

## Inter faith activity in the UK

A Teacher resource  
for secondary pupils  
aged 11–14



# Teacher introduction



## 1) A RESOURCE FOR KEY STAGE 3 LEARNING ABOUT INTER FAITH ACTIVITY

This resource is produced by the Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN) which has worked since 1987 to support and encourage inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. [www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk).

The resource is aimed at teachers of pupils at Key Stage 3, ages 11–14. It is intended to help pupils learn about the variety of inter faith activity across the UK, using examples from across different communities. Given the complexity of curriculum requirements across the UK this resource has been shaped in the context of English curriculum requirements. It has, however, benefited from the input of the national inter faith linking bodies of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and may be more widely useful.

The resource is intended to help pupils learn about the variety of inter faith activity in the UK, using examples from across different communities and types of organisation. It is designed to be useful for general RE outcomes in England, particularly in the context of:

- the **requirement in many agreed syllabuses at Key Stage 3**, in England, to learn about ‘interfaith dialogue: a study of relationships, conflicts and collaboration within and between religions and beliefs’;
- the **recommendation in the 2013 Curriculum Framework for RE in England** that ‘Students examine questions about whether religion and spirituality are similar or different, about how different religions and worldviews relate to each other and about collaboration and conflict between individuals and communities, including inter faith’; and
- the recommendation of the RE Council’s Commission on RE Final Report (2018) that as part of the proposed ‘National Entitlement’ pupils should be taught ‘the ways in which worldviews develop in interaction with each other, have some shared beliefs and practices as well as differences, and that people may draw upon more than one tradition’.

The resource can be adapted for the education requirements in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

### GCSE relevance

The units can serve also as a **useful springboard for GCSE study** as the material is relevant to such topics as social justice, values and shared ethics. It is also relevant to some of the requirements in GCSE specifications for AQA, OCR, Edexcel and Eduqas in England, WJEC in Wales and CCEA in Northern Ireland; and, National 3, 4 and 5 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies in Scotland (SQA).

### SMSC and British Values

The resource can also support schools in providing **SMSC** since it enables pupils to think about ‘British values’ and values shared by different religions. It can also help them to learn about the social capital faith communities and inter faith bodies bring to their locality and to the UK as a whole.

### Citizenship skills

Citizens of a diverse society need good skills to help them ‘live well together’, such as dialogue skills. This is very important to the continued development of an integrated society. These units can help pupils reflect upon and develop skills for dialogue, establishing common ground and engaging well with difference (see Unit 2 for greater detail).

### Worldviews in RE

For those teachers who are exploring the concept of worldviews in RE<sup>1</sup> there are opportunities to explore the ways that religious and non-religious worldviews share things in common; and, that multi faith and inter faith encounter and action demonstrate particular forms of commitment on the part of people from different faith communities and belief traditions to work with each other. Teachers might also want to explore how people from within different faith communities or belief groups may hold different worldviews and how that has an impact on the way they respond to the world around them<sup>2</sup>.

### Cross curricular themes

Across the UK, schools are required to promote responsible citizenship and to develop cultural understanding. In England this is embedded in the

<sup>1</sup> Commission on Religious Education (2018) Religion and Worldviews: The Way Forward A national plan for RE. London, Religious Education Council for England and Wales

<sup>2</sup> Cooling T., with Bowie R. and Panjwani F. (2020) Worldviews in Religious Education. London, Theos

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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[National Curriculum Order for Citizenship](#)<sup>3</sup>.

### Inter Faith Week

This resource could be used during Inter Faith Week – in which an increasing number of schools participate. Inter Faith Week is led by the Inter Faith Network for the UK, in consultation with the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum and the Inter-faith Council for Wales/ Cyngor Rhyngffydd Cymru in relation to the Week in those nations<sup>4</sup>. It is timed to begin on Remembrance Sunday to encourage remembering together of the service of those of many faiths and beliefs. Inter Faith Week has its own website – [www.interfaithweek.org](http://www.interfaithweek.org) – and its own social media channels.

Pupils may wish to hold their own Inter Faith Week activity connected to their learning through this resource. If your pupils do activities for Inter Faith Week, we would be pleased to know. For details on how to be in touch see **Feedback** at the end of this Introduction. If you tweet about your pupils' activities or put them on Facebook, the hashtag is #InterfaithWeek.

## 2) RESOURCE CONTENT AND FORMAT

### The units

The resource consists of five units which can be used separately or in combination.

#### Unit 1: Introducing Inter Faith Activity in the UK

This unit forms the basis for a lesson, or a series of lessons. It is suitable for freestanding use or it can be a starting place for additional lessons based on the units below.

#### Unit 2: Let's Talk – inter faith dialogue

#### Unit 3: Faith communities, service and solidarity

#### Unit 4: Faith communities in service for the wellbeing of others

#### Unit 5: Making a difference in the world – inter faith responses to the climate crisis

The units are most helpfully used as a set. However, they are designed in such a way that teachers can also choose individual units to suit pupils' needs and interests; or their own interests or areas of knowledge. They can be tailored by individual schools to help meet relevant requirements for the school or academy, such as those in an agreed syllabus, funding agreement or foundation document. It is suggested that Unit 1 is used ahead of any of the others.

### Format

The units have common elements:

- About this unit
- Vocabulary
- Expectations
- Learning objectives and possible teaching activities
- Learning outcomes
- Teacher resources
- Notes

Where words or phrases are underlined and in blue these are hyperlinked to resources that teachers might find useful.

External websites for which the resource provides hyperlinks will not have been designed for pupils aged 11–14 years old. It is recommended that teachers read the linked pages to check in advance whether they are appropriate to meet the learning needs of their particular pupils and also to identify where pupils might need extra assistance given the complexity of some language or concepts used on the websites. Where access to computers or tablets is limited teachers may want to create their own presentations for whole class teaching using the hyperlinks. A small number of the linked materials could be used live on an interactive whiteboard (eg DataShine, some video links) but would not work as part of a standard PowerPoint presentation.

The language relating to pupil expectations is drawn from the National Framework for Religious Education as that is still widely used in Agreed Syllabuses in England, but teachers should look at the documents that relate to RE in their schools to ensure that they are meeting the standards expected.

<sup>3</sup> The requirements in other nations of the UK include: [Mutual Understanding](#) in Northern Ireland, [responsible citizens and effective contributors](#) in Scotland, and [ethical and informed citizens](#) in Wales.

<sup>4</sup> Scottish Interfaith Week, running since 2004, is led by Interfaith Scotland. It usually takes place at the same time as Inter Faith Week elsewhere in the UK. It also has its own website (<https://scottishinterfaithweek.org/>) and social media channels.

### 3) HOW TO USE THE RESOURCE

#### Sequencing the units

The resource starts with Unit 1, which covers inter faith activity in the UK, as a general introduction. Additional units have been developed to allow teachers and pupils to explore specific areas of inter faith activity. Units 3 and 4 have much in common and teachers may want to teach these as one extended Unit.

Some schools may want to sequence learning about inter faith activity in the UK across the Key Stage. In such cases the Units can be used in a progressive pattern across the two or three years of the Key Stage.

#### A flexible resource

The units are designed to assist lesson planning rather than being complete lesson plans in themselves.

Units are designed so that teachers can deliver them in a lesson, over a number of lessons spread over time, or for a dedicated period of time such as half a day. There is no recommended length of time for any specific unit. Some units lend themselves to more time and others to less, and teachers should feel confident about their curriculum decision making in light of the learning and progress that they want their pupils to make.

Specialist and non-specialist teachers often have different needs when it comes to planning RE. Specialist teachers may find the units a useful springboard from which to develop this work further. Those without an RE specialism may find it useful to stay close to the progression and content set out in each unit, choosing activities and resources to support the learning they want their pupils to achieve.

The ‘Possible teaching activities’ included are largely framed in terms of pupils researching topics. However, most of the links provided can also be drawn on by teachers in other ways, for example drawing on them to create their own resources, such as PowerPoint presentations or work sheets. As noted above, there are a small number of linked materials where either pupils would need individual access to the internet or something like an interactive whiteboard would be required.

#### Ground rules for discussions about contested issues

When discussing religion and belief it is easy to stray into areas where people feel very passionate. For instance, there may be situations where the self-identification of a person or group with a faith community is contested from within the latter. The possibility of difficult discussions should not deter teachers from exploring the issue of inter faith activity. It is important to have ground rules and to be clear about two points from the beginning:

- the importance of listening to others respectfully, and
- that listening to others respectfully does not mean that you have to agree with them.

It is also important to be clear that the term ‘inter faith’ does not imply the ‘mixing up of religions’. It refers simply to engagement between people of different faiths (and sometimes non-religious beliefs). Inter faith activity is activity of this kind – usually within the context of people seeking to understand each other better; explore shared concerns; and together make a positive contribution to their societies.

Teachers may find it useful to read [Building Good Relations with People of Different Faiths and Beliefs](#), which member bodies of IFN sign up to when they become members. This short ‘code’ sets out important ground rules for inter faith encounter.

#### Visits to places of worship and speaker visits

When using these resources, it may also be useful to organise visits to places of worship. Some areas have faith trails organised by local inter faith groups where pupils walk to different places of worship on the same day to experience the diversity of their local community. It may also be possible to invite speakers from faith and belief communities to come to the school to speak about their faiths and how they interact with people from different faith traditions. In some areas of the UK, local inter faith groups assist in this process and provide two or more speakers from different faith or belief traditions to come to the school to talk about how they work together in their area.

The restrictions that came about as a result of the COVID-19 crisis have meant that many places of worship have developed the capacity for virtual tours, and many more local faith and inter faith

groups have the capacity to video conference. As a result of this where visits are difficult to organise due to timetabling restrictions a virtual solution might be the best way forward so that pupils can access their full entitlement to RE at KS3.

### Status of examples

The Units point to a number of resources linked to IFN 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](http://www.interfaith.org.uk) will take you to other useful materials. Its Twitter and Facebook accounts may also be helpful: <https://twitter.com/ifnetuk> and [www.facebook.com/ifnetuk](http://www.facebook.com/ifnetuk)

Other than those to IFN's own websites, 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 and content on linked pages may also change over time. They are correct at March 2021 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 of the individual units. Also reflected in some contexts is the involvement of those who hold non-religious beliefs, such as Humanists.

This resource is focused on inter faith activity in England. Materials and examples about Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have been seen in the course of development by their national inter faith linking bodies.

### 4) COPYRIGHT

This resource, the Teacher Introduction and Units 1–5, is copyright, where stated. The Inter Faith Network's copyright does not extend to the linked materials, which are covered by the copyright of the organisations that have produced those resources.

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### Feedback

If you use this resource, we would be very pleased to hear your experiences. You can email these to [ifnet@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:ifnet@interfaith.org.uk) marked 'Schools material feedback' in the subject line.