

Inter Faith Learning, Dialogue and Cooperation: Next Steps



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Front cover photo: Launch of Faiths Working
Together Toolkit, Near Neighbours and the
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Back cover photo: Workshop discussion at
an IFN National Meeting (Photo: IFN)

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The Inter Faith Network for the UK

The Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN) was founded in 1987 to “advance public knowledge and mutual understanding of the teachings, traditions and practices of the different faith communities in Britain, including an awareness both of their distinctive features and their common ground and to promote good relations between persons of different faiths.”

IFN’s role is unique: linking national faith community representative bodies, local, regional and national inter faith organisations, and academic and educational bodies with a focus on inter faith or multi-faith issues and working with them to deepen inter faith understanding and cooperation. One of IFN’s best known programmes is Inter Faith Week.

IFN carries out its work through raising awareness within wider society of the importance of inter faith issues, creating opportunities for linking and sharing good practice, and providing advice and information to help the development of new inter faith initiatives and the strengthening of existing ones. Working with its nearly 200 member bodies is an important part of this. Each of those makes its own contribution to inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK.

IFN works for the public benefit and its work is wide ranging, touching the lives of many thousands of people directly, and through the organisations and initiatives with which it engages.

To find out more or to support IFN’s work of promoting inter faith understanding and cooperation, please visit www.interfaith.org.uk.

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 Learning,
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Next Steps**



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Foreword

The increasing religious diversity of the UK and our interconnected lives here and globally mean that inter faith understanding and cooperation are becoming ever more important. They are a vital part of living together well and developing as a harmonious and integrated society.

Inter faith discussion and learning is also important for those within religious traditions and those of non-religious beliefs because it is part of coming to an understanding about how our own teachings, practices and understandings of truth may relate to those of others.

If you are reading this booklet you may be someone whose experiences have prompted you to get involved, or further involved, in inter faith learning, discussion or practical cooperation.

The booklet is designed to help you along the way. It is not an exhaustive resource and cannot capture everything but aims to offer pointers to assist. We are grateful to the member bodies of IFN for their assistance in its development. In its pages you will find out about how you can become more involved and the opportunities for conversation, exploration and cooperation. Although it is primarily aimed at individuals there is a page for organisations and the IFN office will be glad to assist with further queries.

We hope that you will find this resource a useful and practical way of getting involved in the vital process of creating bonds of friendship, understanding, trust and cooperation between people of different backgrounds across the UK.

The Trustees of the Inter Faith Network for the UK
November 2016

“Understanding and cooperation between people of different faiths and beliefs are vital for our society and all have a part to play in this.”

THE CO-CHAIRS OF THE INTER FAITH NETWORK



Rt Revd Richard Atkinson and Jatinder Singh Birdi, Co-Chairs, Inter Faith Network (Photo: Myles Fisher for IFN)

Using this booklet

Terminology

In this short booklet the term ‘inter faith’ is used. It describes interactions or learning between people of different faiths, and in some cases between those of religious and non-religious beliefs. The term ‘multi faith’ is used here for ‘side-by-side’ engagement.

‘Inter faith’ discussion often seeks to establish areas of agreement but the term ‘inter faith’ is not used here to imply lessening the distinctiveness of traditions.

At some points in the booklet the term ‘dialogue’ is used. This term is used here to refer to conversation which is a mutually respectful exploration of views with the hoped for outcome of greater understanding.

The contents of this booklet

The first section provides information about various ways in which you might get involved in inter faith conversation, learning or multi faith social action, as well as the kinds of bodies that might be helpful to contact, and the activities and resources they are likely to provide.

A list of IFN’s National Faith Community Representative member bodies, and their web addresses, is included in the final section, along with short profiles and contact details for its member National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations and Educational and Academic Bodies. The over 250 local

inter faith organisations are too numerous to list here and so details on how to find and contact these are provided through the local inter faith locator on IFN’s website.

At the back there is a chart providing an at a glance overview of aspects of inter faith activity covered by IFN’s member National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations and Educational and Academic Bodies, to help the reader find out who to contact depending on their interests.

The story of this resource

This resource has been developed in the context of Inter Faith Week. Every year thousands of people meet and take part in projects with people of different faiths and beliefs – many for the first time. This resource points to the ‘next steps’ that people can take after Inter Faith Week – or at any time – if they are interested in inter faith dialogue, learning and multi faith cooperation.



Attendees in dialogue at an IFN meeting (Photo: Myles Fisher for IFN)

* Ways to get involved

How do I...?

The Inter Faith Network office receives enquiries from a wide variety of people about inter faith engagement and learning. For example:

- I'm an active member of my local faith community but I've never really thought much about how my faith relates to other people's. How can I explore this?
- Inter faith groups were mentioned on the radio the other day. How do I get involved with one in my area? Is there one?
- I don't consider myself religious but I would like to find out more about different religions and beliefs
- Our mosque is thinking about what it can do to get involved in building links with other faith communities locally. What might be some helpful steps to take?
- I'm particularly interested in dialogue with other women. Is there an opportunity for this where I live?
- I would like to know more about dialogue between the non-Abrahamic traditions – how might I do that?
- I am particularly interested in a specific form of dialogue – are there programmes for this?
- I want to study inter faith issues in an educational or academic context – how do I find out about courses?



IFN staff member (Photo: IFN)

* Ways to get involved

Events and projects

“I am interested just in occasional opportunities to attend events or join in projects. What might I do?”

Find out what inter faith events are going on in your area. Check out the following places where listings can be found:

- The website of the Inter Faith Network for the UK www.interfaith.org.uk and IFN’s e-bulletin www.interfaith.org.uk/e-bulletin
- The Inter Faith Week website – for a wide range of events each November www.interfaithweek.org
- The website of the nearest local inter faith group to you – see the local inter faith locator at www.interfaith.org.uk/locator
- Websites such as Eventbrite, where an increasing number of inter faith events are listed: www.eventbrite.co.uk
- The internet – search ‘inter faith’, ‘interfaith’, ‘interreligious’ and ‘inter religious’ and similar terms
- Twitter and Facebook
- The website of your local radio station – it may have a regular faith-related weekly programme. Many often carry inter faith stories and publicity for forthcoming inter faith events. These can often be downloaded for ease of listening.

“In Wales, our inter faith engagement has always had a strong quality of relationality. Understanding and cooperation flourish when we develop these through encounter, conversation and friendship. For anyone wanting to become more involved, finding places and people to share the journey and the conversation and to work together is very important.”

INTER FAITH COUNCIL FOR WALES



Inter faith picnic, Altrincham (Photo: Carolyn Jones)



Launch of Inter Faith Week in Wales at the historic Yr Hen Gapel, Llwynrhydowen, Pontsian, Llandysul, Ceredigion (Photo: Unitarians Wales)

* Ways to get involved

Online resources

There are a number of helpful online resources that can help you to find out about the aspects of inter faith engagement before you take your interests further.

A good place to start is the IFN website: www.interfaith.org.uk. Here you will find numerous resources, guides and information on inter faith dialogue, including reports from our events, national meetings and the IFN code on Building Good Relations.

If you are interested in resources provided by IFN's member bodies, contact details for these can be found at www.interfaith.org.uk/members.

In addition, most of IFN's member bodies have an active presence on social media, and this can be a good way to get involved in inter faith activity for the first time. You can find Facebook and Twitter pages for our member bodies through IFN's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/ifnetuk or our Twitter feed @IFNetUK. If you are a Twitter user, you can find a list of our member bodies with a Twitter feed by visiting @IFNetUK and clicking on 'Lists'.

If you are in Scotland, visit the Interfaith Scotland website, which has a page dedicated to online resources: www.interfaithscotland.org/resources

The website of the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum also carries some resources: www.niinterfaithforum.org



Inter Faith Network online

www.interfaith.org.uk
www.facebook.com/IFNetUK
www.twitter.com/IFNetUK

✿ Ways to get involved

Getting involved locally

A good place to find out more and get involved in inter faith activity may be your local inter faith group. There are now over 250 of these in the UK. They play a very important role in creating opportunities for learning and cooperation in their local communities.

Local inter faith organisations usually have a diverse membership drawn from their areas. All welcome enquirers and offer a variety of ways that people can get involved, from attending meetings to volunteering and helping with aspects of their work.

Local inter faith organisations vary in their activities. They may:

- Hold discussions and talks where participants can learn about different faith perspectives and discuss topics from faith to social issues
- Provide information to people about inter faith activity in their areas, advertise events and connect people
- Arrange visits to local places of worship where people of different faiths can learn about each other's beliefs, practices and communities
- Put on special events such as 'faith walks' to different places of worship in their areas
- Work to help tackle tensions and hate incidents and educate against prejudice
- Help with civic events and ceremonies for events and programmes such as Remembrance Sunday or Inter Faith Week
- Take part in or run social action projects to help the local community – for example where people of different faiths help provide meals or shelter for the homeless
- Hold social events
- Provide speakers for schools
- Act as a consultation point for the local authority and other public agencies on matters relating to faith communities, alongside direct consultation by these bodies with individual communities
- Arrange programmes or events with and/or for young people or women

To get in touch with your local inter faith group or to find out more, visit the Local Inter Faith Locator on IFN's website at www.interfaith.org.uk/locator, where you will be able to find the group closest to where you live. Alternatively, call the IFN office on 020 7730 0410, or email ifnet@interfaith.org.uk, where someone will be happy to help.

If you live in Scotland, visit the local inter faith page of Interfaith Scotland at www.interfaithscotland.org/interfaith-groups.

If there is not a local inter faith group within your area, perhaps you can help set one up. The Local Inter Faith Guide contains helpful guidance. It can be downloaded from www.interfaith.org.uk/lifguide

“Local inter faith groups bring people from different faiths and cultures together, often for the first time, to celebrate the positive work faith groups bring to our communities. It is so important for inter faith groups to provide these safe spaces for people to meet and grow to know and understand others from different backgrounds, communities and faiths, as well as doing good in their communities.”

NORTHAMPTON INTER FAITH FORUM



Barnet Multi Faith Forum and Faiths Forum for London practitioners talking together about hate crime at IFN local practitioner meeting
(Photo: IFN)

“Local inter faith groups carry the enthusiasm of people wanting to understand their own faith better as well as know the faith of others better. Over time such people become true friends and create the social glue that builds relations across difference. They make society a good place in which to live well together.”

DEVON FAITH AND BELIEF FORUM

Visiting places of worship

Many local inter faith groups organise visits to local places of worship, and this can be a good way of getting involved in inter faith activity for the first time. This either takes the form of specific visits to individual places of worship, or can be undertaken as part of a ‘faith trail’, where many places of worship are visited in a single day. Visiting a place of worship allows those interested to talk to people of other faiths and beliefs in their own environment. Your local inter faith group will be happy to help you find out how to arrange a visit to a local place of worship.



Inter Faith Bike Ride and Picnic – Faiths Together in Croydon
(Photo: Faiths Together in Croydon)

“It is incredibly important for people of all faiths and none to get to understand and respect the beliefs of others. Respecting others helps in building a society where everyone is valued. The first step in this process is meeting people or visiting a place of worship and seeing and hearing how others try to find God and how their beliefs and practices are incredibly precious to them.”

LANCASHIRE FORUM OF FAITHS

“When the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum started up in the early 1990s, one of the first things we did was to visit each other’s places of worship as a group. Such visits were very rare in Northern Ireland at that time, but it helped to cement the group and build personal and communal relationships. Some 20 years later we repeated the exercise, in a programme that lasted just over a year, drawing in some new members and sharing perspectives on our faiths. On both occasions we broke through some of the barriers and mystique around our different traditions and practices.”

NORTHERN IRELAND INTER FAITH FORUM



York Interfaith visit, with the Dean of York Minster, to York Mosque during Inter Faith Week (Photo: York Interfaith)



Encountering Hinduism in Southampton (Photo: Vedic Society Temple, Southampton)

* Ways to get involved

Faith organisations

If you are already an active member of a faith community or are affiliated to a faith community, you may be interested to know what your community is doing at a local or national level and to become involved. Many local faith organisations and places of worship, and the national bodies that represent them, actively engage with other faith groups to further good inter faith relations. The best way to find out about what is happening at a local level is to speak to someone in your own community.

National Faith community bodies in each of the nations of the UK offer another important resource.

The ways in which these bodies engage with inter faith dialogue differs depending on their perspectives on the issues and, on the resources they have available and their type of structure. They may:

- Have a programme or division which handles inter faith issues
- Support or advise their local bodies on these matters
- Offer advice and give contact details for those that will be of further help
- Provide information on relevant publications and other resources
- Organise occasional relevant meetings for interested members of their community
- Liaise with their international community structures on inter faith issues

To get in touch with the relevant national body of your faith community, ask at your place of worship or in your community which one is most relevant and how best to contact them. Or you can contact IFN and its office may be able to assist.

Many National Faith Community Representative Bodies are in membership of IFN. Their website details can be found at the back of this booklet and on the IFN website at www.interfaith.org.uk/nfcrbs.



✿ Ways to get involved

Making use of centres, national initiatives and educational resources

There are a number of national and regional inter faith organisations as well as educational and academic bodies with an inter faith focus that offer ways for individuals to get involved in their activities.

Centres and places to visit

Some inter faith and multi faith bodies have centres that are open to those who would like to visit. If you are interested, check the chart at the back of this booklet to see which may be in your area. Some of these centres include libraries and other useful resources.

Opportunities for learning

An increasing number of bodies now run courses about dialogue and about faiths and social issues, working together with people of different faiths and beliefs. These might include training sessions about conflict resolution, or more informal discussions between members of different faiths. The chart at the back of this booklet will give you an idea of which IFN member bodies provide these courses. Alternatively, many Educational and Academic member bodies produce resources about inter faith dialogue and activity, and these can often be found online for download. The chart at the end of the book indicates which IFN member bodies provide these.

Bilateral dialogue

If you are interested in inter faith activity and dialogue between members of two specific faiths, then a number of IFN's member bodies may be able to help. This is sometimes referred to as 'bilateral' dialogue. A number of IFN's member bodies have this as their primary focus or a very important part of their work. The chart at the end of the book gives more detail.

“Bilateral dialogue is particularly important in allowing those from two initial perspectives to explore together issues either of special relevance or in greater depth than wider conversations allow.”

COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

Multi faith dialogue

Some organisations encourage and support dialogue involving many traditions, either by focusing on a specific set of issues or working to promote their aims through dialogue and campaigning. If you are interested in this kind of multi faith dialogue, a number of IFN's member organisations may be of interest to you. Member organisations involved in multi faith dialogue can be found in the chart at the back of this booklet.

For further details look at the websites of the organisations identified as having individual membership at the back of this guide and contact them to explore what they have to offer. You can find a full list of IFN’s member National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations and Educational and Academic bodies towards the back of this resource or on our website at www.interfaith.org.uk/members. Alternatively, call the IFN Office on 020 7730 0410 or email ifnet@interfaith.org.uk where someone will be happy to help.

Academic study of religion

If you are interested in studying religions, including inter faith relations, in an academic context, many institutions of higher education provide courses.

“It is vital that we better understand the challenges and complexities surrounding religion and belief both within and between faith communities. As such, it is hard to think of a time when the academic study of inter faith understanding and inter faith dialogue has been more important for our society and collective futures.”

WOOLF INSTITUTE



A Scriptural Reasoning session at the British Museum (Photo: Cambridge Inter-faith Programme)



Bedouin meeting tent at the St Ethelburga’s Centre for Reconciliation and Peace (Photo: St Ethelburga’s Centre for Reconciliation and Peace)

✿ Ways to get involved

Social action

Serving others is an imperative of the teachings of all faith communities as well as the principles of many with non-religious ethical beliefs.

Faith communities run many social action programmes and make a major difference through volunteering in their communities.

Often different faith groups work together on social action projects. Taking part in such projects can be a great way to help the local community and at the same time get to know people of different backgrounds.

Here are some of the ways that faiths work together, sometimes through local inter faith bodies, on local social action projects:

- Improving public spaces, for example by cleaning graffiti, litter-picking in a local park or tree-planting
- Working together to tackle hate crime or other social problems affecting people in local communities
- Organising a support network to help refugees and migrants in need
- Joining with healthcare professionals to run health awareness days
- Organising fundraisers for local, national or international causes
- Collaborating locally or nationally as part of larger, coordinated campaigns relating to humanitarian issues, such as famine relief or debt reduction

- Holding a joint event on an issue currently affecting the local community

Three special days

- ‘Mitzvah Day’ (www.mitzvahday.org.uk) is a Jewish-led day of social action which encourages inter faith involvement. The objective is to encourage people to give their time, rather than their money, to worthwhile local causes, whilst also creating deeper linkages within communities and supporting charities.
- Sadaqa Day (www.mysadaqaday.org) is a day of social action led by the Muslim community for individuals, community groups, mosques, women’s groups, schools and families. Organisations and individuals from other faiths have also joined in.
- Sewa Day (www.sewaday.org) is an international day of social action where people come together to do good in their communities. The term ‘sewa’ is rooted in the dharmic traditions; the involvement is wider.

If you are interested in such initiatives, you could contact your local faith or inter faith organisation, or organisations and programmes which encourage and support cross-faith community social action projects.



Mitzvah Day poster (Photo: Mitzvah Day)

- The Near Neighbours programme, an initiative of the Church Urban Fund with the Archbishops' Council, with support from the Department for Communities and Local Government, helps bring together people from diverse communities to improve their neighbourhoods and administers a grant programme which supports this
- Faith Action is a network of faith-based and community organisations serving their communities by delivering public services
- The Faith Based Regeneration Network is a network for community development, social action, community organising and regeneration in a multi faith context
- Citizens UK organises communities to act together for social justice and the common good and describes itself as the “home of community organising in the UK, with diverse civil society”



Social action during Inter Faith Week (Photo: Leicester City Council)

“Sewa loosely translates to ‘selfless service’. On Sewa Day people of different backgrounds come together to volunteer to make a difference in local communities – for example, helping in old people’s homes, homeless shelters, and schools in disadvantaged areas, and in environmental projects such as canal cleaning. It’s open to anyone to volunteer and it is a great way to get to know people of different faiths while contributing to the wellbeing of others.”

SEWA DAY

“To work together means understanding each other’s beliefs which we do by discussion and dialogue. This must be done in safety without fear of being forced to accept the beliefs as your faith. Inter faith encounter is the vehicle to do this. It is usually local – city, borough – and seeks to encourage conversation between faiths in an enclosed or public environment. In this scenario, friendships are made and the group often turns outward into the community to address our challenges.”

WELWYN HATFIELD INTER FAITH GROUP

If you are interested in getting involved in social action in an inter faith or multi faith context, then there are a number of things that you can do. You may find helpful a short toolkit produced by Near Neighbours with the Inter Faith Network all about getting involved in and starting local inter faith social action projects www.cuf.org.uk/nn-resources

Contact Near Neighbours, FaithAction, the Faith-based Regeneration Network or Citizens UK (www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours; www.faithaction.net; www.fbrn.org.uk; www.citizensuk.org) to get involved in national social action projects.

To see what is happening in your local area, contact your local inter faith group, which can be found on the IFN website at www.interfaith.org.uk/locator. Alternatively contact the IFN Office on 020 7730 0410 or email ifnet@interfaith.org.uk, where someone will be happy to help.

“The challenges we face today have to be tackled by working together – no individual group can accomplish this without the help of others. Social action is a great way for people of different faiths to come together and cooperate, including those that have not been involved in inter faith activity before. By helping others in the community, we can create lasting partnerships and come to appreciate that a multi faith society is an asset.”

NEWCASTLE COUNCIL OF FAITHS



Toolkit produced by Near Neighbours with IFN

✧ Ways to get involved

Youth inter faith engagement

If you are a young person, there are a number of ways to begin getting involved in inter faith activity that may be of interest.

There are a wide variety of initiatives that focus on inter faith engagement between young people. Young people are engaging in inter faith activity amongst themselves, and some national and local inter faith organisations are actively engaging with young people and providing spaces for them to talk in an inter faith context.

Here are some pointers for getting involved:

- If you are at university or in further education, contact your Student Union, faith or belief society, or chaplaincy
- Contact your local inter faith group. Some have dedicated youth programmes that are actively engaging young people in inter faith dialogue and activity. Find your local inter faith group at www.interfaith.org.uk/locator
- Offer to volunteer for a local or national inter faith organisation and explore internships if you want to go even further
- Get involved through other youth organisations you are involved with, such as the Scouts or Girlguiding

Many Student Unions encourage inter faith engagement, as well as aiming to support the needs of the students from different faith backgrounds. Faith or belief societies are increasingly involved in inter faith activity, dialogue and social action on campus. Chaplaincies often support students in inter faith dialogue and joint social action projects.

- If you already active in a faith community, find out more about their programmes for young people both locally and nationally. Some national faith communities will have programmes and activities dedicated to young people, and some of these may have an inter faith dimension



3FF Inter Faith Summit (Photo: Beatrice Forchetti for 3FF)

The National Union of Students encourages student unions to become involved in building good relations on campus: www.nusconnect.org.uk/strong-students-unions/faith-and-belief/good-campus-relations

If you are still in secondary education there are also opportunities to meet and learn about people of different faiths and to encounter them. For most young people their first awareness of different faith traditions is through religious education (RE) as part of the school's curriculum. Most RE departments in secondary schools invite people from different faith communities to come and talk to classes. In primary schools this may happen as part of collective worship as well as RE.

Here are some things you could do:

- Ask your teacher to invite people from different backgrounds to come and speak about what their faith means to them and/or about the inter faith work that they do and the dialogues that they participate in
- See if there is an opportunity to start an inter faith group in your school
- If you belong to a faith community see what inter faith dialogue they are involved in and see if you can meet people of your own age from other faith communities in your area

To find out more about inter faith activity for young people, go to youth.interfaith.org.uk

A number of organisations that encourage and support young people to get involved in inter faith activity are Religions for Peace UK (www.religionsforpeace.org.uk), 3FF (www.3ff.org.uk) and the Inter Faith Youth Trust



RE Young Ambassadors with Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth at IFN National Meeting (Photo: Myles Fisher for IFN)

(www.ifyouthtrust.org.uk). There are also some which are rooted in a particular faith tradition but work more broadly, such as the Feast (thefeast.org.uk) and the Catalyst programme of the Near Neighbours Programme (www.cuf.org.uk/catalyst). The National Citizens Service (NCS) (www.ncsyes.co.uk) also provides opportunities for inter faith engagement.

If you are in Scotland, contact Interfaith Scotland which has a number of opportunities for youth engagement, and also runs occasional events for young people: www.interfaithscotland.org/our-activities/young-people. For Wales and Northern Ireland, contact ni.interfaith@gmail.com and post@cytun.cymru, respectively.



Jewish Lads and Girls Brigade inter faith National Citizens Service
(Photo: IFN, with permission from Citizens Service Powered by JLGB)

If you would like to discuss these or other options, the IFN office will be happy to talk with you.

“Opportunities to engage with people from other backgrounds mostly end for many young people when they leave school. Getting involved in inter faith events and projects provides new opportunities for those who are still curious about the world to learn about others, but with the maturity that going to university or joining the working world can bring. It is vital that young people have inter faith spaces that allow them to learn and share, especially in the current context of media portrayals of faith and to make their very important contribution to inter faith cooperation.”

3FF

“As like-minded people working in Bolton, it is of paramount importance that we include, value and engage young people in inter faith activity. Young people play a vital part in supporting our ethos of working for peace and harmony, and building trust and respect between all our communities. Our Young Ambassadors project has given us a platform to do this work. We receive amazing and rewarding responses from our young members which make us all proud to be associated with them.”

BOLTON INTERFAITH COUNCIL



Participants at Young Voices, Young Agents for Change event
(Photo: Myles Fisher for IFN)

Women and inter faith engagement

Women are involved at all levels of inter faith engagement in single and mixed gender contexts.

If you are seeking involvement in women-led inter faith activity or inter faith activity specifically for women, there are a number of ways to get involved.

Over the last two decades, a number of women's inter faith initiatives have come into being, mostly developed by and for women. Some of these are short term programmes, special conversations or projects, whilst others are ongoing groups or organisations.

If you consider that women's inter faith activity might be the best space for your needs and interests, and wish to get involved, you might:

- Contact your local inter faith group. Some local inter faith groups have dedicated women's groups or meetings
- If you are already active in a faith community, find out more about their programmes for women – many national faith communities will have dedicated women's programmes, projects and groups, some of which may have an inter faith dimension
- Find out whether there is a group or branch of the Women's Interfaith Network near you
- Set up a local women's group with members of other faiths to discuss issues that affect women of faith and generate friendship and understanding

- If you belong to a branch of a national women's organisation, such as the Women's Institute, you may wish to organise an inter faith event

To find out more about women's inter faith activity contact the Women's Interfaith Network, one of IFN's member bodies, at info@wominet.org.uk. They run a variety of programmes and local groups dedicated to improving inter faith relations among women.

Another initiative that is encouraging women of different backgrounds to get involved in their communities and in inter faith engagement is the Religions for Peace UK Women of Faith Network (www.religionsforpeace.org.uk/about/uk-women-of-faith-network).

There are also a number of new bilateral women's initiatives emerging, such as the Nisa-Nashim (www.nisanashim.org) group for Jewish-Muslim women's inter faith engagement.

The IFN office may also be able to assist with information on local women's initiatives. Call 020 7730 0410, or email ifnet@interfaith.org.uk, where someone will be happy to help.

If you are in Scotland, contact Interfaith Scotland which runs seminars, organises groups and encourages dialogue between women of faith, at admin@interfaithscotland.org.

“Engaging with women from different faiths gave me a whole new family with whom I could share life experiences, grow spiritually and made me stronger in my own faith. We became a voice for the voiceless, friends for the lonely and advocates for issues concerning women. Getting involved in inter faith engagement was truly an enlightening experience and one that I would highly recommend.”

CHAIR OF RELIGIONS FOR PEACE UK WOMEN OF FAITH NETWORK

“I became involved with women’s interfaith because I wanted to find out more about non-Muslim, especially Christian and Jewish, women. I cannot express how far my expectations were exceeded. My involvement has led to lasting friendships that have enriched my life. I would recommend all women of faith to become involved in women’s interfaith dialogue.”

MUSLIM MEMBER OF WOMEN’S INTERFAITH NETWORK



Two IFN Faith Communities Forum Members (Photo: IFN)



Women in dialogue at Northampton Inter Faith Forum event
(Photo: Lisa Bedi)



Women’s event, Hounslow (Photo: Hounslow Friends of Faith)

✿ Ways to get involved

For organisations

Organisations often approach the Inter Faith Network and inter faith groups with questions about engaging with people of faith, for example:

- I'm a university student. On my campus we want to develop new dialogues involving the different faith societies. Are there organisations out there that can be helpful?
- My national faith organisation has not been very involved in inter faith engagement to this point. What might we do?
- I work for a local authority and we are keen to see more opportunities for positive inter faith encounter in our area. What might that involve?
- Our business has a very diverse staff. Might it be worth starting a staff inter faith network?

The IFN office is contacted regularly by organisations that are thinking about how they can engage with faith and belief groups and encourage positive inter faith interaction. Some of the reasons they make contact are:

- To find helpful ways to ensure that the services they provide are meeting the needs of people of faith and their communities
- As part of promoting community cohesion and working for safe, resilient, just and harmonious communities
- In the context of staff welfare and ensuring good handling of religion and belief issues in the workplace

- For assistance on events or projects designed to build inter faith engagement into their work

Within this short booklet, it is not possible to go in detail into how organisations can take forward these issues but the IFN office will be happy to have an initial phone conversation and to offer suggestions for other useful contacts: 020 7730 0410 or email ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.



Northampton Inter Faith Forum in discussion with its local police force (Photo: Lisa Bedi)



Faith in the workplace event (Photo: Christian Muslim Forum)

✿ Ways to get involved

Inter Faith Week

Many people become interested in getting more involved after taking part in an Inter Faith Week event.

Inter Faith Week began in 2009, and has now grown to include hundreds of events all over England, Northern Ireland and Wales. It is now one of the major ways that people get involved in inter faith activity for the first time.

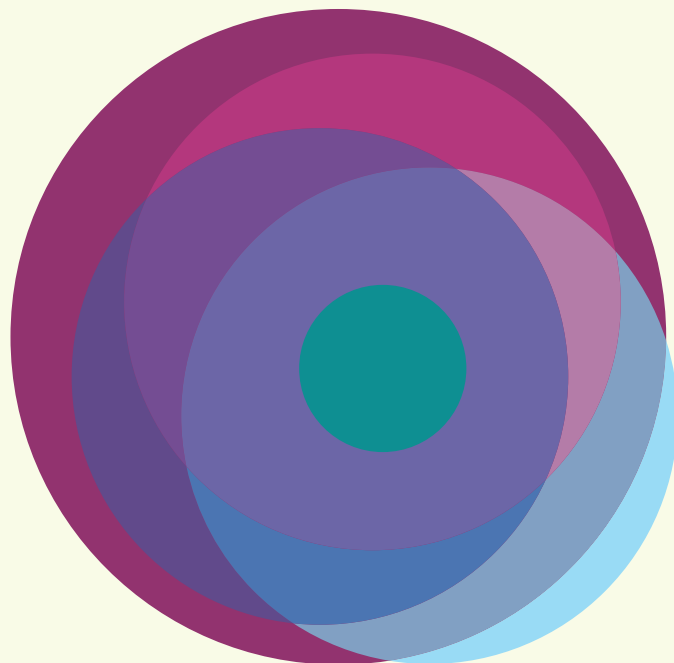
Scottish Interfaith Week has been running since 2004, visit their website for more details:
www.interfaithscotland.org/scottish-interfaith-week

Inter Faith Week takes place every year in November, usually the third week. It offers many opportunities to take part. On the Inter Faith Week website, www.interfaithweek.org you can find information, resources and much more.

Why not think about developing your own event for next year's Inter Faith Week? The Inter Faith Week Toolkit – Developing successful activities is a helpful resource. It can be found at:
www.interfaithweek.org/toolkit. The toolkit sets out some of the basic considerations you may wish to take into account when organising an Inter Faith Week event as well as giving many illustrated examples.

Inter Faith Week Events are held by many different types of organisations such as:

- Local faith communities
- Local inter faith groups
- National faith communities
- Non-religious belief groups
- National and regional inter faith organisations
- Universities and Colleges of Further Education
- Schools
- Youth organisations
- Cultural organisations
- Sports organisations
- Workplaces and businesses
- Local Authorities
- Emergency Services



“Inter Faith Week is a terrific way for people to learn from one another and celebrate the tremendous amount we have in common.”

LORD BOURNE OF ABERYSTWYTH, DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

“Inter Faith Week provides an excellent opportunity to get involved in inter faith activity. Many thousands of people for the first time will encounter exciting and interactive engagements where they can learn about the diversity which enriches the lives of communities across the nation. Activities are available for all ages ranging from visiting places of worship to faith festivals. Inter Faith Week is now a permanent fixture in the diversity diary of the UK.”

ST PHILIP’S CENTRE, LEICESTER



Caldmore Faith Walk (Photo: Walsall Faiths Together)



Bradford University Chaplaincy and students celebrate Inter Faith Week (Photo: Bradford University Chaplaincy)

Inter Faith Week online

www.interfaithweek.org

www.facebook.com/IFWeek

www.twitter.com/IFWeek

Contacts and resources

National Faith Community Representative Bodies

A regularly updated list of National Faith Community Representative Bodies in membership of IFN can be found at: www.interfaith.org.uk/nfcrbs

Baha'i Community of the UK
www.bahai.org.uk

BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha
londonmandir.baps.org

Board of Deputies of British Jews
www.bod.org.uk

British Muslim Forum
www.britishmuslimforum.co.uk

Buddhist Society
www.thebuddhistsociety.org

Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales
www.cbcew.org.uk

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
(Great Britain)
www.mormonnewsroom.org.uk

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland
www.ctbi.org.uk

Churches Together in England
www.cte.org.uk

Council of African and Afro-Caribbean Churches (UK)
www.cte.org.uk/Groups/234690/Home/About/Membership_of_CTE/Member_Churches_of/Member_Churches_of.aspx

Druid Network
www.druidnetwork.org

General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches
www.unitarian.org.uk

Hindu Council (UK)
www.hindu council.net

Hindu Forum of Britain
www.hfb.org.uk

Inter Faith Working Group of the Baptist Union of Great Britain
www.baptist.org.uk

Islamic Cultural Centre
www.iccuk.org

Jain Network
www.jainnetwork.com

Jain Samaj Europe
www.jaincentreleicester.com

Jamiat-e-Ulama Britain (Association of Muslim Scholars)
www.jamiat.co.uk

Methodist Church in Britain
www.methodist.org.uk

Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board
www.minab.org.uk

Muslim Council of Britain

www.mcb.org.uk

National Council of Hindu Temples (UK)

www.nchtuk.org

Network of Buddhist Organisations (UK)

www.nbo.org.uk

Network of Sikh Organisations (UK)

www.nsouk.co.uk

Pagan Federation

www.paganfed.org

Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations

www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/our-structures/quaker-committee-for-christian-and-inter-faith-relations

Spiritualists' National Union

www.snu.org.uk

Sri Lankan Sangha Sabha of GB

www.londonbuddhistvihara.org

United Reformed Church in the UK

www.urc.org.uk

Vishwa Hindu Parishad (UK)

www.vhp.org.uk/vhpuk

World Ahlul-Bayt Islamic League

www.wabil.com

World Islamic Mission (UK)

www.wimuk.com

Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe

www.ztfe.com



Members of IFN's Faith Communities Forum in discussion (Photo: IFN)



Members of National Faith Community Representative Member Bodies in dialogue (Photo:IFN)

Contacts and resources

Local Inter Faith Organisations

There are many multi faith local inter faith groups across the United Kingdom.

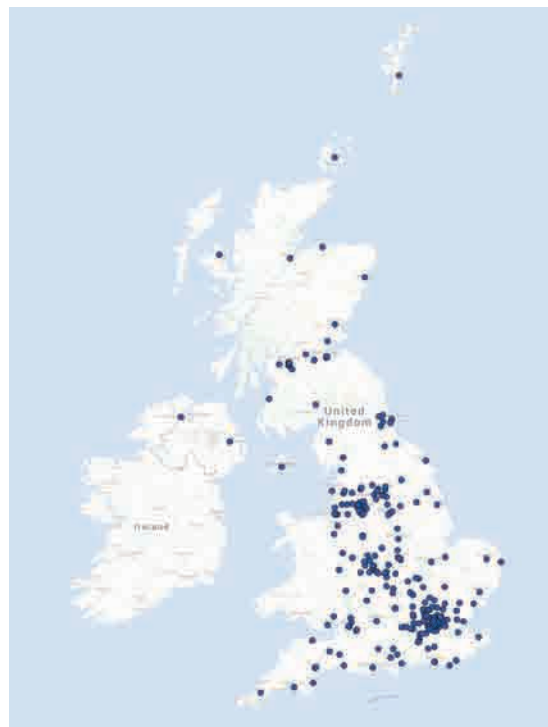
Multi faith local inter faith groups are all independent bodies, including those that are members of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. All bodies known to the Inter Faith Network can be found listed at: www.interfaith.org.uk/locator

Interfaith Scotland is the best source for any additional information required on local groups in Scotland, www.interfaithscotland.org. The Inter Faith Council for Wales, www.cytun.org.uk/interfaithwales/interfaith_eng_home.html and the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum, www.niinterfaithforum.org, are likewise able to provide further information about local initiatives in Wales and Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum, respectively.

Branches of UK or national bodies

There are also some bodies which are branches or groups of national bodies. These include branches of the Council of Christians and Jews and groups of the Women's Interfaith Network. The chart at the back of the book indicated which of the listed bodies say that they have branches.

For local branches of the Council of Christians and Jews, there is a map on their website and the office can put you in touch.



Redbridge Faith Forum participants at All Party Parliamentary Interfaith Group session on local interfaith activity as part of Inter Faith Week 2016 (Photo: IFN)

Contacts and resources

National and Regional Inter Faith Member Organisations

IFN's National and Regional Inter Faith member organisations provide a wide variety of ways to get involved in inter faith activity. Some engage in bilateral dialogue, between two particular faiths, whilst others engage in multi faith dialogue, between more than two faiths. Contact details and a short profile of each can be found below. A list of IFN's National and Regional member bodies can also be found at www.interfaith.org.uk/nrifos and contact details there are regularly updated.

Interfaith Scotland



Linking inter faith activity and developing good relations between people of different faiths in Scotland.

www.interfaithscotland.org
admin@interfaithscotland.org
 0141 558 0778

Flemington House (2nd Floor),
 110 Flemington Street, Glasgow G21 4BF

Inter Faith Council for Wales



Building trust and respect between people of all faiths throughout Wales

www.cytun.org.uk/interfaithwales/interfaith_eng_home.html
post@cytun.cymru
 02920 464375
 c/o Cytun, 58 Richmond Road, Cardiff CF24 3UR

Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum



Promoting friendship and mutual understanding across the spectrum of religious and ethnic life in Northern Ireland.

www.niinterfaithforum.org
ni.interfaith@gmail.com

028 9038 4328

c/o Clonard Monastery, 1 Clonard Gardens,
 Belfast BT13 2RL

3FF



Building friendship, goodwill and understanding between Muslims, Christians and Jews through dialogue and action.

www.3ff.org.uk
info@3ff.org.uk
 020 7482 9549

Star House, 104 Grafton Road, London NW5 4BA

All Faiths Network for the United Kingdom



Our aim is the furtherance of mutual respect. We welcome membership from people of every faith and belief.

www.allfaithsnetwork.org.uk
martin@allfaithsnetwork.org.uk

0203 411 7596
 Office 7, 35-37 Ludgate Hill, London EC4M 7JN

Children of Abraham (Imams and Rabbis Council of the United Kingdom)



Working to build dialogue and co-operation between Jewish and Muslim communities.

www.childrenofabraham.org.uk
enquiries@childrenofabraham.org.uk
 020 7193 7943
 PO Box 67481, London NW3 9RN

Christian Muslim Forum



Creating a safe space where Christians and Muslims can meet, learn and understand about each other.

www.christianmuslimforum.org
info@christianmuslimforum.org
 020 7631 4433
 Collaboration House, 77 Charlotte Street, London W1T 4PW

Christians Aware



Building understanding, mutual trust and respect between people of different faiths.

www.christiansaware.co.uk
barbarabutler@christiansaware.co.uk
 0116 2540770
 2 Saxby Street, Leicester LE2 0ND

Coexist Foundation



Promoting better understanding between Jews, Christians and Muslims, and between people of these faiths and others, through education, dialogue and research.

www.coexist.org
info@coexistfoundation.org
07584993996
c/o Collaboration House, 77-79 Charlotte Street, London W1T 4PW

Council of Christians and Jews



The leading nationwide forum for Christian – Jewish engagement
www.ccj.org.uk
director@ccj.org.uk
0203 515 3003

The Council of Christians and Jews, Collaboration House, 77-79 Charlotte Street, London W1T 4PW

Council of Dharmic Faiths



Uniting the spirit of the five dharmic faiths, Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Zoroastrianism.
www.councilofdharmicfaithsuk.com
info@dharmicfaiths.org
020 8200 0828
Jain Centre, 64-68 Colindale Avenue, London NW9 5DR

East of England Faiths Agency CIC



Supporting and strengthening local inter faith, faith and public sector work in the region.
www.eefa.net
office@eefa.net
01379678615

The Inter Faith Centre, Brightspace, 160 Hadleigh Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP2 0HH

Faiths Forum for London



The Faiths Forum for London empowers religious communities to work together for a better London.

www.faithsforum4london.org
info@faithsforum4london.org
020 7569 9098
Collaboration House, 77-79 Charlotte Street, London, W1T 4PW

Hindu Christian Forum



Hindus and Christians working together with mutual respect to strengthen relationships, understanding and learning of each other's faiths.
www.hinduchristianforum.co.uk
robin.thomson@southasianconcern.org
156 Cromwell Road, London SW7 4EF

Interfaith Alliance UK



Family of people united in friendship, from diverse progressive and liberal faith communities, working together to promote the love of the One Same God.
www.interfaithalliance.org.uk/
enquiries@interfaithalliance.org.uk
020 7193 7943
145-157 St John Street, London EC1V 4PW

International Association for Religious Freedom (British Chapter)



Campaigning for freedom of religion and belief as a basis for human rights and integrity.
www.iarf.net

luke@iarf.net
Essex Hall, 106 Essex Street, London WC2R 3HY

International Interfaith Centre



Promoting international inter religious understanding and cooperation between people for a just and harmonious world.
www.iicaoo.org
27 Ouseley Close, Marston, Oxford OX3 0JS.

Joseph Interfaith Foundation



Fostering constructive and realistic dialogue between the Muslim and Jewish communities in the UK.
www.josephinterfaithfoundation.org
info@josephinterfaithfoundation.org
020 8458 9081
75 North End Road, London NW11 7RL

Lokahi Foundation



Enabling sustainable, diverse communities – a dynamic, resilient society where religious difference is a source of strength and creativity.
www.lokahi.org.uk
enquiries@lokahi.org.uk
020 7795 4190
23 Kensington Square, London, W8 5HN

London Boroughs Faiths Network



Connecting local practitioners and public agencies across the capital.

www.lbfhn.org

convener@lbfhn.org

Telephone: 020 8674 4610

77–79 Collaboration House, Charlotte Street, London W1T 4PW

London Inter Faith Centre



London Inter Faith Centre is a Christian centre which seeks to engage with the reality of individuals and communities “Living Together in a Multi Faith Society”.

www.londoninterfaith.org.uk

info@londoninterfaith.org.uk

07801286819

125 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6RG

London Society of Jews and Christians

Increasing religious understanding and good will between Jews and Christians and combating religious intolerance.

www.ljs.org/a-place-of-meeting/clubs-and-societies/83/london-society-of-jews-and-christians/

marksolomon@btinternet.com

020 7580 1663

28 St. John's Wood Road, London NW8 7HA

Maimonides Interfaith Foundation



Promoting understanding and respect between people from the three Abrahamic faiths through the power of art, creativity, intercultural dialogue and education.
www.maimonides-foundation.org

enquiries@maimonides-foundation.org

020 7287 3830

Nour House, 2 Old Burlington Street, London W1S 3AP

Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby



Promoting mutual understanding between people of different faiths/beliefs and none and building respect between people as fellow human beings across cultures.

www.multifaithcentre.org

mfc@derby.ac.uk

01332 591285

The University of Derby, Kedleston Road, Derby, Derbyshire DE22 1GB

North East Regional Faiths Network



The North East Regional Faiths Network is a network of groups, networks and organisations concerned with promoting good inter-faith relations and understanding in the region.

www.nerfn.org

info@nerfn.org

07710404716

URC Northern Synod Office, 4 College Lane, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE1 8JJ

Religions for Peace UK



The world's religious communities cooperate effectively for peace.

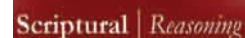
www.religionsforpeace.org.uk

secretary@religionsforpeace.org.uk

Telephone: 07762105387

18 Little Acres, Ware, Hertfordshire SG12 9JW

Scriptural Reasoning



By reading together, we seek to understand better and respect each other's important differences of belief, and to work together in building our shared civic life in Britain.

www.scripturalreasoning.org.uk

enquiries@scripturalreasoning.org.uk

020 7193 7943

PO Box 67481, London NW3 9RN

South East England Faiths Forum



SEEFF Supports and brings together the interests of faith communities, non-faith organisations and regional bodies, to promote mutual faith understanding and engagement for the benefit of the whole community.

seeffchair@gmail.com

contact@se-faithforum.net

01865 512126

Guildford URC, 83 Portsmouth Road, Guildford GU2 4BS

St Ethelburga's



We help people build relationships across divisions of conflict, culture and religion.

www.stethelburgas.org

enquiries@stethelburgas.org

020 7496 1610

78 Bishopsgate, London, EC2N 4AG.

St Philip's Centre



The St Philip's Centre's main aim is to enable people to learn to live well together. We have a Christian foundation, and work with people of all faiths and no faith.

www.stphilipscentre.co.uk

admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk

0116 273 3459

St Philips Centre

United Religions Initiative



Our purpose is to build bridges linking different faiths, in order to protect the most fragile and disadvantaged areas of our society from religious intolerance and bigotry.

www.uri.org/cooperation_circles/detail/uk
info@uri.org

Westminster Interfaith



The agency of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster for Interreligious Dialogue

www.westminsterinterfaith.org.uk/
westminsterinterfaith@rcdow.org.uk
 020 7931 6028

Vaughan House, Francis Street, London SW1P 1QN

Women's Interfaith Network



Promoting Friendship, Embracing Difference

www.wominet.org.uk
info@wominet.org.uk
 0203 515 2786

Suite 13, Collaboration House, 77-79 Charlotte Street, London W1T 4PW

World Congress of Faiths



Promoting and sharing the personal values and public value of spiritual life.

www.worldfaiths.org
enquiries@worldfaiths.org
 01935 864055

Collaboration House, 77-79 Charlotte Street, London W1T 4PW



Participants at an Inter Faith Week event organised by Council of Christians and Jews Student Leader at the LSE (Photo: CCJ)



Participants at meeting of the national inter faith linking bodies of the devolved nations with IFN in Belfast (Photo: IFN)

Contacts and resources

Educational and Academic Member Bodies

If your interest in inter faith activity is educational or academic, then a number of IFN's member bodies will be able to help you get involved. Many publish resources, and organise lectures, conferences and seminars. Below are short profiles and contact details for these. Details can also be found at www.interfaith.org.uk/eabs where they are regularly updated.

Cambridge Inter Faith Programme (CIP)



Dedicated to learning about, learning from, and learning between religions as they interact with a secular and religious world.
www.interfaith.cam.ac.uk
team@interfaith.cam.ac.uk
 01223 763 013
 Faculty of Divinity, West Road, Cambridge
 CB3 9BS

Community Religions Project, University of Leeds

Conducting empirical research on religion and religions 'near at hand' in the cities of Leeds and Bradford and beyond.
www.arts.leeds.ac.uk/crp
m.j.prideaux@leeds.ac.uk
 0113 3430461
 Dept of Theology and Religious Studies,
 Hopewell House, Leeds, LS2 9JT

Institute of Jainology



Promoting Jainism and its values through art, culture and education.
www.jainology.org
info@jainology.org
 020 8997 2300

Unit 18, Silicon Business Centre,
 26/28 Wadsworth Road, Greenford,
 Middlesex UB6 7JZ

Islamic Foundation



Striving towards building bridges between the Muslim community and the rest of society by creating a better understanding between communities through greater awareness about each other
www.islamic-foundation.org.uk
ataullah@islamic-foundation.org.uk
 01530 244944
 Markfield Conference Centre, Ratby Lane,
 Markfield, Leicestershire LE67 9SY

National Association of SACRES



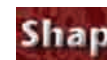
Strengthening the work of local SACRES and supporting them in carrying out all their responsibilities.
www.nasacre.org.uk
secretary@nasacre.org.uk
 01785 600260
 CAN Mezzanine, 49-51 East Road,
 London N1 6AH

Religious Education Council of England and Wales



Representing the collective interests of a wide variety of professional associations and faith communities in deepening and strengthening provision for Religious Education.
religioneeducationcouncil.org.uk
info@religioneeducationcouncil.org.uk
 0207 250 8166
 Religious Education Council, CAN
 Mezzanine, 49-51 East Road, London
 N1 6AH

Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education



Broadening the basis of education at all levels by encouraging the study and teaching of world religions by producing accurate information and resources for those involved with religious education and religious studies.
www.shapworkingparty.org.uk
secretary@shapworkingparty.org.uk
 07973 541427
 CAN Mezzanine, 49-51 East Road, London
 N1 6AH

Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter



Providing a safe environment where people of different faiths can meet together to learn, exchange and grow in understanding of each other.
 sioncentre.org
 sioncde@yahoo.co.uk
 020 7313 8286
 34 Chepstow Villas, London W11 2QZ

The Woolf Institute



Studying relations between Jews, Christians and Muslims.
 www.woolf.cam.ac.uk
 enquiries@woolf.cam.ac.uk
 01223 741 048
 12-14 Grange Road, Cambridge CB3 9DU

Wales Association of SACREs (WASACRE)



A forum for presenting, discussing and responding to issues of relevance to religious education and collective worship in Wales.
 www.wasacre.org.uk
 libby.jones@glyndwr.ac.uk
 4 Patten Close, Hawarden, Deeside
 CH5 3TH

Overleaf you will find a chart containing information on relevant activities of IFN's National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations and Educational and Academic member bodies. It is aimed at answering the following kinds of reader question:

- Who do you work with?
- What resources can I access?
- What can I attend/take part in?
- What can I do?

The accuracy of information provided is the responsibility of the bodies included.

Inter faith opportunities provided by National and Regional Inter Faith, Educational and Academic Member Bodies of IFN

This chart gives an at a glance view of some of the ways that these bodies may be able to assist you. Information is as provided in November 2016.

	WHO DO YOU WORK WITH?		
	Multi Faith (three or more faiths in dialogue)	Faith groups in dialogue with non-religious belief groups	Mainly two faiths in dialogue (bilateral)
Interfaith Scotland	●	●	
Inter-faith Council for Wales	●		
Northern Ireland Interfaith Forum	●		
3FF, Three Faiths Forum	●	●	
Cambridge Inter-faith Programme	●		
Children of Abraham (Imams and Rabbis Council of the United Kingdom)			Islam, Judaism
Christian Muslim Forum			Christianity, Islam
Council of Christians and Jews			Christianity, Judaism
Council of Dharmic Faiths	●		Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism and Zoroastrianism
East of England Faiths Agency CIC	●	●	
Faith Awareness – the interfaith programme of Christians Aware	●		
Faiths Forum for London	●		
Hindu Christian Forum			Christianity, Hinduism
Institute of Jainology	●		
International Association for Religious Freedom (British Chapter)	●	●	
International Interfaith Centre, Oxford	●	●	
Islamic Foundation		●	Christianity, Islam
Joseph Interfaith Foundation			Islam, Judaism
London Boroughs Faiths Network	●	●	
London Interfaith Centre	●		
London Society of Jews and Christians			Christianity, Judaism
Maimonides Interfaith Foundation	●		
Multi-Faith Centre, University of Derby	●	●	
National Association of SACRE's (NASACRE)	●		
North East Regional Faiths Network	●	●	
Religions For Peace (UK)	●	●	
Religious Education Council of England and Wales	●	●	
Scriptural Reasoning	●		
Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education			
Sion Centre for Dialogue & Encounter			Christianity, Judaism
South East England Faiths Forum	●	●	
St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace	●		
St Philip's Centre, Leicester	●	●	
Wales Association of SACRE's (WASACRE)	●		
Westminster Interfaith	●	●	
Woolf Institute	●		
Women's Interfaith Network	●		
World Congress of Faiths	●		

Building good relations – principles

The following principles for inter faith engagement, 'Building Good Relations with People of Different Faiths and Beliefs' were developed by the Inter Faith Network for the UK, with its member bodies, in 1993 and continue to be widely used both in the UK and beyond.

A printable copy of the 'code' can be downloaded from the IFN website at www.interfaith.org.uk/code and it is also reproduced here.

Building Good Relations with People of Different Faiths and Beliefs

In Britain today, people of many different faiths and beliefs live side by side. The opportunity lies before us to work together to build a society rooted in the values we treasure. But this society can only be built on a sure foundation of mutual respect, openness and trust. This means finding ways to live our lives of faith with integrity, and allowing others to do so too. Our different religious traditions offer us many resources for this and teach us the importance of good relationships characterised by honesty, compassion and generosity of spirit. The Inter Faith Network offers the following code of conduct for encouraging and strengthening these relationships.

As members of the human family, we should show each other respect and courtesy. In our dealings with people of other faiths and beliefs, this means exercising good will and:

- Respecting other people's freedom within the law to express their beliefs and convictions
- Learning to understand what others actually believe and value, and letting them express this in their own terms
- Respecting the convictions of others about food, dress and social etiquette and not behaving in ways which cause needless offence
- Recognising that all of us at times fall short of the ideals of our own traditions and never comparing our own ideals with other people's practices
- Working to prevent disagreement from leading to conflict
- Always seeking to avoid violence in our relationships

When we talk about matters of faith with one another, we need to do so with sensitivity, honesty and straightforwardness. This means:

- Recognising that listening as well as speaking is necessary for a genuine conversation
- Being honest about our beliefs and religious allegiances

- Not misrepresenting or disparaging other people's beliefs and practices
- Correcting misunderstanding or misrepresentations not only of our own but also of other faiths whenever we come across them
- Being straightforward about our intentions
- Accepting that in formal inter faith meetings there is a particular responsibility to ensure that the religious commitment of all those who are present will be respected

All of us want others to understand and respect our views. Some people will also want to persuade others to join their faith. In a multi faith society where this is permitted, the attempt should always be characterised by self-restraint and a concern for the other's freedom and dignity. This means:

- Respecting another person's expressed wish to be left alone
- Avoiding imposing ourselves and our views on individuals or communities who are in vulnerable situations in ways which exploit these
- Being sensitive and courteous
- Avoiding violent action or language, threats, manipulation, improper inducements, or the misuse of any kind of power
- Respecting the right of others to disagree with us

Living and working together is not always easy. Religion harnesses deep emotions which can sometimes take destructive forms. Where this happens, we must draw on our faith to bring about reconciliation and understanding. The truest fruits of religion are healing and positive. We have a great deal to learn from one another which can enrich us without undermining our own identities. Together, listening and responding with openness and respect, we can move forward to work in ways that acknowledge genuine differences but build on shared hopes and values.



Dialogue at an IFN Meeting (Photo: Myles Fisher for IFN)

Contacts and resources

List of resources

Below are some helpful resources published by the Inter Faith Network for the UK or to which it has contributed as a partner. There are, of course, many other resources produced by IFN's member bodies and others.

Building Good Relations

IFN works to build good relations between people of different faiths and beliefs, promoting mutual respect and understanding. In 1993, it developed, in consultation with its member bodies, guidance on Building Good Relations with People of Different Faiths and Beliefs. All member bodies subscribe to this guidance, and it has also come to be used by a number of inter faith organisations around the world. The guidance, sometimes referred as IFN's 'code', was first issued as part of a consultative document Mission, Dialogue and Inter Religious Encounter published by IFN in 1993. It is reproduced in full on the previous page.

www.interfaith.org.uk/code

The Local Inter Faith Guide

A guide to setting up and running a local inter faith initiative. Published by the Inter Faith Network for the UK in association with the Inner Cities Religious Council of the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

www.interfaith.org.uk/lifguide

Faiths Working Together Toolkit (In Partnership with Near Neighbours)

The toolkit includes practical pointers for making contact and for planning and publicising joint social action initiatives, as well as advice on key principles to consider, such as the importance of looking for shared values and experiences while working well with difference.

www.interfaith.org.uk/fwttoolkit

The Inter Faith Week Toolkit

This short guide is packed with suggestions for marking the Week and examples and illustrations drawn from the many successful activities held for the Week to date. It also includes practical guidance and links to further information.

www.interfaithweek.org/toolkit



Participants at the launch of the Inter Faith Week Toolkit (Photo: IFN)

Connect: Different Faiths Shared Values

A 28 page full-colour inter faith action and resource guide for young people aged 16-25. Connect encourages young people to get involved with inter faith activity and bridge building between communities. More than ever young people are becoming aware of the importance of working to create better understanding between people of different cultures and religions. Connect aims to provide ideas and inspiration for you to get involved and begin your own initiatives.

www.interfaith.org.uk/connect

In addition, Interfaith Scotland have produced the following resource:

Interfaith Scotland – Belief in Dialogue: A Good Practice Guide

Interfaith Scotland worked with the Scottish Government to produce the following resource, published by the Scottish Government, which is also very helpful in the UK inter faith context.

‘Belief in Dialogue: A Good Practice Guide’ provides guidance on building good relations among and between religious and belief communities and individuals. It encourages people to listen to those whose beliefs are different from their own, to try to understand and appreciate them.

www.interfaithscotland.org/resources/publications/belief-in-dialogue

“The need for people within diverse communities to build strong bonds of friendship is becoming ever more critical in a world that is becoming more fractured and interfaith engagement is one of the most effective ways of building those bonds. Genuine, deep engagement challenges our prejudices and stereotypes while at the same time is life-enhancing and educative making it worth every effort to engage with people.”

INTERFAITH SCOTLAND



Interfaith Glasgow presenters at All Party Parliamentary Interfaith Group and IFN session on local inter faith activity (Photo: IFN)





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