

Welcome to our second Newsletter

Welcome to our second newsletter. The autumn term is well underway and the *CelebratingRE* team is hard at work co-ordinating an exciting programme of events for everyone interested in and involved with RE in England and Wales.

We need contributions from you. Tell us what you are planning and let us give you further publicity. We are particularly keen to have Welsh News. See contact details and next month's deadline at the end.

Competition update

This month sees the launch of more than twenty competitions for Celebrating RE Month. Many of you will have competitions at a local level organised by your SACRE or perhaps by a local faith community; some of you will be planning competitions within your school. Those I'm writing about here are open to schools all over England and Wales – some are for teachers but most are for primary and/or secondary pupils. There's a strong focus on Learning Outside the Classroom in both activities and prizes. Several competitions offer prizes of free guided visits for a whole class to places of religious significance ranging from Worcester and Southwark Cathedrals to Bhaktivedanta Manor in Hertfordshire, from the Holocaust Centre near Nottingham to the Jewish Museum or the Buddhist Centre in London. A host of other prizes include books, ICT resources, subscriptions and artefacts, not to mention cash!

In this issue

- Celebrating RE Nationwide:
 - ▶ East of England
 - ▶ Portsmouth SACRE
 - ▶ Norfolk SACRE
 - ▶ St Paul's London
 - ▶ Lancashire SACRE
- Competitions
- Website update
- What can I do ?
- Contact details



The competitions themselves are deliberately very varied so that there is almost certain to be something that would fit well with your scheme of work for this term or next. Many involve ICT activities and all are designed initially to be submitted electronically, so there's no worry about parcelling up boxes crammed with pupils' fragile models. There's something for every age and stage and quite a few can be adapted to whatever theme or religious tradition you are teaching. Many also provide a chance for pupils' work to be displayed in an exhibition in your school as part of your *Celebrating RE* Month impact.

The closing date for almost all the competitions is 31st January 2011, and prize winners will be invited to awards ceremonies at special *Celebrating RE* events in their own areas. As with most things in life, thought and preparation lead to good competition results, so why not look at the Competitions section of the website now and start planning with your classes?

Competition entry forms

These can be downloaded from the website, CelebratingRE.org.uk, and while you are doing this you can also check the terms and conditions of entry.

CelebratingRE Nationwide

East of England

Eastern England Celebrating RE Champions had a very successful planning launch on 17th September.

Twenty-four teachers from primary and secondary schools of all kinds in Norfolk, Suffolk, Luton, Bedford and Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Essex and Hertfordshire came together for a day in Ely to work with local RE advisers and consultants. The purpose was to plan how they would involve teachers and schools in their areas in preparations for Celebrating RE. This had all been made possible by a grant from the Keswick Hall Trust to eastern region members of AREIAC (Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants), whose project had two aspects. The first was to plan activities and events for *Celebrating RE*. In addition, the project would enable enthusiastic and committed teachers to take on a leadership role in RE by championing the celebration with local schools and colleagues.

A wealth of ideas and plans emerged as the day went on; in the afternoon groups from each geographical area presented their ideas to the other participants. The following list gives just some of the suggested projects.

- An 'Awe and Wonder' day
- Creating a county book called 'God is...'
- A day for A level students, and an evening lecture for the public
- Creating a food market place in school, then creating a 'recipe book' with stories on one side, and recipes on the other
- Creating a reflective space in school
- Who do you think you are? - focus on 'names'.
- A 'Faith Ship'
- Letting off balloons with prayers/reflections attached (the group hoped there might be some 'Celebrating RE balloons- bio degradable of course... to be set off on 1st March!)
- Other launch events- prayer wall, prayer flags...
- A film festival - films about RE, showcased in a public place

Between now and Christmas the 'Celebrating RE Champions' will meet with teachers in other local schools and generate activities in their areas. A second Champions' event will take place in January when participants will share their progress and think further about the important aspect of publicity and ways of getting the message about the value and enjoyment of RE across to as wide a public as possible.



Eastern England teachers creating inspiring ideas for *Celebrating RE*

Portsmouth SACRE

Want to keep fit AND Celebrate RE? Why not walk to a place of worship in your local area?

This is the great idea of Portsmouth SACRE, who want to encourage healthy schools, as well as engage students with the wealth of religious resources on their doorstep during March 2011. This is a wonderful way to enhance local knowledge and build community cohesion by getting young people to explore their local neighbourhood. Look on the website Calendar of events for more details.

Have you got an event which could be entered on the *Celebrating RE* events calendar? To find out more, visit the What's on? section of the website.

Celebrating RE: Events						
March 2011						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
27	28	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
View All Events						

Lancashire

Enthusiasm is an infectious commodity and so it was a delight to receive a call from a newly appointed RE Co-ordinator at Morecambe Road Special School telling Lancashire SACRE that her staff were so excited to be entering the artefact competition from the *CelebratingRE* web site. Fearn's High School in Rossendale reported making plans for March to develop learning about 'Dreams, Aspirations and Challenges' through connecting to Martin Luther King's Dexter Baptist Church community in Montgomery Alabama. *CelebratingRE* is being grabbed as a wonderful opportunity to raise the profile of RE throughout the County.

The Lancashire Youth SACRE is planning a conference to celebrate good practice by linking seven high schools with local primary and special schools to identify and celebrate 'Good RE'. The learning experiences that they share will contribute to the new Lancashire RE syllabus exemplification.

Lancashire SACRE members have pledged to be involved as individuals as well as promoting the event with the groups they represent thus a teacher union representative is circulating details of *CelebratingRE* to all their teachers. These were among the things SACRE members pledged;

- An opportunity for schools to be invited to an interfaith dialogue day
- Creation of RE newsletters to parents via school website
- Asking for contributions from governors
- Supporting schools making visits to faith groups
- Diocesan support to promote understanding Christianity in its many forms, for example looking at King James Bible
- Creating a faith trail through school – a classroom per religion
- Raising the profile of RE in a school as high as possible eg. involving a local football club
- Re connecting to diversity links with Preston Guild and the Olympic Games
- An RE open day in school and exhibitions of pupils' work, with invitations to all faith communities to take part
- Setting up of panels made up of, for example, faith groups, possibly in libraries, to answer contentious questions from pupils
- Blocking of RE in the timetable, for example an RE week, involving the whole school

Lancashire SACRE supports Interfaith week events in November and has encouraged its partner groups to follow on their activities as 'phase 2' in March 2011. For example the Preston Faith Forum is working with local high schools to develop learning through enquiry models connected to visiting local faith communities. The Burnley and Pendle Faith centre is planning Interfaith week events with Christian and Muslim groups and schools in the area that will be further developed in March.

London - St Paul's

The Schools and Families Department at St Paul's Cathedral in collaboration with the RE Council are planning a student conference in March 2011. This conference aims to join the nationwide celebrations by offering workshops and presentations in the setting of the historic Cathedral. It will support schools with their provision for gifted and talented students. In addition it will market GCSE RS, through a focus on the 'Nature of God' and 'Contemporary moral issues' which feature on many GCSE specifications. Not to be missed.



Norfolk SACRE

Norfolk SACRE take over The Forum in Norwich!

RE will be celebrated in a very public place in Norwich during March! Norfolk SACRE have successfully booked The Forum in the heart of Norwich for 24th March 2011. The Forum is a unique city centre venue, with stunning glass atrium and expansive outdoor spaces for hosting music and dance. Plans are afoot to have over 20 stands relating to RE in Norfolk, craft activities for children, dressing up opportunities, a reflective space, children and young people's performances, as well as CPD for teachers!

What can I do?

If you are reading this newsletter then chances are you have already found our website and signed up for news updates.

A simple thing you can do is to share this newsletter with a colleague and ask them to pass it on to someone else. This is an easy way for us to get the message that *Celebrating RE* is happening and for schools to be aware that March 2011 is a special month for RE. If you are teaching in a school or college, talk to your students about the month and share ideas about how you can be involved.

Find out more by visiting the *Celebrating RE* website. <http://www.celebratingre.org/>

CelebratingRE website

The *CelebratingRE* website is being constantly updated, so don't forget to check it to see what's happening nationally and in your area. There are several new articles this month on ways of Celebrating RE: Learning Outside the Classroom, Celebrating RE with your local community, publicising your activities and events, celebrating in schools of a religious character.

Visit the *What can you do?* section of the website to find out more.
www.celebratingre.org

Invite your MP!

One of our aims for *Celebrating RE* month is to get the message across to policy makers about what a superb contribution RE can make to the education of children and young people.

As we know, many older people don't know how much RE has changed since they were at school. The month of March 2011 gives us a wonderful opportunity to showcase the discussion, dialogue, creativity, reflection, local and global awareness and depth of thinking that are the stuff of RE now.

There are 573 MPs in England and Wales and we'd like to make sure that during *Celebrating RE* month at least half of them attend an RE event. The first step to making sure they know about RE is to invite them to your activity. Tell them lots of children/young people will be involved. Tell them the media will be there. MPs love good publicity! But like most of us they have packed lives, so as soon as you have fixed the date and time of your event, send them an invitation. If you have connections that might help - through governors or local councillors - use any channels you can to get your MP on board. What a difference it could make to the future of RE if we had a House of Commons where a critical mass of people knew what the subject was about!



Newsletter



Please send us information for inclusion in next month's newsletter, by October 15th, to newsletter@recelebration.org.uk Please keep your contribution brief, two paragraphs is ideal, and be aware that we may edit your piece to fit. We would love to have photos to use in the newsletter - make sure that you have permissions to use these, particularly if they contain images of young people. Any queries, email the editor on the email address above. Thank you for reading and we hope you feel inspired to Celebrate RE with us in March 2011. See you next month.

The CelebratingRE Team