

Inter Faith Week

**Activities in the community
to bring together young people
from different faiths and schools**

**Material created for Inter Faith Week by NASACRE with the support of
the Department for Children Schools and Families**

Aims of Inter Faith Week:

- promoting good inter faith relations
- highlighting the contribution of faiths to building community
- increasing understanding between faiths and wider society

SACREs have the potential to be a great resource for schools and for the children and young people they serve. The following community based activities can be organised or supported by SACREs as a means of bringing children and young people from different faiths and schools together.

1. Exchange and Activity Days

Rationale: To facilitate inter faith exchanges amongst primary age children.

Activity: The SACRE could commission and support planning of a programme for primary schools in which children from up to four diverse schools engage in inter faith exchanges and activity days (e.g. art, music, sport, and computers). The work would be coordinated by a teacher or consultant on behalf of the SACRE drawing on community links and connections. Local places of worship and community venues could be considered as venues for the activity days and various media including a local newspaper could get involved in recording and sharing the children's experiences.

Time frame: Programme planning – September to November 2009
Programme launch – Inter Faith Week or soon after.

2. Going to Secondary School – Faith and Transitions

Rationale: To bring pupils together to discuss faith and transition to secondary school.

Activity: The SACRE could commission and support an event “Going to Secondary School” for Year 6 pupils in four or five primary schools coming from many faith communities. The event led by teacher or community based youth worker would address issues of concern to the children and young people about faith and its practice in their new schools. As part of the event the pupils explore their experience of, and develop ideas about, what worship means to them, and how schools can help them experience this. SACRE members facilitate small group discussions during the event.

Time frame: Event planning - September to November.
Event date – Inter Faith Week

3. Sameness and Differences

Rationale: To facilitate exploration of ‘sameness’ and ‘difference’.

Activity: SACREs and a local Inter faith group could identify specific faith communities within their locality (for example, Greek Orthodox, Sufi Muslims, Jain, Rastafarian community), with whom pupils in Y6 and Y7 from a cross-section of schools within the local authority area explore the statement 'we are all the same; we're all different' through dance, artefacts, music, and texts. This activity led by teachers and supported by relevant SACRE members would enable the pupils to share reflections on ‘our commonality and individuality’. The schools from which the pupils have been drawn share these reflections more widely at a conference convened by the local SACRE and inter faith group.

Time frame: Planning of the exploration session – September to November.
Delivery of the session – Inter Faith Week.
SACRE conference – Late spring 2010

4. Global Discussions

Rationale: To explore specific questions and engender discussion amongst pupils from a range of faith backgrounds.

Activity: SACREs and local inter faith groups could sponsor and support discussions using the 'World Cafe' model as a means of exploring

specific questions and to engender facilitated, but potentially rich discussion. SACRE members and teachers could facilitate the discussions which would be hosted in community based venues.

Questions that have been tried successfully include:

- Is there a purpose to life?
- What makes me who I am?
- What does it mean to be human?
- What is truth?
- Is violence ever justified?
- Why is there evil and suffering?
- Is religion out of date?
- Which is more important: the question or the answer?

The 'World Cafe' model is explained in detail below.

Time frame: Planning of 'World Cafe' – September to November
Delivery – Inter Faith Week

5. Faith Trails

Rationale: To introduce children and young people to a range of beliefs as experienced by other children and young people.

Activity: SACREs and local inter faith groups could sponsor a faith trail focussing on striking local faith buildings (perhaps a mosque, Sikh gurdwara, Anglican church, Hindu temple). Arrangements are made for groups of KS2/3 pupils of mixed faith backgrounds to undertake the faith trail, visiting the buildings and making contact with the faith community members. At each venue a young person of the faith background of the particular building shares with the group her or his faith experience followed by small group discussions exploring similarities and differences with their own experiences or those of other young people who previously shared at other venues.

Time frame: Set up the faith trail – September to November
Visits of children and young people – Inter Faith Week

6. Setting out your Stall

Rationale: To bring together contributions from pupils from a range of backgrounds under a common inter faith theme.

Activity: The SACRE and a local inter faith group could jointly sponsor a local inter faith event to which secondary age pupils could be asked to contribute. The event, which would have stalls in a high profile public space, would provide a platform on which Y10 and Y11 pupils from local secondary schools could present a series of sketches and songs relating to a common theme. Selecting an appropriate theme (such as child poverty, HMD, the environment, anniversary of 7th July atrocities) would be essential as a means of drawing together communities to share in a worthwhile inter faith effort). The young people would work on the theme in advance with their RE teacher. These contributions, including sketches, dramatic presentations, recitations and raps from the perspectives of different faiths, could be presented alongside presentations from community groups, local HE and FE students who with the Y10 and Y11 pupils also help "front" their faith stalls at the event.

Time frame: SACRE Planning and preparation - September to November
Event date - Inter Faith Week or later in 2010

7. Electronic Links

Rationale: To use information and communication technologies to bring young people together.

Activity: Depending on how proactive the SACRE is in its use of such technology it could encourage schools to link electronically (using websites, emails, camcorder, video conferencing) supplemented by joint activities, and visits as suggested in the open days, faith trails and global discussions. Where SACREs and local inter faith groups are unfamiliar with the technologies they could, in liaison with the local authority ICT adviser or consultant undertake training and preparation in readiness for demonstrations of the capabilities of such systems during Inter Faith Week. The Inter Faith Week event could be a precursor to longer term work in which mainstream schools and supplementary schools within the faith communities explore how faith and education interact to create better communities.

Time frame: SACRE briefings on ICT capabilities – September to November
ICT Demonstrations – Inter Faith Week
School Links established – 2010

8. Linked Schools

Rationale: To bring together young people attending different faith schools and to support links between such schools.

Activity: Using the NATRE local network groups as a starting point the SACRE and local inter faith groups could encourage schools to link and compare experiences e.g. a Roman Catholic school with another school with a high Muslim population as part of an RC/Islam unit.

It is important that schools guard against presenting tokenistic efforts during Inter Faith Week by attempting too much too quickly.

However, Inter Faith Week may be a good time:

- to showcase work on school linking already in hand and going well
- to launch the start of new school link; or,
- to 'feel the pulse' of relatively new school linking ventures.

After the first year of operation, pupils from the linked schools could share their experience of the linking process at a conference for KS3/KS4 pupils organised by the SACRE and the inter faith group. School links established in this way could be [extended and formalised through the School Linking Network scheme](#). [See the advice note [School Linking](#) which provides links to the Schools Linking Network and the Shared Futures programme of the Three Faiths' Forum].

Working together two SACREs could plan a shared evening meeting during inter Faith Week / Islam Awareness Week to explore the impact of faith schools linking together and how SACREs could better support such initiatives. The meeting would also enable representatives of the SACREs to get to know each other and make their own links in order to provide support and networking (for example the Hindu SACRE reps knowing each other and having each other's contact details).

Time frame: Establishing the links – September to December
Joint SACRE Meeting – Inter Faith Week
Conference - November 2010

9. Year 12 Multi Faith Conference

Rationale: To bring together young people from different backgrounds and key service providers to consider issues of faith and service delivery.

Activity: SACRE and a local inter faith group could commence planning of a large scale conference for Y12 pupils with a view to it taking place in the summer 2010. Initial consultations with young people could take place during Inter Faith Week with the outcomes influencing the shape and direction of the conference planning. Consultations could

employ techniques such as the 'World Cafe' for drawing out the local concerns around services such as health, education and policing where faith issues might be important factors. Following on from this and working together with the local youth SACRE (if there is one), HE and FE providers and other significant stakeholders, the SACRE and the local inter faith organisation could proceed to organise a multi faith conference for year 12 pupils.

Time frame: Initial conference planning – September to November
Initial youth consultation - Inter Faith Week
Main conference planning – January to May 2010
Y12 Conference – June 2010

10. Faith Community Open Days

Rationale: To raise awareness amongst children and young people of local places of worship.

Activity: SACREs and local inter faith groups organise a series of open days during Inter Faith Week when children and young people from a range of backgrounds are able to visit the buildings, make contact with the members of the faith communities and engage in active discussions in small groups. The opportunity of these open days could be taken to hold discussions facilitated by teachers, SACRE members and faith community members around the theme of 'faith in society' using active discussion techniques where small groups circulate to different faiths moving every 10 minutes or so.

Time frame: Planning of Open Days – September to November
Open Days – Inter Faith Week

Note on 'World Cafe' Model

Decide on 4 to 8 questions you wish to discuss. These could be wide ranging across a number of themes, or specific to a particular issue. Set out a table for each question, each table being covered with a paper table cloth, facilitated by one person who stays at that table, having a flip chart with markers next to it and on it a number of different coloured felt-tips or pens.

The delegates are divided into the number of groups that there are tables and spend 10-15 minutes at each table, then moving on to the

next one until they have been at each one. (Alternatively, they could cover half of them, or choose a certain number, depending on time available.) The facilitator stays with her/his table. As the group discusses the question, the facilitator notes the main points of the discussion on the flip chart. Individuals also write ideas on the table cloth. Then, when the time to change happens, the ideas of the previous group are outlined by the facilitator and the new group takes on the discussion. Individually they can build upon comments left on the table cloth by the previous individuals. (If you want to allow for each person to take their own notes away with them, you can give them a sheet with all the questions on it and they make notes on that at each table and take it with them to the next table and then take it with them at the end of the session. This is purely for their own personal record.)

The contributions at each table can then be summarised by each facilitator at the end of the session, people go around the tables reading the threads of thoughts and the flip charts and table cloths typed up at a later date and sent out to delegates.

The strength of this approach is that it allows people to build on what has already been discussed and to start their own stream of thinking that others might develop. It is also very enjoyable!