta

## Christianity



Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Luke 6:31

# Shared Values

## Islam



No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.

An-Nawawi’s Forty Hadith, 13

## Jainism



I forgive all beings, may all beings forgive me, I have friendship towards all, malice towards none

Pratikraman Sutra 35:49

## Judaism



What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow man.

Talmud: Shabbat 31a

## Sikhism



No one is my enemy, and no one is a stranger. I get along with everyone.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib p.1299

## Hinduism



This is the sum of duty: do naught to others which if done to thee would cause thee pain.

Mahabharata 5.1517



## Zoroastrianism



That nature only is good when it shall not do unto another whatever is not good for its own self.

Dadistan-I-Dinik 94.5

//There is a story that a famous rabbi called Hillel was challenged to explain the Torah (the five books of Moses) while standing on one foot. Hillel replied simply, "Whatever is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour: this is the whole law; the rest is mere commentary." For me, this value is at the heart of my religion. To love and care for others as you would expect to be treated by them. Jewish values, such as charity, welcoming strangers and not gossiping, have influenced me throughout my life as a Jew growing up in Britain, surrounded by others different to myself. // . Ruth, Jewish



The great faith traditions are each distinct, but there are important values that people of different faiths share. Leaders and members of different faiths came together in the Houses of Parliament for a special Millennium "Act of Reflection and Commitment" and affirmed this in these words:

In a world scarred by the evils of war, racism, injustice and poverty, we offer this joint Act of Commitment as we look to our shared future.

We commit ourselves, as people of many faiths, to work together for the common good, uniting to build a better society, grounded in values and ideals we share: community, personal integrity, a sense of right and wrong, learning, wisdom and love of truth, care and compassion, justice and peace, respect for one another, for the earth and its creatures.

We commit ourselves, in a spirit of friendship and co-operation, to work together alongside all who share our values and ideals, to help bring about a better world now and for generations to come.

Find out more about the Act of Reflection and Commitment at [www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk)



## Case Study 1

### Ekta

"I got involved with an anti-racism youth project in Kettering. The group was made up of 14 young people who volunteered for the project. Our first task was to choose a name for the group. We came up with "Ekta", which means unity in Hindi. The group meets every two weeks and I have made some really good friends at Ekta. We talk about all sorts of things and work together on ideas to raise awareness about racism. We received an award from the Northamptonshire Police for our work and spent the money on producing a web site."

**Sarabjit, Sikh**

## Case Study 2

### The Story of Noah

"In my church youth group we looked at the story of Noah and realised that the story was shared in common with Jewish and Muslim faiths and thought that we could do an arts and crafts event with young people of these faiths on this theme. We got in touch with Nottingham Inter Faith Council and eventually organised a series of four sessions with other young people from the Jewish Lads and Girls Brigade and the Muslim Bobber's Mill Youth Club. In these sessions we got to know each other and took part in art, music and role play on the Noah theme."

**Lucy, Christian**

## Case Study 3

### Blackburn Heats

"I created Blackburn Heats Volleyball Club last year with the help of two close friends Saeed and Alfred. The club was formed as a backlash against discrimination both in sport and in our community in general. We looked to create a safe haven for people who wanted to play volleyball and other sports without having to wonder where the next assault would come from. Together we gathered young people mostly from Christian and Muslim backgrounds and decided that we were no longer going to accept the situation and we began a move to change it.

We recently held an open sports forum with Blackburn with Darwen Sporting Club in which people from many races came and participated in the spirit of sport. The sight was awe inspiring. Finally I knew that our cause was making headway and felt a supreme sense of self worth and belonging as I saw

white, black and Asian teenagers having fun together.

Now we are trying to expand our membership and are holding a festival of respect to get more young people involved in the club, whether as players or as volunteers to improve the quality of their life and to secure a bright future for all concerned".

**Asif, Muslim**







Idea Champions project, Tower Hamlets. [www.ideastore.co.uk](http://www.ideastore.co.uk)

# Making it happen!



**OK, I want to do something to make a difference, but what can I do? First and foremost do what interests you. Here are some ideas...**

For help with making contacts or carrying out your project see the resources section on page 22.

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**1** Getting to know people of other faiths is not difficult. You may already have friends or neighbours of different faiths. Why not ask them about their faith and what it means to them?

**2** Join or start an inter faith discussion group at your school, college or youth club. See if a "faith forum" or day conference can be organised.

**3** Start an inter faith discussion forum at your university or college or encourage the different religious societies to co-operate on a joint event. If you belong to a student religious society, host an inter faith discussion.

**4** Organise an international lunch or supper asking people to contribute dishes from their traditions (see the section on food on page 19).

**5** Organise an event as part of a special day or week such as One World Week ([www.oneworldweek.org](http://www.oneworldweek.org)) or Comic Relief.

**6** Organise a quiz, featuring questions about each other's faiths.

**7** Work as part of an inter faith team to organise a sports event and get people of different faiths involved.

**8** Find out if there is an inter faith group in your area and offer

to make a presentation about issues that are important to you. The group might also be interested in helping you set up an inter faith link between young people or a special project.

**9** See if your school or college or local inter faith group will help put on an exhibition about the different faiths in the area. Join with friends to take photographs and video clips or borrow resources from other organisations who have put on exhibitions (see resources).

**10** Contact your local radio station to see if they might be interested in an inter faith programme featuring young people of different faiths.

**11** Organise visits to different places of worship. If there aren't many in your own area you could organise a trip to a town or city further afield. Many local inter faith groups organise annual "pilgrimages" to a number of different places of worship in a day. You could join one of these.

**12** If you belong to a church, gurdwara, mosque, synagogue, temple, vihara or other place of worship, ask if it will host an open day for local people to visit. Young people could act as guides. If it has a youth group, see if the group can host an inter faith day or event.

**13** If you live in an area where there is sometimes tension between young people of different backgrounds you might want to learn about "conflict resolution" skills and work together to put these into practice.

**14** Get together with some friends of different faiths and see if you can get involved with a project such as helping homeless or elderly people; or an environmental project, such as clearing an area of local wasteland or removing offensive graffiti. Or work together to raise money for a charity like Children in Need, for example by recycling cans for cash.

**15** If you are at a school which has mainly pupils of one faith, see if your teachers can organise an event or exchange visit with a nearby school which has pupils of other faiths.



Test your knowledge about faith issues with on line quizzes at [www.respect.org.uk](http://www.respect.org.uk) and [www.bbc.co.uk/religion](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion)



**//Charity is one of the highest virtues and is commanded by Ahura Mazda the creator God. One of our important prayers tells us that Ahura Mazda's kingdom is for the person who nourishes the poor. //**  
**Farmeem, Zoroastrian**

If you plan an event which features prayers or readings from different faiths, it is important to remember that not everyone is comfortable joining in a prayer of a different religion. Instead you could organise the event so that each faith makes a contribution in turn without expecting everyone to join in.



# Planning for success



**//Baha'is believe that any work done in a spirit of service is worshipping God //**  
**Danielle, Baha'i**

You've decided to arrange an inter faith event, but how do you get started? Here are some tips on organising an inter faith event or project:

- Plan in advance – write down what you want to achieve and how you want to do it – think ahead and be flexible
- Get people involved; don't try to do everything yourself
- Make a list of everything you will need and how to get it
- If you need some funding, start by asking people and organisations that you know (the resources section lists some suggestions of organisations you can apply to for funding)
- Don't stop. If you know you are doing something worthwhile, don't let others put you down
- Get going. Get your project rolling, don't sit on your idea and do nothing about it. If things don't go exactly as you expected, you can always adjust your plan as you go
- After your event or project seek feedback to help you in future

**Can't someone else run the project?**

Don't underestimate yourself. Many important projects have been started by just one person with a great idea.

**//I have got involved in inter faith work because my Christian faith calls me to engage with the world around me. It has helped me look beyond stereotypes of other faiths and also helped me learn more about my own Christian faith. It has also helped me appreciate how difficult it is to be religious in a secular world //** **Chris, Christian**





## Case Study 4

### Together as One

In Slough, Aik Saath (Together as One), works with young people of different backgrounds to develop their peer mediation and conflict resolution skills.

"I joined this group because I wanted to learn more about the conflicts that happen in everyday life. I want more feedback and information on conflicts, how they start and how to resolve them. I also wanted to build up my confidence and mix with others in the group. I would like to become a person who resolves conflicts and does not cause them." [www.aiksaath.com](http://www.aiksaath.com)  
**Shazab, Muslim**

## Case Study 5

### Community Spirit

"Liverpool Community Spirit (LCS) brings together young people from different faith and cultural groups in Liverpool 8. We do different projects like helping primary school children in a reading partnership scheme. We also take part in visits to different places to learn about our community. We have been to a mosque, a synagogue, a parish church, the gurdwara, the Caribbean Centre, the Liverpool 8 Law Centre and the Somali Centre.

Another project we did was called 'Altar8', where people

were invited to express their spirituality by placing objects on a blank "altar" space. Over 100 people took part. I got involved with the LCS because I wanted to learn about community spirit and make a positive contribution to it. Being part of the Youth Council has enabled me to learn about other faiths and cultures and use my skills in working with the community and working as part of a team

The pictures show some of us on one of our field trips."  
**Rabietoo, Christian**

## Case Study 6

### BBC Youth Extra

"Getting involved with BBC Youth Extra has been a real eye opener. It is an inter faith youth broadcasting group that was set up by BBC Radio Leicester. We have been working with other young people to produce and present features on the radio. We did a feature on the Navratri festival in Leicester and we also interviewed the Chief Executive of the Parliament of World Religions. We are now working on a documentary on Young People, Faith and Community Cohesion. Radio work is not as easy as it seems, but it has been fun and we have learnt a lot. You can listen to some of our work at [www.bbc.co.uk/leicester/faith](http://www.bbc.co.uk/leicester/faith)"  
**Deepa, Hindu**



# Talking religion



# Good t

Although religion may not cause wars it can certainly lead to heated discussion! People often speak with passion. Here are a few points to keep in mind when speaking about faith and religious topics:

- When asking questions of others about their faith, offer a genuine, personal reason for your query
- Find out what others actually believe and value, and let them express this in their own terms.
- Find out what you have in common; what connects you rather than divides you
- Respect the other person's right to express their beliefs and convictions and to disagree
- We are not all the same – accept and respect the fact that the religious beliefs of someone may affect what they eat, what they wear and many of the ways they deal with other people
- Ensure your faith is presented with integrity – be prepared to say 'I don't know the answer to that, but I'll find out'
- Take care that everyone understands the religious terms that you are using – ask, "Is this clear?" every so often
- A sense of humour is good, but take care – jokes on religious topics can cause offence

All the major religions have teachings encouraging their followers to find ways to live in peace with others. Talking with people of different religions is not about compromising your own principles or beliefs. It's about getting rid of misconceptions and prejudices, looking for common ground in shared values and about finding constructive ways to discuss genuine areas of disagreement.

Here are a few tips for getting going:

- Settle newcomers into a warm and welcoming space by encouraging the use of first names – mingle friends and people of different faiths
- Invite everyone to sit in a circle at the same level, to foster listening and trust
- Start a group session with an icebreaker activity to reduce shyness and turn strangers into friends. There are lots of good ideas in the National Youth Agency's book Icebreakers (see resources section)
- Ask everyone to introduce themselves saying something about their faith background

# o talk

- Invite one person to facilitate the discussion so that they can ensure everyone who wants to gets an opportunity to speak
- Encourage people to talk from their own experiences using "I" statements such as "I believe" or "I think that" rather than just making generalisations
- Ensure you have enough time for your discussion or activity
- Agree to create a courteous environment free from abusive language, whispering or people walking about
- Ensure people are allowed to finish what they're saying without interruption
- Agree that mobile phones will be switched off during discussions and that people will stay until the session ends
- If things do get a bit heated call for a "time out"

It is good to establish a few ground rules for the discussion and to write these down. Examples of these are:

- Personal information or opinions shared in the group are not to be discussed outside the room or the group

Once you have got to know each other and found out about each other's faith or beliefs, you might want to discuss some current issues or particular topics from a faith perspective. You could invite

A great way to start is by meeting with others of different faiths and finding out more about each other's beliefs, hopes and dreams. They may not be what you think they are!

everyone to write down their questions on pieces of paper and create a "lucky dip" so that different people get to answer the questions. Or you could collect some newspaper cuttings to discuss.

## Here are some statements that could spark interesting discussions:

It's a good idea for there to be schools which are mainly for pupils of one particular religion  
Religion and politics don't mix  
We'd all be better off if religion was banned it only causes trouble  
People should be allowed to wear at school and in the workplace whatever clothing or jewellery their faith requires

Lots of people find when they get involved in inter faith discussions that they want to find out more about their own faith traditions or their beliefs.



**/// I don't belong to any religion but that doesn't mean that I don't think about the values that shape my decisions. I try to follow my conscience and choose right from wrong, treating others with respect and understanding // Zara**

Now that we have more materially rich lives, religion is not really relevant any more  
Atheists and agnostics have moral values just as much as people of different religions do  
The pressures of modern society make it hard to practise a traditional religion

## Case Study 7

### Faithshare Lancaster

"In my first year at the University of Lancaster I became the chair of the very small Jewish Society and was involved in helping to organise an inter faith celebration for the Chaplaincy's 30th anniversary. Five faith communities were involved in this wonderful event and we wanted to make sure that what we had achieved together would not be lost. After all the festivities, we decided to have a termly meeting, each with a different theme, where people would come together to share and learn more about the diversity of our faiths and within our faiths. And somehow I ended up as the co-ordinator!

We wanted to create a space in which people could come and learn, and feel comfortable to share. We decided to have three parts to our "meetings"; the opening section would be a person from each faith willing to share with the whole group their response to the topic, the second

part would be a chance for people to reflect and share further in small groups of 3 – 5. We would end by coming back together to reflect on what had been said, and to have some silence for quiet contemplation. We generally attracted between 15 and 35 people. The programme continues to run in Lancaster, with a different co-ordinator each year, with the support of the chaplains.

Now I am hoping that the Faithshare model can be used around the country with support from the Council of Christians and Jews Youth Section"

**Debbie, Jewish**



## Case Study 8

### Faith Forum

For the Queen's Golden Jubilee, 80 young people of nine faiths came together at St James's Palace from across the UK to talk about faith and service to the community:

"Despite the differences in our spiritual beliefs, the strength of the commonly held humanitarian aspects of all our faiths was more than enough for us all to be friends and work together."

**Gaurav, Hindu**

"The Young People's Faith Forum was a good opportunity to meet people of different faiths, especially faiths that I'd only read about. It was interesting to listen to people of other faiths expressing their views and to deal with their perception of your own faith. I realised that although people of faiths have many things in common, this does not undermine or dilute each person's genuine commitment to their faith. You can be different, but still be genuine and show real understanding and respect for others."

**Naveed, Muslim**







HRH The Prince of Wales with participants in the Faith Forum



## Case Study 9

### Faith matters

"The Baha'i community in Scotland nominated me to be a youth representative on the planning group for an inter faith conference for young people being held by the Scottish Inter Faith Council. Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Brahma Kumaris and Rastafarian young people were involved too. We were really enthusiastic about the idea of the conference which we decided to call "Faith Matters". We met together about every six weeks for several months and planned the theme, the programme, the exhibitions, the speakers and the workshops for the conference. Each of us took responsibility for an exhibition about our own faith and we also each contributed prayers and thoughts for peace which we made into a leaflet to hand out on the day.

On the day of the conference we all worked together to make sure that everything ran

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## Case Study 10

### MoJoW

smoothly – different members of the committee were responsible for different aspects of the conference – there was great team spirit. Working together also helped us learn a lot about each other's respective faiths as we had to discuss practical things like what food should be served; what the prayer and meditation room should be like (a friend and I organised this aspect of the event) and what times it needed to be free for Muslim prayers; what sort of music we should have at the conference; and what sort of topics should be discussed. Although there was diversity in some of the practical things that the different faiths needed there was also a lot of unity of thought and purpose and we really developed a great respect for each other and for each other's points of view."

[www.interfaithscotland.org](http://www.interfaithscotland.org)

**Karmel, *Baha'i***

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"MoJoW is a group of religiously orientated women from Judaism and Islam at Cambridge University who are seeking common ground with each other through their commitment to their respective religious practices. Our aim is to build relationships with each other in order to break down the mutual suspicion and ignorance that exists in both of our communities. Women from the two faiths have a deep commonality and sensibility. Our sessions have helped us to learn about each other's faith and build friendships in an intimate, warm atmosphere. We have discussed things like festivals in our faiths, head covering that women wear, and looked at our shared history. We end each session by saying our respective prayers. The relationship between the faiths will take time, but it is the commitment to that gradual growth that binds us together"

**Miriam, *Jewish* and  
Sophia, *Muslim***

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## Case Study 11

### Inter Faith Forum

"We belong to the University of London Union Buddhist Association. Recently we held an inter faith forum with speakers from five different religions offering their perspectives on the question "The War on Terrorism – How ethical is it?". The idea was to have a chance to explore the similarities and differences of religious thought on a particular topic. It was very successful and we think it made a real contribution to promoting understanding and peaceful coexistence between faiths."

[www.ulubuda.org.uk](http://www.ulubuda.org.uk)  
**Chao Rong and Yee Leng, *Buddhist***

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## Case Study 12

### The peace line

"We go to Lagan College, which is an integrated school in Northern Ireland, which means that both Catholics and Protestants go to it. Going here helps us to be aware of the differences between the two communities and to be part of ending sectarianism. Recently a group of us went to the Peace Line in West Belfast. This is one of the walls that was put up to separate the Catholic and Protestant areas and is a sign of the troubles that have plagued Northern Ireland. We learnt about the work of the Cornerstone Community and other groups which are working to build peace and understanding between the two communities and we want to be peace builders ourselves."

[www.lagancollege.com](http://www.lagancollege.com)

**Laura, Rosanna and Ciaran, *Christian***

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# Celebrate!

All the faiths have special days when events of particular significance are remembered or celebrated. Calendars of different faiths are different from our national calendar, and some dates move year by year. You can find out dates of different faith festivals at [www.bbc.co.uk/religion/interactive/calendar](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/interactive/calendar) or from the Shap Calendar (see under resources). Of course each faith has more than one day of major significance but here are some of the festivals celebrated by different faiths on which it is traditional to exchange special greetings.

April or May

## **Buddhists** **Wesak**

**Happy Wesak.** Celebrates the enlightenment of the Buddha under the bodhi tree.

September

## **Jews** **Rosh Hashanah**

**Happy New Year or Shana Tova.** The Jewish New Year is a two day festival which is followed by a further 8 days of repentance and self-examination, culminating in a day of prayer and fasting on the Day of Atonement.

25 December

## **Christians** **Christmas**

**Happy Christmas.** Celebrates the birth of Jesus. Some Orthodox Churches celebrate on 7 January.

Dates Vary

## **Muslims** **Eid-ul Fitr**

**Eid Mubarak.** Celebration marking the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan and the end of the month of fasting.

October or November

## **Hindus** **Diwali**

**Happy Diwali or Shubh Diwali.** The festival of lights focusing on Lakshmi the goddess of wealth and marking the return of Lord Rama after defeating Ravan.

14 April

## **Sikhs** **Vaisakhi**

**Happy Vaisakhi.** Marks the foundation of the Khalsa Panth, the community of Sikhs.

21 March

## **Baha'is Naw-Ruz**

Happy Naw-Ruz or Happy New Year. Marks the end of the 19 day fast that concludes the old year.

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October or November

## **Jains Vira- Nirvana/Deepavali**

Happy Deepavali. Jains celebrate Lord Mahavir's liberation and also the Jain New Year which marks the attainment of absolute knowledge by Guru Gautam.

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March

## **Zoroastrians No-Ruz**

Happy No-Ruz. New Year's Day according to the Fasli calendar used in Iran.

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# let's talk over lunch

## Did you know?

Religious beliefs, rooted in the scriptures and teachings of the different faiths, can affect what people will eat and drink. For example:

Jews have special rules and dietary laws and many Orthodox Jews will eat only "kosher" ("fit" or "proper") food. Muslims have special dietary rules which means that they are supposed only to eat "halal" ("permitted") foods. Eating pork or ham or other products from pigs is forbidden for Jews and Muslims.

Hindus refrain from eating beef and many are vegetarian and do not eat eggs. Some also avoid garlic and onion. Jains do not eat meat or eggs and are supposed to avoid eating root vegetables such as carrots, potatoes, garlic and onion to minimise harm to minute living

beings. Some Sikhs, Buddhists and Christians are vegetarian. Sikhs do not eat halal or kosher meat.

## So what do we feed everyone at a multi faith get together?

- Make plenty of totally vegetarian dishes
- Have some vegetarian dishes which contain no eggs, garlic, onion, potato or carrots
- Use non-dairy butter substitutes
- Make sure there is no animal gelatine or animal fat in anything marked as vegetarian
- Make sure there is no alcohol in any of the food
- Watch out for crisps and other snacks which may contain animal or fish protein
- Have plenty of fruit available

- Always label the food clearly so that people can feel comfortable about what they are eating.

"For our events, we have just vegetarian catering so the maximum number of people can share food together"  
Bhupinder, Inter Faith Network

## Let's get together and talk about it over a drink

Hmm. What sort of drink? Alcohol is forbidden to Muslims and to followers of a number of other faiths such as the Baha'i faith. Many Buddhists, Hindus, Jains and Sikhs and some Christians also avoid alcohol. Some religious people avoid drinks with caffeine or other stimulants. So if you are serving tea or coffee, it is a good idea to also offer alternatives like water, herbal tea or fruit juice.

## Case Study 13

### Youth CHOGM

"A CHOGM is a 'Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting' which happens every 2 years when leaders of the 54 Commonwealth countries come together to discuss issues of global concern. We had the opportunity to take part in a special UK 'Youth CHOGM' hosted by the Secretary General of the Commonwealth at Marlborough House in London. 100 of us, all aged 14-24, from many different backgrounds had a chance to role play Commonwealth diplomacy and to debate some of the key issues facing Commonwealth countries. We also had a chance to discuss local issues. Several of us of different faiths were chosen specially to give a faith perspective. There are going to be more 'Youth CHOGMs' and we think they are a brilliant way to help increase cooperation and understanding."

[www.the.commonwealth.org](http://www.the.commonwealth.org)

**Tom, Christian** and  
**Serina, Sikh**

## Case Study 14

### Working together

"As part of our business studies coursework we were asked to choose a charity of our choice and make a presentation about it in front of the class, explaining why its work is important. I got together with three friends of different faiths (Sikh, Zoroastrian, and Muslim) to talk about the Inter Faith Network. We each made a presentation about our particular religion and also explained the importance of the different faiths working together."

**Gaylina, Buddhist**



## Case Study 15

### Peace Mala

"After 11 September 2001, there were a number of local incidents of anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish abuse. Some of the students at our school (Coedcae School, Llanelli) began a project to help promote awareness, tolerance and respect between all communities. The idea was inspired by one of our teachers and is a "Peace Mala". In the East, a mala is a string of beads which may be used in meditation or prayer. Our Peace Mala is a double rainbow bracelet made up of beads of different colours, with each bead representing a different religion or spiritual path and their peace messages for the world. A final single clear bead represents unity, harmony and peace. The bracelet has two knots. The first knot represents the wearer – we are each unique and special!

The last knot reminds each one of us that how we behave in life affects everyone we meet and we should follow the path of peace and friendship to help create a better world."

**Emily, Christian, Imran, Muslim, Paul, Pagan**

The Peace Mala project was launched at the United Nations Association Temple of Peace in Cardiff where candles in the colours of the Peace Mala, were lit by representatives of 14 spiritual traditions.

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



Launch of the Peace Mala

## General information and contacts

### The Inter Faith Network for the UK

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

[ifnet@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:ifnet@interfaith.org.uk)

Tel: 020 7931 7766.

8A Lower Grosvenor Place  
London SW1W 0EN

The Network promotes good relations between the major faiths in the UK. It links over 100 member organisations, including the representative organisations of the different faith communities, national and local inter faith bodies and education organisations. It can help you with contacts for:

- Local inter faith groups in your area
- National inter faith initiatives
- National organisations of the different faiths (which can tell you about their communities' inter faith programmes)
- Young people's organisations of the different faiths

The Network's website has links to the sites of many relevant bodies, including other national inter faith organisations. Some of these which have youth inter faith programmes are:

### Council of Christians and Jews Youth Section (YES!)

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

### Maimonides Foundation

(links Jewish and Muslim faiths)

[www.maimonides-foundation.org.uk](http://www.maimonides-foundation.org.uk)

### United Religions Initiative

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

The following Network member bodies can give advice and information relating to their particular nation of the UK:

### Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum

[interfaithni@stran.ac.uk](mailto:interfaithni@stran.ac.uk)

### Scottish Inter Faith Council

[www.interfaithscotland.org](http://www.interfaithscotland.org)  
[admin@interfaithscotland.org](mailto:admin@interfaithscotland.org)

### Inter Faith Council for Wales

[interfaith@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:interfaith@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

### TimeBank

[www.timebank.org.uk](http://www.timebank.org.uk) is a high profile national campaign inspiring and connecting people to share and give time. The website contains lots of information about volunteering and a media guide to help you to publicise your activities. The *respect* website,

[www.timebank.org.uk/respect](http://www.timebank.org.uk/respect)

has lots of ideas and case studies to help get you started. *respect* was a two year TimeBank initiative with The Prince's Trust. Its objective was to encourage greater understanding and tolerance by inspiring people of different faiths and of none to give time to each other through local community projects.

### The National Youth Agency

[www.nya.org.uk](http://www.nya.org.uk) supports those involved in young people's personal and social development and works to enable all young people to fulfil their potential within a just society.

[www.youthinformation.com](http://www.youthinformation.com) is an online information kit for young people. It is a UK-wide youth information site.



## Learning about religions

There is a wealth of good material available through faith communities and religious education resources. Listed below are some general web sites which include basic information about different religions and provide links to resources on individual faiths:

[www.multifaithnet.org](http://www.multifaithnet.org)  
[www.bbc.co.uk/religion](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion)  
[www.re-xs.ucsm.ac.uk](http://www.re-xs.ucsm.ac.uk)  
[www.beliefnet.com](http://www.beliefnet.com)

## Calendar

Shap calendar of religious festivals (accompanied by a short booklet with information about different festivals). See [www.shap.org](http://www.shap.org) for ordering details.

## Statistics

Statistics from the 2001 Census on the religious make up of the UK and of different local areas can be found at [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)

## Exhibition resources

Nottingham Inter Faith Council – [www.interfaithnottm.org.uk](http://www.interfaithnottm.org.uk)  
 Wolverhampton Inter Faith Group – [www.wlv.ac.uk/chaplaincy/photoex](http://www.wlv.ac.uk/chaplaincy/photoex)

## Other helpful resources

If you want to arrange inter faith discussions or events at your school or college, RE teachers and those teaching Citizenship Education are likely to be very helpful resources.

In universities and colleges, the chaplaincy (including ministers of different faiths) can be a helpful resource. The National Union of Students ([nusuk@nus.org.uk](mailto:nusuk@nus.org.uk)) is supportive of initiatives to build good relations on campus and may be able to assist with advice or information and contacts for student religious societies on campus.

**Connexions Direct**  
[www.connexions-direct.com](http://www.connexions-direct.com)  
 Provides information and advice to young people.

**Golden Jubilee Young People's Faith Forum**  
 Summary Report. Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2002. Available to download from [www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk)  
 The project is grateful to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport for permission to use some of the quotes and photos from young people who attended the Golden Jubilee Young People's Faith Forum.

The Government now has a **Faith Communities Unit** in the Home Office which deals with faith issues:  
[www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)

**Minorities of Europe**  
[www.moe-online.com](http://www.moe-online.com)  
 Organises regular events and projects to promote positive relations between young people throughout Europe.

**National Inter Faith Football Tournament**  
[www.faithandfootball.com](http://www.faithandfootball.com)  
 A national football tournament for youth teams which include players from different faiths.

**Diversity Board Game** of inter faith and multi cultural life. Developed by the Suffolk Inter Faith Resource, [www.sifre.org.uk](http://www.sifre.org.uk) priced £30.00

**Icebreakers**, Vanessa Rogers, National Youth Agency Price £6.50 – email [sales@nya.org.uk](mailto:sales@nya.org.uk)

**Leap** Confronting Conflict is a national voluntary youth organisation and registered charity providing opportunities, regionally and nationally, for young people and adults to explore creative approaches to conflicts in their lives. The Leap website at [www.Leaplinx.com](http://www.Leaplinx.com) contains information about their youth projects

**Local Radio**  
 There are a growing number of community radio stations around the country as well as mainstream radio stations that you could contact to get involved with radio. **Take Over Radio** [www.takeoverradio.co.uk](http://www.takeoverradio.co.uk) is a station which is run by young people and provides opportunities for young people to train in radio journalism.



## Accreditation and Awards

Anyone between 16 and 24 can be a **Millennium Volunteer (MV)**. An MV Certificate is awarded for voluntary work done and shows that you are a hard worker and care about your community. See [www.millenniumvolunteers.gov.uk](http://www.millenniumvolunteers.gov.uk) for more information.

**The Duke of Edinburgh Award** scheme recognises and awards individuals who take part and organise community projects. More information is available at: [www.theaward.org](http://www.theaward.org)

Like more copies of this guide?

You can download it at [www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk)

For details on ordering printed copies please contact the Inter Faith Network, [ifnet@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:ifnet@interfaith.org.uk)



## Funding

You could raise money from individuals you know or local businesses. The community and youth service of your local council may be able to provide advice on grants to youth projects. There are a number of trusts, foundations and other organisations that provide funding for youth projects.

**Funderfinder** is a database of funding organisations. You can access this at your local council for voluntary service (CVS). Find your local office at the National Association of CVSS: website: [www.nacvs.org.uk](http://www.nacvs.org.uk)

**The Youth Funding Guide**, Nicola Eastwood, Directory of Social Change [www.dsc.org.uk](http://www.dsc.org.uk) (available in certain libraries).

**Alma Royalton-Kisch Trust.** A trust dedicated solely to supporting inter faith educational work with young people. Provides grants of not more than £1,000 and provides fast track grants of less than £500. [www.kisch.org.uk](http://www.kisch.org.uk)

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p1, Andrew Brackenbury (taken at Preston Manor High School); p1, Harkanwal Singh; p2,5,9,10,15,15, PA Photos; p3, Sarah Thorley; p6, Blackburn Heats Volleyball Club; p7, Dave Sinclair (courtesy of East End Life); p8, Rajinder Singh Panesar (Bradford Youth SACRE); p11, Liverpool Community Spirit; p11, BBC Radio Leicester; p12, Respect: Contemplation, Communication and Cooperation Retreat; p14 Debbie Young; p16, Claire Weeldon; p21, Amanda Cruise.

// Sikhs have a great tradition of serving the community and our history has many examples of helping those in need. We are taught from an early age to remember God's name, work hard and share what we can. This is called vandshakna. Another important aspect is seva, meaning voluntary service. The gurdwara is a wonderful example of this spirit in practice. Advice, accommodation and food are provided for anyone who comes // . Mona, Sikh

# Giving your time!

Getting involved or organising an inter faith project in your community is a kind of "volunteering". You are volunteering or giving up your time to help in your community. Benefits include the satisfaction of knowing you've made a difference by helping bring about greater inter faith understanding and in the process:

- you've gained new skills, in information technology or public speaking, for example
- you've tried out something you always wanted to do
- you've grown in confidence, and now feel better prepared to take on new challenges and responsibilities
- you've got plenty of new material and certificates to put on your CV or in your Record of Achievement
- you've made new friends and had fun along the way.

**Now it's up to you!**

Whatever you decide to do, enjoy it. We wish you well!





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