

# Inter faith Unit KS 3 – Talking Together – Inter faith engagement



<p><b>What this unit contains</b></p>	<p><i>Session 1. “Why talking together?”</i> Pupils consider what can be gained from discussing religion, from engaging with people of different religions and from hearing the views and values of those who have no particular religious beliefs. Teachers will discover how the pupils’ backgrounds and experiences will contribute to this unit. Pupils will consider issues of stereotyping and prejudice and how that might affect our relationships. Begin a vocabulary/glossary and start a classroom Resource File.</p> <p><i>Sessions 2 &amp; 3: engaging in conversation – developing trust, sharing, collaborating and empathising.</i> Explore the religious dimension of matters which are relevant to pupils in their everyday lives. Focus on food, (rules, customs, and symbolism) – with optional extension to festivals. Observe how and where the religions interweave and overlap. Common ground and differences. Pupils ‘read’ together a play script conversation and follow up with discussion and investigation of artefacts. This session will provide an opportunity to raise awareness of diversity and stereotyping within a religion as well as between religions. Invite in adult visitor(s) with religious commitment.</p> <p><i>Sessions 4 &amp; 5: exploring the diversity of religion in our own locality.</i> By sharing pupil and staff knowledge, chart a wall map of the locality with religious landmarks. Arrange a local walk to discover the different faith communities, their buildings, their worship patterns and their community activities. If this is really impossible, research websites of places of worship in Haringey.</p> <p><i>Session 6: review and evaluate the unit; investigate co-operation initiatives in the local area.</i> Presentations. Concluding inquiry about how local religious communities are co-operating, through discussion with a member of a local inter faith group. (Is there a school-based inter faith ‘club’?).</p>
<p><b>Where the unit fits and how it builds upon previous learning</b></p>	<p>This should be taught in the spring term of year 7. As pupils are still settling in, having come from different feeder schools and with different prior experiences, it will enable them to contribute their knowledge, exchange ideas and get to know each other better, to trust each other in an informal, relevant, cutting-edge and thoughtful way. It will raise awareness of the diversity of religious communities in Haringey and how they interact. It will also help teachers to assess the experience and knowledge each pupil already has and thereby plan future teaching more effectively.</p>

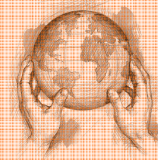


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<p><b>Extension activities – gifted &amp; talented pupils</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Pupils could write inter religious conversations or play scripts of their own, starting from questions about clothes or festivals and ‘perform’ them to another class. Include views and values of pupils without specific religious beliefs.</li> <li>➤ Pupils could engage in a deeper investigation of two local places of worship; they could research and prepare a presentation on the history of their presence in the neighbourhood and their buildings, their members’ worship practices and their service to the wider community.</li> <li>➤ Pupils collaborate with other classes to produce a high quality display for a central area in the school based on a map of Haringey and demonstrating the multi-faith diversity of the borough.</li> <li>➤ Pupils might consider how to teach an inter faith unit in a school in the countryside where there are only Christian places of worship to visit.</li> <li>➤ Play ‘The Diversity Game’ a game aimed at helping people to deepen their understanding of each other, to celebrate difference and share values. Available from the Festival Shop Ltd, 56, Poplar Rd., Birmingham B14 7AG tel: 0121 444 0444</li> </ul>
<p><b>Vocabulary</b></p> <p>inter faith (<i>between religions</i>)</p> <p>intra faith (<i>within a religion</i>) dialogue</p> <p>denomination ecumenical diversity</p> <p>commitment stereotype prejudice</p>	<p><b>SMSC/Citizenship / Cross-Curricular Links</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ This unit provides opportunities for cross curricular work linking with many subjects, for example geography, drama, citizenship, local history, art, architecture, science, health, pshe and ICT</li> <li>➤ The wider dimensions of small communities within the locality</li> </ul>

**Note. Before starting this unit:** Invite adults or older pupils with religious commitment, to join in sessions 2 and 3. Arrange visits to 4 or 5 local places of worship (for session 5). Remember risk assessment and consider a donation for each place of worship visited. Invite parents to join the walk (session 5). Invite a member of an Inter Faith Group for session 6. Send for information leaflets from the Inter Faith organizations listed for session 6.





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## *Session 2 – Developing trust and sharing experiences*

Learning objectives	A T 1	A T 2	Suggested teaching activities	Sensitivities, points to note, resources
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<p><i>This session should foster creative interaction and trust between pupils through conversation and discussion of the religious dimension of everyday matters.</i></p>	<p>√</p>		<p>Share homework comments and add any further information to wall map and news-cuttings to Resource File.</p>	<p><b>Resources</b></p>
<p>Pupils should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ recognise similarities in practice and concepts;</li> </ul>	<p>√</p>		<p>Whole class: warm up the play reading conversation (depending on pupil confidence, allocate parts beforehand for the six readers to practice). Introduce the six ‘characters’ to the class, indicating that they are ‘fictional’ but their conversation represents the variety of real life beliefs and practices as they happen around us today in London. Photographs and captions reinforce this. Six pupils read aloud the conversation script. Afterwards the class can ‘read’ the pictures and captions together. <i>Note that these children are not wholly typical of faiths and that there are other interesting things to find out about attitudes and practices not referenced in this conversation – particularly Jewish practices.</i></p>	<p>‘Talking together’ books or copies for each pupil, of the 4 page conversation ‘In the dinner hall’ Introductory / discussion prompts Invite adult guest with a religious commitment to join in discussion.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ appreciate and respect differences;</li> </ul>	<p>√</p>		<p><b>Discussion:</b> Identify the differences in Buddhist attitudes to eating meat (p.2) and the differences between Jewish families’ observance of eating kosher food (p.2) and the different Christian church customs of shared food after worship (p.2). Note that Judith’s family are not observant Jews and her response is typical of secular and liberal Jews. She does not explain much about Jewish food laws and you might like to explore these in more depth after reading the play. How might an Orthodox Jew have responded differently during the conversation?</p>	<p><b>Food artefacts:</b> packets/tins of kosher food; Seder dish; Hindu puja tray with fruit; photo of (sacred) cows in India; photo of halal butcher shop and kosher section in supermarket; Christian harvest festival service sheet; Communion chalice &amp; paten; bottles (empty!) of Communion wine &amp; Sabbath wine (for labels); dates from Arab country to break Ramadan fast; Zakat &amp; Lent (charity) boxes; Buddhist monk’s food bowl &amp; spoon; Sikh langar dish; Fair Trade packets.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ understand there are variations <i>within</i> each religion</li> </ul>	<p>√</p>		<p>Display artefacts to investigate: pupils should be able to handle them, look at labels, discuss their use and share their knowledge and opinions. Working in small groups, each group should choose one or two artefacts to research and write about. If possible add to the glossary.</p>	<p>Books / websites for researching artefacts &amp; their use.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ know the wider significance and implications for a person’s lifestyle of religious teachings e.g. correlation of fasting and giving</li> </ul>	<p>√</p>	<p>√</p>	<p><b>Homework:</b> Take home ‘food’ conversation. Choose two of the questions on page 4 to answer; then answer question 9 and this one: Is there any time in your own life when you give up something (your time? money? food?) so that someone else can have more?</p>	



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## Session 3 – Collaborating and empathising

Learning objectives	A T 1	A T 2	Suggested teaching activities	Sensitivities, points to note, resources
<p><i>This session should foster creative interaction and trust between pupils through conversation and discussion of the religious dimension of everyday matters</i></p> <p>Pupils should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ work collaboratively and think empathetically (imagining themselves in the shoes of someone from a religion or standpoint not their own)</li> </ul>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>In groups of four, pupils could write a play script with four imaginary characters from three different religions and one of no religion similar to last week's food conversation.</p> <p><b>either</b> extend the food conversation starting with the question: 'Do we think there are some foods (e.g. meats) – and drinks, tobacco and drugs – that should be forbidden for religious reasons? Why? or Why not?' (consider God's laws/will for us, harming or spoiling creation, being selfish, greedy, not valuing our bodies)</p> <p><b>or</b> using their knowledge and experience, and information from reference books and/or from the internet, write a new <i>short</i> conversation on the subject of festivals. For consideration - Which are the main festivals? Are they all happy occasions or are some solemn or sad anniversaries? What kind of things do they have in common? Special worship/prayers? Special food? Cards or presents? New clothes? Special music? Dancing? Street processions? What if they fall not at a weekend? Time off school or work? Can we join in each others festivals? How do we celebrate if we do not belong to a religion?</p> <p>Plenary: groups to read their scripts to the whole class</p> <p>As a class, decide if there are any new words for the glossary.</p> <p><b>Homework:</b> Collect information about/make a list of signs of religion in the neighbourhood. Look out, on your way home, for religious landmarks, street names etc – ask neighbours.</p>	<p><b>Resources</b> Copies of last week's food conversation (for reference). Teachings from religions about moderation or prohibitions on food, drink, alcohol and drugs</p> <p>Basic information about festivals of six main religions.</p> <p>If possible, invite in one or two adults (parents?) with a religious commitment, to help the groups</p>



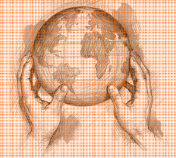


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## Session 5 – Neighbourhood walkabout

Learning objectives	A T 1	A T 2	Suggested teaching activities	Sensitivities, points to note, resources
<p>Pupils should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ become familiar with locations of nearby places of worship and religious landmarks;</li> <li>➤ understand that worship/spiritual fellowship are central to religious communities;</li> <li>➤ understand that the concept of service to others is central to most religions;</li> <li>➤ if time - know about the origins of local religious groups.</li> </ul>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>	<p>Take pupils on a two/three hour walk, visiting 4 or 5 places of worship and/or religious landmarks. Remind the class about dress conventions and expected behaviour. Take donations if you can.</p> <p>Appoint one or two of the class as photographers. Pupils could work in groups of 5 or 6, each group to have a notebook and appoint a note-taker.</p> <p>During the walk, make notes on each building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) How it is identified outside and inside. Its size, age (approx), layout of building e.g. seating /pews? moveable chairs? Musical instruments? Why is it like it is?</li> <li>b) Information from notice boards about worship and other activities. Are there community activities? Charities supported?</li> </ul> <p>Each group could collect one copy of free information/leaflets about the building and its community activities/charities (i.e. don't walk off with 30 copies!).</p> <p><b>Homework: either:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Take home a leaflet collected from one of your visits (or brought in by a visitor) – paste onto an A4 sheet and add some of your own comments – to be shared with the class and add to the class Resource File during the next lesson.</li> </ul> <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b) Write a paragraph about how you <i>felt</i> being in one or more of the places of worship.</li> </ul> <p><b>Optional extension work:</b> in groups (back at school/home): identify relevant questions and research one building or community to discover its history. Make a display of your findings or add them to the class Resource File. Make a timeline to show their dates of origin. Present your findings at a school assembly</p>	<p><b>Resources</b></p> <p>Notebooks Camera Spare head coverings</p> <p>If you have been unable to go out to make visits to places of worship, continue the website research started last lesson. Interview visitors from places of worship. Make a display of findings.</p>





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## Session 6 – Religions co-operating

Learning objectives	A T 1	A T 2	Suggested teaching activities	Sensitivities, points to note, resources
Pupils should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ discover that religious people and groups work co-operatively with each other in Haringey;</li> <li>➤ consider how co-operation could be increased and improved;</li> <li>➤ think reflectively about the ground covered in this unit.</li> </ul>	√  √  √  √  √	√    √    √	Invite a member of one of Haringey’s Inter Faith groups to come and join your lesson.  Add photos taken on walk, to the wall map. Present your findings from your outing, to your visitor.  Hear from your visitor about the work that his/her organization undertakes.  Discuss whether inter faith dialogue and engagement is a good thing. How does it contribute to society? To peace and harmony between neighbours? Are there any disadvantages?  Can you think of other ways to continue inter faith dialogue and engagement in the community?  How about an inter faith school club? Maybe liaise with another school – maybe a ‘faith’ school? On the internet?  <b>Homework.</b> Write down 4 of the most important things you have learned from this unit. What have you enjoyed most about this unit?	<b>Resources</b> Information leaflets from organizations:  The Peace Alliance: <a href="http://www.peacealliance.org.uk/about.html">http://www.peacealliance.org.uk/about.html</a>  Network Haringey (Christian denominations) <a href="http://www.prayharin.gey.org.uk/">http://www.prayharin.gey.org.uk/</a>  Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) <a href="http://www.ccj.org.uk/">http://www.ccj.org.uk/</a>  North London Inter Faith Group <a href="http://www.northlondoninterfaith.org.uk/aboutus.html">http://www.northlondoninterfaith.org.uk/aboutus.html</a>  Haringey SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for RE)



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## Session 1 – Talking together quick quiz

### QUICK QUIZ

1. Religion	Place of worship	Festival	Scriptures
Buddhist	mosque	Easter	Torah
Christian	synagogue	Eid	Bible
Hindu	gurdwara	Hannukah	Guru Granth Sahib
Jewish	church	Divali	Qur'an
Muslim	mandir	Baisakhi	Dhammapada
Sikh	temple	Buddha Day	Vedas

2. Ramadan is a Christian 'joining, belonging' ceremony  
 Singh is the Hindu sacred sound for God  
 baptism is the Muslim month of fasting  
 a tallit is lives in a Buddhist monastery  
 'Om' is a name given to all Sikh men  
 a bikkhu (monk) the prayer shawl worn by Jews

3. How many?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jewish/Christian commandments          | <input type="checkbox"/> Sikh 'K'symbols                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pillars of Islam                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Disciples chosen by Jesus      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sikh Gurus                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Books in the Jewish Torah      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Days in the period of Lent (Christian) | The Buddhist <input type="checkbox"/> fold path (wheel) |

### 4. SYMBOLS



Christian



Muslim



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*Session 1 – Talking together lesson resource*

*Photograph of Deborah Premraj*



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## Session 1 – Talking together

### Homework

- Read this paragraph. Maybe discuss it with members of your family.
- Write down two comments of your own.
- Begin to collect some news cuttings about religious news for class Resources File.

### WHY?

We can learn about other religions from teachers, from books and from the internet.

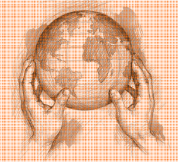
We also hear about religion from newspapers and TV, but often they give us misleading information and only bad publicity about religious activities. So why should we make an effort to talk *with* people of other religions? To talk *and* to listen?

Living in Britain, issues of religion come up on the news every day. Living in Haringey, every one of us is affected by issues of religion; probably every one of us meets and speaks to someone every day, who belongs to a religion – on the bus, in shops, at the doctors' surgery, in school, amongst our neighbours, in the park . . . If we *don't* talk to people who are different from us, that's when misunderstanding comes in, which can lead to fear and arguments and even violence.

If we really talk – and really *listen* to each other, we will find many similarities, many beliefs and values and activities that we share. We will also find differences and we need to respect differences; this is not easy, some differences go deep. But if we insist “I've got it right and you're wrong” then the conversation comes to an end, friendship can't continue and often trouble starts.

Perhaps we can concentrate on what we share, rather than how we compare. Can we invite our 'other faith' neighbours to *join in* the fun or the solemnity of each others' festivals? Visit each others' places of worship? What else?

We are so fortunate in Haringey to have people of so many religions all around us. Let's learn from them. Let's keep talking and learn to trust each other. Let's find out how we can do things together – for our own enrichment and for the sake of peace in our neighbourhoods.



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## *Session 2 – Developing trust and sharing experiences – support materials*

### **Notes for teachers in preparation for reading the conversation ‘In the dinner hall’**

The starting point is not a ‘religious topic’, however the ordinary act of eating food together, is a way in to exploring the religious dimensions of food. Although the conversation is artificial, it should act as a trigger for genuine discussion and the pictures have been deliberately chosen to bring a sense of reality to the conversation. The captions give back-up information and answer some of the questions touched on in the conversation. Questions at the end and the ‘Stretch yourself’ section allow for differentiation.

Notice the diversity within the religions (in this conversation, within Buddhist, Christian and Jewish practices) as well as between the religions. There is no one way of being a ‘Christian’ or a ‘Jew’ or a ‘Buddhist’. Just as the creative silence of a Quaker Meeting is different from the exuberant praise of a Pentecostal service, so there is no one way of being a Jew or a Buddhist. Similarly, just as there are Christian families from far-away places like Nigeria, Cyprus and the Caribbean – with very different customs, so there are Muslims from such diverse countries as Egypt, Pakistan and Bosnia. Some customs which may be perceived as religious are in fact cultural.

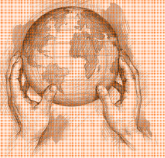
You could ‘warm up’ the conversation, by brainstorming ‘food’. Readers could be briefed and given the chance to practice beforehand. Sticky labels identifying each character can be helpful (note that each character’s name begins with the same letter as his/her religion – for easy identification). Pupils could be asked beforehand, to bring in their own food ‘artefacts’ or family photographs of celebrations with food, to show and share.

Hopefully in the follow-up discussion, pupils will feel able to raise issues that are relevant to them and their daily lives, will clarify some puzzles, challenge some prejudices and expand horizons.

**IN THE DINNER HALL:** Meet the characters. These are imaginary characters who will reflect something of the diversity of the religions of people living around us.

- **Owen’s** family does not belong to any particular religion. They have always lived in Britain.
- **Hansa** is a Hindu. Her family came to Britain in 1980 from the city of Mumbai in south India.
- **Bimi** (short for Bimali) – her family is Buddhist. They came to Britain from Sri Lanka 12 years ago.
- **Judith** is a Jew. Her family came to Britain from Poland in 1939, to escape from the Nazis.
- **Candice** is Christian. Her family came to Britain from Barbados in the Caribbean 42 years ago.
- **Masood** is a Muslim. His family came from Egypt to Britain 8 years ago.

*Extracts from ‘Talking Together’ copyright Sarah Thorley*



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## IN THE DINNER HALL

**Owen.** Pass the ketchup Judith. This beefburger tastes really good. Why aren't you having one Hansa?

**Hansa.** Because it's made of beef and I'm a Hindu and we don't eat beef, because to us cows are holy. No Hindu would harm a cow or kill a cow.

**Owen.** Why ever not? Why should a cow be holy? That's weird!

**Hansa.** My Dad says that a cow is God's great gift. If a cow is all we have, we can survive. We can use its milk to drink and to make into other things to eat. And in India, in the villages, cow dung is mixed with straw and dried in the sun to make bricks to build houses and to burn as fuel to cook on.

**Bimi.** My family don't eat any meat at all. We're vegetarian. Many Buddhists don't eat meat. We don't like to kill any animals. There's plenty of food in the world to eat without killing animals!

**Judith.** Well my Buddhist friend from Tibet says they do eat the meat of yaks, because there aren't enough crops growing in the mountains of Tibet to feed everyone.

**Bimi.** I don't think there's a rule for Buddhists not to eat meat. Buddhists don't go in for a lot of rules anyway. But the Buddha's teaching is to respect all living beings. So I guess we each work out for ourselves what that means.

**Candice.** I didn't know you were Buddhist. We don't have any rules about what we can or can't eat. But even though I like meat, I don't eat it because I think factory farming is cruel to the animals, so I'm vegetarian. Drives my Mum nuts!

**Owen.** I heard that some Christians don't eat meat on Fridays.

**Candice.** You could be right. I think they usually have fish. Something about Jesus dying on a Friday. Come to think about it, we get fish on Fridays for our school dinners.

**Masood.** Muslims don't eat pork or any pig meat. I can't stand the smell of bacon cooking. Our neighbour leaves her back door open and she always seems to be cooking bacon!

**Owen.** I can't say I'm keen on the smell of curry when our Indian neighbours are cooking! But I guess it'd be boring if we were all the same! Jews don't eat pork either, do they?

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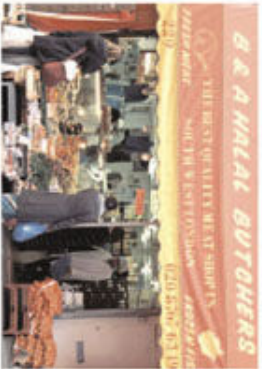
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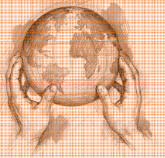
To Hindus, cows are the source of food and symbol of life: a gift from God. They are treated as holy and must not be harmed. Indeed many Hindus do not eat meat because they believe that all animals, as part of God's created world, should not be harmed. Many Buddhists are vegetarian for the same reason.



Buddhist monks and nuns usually receive food bought and cooked and served to them by lay (ordinary) people. It is an honour for people to give them food and an opportunity to be generous. Generosity is an important teaching in Buddhism.



Meat eaten by Muslims is bought from 'halal' butchers. Halal means allowed – the animals must be killed swiftly by cutting the jugular vein and saying the name of Allah. Allah is the Arabic word for God.



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**Judith.** No they don't, along with a whole lot of other things that are forbidden. It's in the Torah. And the food Jews eat should be prepared in a special way. It's called 'kosher'. My family isn't that strict about it though.

**Biml.** Joseph is strict. He says he can't eat school dinners because they aren't kosher. That's why he brings sandwiches. I've seen a section for kosher food in the supermarket.

**Owen.** What a pain! I'm glad I don't have rules about what I can and can't eat.

**Judith.** I went with Simran last Sunday to her gurdwara.

**Candice.** Her *what?*

**Biml.** I know what that is. It's the proper name for a Sikh temple. It means 'the doorway of the Guru'.

**Candice.** Like our church is 'the house of God'?

**Masood.** Yeah, something like that. Except that guru isn't the same as God. 'Guru' means a teacher or holy man or something doesn't it? You'd know Hansa. You have gurus in Hinduism don't you?

**Hansa.** Yes. But the Sikhs had ten special Gurus. Their teachings are in the holy book, the Guru Granth Sahib. It's kept in a gurdwara, so I guess that's why gurdwara means 'the doorway of the Guru'. And Judith, talking of food, did you have a meal at the gurdwara after the service?

**Judith.** Yes we did. Chapattis and dal. Yum! Simran told me that every Sikh gurdwara has what they call a 'langar'. There's a big kitchen where families take it in turns to cook meals for everybody who comes to worship, even strangers. Must have been two hundred of us eating a meal last Sunday.

**Biml.** We do something like that at our temple on Sundays. In two weeks time it's the anniversary of my Grandad's death. So all my family are cooking a special meal for everyone after the service, in memory of him. It's a lot of work, but it's good fun too.

**Candice.** Sounds good. We just have tea and biscuits after our service on Sundays. But we do have a big feast together at Harvest Festival. At Christopher's church, once a month they all bring food to share with everyone after the service.

**Biml.** How about you Masood? Do you have mega meals at your temple?



The Jewish belief is that their Lava, including what should not be eaten, were given by God to Moses. They are part of God's covenant (promise) with the Jewish people. Some Jews keep more strictly to the kosher food rules than others. 'Kosher' means food that's allowed.



This is a Sikh 'langar'. Hospitality is an important part of Sikhism. Every gurdwara has a langar. All the food is vegetarian and is always free. Men and women share the work in the langar. When Sikhs go to a gurdwara they take contributions of food for the langar stove-occupboard.



Children are decorating a church for Harvest Festival, to thank God for his gift of food in creation. After the service, the food will be given to a nearby centre for homeless people.

OSerwah Thorley

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**Masood.** First of all we don't call it a temple. It's a mosque.

**Owen.** I went to a mosque once. When we were on holiday in Turkey. It was really beautiful, especially the dome.

**Masood.** Anyway, we have this one month in the year called Ramadan. During all of that month we fast.

**Owen.** *What?* You don't eat for a whole month? That's rubbish. You'd be dead!

**Masood.** Of course not, idiot! It's just during the hours of daylight that we don't eat – or drink. When it gets dark, we break the fast with a good meal. In fact two or three evenings a week I go to the mosque where food is cooked and shared out. It's good. I get to see my friends.

**Owen.** But *why* do you do it?

**Masood.** Partly because it says so in the Qur'an. Partly it's supposed to be good for our self-discipline. And also, when *we* feel hungry, we remember people who are *always* hungry.

**Owen.** Well that's fair enough. Though I don't see how it helps the hungry people.

**Masood.** Well at the end of Ramadan, we have a big festival called Eid and each of us gives money for the poor. It's called 'zakat'. Don't you collect money for charity at your church during Lent, Candice?

**Candice.** Yes we do. Lent is the forty days before Easter. Christians are supposed to fast during Lent. I'm not sure that many people do it these days. But we do try to give up something we like, like sweets or crisps and give that money to charity. It's partly to remember the forty days Jesus was in the desert without food.

**Hansa.** My Mum was fasting a few weeks ago. She had promised to fast for a month, to eat just one meal a day, if my Dad got better. She had prayed and prayed that he would and he did. It was her way of thanking God.

**Judith.** Do you really believe that God made him better? I mean, what if he hadn't got better? Would you blame God?

**Hansa.** That's a hard one. I believe that we should do good things in our lives. Praying and fasting are good things. They help us to be aware of God. Ask me again tomorrow. That's the bell and I've got to go. And all this talk started with a beefburger!

3 Sarah Tierney



Waiting for the moment to break the fast at the Prophet's Mosque in Meednash in Saudi Arabia. At sunset every evening during the month of Ramadan, all over the world, Muslims gather to pray and to break the fast.

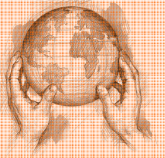


Muslims celebrate the festival of Eid at the end of Ramadan. In the morning all the men and some of the women come to the mosque to pray. Boys are collecting zakat – this is money to give to people in need.



Most Hindus have a shrine in their home with statues and pictures of gods and goddesses and other holy objects. Here a woman offers her food at the shrine, to be blessed, before the family meal.





# Inter faith Unit KS 3 – Talking Together – Inter faith engagement

**FOOD.** Food and drink is pretty central to everyone's life. We can't do without food. 'We are what we eat' was the title of a TV programme – and that's true if you think about it.

- Food and meals are an important part of many religious activities. That's partly about bringing people together, often to give thanks for the gifts of God.
- Giving and sharing of certain foods also often has a deeper symbolic meaning. Such rituals may have traditional meanings which go back centuries.
- Every religion has something to say about food and about eating – or not eating too much, not being greedy. Every religion teaches about justice, which includes sharing the food that we have with those who do not have enough.
- Religions also speak out about the misuse of food and alcohol, tobacco and drugs.

### What do you know? What do you think?

1. Why doesn't Hansa eat a beefburger for her dinner?
2. Which three children are vegetarian?
3. *What do you think* about being vegetarian? Why?
4. Find three pictures which show generosity being practised. Which three religions do they show?
5. *Do you think* there are some foods – and drinks, tobacco and drugs – that should be forbidden for religious reasons? Why?
6. What will Binni's family do on the anniversary of her Grandad's death?
7. Describe any occasions when *you* have special food, maybe at a celebration in your home or at your place of worship.
8. What are some of the reasons why a religious person might fast. Masood, Candice and Hansa have some ideas.
9. *What do you think* this Sikh teaching means: 'Each should give according to what they have and each should take according to their need'? *Is it a good teaching for all of us?*
10. Look at the two photos on this page. Find out about how the foods are used as religious symbols.

### Stretch yourselves... Look beyond...

- Teachings: on alcohol, tobacco, drugs, Kosher and halal food.
- Moderation not greed. Global concern: justice – sharing of food resources – fair trade laws – charity.
- Hospitality at home: thanksgiving meals; prayer before meals.
- Food as part of religious activities eg food taken to share at gurudwara, temple, church. Offering of food – to deities (Hindus); by lay people to monks (Buddhists); at harvest festivals.
- Role of food/meal in worship eg Eucharist, Kiddush, Passover, Prasad, Karah Prasad, Festival food. Symbolic meanings.
- Fasting: penance (being sorry) eg Jewish fast at Yom Kippur; self-discipline, thanksgiving; fulfilment of a vow, monks and nuns.



The act of worship which has become most important for Christians began with a meal. It is called the Eucharist or Holy Communion or Mass.

Christians receive a small piece of bread and a sip of wine by which to remember Jesus. The night before he died, Jesus was eating a meal with his disciples. He gave them wine to represent his blood which would be spilled for them and bread to represent his body which would be broken on the cross.



A Jewish family share the annual Passover meal. They thank God for when their ancestors, the Israelites, were freed from slavery more than 3000 years ago in Egypt. All the food on the table has symbolic meaning. For example the bowl of salt water is a symbol for the tears of misery of the slaves. You can read the story in Exodus chapters 12-14 in the Torah (also in a copy of the Christian Bible).