 

### SCOTTISH INTERFAITH WEEK RESOURCES AND IDEAS

**FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

**8th – 15th November 2020**

## Ask Me Anything Show

Pupils are invited to send in questions to Interfaith Scotland’s volunteers from nine different faiths - Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist, Baha’i, Pagan, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints - for a show called ‘Ask Me Anything’. Any and all questions are invited and a selection will be featured on the show. The volunteers will be interviewed for the shows which will each last around 30 minutes and one video will be uploaded to the Scottish Interfaith Week youtube channel every weekday during Scottish Interfaith Week. The five videos will remain on our youtube channel for you to view again at a later date, but we would love it if you took part in watching one a day throughout the school week to mark SIFW and please let us know through social media what you thought!

 Examples of different types of questions below:

* How does your faith impact your life in terms of food, practice, dress and morals?
* What does faith mean to you personally?
* Your own faith story – how did you join that faith, how does it direct your life?
* The interaction of your faith and Scottish society
* The effect of your faith on societal issues, e.g. poverty and the environment

If any of your pupils would like to ask a question please email these to Frances Hume at info@scottishinterfaithweek.org and put ‘Ask Me Anything’ in the subject title. When the host asks the question, the pupil and school that submitted the question will be named. If you wish to remain anonymous please let us know.

**Don’t forget to subscribe to the Scottish Interfaith Week youtube channel**

#### Plan an Event for Scottish Interfaith Week

You can plan an event for Scottish Interfaith Week for your school. This can be uploaded on the Scottish Interfaith Week website at [www.scottishinterfaithweek.org/submit-an-event](http://www.scottishinterfaithweek.org/submit-an-event)

A list of classroom activities appear on the following pages.

## Faith in the Local Community

Find out what places of worship are in your local community. Create a map of your local community, pinpointing all the places of worship. Around the outside post information about and photos of the places of worship. Think about any places of worship you might want to visit after lockdown and how you might go about this. Write to or invite some of the leaders of your religion from your local community to answer pupils’ questions.

**Planning an Interfaith Dialogue Event**

Ask pupils to imagine that they are setting up an interfaith dialogue in their local community. What would they need to think about in terms of the following:

1. **Invitations** – how will they invite people of different faiths in the community?
2. **Venue** – could be a place of worship to visit or a neutral space such as a library
3. **Food** – find out about the food laws of different religions. What could you serve so that everyone could have something to eat? A mix of vegetarian and vegan food would suit most people, plus kosher food for Jewish people. You could provide halal meat for Muslims in addition.
4. **Date/time** – try and avoid festival dates and holy days and times. The Jewish Sabbath is from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday. Christians, Hindus and Sikhs often have religious services on a Sunday morning.
5. **Prayer space** – Muslims pray 5 times a day and appreciate a separate space for their prayers during an event
6. **Activities** – what kind of activities would they like to run? A music night? A quiz? Speakers from different faiths on a topic? What topic?
7. **Running the dialogue** – discuss the do’s and don’ts of dialogue in the activity below

**The Do’s and Don’ts of Dialogue**

Ask the class what they think dialogue is. Explain that dialogue is listening respectfully to understand another person’s point of view. It is not about debating or ‘winning points’ over another. Divide the class into groups of 4 – 6. On a sheet create two columns, one for ‘Dos’ and one for ‘Don’ts’. Hand a sheet to each group who should come up with as many ideas as they can think of in each column. On person from each group should give feedback to the whole group at the end. Young people could be given handouts and rotate around the big sheets filling in the advice from different groups, or simply fill in the sheets as the other groups give their feedback. An example of ‘dos’ is ‘take time to listen to everyone’s opinion’. An example of ‘don’ts’ is ‘don’t make fun of other people’s beliefs’.

**Dialogue in Pairs**

Give pupils an opportunity to try dialogue for themselves. This could be with the person next to them at their table or it could be in a circle with rotation for each question as outlined below. Decide the length of time for each question, from 1 – 5 minutes. Once one pupil has spoken for the set length of time, ask them to swop over and the second pupils speaks on the topic. They may ask questions but are not allowed to interrupt – focus on good listening skills. Here is an example of questions below. You may think of others that are more appropriate for your class. You might want to start with one minute and work up to longer as the questions progress.

1. What makes you happy?
2. What makes you sad?
3. What makes you angry?
4. What one thing would you change about the world and why?
5. What would make a better world for everyone and what would you do to change it?
6. Name someone you admire and the qualities this person has
7. Share a belief that is important to you and why. This doesn’t have to be a religious belief, it could be an ethical belief, for example the treatment of animals, or treating people with respect on social media.

If you decide to put pupils in a circle with rotation here are the instructions. Divide into two groups of equal number. One group stands or sits in a circle facing inward. The other group forms an inner circle facing outward so that each person is facing a partner to speak to. This could also be done as a line facing each other for smaller groups. Young people take it in turns to speak for a set length of time on a chosen topic in pairs. The people on the inner circle are the first listeners. Then swop round so that those in the outer circle speak on the same topic. After each question the pupils in the outer circle rotate clockwise so that they have a new partner and start the process again.

## The Golden Rule

## The Golden Rule to ‘treat others the way you want to be treated’ is found in the scriptures of all world religions. A handy poster quoting this in the scriptures of each faith is available to download at <http://www.minefieldsandmiracles.com/Downloads/GRposter.pdf>

1. Ask pupils to give examples of the Golden Rule in school, at home, with friends and in the community/world. What difference does living out the Golden Rule make to society?
2. In six groups research what one world religion teaches about our response to poverty or the environment (one religion per group).
3. Find out about organisations set up by different religions that help people in need or that work to protect the environment such as Christian Aid, Islamic Aid, Sikhs in Scotland, One Earth Sangha and Eco-Congregation Scotland. Pick an organisation and create a PowerPoint presentation to share what you have learned about why the organisation was founded, what their aim is, where they work, who they work with and what they have achieved.

## It’s My Opinion!

Place a sign saying ‘AGREE’ on one wall of the classroom and a sign saying ‘DISAGREE’ on the other. Read out the following statements and ask pupils to stand anywhere between the signs depending on what extent they agree with the statement. Pupils must be ready to share the reasons for their opinion. If moving around the room is restricted you could ask people to stay in their seats and do a thumbs up, thumbs down or sign for unsure. Another option is to use ‘traffic light’ cards. Give each pupil a red, green and yellow card which they have to hold up to show their answer. Green for agree, yellow for unsure or in the middle, red for disagree. The statements are below:

1. My faith and beliefs are an important part of who I am
2. Religion is a cause of many of the world’s problems
3. I can trust what I read and hear about religion on the news and social media
4. People of different faiths share many of the same beliefs
5. People should be allowed to wear religious dress or symbols in school
6. People without religion have no sense of right and wrong
7. Faith is a comfort to people in times of trouble
8. Non-religious people have more fun than religious people
9. Some people find religion threatening
10. Religious diversity should be celebrated

**The Impact of Faith**

This activity looks at how faith affects people in different ways.In small groups, pupils answer the question “How does faith have an impact on individuals, families, local communities, Scotland, the world?” Pupils fill in a large grid made out of frieze paper outlining both the positive and negative impact of faith in these areas (see below).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Individuals | Family | Community | Scotland | The World |
|  + |  |  |  |  |  |
|  - |  |  |  |  |  |

Pupils are then asked to give feedback in their groups. As a supplementary exercise you could ask the groups to discuss what they think are the most important issues for young people in Scotland today. You could also have a discussion about ways in which interfaith dialogue could counteract some of the negative impacts of faith. Examples of positive and negative impacts along with ways that interfaith dialogue can counteract the negative impacts appear on the next few pages.

# THE IMPACT OF FAITH

# Individuals

**Positive**

* Sense of meaning, purpose and hope for your life and for the world
* Sense of communion with something greater than yourself (e.g. God, Spirit)
* Sense of support from God, Spirit (e.g. through prayer)
* A guide to live your life and be a good person (e.g. through holy books)

## Negative

* Can single people out as being different and they can be the target of religious or racial abuse (e.g. for wearing the hijab)
* Sense of exclusion in a largely secular society
* Possibly excluding people of other faiths and no faiths if you think you are on the only true path

## Counteracting the negative with interfaith

* Meeting people of different faiths counteracts negative stereotypes and can bring greater empathy for a person of that faith
* Meeting people of different faiths reduces isolation and brings a sense of belonging and encouragement
* Meeting people of different faiths brings greater openness to other religions, learning what we have in common and increases spiritual growth and discovery

# Family

## Positive

* Can unite families if they have the same beliefs

## Negative

* Can divide families if they have different beliefs and don’t agree

## Counteracting the negative with interfaith

* Brings people together from different faiths so everyone can learn from each other and not judge each other

# Community

## Positive

* Sense of community (e.g. through attending a place of worship)
* Joining in celebrations with other people of your faith (festivals etc)

## Negative

* Sectarianism when two faiths represent two groups who won’t live together peacefully (often for political reasons, e.g. N Ireland)

## Counteracting the negative with interfaith

* Brings different communities together to explore what they have in common and make friends in a neutral space
* Celebrating each other’s festivals as a community event, e.g. Holi in the park
* Faiths working together for positive change in society

# Scotland

## Positive

* Rich religious heritage shaping our culture, art, music
* Brings positive values to society that have shaped our legal system etc
* Using common values to work together for positive change in communities (e.g. environment, poverty, social justice issues)

## Negative

* Sectarianism
* Religiously motivated hate crime
* Social exclusion

## Counteracting the negative with interfaith

* It can be used as a tool of conflict resolution in areas of conflict in the world
* Promoting equality and human rights (e.g. wearing the hijab or kirpan)

# The World

## Positive

* Rich diversity of faiths, cultures and beliefs
* Art, culture, music etc

## Negative

* Religious wars

## Counteracting the negative with interfaith

* It can be used as a tool of conflict resolution in areas of conflict in the world