

# Inter Faith Week 2010 in England

- Promoting good inter faith relations
- Highlighting the contribution of faiths to building community
- Increasing understanding between faiths and wider society



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[Back cover \(left to right\)](#)

*Tower Hamlets Baha'i Community Inter Faith Week event (Photo: Tom Habibi) | Children from Cale Green School, Stockport singing as part of the 'Faith 4 the Future' event, organised by Stockport Inter-Faith Network (Photo: Rev P Winn) | The opening of the Ninth General Synod of the Church of England, attended by senior leaders of faiths (Photo: Lambeth Palace Press Office) | Volunteer litter-pickers at a joint Mitzvah Day and Sewa Day event for Inter Faith Week in Radlett (Photo: Bhaktivedanta Manor)*

[Front cover \(left to right\)](#)

*Members of Watford Interfaith Association at Watford and District Synagogue as part of an inter faith pilgrimage (Photo: WIA) | Guests at 'Bristol Celebrates' event (Photo: Terry Rook at Glance Image) | Guests at the Christian Muslim Forum's 'Faith and Practice' Women's Group event (Photo: CMF) | Young musicians playing at the West Midlands Faiths Forum launch of the Week (Photo: WMFF)*

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The Inter Faith Network for the UK closed in 2024, with outward facing operations ceasing in April.

In order to ensure that the material in IFN's publications remained available to the public, to inter faith practitioners, and to scholars after IFN's closure, the copyright status of publications has been changed.

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# Inter Faith Week 2010 in England



# Foreword

Good inter faith relations and practical cooperation between different faith communities are vital to the wellbeing of our society. Inter Faith Week shines a light on the rich possibilities of mutual engagement and offers a chance for encounter, learning and practical engagement.

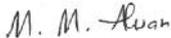
In our diverse society it is of great importance that people of different backgrounds have the chance to learn about what each other hold dear, and what shapes their identity – including, of course, deeply held beliefs. It is vital, too, that – while recognising our differences of practice and belief and celebrating the positive dimensions of diversity – we continue to find ways, as a society, to address genuine differences and to discern the areas of commonality that are the basis of a strong, shared, society characterised by respect, justice and compassion.

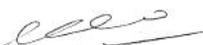
21–27 November saw the second national Inter Faith Week take place across England. Over 400 events and projects took place which drew, between them, many thousands of people into discussion, debate, and social action – as well as varied activities from sport to music, dance and art.

Local and national faith and inter faith bodies celebrated the Week and helped raise the profile of work to promote understanding and cooperation between faiths – and also between faiths and wider society. The Week provided, too, an opportunity for faith communities to welcome members of the public to see their places of worship and to learn more about the contribution which they make to society. An increasing number of other bodies such as local authorities, emergency services and many educational institutions also marked the Week.

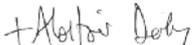
This short review of the Week can, of course, only capture some of the highlights and themes of the Week's activity. A list of events known to have taken place in the course of the Week is available on the Inter Faith Week website: [www.interfaithweek.org.uk](http://www.interfaithweek.org.uk).

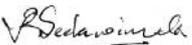
The 2011 Week will take place from 20–26 November in England (and also in Wales and Northern Ireland). We hope that this short overview of the 2010 Week will inspire you to take part – again or for the first time.

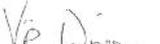
  
Dr Manazir Ahsan MBE  
Co-Chair, Inter Faith Network

  
Dr Girdari L Bhan  
Vice-Chair, Inter Faith Network

  
Dr Indarjit Singh CBE  
Vice-Chair, Inter Faith Network

  
The Rt Revd Dr Alastair Redfern  
Co-Chair, Inter Faith Network

  
Ven Bogoda Seelawimala  
Vice-Chair, Inter Faith Network

  
Mr Vivian Wineman  
Vice-Chair, Inter Faith Network

# Inter Faith Week 2010

Inter Faith Week took place for the first time in England and Wales in November 2009. In its first year it was led in partnership by the Inter Faith Network for the UK and the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The 2010 Week was led by the Inter Faith Network for the UK in consultation with the Department for Communities and Local Government and also in consultation with the Local Government Association; the Department for Education; the Equality and Human Rights Commission; and the Community Development Foundation.

This report shows some of the ways it was marked. The Week was open to anyone who wished to take part and this overview reflects this variety. Inclusion in the report does not imply endorsement of events or their organising bodies by the Inter Faith Network or by Government.

Inter Faith Week in Wales was led by the Inter-faith Council for Wales (IFCW) in consultation with the Welsh Assembly Government. Details on the Week in Wales can be found at [www.interfaithwales.org/index.php?pageid=4](http://www.interfaithwales.org/index.php?pageid=4). Northern Ireland marked the Week for the first time in 2010; for details, email [ni.interfaith@gmail.com](mailto:ni.interfaith@gmail.com).

A Scottish Inter Faith Week has taken place since 2004. For details on the Week in Scotland in 2010, see the Scottish Inter Faith Council website, [www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org/22.htm](http://www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org/22.htm).

## The aims of Inter Faith Week:

- Strengthening good inter faith relations at all levels
- Increasing awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, in particular celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- Increasing understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs

## Inter Faith Week 2010

21–27 November

### Just a few of the events happening:

- Places of worship opening their doors to all
- Women and inter faith dialogue workshops
- Multi faith environmental projects
- Faith and social action projects
- Exchange visits between places of worship
- Faith and food events
- Inter faith football
- Day event on 'older people, spirituality and faith'
- Inter faith learning events in schools
- School linking
- Faith trails and inter faith walks
- Campus dialogues and activities
- Arts festival and national photo competition
- Employer round table on faith and belief in the workplace
- Civic events

### A Week to:

- strengthen inter faith relations at all levels
- encourage local faith groups and communities to reach out to each other and build strong bonds of understanding and cooperation
- increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, in particular celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious belief

[www.interfaithweek.org.uk](http://www.interfaithweek.org.uk)



# Inter Faith Week – growing fast!

“Inter Faith Week is the perfect opportunity to celebrate the fantastic pastoral work of faith communities – and also to recognise that it’s when they pull together in a shared endeavour that they can make the biggest difference in their community.

“Collaboration builds stronger understanding and helps people to concentrate on the values they hold in common – without ever losing their unique strengths.”

*Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Eric Pickles MP*

Many different types of event took place across England for Inter Faith Week 2010. There were civic celebrations, dialogues and discussions, arts and other cultural events and educational events both in education institutions and in the community.

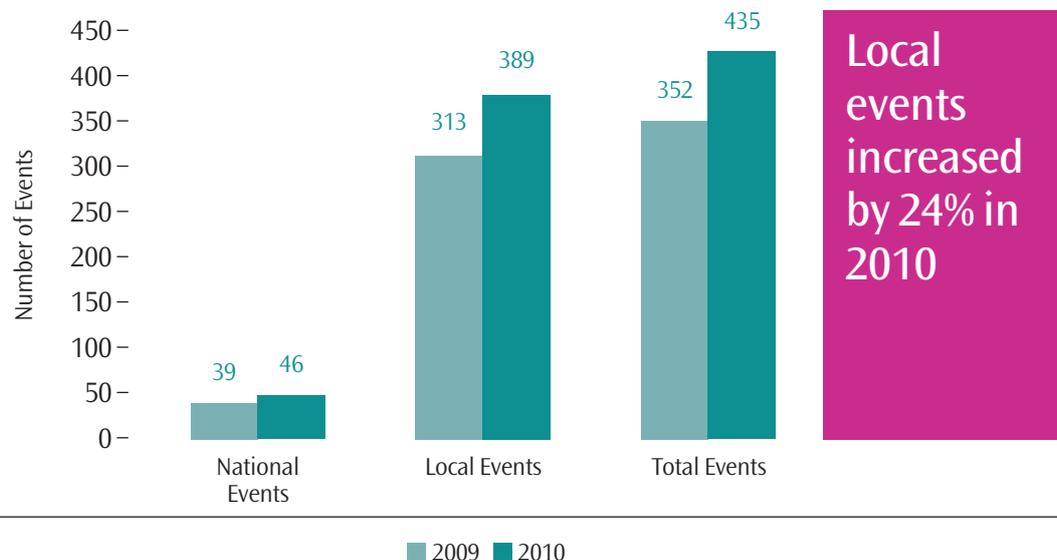
Venues for Inter Faith Week ranged from churches, gurdwaras, mandirs, mosques, synagogues, and viharas to town halls and civic centres, schools, universities, prisons, hospitals, workplaces and outside spaces such as parks and sports facilities.

The number of events rose significantly in 2010 compared to the previous year and growing numbers of people took part.



*‘Faith in the Big Society’ event, organised by Cheshire West and Chester Council, Cheshire Interfaith Network and Northwest Forum of Faiths (Photo: NWWF)*

## Local events increased by 24% in 2010



*435 events are known to have taken place across England to mark Inter Faith Week 2010, an increase of over 24% on the Week in 2009.*

*There were 46 events held by national bodies in 2010 – an increase of 18% on 2009.*

NB: Totals include a small number of events which fell slightly outside the dates of the Week but that were advertised as being Inter Faith Week events. Pan-regional events are included in the National category; sub-regional events are counted as Local.

“...I know that very many activities are happening around the country to bring people of different religious backgrounds together and to highlight what people of faith are doing to contribute to their local communities and to our society. This is a most welcome and worthwhile initiative...”

*Prime Minister David Cameron  
(extract from message for the DCLG Inter Faith Week Reception)*

Events during Inter Faith Week 2010 appear to have been more concentrated around the middle of the Week than in 2009, with far fewer daytime events taking place on the Saturday (see the chart below). One reason for this might be that events held on the Jewish Sabbath would not be possible for many Jewish participants. This move toward fewer events on Saturday in 2010 may reflect some of the positive ways in which Inter Faith Week has enabled people to show greater sensitivity to the needs of others in their local communities.

**“We estimate that over 3,000 people [in our area] were directly touched by the activities and themes of the Week and many more people had their awareness of the issues raised. The energy and enthusiasm, especially of the children, was infectious, and planning has already begun for 2011.”**

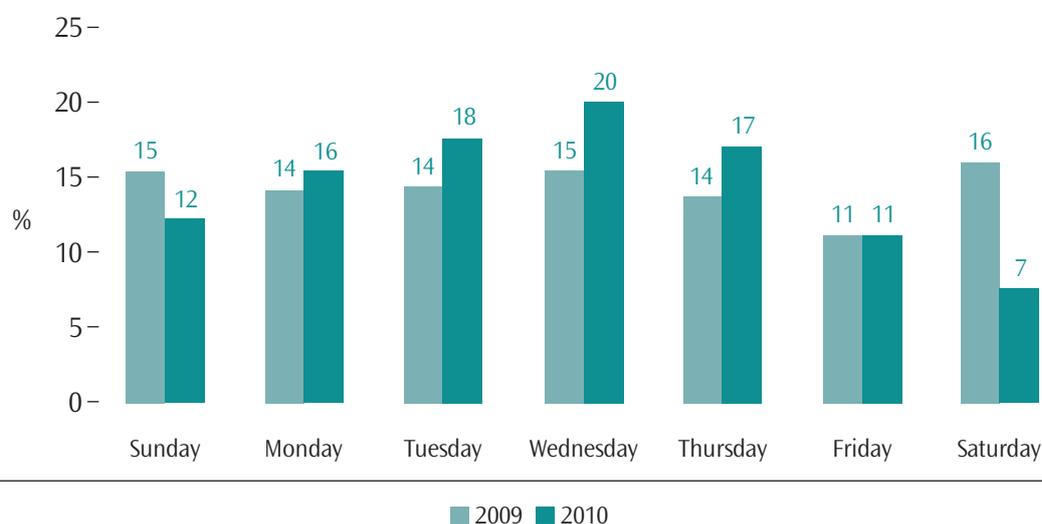
*Local organisers' report on Inter Faith Week 2010 in Worcester*

The Week was, again, held in late autumn, when most educational institutions are in session and there are relatively few exams and final coursework deadlines. This was to enable maximum participation by faith communities, school pupils and students in Higher Education and Further Education institutions.

*Mitzvah Day* – a day of charitable work and social action led by the UK Jewish community, and encouraging the participation of all, regardless of affiliation, wealth, age, gender or nationality – once again took place on the first day of the Week (21 November), and was joined this year by *Sewa Day*, a day with similar aims. It was a felicitous overlap, with a number of joint events being held at local level; both *Mitzvah Day* and *Sewa Day* projects actively encouraged the participation of all members of the local community, irrespective of religious affiliation.

[www.mitzvahday.org.uk](http://www.mitzvahday.org.uk)  
[www.nationalsewaday.org](http://www.nationalsewaday.org)

### Percentage of Week events taking place on particular days



# Launching and celebrating the Week



*Attendees at Leicestershire County Council Inter Faith Week launch event (Photo: Leics CC)*

## Local and regional launches and celebrations

Local launches and celebrations marking the Week took place in many towns and cities and also rural areas. A significant number were partnership events involving local inter faith groups, local communities and local authorities, often also involving other organisations such as police and fire services; healthcare bodies; local charities and other community organisations; local businesses; and schools, colleges and universities.

Special regional events for the Week took place in the East, the North East, South West, West Midlands and Yorkshire and Humber\*. A number of these were organised in partnership with local groups and other organisations and aimed to highlight – in one case through awards – the work of local activists. Reports on activities regionally are available directly from the Regional Faith Forums. Contact details for these can be found at [www.interfaith.org.uk/local/directory.htm](http://www.interfaith.org.uk/local/directory.htm).

\* Regional Faith Forums in the East Midlands, London, the North West and South East chose to support and encourage local events, but not also to run a regional launch event.



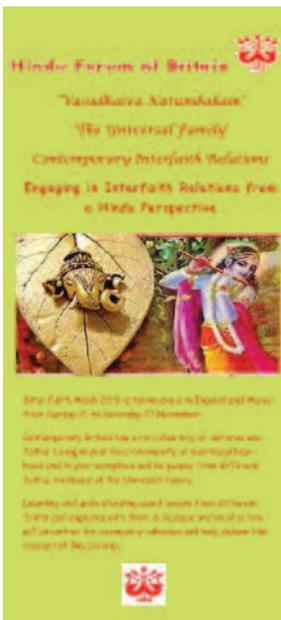
*Braintree District Inter Faith Forum receiving one of the local inter faith awards from the East of England Faith Council at their regional launch event (Photo: EEFC)*

## National faith and inter faith bodies

Many national faith and inter faith bodies marked the Week, highlighting the support of faith communities for inter faith engagement and collaborative social action. Some did so through special events and some through inviting participants of other faiths to join in high profile events already planned, such as the opening of the General Synod of the Church of England by HM The Queen.



Clockwise from top right Members of different faiths were invited to attend and observe the Inauguration of the Ninth General Synod of the Church of England (Photo: Lambeth Palace Press Office) | Speakers at the Network of Sikh Organisations (UK) launch of Inter Faith Week at Ramgarhia Sabha Reading (Photo: Jasmal Photography) | Delegates at 'Faith in the Workplace' event, organised by the Board of Deputies of British Jews for young professionals of all faiths and none (Photo: Board of Deputies) | Muslim Council of Britain Inter Faith Week event at House of Lords (Photo: MCB)



'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' / the 'Universal Family' Contemporary Inter Faith Relations leaflet produced for the Week by Hindu Forum of Britain



Children taking part in a Hindu Council UK event (Photo: HCUK)



Speaker at the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe 'Inter Faith Health Awareness Fair' (Photo: ZTFE – Zubin B Sethna)



*Chair of Liverpool Community Spirit Youth Council addressing guests at the DCLG reception  
(Photo: IFN)*

## Government

The Department for Communities and Local Government held a special Inter Faith Week reception at Admiralty House on behalf of Government, celebrating the work of local inter faith activists. Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, and Andrew Stunell OBE, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and Minister for Community Cohesion, spoke about the importance of inter faith work and the contribution of faith communities to society.

Local activists from Bradford District Faiths Forum, Northampton Hope Centre and Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum, as well as young members of Liverpool Community Spirit Youth Council, were invited to speak about the important work they undertake in their local communities.

The Inter Faith Network assisted DCLG on the event and its Co-Chairs, Bishop Alastair Redfern and Dr Manazir Ahsan, spoke about the importance of local inter faith engagement and also the significant role of national faith communities and national and regional inter

faith organisations, highlighting their work in supporting and advocating for the valuable work of local faith and inter faith organisations.

Music was provided by young Sikh duo Jasdeep Singh Degun (sitar) and Tejbir Singh (tabla) and Yalla, a 5-piece Jewish and Muslim band.

Displays about inter faith work and work on faith and social action were created by IFN and the Faith-based Regeneration Network (FbRN). The Community Development Foundation distributed copies of its publication *Faith matters: Case studies from the Faiths in Action Fund*.

FbRN distributed copies of its faith and social action guide, *Practical Spirit* (see p12).

The material for the boards on youth involvement in inter faith action has subsequently been developed by IFN into a short e-resource which can be downloaded from the Inter Faith Week website: [www.interfaithweek.org/index.php/resources/young-people](http://www.interfaithweek.org/index.php/resources/young-people).



# Faith and social action

All religions have a rich history of engagement in social action and this was reflected during Inter Faith Week 2010.

“This week I was glad to recognise the contribution of faith groups to our society with ‘Inter Faith Week’. You won’t find too many churches, temples, mosques or synagogues in this country only interested in what goes on within their own walls. Today and every day, without thanks or applause, you’ll get volunteers from every faith group serving their community in every conceivable way: running youth clubs; offering help to the homeless; providing meals to the vulnerable – or simply listening to the lonely. In many ways these communities exemplify the Big Society principles of collective responsibility, neighbourliness and practical skills to get things done.

The experience that faith groups have, the reach into communities that public services may struggle to get to, is invaluable. Religious festivals from Eid to Christmas to Hannukah inspire believers to give to others and think about the less fortunate. Our message in Inter Faith Week was that if faith groups do a tremendous amount individually; collectively they can do even more.”

*Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Eric Pickles MP*

*([conservativehome.blogs.com/localgovernment/2010/11/eric-pickles-mp-why-this-government-wants-faith-groups-to-play-a-leading-part-in-big-society.html](http://conservativehome.blogs.com/localgovernment/2010/11/eric-pickles-mp-why-this-government-wants-faith-groups-to-play-a-leading-part-in-big-society.html))*

The wellbeing of the local community – how we treat one another, how we respond to issues such as crime and poverty and the quality of life we enjoy day by day – is a subject close to the heart of all faith traditions. During the Week there were many events focusing on social issues. Some involved hands-on social action projects in the local community, such as tree-planting and litter-picking. Others brought members of different faith-based community projects together to explore avenues of collaboration or to discuss responses to social issues such as the needs of asylum seekers and refugees; health; gender; the economic climate; and the environment. Other events involved awareness-raising and fundraising elements which focused on global development issues.

“Faith communities make a vital contribution to society, shaping people’s attitudes and actions and inspiring many to work for the good of all. This contribution, together with inter faith cooperation and understanding, is important both for our national life and for flourishing local communities.

Inter Faith Week provides a tremendous opportunity to highlight the value of inter faith activities ...”

*Community Cohesion Minister, Andrew Stunell OBE MP*



*Community Cohesion Minister, Andrew Stunell speaking at the DCLG reception (Photo: IFN)*

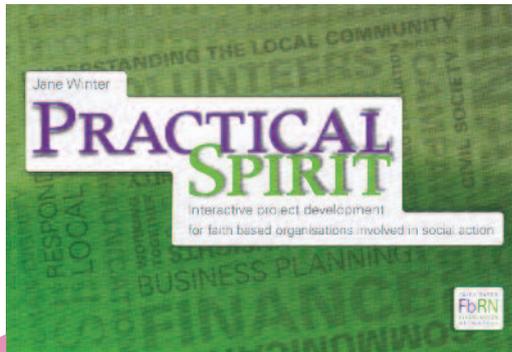


*Clockwise from top left Flyer advertising an Inter Faith Eco Festival, organised by INTERACT and the UK Youth Climate Coalition. (Image copyright INTERACT) | 'Enabling Faith to Make an Impact on the Big Society Programme' event at Leeds Makkah Masjid held by the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board and others (Photo: MINAB) | Discussion group at 'Celebrating Later Life: Older People, Spirituality and Faith' event, organised by Churches Together in England (Photo: Yorks Photo Digital)*



*1) Volunteers at Radlett Groundforce Challenge, a joint Mitzvah Day and Sewa Day event for Inter Faith Week (Photo: Radlett and Bushey Reform Synagogue). 2) Chief Rabbi Lord Sacks and Srutidharma das pictured working together building bird boxes at Camley Street Natural Park, Kings Cross, London as part of a joint Mitzvah Day and National Sewa Day event (Photo: Bhaktivedanta Manor)*

A number of events focused on how local inter faith organisations can best work with local authorities and local strategic partnerships for the good of local communities.



*FbRN The Practical Spirit guide*

The Faith-based Regeneration Network (FbRN) is the leading multi faith network for community development, community regeneration and social action. It brings together practitioners for sharing ideas and good practice, to encourage each other and to enable them to link with the makers of public policy.

As part of FbRN's marking of the Week, it launched, with support from DCLG, *Practical Spirit* – a resource for faith and inter faith communities engaged in social action projects. This free guide can be downloaded at: [www.fbrn.org.uk/practical-spirit](http://www.fbrn.org.uk/practical-spirit).



*Discussion group at 'Faith in the Big Society' event organised by the North East Regional Faiths Network and the Churches' Regional Commission (Photo: CRC)*



- 1) 'Celebrating Faiths in Healthcare' event organised by Ipswich Hospital Chaplaincy (Photo: IHC).
- 2) Woking People of Faith hosts a 'coffee house conversations' event, Woking Town Centre (Photo: WPF).
- 3) Delegates taking part in one of several tree planting ceremonies organised by Altrincham Interfaith Group with a range of partners to mark the Week (Photo: AIG).
- 4) 'Focus on Faith and Disability' seminar and dialogue event, organised by Kirklees Faiths Forum (Photo: Hannah Taylor)

# Dialogue, discussion, debate

“When we engage in inter faith dialogue, it’s not just an exchange of ideas, it’s an attempt really to listen, really to enter into somebody else’s world of reference – not giving up who or what we are – but just having that hospitable outreach and that capacity to transcend our own boundaries in some ways.”

*The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, speaking in Churches Together in England’s specially commissioned Inter Faith Week video [www.youtube.com/watch?v=EoH\\_dvW2jbk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EoH_dvW2jbk)*



*Panel members at the Birmingham Faith Leaders’ Group Question Time event at the Nishkam Centre, ‘Faith & the Big Society’ (Photo: BFLG)*

Working together on social issues is important but talking, listening and discussion is, too, a vital part of growing together as one society – a society where the different backgrounds of people are respected, their distinctive beliefs appreciated and, at the same time, we seek the values and perspectives held in common that can underpin a thriving and peaceful shared society.

In the course of the Week, many events were held where people came together to talk, listen and debate. A large number of dialogues took place around the country. Some were between people of two different faiths (such as Christian-Muslim dialogue).

Others involved people of several faiths. A number of events had a particular focus and methodology to help the learning process such as shared study of sacred texts.

Many topics were addressed: prayer; faith and belief; religious practice; approaches to issues such as the environment, the economy, the Big Society (and what this might mean in particular local contexts), and poverty; human rights; crime; healthcare; the role of women; and ageing and spirituality. Some dialogues tackled sensitive issues, such as how to respond to past and present conflicts and oppression or how to work to counter extremist politics.



- 1) Launch of a Council of Imams and Rabbis at House of Lords (Photo: Joseph Interfaith Foundation)
- 2) Participants in conversation at West Midlands Faiths Forum launch of the Week (Photo: WMFF)
- 3) Audience members at the Birmingham Faith Leaders' Group Question Time event, 'Faith and the Big Society' (Photo: Birmingham Mail)

Dialogue between those of religious and non-religious beliefs was also an important theme of the Week. Some events at national and local level explored meeting points between them.

A number of academic debates and discussions took place throughout the country, many in universities. The National Union of Students encouraged participation in the Week, and created a dedicated resource which can be found here:

<http://nussl.ukmsl.net/asset/news/6105/Students-Unions-Universities-and-Inter-faith-Week-HE-2010.pdf>.



*Buddhist, Christian, Jewish and Muslim panellists taking questions at the Islington Faiths Forum and London Metropolitan University Inter Faith Lecture and Debate (Photo: IFF)*



*Participants at the 'Freedom of Speech: Its Rights, Remits and Responsibilities' event held at Royal Holloway, University of London. Organised by Joseph Interfaith Foundation with the RHSU Islamic Society and Jewish Society (Photo: JIF)*

# Education, sharing and learning



*left to right Guests with Hindu delegates at 'Bristol Celebrates' event organised by Bristol City Council, Bristol Inter Faith Group, Bristol Multifaith Forum and Faithnetsouthwest (Photo: Terry Rook at Glance Image) | Buddhist delegates at 'Bristol Celebrates' event (Photo: Terry Rook at Glance Image) | Members of West Wiltshire Interfaith Group visiting John of Gaunt School, Trowbridge to talk about how wealth is seen by different faiths (Photo: West Wiltshire Interfaith Group)*

Inter Faith Week 2010 saw a high number of events that helped people to learn about one another, with many local inter faith groups arranging events which highlighted the important role of inter faith work in promoting better community relations and the role that faith groups play in their local communities.

As well as events taking place in educational establishments, there were many that were aimed at promoting learning and mutual understanding within the local community, such as exhibitions with stalls prepared and minded by members of local faith communities; faith trails and peace walks and open-door days where places of worship open their venues to the public; events centred around shared meals; and events where members of other faiths were invited to attend and observe religious worship, festivities or business proceedings.

Following the enthusiasm for Inter Faith Week shown by schools in 2009, the IFN office undertook to contact as many schools as possible with news about the Week, and to highlight the resources for schools available on the Inter Faith Week website. IFN again



*Members of Watford Interfaith Association taking part in an inter faith pilgrimage (Photo: WIFA)*

“I particularly enjoyed the Candlelit Walk to different places of worship. Although York does not have the wealth [of diversity] that is present in Leeds or Sheffield, we were able to visit different denomination places of worship and learn a little about each, and about the communities which use them. Many of us promised another visit later to learn more. It was an opportunity to meet and talk with people of different faiths and backgrounds as we walked from place to place. The lanterns... created a talking point for passers by – and added to the atmosphere. I hope we can repeat it next year!”

*Participant in event held in York to mark the Week [www.yorkinterfaith.org](http://www.yorkinterfaith.org)*

worked with the Religious Education Council of England and Wales and the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education, as well as the Association of Religious Education Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants and several other organisations, raising awareness of the Week, and including information about the Week in e-bulletins to the members of these organisations. Work was also undertaken to contact independent schools, which had a relatively low involvement in 2009, with the assistance of the Independent Schools Council Information and Advice Service (ISCias), the School Chaplains' Association (SCA) and the Independent Schools Religious Studies Association (ISRSA). The Department for Education circulated information about the Week to their Faith Schools Advisory Group.

Many schools and SACREs took part in the Week, through classroom learning, special events and joining in local inter faith activities such as 'faith trails' and conferences.

“Inter Faith Week is very important because it gives students a chance to continue learning about belief systems and allows us to celebrate the rich diversity of [our college].”

*Westminster Kingsway College Admissions and Advice Supervisor*



*Children of Redhill Inter Faith Week Community Club with banner (Photo: Redhill Community Club)*



*Students at the University of Exeter's 'A Question of Faith' inter faith quiz night (Photo: RCC)*

Higher and Further Education institutions saw many Inter Faith Week events aimed at learning about the traditions and beliefs of different faith communities. Events on campus were run by students' unions; inter faith societies; two or more faith-based societies working together; chaplaincy teams; staff in theology / religious studies departments; national inter faith organisations; local inter faith groups; and local faith community groups. In many cases, events were organised by two or more of these types of group working together in partnership.

The Inter Faith Youth Trust supported a number of events involving young people.

**Open Faith Weekend**  
Celebrating diversity and faith. Places of worship open their doors to all.

**Saturday 20th November  
Sunday 21st November**

**National Interfaith Week**  
21st - 28th November 2010

Organised in partnership with  
**Harrow Inter Faith Council**

**Harrow COUNCIL**  
LONDON

*Flyer about Open Door Weekend organised by Harrow Inter Faith Council and Harrow Council*

“Connecting Communities, in collaboration with The Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB) held an event with the theme ‘Enabling Faith Communities to make a big impact on Society’ at Leeds Makkah Masjid... Inter Faith Week enabled us to deepen our community engagement and broaden our horizons; to help bring about a positive change in our community, through consultation and feedback, and open up new relationships with faith groups in Leeds.”

*Leeds Rugby Foundation's Connecting Communities Manager, Ikram Butt  
The Leeds Rhinos*



*1) Arabic calligraphy at a mosque open day and inter faith celebration event in Kirklees (Photo: Hannah Taylor). 2) Students at Regents Park Mosque as part of the ‘Young, British and Believer’ half-day seminar for Muslim and Jewish university students organised by the Joseph Interfaith Foundation in association with the Islamic Cultural Centre, Regents Park Mosque (Photo: Joseph Interfaith Foundation). 3) Buddhist representative talking to guests at the Preston launch of Inter Faith Week held at the Harris Library (Photo: Harris Library)*

# Music, arts and culture



*Children from Cale Green School, Stockport singing as part of the 'Faith 4 the Future' event, organised by Stockport Inter-Faith Network (Photo: Rev P Winn)*

“Children can show all of us the way to live and work and pray together – the harmony of a choir singing is a vivid picture of how we can be in Worcester.”

*The Revd Duncan Ballard  
News article from [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk) Hereford and Worcester*

*Reproduced with thanks to the BBC*

All religious traditions have long established patterns of engagement with the creative arts, and many events during Inter Faith Week 2010 focused on the artistic and cultural element of shared expression. There were art exhibitions; dance and musical events; shared

meals; storytelling; and poetry recitals. Some events focused on sport as a way of bringing people together.

These events demonstrate the potential of artistic and cultural expression to bring diverse groups of people together, as well as highlighting the cultural richness of England.

The visual arts have been an increasingly important part of Inter Faith Week. There were numerous exhibitions, including a week-long arts festival and a national inter faith photography competition.



Winner of the 'Faith Through a Lens' photo competition organised by Congregational and General Insurance, with 'Haitian mother with a child' (Photo: Matt Writtle)



1&2) Students at the University of Manchester serving and enjoying a langar meal as part of Manchester FaithWorks' celebrations of Inter Faith Week (Photos: Manchester FaithWorks)

Food was once again used as a great way to bring people together during Inter Faith Week, with many local groups choosing to mark the Week with a meal or by showcasing different traditional foods.

Many events were arranged around music and dance, including choirs, concerts and workshops.



Mind map produced during High Wycombe 'Faith Café' event (Photo: Buckinghamshire Forum of Faiths)



Singers from Yalla performing at DCLG reception (Photo: IFN)



Inter Faith bowling event, St Philip's Centre, Leicester (Photo: St Philip's Centre)

"We ran 12 major events throughout the country, focusing on Faith, Food and Film, with several hundred people attending in total and some events reaching capacity. Many of our branches staged their own activities as well as supporting wider multi faith events."

Council of Christians and Jews



1) Vrata dancing at Leeds Concord's, 'Celebrate Festivals' event in Leeds City Museum (Photo: LCM)  
 2) Young musicians playing at the West Midlands Faiths Forum launch of the Week (Photo: WMFF)



1) Dancers at the 'Objects of Devotion: Inter-Faith Volunteering and the Arts' event held by the Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby (Photo: IFN). 2) Visitors at the Interfaith Arts Festival organised by the Three Faiths Forum and partners (Photo: Three Faiths Forum). 3) Story tellers from the Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths telling a story at the 'Sea of Stories' event, St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace (Photo: St Ethelburga's).



1) Bolton Interfaith Council's Young Ambassadors dancing at an Eid and Diwali joint celebration event (Photo: BIC). 2) Henna painted hands at 'Bristol Celebrates' event (Photo: Terry Rook at Gance Image). 3) Members of Wellingborough Inter Faith Group with the 'Getting to know your neighbour' exhibition at their local library. Also shown is the table drape made for them by the 'Women Have A Go' craft group (Photo: WIFG)



# Looking forward to Inter Faith Week 2011



*Delegates talking at a West Wiltshire Interfaith Group event (Photo: WWIG)*

Inter Faith Week 2011 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will run from Sunday 20 – Saturday 26 November<sup>1</sup>. We hope that this report, which demonstrates the range of events that were organised during 2010, will have inspired you to hold an event this year.

IFN, the Inter-faith Council for Wales and the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum will be working to encourage more organisations to organise events in their local communities to mark the Week.

If you plan to run an event in 2011, please let the IFN office know through the Inter Faith Week website: [www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk), or by writing to the IFN office.

2011 Week materials will be made available on the website and if you have queries or

would like to discuss your event, you can also contact us through a web-form. There are dedicated materials for schools and FE colleges, universities and local authorities as well as tips for getting media coverage.

There is no single Week ‘theme’ for 2011; however we already know that, with the 2012 Olympics on the horizon, quite a number of groups are thinking about a ‘faith and sport’ theme. With ‘Big Society’ a key theme of the Government’s agenda, there are also likely to be events looking at faith and volunteering and faith and social action.

Mitzvah Day ([www.mitzvahday.org.uk](http://www.mitzvahday.org.uk)), with its focus on shared social action, will again fall on the first day of the Week and many joint events are anticipated.

<sup>1</sup> Scottish Inter Faith Week will run from 27 November – 4 December.

# Getting involved

## Inter Faith Week 2011: 20–26 November

### Inter Faith Week

- **Highlights** the good work done by local faith, inter faith and faith-based groups and organisations
- **Draws** new people into inter faith learning and cooperation
- **Enables** interaction between people of different religious, cultural, ethnic, socio-economic and age backgrounds
- **Helps** develop integrated and neighbourly communities
- **Empowers** local people to help shape their local community
- **Celebrates** diversity
- **Opens** new possibilities for partnership

### The three aims of the Week are

- Strengthening good inter faith relations at all levels
- Increasing awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, in particular celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- Increasing understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs



*Christian Muslim Forum 'Faith and Practice' Women's Group event (Photo: CMF)*



*Volunteer litter-pickers at a joint Mitzvah Day and Sewa Day event for Inter Faith Week in Radlett (Photo: Bhaktivedanta Manor)*

The following pages provide some ideas and resources which you may wish to draw upon when planning to mark the 2011 Week.

Further ideas and resources can be found on the Inter Faith Week website:  
[www.interfaithweek.org](http://www.interfaithweek.org).

# Ideas for the Week

- Local faith communities hold an Inter Faith Week discussion on faith and service to the community
- Local faith leaders make a statement affirming their commitment to inter faith work (see the statement on p. 27 for inspiration)
- A church and a gurdwara arrange exchange visits for their congregations
- A Hindu temple hosts an inter faith dialogue event, inviting members of other local communities
- A local inter faith organisation and local faith groups arrange a 'faith trail' visiting places of worship in their city
- Two local faith schools of different faiths hold an inter faith sports event
- Faith groups join with a charity or community group in their area to arrange an Inter Faith Week event for service users and the public
- A vihara or church arranges a special open day event
- A school works with its local SACRE and local inter faith group to host an 'inter faith day' with opportunities to talk with local members of different faiths about why good inter faith relations are important
- A national faith community representative body creates a web resource about the basis within their tradition for involvement by its members in inter faith activity
- A student union works with all the student religious groups in its university to put on a forum on 'What our faiths say about faith and social action'
- With the Olympics in sight, a local faiths forum holds an evening discussion on faith and sport
- A mosque hosts a Muslim-Christian dialogue event
- A local inter faith group holds a joint event with a local Humanist group on "What do I believe and why?"



*Tower Hamlets Baha'i Community Inter Faith Week event (Photo: Tom Habibi)*

- A multi faith chaplaincy in a college of Further Education works with students and staff to put on a special Inter Faith Week photography exhibition
- A 'dine at mine' event takes place, with people of different faiths coming together for a meal
- Women of different faiths meet to discuss the role of women in promoting good inter faith relations
- The local paper and radio station host daily slots during the Week for presenters of different faiths to talk about their faith and also what their faith teaches them about getting on well with people of other faiths
- A branch of the Council of Christians and Jews hosts a special Inter Faith Week event
- A local inter faith group and nearby library hold a 'living library' event where people can 'take out' people of different religions and beliefs for half an hour to learn from these 'living books'

# Faith communities and Inter Faith Week

As part of the first national Inter Faith Week, the Archbishop of Canterbury hosted an event at Lambeth Palace, arranged with the assistance of the Inter Faith Network. At this, faith leaders made the statement on the page opposite. You may be interested to work towards a statement about commitment of communities in your area to the important goals which the Week highlights.



*Faith community leaders and other guests at Lambeth Palace event (Photo: Lambeth Palace Press Office)*



*The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, signing the Statement (Photo: Lambeth Palace Press Office)*



*Commissioner Betty Matear and the Venerable Bogoda Seelawimala reading the Statement (Photo: IFN)*

“We believe that good inter faith relations are a vital part of a harmonious, just and respectful society.

We pledge today, to deepen our work to increase understanding about and between our faiths and to strengthen our cooperation on social issues.

We renew our commitment to developing effective and long term ways of dialogue and mutual learning. We shall continue to seek to understand the patterns of engagement of our faith communities – through history and today; to affirm the positive aspects of these patterns; and to heal wounds of misunderstanding where these are found.

While our great religious traditions are distinct in belief and practice, there is much that unites us. We will draw on fundamental values held in common and on the wisdom of our respective faith traditions to continue to work – as individual communities and together – for the wellbeing of our society, our wider global community and the planet that is our home.

Alongside all of good will, we will work to tackle with renewed determination the challenges of poverty, ignorance, injustice, crime and violence, and social fragmentation and to help shape a society where all feel at home; all are valued and justly treated; and all have a chance to thrive.”

*[www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/961/archbishop-and-faith-leaders-launch-inter-faith-week](http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/961/archbishop-and-faith-leaders-launch-inter-faith-week)  
This statement can also be found on the Inter Faith Week website:  
[www.interfaithweek.org/index.php/statement](http://www.interfaithweek.org/index.php/statement)*

# Planning your 2011 event

## Some planning tips:

- Send IFN details of your event via the Inter Faith Week website
- Make use of social networking to help raise the profile of your event
- Invite journalists to cover your event
- Download planning resources from the Inter Faith Week website
- Arrange for someone to take good photographs of your event
- Think about how you may evaluate the impact of your event

IFN plans to make further use of web technologies to streamline the process for the registration of events on the Inter Faith Week website and to make use of social media websites.

To increase further the success and ensure the sustainability of the Week – and to continue to attract funding, media attention, volunteer time and public involvement – ways to quantify and measure its impact are being developed. A short evaluation toolkit will be available on the Inter Faith Week website in advance of the Week, along with a survey form to aid the IFN office in evaluating the Week in England nationally.

Updates to the Inter Faith Week website will take place throughout 2011, particularly in the two months leaving up to the Week – be sure to check it out regularly for new information and resources.

We look forward to hearing about your plans for marking the Week!

[www.interfaithweek.org](http://www.interfaithweek.org)



The Inter Faith Network for the UK has worked since 1987 to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. Inter Faith Week helps carry forward this vital work and to increase awareness of the importance of mutual understanding and joint action for the common good.

Inter Faith Week is a key way that people of all faiths – and none – can make new connections, share ideas for shaping their local communities, and learn about the range of faiths and beliefs in our diverse society and about how faith communities contribute to the wellbeing of society. This short report shows some of the ways the 2010 Week was marked in England and opens the door to Inter Faith Week 2011 with ideas for the Week.

[www.interfaithweek.org.uk](http://www.interfaithweek.org.uk)



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# Inter Faith Network member bodies

## Faith Community Representative Bodies

Baha'i Community of the UK  
BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha  
Board of Deputies of British Jews  
British Muslim Forum  
Buddhist Society  
Churches' Agency for Inter Faith Relations in Scotland  
Churches Together in Britain and Ireland  
Churches Together in England  
Committee for Relations with Other Religions, Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales  
Council of African and Afro-Caribbean Churches (UK)  
General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches  
Hindu Council (UK)  
Hindu Forum of Britain  
Islamic Cultural Centre  
Jain Samaj Europe  
Jamiat-e-Ulama Britain (Association of Muslim Scholars)  
Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board  
Muslim Council of Britain  
National Council of Hindu Temples (UK)  
Network of Buddhist Organisations (UK)  
Network of Sikh Organisations (UK)  
Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations  
Sri Lankan Sangha Sabha of GB  
Triratna Buddhist Community  
Vishwa Hindu Parishad (UK)  
World Ahlul-Bayt Islamic League  
World Islamic Mission (UK)  
Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe

## Inter Faith Organisations

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum  
Scottish Inter Faith Council  
Inter-faith Council for Wales/Cyngor Cymru  
East of England Faiths Council  
faithnetsouthwest  
Faiths Forum for the East Midlands  
North East Regional Faiths Network  
Northwest Forum of Faiths  
South East England Faith Forum  
West Midlands Faiths Forum  
Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum

Alif Aleph UK  
Christian Muslim Forum  
Christians Aware Interfaith Programme  
Coexist Foundation  
Coexistence Trust  
Council of Christians and Jews  
Council of Dharmic Faiths  
East of England Faiths Agency  
Interfaith Action (INTERACT)  
Interfaith Alliance UK  
International Association for Religious Freedom (British Chapter)  
International Interfaith Centre  
Joseph Interfaith Foundation  
London Society of Jews and Christians  
Minorities of Europe Inter Faith Action Programme  
Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby  
Religions for Peace (UK)  
Scriptural Reasoning  
Society for Dialogue and Action  
St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace

St Philip's Centre for Study and Engagement in a Multi Faith Society  
Three Faiths Forum  
Tony Blair Faith Foundation  
United Religions Initiative (UK)  
Westminster Interfaith  
World Congress of Faiths

## Local Inter Faith Groups

Altrincham Inter Faith Group  
Barking and Dagenham Faith Forum  
Barnet Multi-Faith Forum  
Bedford Council of Faiths  
Birmingham Council of Faiths  
Blackburn with Darwen Interfaith Forum  
Blackpool Faith Forum  
Bolton Interfaith Council  
Bradford Concord Interfaith Society  
Bradford District Faiths Forum  
Brent Interfaith  
Brent Multi-Faith Forum  
Brighton and Hove Inter-Faith Contact Group  
Bristol Inter Faith Group  
Bristol Multi-Faith Forum  
Buckinghamshire Forum of Faiths  
Building Bridges in Burnley  
Muslim-Christian Forum (Bury)  
Calderdale Interfaith Council  
Cambridge Inter-Faith Group  
Camden Faith Communities Partnership  
Canterbury and District Inter Faith Action  
Cardiff Interfaith Association  
Cheltenham Inter Faith  
Clapham and Stockwell Faith Forum  
Coventry Multi-Faith Forum  
Crawley Interfaith Network  
Faiths Together in Croydon  
Cumbria Interfaith Forum  
Sharing of Faiths (Dacorum)  
Forum of Faiths for Derby  
Devon Faith and Belief Forum  
Doncaster Interfaith  
Dudley Borough Interfaith Network  
Elmbridge Multi-Faith Forum  
Exeter Faith and Belief Group  
Gateshead Inter Faith Forum  
Greenwich Multi-Faith Forum  
Hampshire Interfaith Network  
Harrow Inter Faith Council  
Hastings and District Interfaith Forum  
Hillingdon Inter Faith Network  
Horsham Interfaith Forum  
Hounslow Friends of Faith  
Huddersfield Inter Faith Council  
Hull and East Riding Interfaith  
Inter Faith Isle of Man  
Interfaith Swansea  
Islington Faiths Forum  
Keighley Interfaith Group  
Kingston Inter Faith Forum  
Kirklees Faiths Forum  
Faiths Together in Lambeth  
Lancashire Forum of Faiths  
Faith in Lancaster  
Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship  
Leeds Faiths Forum  
Leicester Council of Faiths  
Lincoln Inter-Faith Forum  
Liverpool Faith Network  
Loughborough Council of Faiths  
Luton Council of Faiths  
Faith Network for Manchester  
Medway Inter Faith Action Forum  
Merseyside Council of Faiths  
Middlesbrough Council of Faiths

Interfaith MK (Milton Keynes)  
Milton Keynes Council of Faiths  
Moseley Inter Faith Group  
Newcastle Council of Faiths  
Newham Association of Faiths  
Newham Faith Sector Forum  
North Herts Faith Forum  
North Kirklees Inter-Faith Council  
North Staffordshire Forum of Faiths  
Northampton Inter Faith Forum  
Norwich Interfaith Link  
Nottingham Inter Faith Council  
Oldham Inter Faith Forum  
Oxford Round Table of Religions  
Building Bridges Pendle - Interfaith Community Project  
Peterborough Inter-Faith Council  
Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity  
Portsmouth Inter Faith Forum  
Preston Faith Forum  
Reading Inter-Faith Group  
Redbridge Council of Faiths  
Redbridge Faith Forum  
Rochdale Multi Faith Partnership  
Rossendale Faith Partnership  
Rugby Inter Faith Forum  
Sandwell Multi-Faith Network  
Sheffield Faiths Forum  
Sheffield Inter Faith  
South London Inter Faith Group  
South Shropshire Interfaith Forum  
Southampton Council of Faiths  
Southwark Multi Faith Forum  
Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource  
Faiths United (Tameside)  
Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Group  
Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum  
Valleys Faith Forum  
Waltham Forest Faith Communities Forum  
Wandsworth Multi-Faith Network  
Warrington Council of Faiths  
Warwick District Faiths Forum  
Watford Inter Faith Association  
Wellingborough Inter Faith Group  
Welwyn Hatfield Interfaith Group  
West Wiltshire Interfaith Group  
Westminster Faith Exchange  
Whalley Range (Manchester) Inter Faith Group  
Windsor and Maidenhead Community Forum  
Wolverhampton Inter Faith Council  
Worcestershire Inter-Faith Forum  
Wycombe Sharing of Faiths  
York Interfaith Group

## Educational and Academic Bodies

Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme  
Centre for Christianity and Interreligious Dialogue, Heythrop College  
Centre for the Study of Interreligious Relations, University of Birmingham  
Community Religions Project, University of Leeds  
Institute of Jainology  
Islamic Foundation  
National Association of SACRES  
Religious Education Council of England and Wales  
Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education  
Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter  
Wales Association of SACRES  
Woolf Institute of Abrahamic Faiths