

# Ealing RE Network

## Primary RE Conference

15 June 2007

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**Attendees:** Shevell Batchelor (Viking), Michael Bonney (Coston), Henry Bray (Wood End Junior), Tasneem Ebrahimji (Gifford), Erika Fox (Lady Margaret), Teresa Heyes (Ealing Primary Centre), Rebecca Hodges (West Acton), Melanie Hogan (Castlebar), Sukina Jalaf (Stanhope), Judy Johnson (West Twyford), Liz Keane (North Ealing), Hermit Kochar (North), Kerrie Lynskey (Vicar's Green), Sarita Maini (Durdans Park), Kajal Makinana (Viking), Eileen Mant (Mandeville), Kanwaljit Rahi (Blair Peach), Jenny Redley (Montpelier), Paramjit Saggi (John Perryn), Margaret Wittich (St Saviour's CE Infant)

**Workshop facilitators:** Tasneem Ebrahimji (RE co-ordinator, Gifford), Keith Field (RE adviser, Hillingdon), Judy Johnson (RE co-ordinator, West Twyford), Jay Lakhani (Education Director, Hindu Council UK), Surinder Lall (Assistant Head, Featherstone), Nora Leonard (SACRE consultant), Alim Shaikh (Manager, Ealing CLC)

**Special guests:** Usman, Tahseen and Azhar Sheikh, representing the Muslim Council of Britain



*Tahseen and Azhar Sheikh displaying the resource pack they developed for teaching Islam at key stages 1 and 2*



*Surinder Lall*

**On Friday, 15 June 2007 the first primary RE conference was held at Ealing Education Centre.** Simon Prebble, Ealing's new primary strategy manager, opened the conference with a video welcome, during which he announced the appointment of Judy Johnson as Ealing's primary lead subject teacher for RE.

The group then separated into two rooms for the first programme of workshops. Surinder Lall (assistant head for the foundation stage at Featherstone Primary School) had used a Farmington Fellowship<sup>1</sup> in 1999 to investigate the teaching of Sikhism to young children. Drawing on the results of her study, Surinder authored the chapter on teaching Sikhism in the book *Representing Religions* (published by RE Today Services, ISBN 1-904024-06-8).

One of the focuses of Surinder's workshop was the diversity of Sikhism; this included the role, in some sects, of living gurus, and the fact that it is not always possible to identify a Sikh through the presence of the 5 Ks!

In the other room Judy Johnson (RE co-ordinator of West Twyford) led a session entitled "The context of Christianity", in which she emphasised the background of the faith by leading listeners along a timeline from Genesis in the Hebrew Scriptures to the events of Pentecost as told in the New Testament, tracing the development of the theme of the sacrificial lamb. Along the way she outlined some of the shared beliefs and differences between Christianity, Judaism and Islam. She also distributed a sheet of websites on which useful lesson content can be found.



*Display of some items that might be found in a Sikh home shrine*

<sup>1</sup> For more information about Farmington's fellowships for teachers of RE, visit their website: [www.farmington.ac.uk](http://www.farmington.ac.uk)

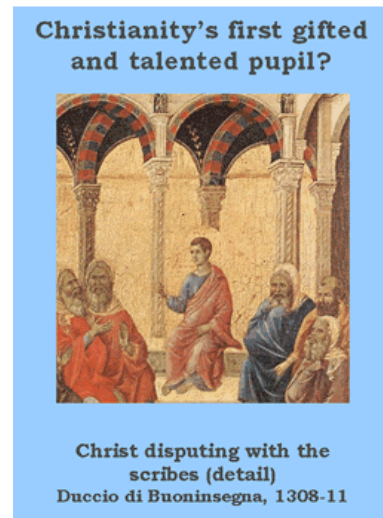


*Judy Johnson*

The following session, on ‘Teaching faiths other than your own’, was led by Judy as a discussion. The range of questions was wide ranging and more time could usefully have been spent sharing ideas. These questions have now been posted in our ‘teachers’ room’ and further contributions to this forum would be valued ([www.egfl.org.uk/religion](http://www.egfl.org.uk/religion)).

In the other room Nora Leonard led a discussion on meeting the needs of pupils who are gifted in RE. In her presentation she talked about some of the diverse ways pupils can express these talents, e.g. imaginative use of symbols, development of critical thinking, logical insight and an empathetic understanding of religious experience—the last of which can also be

demonstrated by pupils who do not necessarily define or express their empathy in specifically religious terms. After the presentation, the group brainstormed the possibility of having a summer school for gifted and talented primary pupils in the summer of 2008; ideas included a trip to the V&A to view some of the exhibits that are part of the museum’s religious education project, designing a meditation centre that could be used by people of all—or none—religions, and creating a peace garden.



*Excerpt from presentation on RE for gifted and talented pupils*



*Alim Shaikh and Tasneem Ebrahimji*



During the lunch break, teachers were able to examine the excellent resource pack for teaching Islam at key stages one and two that was produced by Tasneem and Azhar Sheikh.<sup>2</sup> The Sheikhs, along with their son Usman, also took part in the workshop on teaching Islam that was facilitated by Tasneem Ebrahimji (RE co-ordinator of Gifford Primary School) and Alim Shaikh (manager of Ealing CLC). Tasneem talked about introducing Islam at the foundation stage, and Alim looked at some of the resources available on the curriculum pages of the EGfL. He also talked about the RE module that he and his colleagues had produced for Caspian education games software that will soon be available as a resource for teaching the five core faiths at key stages two and three.

In another afternoon workshop, Keith Field (RE adviser from Hillingdon) reprised his excellent session on assessment from the previous network meeting. And in one of the final workshops of the day, he provided an overview of some of the main tenets and practices of Judaism. His presentation was illustrated with photographs of Jewish places, artefacts and practices from around the world, and focussed on the Jewish belief that the religion had been moulded by God’s acts throughout the history of the Jewish people. There was also discussion of the major Jewish festivals and holy days, with some practical ideas for use in the classroom.



*Keith Field*

<sup>2</sup> To obtain one of these packs visit the Muslim Council of Britain’s website ([www.mcb.org.uk](http://www.mcb.org.uk)); alternatively you can email [booksforschools@mcb.org.uk](mailto:booksforschools@mcb.org.uk) for further details.



Jay Lakhani

Jay Lakhani (Education Director, Hindu Council UK) facilitated the session on Hinduism, entertaining the group with several lively performances of stories specifically tailored to convey aspects of a complex religion to children. Participants were also able to have a look at the two books that Jay and his wife Seeta had written, *Hinduism for Schools* and *Primary Hinduism* (available from amazon.co.uk).



Resources for teaching Hinduism

*“I think that this RE conference was a really good idea, it would be great if it was to become an annual event.”*

*“Very effective, brilliant that there is choice.”*

(Comments on feedback forms)

Of course the real stars of the conference were the attendees, the teachers and RE co-ordinators that took time out of their busy schedule to come to the EEC and make the event a memorable occasion.

