

## **Islington Community of Schools: Youth SACRE**

Promoting children and young peoples' voices on the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

### **Third Youth SACRE session and their presentations to SACRE**



'Do people from different religions mix?'

### **Third Youth SACRE session**

On Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> June, 15 delegates from Years 5-9 in five Islington schools met at Laycock Centre to share findings from their research and develop presentations to take to Islington's Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education on July 2nd.

Before lunch Youth SACRE delegates and their accompanying adults re-introduced themselves by (successfully!) remembering each other's names. Delegates from three schools were missing: one school could not provide an adult to support the children to attend; in another the students were sitting an exam; and in the third the pupils were welcoming into their school authors of books they had studied so they were unable to join us.

#### **Modelling how to present our information and messages to SACRE:**

The students from Mount Carmel RC College took participants through a presentation they had already delivered to their peers at school. This helped everyone focus not only on the important issues they raised, but also effective ways of presenting information and communicating a message.

The question they had chosen was '*What can we find out and do about tensions between religions at community and international level?*' and they spoke about the civil war in Syria and the consequences for civilians affected by it. They had undertaken an impressive amount of research which they organised through PowerPoint, supporting an impassioned plea for our consideration of the plight of Syria's children.

The other delegates then established what topics they would develop into presentations for SACRE. These were:

- *In Islington, do people from different religions mix?*
- *How to make RE lessons interesting and relevant*
- *What can we do to tackle misunderstanding through the stereotyping of people's religion and culture?*

### **Sharing work done by the delegates since our last session:**

After lunch, delegates reported on what they had done since last time to follow through the issues that they had decided to present to SACRE. For example:

- Delegates from St John Evangelist had conducted an in-depth survey to find out children's and an adult's opinions about the following:
  - In your experience, do people from different religions mix?
  - Do you think all religions mix?
  - If you owned a school would you allow all religions?
  - Do you think similar religions mix?

They had organised their findings through a PowerPoint presentation, illustrating them using pie-chart diagrams. *This PowerPoint presentation is attached to the end of project evaluation report.*

- The two delegates from St Andrews had also asked whether people from different religions mix. They had looked at Islington Council's statement on equality that committed the council to tackling discrimination against all groups including faith groups. They identified the main religions in Islington, the percentage number of declared members of each faith and they explored commonalities between faiths, such as how many believe in one God, and similar expectations of respect and love for one another. Finally they presented their school motto as a model for all schools, whereby every individual is respected and valued.
- Students from Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School were investigating misinformation about certain faiths, supported by stereotyping often promoted by the mainstream media. They brought along a PowerPoint presentation explaining that they felt much could be done to explain different faiths to each other, and to avoid over-simplification.

### **Preparing their presentations for SACRE**

After discussion and feedback the delegates then prepared their presentations to be taken to SACRE. They were asked to work on illustrating their messages further, in ways that more directly engaged the audience and better supported empathy and understanding.

The delegates were able to deploy a range of resources. These included:

- A range of high quality materials for drawing, painting and making sculptures
- Access to the internet
- PC to polish/edit PowerPoint presentations
- An adult assigned to each group to provide assistance if necessary



## **Filming our messages for SACRE!**

Because SACRE met from 5pm, most young people would not be able to attend in person. So to make sure their messages were heard, with the help of Tom a film-maker from Rowan Arts, groups were filmed making their presentations for SACRE.

### **1. Do people from different religions mix?**

One pupil from Hungerford joined the St Andrews delegates and together they presented a poster to support their PowerPoint presentation (see above) that challenged the audience to share their own experiences of mixing with other religions. Ensuing discussion revealed that:

- some of the delegates present had participated in the festivals of friends from other religions. Some attended schools that held celebrations of each other's faith festivals
- some of their parents mixed; one adult, when questioned, said her son had a god-father from a different faith

Delegates from St John Evangelist Primary School presented a poster to support their PowerPoint presentation (see above) that emphasised some of the key learning from the survey they conducted at school. Key messages were:

- It's important to value and respect other religions to prepare for the world of work where good relations with other workers, many who will be from a different religion, is important
- People don't necessarily mix with others from different religions, but they can. It needs effort and commitment
- Major religions lead by example. Remember that Jesus was Jewish, and Christians believe in Jesus.

### **2. Stereotyping religion and culture**

Delegates from Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Secondary School spoke to their PowerPoint presentation (see above). *This PowerPoint presentation is attached to the end of project evaluation report.*

They suggested that people sometimes purposefully told untruths about other religions to stoke up fear and hatred for their own purposes. They showed how Hitler and the Nazis did this to persecute the Jews, and that in current-day Britain the English Defence League did the same against Muslims.

They urged teachers and schools to do more to educate pupils about different religions, and to ensure there was tolerance and acceptance of religious diversity. To emphasize this point they showed us a clip from YouTube that challenged dominant media myths about Islam. They emphasised how much of this stereotyping springs from racism.

Finally, against the backdrop of a poster they had just made pleading for people to 'say no to myths and stereotypes', one student gave a powerful account of how she once, when on a bus, witnessed a man of Asian heritage calmly and effectively deal with racism from another passenger.

### **3. Making RE interesting in school**

A pupil from Hungerford Primary School eloquently disseminated findings from a survey they had conducted of fellow pupils about what made RE interesting. Key elements of good lessons were:

- Role play
- Trips
- Art work
- Cooking
- Concentric circle discussions and interviews in class

Her favourite session was a cooking session that linked pupils to famous religious leaders. Fish was prepared in the different ways their cultures practiced. She also particularly enjoyed being asked to think what God would say about different things, and what religious figures she would like to have a conversation with.

### **4. The result of tensions between religions at community and international level**

The students from Mount Carmel RC College prepared and presented a drama about the civil war in Syria to support the PowerPoint presentation they gave earlier (see above). They acted out the consequences of the violence on one family to moving background music. They effectively engaged the audience to the issue on an emotional level.

**Please turn over**

## Representation at SACRE

At 5 pm on 2<sup>nd</sup> July SACRE met and heard an account of the key messages from Youth SACRE, delivered by two primary pupils from Hungerford and supported by clips from the film of the Youth SACRE presentations and extracts from their PowerPoint presentations.



*The two Youth SACRE delegates taking SACRE representatives through the Youth SACRE messages*



The responses to the presentations were very thoughtful and SACRE members engaged in detailed discussion with our two Youth SACRE delegates. They also discussed ways they could build on the success of Youth SACRE next year. Sue Kerrigan, the Chaplain at Mount Carmel and St Aloysius, mentioned that Youth SACRE has been set up and is thriving at her two schools. They are keen to support any further initiatives at borough level also.



# President Bashar-al –Assad.



# Bashar al-Assad

- President in 2000.
- His father had died –President Hafez al – Assad.
- Bashar al-Assad’s brother was meant to be the next President-he was killed in a car accident in 1994.

# The New President

- The people of Syria hoped that this new President would bring good changes to Syria.
- They wanted Syria to become a modern state.

BUT...

- State of Emergency continued (1963 – 2011)
- Human Rights – still a problem; would Syria ever be free??
- Government inaction.

# Syria before the war



# Demands for change

- Copied Egypt and Libya- January 2011.
- The people of Syria went into the streets to demonstrate for change.

## **Plans for next year**

We hope to develop further opportunities for pupils, teachers and schools to promote cohesion and inter-faith dialogue through RE. This will be through:

- Promoting pupil voice through representation on SACRE
- Supporting high quality RE teaching through CPD in action sessions modelled on the three Youth SACRE sessions this year and the NATRE youth RE conference in April.

## **Acknowledgements**

A BIG THANK YOU to all Youth SACRE participants and their accompanying teachers and TAs. Also thanks to Rowan Arts for helping us with the filming.

A special thank you to Andrea (lead RE teacher) and Ashleigh (Pooles Park Primary) who helped facilitate some of the sessions. Thanks also to the mother who accompanied her child, one of our pupil delegates, to SACRE, thus enabling her participation.

**Tim Spafford**  
**17<sup>th</sup> July 2013**

*For further information about this project, please refer to the evaluation report submitted to Westhill and NASACRE.*

# Syria –peaceful



# Supporters of the President



# Syrian Army –violent crackdown against the uprising

- Homs
- Suburbs of Damascus
- January 2012-5000 civilians killed by the Syrian Military
- 1000 civilians killed by anti-regime forces.



فما شد اليد الرئيس  
أن يصر على العصبي

أغيثونا  
من عصبي



# Why give to Syria.

- June 2012-uprisings now a Civil War.
- 1 million refugees.
- 2 million damaged children.

# A refugee camp in Jordan.



# Conditions in one of the camps.

- Almost 90,000 people.
- Walk for nearly one hour to get bread.
- Queue for water.
- No heating.
- The future?



# The Children of Syria-a lost generation.

- Children as young as 8= human shields.
- A 12 year old watched her father being shot.
- “I stopped going to school when the shelling started”
- One in 3 children injured because of the fighting.
- Malnutrition and disease.



**WAR**  
**child**

# CHILDREN OF SYRIA APPEAL

[warchild.org.uk/syria](http://warchild.org.uk/syria)



## HELP TAKE HIM AWAY FROM HERE

Text PROTECT to 70444 to donate £3



# ST. JOHNS EVANGELIST'S WORK FOR YOUTH SACRE

WE INTERVIEWED A GIRL, BOY AND T.A WE GOT DIFFERENT AND THE SAME ANSWERS, IN THIS POWER POINT WE INCLUDED OUR QUESTION 'DO PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT RELIGIONS IN ISLINGTON MIX?' THE OPINIONS WERE HELPING SEE WHAT PEOPLE THOUGHT ON THIS TOPIC, WE WOULD REALLY LIKE TO SHOW WHAT WE FOUND OUT WITH YOU SO SIT BACK RELAX AND LET YOUR OPINIONS FLOW!

# The questions we asked our class mates

Our main question was do people from  
different religions mix?

do you think all religions mix?

If you owned a school would you allow all  
religions?

What is your opinion on this question?

Do you think similar religions mix?

# Mrs Simons (T.A) thought...

Her first answer was yes, in Islington not enough religions do mix its sad but true.

Her third answer was that all religions are invited and welcome if I owned a school.

Her fourth answer was that children mix quite happily through school and don't usually ask what their religion really is.

# Lavinia (year 5) thought...

Her first answer was yes you do see people from different religions being friends however some religions are friends some are not.

Her second answer was some religions do mix however some religions fight for their religion.

Her third answer was that yes but I would have one main religion then let other religions join.

Her opinion was that yes also I used to have a next door neighbour who was Muslim we were quite good friends.

Her last answer was yes however Jews were treated badly as well as Jews treating other religions badly.

# Serak (year 5) thought...

His first answer was yes religions don't always have to argue also you don't always ask religion that's probably why we mix so well.

His second answer was maybe not all a long time ago Jews and Samaritans didn't get along.  
(some of it told in class)

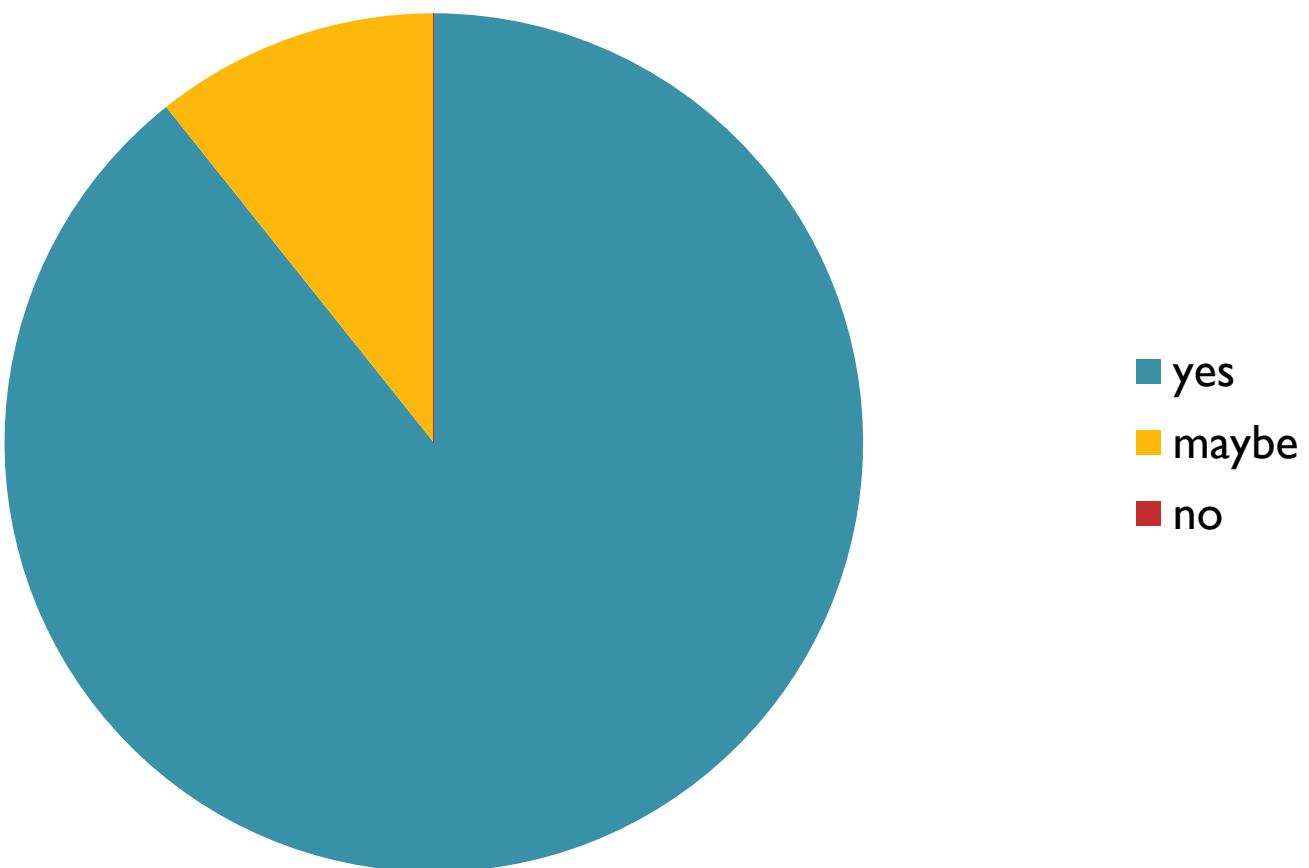
His third answer was yes I would let in all religions people might think I don't like other religions and I don't want that, I like all religions.

His opinion was that its right that everyone gets a chance to get along.

His last answer is that similar religions do mix, but different ones don't.

# Q1 do people from different in Islington mix?

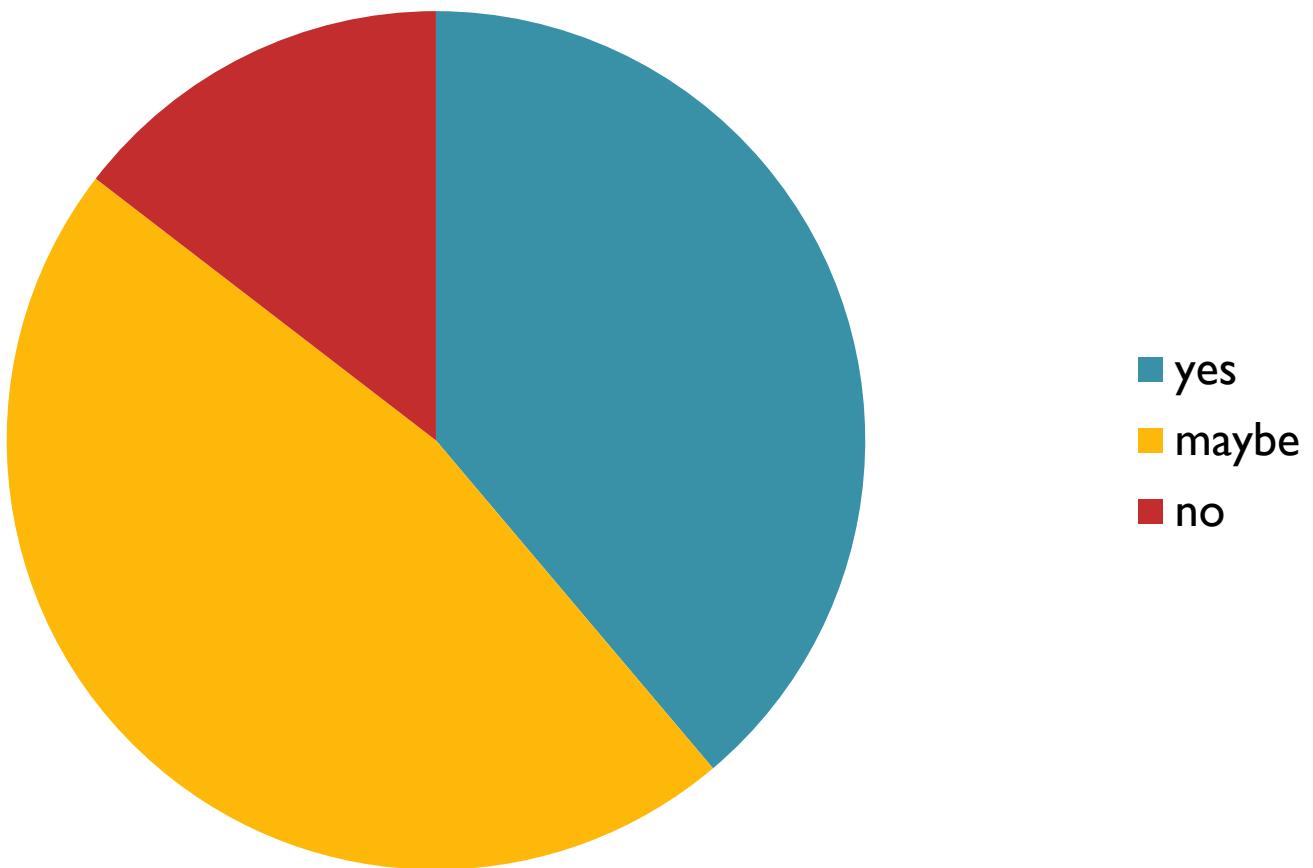
**Pluto class results**



Q2

do you think all religions mix?

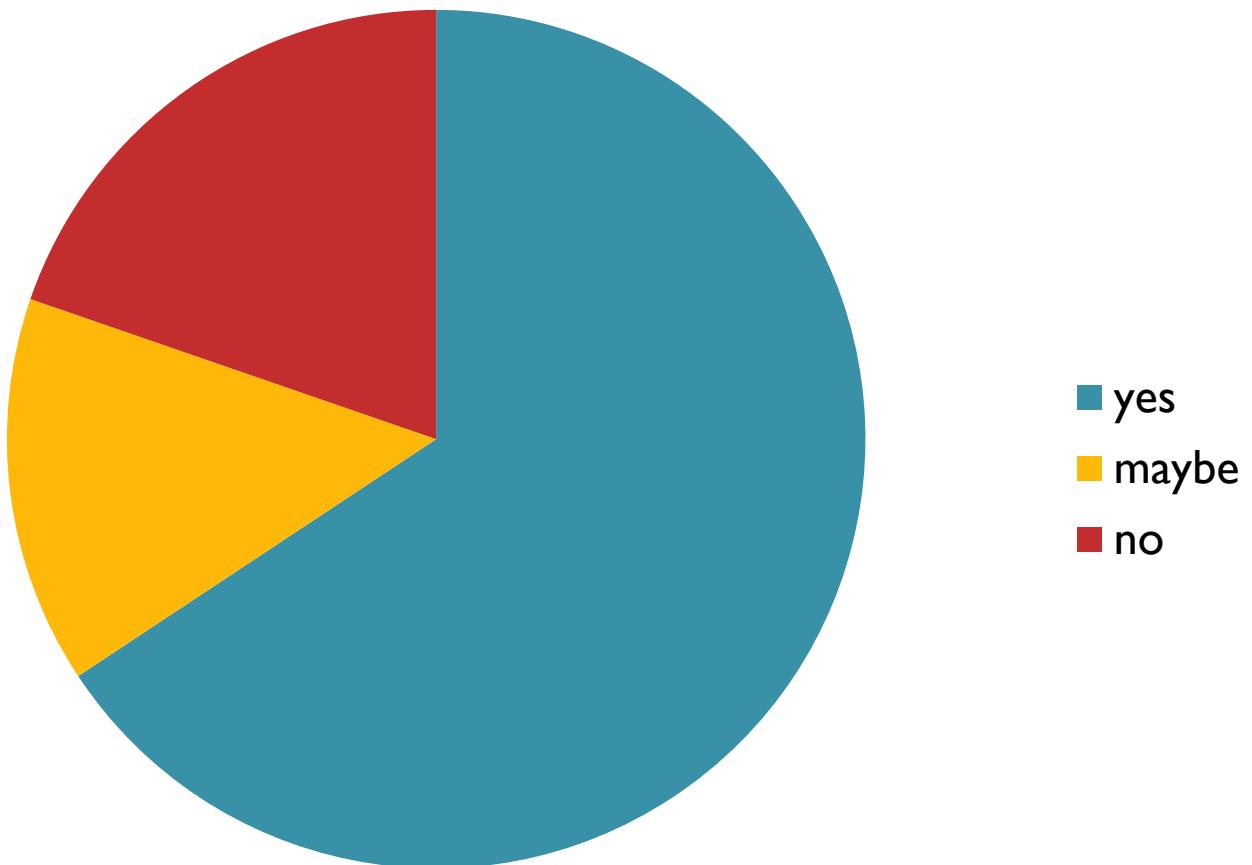
**Pluto classes results**



**Q3**

**if you owned a school would you allow all religions?**

**Pluto class results**



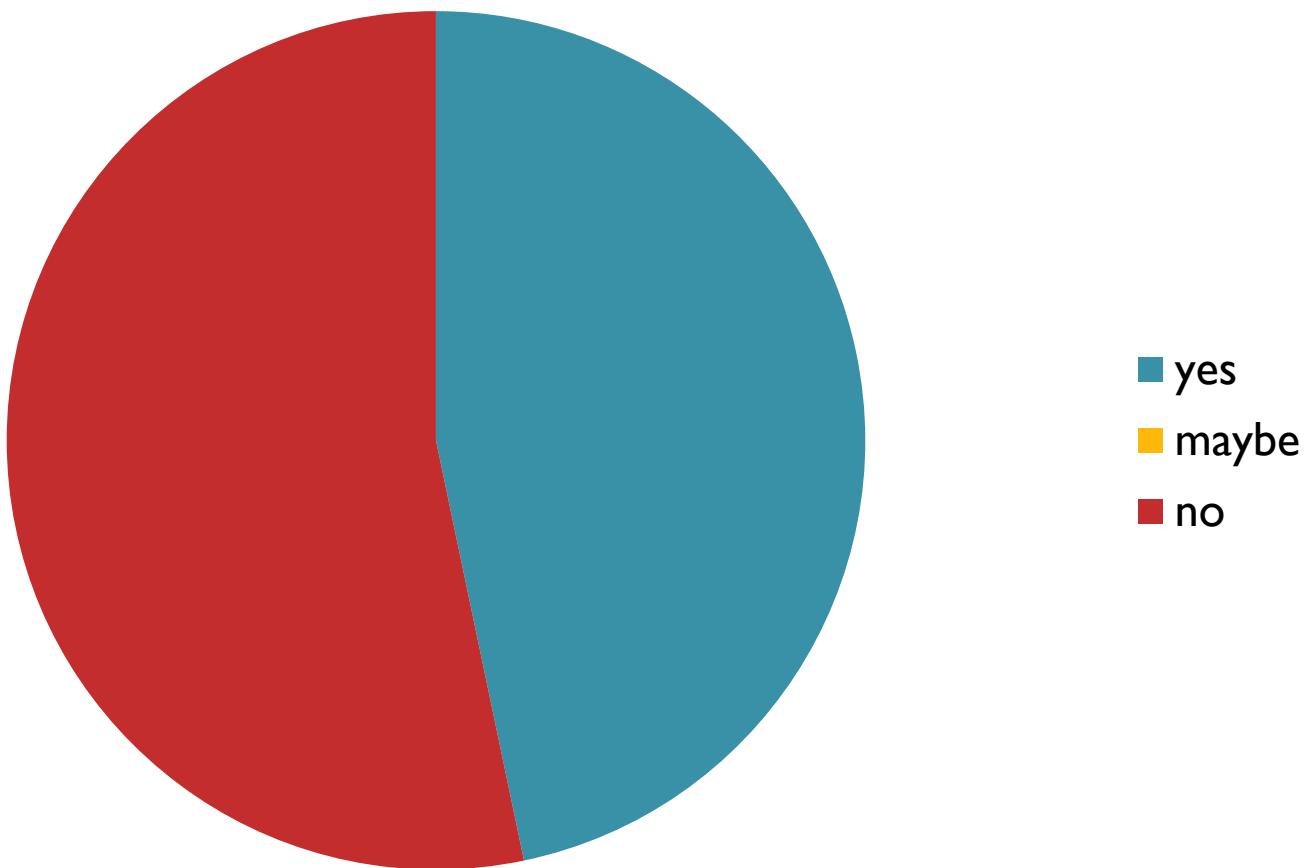
# Q4 (opinions)

We are going to bring along some of the most thoughtful opinions they were all brilliant!

We have got some of the quotes on a poster from the interviews.

# Q5 results do you think similar religions mix?

**Pluto class results**



# THANK YOU!

thank you for sitting patiently and respecting us  
I hope you learned something from our results  
and that everyone has different opinions!

Hope you enjoyed it and if you do you have any  
questions please ask us all!

# Myths and stereotypes about our religion and cultures

What can we do to tackle them?

# Introduction

- In this presentation, we are going to talk about myths and stereotypes in religions and cultures. We are also going to talk about racism and stereotypical examples and how we can prevent these issues from happening.

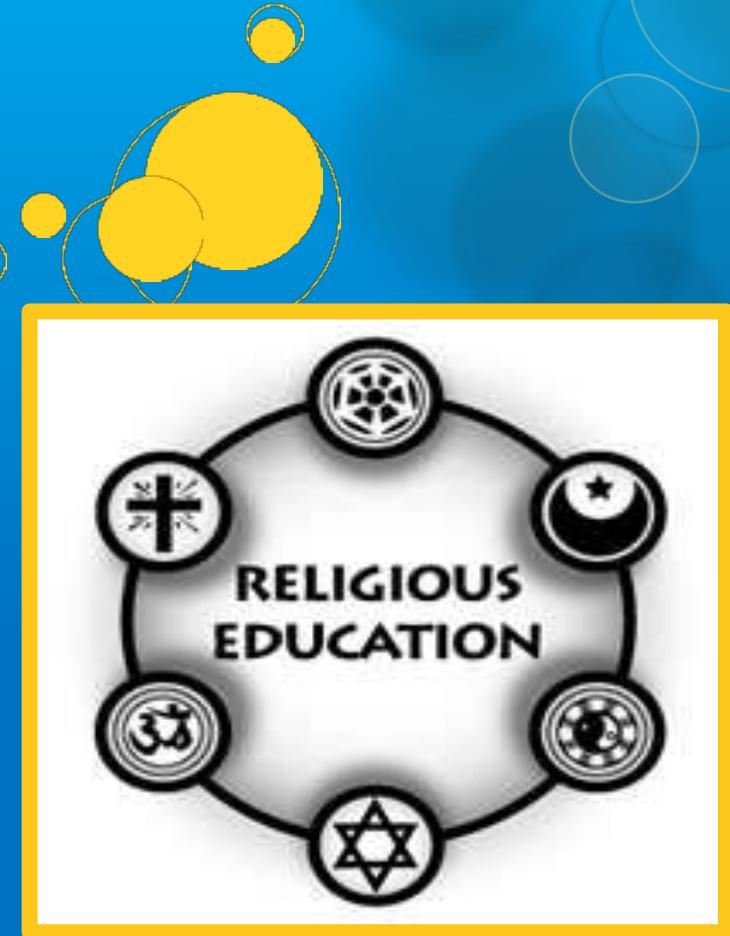
# Stereotypes

- Stereotypes exist in all societies. How we perceive each other can be determined through oversimplified assumptions about people based on particular traits, such as race, religion, culture, etc.
- What we can do about this is that we can explain this in detail and make people understand about stereotypes and try to increase their knowledge about this to stop this from happening. Posters play a good part in this topic as it can attract people to become aware of the matter.

# Myths

Myths and lies also exist in this society. People criticize religion by making up lies to further make the religion to be hated.

What we could do about this matter is get teachers to teach students about myths and stereotypes in religion and how to stop them happening for them to gain more knowledge. This topic could be a national curriculum so pupils at school can be conscious of it in the society.



# Racism

- Racism is discrimination directed against someone of a different race based on such a belief. Racism isn't necessary because you can't judge people by their backgrounds, cultures, traditions and religion. The world is still in existence of racism, for example EDL( English defence league) are against Islam, is there a reason to this to make people hate Muslims or are they trying to make excuses. Another example is Adolf Hitler persecuting the Jews. His apparent excuse was that the Jews took over all the jobs. Hitler wanted to have somebody to blame. He made up lies so that the Jews could be loathed.



We can reduce racism by speaking to the faith leaders and discuss the issues and views between the different religions and try to resolve them.

# An example of resolving differences between people with different beliefs

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-york-north-yorkshire-22689552>

**Thank  
You For  
Watching!**