

Faith Quotes for Dialogue

Below is an activity that could be used to encourage interfaith dialogue with a group.

You will find a set of seven cards with quotes on creativity and the arts from seven different faith traditions. Print out the cards, making sure that you print single sided, and then cut out the individual cards below. Give each card to a different person to read out that quote to the whole group. Then in small groups, give each group a set of the quotes below. Discuss the quotes in your small groups, looking at the different themes emerging as well as common themes between the faiths.

Baha'i Faith

Art is regarded as worship. 'The more thou strivest to perfect it, the closer wilt thou come to God. That is to say, when thy fingers grasp the paintbrush, it is as if thou wert at prayer in the temple'.

Abdu'l-Baha

Buddhism

Often when a person feels this sense of awe, amazement or love of what is, they need to do something with the energy that is created. That could lead to drawing, poetry, or constructing something. Art for me is not about the best or the greatest artist, it's about acknowledging our life force (in Buddhism this is sometimes called our Buddha nature). To hide it, or suppress it, leads us into depression, anger and frustration. If we open up to that part of ourselves, it allows expression, courage, and beauty. What would you do to allow beauty into your life?

Amaranatho, a Buddhist monk

Christianity

On meeting a former artist in heaven, 'When you painted on earth, it was because you caught glimpses of Heaven in the earthly landscape...that enabled others to see the glimpses too... light itself was your first love: you loved paint as a means of telling about light'.

C.S.Lewis, The Great Divorce (a novel)

Hinduism

Indian art is essentially religious. The conscious aim of Indian art is the intimation of Divinity. But the Infinite and Unconditioned cannot be expressed in finite terms; and art, unable to portray Divinity unconditioned, and unwilling to be limited by the limitation of humanity, is in India dedicated to the representation of gods, who to finite man represent comprehensible aspects of an infinite whole.

Dr. Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy

Islam

Allah is beautiful and loves beauty

Prophet Mohammed (pbuh), The Hadith

Judaism

This is the eternal origin of art that a human being confronts a form that wants to become a work through him. Not a figment of his soul but something that appears to the soul and demands the soul's creative power. What is required is a deed that a man does with his whole being.

Martin Buber, I and Thou

Sikhism

Why do you go to the forest in search of the divine? God lives in all and abides with you too. As fragrance dwells in a flower, or reflection in a mirror, so the divine dwells inside everything; seek therefore in your own heart.

Guru Tegh Bahadur (the 9th of the 10 Sikh Gurus)