

Anti-racist people from different religions – what can we learn from some examples?

Anti-racist religious education

www.anti-racist-re.org.uk

www.natre.org.uk/anti-racist-re



RE TODAY AND NATRE WORKING WITH THE FREE CHURCHES GROUP AND METHODIST SCHOOLS



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In RE pupils learn about diversity all the time.

In anti-racist RE, negative or racist attitudes or behaviour are confronted and challenged so that prejudice can be reduced and equality and justice issues can be highlighted.

In these lessons your pupils aged 8-11 will have a chance to explore and research some examples of anti-racist figures or examples of people who work for equality from different religions. It can be set as project work, with a presentation outcomes from small groups of three pupils.

See the notes to this slide for further details.

Start your pupils work on the next slide.



Who has given their life for equality? What can we find out?

- Many religions and worldviews have examples in their scriptures, history and tradition of those who have made a courageous stand for justice, equality and fairness.
- In this work, you will find out about a person from one particular religion or worldview who has made a fine contribution to equality between people who are different.
- You will need a plan to research the person you choose, and as a small group of three you will be making a presentation to the rest of the class: who will speak? Who will write the script? Can you make a PowerPoint about your chosen person?
- Some ideas (don't try to do them all!) on the next slide.
- Make sure that you focus on TELLING THE STORY!



- Choose your key leader carefully and plan to tell the story of their life and work to the class in an exciting way.
- Can you make up a quiz to ask your classmates to see if they remember what you taught them?
- Can you give them an activity to do – maybe sorting out and ranking some things that matter about the life story you are telling?
- Can you find a very short video clip to play that shows the main parts of the story you want to tell?
- What are the hidden messages in the story you tell? What can we learn from the key figure you are studying? Can you put these into just three or four simple sentences?
- It is very hard to get rid of racism, but your chosen leader made a difference: tell the class how you think we can all do our part to reduce racism.

On the next slide: some people to think about. But choose a different examples if you like.



- What can we learn from Hany El Banna? A Muslim example, the founder of Islamic Relief has made a big difference to tackling all kinds of inequality. Stories and examples here: <https://www.islamic-relief.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/education/> Another Muslim example would be Malala Yousufzai.
- What can we learn from Bhai Khanaiya? A Sikh example. You could also tell the story of Bhagat Puran Singh, who confronted many prejudices in his work. Additional information about Sikh support for 'Black Lives Matter' here: <https://kaurlife.org/2020/06/08/why-should-sikh-women-care-about-black-lives/>
- What can we learn from the stories of Mahatma Gandhi and Asha Kowtal (a Hindu Dalit Rights activist)? Asha's story can be found here: https://idsn.org/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/Profiles/Asha_Kowtal_Profile_2014.pdf
- What can we learn from the Biblical story of Jonah? A Jewish example of anti-racist scripture. What can we learn from Laura Marks, Jewish equalities activist and founder of 'Mitzvah Day' <https://mitzvahday.org.uk/> Laura Marks writes in the Jewish Chronicle here about being anti-racist and Jewish: <https://www.thejc.com/comment/opinion/laura-marks-jewish-britain-and-islamophobia-1.482139>
- What can we learn from Nelson Mandela? He was raised a Methodist Christian. In later life, he was careful not to identify with one religion. Find stories, projects and history here: <https://www.nelsonmandela.org/>
- What can we learn from Jess Benjamin and the work of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship? A Buddhist example <http://www.buddhistpeacefellowship.org/jess-benjamin/>
- What can we learn from Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King or Mpho Tutu? Three Christian examples. Rev Mpho Tutu Van Furth is a South African anti-racist campaigner for girls' welfare. Find out about her work here: <http://www.mphotutuvanfurth.com/about/>





Example A: Rosa Parks

- She lived 1913-2005, and she was a Christian
- She started the 'bus boycott' in USA in 1955 by refusing to give up her seat to a white person.
- Thousands of black people boycotted the busses in Montgomery Alabama USA after this, and they won the right to sit wherever they wished on busses after that.
- One lady, Mother Pollard, in her 70s walked to work every day: was it hard? Yes, she had blisters, but she said: "My feets is tired, but my soul is rested."
- Rosa Parks continued to live and work for racial equity all her long life. In 1996 President Clinton awarded her the Presidential Medal of Freedom.
- Read more here:

<https://www.biography.com/activist/rosa-parks>





Example B: Dr Hany El Banna

- Hany was a doctor in Birmingham. He travelled to Sudan during a famine, and was shocked to see people starving.
- His nephew gave him 20p to try and make people less hungry. It was the first donation to the charity which became 'Islamic Relief'
- Hany tried to follow the teaching of the Qur'an and the example of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)
- The charity today raises about £100 million pounds every year in the UK to help the poorest people on earth, no matter what their race. It is an expression of equality
- Find out more:
- <https://www.islamic-relief.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/orphans-and-children/>



Getting ready to give your talk:

A simple checklist

- Who is doing what? All three of you should be involved.
- Have you got a good script to read out?
- Do you tell the story well?
- Are there some good pictures or even a video clip to show? Is the technology ready?
- Will your talk make the rest of the class think?
- How could you get them other pupils to respond?
- Have you shown clearly how your leader has worked for equality?
- Did you explain well what their religion is and how it inspired them?



What did you learn?

Good if you can:

- Work with a team to tell a story about equality
- Identify and talk about hidden messages about fairness in religious stories
- Consider a text which raises questions about racial justice and respond in depth
- Make links between religious story and fairness for everybody
- Suggest an idea of your own about how a story carries a message of fairness to the readers

Even better if you can:

- Make a good presentation in your team of a life story that is against racism
- Describe how religious stories and texts share some messages about fairness or about racism
- Consider texts and ideas about how people can change their minds in the direction of justice
- Explain links between religions in what they teach about why racism is wrong
- Express thoughtful views about how the religious stories you have studied can make a difference to problems caused by racism.



Partners

This project is a partnership between the Free Churches Group, the Methodist Schools, RE Today, NATRE and many teachers of RE and educators from Black, Asian and other minority ethnic communities who have become voluntarily involved.

Lat Blaylock, RE Today Adviser and Anti-Racist RE project co-ordinator, would like to thank all these partners for their contributions, work and inspiration.

