



Saturday 11th February 2012

# Torbay Interfaith Forum 4 Youth



Kindly Funded by The Dulverton Trust

## Making Connections



Teresa Griffiths and Marjon students were thanked for their initiative, effort and enthusiasm by TIFFY Leader, Heather Savini. They had engaged TIFFY members very effectively and students' comments express their reflections on the day.

*'I felt fortunate to work with children from different cultural backgrounds.'*

*'I learnt a lot from the pupils' good and valuable feedback.'*

*'The interactivity of the discussions and the enthusiasm of the pupils were encouraging.'*

*'The day was a very big success.'*

*'I appreciated hearing young people's points of view.'*

**Torbay Inter-Faith Forum 4 Youth** aims to cross boundaries and thereby make new connections with people not normally encountered. In addition, TIFFY likes to introduce young people to new venues to broaden their horizons. TIFFY's visit to University College MARJON Plymouth accomplished both of these aims through meeting Plymouth young people and the Postgraduate Certificate of Education, Religious Education students as well as experiencing something of university life. The students organised the workshop of fun and informative activities, using their excellent creative and organisational skills to produce a valuable programme, enjoyed by everyone. The Academic Lead for the Faculty of Education, Teresa Griffiths, made the event possible and TIFFY is very grateful to her for her collaborative spirit.

The event appropriately came just after the United Nations' World Interfaith Harmony Week which focused on 'My friend of a different faith' and this TIFFY event was certainly in tune with that theme. The 29 young people and students and 8 supporting adults represented 6 faiths and a host of cultures

The young people commented on what had appealed to them about the workshop saying: *'It was a rewarding and worthwhile workshop.'*

*'I enjoyed meeting new people because I don't normally meet with people of different cultures.'*

*'Being at university and the interesting topic appealed to me.'*

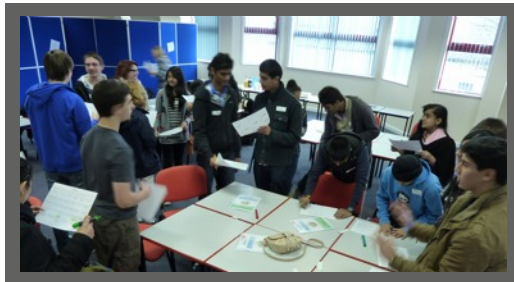
*'It was interesting and fun to engage with youth from different faith and cultural backgrounds.'*

*'I liked meeting new people because I made new friends.'*



The students divided the young people into teams and the day proceeded on a competitive basis, adding to the excitement and team spirit. It was said:

*'Everyone co-operated well with one another and there was good communication and enthusiasm in group activities.'*



An interesting introductory exercise helped everyone learn names. This was followed by an orienteering challenge to explore and appreciate Marjon's campus.



Students explain an activity. The young people said:

*'I was helped to understand others from minority cultural backgrounds via the mixture of activities.'*

*'Some activities were entertaining & light-hearted fun.'*

*'I learned weird and wonderful facts!'*

*'All of it appealed to me because it is good to socialise and it's good to know what universities are like.'*



Communication skills were developed through listening, discussing and reporting back on group views.

*'My communication skills have developed.'*

*'It helped me communicate more with other people.'*

*'I learnt a lot from the pupils.'*



*'I realised I need to listen to people to understand their point of view.'*

*'I learned how to work in a team, even if I didn't know my teammates well.'*

*'I am very glad I had the chance to put my views across.'*



Focusing on team scores! The RE students were keen to discover how best to approach and incorporate young people of faith within RE lessons. This provoked a lively discussion and perceptive suggestions were made by pupils. The students discovered .....



The young people are setting off in their teams to explore the university campus. Pupils found the visit a 'help in making thoughtful decisions about university and RE.' and 'learned a lot about university and teaching.'

'They should not use pupils as guinea pigs and pick on one particular faith.....or single out any pupil.'

*'They should beware of taking advantage of a pupil because the class is studying their religion.'*

'Pupils do want to share knowledge & experience but on their own terms, after discussion with the teacher.'

'Pupils welcome a more active role in RE.'



Speaking in public was encouraged in the reporting back from group discussions. Pupils were very eloquent and clear in their presentations. Students had a scribe taking notes of the points made in order to encapsulate all the thoughts that had materialised.



The students organised a welcome lunch of pizza, fruit and squash. A student's birthday was celebrated and her birthday cake enjoyed! 'The food was very nice', declared one pupil.

Pupils were asked what qualities a good teacher required! Both pupils and students gained from this activity. Students learned what pupils expected from teachers and they discovered the pupils were *'astute in discerning a teacher's intentions.'* One student said, *'I will remember the characteristics of a good teacher in my future teaching career'*. Another promised *'to take time to really get to know pupils.'* *'Hearing pupils' points of view was very helpful'* for another student.



Beverly Jones, Programme Manager for the Devon Total Support Project brought the day to an end by exploring the future direction for youth interfaith activities in Devon. Lots of great ideas were proposed.

Pupils gained insight into the role of the RE teacher and one pupil summed this up by saying, *'I grasped the struggle of teachers!'* Another wants to become a primary school teacher, *'so the skills for the good teacher activity were really helpful.'*



The young people were delighted to be presented with 'goodie bags' to remind them of their visit to MARJON and there were prizes for the winning teams!

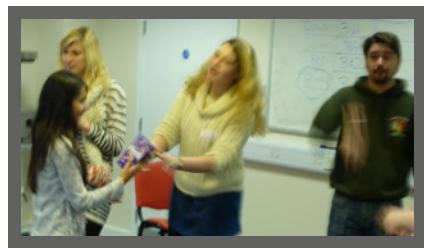
*'I had to talk to new and different people and work with them, which is exciting and interesting - I learnt from them.'*

*'I loved this as a social gathering with some religious knowledge.'*



The adults observed that the programme had been *'excellent'*, *'inspiring and encouraging'* and *'an enriching experience for everyone'*.

The students hope to produce a Guide for RE teachers to publicise the valuable insights which were gathered from *'Making Connections'*.



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TIFFY wishes to thank everyone who contributed so enthusiastically and effectively to this educative and enjoyable Devon event.

Designed and Produced by Dr Y. Mubashar

