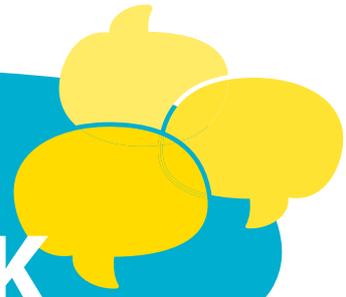


EXAMPLES OF INTERFAITH WORK



How do people go about building bridges and understanding between religions? There are several different approaches to interfaith dialogue. Here are some examples

Scriptural reasoning. This is an approach where members of different religions come together to examine common themes or people in their religious traditions. For example, Christianity, Judaism and Islam have many stories and characters in common, including Abraham, Moses and David. Studying stories or people common to each religion is supposed to develop insight and understanding into each other's approach to sacred texts and to key people and stories.

Shared spaces. Some churches work with other religions to share spaces or to give disused buildings to another religion to use. For example, some former churches have become mosques for Muslims or temples for Hindus. Some Christians have found it difficult to accept that a place once linked to their God is now being used by another, but others believe that allowing old churches to become the home of other religions is to treat others as they would want to be treated.

Councils of faiths. A local committee of the different religions might come together to talk and campaign on issues of shared interest. They might act, for example, against religiously-motivated violence.

The Inter Faith Network is a national organisation which works to improve knowledge and understanding between religions. Through the use of their website and their national organisation, they are seeking to build understanding and acceptance between different religions about their distinctive features and their common ground, and to promote good relations between people with different faiths.

Invite each other to important celebrations to understand and share in the important parts of the religion's faith. The local Hindu temple might invite Christians to come and share in Divali celebrations and the church might invite them to a carol service in return, for example. Some Christians and members of other faiths might find this difficult as they might feel they are taking part in the worship of another religion.

Working together over humanitarian issues. For example, Christian Aid, Islamic Relief and World Jewish Relief have sometimes pooled their efforts to help people caught up in disasters.

How important do you think conversations between different faith groups can be?