



# Interfaith Workshops in Schools



Interfaith  
Scotland

# About Interfaith Scotland



**Interfaith Scotland is the national interfaith organisation for Scotland.**

We work to help ensure good relations between Scotland's diverse religion and belief communities.

*We also share good practice in interfaith dialogue, education, engagement and training nationally and internationally, striving for peace and building a more welcoming and inclusive Scotland for all.*



# What is interfaith dialogue?



**Interfaith dialogue is engaging with people from different religions and beliefs to understand, empathise and learn from each other, build friendships and create more welcoming communities.**

Some examples of interfaith activities include:

- Visiting different places of worship
- Attending festival celebrations
- Talks and discussions on a topic by different faiths such as caring for the environment
- Community celebrations such as shared meals, ceilidhs, picnics and sports events
- Volunteering together to help the local community such as soup kitchens and tree planting



# Why is dialogue important?



## Interfaith dialogue can be a positive tool to:

- Foster trust and respect between different communities
- Challenge negative stereotypes through personal encounter
- Unite people of different faiths to tackle injustice
- Assist with conflict resolution
- Advocate for religious equality and ensure religious rights are upheld
- Support people in their personal search for meaning, spiritual growth, acceptance and belonging



# Interfaith Workshops in Schools



## Volunteer Speakers

We train speakers from different faiths, cultures and backgrounds to give presentations about their faith in primary and secondary schools across Scotland.



# Available faiths & backgrounds



**Volunteers come from a variety of world religions, including:**

- **Bahá'í**
- **Buddhist**
- **Christian** (Catholic, Protestant)
- **Quaker**
- **Hindu**
- **Jewish**
- **Muslim**
- **Pagan**
- **Sikh**



# What is explored in the talks?

Presentations from speakers can include:

- Introduction to core beliefs of their faith
- How faith impacts their life (such as prayer, religious dress and values)
- Their personal faith story
- How their faith/culture interacts with Scottish society



# Exploring the Impact of Faith



- Speakers can share how the values of their faith link to real life issues in society
- Speakers can talk on a theme from the perspective of their faith such as peace or climate change, demonstrating the common values across faiths
- Pupils may hear about the impact of religious discrimination on real people
- Pupils can reflect upon the way the media and global politics influence discrimination in Scotland



# Format of workshops

## We offer a variety of models for the workshops:

- school assemblies
- classroom talks
- panels with Q&A
- whole or half-day 'faith carousels' where pupils can hear from speakers of several faiths in one day

By interacting with several speakers, pupils have the opportunity to compare beliefs and values across different faiths and find out more about what they share in common.



# Engaging with Religious Objects



Volunteers often share religious objects that are important to them. We also have boxes of religious objects from six major religions in Scotland which can be demonstrated to pupils. These include

- Musical Objects – *tingsa, singing bowl for meditation*
- Similar objects across faiths showing commonalities:
  - *prayer beads from Buddhism, Sikhism, Islam and Catholicism;*
  - *incense from Hindu, Buddhist and Catholic traditions*
- Religious Dress – *hijab, kippah, tallith*

Discussion can include the impact of the item for the person of faith, for example wearing a religious item can bring a sense of pride and identity but also result in bullying and discrimination.



# How will pupils benefit?



**Pupils can ask questions directly to a friendly and approachable volunteer about their religion which can be significant in their journey of understanding**

- to increase empathy
- to break down barriers of fear and suspicion
- and help to challenge negative stereotypes

This is particularly effective for pupils in rural areas who may have fewer opportunities to meet people from different religions or cultures to themselves.

*“I never realised religious people could be so normal!” – S6 pupil Oban High School*



# Interfaith Dialogue Activities



We can also offer interfaith dialogue activities to accompany the talks which are delivered by our staff team.

These activities promote listening and speaking respectfully, not to win points but to understand others better, a useful tool for peer groups and communities.

Includes games, such as:

*The Conflict Spectrum Game, Do's and Don'ts of Dialogue, Dialogue Circle, and Dialogue in Pairs.*



# Other school activities



## Themed workshops delivered by our staff team:

- **Our Life Journey** - *Looking at the people, places, values, beliefs and experiences that have influenced our own life journeys.*
- **Faith and Identity** - *Looking at different aspects of our identity such as gender, culture, faith and belief.*
- **Impact of Faith and Interfaith Today** - *On individuals, communities, Scotland and the world.*
- **Conflict to Co-operation** - *What it means to respect people with different beliefs and backgrounds, with some conflict resolution activities.*
- **Dialogue Dinner** - *How to plan a dialogue dinner with activities throughout the meal on topics of food and friendship.*
- **Faith Book Art Activity** - *Pupils discuss shared values between faiths and create a book of quotes and scripture readings on different themes such as love, peace and gratitude.*
- **Religious Equality** - *Looking at the importance of religious equality as a human right in Scottish society and how to promote this.*
- **Faith and the Climate** – *What different faiths have to say about caring for the environment*

# Scottish Interfaith Week



**Scottish Interfaith Week is Scotland's annual festival to celebrate the nation's religious and cultural diversity.**

Anyone can host an event, including schools. Events can be open to the public or private.

We offer resources to support teachers and school libraries to engage pupils in the festival which can be downloaded at

[scottishinterfaithweek.org](https://scottishinterfaithweek.org)



*Young people meeting First Minister John Swinney at the National Interfaith Youth Conference in 2025*

# Faces of Faith exhibition

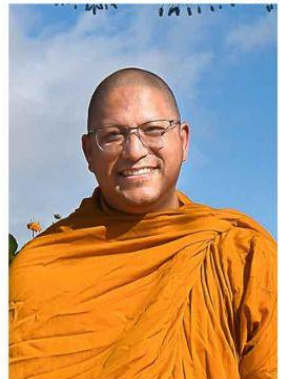
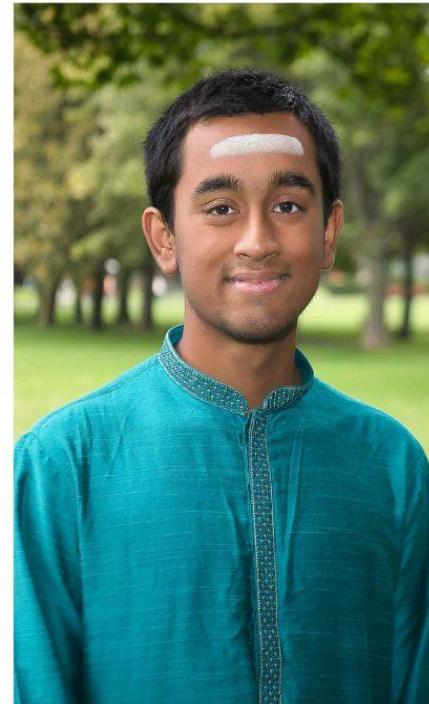


## Touring throughout Scotland!

Our Faces of Faith exhibition shares the stories of 16 people from different faiths and cultural backgrounds. It explores the joys, challenges, and complexities of living as a person of faith in Scotland, and the positive impact these communities have on a local, national, and international level. The exhibition is accompanied by workshop materials for schools and workshops can be facilitated by our staff team.

*Previously hosted by: Robert Gordon's College, University of Glasgow, University of Edinburgh, Napier University, University of Aberdeen, Ecovillage Findhorn, Scottish Storytelling Centre, Dundee Central Library, Borders General Hospital, and more.*

<https://scottishinterfaithweek.org/faces-of-faith-exhibition>



# Training

## Understanding and Supporting the Needs of People of Diverse Religions and Beliefs in Scotland

We offer this training to teachers and other school staff such as janitors and caterers.

Topics covered include food, festivals, holy days, fasting, religious dress, prayer, participating in sport, washing, health, birth and death.

The training also provides guidance on visiting places of worship and organising interfaith activities in schools and community settings.



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# Interfaith Scotland resources



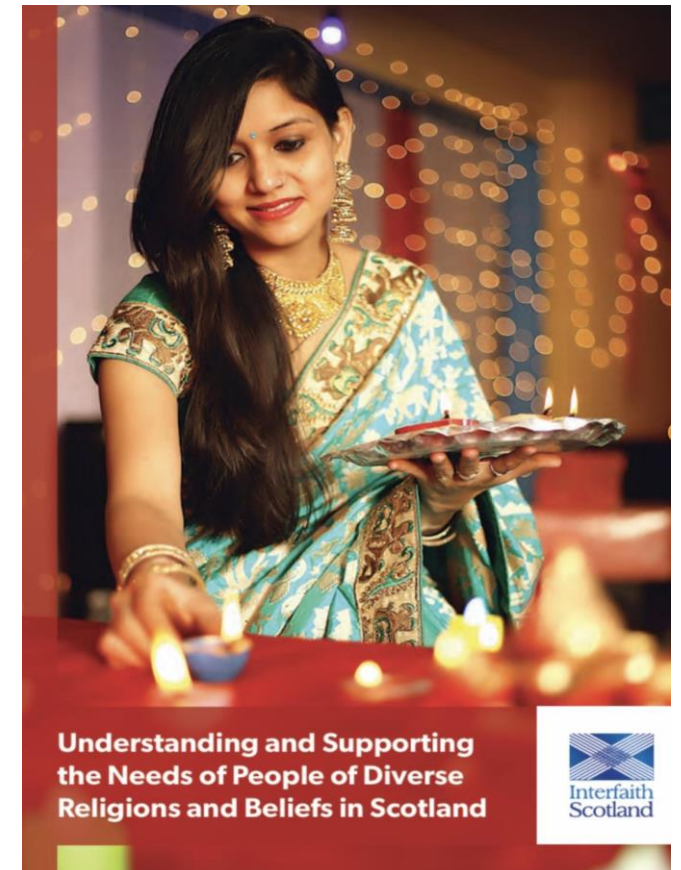
Our training on Understanding and Supporting the Needs of People of Diverse Religions and Beliefs in Scotland is based on a booklet we created which is available as a hard copy or as a PDF on our website at:

<https://tinyurl.com/SupportingNeedsBooklet>

## **Develop Your Religious Literacy**

Presentation and Resources at Education Scotland under 'Rights and Equalities'

<https://tinyurl.com/DevelopYourReligiousLiteracy1>



# Further resources



**For further Interfaith Scotland youth-based resources:**

<https://interfaithscotland.org/resources/youth-and-schools>

<https://scottishinterfaithweek.org/resources>

**Faith and the Environment:** information and activities about climate change from the perspective of different religions:

<https://interfaithscotland.org/climate-action-resources>

**The Golden Rule:** a printable poster about shared values across all faiths.

[www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/shared-values-golden-rule](http://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/shared-values-golden-rule)

**Persona dolls:** A way to counter bullying and discrimination for primary school pupils <https://personadoll.uk>



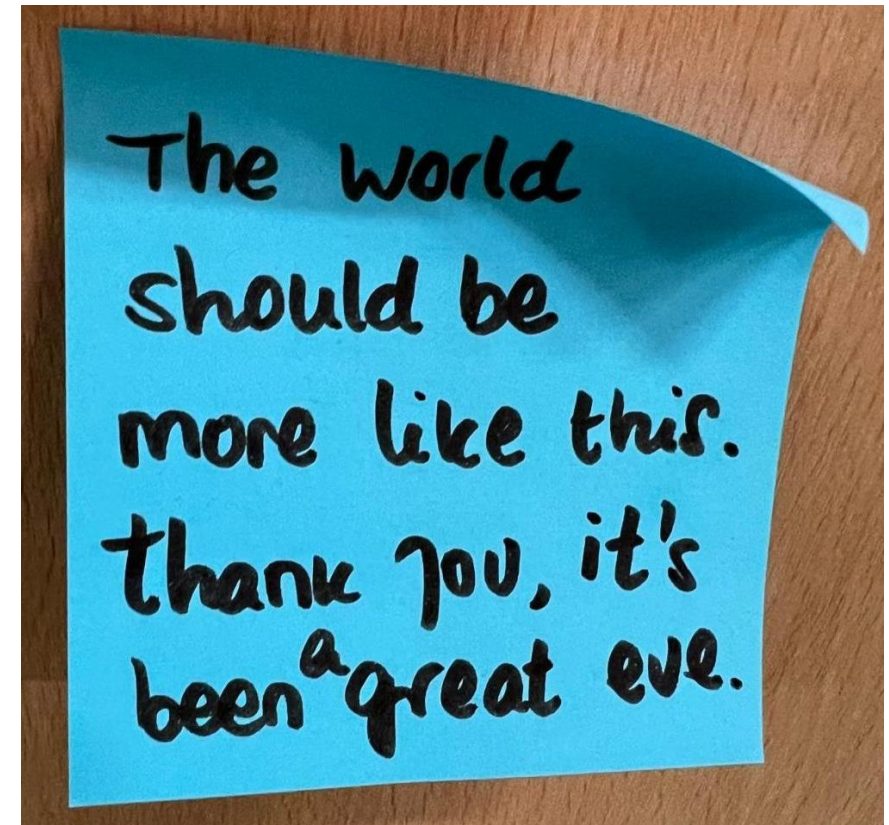
*Persona Dolls UK*

# Engaging with us



To book a speaker, workshop or training for your school or school staff please email [admin@interfaithscotland.org](mailto:admin@interfaithscotland.org)

If you know of a network, newsletter or Facebook group in which we can spread the word about our events and resources, please send details to [info@scottishinterfaithweek.org](mailto:info@scottishinterfaithweek.org)



# Stay in touch



Sign up to our newsletters through our website homepages.

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The logo for Scottish Interfaith Week (SIFW), with the letters "SIFW" in a colorful, outlined font.

Scottish  
Interfaith  
Week



**Newsletter out soon!**

