

Scottish Interfaith Week

8-15 November 2026

Dialogue on Health and Wellbeing in Faith Traditions

Quotes and questions to spark dialogue



SIFW Scottish
Interfaith
Week



Interfaith
Scotland

Guide for facilitators of *Dialogue on Health and Wellbeing in Faith Traditions*

The Scottish Interfaith Week 2026 theme of *Wellbeing* encourages us to explore what it means to care for ourselves and others.

When we are living in a time of social and political upheaval, where division and isolation threaten our wellbeing both as individuals and communities, what does it look like to sustain, nurture and uplift one another?

In our dialogue today we will be looking at passages and quotes from eight religions and beliefs on the theme of health and wellbeing. These have been selected by members of Interfaith Scotland from their respective faiths. Some are passages from scriptures or other holy writings, and some are from authors of that faith.

Health and wellbeing can incorporate mental, emotional, physical and spiritual health. The passages include these different aspects and help us reflect upon what supports health and wellbeing from a faith perspective.

Instructions for running the dialogue

1. Pick four passages to explore together from the eight passages listed.
2. Try to include a combination of Abrahamic faiths, Dharmic faiths and other spiritual traditions in your selection of passages.
3. If you know the faiths of the people that are attending the event, you may wish to prioritise the passages from these faiths for discussion.
4. Introduce the theme of health and wellbeing as outlined above.
5. Put participants into small groups of approximately four people.
6. Take around 12 minutes to explore each passage. A volunteer can read the passage aloud and then pose the related question/s to the group.
7. Share with the group that the questions are a guide and they are welcome to comment on anything from the text that is meaningful to them.
8. Make the group aware that the passages may be considered as sacred texts to some of those engaging in the dialogue and should be treated with respect, not 'critically unpicked' as an academic exercise.
9. After 12 minutes gently encourage groups to move on to the next question.
10. You may wish to come together as a group at the end and share how you found the experience. You could ask the whole group questions such as what inspired them or what made them think.

Dialogue on Health and Wellbeing in Faith Traditions

Below are quotes from different faiths on the topic of wellbeing. You will have 12 minutes to explore each quote in small groups. A volunteer can read the passage aloud and then pose the question/s below the passage to the group. The questions are a guide and you are welcome to comment on anything from the text that is meaningful to you.

Please be aware that these may be considered to be sacred texts to those engaging in the dialogue.

Baha'i Faith

Abdu'l-Bahá (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982):

'We should all visit the sick. When they are in sorrow and suffering, it is a real help and benefit to have a friend come. Happiness is a great healer to those who are ill. You must always have this thought of love and affection when you visit the ailing and afflicted. All true healing comes from God! There are two causes for sickness, one is material, the other spiritual. If the sickness is of the body, a material remedy is needed, if of the soul, a spiritual remedy'.

Questions:

- How can we assist in the health and wellbeing of others?
- The passage mentions material and spiritual sickness. Do you think there is a link between 'spiritual' and 'material' health?

Buddhism

Metta Sutta, Pali Canon Sn 1.8:

'Wishing in gladness and in safety, may all beings be at ease.

Whatever living beings there may be,

Whether they are weak or strong, omitting none,

The great or the mighty, medium, short or small,

The seen and the unseen, those living near and far away,

Those born and to-be-born – may all beings be at ease.

'Let none deceive another, nor despise any being in any state.

Let none through anger or ill will wish harm upon another.

Even as a mother protects with her life her child, her only child,

So with a boundless heart should one cherish all living beings,

Radiating kindness over the entire world...'

Question:

- Do you think that 'radiating kindness' and wishing others well contributes to our wellbeing and if so in what way?

Christianity

2 Corinthians Chapter 4 and 5 extracts (St Paul's letter to the early church):

'The God who said "Out of darkness the light shall shine" is the same God who made his light shine in our hearts. Yet we who have this spiritual treasure are like clay pots... We are often troubled but not crushed; sometimes in doubt, but never in despair; there are many enemies but we are never without a friend; and though badly hurt at times we are never destroyed... For this reason we never become discouraged. Even though our physical being is gradually decaying, yet our spiritual being is renewed day after day... For we fix our attention, not on things that are seen, but on things that are unseen. What can be seen lasts only for a time, but what cannot be seen lasts forever'.

Question:

- What do you make of the phrase 'though our physical being is gradually decaying yet our spiritual being is renewed'?

Hinduism

An excerpt from the book *Sushruta Samhita* by Maharishi Sushruta:

"A person is truly healthy when their soul, senses and mind are completely joyful."

Questions:

- What do you think is the association between joy and health?
- In what ways can we foster joy in our daily lives?

Islam

Luqman 31: 12 - 19:

'Whosoever is grateful is so for his own good, and whosoever is ungrateful (should remember) that God is above all concerns, worthy of praise... We have committed man about his parents. His mother carries him in her womb in weakness and debility, weaning him in two years. So he should be grateful to Me and his parents... Fulfil your moral obligations... and bear with patience what befalls you. These are indeed acts of courage and resolve. Do not hold men in contempt, and do not walk with hauteur on the earth... be moderate in your bearing.'

Question:

- What are the qualities that the text recommends that could contribute towards wellbeing?

Judaism

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks (various sources):

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks taught that true wellbeing and happiness come from moving away from a selfish "I" and embracing a communal "We", practicing daily gratitude, and finding deep meaning through family, relationships, and responsibilities.

- **The Shift from 'I' to 'We':** Consumer culture pushes us to focus only on ourselves, which leads to loneliness and empty, short-lived joy. True fulfillment happens when we care for others and build strong communities.
- **The Power of Gratitude:** Judaism teaches us to start each day by saying thank you for life itself. Noticing small daily blessings keeps our minds open, humble, and emotionally healthy.
- **Finding Joy in Ordinary Places:** In his book 'Celebrating Life', Rabbi Sacks explained that happiness is not found in massive wealth or status. Instead, it lives in simple bonds like friendship, shared meals, family moments, and shared human responsibilities.
- **Faith as a Cure for Loneliness:** Rabbi Sacks viewed faith and community as the ultimate remedy for isolation, noting that being connected to a supportive group lets us feel a true sense of belonging and divine love.

Questions:

- Where do we find true connection, belonging and love?
- In what ways can we contribute to the emotional and spiritual wellbeing of ourselves, our communities and our interfaith communities?

Paganism

Excerpt from *Paganism for Beginners: Values by Pagan* author and scholar, Yvonne Aburrow:

"Pagan values are grounded in an appreciation of life and the enjoyment of being physically embodied, and the desire for others to enjoy the same experience.

"Pagans value physical pleasure such as eating, drinking and seeing beautiful things. We find that the enjoyment of these things increases our 'spiritual' connection, because we find value in the physical world. We love trees, rocks, mountains, flowers, beautiful art, the ocean, animals, birds, other people, the moon, the night, the sun, rolling hills, water, eating and making merry.

"The idea that the divine/deities is/are immanent in the world (intimately entwined with physical matter) also contributes to the sense that being alive in this world is to be celebrated and enjoyed."

Question:

- How might our love for the physical world and enjoyment of it lead to greater spiritual connection and contribute to our overall wellbeing, especially during life's difficult moments?

Sikhism

Below is a kirtan which is an expression of praise in musical form. The hymns of the Sikh scriptures, the Guru Granth Sahib, are sung to invoke healing by giving praise to the divine physician as the giver of life.

Guru Granth Sahib quote from Ang (p807) Raag Bilawal:

“He has blessed Hargobind with long life, and taken care of my comfort, happiness and well-being. The forests, meadows and the three worlds have blossomed forth in greenery; He gives His Support to all beings.

“Nanak has obtained the fruits of his mind's desires; his desires are totally fulfilled. One who is blessed by the Lord's Mercy, passes his time in contemplative meditation. In the Saadh Sangat, the Company of the Holy, meditate, and vibrate upon the Lord of the Universe. Give up your selfishness, and you shall find peace; like water mingling with water, you shall merge in absorption.”

Question:

- What do you think are the spiritual remedies for human suffering?