

## **National Interfaith Week (KS2, KS3 & KS4)**

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During National Interfaith week our Imam planted trees outside the mosque alongside the Chief Rabbi, this was part of Mitzvah day which is a day of faith-based action. I, along with some of my students, also participated. I think it is really important for our faith leaders to set examples for the rest of the community and images such as faith leaders working for the common good speaks volumes. Our students have linked up with young people from our neighbouring synagogue and have formed a social club

Outside mainstream education there is an impressive range of initiatives, projects, websites and resources, much of it galvanised by the excellent Inter Faith Network and their growing membership, who have been the pioneers and main inter-faith drivers for almost thirty years.

The Quran commands Muslims to **“Vie, then, with one another in doing good works!”** Planting trees in Islam is a form of charity and is a step in the right direction for helping reverse the effects of climate change. Muslims are required by Islam to keep the environment around them pure and clean. True Muslims are those who appreciate the beauty surrounding them. This may explain many of the Prophetic hadiths that talk about the merits of planting trees and other acts that benefit people. There is a hadith saying, **“There is none amongst the Muslims who plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person or an animal eats from it, but is regarded as a charitable gift for him.”** This is a form of sadaqah jariya which means that such an act will continue to benefit a person after the person dies as well.

Inter-faith activity is defined as ‘the collaborative promotion of dialogue, co-operation, understanding and action of different faith groups in order to develop a more cohesive society’.

A cohesive society is one where there is a common vision and sense of belonging for all communities; the diversity of people’s different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued; those from different backgrounds have similar opportunities; and strong and positive relations are being developed in the workplace, in schools, and within neighbourhoods.

A lot can be learned outside the classroom and young students can meet religious leaders and ask them questions about anything they like.

Visiting sacred space is another excellent way whereby students can get a feel of what it is like to be a follower of a faith. There is awe and wonder when entering the space that is sacred to people of other faiths. I visited East London mosque during a meeting of the Religious Education Council. I was amazed to hear that almost two thousand people use the mosque every day for their daily prayers. Whilst I was there three coffins were being brought in whereby after the mid-day prayers people would then take part in the funeral prayers of the deceased. The mosque had a minaret and there were loudspeakers that were used for the call of prayer. I remember how unusual it was to hear the call to prayer on the streets of London!

There were fantastic displays on the walls where a verse was cited about a particular topic like marriage for example and then a small image was painted to illustrate the topic. Visiting East London mosque was nice for me during National Interfaith week because it is not a mosque I normally go to because I go to a mosque which is nearer to where I live. It was interesting to learn that part of the building used to be a synagogue and before it was sold they there were very good relationships between the two communities illustrating the peace and harmony that can result when people respect each other regardless of their faith or belief.

This resource was written by Aliya Azam, one of RE:ONLINE's Email a Believer team. If your class would like to ask a Pagan representative any questions about their beliefs, or to see answers to previously asked questions please visit <http://pof.reonline.org.uk/people-of-faith/islam/>