

# Youth SACRE 2009

## 1. Event Overview

- 1.1 The fourth Warwickshire Youth SACRE event was held on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2009 at Higham Lane School with around 100 Year 8 and Year 9 pupils from schools across Warwickshire attending. The schools who took part were: Harris School, Etone College, Higham Lane School, Bilton School, King Edward VI School, The Avon Valley School, Stratford Girls' Grammar School, North Leamington School and Hartshill School.
- 1.2 The aim of the event was to enhance pupils' understanding of the beliefs, practices and traditions of different faith groups by bringing them together with members of faith communities. The theme of 'Wealth, Poverty and Inequality' was chosen for this year's event and provided pupils with an opportunity to look at religion in relation to these issues. As the country is currently in the midst of a recession it seemed like a topical and current issue that pupils would be able to relate to.
- 1.3 The event opened with a number of dances, to a mix of Bhangra and more modern pop tracks, performed by pupils of Higham Lane School. Schools and faith representatives were welcomed to the school by Headteacher Phil Kelly and Chair of SACRE Manjit Kaur. Pupils were also given an overview of the day from Karen Steele before splitting off into their groups.
- 1.4 Each group were given the opportunity to experience two different faith workshops during the morning sessions, and following lunch were asked to create a presentation based on what they had learnt during their workshops. Presentations could take any form, such as a rap, a drama piece, a song or artwork and each group came up with a creative response to the issues they had discussed earlier in the day.
- 1.5 Pupils were also given the opportunity during lunch time to purchase some items from a stall selling Fair Trade items and to learn more about the Fair Trade symbol and what it means to producers in poorer economic countries.
- 1.5 Pupils returned to the main hall for the last part of the day to perform their presentations to the other groups. The Headteacher and Rocky Grove, faith representative on SACRE, closed the event with a note of thanks.
- 1.6 The different faiths that were represented and the guest speakers are listed below:

Faith	Faith Speaker
Islam	Imran Muhammad, Islamic Relief
	Naurin Mughal, Warwickshire teacher
Christianity	Jane Hill, CORD (a local charity based in Leamington Spa)
	Geoff and Steph Devlin, Leamington Christian Mission
	Lizzie McWhirter and Revd. Canon Mervyn Roberts, SACRE
Judaism	Jonathan Passman, Coventry SACRE
	Vikki Rose, Tzedek (registered charity based in London) - unfortunately this workshop had to be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances
Humanism	Andrew Copson, British Humanist Association
	Sandra Durkin, SACRE - unfortunately this workshop had to be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances

## 2. Evaluation Results

2.1 All students and staff were asked to complete an evaluation form at the end of the event. A total of 69 forms were completed and returned. With the exception of Q1, all questions were open ended giving respondents the freedom to submit any answer.

### 2.2 Q1) On a Scale of 1-5, how worthwhile was Youth SACRE? (5 being most and 1 being least)

2.3 The average score was 3.82 with 51% of respondents giving a rating of 4 and 29% a rating of 3. In comparison to last year's 24%, only 15% of respondents rated the event as very worthwhile. The average has therefore seen a slight decrease by 0.2%. None of the respondents rated the event as 'not worthwhile' and only 1% gave a rating of 2, showing that the majority of participants rated the experience as positive and worthwhile.

### 2.4 Q2) Which part of Youth SACRE did you most enjoy?

2.5 Respondents appeared to enjoy the presentations at the end of the day the most, with 33% stating this was the part that they most enjoyed. Some respondents indicated that they enjoyed watching the presentations while others gave positive responses about participating in presentations. One teacher found the presentations to be most enjoyable because ***"as soon as the pupils were allowed to do something, it really came alive!"***

2.6 Preparation of presentations was also one of the more popular responses, with 13% of students finding this the most enjoyable part of the experience. Respondents also seemed to enjoy mixing and working with people from different schools, with 10% stating that they most enjoyed being able to meet new people. One student enjoyed ***"experiencing a new school [and] meeting new people"*** and another student found that they most enjoyed ***"getting to know people."***

2.7 19% of respondents indicated that they most enjoyed the activities or a particular aspect of the activities that made up the morning workshop sessions. One student ***"enjoyed the part about learning Christianity because I didn't know much about it and it was fun"*** and another enjoyed ***"learning about Islam because it was a different religion."***

2.8 A small number of respondents (8%) stated that they most enjoyed the opening dances performed by pupils at Higham Lane School, while 5% most enjoyed learning about new religions.

### 2.10 Q3) Which part of Youth SACRE did you least enjoy?

2.11 Although 19% of respondents indicated that the workshop activities were the most enjoyable aspect for them, 35% found that this was the least enjoyable part of the day. As students were split into different groups and took part in different workshops this could mean that certain workshops were less enjoyable than others.

2.12 The second most popular response was that there was no part of the day that pupils did not enjoy (32%).

2.13 Although the presentations were popular with many pupils, a small number (14%) found that these were the least enjoyable aspect of the day.

- 2.14 Respondents listed a number of other aspects that they found least enjoyable such as the opening dances (6%), not being with their friends (4%) and waiting (3%).
- 2.15 **Q4) If another Youth SACRE event was held, is there any particular activity you think should be included?**
- 2.16 Respondents gave a wide range of ideas for future activities with the most popular being games (15%) and more hands-on activities (13%), perhaps reflecting the fact that workshops this year were less hands-on and active than last year's more creative workshops.
- 2.17 11% of respondents wanted to see presentations included in future years and a small number suggested that presentations should be more creative (2%) and pupils should have more time to prepare these (2%).
- 2.18 Other suggestions for future activities included: outside activities (4%), ICT activities and Art (4%), events to raise money for charities e.g. tombola (4%), more religions (2%), meeting political figures (2%) and Sikhism (2%).
- 2.20 **Q5) What do you like most about RE?**
- 2.21 Learning about different religions, belief, cultures and lifestyles was given by 18 respondents (32%), ***"discovering the different lifestyles of different religions"*** and ***"learning about the way other cultures think."***
- 2.22 Being given the opportunity to have group discussions and debates about various issues was another popular answer given by 16% of respondents, ***"being able to debate and question religion."*** Closely linked to this aspect is the experience of being able to hear other people's opinions and views of religions which was a response given by 11% of respondents, ***"learning about different peoples' points of views and ideas."***
- 2.23 A small number of pupils stated that they most enjoy learning new things in RE (7%) and 5% like the fact that the subject gives pupils the chance to express their own opinions and to be open-minded on various issues, ***"You can easily voice your own opinion."***
- 2.24 Youth SACRE's main priority is to provide an opportunity for students to debate and develop their own thoughts and beliefs on Religious Education. It is clear from these results that students appreciate these opportunities and enjoy being able to openly express their thoughts knowing that there can never be a right or wrong answer. It is important that the Youth SACRE continues to provide young people with the chance to share ideas about RE in an open-minded environment.
- 2.25 **Q6) Respondents were asked to make any other comments relevant to Youth SACRE or RE.**

Here is a selection of their responses:

***"It was very interesting."***

***"I loved working with others."***

***"It was really fun and enjoyable. I would do it again."***

***“This day gets better every year. Everyone was really organised.” (Teacher’s comment)***

***“The question “Is God bothered?” wasn’t actually answered. It would have been better if today had been more active and not just sitting down.”***

***“Today wasn’t what I expected! Discussion work next time? I like the idea of presenting though!”***

***“You talked too much and the activities were boring.”***

***“Perhaps could be opened up to all KS3 if numbers allow. Some Gifted and Talented Year 7 students would love the event.” (Teacher’s comment)***

### **3. Considerations for 2009**

- 3.1 Recommendation to hold another Youth SACRE event in 2010.
- 3.2 Presentations continue to be a popular part of the event and a large proportion of pupils enjoyed preparing and performing their presentations to the other groups. These seem to be an appropriate way of summarising what pupils have learnt during the morning sessions and provide pupils with a creative outlet for expressing their own thoughts and responses to the issues that have been discussed.
- 3.3 Although 19% of pupils stated that the workshops were the most enjoyable part of the day, a higher proportion of pupils felt this was the least enjoyable. Other comments made on evaluation forms seem to suggest that some guest speakers were better at engaging the pupils in discussions and other activities, whereas others were less well prepared and talked for long periods of time without involving pupils in the discussion. For future events, it would be useful if guest speakers were given more direction and clearer guidance on how to ensure pupils are actively involved during workshops, and to avoid pupils having to sit and listen for long stretches of time.
- 3.4 Pupils suggested including games and more hands-on activities in future events which could be a consideration when planning the next Youth SACRE. However the second most popular response from pupils when asked what they liked most about RE was having the opportunity to openly discuss and debate various issues and being able to share their own opinions with others. Opportunities for more debating activities should also be considered when planning future events.
- 3.5 From an organisational point of view the event ran reasonably smoothly and teachers commented on the improvement on last years Youth SACRE. Due to unforeseen circumstances two of the guest speakers were forced to pull out at the last minute which meant some groups had to be reorganised. This was solved easily although this is another factor which should be taken into consideration when planning future events.
- 3.6 Youth SACRE appears to be growing in success year after year and generally pupils find the experience a positive and worthwhile one. If Youth SACRE should continue into its fifth year it would be useful for SACRE to consider how this might develop and how pupils could be given the opportunity to be more actively involved with the work of SACRE.

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