

Principles and Guidelines for Interfaith Dialogue

Organizing Interfaith Collaborations



**We are grateful to Scarborough Foreign Mission Society for
their generous sharing of these resources**

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Guidelines for Organizing Interfaith Meetings

- Provide appropriate and comfortable meeting space for the group.
- Arrange space to allow for democratic participation; be aware of the access needs and dietary restrictions of faith group members.
- Arrive in advance of participants so hospitality is ready and available when participants begin to arrive.
- Have sufficient supplies and copies of materials available for participants in advance.
- Allow adequate time for introductions and use nametags until members are known to the leaders and each other.
- Commit to beginning and ending sessions on time.
- Build the community. Include opening and closing exercises that help participants to get to know the other members of the group.
- Create a climate that supports prayer and reflection. Use the prayers and rituals of various traditions to support learning. Allow time and space for silence as well as for speaking.
- Remind participants that dialogue is as much (perhaps more) about listening as it is about speaking. Practice listening skills with the group if necessary. Insist that put-downs of people or their feelings are unacceptable.
- Plan for a diversity of learning styles using a variety of media, print, visuals, discussion, etc.
- Seek a balance in participation. Watch for individuals or groups who dominate, as well as those who are silent. Encourage everyone, but also give everyone the right to pass in any discussion.
- Make it clear that no member of the group will be forced to share more than he/she feels comfortable to reveal.
- Enlist the whole group in taking responsibility for making the experience work.

Excerpted from **Interfaith Peacemaking Curriculum** <http://abrahamicfaithspeacemaking.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/For-One-Great-Peace-Study-Guide.pdf>

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Ten Things You Can Do to Support Interfaith Peacemaking and Collaborative Action

1. Investigate the “religious landscape” of your home community and develop a list of contacts interested in building interfaith relationships. Form a dialogue group that meets regularly and responds to issues in the community.
2. Reflect on the religious pluralism within your congregation. Are there any interfaith families? Does your congregation have staff members or volunteers from other religious groups? How might your congregation better serve those from other religious groups in your midst?
3. Ask people from other religious traditions to tell you about their communities, as regards religious education, worship, etc. If your congregation has already formed some interfaith relationships, are there ways that these might be deepened or expanded?
4. Visit another religious group in your community when they hold an open day or offer a community program. Hold a visiting day at your own congregation and invite the wider community for hospitality. Support interfaith pastoral care at a local hospital.
5. Find ways, when working on common issues such as poverty, homelessness, education, etc., to work with other religious groups in your local community.
6. Study. In your own congregation or with another religious group, design an educational experience or share in a book group.
7. In order to build relationships, do business intentionally with firms run by members of other religious groups.
8. Support efforts combating religious hate crimes and religious discrimination in your community.
9. Support local, national, and global interfaith organizations with your time, your ideas, and your material resources.
10. Pray that God may empower you to build interfaith community through your congregation.

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