

Scottish Interfaith Week

8-15 November 2026

Classroom Resources & Schools Competition



Competition Overview:

Wellbeing

The theme of this year's Scottish Interfaith Week is 'Wellbeing'. We're encouraging young people to explore what it means to care for ourselves and others.

We are living in a time of social and political upheaval, where division and isolation threaten our wellbeing both as individuals and as communities.

What does it look like to sustain, nurture and uplift one another? This Scottish Interfaith Week, we can explore wellbeing in its many forms: spiritual, physical, mental and social. This can look like many different things. Think bike rides, shared meals, crafternoons, dancing, space to talk, gardening, meditation and more.

Through celebrating Scotland's religious and cultural diversity we can support and strengthen our communities, especially in the most challenging of times.

To celebrate the theme we are asking young people to think about the ways that different faiths and cultural backgrounds can support practices of wellbeing. The 'Faith and Wellbeing' competition asks young people to:

- Use any creative medium to explore a wellbeing practice or a way to create opportunities for individual or communal wellbeing

This prompt is intentionally broad, because we want to see projects which reflect the interests, ideas, and lived experiences of the schools and students submitting. Feel free to be creative! You can reflect on ways in which places of worship can provide opportunities for wellbeing, on how faith and belief practices can support wellbeing, or any topic that sparks your interest and relates to your curricular learning. This can be an art project, a research project, or an experience that the students take part in or create. Use the guidance below for further ideas and inspiration.

Any primary school class or secondary school pupil in Scotland can enter the competition and be in line to win a prize.

Competition Prizes:

Primary School:

Win £50 voucher for class entry.

Primary schools can submit one entry per class. One class will win the £50 voucher and receive a certificate. One class will be awarded a certificate as a runner-up prize.

Secondary School:

Win £20 or £10 vouchers for individual entries.

Secondary schools can submit multiple entries, one per pupil. One student will win a £20 voucher and a certificate. Three students will be awarded a £10 voucher each and certificates.

Submission Format:

Competition entries must be sent as a digital file (photograph, video or PDF) to sydney@interfaithscotland.org. If your file is too large to send by email, please send it by [WeTransfer](#).

Please note that we will be highlighting selected projects on social media or our website, in order to share the learning further, so please make sure that your school holds all the necessary permissions for sharing the work.

Deadline:

The deadline for submissions is 5:00 pm on Friday 20th November, 2026.

We want young people to be able to engage in the competition during Scottish Interfaith Week (8th – 15th November, 2026), therefore the deadline is a week after the festival.

Submissions will be judged in late November and we will aim to notify winners in early December.

Religion, Belief & Values Award:

While not affiliated with the Religion, Belief and Values Award, this competition could work well to continue facilitating students' exploration of these themes.

Schools could run the competition in conjunction with the RBV Award and use it as extra motivation for the Award's completion.

Any Questions?

Contact us at sydney@interfaithscotland.org to ask questions about the competition or share your thoughts.

Interfaith Scotland established Scottish Interfaith Week in 2004 and continues to manage the festival to this day. You can learn more about our work through the [Interfaith Scotland website](#).

Teaching Notes:

Interfaith Definition (Primary School):

When people of different religions and beliefs talk to each other, work together and sometimes become friends, this can be described as 'interfaith'.

It's important because when we are friends with each other, we are more likely to understand, protect and care for each other, regardless of our differences.

Interfaith Definition (Secondary School):

Interfaith is a term used to describe interactions between people of different faiths, and in some cases between those of religious and non-religious beliefs. Interfaith activity takes many forms, including:

- Dialogue
- Sharing a meal
- Sport
- Arts or cultural activities
- Roundtable discussions
- Panels
- Workshops
- Working together to meet a practical need in the local community

By engaging with people of different religions and beliefs we can help to:

- Challenge negative stereotypes
- Resolve conflict
- Build trust and respect between communities
- Unite people to tackle social injustice
- And much more!

Interfaith Wellbeing & Mindfulness Practices

Here are some examples of different components of faiths and beliefs which contribute to personal and collective wellbeing. You could use these suggestions as a place to start thinking about how your class can explore the theme of wellbeing this Scottish Interfaith Week.

Sabbath / Rest / Breaks

Humans aren't designed to go all the time - we need a break. This allows us time to pause, reflect and reset. Many religions have rituals built in to ensure structured breaks at various times throughout the week and year.

- In both the Jewish and Christian traditions, there is a belief that God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. So too, humans work for six days, and rest on the seventh. In Judaism, the seventh day is Saturday (beginning with sunset on Friday), while in Christianity, it is Sunday. Some people refrain from working on Shabbat/Sabbath.
- Within the Orthodox Jewish tradition, the idea of work is extended - practitioners refrain from using technology like cellphones, computers and TVs, driving, spending money, writing, and even turning on the lights. The idea is that it's a complete letting go of the human ability to command the world, and stepping into a space where God is in control and we're taken care of.

Ask students: Would you be able to spend a whole day without using your phone, spending money, or using transportation? What do you think the benefits and challenges of this practice are?

Click Me!

Click on the underlined words for links with more information about these practices.

Prayer

Prayer is a part of many world religions. Praying is the act of taking time, either personally or communally, to reflect, express gratitude, or request support. Prayer can be an expression to a God or Gods, to a higher power or to a spirit.

Prayers can be said silently, or some prayers or chants can be repeated, and paired with slow breathing to calm the nervous system.

- Christians have many different types of prayer including personal prayer, communal worship, chanting and meditational prayer.
- In Islam, prayer takes place five times throughout the day, at designated times. Prayers are announced by the muezzin, sometimes over a loudspeaker, to let everyone know it's time.
- In the Jewish tradition, many prayers are said silently, but with the mouth moving, and air being drawn in and out. This encourages people to breathe deeper, getting oxygen into our bodies and minds - which is very good for us! There are many prayers for different daily experiences - for example, waking up in the morning, using the restroom, eating food (with different prayers for different categories of foods), smelling nice smells, seeing a rainbow, seeing the Prime Minister - all sorts! Taking time to reflect and express gratitude during the day helps us to recognise the good in everything.

Suggested Activities:

- Look at examples of common prayers from different religions. Examine the prayers, and have students research or reflect on the following questions:

- Who is the prayer directed at?
- When would this prayer be said?
- Who would this prayer be said by?
- Does this prayer address the theme of physical, spiritual or emotional wellbeing? How?

Give students the opportunity to share their own prayer practices if they would like to. This can also be an opportunity to reflect on any collective prayer practices or spaces within your school.

- Discuss how prayer can encourage wellbeing. Examples include:

- Lowering stress and calming the mind
- Providing emotional comfort, especially in difficult times
- Giving people a sense of hope and optimism
- Providing a deeper sense of meaning
- Strengthening emotional resilience against anxiety and depression

Singing or Chanting

People of different faiths will often sing together as a group. This can be in the form of singing hymns or chanting a repetitive phrase. Singing in a group has been shown to be good for mental and emotional wellbeing. It can foster social bonding, belonging, and community inclusion faster than many other shared activities. Singing may also be accompanied by musical instruments.

- Sikh hymns, known as Kirtan, are sacred songs and prayers found within the holy scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, giving praise to God. These may be sung during worship, accompanied by a drum called a tabla and a harmonium.
- Christian hymns offer praise to God and share beliefs or stories of the faith. An example is traditional Christmas carols that tell the story of the birth of Jesus. Hymns can be lots of different styles from gentle and meditative to lively with a variety of instruments.
- The Hindu faith has several different prayer practices which involve singing and chanting, such as the traditions of Bhajan, Kirtan and Japa.

Attending Worship Services

Many faiths hold collective services in a place of worship. These may include prayer or meditation, singing together, reading the scriptures and listening to talks or sermons about how to live a good life. These services allow people to come together, which helps with loneliness and isolation. Singing together can also promote emotional wellbeing. Places of worship can provide practical and emotional support for people in need. The regularity of having a recurring activity can help provide structure to the week and create a sense of community.

Suggested Activities:

- Introduce students to different places of worship or prayer spaces in your area. This can be through actual visits to these places of worship, or virtual tours making use of the Street View function on Google Maps, or by using other web resources. Have students consider:
 - How do these spaces of worship encourage wellbeing within your community?
 - If you were going to design a faith-based space of wellbeing, or a 'perfect prayer space' what would it include?
 - How would you design an interfaith place of worship for wellbeing?

Meditation & Mindfulness

We so often go through our daily life without thinking about the things we're actually doing. This can cause us to feel stressed and overwhelmed, and can lead to other challenges. Giving ourselves time away from technology and distractions allows us to clear our minds and refresh. Many religions have practices built in to help us slow down, take note of the world around us and the ways that we exist in it.

Meditation is a practice of becoming still and paying attention to the present moment. People of any faith, or no particular religious tradition, can use meditation as a way to find greater calm, clarity and connection with themselves and the world around them. Meditation plays a role in the contemplative practices of Jainism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Paganism. Meditation-like techniques are also known in Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Sikhism, in the context of remembrance of, and prayer and devotion to God.

There are many wellbeing benefits to meditation - encourage students to research some of these, as well as different faith-based meditation practices.

- Buddhism incorporates many different forms of meditation.
- The Hindu practice of Pranayama, or breathwork.
- In the Bahai and Buddhist traditions, there's a focus on detachment from physical objects.

Suggested Activities:

- See if you can invite a meditation or breathwork practitioner to lead a workshop with the students. Likewise, there are many meditation and breathing videos on YouTube, or written meditations which you can read aloud and facilitate for the class.
- Create gratitude journals, either individually or as a class, where students write down five things they're grateful for each day.
- Write blessings, intentions or statements of gratitude for different things that you experience as a class - for example, starting the day, finishing the day, writing an exam, before or after food, etc. You can make these into decorative posters to hang around the classroom.
- Before lunch, have the students write down or draw what they're about to eat. Have them break it down into its component parts. For example, mac and cheese is made of pasta, cheese, milk, etc. Have them research where each of these components comes from, how it's grown, or who makes it. If possible, see if you can visit one of these places, i.e. a farm or a factory.

Spending Time in Nature

For Druids and Pagan religions, as well as others, connection to nature and observance of the natural world is key to building relationships with ourselves and the world around us. Some people closely follow the Wheel of the Year - festivals based around the Winter and Summer Solstices, Autumn and Spring Equinoxes, and the halfway points between them - and celebrate with different activities to get close to nature.

Suggested Activities:

- Practice nature observation. Go outside, and have the students get up close and personal with their surroundings, and the ways the seasons are changing around them. Have them collect objects of different colours, or do crayon rubbings of different textures, like tree bark. You can practice drawing different leaves, tracing the shadows on a piece of paper, or anything else which gets students outside and engaging with natural materials.
- Go outside and encourage the students to find a place to sit alone. Have them listen for a set amount of time, and then write down the sounds that they can hear in nature.

Food & Nutrition

Many religious practices offer guidance on food consumption, or have rituals around food which contribute to the wellbeing of their members. Here are some different practices:

- The Hindu practice of Ayurveda.
- The Jewish practice of keeping Kosher, or dietary laws around what types of foods can be consumed.
- The Muslim practice of Halal, or eating permissible meat.
- In Sikhism, the practice of Langar - communal food preparation and distribution - is central. Community members prepare food together and serve many free meals each day in Gurdwaras.
- In the Jain religion, a form of vegetarianism is practiced which involves extra steps aimed at reducing harm to life, including not consuming root vegetables.

Fasting

In many different faith traditions, times are set aside throughout the year as a period to refrain from certain things - this could be food, celebration, luxuries, and more. By taking away our physical needs, the idea is that we're able to focus more on our spiritual needs, and work on improving ourselves. Examples include:

- The Islamic month of Ramadan, when people refrain from eating and drinking during the day.
- The Christian practice of Lent, when people give something up for a period.
- The Jewish festival of Yom Kippur, when people don't eat or drink for 25 hours.
- The Buddhist practice of Vipassana, which involves refraining from speaking for a set period of time.

Suggested Activities:

- Ask the students to imagine giving something up for a set time period. What would they choose to give up? Have them identify what the challenges and benefits of this process would be.
- Part of the process of temporarily giving up our basic needs like food allows us to think about people who regularly don't have access to these things. Have the students come up with ideas for ways to help alleviate these needs - i.e. doing a food drive to collect donations for your local food bank, or collecting toys or school supplies. If time allows, actually do this project and put the learning into action.

Charity / Volunteering / Service

For many people, giving to others is a form of taking care of themselves. When we focus too much on our own needs and desires, we can lose track of what's important, and forget to take care of others and our communities. In many faiths and religions, volunteering and service are built into daily life.

- The Sikh practice of Sewa, or acts of service as a religious practice.
- The Muslim practice of Zakat, or donating 2.5% of earnings to charity.
- The Jewish practices of Tzedaka (charity) and Tikkun Olam, acts that repair the world.

Moving Your Body

Physical activity is great for us, and can give us the energy to help us focus. Meeting our physical needs allows us to focus on higher spiritual pursuits, and can alter the way we're able to focus our energy. Many religions build physical movement into different rituals:

- The Hindu practice of yoga.
- The Muslim practice of Sujud, or prostration during prayer.
- The Taoist practice of Qigong.
- Some forms of Christian prayer involve kneeling as a submission to God.
- Sometimes Jewish people sway backwards and forwards when they pray, as a way to help focus on the spiritual meanings of the prayers and to turn prayer into a full-bodied experience.

Suggested Activities:

- See if you can invite a practitioner of Yoga or Qigong to speak to your class and do some introductory exercises with the students.
- Integrate some gentle stretching during transition points during the school day.
- Mix up the way you learn in class and ask students to reflect on how their physical position affects their mental state - i.e. have a desk-free day where everyone sits on the floor, practice maths while laying on the ground, have students stand on one leg while answering questions, etc.