

## SOCIALISING BY RELIGION

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### Target audience

In-service teachers

- Secondary teachers
- Other situations: Possible training with humanities teachers

### Itineraries

- Developing knowledge about languages and cultures
  
- Exploring attitudes towards languages and cultures

### Abstract

The three activities proposed here illustrate an approach of incorporating the concept of diversity, in general, and the concept of religion, in particular, in a language teaching context.

The first activity focuses on the diversity of faiths. Trainees work in pairs to find words related to religion, to discuss the relationships these concepts have with languages, their speakers and their cultures, and, in groups, debate the issue to reach a conclusion.

The second activity, entitled ‘Analysing a prayer’, uses versions of the prayer “Our Father” in different languages to compare and to identify links between them.

In the third activity, trainees work with vocabulary related to religion to talk about their own religious traditions or/and to ask about other countries’ traditions, using the given words.

### Rationale

The activities proposed consider religious issues from different perspectives, thus, motivating trainees to raise positive attitudes towards diversity. They also intend to foster an appreciation of religion, holding every individual in esteem in his/her own faith and creating an international environment where trainees can express personal opinions.

They also aim at promoting consideration of the role languages play in celebrating diversity and in maintaining social cohesion, by investigating religious evidence in a multilingual and multicultural Europe.

### Personal and social dimensions

- understanding and celebrating a diversity of faiths
- helping to appreciate religious diversity as a value
- considering issues from different perspectives
- knowing oneself as a language educator by thinking about one’s religious knowledge, values, and understanding with regard to language communication
- helping to build up an inter-ethnic society in which the individual is considered as a human being who holds values, tradition and cultural characteristics.

### Professional dimensions

- thinking about the concepts linked to language teaching

- knowing and defending the reasons for an education favourable to the development of plurilingual and pluricultural competence
- observing, analysing and making use of the diversity that exists in one's teaching environment
- motivating students/teachers to raise positive attitudes towards plurilingualism and pluri-interculturalism

## Religion Activity 1

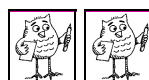
Timing: 60'

Material required : a copy of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (art. 18)**

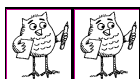
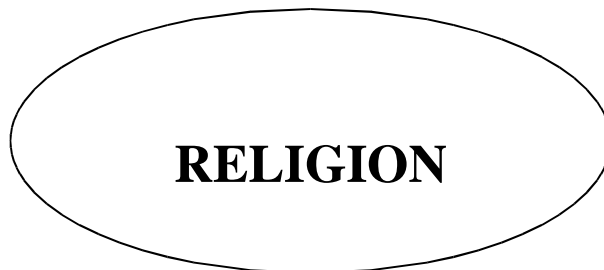
Grouping :

 (pair work) /  (group work)

Description of the activities:



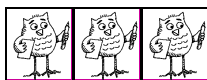
a) In pairs, decide what words are related to religion and put them down in a mind map.



b) Discuss with your partner what relationships these concepts can have with languages, their speakers and their cultures.

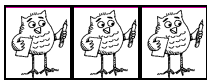


c) How many types of religious beliefs do you know?

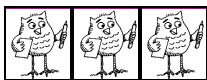


d) In groups, analyse your findings and answer the following questions:

- What do you know about the Christian religious events: Easter and Christmas?
- What do you know about the Muslim religious events: Ramadan\* and Eid – ul – Fitr\*?



e) Choose a religious event and, in your group (preferably formed of people with different religious orientations), brainstorm as much as you know about it.



f) Debate the issue to reach a conclusion (group work).

As a result of this debate, in my community/teaching environment, I would like to.....  
.....  
.....

As a result of this debate, in my life, I will change .....  
.....  
.....

**Notes for teacher educators**

( *Optional* ) Further comments – Starting from Appendix 1 (Article 18 from **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights**), initiate a debate on the right of religion and on teaching, irrespective of the religious belief.

- \* Eid-ul-Fitr [‘i:d,l’fit] = (fast-breaking), the festival with which Ramadan ends.
- \* Ramadan = occurs during the ninth month of the Muslim calendar and it is the month of fasting. Adult Muslims fast during the hours of daylight. They abstain from food, drink, smoking and sexual activity. It is seen as a special time of spiritual renewal when family and community relationships are strengthened. The date when it begins changes each year.

## Analysing a Prayer Activity 2

Timing: 60

Material required :

- a copy of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (art. 18)**
- samples of the prayer **Our Father** in English, French, Latin, Russian (possibly, other languages)

Grouping :

 (individual) /  (pair work) /  (group work) /  (whole class)

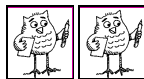
Description of the activities:

- a) Look at Appendix 2 and read the prayer **Our Father**. Compare it to the versions



of the prayer in Romanian (Appendix 3), French, Italian, Russian and German (Appendix 3.1., 3.2., 3.3., 3.4.) and, using the knowledge of the prayer in your own language (if other than the previously mentioned ones), think of the reason for which it is considered ‘the mother of all Christian prayers’.

- b) Share your impressions with your partner and discuss about people’s need



for a spiritual dimension. Think of questions such as:

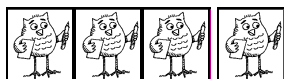
- Why do we pray ?
- When and where do we pray ?
- How do we pray ? (aloud, silently, contemplatively, etc. )

- c) Make use of your knowledge of other religions and, in groups, try to:



- comment on the significance of the cross ;
- describe the buildings used for worship in different religions ;
- identify symbolic acts of worship that are the same in different religions (e.g. covering the head , recitation, prostration, etc. )

- d) Analyzing your findings and the language of prayers, discuss the



importance of faith in people’s lives.

**Notes for teacher educators:**

- a) You may choose not to use all the versions suggested, if you consider the activity too time-consuming.

If, for any reason, you feel the questions suggested in b) make trainees uncomfortable, you can skip or reformulate them.

## Religious festivals Activity 3

Timing : 60'

Material required : none

Grouping :

 (individual) /  (pair work) /  (group work) /  (whole class)

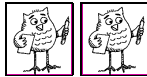
Description of the activities:



a) Traditions and festivals are part of a country's culture and

civilization. Some traditions have become so popular that they are celebrated in other countries as well. The following events (Easter, Thanksgiving, Ramadan, Christmas, Diwali, St. Valentine's Day, Halloween) are celebrated in various parts of the world. Which of them do you recognize? Do you know which time of the year they take place? Are any of these events celebrated in your country?

Working in groups, find out how much each of your partners knows about them.



b) In pairs, talk about a religious festival in your country. Say

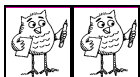
when it takes place and how you celebrate it.



c) Match the person to the religion/church (in some cases, the

same person is connected with more than one faith)

- |              |   |                            |
|--------------|---|----------------------------|
| 1. bishop    | - | a) Islam                   |
| 2. dean      | - | b) Judaism                 |
| 3. minister  | - | c) Buddhism                |
| 4. priest    | - | d) Lutheran Church         |
| 5. pope      | - | e) Presbyterian Church     |
| 6. rabbi     | - | f) Anglican Church         |
| 7. ayatollah | - | g) Roman Catholic Church   |
| 8. mullah    | - | h) Russian Orthodox Church |
| 9. vicar     | - |                            |
| 10. guru     | - |                            |



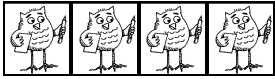
d) Since most festivals were originally religious celebrations, a lot

of religious vocabulary is associated with them. Choose the correct words to fill in the sentences below:

Hindu, pagan, Catholic, Protestant, Lent, fast, Islam, Hindus, Tora, reincarnation, service.

1. .... is the name for the 40 days before Easter in the Christian calendar.
2. Diwali is the ..... festival of light.
3. Halloween was originally a ..... festival.
4. Northern Ireland is divided between two main Christian religions - ..... and .....
5. During Ramadan, strict Muslims ..... during daylight hours and only eat and drink at sunset.

6. The vicar conducted the ..... in the church.
7. The ..... are forbidden by their religion to kill cows and eat beef.
8. Koran is characteristic of ... .
9. The Buddhists believe in ..... .
10. In Judaism..... designates, sometimes, the whole Bible, not only Moses's five books.



e) Have a look at the following quotation and, considering the

activities you have worked on so far, decide to what extent could religious issues develop trainees' awareness of their own and other cultures?

'We must glean the best values of all traditions and work together to remove the tensions between traditions in order to give peace a chance.' ( Thich Nhat Hanh , Vietnamese Buddhist monk )

### Notes for teacher educators:

1. For a) you may need the following information:  
Diwali – is a Hindu festival which takes place in October or November. It is the celebration of the time that Rama, who is the Hindu god Vishnu in human form, came back from exile to become king.  
On St. Valentine's Day people send anonymous cards to the people they love, or people they would like to go out with. Saint Valentine was an early Christian who was executed because of his beliefs.  
Halloween - is a famous celebration that occurs on 31<sup>st</sup> October. It originated as the Celtic festival of the Dead, which was called Samhain. The Christian Church tried to suppress this pagan festival and renamed it All Hallows' Eve, which is where the current name is derived from.
2. Answers for c): 1.f, g; 2.f,g; 3.d,e; 4.g,h; 5.g; 6.b; 7.a; 8.a; 9.f,g; 10.c.
3. Answers for d): 1. Lent; 2. Hindu; 3. pagan; 4. Catholic, Protestant; 5. fast; 6. service; 7. Hindus; 8. Islam; 9. reincarnation; 10. Tora.



## **Assessment**

After each of the three activities the members of the group are asked the following questions:

How can you use these activities in your teaching environment?

Do you consider that religion is a challenging topic for language teaching?

To what extent do you think the choice of the materials and the way the activities were designed are helpful in introducing plurilingual, pluricultural and intercultural awareness?

## **Appendix 1**

### **Article 18 (from The Universal Declaration of Human Rights)**

‘Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.’

## **Appendix 2**

### **Our Father**

#### **Our Father**

**Who art in Heaven**

**Hallowed be thy name,**

**Thy Kingdom come,**

**Thy will be done,**

**On earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day**

**Our daily bread.**

**And forgive us our trespasses**

**As we forgive those who trespass against us**

**And lead us not into temptation**

**But deliver us from evil**

**For thine is the kingdom**

**And the power, and the glory**

**For ever and ever**

**Amen.**

### Appendix 3

#### Tatăl nostru (Romanian version)

**Tatăl nostru**  
**Care ești în ceruri**  
**Sfințească-se numele Tău**  
**Vie împărăția Ta**  
**Facă-se voia Ta**  
**Precum în cer așa și pe pământ.**  
**Pâinea noastră cea de toate zilele**  
**Dă-ne-o nouă astăzi**  
**Și ne iartă nouă greșelile noastre**  
**Precum și noi iertăm greșităilor noștri**  
**Și nu ne duce pe noi în ispită**  
**Ci ne izbăvește de cel rău.**  
**Că a Ta este împărăția**  
**Puterea și Slava**  
**În numele Tatălui**  
**Al Fiului**  
**Al Sfântului Duh**  
**Amin.**

### **Appendix 3.1**

#### **Le Notre Pere (French version)**

**Nostre Pere, qui es aux cieux,**

**Que Ton nom soit sanctifie'.**

**Que Ton regne vienne,**

**Que Ta volonte' soit faite**

**Sur la terre comme au ciel.**

**Donne-nous aujourd'hui notre pain quotidien.**

**Pardonne-nous nos offenses**

**Comme nous aussi nous pardonnons a ceux qui nous ont offenses.**

**Et ne nous conduis pas en tentation,**

**Mais delivre-nous du mal.**

**Car c'est a Toi qu'appartiennent dans tous les siecles le regne, la puissance et la gloire.**

**Amen.**

### **Appendix 3.2**

#### **Padre nostro (Italian version)**

**Padre nostro che sei nei cieli,**

**Sia santificato il Tuo nome;**

**Venga il Tuo regno,**

**Sia fatta la Tua volonta',**

**Come in cielo cosi' in terra.**

**Dacci oggi il nostro pane quotidiano,**

**Rimetti a noi i nostri debiti,**

**Come noi li rimettiamo ai nostri debitori**

**E non ci indurre in tentazione,**

**Ma liberaci dal male.**

**Amen.**

### Appendix 3.3

#### Otce nas (Russian version)

Otce nas, suscij na nebesach: da svjatitsja imja tvoje.

Da prijdjet carstvie tvoje.

Da budet volja tvoja i na zemle, kak na nebe.

Chleb nas nasuscnyj daj nam sej den'.

I prosti nam dolgi nasi,

Kak i my proscaem dolznicam nasim.

I ne vvedi nas v iskusenie,

No izbav nas ot lukavogo.

Ibo tvoje jest' carstvoi sila i slava vo veki.

### Appendix 3.4

#### Vater Unser (German version)

Vater Unser im Himmel,

Geheiligt werde Dein Name,

Dein Reich komme.

Dein Wille geschehe,

Wie im Himmel, so auf Erden.

Unser tagliches Brot gib uns heute,

Und vergib uns unsere Schuld,

Wie auch wir vergeben unseren Schuldigern.

Und fuhre uns nicht in Versuchung,

Sondern erlose uns von dem Bosen.

Denn Dein ist das Reich und die Kraft

Und die Herrlichkeit, in Ewigkeit.

Amen.

