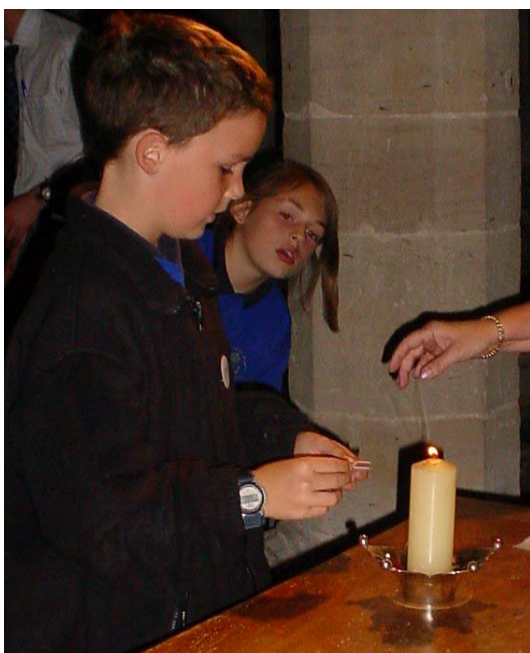


Visits and visitors for Religious Education



Introduction

Meeting visitors and going on visits to faith communities is a key learning experience and one of the essential experiences and opportunities for all pupils identified in the Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus for RE 2006.

Teachers often ask for advice about the best places of worship to visit with pupils. During 2004 Herefordshire SACRE asked teachers to tell us which places they had found useful and to share with us any comments which may help other teachers thinking of organising a similar visit. These details have now been updated and included here. Some schools also suggested visitors from faiths who could be invited in.

The places and people are organised by town or city. They include Birmingham, Cardiff, Cheltenham, Gloucester, Hereford, Leominster and Wolverhampton. This list does not aim to be fully comprehensive - but tries to be helpful and to be as accurate as possible at the time of writing.

Your help is needed

If you would like to recommend a visit or visitor to other schools to support teaching and learning in RE or can update the information in this document please let us know.

Please contact: Belinda Lewis blewis@herefordshire.gov.uk

Guidance for teachers planning a pupil visit to a place of worship

There are many benefits to be derived from visiting places of worship, but in practical terms you will need to think through the points listed below:

Before you go:

- Make initial contact with the faith community to find out if you can visit and when is the best time – both for you and the faith community.
- Try to visit the faith community yourself to explore learning opportunities and to discuss your needs with the person who will be involved in the visit. Share with him/her what you hope pupils will get out of the visit. Clearly planned aims help to fit the visit into a scheme of work. A general 'look around' is the least likely activity to be successful. If possible try to arrange for the pupils to meet some believers other than the ordained leaders. Talk about how long you will stay. As a rule of thumb, under an hour is usually too short to make the most of the learning opportunity.
- Get parental permission: Schools should send a letter home with each pupil to make clear that this is an educational visit and that pupils will observe, not participate, in worship. Invite parents and other adults to help out on the visit.
- Prepare pupils. It is likely to be a completely new situation for them. Provide guidance about appropriate attitudes and any dress requirements such as removing shoes, covering heads. Encourage pupils to ask and respond to questions during the visit. Talk over, in advance, questions they may wish to ask during the visit. Identify ways in which the visit will be followed up back in the classroom.

Some key points to remember when visiting faith communities

Dress – in addition to any specific requirements, *modest dress* is the usual guideline. *Shoes* are removed before entering the prayer rooms of the Mosque, Mandir, Gurdwara and Buddhist Vihara.

Check specific requirements when organising the visit – the following are the usual practice:

Mosque: Female: Head, legs, arms covered.

Male: Heads covered during prayer time.

Gurdwara: Female: Head and legs covered. Male: Head covering.

No cigarettes to be taken into the Gurdwara.

Photographs – many places of worship will allow photographs to be taken at the appropriate time but prior permission should be sought.

Behaviour – normal good behaviour standards are appropriate. In all places of worship it would be disrespectful to chew, talk loudly, run around or touch things without invitation. In places where sitting on a carpeted floor is usual, it is disrespectful to sit with legs open facing the focal point e.g. a deity, a holy book, Qibla wall etc.

Hospitality – a number of places of worship will show hospitality to visitors by offering food or refreshment. It is important to prepare pupils for this.

Hindu: prashad – this may take the form of crystal sugar, almonds, sweets or snack food. It is not sacred and should be accepted with thanks and eaten on the spot.

Gurdwara: Kara prashad – a semi-solid cold food made from butter, semolina, sugar and milk, or a cup of tea boiled with milk. This is not a sacred food and should be accepted with thanks. Kara prashad can be kept for eating later.

Donations – places of worship do not, as a rule, charge for visits, but a donation is recommended.

Guidance for faith communities: Schools visiting places of worship

Many schools would like to plan visits to local places of worship into their RE lessons, but either do not know how to make the first approach or what to expect when they have made contact.

- Before receiving a group of pupils on a visit, you should plan carefully with the teacher and prepare, in discussion with the teacher, some activities that will be engaging for pupils. In general, a combination of listening, doing, talking, questioning and recording is the best plan for variety!
- If possible try to arrange to have some believers, and not just ordained leaders, but some 'lay' people present to meet the pupils. If possible the faith representative might talk about how and why their faith is important to them; show pupils anything they use in their religious worship or special days and perhaps retell a favourite faith story and say what it means to them.
- If you have frequent school visits you may find it helpful to produce a short checklist of things to remember that can be sent to the school in advance of the visit. This will be very helpful to the teachers in preparing pupils for the visit.

Code of practice for religious visitors going into schools

Schools can provide rich opportunities for pupils by welcoming visitors from local religious communities. Some schools remain hesitant about this, so this Code of Conduct is offered to encourage good relations between schools and visitors, and to make the most of the opportunity.

The code of conduct

Religious visitors taking part in the life of a school should:

- Be willing to share their own experiences, beliefs and insights, but avoid (a) criticism of the experience and insights of others and (b) imposing their views on pupils in any way.
- Be familiar with the school's aims, ethos and policies, and plan their involvement in the light of the aims and curriculum at the school. It is more effective to take part in the regular programme of teaching and learning, rather than make an isolated or one off contribution to the curriculum
- Seek to use engaging teaching and learning methods which involve the pupils actively, and to communicate at appropriate levels for the age group(s) concerned. The two most common problems for pupils when visitors make a classroom contribution are that they listen to a lengthy monologue, with more or less attention, and that they can't understand; the material presented is too hard, or the language is over the pupils' heads. Visitors who avoid these two pitfalls will be more effective.
- Make clear to pupils who they are, who they represent and what they are offering to the pupils during their visit to the school.
- Be willing to respect and value the faith of children and young people when it is different to their own.
- Develop ways of speaking to children which communicate their open approach, avoiding any hidden agenda to convert young people.

A question to help visitors reflect on their approach in the classroom:

'If a member of another religion visited my child's school and contributed in the same way that I have done, would I, as a parent, be happy with the education given?'

Birmingham – places of worship to visit

Islam: Ghamkolvia Central Mosque,

150, Golden Hillock Rd, Small Heath, Birmingham. B10 0DX

Contact: Mr Akhtar Ali Tel: 0121 771 4533

Email aktaraliaktar@yahoo.co.uk

Judaism: Birmingham Hebrew Congregation

based at **Singers Hill Jewish Synagogue**, Singer's Hill, Ellis St, Birmingham.

Tel: 0121 643 0884 **Fax** 0121 693 0883 **Email:** office@singershill.freemasonry.co.uk

Website: <http://www.singershill.com/>

Sikhism: Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha,

18-20 Soho Road, Handsworth, Birmingham B21 9BH

Tel: 0121 551 1125 Fax 0121 551 0022

School Comment:

'We were offered vegetarian meal (free) in the Langar hall which we accepted. It is probably advisable for children to take their own head covering. Our guide was surprised that we hadn't been told this when booking. We were told to allow 1 hour for the visit but we were there 1 hrs 30 mins. We left there at 2.30 and arrived back at school at 4.30' (St Mary's Credenhill 2006)

Hinduism: Shree Geeta Bhawan Temple

107-117 Heathfield Road Birmingham B19 1HL

Tel: Mandir: (0)121 554 4120 Tel: Office: (0)121 523 7797

Website www.geetabhawan.co.uk

(Recommended by Bredenbury and St Mary's Credenhill Primary schools)

School comment:

'The Mandir is closed 1 pm to 5pm so plan for a morning visit. Language can be an issue on initial phone call, but with repeated attempts we were able to communicate clearly. An English-speaking guide showed us around, told us some stories and allowed us to take part in morning prayer (11am). We used a room there to eat our lunch afterwards.' (St Mary's Credenhill 2006)

Hindu Temple, 541A Warwick Rd, Birmingham.

Contact: Mhadra Dabhi, President of the Mandir, Tel: 0121 764 4174

Cardiff: places of worship to visit

The following places of worship are visited by schools in South Wales:

Judaism: Reform synagogue

Administrator for school visits:

Mrs Maggie Kyiet, 8 Llandennis Green, Cuscoed. CF23 6JX

Tel: 029 20750019 Mobile 0781 3636709

Telephone Mrs Kyiet on either of the above numbers. She is happy to arrange a 1-2 hour visit for groups of no more than 50 pupils. Adults are in addition to this.

The synagogue serves a community of 200 families. It was converted from a church in 1949 and is just off the Newport Road, on the Hereford side of Cardiff city centre.

The synagogue makes a small charge of £25.00 per group to cover expenses.

Pupils can take part in activities, touch artefacts, try on prayer shawls, look at the Torah scroll, watch as the candles are lit. Many schools have visited. The administrator has a small team of volunteers who help her make the visits as enjoyable and worthwhile as possible. A pupil pack if available from Mrs Kyiet.

Islam: South Wales Islamic Centre, Alice Street, Butetown, Cardiff. CF10 5LB

Tel: (029) 20460243 –Mohammed Toulba

Telephone this number and they are happy to arrange one hour morning visits for school parties.

Sikhism: Sri Dasmals Singh Sabha Gurdwara Bhatra Sikh Centre

97-103 Tudor Street, Cardiff CF11 6AE

This Gurdwara has been visited by many Welsh schools, primary and secondary.

The Gurdwara will provide someone to show you around and respond to questions.

Refreshments are provided.

Write to the Secretary at the above address requesting a visit, giving details of the age group and numbers of pupils, possible dates and times of visits, together with your contact name and telephone number.

Website: <http://credo.ysgolccc.org.uk/addoldai/gurdwaraone.html>

This website contains 14 images of the Bhatra Sikh Gurdwara for younger pupils.

Click to Places of worship in Wales to find a link to 16 images for older pupils.

Hinduism: Swaminarayan Temple

Merches Place, Grangetown, Cardiff, CF1 6RD

Contact: Naran Patel, President of the Hindu Mandir

Website: <http://www.swaminarayanwales.org.uk/default.asp>

Visit this site to see details of arranging school visits and a list of schools that have been. Visits to the Mandir are in the mornings only with prior arrangements. The visit normally lasts approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes. The visits can consist of:

Description and feel of the artefacts; Playing traditional Indian musical instruments; Performing "Yoga"; Different symbols; Worksheets can be used to accommodate the schools syllabus; Hindu greetings and their morning activities at home.

Buddhism

Cardiff Buddhist Centre

12, St Peter's Street, Roath, Cardiff, CF24 3BA

Tel: 029 20462492 email: connect@cardiffbuddhistcentre.com

Website: <http://www.cardiffbuddhistcentre.com/home.htm>

Tibetan Buddhism: Rokpa Cardiff

Correspondence contacts:

100 Moorland Road Cardiff CF24 2LP

Tel: 029 2049 9185

E-mail: info@rokpacardiff.com Website: <http://www.rokpacardiff.com/>

Rokpa Cardiff is a branch of Kagyu Samye Ling Monastery in Scotland, a Tibetan Buddhist Centre established in 1967 with branches worldwide.

Visits to schools by Tibetan monks and nuns have been arranged in South Wales.

Contact the above number for more information.

Cheltenham: places of worship to visit

Gloucestershire Hindu community:

Krishna Mandir, Cheltenham

64 Swindon Road, Cheltenham, GL50 4AY

Contact: by email to Daxa Mehta

Email: daxa.mehta@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Daxa will contact the Mandir on behalf of schools. Schools are asked to confirm arrangements in writing.

Mandir able to offer: visits to the centre

Further information: The Hindu community of 200-300 families uses the centre for worship and community meetings. Groups (to a maximum of 30) can visit the temple and, dependant on time of visit, observe daily worship and hear about the deities. Modest dress; shoes removed before entering the temple. A donation is very welcome.

Wheelchair access available to temple only.

Weblink - for an article on the Gloucestershire Hindu Community:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/gloucestershire/untold_stories/asian/hindu_community.shtml or

<http://www.irespect.net/Untold%20Stories/Asian/index.htm>

Gloucester: places of worship to visit

ISLAM – MOSQUES

Schools wishing to arrange visits to the Gloucester Mosques or speakers from the Muslim community should contact:

Mufti Abdullah Patel Director, Gloucestershire Islamic Academy

Tel: 01452 300465 **email** iacademy@yahoo.co.uk

Details: Mufti Abdullah is Chair of the Islamic Shuraa (committee) for Gloucestershire which comprises Imams of all the Mosques and Chair of their respective Mosques. He is respected scholar in Islamic theology and Jurisprudence. He also heads the Gloucestershire Islamic Girls School since 1994. He is very well informed on educational matters.

Mosques in Gloucester:

Jamia Al Kareem Mosque

All Saints Road, Gloucester GL1 4EE

Tel: 01452 506870

Tradition: Sunni

Contact: Anwar Limalia

Masjid-e-Noor, 44-46 Ryecroft Street, Gloucester, GL1 4LY

Tradition: Sunni

Contact: Ahmed Bham Tel: 01452 416682 email sabham@blueyonder.co.uk

Details: Ahmed is Chair of Gloucester Inter Faith Action and also represents Muslim community on the SACRE. He deals with the issues of Islamic Faith and issues about contemporary British Muslim issues; offers workshop and lectures.

Khoja Shi'a Muslim Community of Gloucester

Wainsbridge, 69 Bristol Road, Quedgeley, Gloucester GL2 6NE

Tradition: Shi'a

Further information: All visitors remove shoes on entering prayer hall. Females: cover legs, arms, head.

Wolverhampton: Inter faith group and places of worship to visit

Main contact: Wolverhampton Inter-faith Council and Faith Network

Office and resource centre: 2, Clarence Rd, Wolverhampton WV1 4HZ

Tel/Fax: 01902 427601 This number will give you the name and telephone number of the schools' coordinator.

Email: admin@wifg.eclipse.co.uk

This organisation organises the itinerary for visits and advises on dress codes and religious sensitivities. *It was used by Kimbolton St. James C.E. Primary School in July 2006.*

'The schools coordinator, Rev. Jim McManus, was very enthusiastic and very helpful.'

Places of worship in Wolverhampton:

ISLAM:

Central Mosque, Waterloo Road, Wolverhampton.

HINDUISM:

Shree Krishna Hindu Temple 123 Penn Road, Wolverhampton

School comment: *'very welcoming, an interesting and enjoyable experience for the children'*.

School Advice: *'need to make clear the age of the children and the time available, to ensure a balance of listening, responding and exploring'*.

'Snacks were offered and accepted as we left.' (Kimbolton 2006)

SIKHISM:

Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara, Sedgley St, Wolverhampton.

Nanaskar That Sikh Gurdwara, Mander St. Wolverhampton.

'Excellent tour and talk. We witnessed members, of all ages, coming in to worship. Lunch in the langar was offered to all; not wanting to take too much advantage of their generous hospitality, since we had over fifty children visiting, we accepted snacks of fruit and crisps, on their behalf. This was arranged in a pre-visit.'

If morning visits are arranged, Himley Hall Park (off the A449, on the Kidderminster side of Wolverhampton, about 15 minutes coach ride from the above gurdwara) is a large open space for lunch and exercise. We arrived at 1.30p.m. The children were not hungry after their snacks at the mandir and gurdwara. The park is free but the warden appreciates advance notice of your use of the park.' (Kimbolton 2006)

Hereford

Visitors from faith communities

Baha'i Faith:

Midge Ault

Midge is a member of SACRE and a Baha'i working as a teacher in Leominster. She can be contacted by email - midgeoff@freenetname.co.uk

Islam:

Zack Pandor

Zack is a member of Herefordshire SACRE and a Muslim working in Hereford. He can be contacted by email - zpandor@yahoo.co.uk

Judaism:

Maurice Rollnick

Maurice is a member of Herefordshire SACRE and a member of the Herefordshire Liberal Jewish community. He can be contacted by email - mprollnick@tiscali.co.uk

Some Christian places of worship to visit (you will know of others)

Hereford Cathedral

Contact: Sarah Arrowsmith Education Officer
5 College Cloisters, Cathedral Close, Hereford, HR1 2NG

Salvation Army Citadel, Cannonmore Street, Hereford

Contact: Rudi Pilsel

Roman Catholic:

Belmont Abbey

Contact: Father James Tel: 01432 374780

Leominster: places of worship to visit

The Priory Church

Contact: Rev Mark Townsend Tel. office 01568 612124
home 01568 610886

St. Ethelbert's Roman Catholic Church, Bargates, Leominster.

Contact: Father Slater Tel. 01568 612238

The Methodist Church, Green Lane, Leominster.

Contact: Rev. Mary Jolly Tel.01568 612406

The Baptist Church, Etnam St., Leominster.

Contact: Mr Peter Dennis Tel.01568 620313

The Moravian Church, South St., Leominster.

Contact: Rev. David Howarth, 116 College Rd., Moseley, Birmingham. B139LH
Tel. 0121 777 3429
email david.howarth@moravian.org.uk

Visitors from other faith communities

Freedom Church (formerly New Life Christian Church)

Contact: Mrs Heather Snowzell Tel: 01568 615085

Baha'i Faith

Contact: Midge Ault see Hereford page.

For other local places of worship and visitors from faith communities see the Hereford list.