**Develop Your Religious Literacy Part 1**

**Aims of the resource**

This resource provides an opportunity to develop your religious literacy by:

* Supporting an understanding of some of the issues and discrimination related to religion and belief in Scottish Education.
* Increasing understanding of the core beliefs and cultural practices of the six main faith communities in the UK.
* Signposting the different religion and belief communities and organisations in Scotland for further information and advice.

**Why is it important to consider?**

* Religion and Belief are a protected characteristic in the Equality Act 2010 which recognises that nobody should be discriminated against because of their Religion and Belief.
* The Public Sector Equality Duty requires all public bodies (including many in education settings) to take steps to eliminate discrimination.
* Discrimination by public bodies is often unintentional, and arises from a lack of understanding about different groups and the needs arising from their characteristics. By better understanding the core beliefs and cultural practices of the six main religions in the UK, providers may be able to avoid discrimination before it happens.
* Increasing your religious literacy will also help you develop your practice of inclusion and anti-racist education.

**Things to try**

1. Develop your own ‘religious literacy’ – your knowledge of the main faiths, their core beliefs and the needs arising from them. Typically, the negative experiences of people of faith arise from other people’s lack of knowledge and understanding.
2. Always keep in mind that there is great diversity within each faith community. What is true of one person may not be true of other people within the same faith community.
3. Avoid making assumptions about people based on their perceived faith. It is important to recognise both commonality and individuality. For example, some Muslim people and Orthodox Jewish people prefer not to shake hands with people of the opposite sex, but this is not true for all members of these communities.
4. It is best to avoid asking students to explain their religion to other students. They may volunteer to share what matters most to them, but they shouldn’t be expected to summarise a whole religion to others. Children and young people typically do not feel able to accurately summarise a whole faith tradition in a way that is understandable to others, and being asked to do so may serve to highlight their differences from their peers in a way that is uncomfortable for them. If someone does choose to explain their faith then it should be noted that this may not necessarily be representative of all followers of that faith.
5. Ensure you are considering the needs arising from religion and belief in the work that you do. In part 2 of this resource (Develop your Religious Literacy Part 3) we explore needs such as: diet; clothing; prayer; avoiding alcohol; religious festivals and holy days.

**Further reading, resources and professional learning**

**Religious Discrimination and Bullying**

[Faith and religious bullying | Childline](https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/types-bullying/faith-religious-bullying/)

[Home – respectme](https://respectme.org.uk/)

[3. What is hate crime? - Hate crime strategy - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/hate-crime-strategy-scotland/pages/3/)

**VIDEOS**

* Different religions explained for children and young people: [Religious Studies - BBC Bitesize](https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/subjects/zmyb4wx)
* A selection of videos with stories from different religions, school assembly ideas and videos of young people explaining the different aspects of their faith: [Primary Religious Studies teaching resources (bbc.co.uk)](https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/topics/cmmp3ye818mt)
* Videos for RME, PSE and Citizenship. Check the ‘Quick Links’ to the different faiths across the top of the page: <https://www.truetube.co.uk/>
* ‘Faith and I’ is a short film created by Edinburgh Interfaith Association following the stories of a young Sikh, Muslim and Jewish person at secondary school: [Faith & I (youtube.com)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ev4n8nyBuFI&t=7s)
* BBC Radio and TV Programmes on Religion and Ethics: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/genres/religionandethics/player>

**PUBLICATIONS**

* A Guide to Faith Communities in Scotland gives a summary of 10 religions and beliefs, produced by Interfaith Scotland in consultation with local faith communities: [Guide-to-Faith-Communities-in-Scotland-2014.pdf (interfaithscotland.org)](https://interfaithscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Guide-to-Faith-Communities-in-Scotland-2014.pdf)
* Values in Harmony outlines the beliefs and values of 11 religions and beliefs: [Values-in-Harmony-the-promotion-of-good-community-relations-in-Scotland.pdf (interfaithscotland.org)](https://interfaithscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Values-in-Harmony-the-promotion-of-good-community-relations-in-Scotland.pdf)
* West Lothian Faith Handbook provides useful resources on customs surrounding food, fasting, birth, and death in different religions. [West\_Lothian\_Faith\_Handbook\_October\_2017.pdf (interfaithscotland.org)](https://interfaithscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/West_Lothian_Faith_Handbook_October_2017.pdf)

The following series from Oxford University Press gives a short introduction to six faiths.

*Christianity: a very short introduction*: Linda Woodhead

*Judaism: a very short introduction*: N. Solomon

*Buddhism : a very short introduction:* D. Keown*Hinduism : a very short introduction*: KimKnott*Sikhism : a very short introduction:* E.M.Nesbitt

*Islam : a very short introduction:* Malise Ruthven

**WEBPAGES**

A comprehensive outline of the different religions can be found in the BBC archives at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/>

A calendar of religious festivals is available to purchase at: [www.shapcalendar.org.uk](http://www.shapcalendar.org.uk)

Buddhism:<https://www.buddhanet.net/>

Christianity:<https://request.org.uk/>

Hinduism:<https://www.hinduismtoday.com/>

Islam:<https://www.islamicity.org/>

Judaism:<https://jewishmuseum.org.uk/>

Sikhism:<https://www.sikhs.org/>

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**Religious Festivals Calendar**

<https://www.reonline.org.uk/festival-calendar>

**FAITH ORGANISATIONS IN SCOTLAND**

**Buddhist**

Tibetan Buddhists: [www.samyeling.org](http://www.samyeling.org)

Varapunya Buddhist Centre Aberdeen: [www.varapunyacentre.com](http://www.varapunyacentre.com)

Dhammapadipa Temple Edinburgh: [www.dhammapadipa.com](http://www.dhammapadipa.com)

**Christian**

Archdiocese of Glasgow (Catholic): [www.rcag.org.uk](http://www.rcag.org.uk)

Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh (Catholic): [www.archedinburgh.org](http://www.archedinburgh.org)

Baptist Union of Scotland: [www.scottishbaptist.com](http://www.scottishbaptist.com)

Church of Scotland: [www.churchofscotland.org.uk](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk)

Methodist Church in Scotland: [www.methodistchurchinscotland.net](http://www.methodistchurchinscotland.net)

Scottish Catholic Education Service: <https://sces.org.uk/>

Scottish Episcopal Church: [www.scotland.anglican.org](http://www.scotland.anglican.org)

United Free Church of Scotland: [www.ufcos.org.uk](http://www.ufcos.org.uk)

United Reformed Church: [www.urc.org.uk](http://www.urc.org.uk)

**Hindu**

Hindu Temple of Scotland: [www.hindutempleofscotland.com](http://www.hindutempleofscotland.com)

Glasgow Hindu Mandir: [www.hindumandirglasgow.org](http://www.hindumandirglasgow.org)

Scottish Hindu Foundation: [www.scottishhindufoundation.com](http://www.scottishhindufoundation.com)

**Jewish**

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities: [www.scojec.org](http://www.scojec.org)

**Muslim**

Muslim Council of Scotland: [www.mcscotland.org](http://www.mcscotland.org)

**Sikh**

Glasgow Gurdwara: [www.facebook.com/TheGlasgowGurdwara](http://www.facebook.com/TheGlasgowGurdwara)

Central Gurdwara Glasgow: [www.facebook.com/central.g.glasgow](http://www.facebook.com/central.g.glasgow)

Edinburgh Gurdwara: [www.edinburgh-gurdwara.co.uk](http://www.edinburgh-gurdwara.co.uk)

**INTERFAITH ORGANISATIONS IN SCOTLAND**

Interfaith Scotland: [www.interfaithscotland.org](http://www.interfaithscotland.org)

Edinburgh Interfaith Association: [www.eifa.org.uk](http://www.eifa.org.uk)

Interfaith Glasgow: [www.interfaithglasgow.org](http://www.interfaithglasgow.org)

**LOCAL INTERFAITH GROUPS IN SCOTLAND**

Contact details for the 20 local interfaith groups based in Scotland.

<https://interfaithscotland.org/local-interfaith-groups>