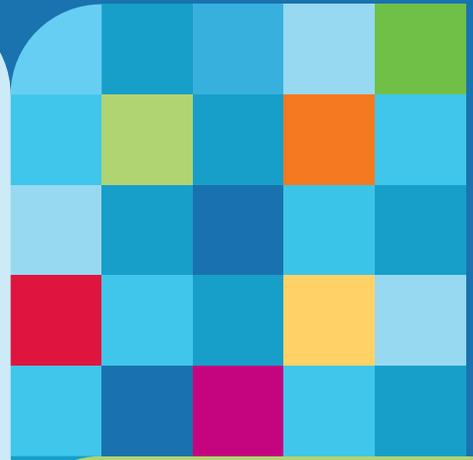


## Inter faith activity in the UK

A Teacher resource  
for secondary pupils  
aged 11–14



### UNIT 1

# Introducing Inter Faith Activity in the UK



**This unit is intended to take pupils on a journey:**

The UK is diverse.

Diversity of religion and belief is a significant part of that diversity.

Religious diversity in the UK is not a new phenomenon.

In a diverse society there is a need for people to live together well.

Good inter faith relations is part of living together well in a diverse society.

Inter faith activity is an increasingly visible feature of life in the UK and takes a wide variety of forms.

Inter faith dialogue and learning help faith communities to explore points of difference and commonality.

Inter faith understanding and cooperation help people live together well, as they help develop and strengthen tolerance and respect.

**Teacher note:** This unit of work is intended as an introduction for pupils learning about inter faith relations in the UK. It introduces pupils to some reasons that inter faith relations are important and to different types of activity that can contribute to good inter faith relations. It gives examples of different types of faith and inter faith bodies involved.

### About the unit

This unit is aimed at helping pupils to learn about and understand the religious diversity of the UK and how that diversity has increased both the opportunities and the need for communities to understand each other better.

The unit asks pupils to think about the ways in which people with different religious and non-religious beliefs can live well together, building on shared values to work together for the common good. In the course of this it explores the 'British value' of 'Mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs'<sup>1</sup>.

### Vocabulary

Inter faith, multi faith, diversity, religion, belief, values, civic virtue<sup>2</sup>.

### Expectations

#### Pupils will:

- Have an understanding of the diversity of religion and belief in the UK and in their own local area.
- Be able to talk about how inter faith initiatives help people from faith and belief groups come together to learn about each other, explore their common values and differences and to work together for the common good.
- Talk about how inter faith activities provide an important way to strengthen tolerance and mutual respect.
- Understand and be able to distinguish between the concepts of tolerance and respect.

<sup>1</sup> Schools should promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. [Promoting fundamental British values through SMSC - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

<sup>2</sup> 'Civic virtues' are behaviours of a good citizen, such as care for neighbour and environment. For further ideas see the National Curriculum Order for Citizenship: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-citizenship-programmes-of-study>

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"> <li>• That in a diverse society it is important that people are able to live together well.</li> </ul>	<p>Pupils discuss why they believe it is important for people to live well together and give examples of what that might involve and discuss the importance of civic virtue.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the UK's population has been for many centuries – to varying degrees – diverse in terms of ethnicity, countries of origin and other aspects of identity.</li> <li>• That some areas are very diverse, others less so.</li> <li>• That people also encounter diversity through travel, education and the media, people live in an interconnected society.</li> </ul>	<p>Pupils research diversity across the ages, and the range of people who have lived in what is now the United Kingdom and the nations that form it. They could explore the resources the BBC have produced to show <a href="#">migration's effect on Britain – religion and ideas</a></p> <p>Pupils discuss what they understand the term 'diversity' to mean and how it can be used in different ways and contexts.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That part of the UK's diversity is the diversity of different religious and non-religious beliefs with which people identify.</li> <li>• That religious traditions in the UK have an institutional life. There is a wide range of traditions and many thousands of places of worship of different faiths.</li> </ul>	<p>Pupils learn about diversity of religion and belief as recorded in by the 2011 Census for <a href="#">England and Wales</a>.</p> <p>Pupils could look at websites of national faith community representative bodies that represent some of the major religious traditions in the UK, in some cases representing a spectrum of strands or 'denominations' of that tradition, eg <a href="#">The Buddhist Society</a>, <a href="#">Churches Together In Britain and Ireland</a>, <a href="#">Hindu Forum of Britain</a>, or <a href="#">The Muslim Council of Britain</a>. For a non-religious belief body pupils could look at <a href="#">Humanists UK</a>.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To identify religious diversity in their own communities.</li> <li>• That many religious communities have diversity within them, for example different denominations or members of different ethnic backgrounds.</li> </ul>	<p>Pupils investigate the religious diversity in their <a href="#">own locality</a><sup>3</sup>.</p> <p>Pupils could also explore the pattern of religious buildings in their area, such as churches, gurdwaras, mandirs, mosques, synagogues, temples and viharas.</p> <p>Pupils, with teachers' support, organise a virtual classroom experience where representatives of different religions and/or different denominations from the same tradition speak about their tradition and how it relates to the broader religion to which they belong.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That diversity of background, alongside other factors such as different political and other views, mean that to live well together, people need to develop the values of respect and tolerance and make a reality of those day to day.</li> </ul>	<p>Pupils discuss what is meant by the terms 'respect' and 'tolerance' and how those values are important for people living well together. They consider how these relate to the 'British values' of individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths (see foot note i).</p> <p>Pupils could also explore how living well together calls for the ability to discuss matters well (see Unit 2 on dialogue).</p>

<sup>3</sup> Locality here could mean their 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. Demographic information about a schools locality can be found on the [DataShine Census](#) website by entering the school's post code, going to the Data Chooser and clicking the tab Origins and Beliefs, subheading (2) Religion (detailed), and then choosing the religion to be viewed (3).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That 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, some national faith community organisations 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.</li> </ul>	<p>Pupils look at examples of resources that help members of particular faith traditions to work with people different from themselves, such as: <a href="#">The Board of Deputies of British Jews</a>; <a href="#">The Church of England</a>; the <a href="#">Institute of Jainology</a>; and <a href="#">The Methodist Church</a>.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That inter faith initiatives have been formed to enable people from different faith traditions to meet together, learn about each other and work towards building a better society.</li> </ul>	<p>Pupils could research the early history of formal structures for inter faith relations in Britain or key figures in this. Examples include <a href="#">International Association for Religious Freedom</a>, founded in 1900, initially as a Unitarian council; <a href="#">World Congress of Faiths</a>, founded in 1936 by Sir Frances Younghusband; <a href="#">The Parkes Institute</a>, based on the work of the Revd Dr James Parkes; and the <a href="#">Council of Christians and Jews</a>, founded in 1942 by the then Archbishop of Canterbury and Chief Rabbi. Two early local inter faith groups that emerged in particular social circumstances are: <a href="#">Interfaith Wolverhampton</a>, and Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship, which produced <a href="#">a book about inter faith relations in Leeds</a> to mark its 40th Anniversary.</p> <p>Pupils could look for two online examples – one local and one national – of an inter faith organisation’s aims or activities. They could discuss the ways in which those examples show people of different religions cooperating and/or learning about each other. Three possible national examples include the <a href="#">Faith and Belief Forum</a>, <a href="#">Nisa Nashim</a> and <a href="#">Religions for Peace UK</a>. Two local examples are <a href="#">Building Bridges Burnley</a> and <a href="#">Windsor and Maidenhead Community Forum</a>.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National inter faith linking bodies for the UK and for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland exist to help enable inter faith initiatives and faith communities to share their learning and work together.</li> </ul>	<p>Pupils research the work of the <a href="#">Inter Faith Network for the UK</a>, <a href="#">Inter-faith Council for Wales</a>, <a href="#">Interfaith Scotland</a> and the <a href="#">Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum</a>.</p>

LEARNING OUTCOMES Pupils should be able to	POINTS TO NOTE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate that they understand that the UK is a diverse place, and has been historically.</li> </ul>	<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"> <li>• Demonstrate their knowledge about diversity of religion and belief in their local area and nationally.</li> </ul>	<p>Teachers can draw upon what pupils have already learned about religious diversity and what they have already learned as part of their RE. Religious diversity in a school's local area may be much wider than what might be required of a school by an Agreed Syllabus/funding agreement, and this may be reflected in the school itself. For example, there may be a Unitarian chapel in the vicinity of the school but the Unitarian Church may not feature in a locally agreed syllabus. Teachers may therefore need to have a broader approach than that needed for the local authority as a whole.</p> <p>The <a href="#">Datashine</a> website is a useful resource for identifying different sorts of diversity in local areas.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk about the importance of respect and tolerance, setting out reasons as to why these values are important in a pluralist society.</li> </ul>	<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> <p>Pupils may also find it useful to discuss the IFN resource: <a href="#">Building Good Relations with People of Different Faiths and Beliefs</a>.</p>

## TEACHER RESOURCES

During this introductory 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 (whether virtually or in person). See About This Resource in the Teacher Introduction to this set of units.

## NOTES

### Faith and belief organisations referred to in this unit.

**The Board of Deputies of British Jews** is the largest Jewish communal organisation in the United Kingdom, established in 1760. It describes itself as “the voice of the British Jewish community, the first port of call for government, the media and others seeking to understand Jewish community interests and concerns”.

**The Buddhist Society** is the oldest Buddhist organisation in the UK. It specialises in publishing and profiling the principles of Buddhism and encouraging the study and practice of those principles.

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

**The Church of England** is the established church in England. It is of the ‘mother church’ of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

**Hindu Forum of Britain** is an umbrella body linking a wide range of Hindu organisations. Its work involves “Public policy and community consultation for the government; capacity building and project development for the Hindu community; and developing good interfaith relations with other faith communities to build a cohesive and inclusive Britain.”

**Humanists UK** is a national charity whose aims include advancing Humanism; advancement of education and in particular the study of and the dissemination of knowledge about Humanism.

**Institute of Jainology** provides a platform for Jain traditions and organisations to interact, facilitate scholarly research and promote inter faith encounter, including through One Jain.

**Methodist Church** is the body that represents many Methodist churches and chapels in Great Britain.

**The Muslim Council of Britain** is a national representative Muslim umbrella body with over 500 affiliated national, regional and local organisations, mosques, charities and schools.

### Inter Faith Organisations referred to in this unit

**Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN)** works to promote understanding, cooperation and good relations between organisations and persons of different faiths in the UK.

**The Inter-faith Council for Wales, Interfaith Scotland** and the **Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum** are the inter faith linking bodies for the devolved nations.

**The Faith and Belief Forum** is a UK based organisation with a number of programmes, including school-linking programmes and student focused programmes such as ParliaMentors.

**Building Bridges Burnley** is an inter faith organisation created after the 2001 ‘serious disturbances’ in Burnley, to enhance awareness and understanding between different faith groups. The organisation advocates diversity and aims to promote social cohesion through inter faith activities across the town of Burnley and beyond.

**Windsor and Maidenhead Community Forum** has worked since 1981 to strengthen understanding, mutual respect and trust between the different faiths within the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

**Interfaith Wolverhampton** works with the diverse communities living in and around Wolverhampton in order to foster and nurture mutual understanding and appreciation between the different faiths. Its website includes many resources including a booklet about how and why it came into existence after Enoch Powell’s ‘Rivers of Blood’ speech.

**The International Association for Religious Freedom**, founded in 1900, is one of the world’s first international inter religious organizations. It promotes and supports the work of individuals in the cause of religious freedom.

**Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship** is an inter faith body working in Leeds, West Yorkshire

**Nisa-Nashim** is a UK based network bringing Jewish and Muslim women together by setting up groups of women who build personal friendships, grow as leaders and benefit wider society through programmes and initiatives

**The Parkes Institute** is the world's oldest centre for the study of Jewish/non-Jewish relations across the ages.

**Religions for Peace UK** is the independent UK Chapter of Religions for Peace International, a body accredited to the United Nations

**World Congress of Faiths** was founded in 1936 and has its roots in the World Parliament of Faiths founded in 1893. It is UK based and made up of members of all faiths, and none, who have an interest in spiritual dialogue and learning.

### Technical vocabulary

**Inter faith** is used in this resource to describe interactions between people of different faiths, and in some cases between those of religious and non-religious beliefs.

**Multi faith** is used in this resource of activities to describe activities involving several faiths contributing 'side-by-side' where the primary emphasis is not on their interaction.

'**Denomination**' here refers to an autonomous branch of the Christian Church. It can also refer to a branch of any religion.

**Unitarianism** is a Christian movement and denomination, with its UK origins in the dissenting Christians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Its name comes from some Dissenters' rejection of the doctrine of the Trinity, instead seeing God as a One and Jesus as a wise teacher, but not divine.

### Scope of examples included

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

The unit points to a number of resources. [What does it mean to live in a multi-faith society? – KS3 Religious Studies – BBC Bitesize](#) is also a useful link. There are many such materials available and those included in this unit 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.

Where 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 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.

Teachers should consult the Teacher Introduction before using this unit as a basis for curriculum planning.