



Scottish Interfaith Week

Resources and Ideas for Primary and Secondary Schools

11 - 18 November, 2024

What is Interfaith Scotland and what do we do?

Interfaith Scotland is a national organisation which runs interfaith dialogue activities in schools, with faith communities, religious leaders, members of Interfaith Scotland and local interfaith groups. Interfaith Scotland has members from all the main faiths in Scotland and it supports the work of local interfaith groups throughout Scotland.

You can find out more at www.interfaithscotland.org

What is Scottish Interfaith Week?

Scottish Interfaith Week provides an opportunity for interfaith groups, faith communities, schools, organisations and local communities across the country to celebrate Scotland's religious and cultural diversity by planning events that bring people together to promote dialogue, understanding and cooperation. Around 100 events are held each year.

You can find out more at www.scottishinterfaithweek.org

Festival theme for 2024

Our theme for 2024 is 'Discovery'. We believe that encouraging young people to discover and learn about the lives of others is an effective way to challenge prejudice and misunderstanding both inside of us and in the world around us.

Organise an event

You can plan an event for Scottish Interfaith Week at school or in your local community and upload it at www.scottishinterfaithweek.org/submit-an-event

Events in your local community

We invite people to organise events in their local communities such as meals, workshops, coffee mornings, family fun days, concerts and ceilidhs. If you would like to plan an event in your local community you can find inspiration from our [event planning resource](#) on the theme of 'Discovery'.

Resources for the classroom

Films

1. An Introduction to Interfaith Scotland (16 mins)

A video outlining the work of Interfaith Scotland. [Interfaith Scotland presentation for schools](#)

2. Ask Me Anything (30 - 40 mins per episode)

A video series of people from the Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist and Baha'i faiths answering questions about their faith and its practices, what it means to them and its impact on Scottish society. [Ask Me Anything series - SIFW2020 - YouTube](#)

3. We Belong to Glasgow (5 mins)

We Belong to Glasgow is a short film created by a group of young people about how they feel they belong to Glasgow and also how they belong to their faith community. Produced by Interfaith Glasgow. [We Belong to Glasgow - YouTube](#)

4. Faith and I (30 mins)

Telling the story of three young people from the Jewish, Muslim and Sikh faiths living in Edinburgh. Produced by the Edinburgh Interfaith Association. [Faith & I - YouTube](#)

Classroom activities

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 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. One 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 swap over and the second pupil 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.

You could also sit in a circle in pairs, labelling each other A and B. The first set of A and B take it in turns to speak to each other. After each question the A's in the pair stay where they are and the B's move one space in a clockwise direction to meet their new 'A'.

1. What makes you happy
2. What makes you sad?
3. What one thing would you change about the world and why?
4. What would make a better world for everyone and what would you do to change it?
5. Name someone you admire and the qualities this person has
6. 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.

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 [Minefields and Miracles](#).

- 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 and EcoSikh. 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.
 - Christian Aid - www.christianaid.org.uk
 - Islamic Aid - islamicaid.com
 - EcoSikh - ecosikh.org

Interfaith Scotland also has a list of Climate Action Resources from different faiths at interfaithscotland.org/climate-action-resources

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: Guidance

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

Additional Resources

The Inter Faith Network for the UK

The Inter Faith Network for the UK produces resources for Primary and Secondary Schools for Interfaith Week. You can find these at: interfaithweek.org/resources/schools