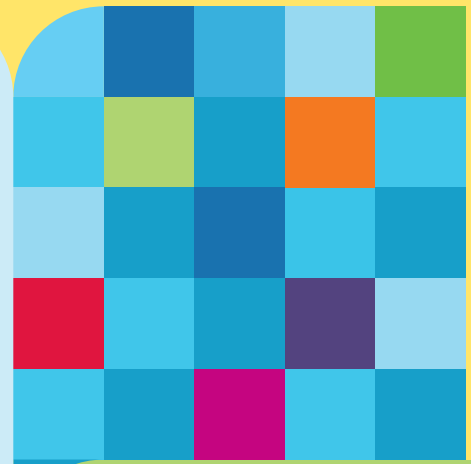


Learning about inter faith activity

A primary resource
for pupils aged 9–11



UNIT 1A

Religious diversity in the UK and the importance of inter faith activity



Teacher note: This unit of work goes with Unit 1b *Introducing inter faith activity*. Teachers should consult the *Teacher introduction* before using this unit as a basis for curriculum planning.

In order to understand why good inter faith relations are important, and why inter faith activity takes different forms, pupils need to know something about religious diversity in the UK. In part this will have already been encountered as part of Religious Education.

Pupils experience diversity in different ways. Some pupils live in diverse communities, others in ones that are much less so. Whichever the case, learning about how diverse the UK is is seen to be part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

This unit is intended to take pupils on a journey:

We live in the UK which is very diverse.

The UK is religiously diverse.

Religious and non-religious beliefs matter a lot to many people and shape the way they live their lives.

There is a need for people to live together well. For society to work well, respect and tolerance are key values.

It is important that people of different faiths and beliefs are able to talk with each other and cooperate, exploring shared values and also differences.

About the unit

This unit is aimed at helping pupils to learn about and understand religious diversity in the UK. It gets pupils to think about how the United Kingdom has a long history of religious diversity, even in small communities. It asks pupils to think about the ways in which people with very different religious and also non-religious beliefs can live well together. In the course of this it explores the values of respect and tolerance.

Vocabulary

Diversity, religion, belief, inter faith, values, civic virtue¹.

Expectations

At the end of this unit

Most pupils: will be able to talk about religious diversity in the UK. They will be able to give examples of diversity of religion and belief in the UK. They will be able to talk about why religious and non-religious beliefs are important to many people. Pupils will be able to talk about why respect and tolerance are important for communities if they are to live well together and some ways that people of different religions and beliefs come together to talk and to help others in society.

Some pupils: will not have made so much progress they will be able to talk about the diversity in their community and how people of different backgrounds make up the community in which they live, focusing particularly here on people of different faiths and beliefs. They will be able to talk about why respect and tolerance are important if people are going to live well together.

Some pupils: will have progressed further and will be able to recognise that religions also have diversity within them, as do non-religious belief groups, and give examples of that diversity in at least two different traditions in the UK. They will be able to explain what is meant by 'values' and by a 'civic virtue' and explain the difference between 'respect' and 'tolerance'.

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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LEARNING OBJECTIVES Pupils should learn...	POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the UK is diverse in a number of different ways and has been so for centuries; • that many people live in very diverse communities, although some do not; and • that diversity is also part of our lives through lots of other routes such as travel, education and the media. 	<p>Pupils discuss what is meant by the term ‘diversity’ and how it can be used in different ways and contexts.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That part of the UK’s diversity is people’s different religious and non-religious beliefs; and • that many religious communities have diversity within them, for example different denominations or ethnically based communities. 	<p>Pupils learn about the census information on religion and belief in England and Wales. (Local authority data is also available.)</p> <p>Pupils could look at websites of national faith community representative bodies that represent some of the religious traditions in the UK, some of which make clear through their member listings that they included different ‘denominations’ or groups, eg Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify religious diversity in their own communities. 	<p>Pupils investigate the religious diversity in their own locality². They could do this by identifying religious buildings such as churches, mandirs, gurdwaras, mosques, synagogues, temples and viharas in their area and the traditions they belong to.</p> <p>If your locality has places of worship linked to different faith communities a visit could be organised to two different places of worship. Where a community does not have places of worship locally, staff could ask pupils to invite speakers from two different religious traditions to come to the class to speak about their faiths, especially where a local faith tradition may have no place or worship nearby; for example the Baha’i or Zoroastrian faiths. They could also invite a speaker from a non-religious belief group.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To recognise that religious and non-religious beliefs are important to people and that these beliefs have an impact on the way people live their lives. 	<p>In pairs (or threes) pupils research two people of different religions or beliefs who have spoken about the importance of their beliefs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • locally • nationally <p>These could, for example, be religious leaders, sports people, business people, environmental campaigners or others.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That to live well together, people need to develop the values of respect and tolerance. Pupils discuss what is meant by the terms ‘respect’ and ‘tolerance’ and how those values contribute to people living well together. 	<p>Pupils look for one online example – local or national – of an inter faith initiative’s aims or a project or event and discuss how it shows people of different religions cooperating and/or learning about each other. One example of a national initiative is the UK Women of Faith Network which brings together women of different backgrounds. Another example is the Faith and Belief Forum which has a number of programmes.</p>

LEARNING OUTCOMES Pupils should be able to	POINTS TO NOTE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate that they understand that the UK is a diverse place, and has been historically. 	<p>History, Geography and PSHE are areas where this may have already come up and it is useful to build on prior learning.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate their knowledge about diversity of religion and belief in their local area and nationally. 	<p>Teachers can draw upon what pupils have already learned about religious diversity by getting pupils to reflect on what they have already learned as part of their RE. Religious diversity may be much wider than what might be required of a school by an Agreed Syllabus and this may be reflected in the school itself.</p> <p>The Datashine website is a useful resource for identifying different sorts of diversity in local areas.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about the importance of respect and tolerance in the building of strong communities. 	<p>Teachers may wish to draw on the DfE guidance, which talks about the importance of respecting the beliefs of others and the rights of people to practise their religion within the law.</p>

TEACHER RESOURCES

In preparation teachers could develop simple resources for pupils to help them engage in learning. Here are some suggestions:

- a map of the locality which already identifies places of worship in the area where the school is (local Humanist groups advertise their meetings on their websites and could be added to the map);
- a list of some well-known sports personalities and other celebrities who have spoken about their religious beliefs;
- a list of a few well-known local religious figures and/or prominent people of faith or belief;
- discussion cards for a P4C or Circle Time lesson on respect and tolerance to enable a more informed session.

During this unit it may be useful for pupils to visit places of worship in their area or to invite speakers from different faith communities/ belief groups to visit the school, see *the Teacher Introduction* that goes with this unit.

NOTES

The primary focus of faith community bodies is their own community and tradition. At the same time, inter faith issues are increasingly significant. As part of their work within society, many now have a dedicated strand to their work designed to enable them and their members to engage with integrity in inter faith dialogue and encounter and to work together on social issues for the common good.

Non-religious belief bodies, such as Humanists UK, also engage with inter faith issues and the involvement of non-religious belief bodies is referenced at various points in this resource.

The Bahá'í community of the United Kingdom comprises over 7,000 Bahá'ís and has members across the whole of the UK. The Baha'i faith has its origins in 19th Century Iran.

Zoroastrians originally came to the UK via India over 150 years ago and form part of a community that has its origins in ancient Iran.

Churches Together Britain and Ireland (CTBI) is an umbrella body for many different Christian denominations in Britain and Ireland. England, Scotland and Wales also have their own Churches Together structures and Ireland and Northern Ireland has the Irish Council of Churches.

Denomination here refers to an autonomous branch of the Christian Church.

UK Women of Faith Network is a project of Religions for Peace UK, which itself is a member of Religions for Peace International.

The Faith and Belief Forum, formerly the Three Faiths Forum, is a UK based organisation with a number of programmes.

The unit points to a number of resources linked to Inter Faith Network member bodies and other sources. There are many such materials available and those included are in no way exhaustive. IFN's member body list and other resources on its website www.interfaith.org.uk will take you to other useful materials.

The links provided are to materials of independent organisations. IFN takes no responsibility for their content – as it stands at this time or as it may evolve. The links may change over time. They are correct at November 2019 and will be checked periodically. If you find any that do not work, please do let us know so that we can replace them.

The resource covers a broad range of faith traditions in the UK and this is reflected across the resource as a whole, not in all or any one of the individual units.

¹ 'Civic virtues' are behaviours of a good citizen, such as care for neighbour and environment. For further ideas see the DfE's guidance on Citizenship education in the primary school.

² Locality here could mean village, town or city. In less diverse and more sparsely populated areas 'locality' could refer to the local authority as a whole. Teachers should use their own discretion.