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Our Faiths and Our Shared Futures Derby



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 CENTRE
 at the University of Derby

Derby
 Community Safety Partnership

J E T JOBS EDUCATION & TRAINING





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We acknowledge that in each of our faiths some leaders, religious and secular, have used our faith texts, out of context, as justification for violence and oppression.

This has been against our own and other peoples. Such a misuse of texts is considered to be wrong by Islam, Judaism and Christianity. We affirm again the opposition of our three religions to violence and oppression of others

THE FAITH NARRATIVES COMMITTEE

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Why did we produce this booklet?

This booklet came about because of the need to give a voice to the people of Derby about how we can preserve our community's safety and security, to show our respect for the differences and diversity amongst us, and most importantly our belief in the importance of the protection of life.

The Derby Community Safety Partnership has supported the development and production of this booklet after extensive community based discussions. We want to show that those who attempt to stir up division, hate or extremism in our communities do not speak for the people of Derby.

THIS WORK HAS BEEN COMMISSIONED BY THE
DERBY COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

multifaith
CENTRE
at the University of Derby





This booklet focuses on scriptural texts that include the Qu'ran, Bible and Torah. There are similar values at the heart of these three faiths (as well as with other faiths such as Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism).

All of them are based on a foundation of prioritising the safety and security of people and communities and the protection of life.

Their importance in the way we shape day to day life of Derby is equal to other faiths, and to the non-religious values of equality and mutual respect that many of us who do not have a faith still hold. It is this diversity that makes Derby the great city that it is.

Hate, extremism and division have no place in our city. Derby is our city and together, we can collectively send a message to those who seek to undermine our city that we all matter. We are all part of its future and we all are responsible to each other for our safety and security.





Why you should read this booklet?

Do you want people to tell you what to think? Or do you want to think for yourself? Does it make you angry when you see yourself described as a 'hoody' or your beliefs labelled as 'extremist'?

What do you think about the other people who live in Derby? Do they deserve your respect? And in return, do you deserve theirs?

Do people who live in different parts of the UK, people who have a different faith or different coloured skin to you, deserve to be judged by you? And beyond our own borders – do the people of other nations deserve to be listened to, or to be ignored because they are 'foreign'?





Should judgement be reserved until you know what lies in the heart of a person? Is it even a man or a woman's place to judge another person?

There are people from more than 120 different countries living in Derby. In the Muslim community alone there are people from five continents. Our city has been the home to people from other countries and faiths for a long time.

When we talk about 'we' in this booklet, we mean the different community groups in Derby who contributed their thoughts to it (you can see a list at the back).

We believe that as Muslims, Christians, Jews or non-believers, there are more things that unite us than divide us.

Our religions all come from the same place. We are all children of Abraham one way or another. And our God is the same God, though his name may sound different when we say it.

In this booklet we ask you: do you know your own faith? Do you understand the faith of your neighbours? Do you respect the way of life of others?

We challenge you to keep reading – to find out for yourself what the Qu'ran, the Bible, the Torah and the Talmud have to say about the sanctity of life, the rights of other people, and the respect that all people deserve to receive from us.

Don't rely on other people to tell you about these things. Find out for yourself and then think for yourself.





Our right to think and believe what we want

‘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.’

ARTICLE 18 OF THE UNIVERSAL
DECLARATION OF HUMAN
RIGHTS. PROTECTS THE RIGHTS
OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES.





We live in an age where our right to believe in our own God, or not to believe in a God at all, has been laid down in international law by the United Nations. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed in 1948 just after the second world war. Humanity was trying to find a way to protect the rights of all. It still stands as international law today.

But this demand that we respect for our fellow humans had already been made by our religious scriptures long before this.





Our faiths teach us to value life

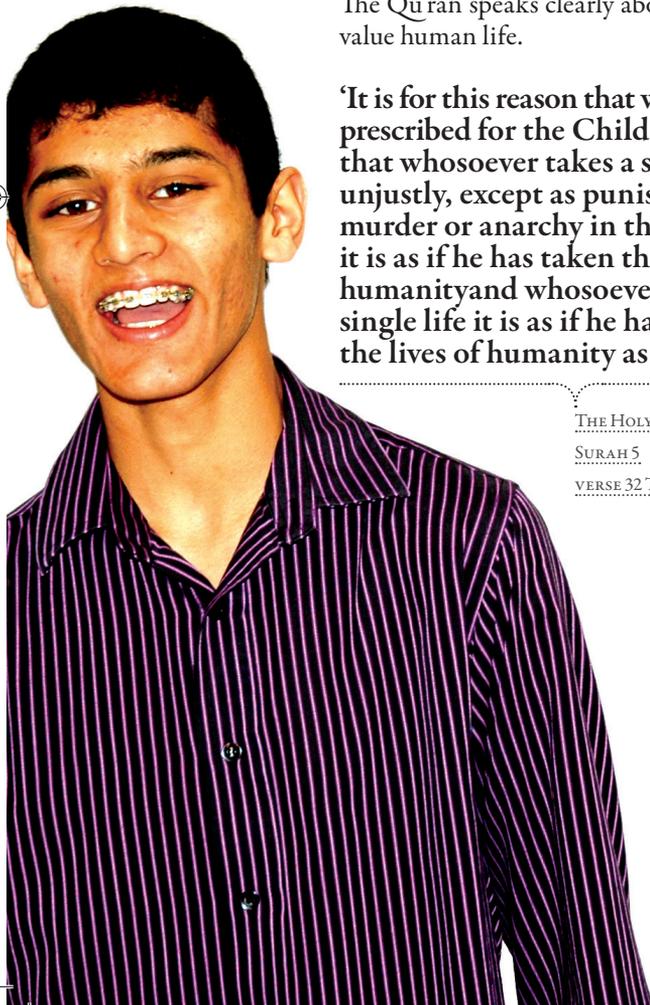
The Qu'ran speaks clearly about our duty to value human life.

'It is for this reason that we prescribed for the Children of Israel that whosoever takes a single life unjustly, except as punishment for murder or anarchy in the land, then it is as if he has taken the lives of all humanity and whosoever saves one single life it is as if he has preserved the lives of humanity as a whole.'

THE HOLY QU'RAN

SURAH 5

VERSE 32 THE TABLESPREAD





Muslims are asked to see life as a gift from Allah that must be treasured and cherished. The Prophet Muhammad said:

‘None of you has faith until you love for your brother what you love for yourself.’

SAHIH AL-BUKHARI
KITAB AL-IMAN
HADITH NO.13

In other words, we must value to the lives of others as much as we value our own life. Until then, we can't be a true Muslim.

In exactly the same way, Jewish people are asked by the Talmud to protect life:

‘If you save one life, it is as if you saved the world’

THE TALMUD

And Christians and Jews are told by the Old Testament to cherish the lives of all since the breath of life was a gift from God:

‘The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath



of life, and the man became a living being.’

GENESIS 2,7

Christians are given the same message as Muslims in the gospel of St Mark:

‘And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.’

MARK 12:28-31

These ancient religious teachings also became international law with the signing of the Declaration of Human Rights:

‘Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.’

ARTICLE 3

DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

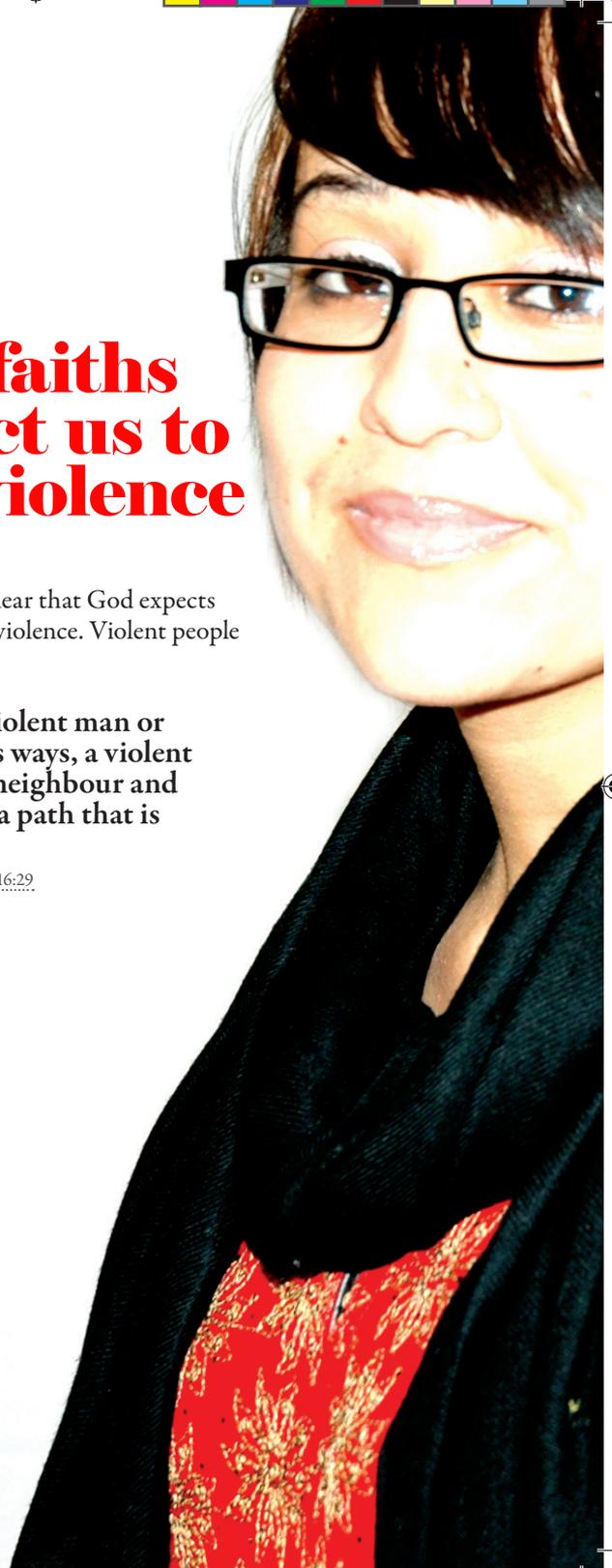


Our faiths instruct us to reject violence

The Bible makes it clear that God expects Christians to reject violence. Violent people are to be pitied:

‘Do not envy a violent man or choose any of his ways, a violent man entices his neighbour and leads him down a path that is not good.’

PROVERBS 3:31 & PROVERBS 16:29





God will protect us from the violent actions of other people:

‘My God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge and my saviour - from violent men you save me.’

2 SAMUEL 22:3

These words have meaning for Jewish believers too. Violence must be the last resort. All Jews live under the duty of ‘**Tikkun Olam**’ which means ‘**repairing the world**’. Tikkun olam gives Jews the duty to mend the world, and so they must reject violence, reduce violence and speak against violence. In the Torah it says that even when the ancient Jewish nation was instructed to attack another city, they were asked to first offer peace:

‘When approaching a city to attack it, first offer peace’.

DEUT. XX.10

We know that the Prophet Muhammad told Muslims that:

‘None of you has faith until you love for your neighbour what you love for yourself.’

SAHIH MUSLIM

KITAB AL-IMAN, 67-1

HADITH NO.45

It is impossible to love your neighbour and to act violently. All Muslims who have studied the Qu’ran understand that violence has no part to play in Islam. Islam rejects violence.

So what about Muslims and ‘**Jihad**’?

In today’s world, ‘**Jihad**’ is being consistently misused to justify violent and terrorist acts or to criticise Islam as a ‘**violent**’ or ‘**extremist**’ religion. Jihad is wrongly defined as ‘**holy war**’ against the unfaithful. This is a misunderstanding of the true meaning of the word.





Setting the record straight what is the meaning of Jihad?

The word 'Jihad' means 'struggle'. Famously, the word 'Jihad' is used by the Prophet as he returns from a battle.

The Prophet says:
**We are returning from a minor
jihad to a major jihad.**





'Jihad' is not just about war. Life is a continuous Jihad, or struggle, to promote good and defeat evil. The biggest Jihad any Muslim faces is an inner struggle to make themselves a better person.

War is prohibited in Islam unless it is for self defence. As in Jewish scripture, the Qu'ran says that war must be a last resort:

'And fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but begin not hostilities. Indeed, Allah does not love the aggressors.'

QU'RAN, SURAH 2

VERSE 190

THE COW

Even when at war, Muslims must have very strict codes of behaviour. The property, families, animals, children, and the environment of our enemies must not be attacked; the only action should be against the enemy that is directly attacking us. The response must not be out of proportion to the attack made on us, and must only be to protect the community.

The demand from Allah to avoid violence is clear in the Qu'ran. Allah tells us that we have been stopped from committing murder and unjustified killing. Allah says that the highest sin is to kill without reason.

Both the Qu'ran and the Sunnah teach us that suicide attacks are even more evil in the eyes of Allah and within Islam. This is because suicide attacks kill a wide range of innocent people. The damage from the killing is much greater and this therefore makes it the worst form of crime.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad said: the whole of creation is the family of Allah and the most beloved person to God is the one who treats Allah's family well. This includes humans and all other forms of God's creation.





Our faiths ask us to treat each other with respect and love

The Torah says that we are all equal. It teaches Jewish believers that strangers should be treated with love:

‘You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God’

LEVITICUS 19:34

In the ancient times of the Kings of Israel, those who had a different faith were allowed to worship. Even in times of power, the Jews did not force their own religion on others. They accepted the right of individuals to live and believe in what they wanted under Jewish rule, as long as they respected the laws and beliefs of their fellow Jewish citizens.

The messages to Christians that are contained in the Bible are just as clear.





It is a duty for any Christian to love and respect others – no matter what their faith. Here is just one example, taken from the gospel of St John.

‘We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him. This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.’

1 JOHN 3, 14-16

In the Qu’ran, our belief is true only if we have the freedom to choose. Islam recognises the right to choose between belief and non belief.

‘Let there be no compulsion in Religion’

SURAH 2: VERSE 256

THE COW

The Qu’ran describes the differences between the people of the earth as one of Allah’s Signs and of his greatness

‘And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colours: verily in that are Signs for those who know.’

SURAH 30: VERSE 22

THE ROMANS

When the Prophet came, people were already following two religions - Judaism and Christianity. The Prophet never quarrelled with Jews and Christians, and always prayed for all people.

When the Prophet went to Medina, he made an agreement with Jews and Christians there. According to this agreement they would defend Medina together. All religions were seen as equal and there was no feeling that one faith was better than the other.

OUR FAITHS AND OUR SHARED FUTURES – DERBY





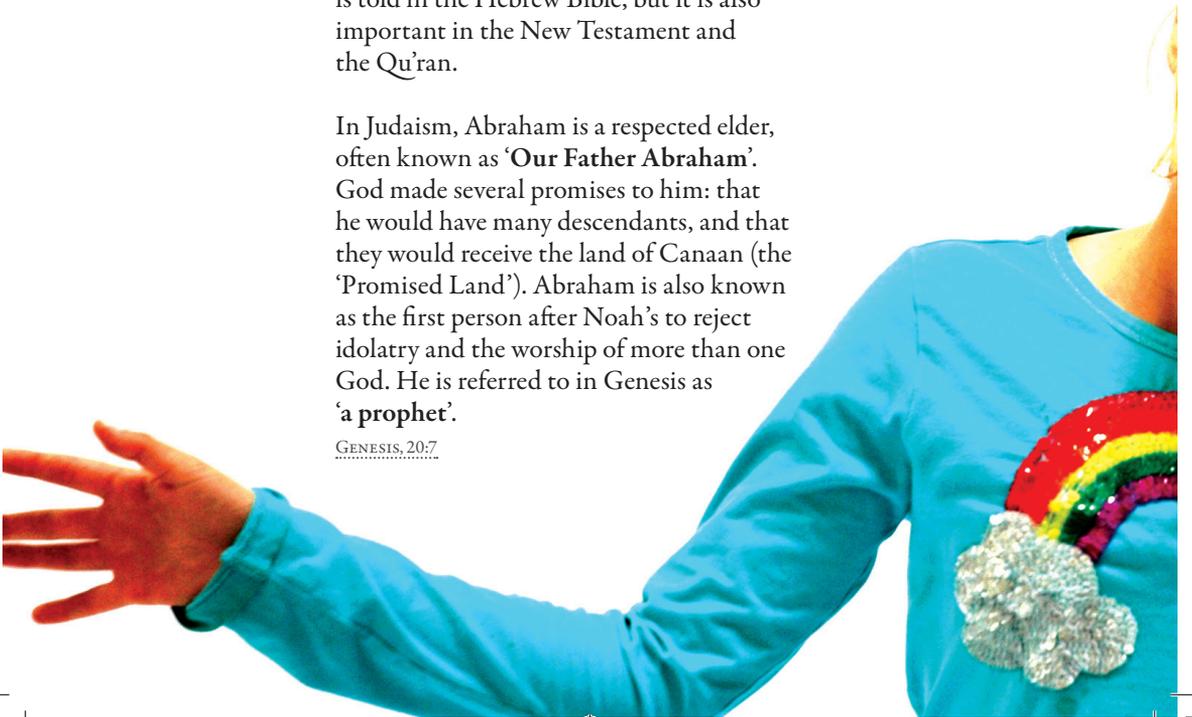
So is there more that unites us than divides us?

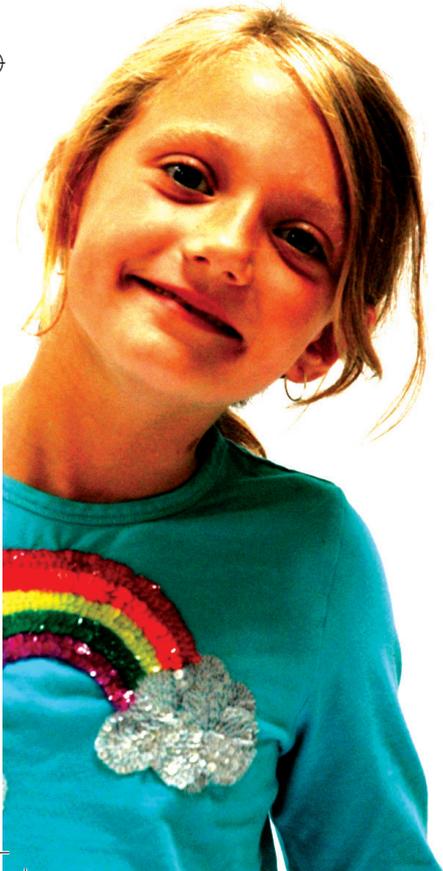
Did you know that the Muslim, Christian and Jewish religions all have a common beginning? All three religions worship one God, though known by different names.

These three religions are known as the 'Abrahamic religions'. Abraham's story is told in the Hebrew Bible, but it is also important in the New Testament and the Qu'ran.

In Judaism, Abraham is a respected elder, often known as 'Our Father Abraham'. God made several promises to him: that he would have many descendants, and that they would receive the land of Canaan (the 'Promised Land'). Abraham is also known as the first person after Noah's to reject idolatry and the worship of more than one God. He is referred to in Genesis as 'a prophet'.

GENESIS, 20:7





For Christians, Abraham is a respected figure from the past, rather than a direct ancestor. But he is used as an example of a true believer. His willingness to obey God by offering up his son Isaac as a sacrifice is compared to God's offering of his own son, Jesus.

In Islam, Ibrahim is one of a line of prophets beginning with Adam and ending with Muhammad. He is known as the 'first Muslim' because he was the first person to believe in just one God in a world where everyone else believed in many different gods. Muslims, like Jews, often call him 'Our Father Abraham' as well as Ibrahim al-Hanif or Abraham the Believer In One God. The difference comes in the Muslim belief that it was Ishmael (Isma'il) rather than Isaac that Ibrahim was instructed to sacrifice.

This connection to Abraham means that all three religions believe in the same God – although the way they worship and some elements of their religion are different.



It's because of this unity at the heart of our faith that our religious leaders have called on us all to love and respect each other.

'Muslims and Christians together make up well over half of the world's population. Without peace and justice between these two religious communities, there can be no meaningful peace in the world. The future of the world depends on peace between Muslims and Christians. [...] Thus in obedience to the Holy Qu'ran, we as Muslims invite Christians to come together with us on the basis of what is common to us, which is also what is most essential to our faith and practice: the Two Commandments of love.'

AN OPEN LETTER AND CALL FROM
MUSLIM RELIGIOUS LEADERS TO
POPE BENEDICT XVI

'We believe in the same God, the one God, the Living God who created the world ... In a world which desires unity and peace, but experiences a thousand tensions and conflicts, should not believers come together? Dialogue between Christians and Muslims is today more urgent than ever. It flows from fidelity to God. Too often in the past, we have opposed each other in polemics and wars. I believe that today God invites us to change old practices. We must respect each other and we must stimulate each other in good works on the path to righteousness.'

JOHN PAUL II, IN A SPEECH DELIVERED
TO OVER 80,000 MUSLIMS AT A SOCCER
STADIUM IN CASABLANCA: 1989





For those of us who have a religious belief we should listen to what our religion teaches us. As the Qu'ran states, in the end, it is God, not humans who will decide who is right and who is wrong:

'The Jews say: "The Christians have nothing to stand on," and the Christians say: "The Jews have nothing to stand on", yet they both recite the Book. Those who do not know say the same as they say. God will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection regarding the things about which they differ.'

QU'RAN, 2:113



And for those of us who have no faith, we should still live by the international laws which govern us.

'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.'

ARTICLE 1 OF THE DECLARATION
OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

OUR FAITHS AND OUR SHARED FUTURES - DERBY





Five things you can do to build a positive future for Derby

Derby is a city that has a long and proud history. It is also a city that has become the home of people from many nations and faiths.

You are the children of the people who built the city and made it what it is today.

Your challenge is to find the things that unite you and to build a future where everyone has the respect and understanding that they deserve.





1.

If you have a faith, find out more about your religion by talking to the people who know the most: your imam, priest or rabbi

2.

Understand that those who call people to violence are breaking with their faiths – they are not real believers

3.

Get involved with your community – find out more about the people in it and what they believe

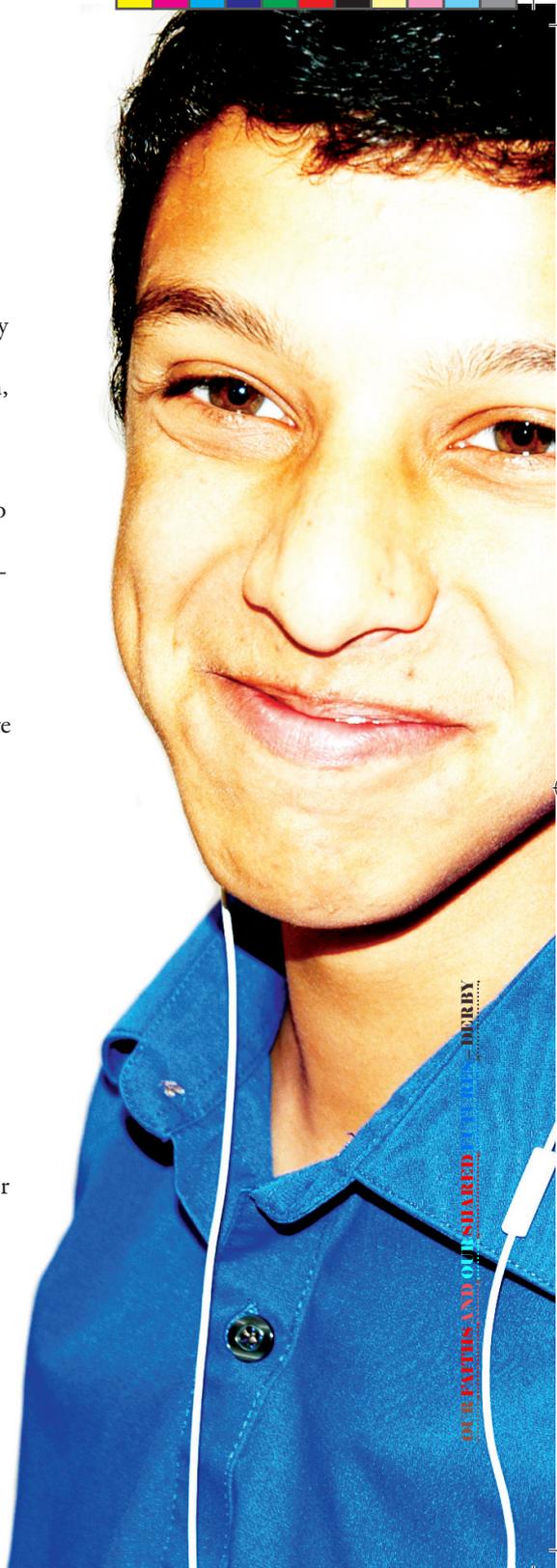
4.

Be proud of what Derby stands for: people of all faiths, of no faith, people from the UK, people from around the world all living together in unity

5.

Take a personal stand against hate, extremism, intolerance, injustice or fear in your community

Peace. Shalom. Salaam.



OLIVER AND OUI SHARED TALKING — DERBY





Want to know more about religious texts and words in this booklet?

For people who aren't familiar with the scriptures and religious figures of Islam, Christianity and Judaism, or some of the other texts that we've used in this booklet, we've put together this list of words and explanations. We hope you find it useful.



Abraham / Ibrahim

Abraham or Ibrahim appears in the religious scriptures of Muslims, Christians and Jews. (These religions are sometimes known as the Abrahamic religions.) He was part of the 20th generation of people after Adam. Abraham entered into an agreement with God: in exchange for faithfulness, Abraham would be blessed with a great many children and descendants and the land would belong to them. God promised to Abraham that through his offspring all the nations of the world would come to be blessed. His first son, Ishmael, is considered to be the father of Arab nations. His second son, Isaac, is considered to be the father of the Jewish nation.

Adam

According to the first book of the Bible, Genesis, Adam is the first human man, created by God from dust. Eve, the first woman, was created using one of Adam's ribs.

Allah

This is the Arabic word for "God". Muslims use this name universally, as do Arab Christians and Jews.

Bible

The religious scripture of Christians. It is made up of two parts – the Old Testament (which is also a religious scripture for Jews) and the New Testament.

Children of Israel

The descendants of Jacob / Israel. Broadly speaking, this name was originally used to describe the Jewish people who lived in the lands of Israel and Palestine. It is now often used to refer to Jewish people no matter what part of the world they live in.



Day of Resurrection

The Day of Resurrection (Yawm al-Qiyāmah) is the day when Allah makes his final judgement on humanity. On this day, all living creatures will die, then all humans will be resurrected, and each one will stand before Allah for His Judgement.

Genesis

The first book of the Old Testament in the Bible. This book describes the creation of the universe, our planet, all life within it, and the first humans, Adam and Eve.

Gospel of St John

A book in the New Testament, the second part of the Bible. St John was one of Jesus's disciples, and in this book he describes the life and death of Jesus. It is the fourth of the gospels, the others being written by Matthew, Mark and Luke.

Gospel of St Mark

A book in the New Testament, the second part of the Bible. St Mark was one of Jesus's disciples, and in this book he describes the life and death of Jesus. It is the second of the gospels, the others being written by Matthew, Luke and John.

Ishmael / Isma'il

The first son of Abraham. His story is told in the Old Testament in the Bible. Muslims believe that he is the father of the Arabic nations and one of the line of prophets that began with Adam and ended with Muhammad. His brother, Isaac, is believed to be the father of the Jewish nation.

Jesus Christ

Christians believe that Jesus was the son of God and the Messiah. His story is told in the New Testament in the Bible. Muslims believe that Jesus was a prophet, but that his teachings are superseded by the Prophet Muhammad who came after him.





Kings of Israel

The Kings of Israel established a kingdom in the land of Israel around 1000 BCE. Their stories are told in the Old Testament. The third and most famous king, David, made Jerusalem his capital city and led many military campaigns against neighbouring people. His son, Solomon, was the last king of Israel.

Land of Canaan

Canaan is an ancient name for a region which includes what is known today as Israel, Lebanon, the Palestinian territories and adjoining coastal lands. It also includes parts of Jordan, Syria and some of the north east of Egypt.

Medina

This city in what is now Saudi Arabia was originally called Yathrib. Muhammad arrived here in 622CE and successfully transformed the city into a peaceful community, ending a long history of warring between the tribes that lived here. Most significantly, an agreement was signed between Jews and Muslims to live peacefully together. Medina was also the site of the first Muslim mosque.

The Prophet Muhammad

Muhammad was the founder of the Islamic religion and is believed to be the messenger and prophet of Allah. He is considered to be the greatest prophet in a line of prophets that began with Adam and includes Abraham and Jesus.



New Testament

This is the second part of the Bible and contains the main elements of Christian scripture as they differ from both the Jewish and Islamic faiths. It consists of 27 books including the four gospels which describe the life and teachings of Jesus, and a description of his future return and the final judgement of humanity in the Book of Revelation.

Old Testament

This is the first part of the Bible and contains the history of the creation of humanity and the creation of the nation of Israel. The teachings within it are held to be sacred by both Christians and Jews alike. However the Jewish version of the Old Testament ends with the Book of Chronicles and the restoration of the temple in Jerusalem. The Christian Old Testament ends with the Book of Malachi and a prophecy that the new Messiah will be born.

Qu'ran

The Qu'ran is the religious text of Islam. Muslims believe it is the literal word of Allah, revealed to Muhammad by an angel. These words were dictated by Muhammad to his followers who memorised them and then wrote them down. The text of the Qu'ran consists of 114 chapters of varying lengths, each known as a sura.

Salaam

The Arabic word for 'peace'. Often used as a greeting.

Shalom

The Hebrew word for 'peace'. Often used as a greeting.

Sunnah

An Arabic word that means 'usual practice'. Muslims use it to describe the sayings and living habits of Muhammad – including his specific words, actions and practices. These have been recorded and handed down through generations. Sunnah is used to define the ways that we should live with each other





and our relationships with government.

Torah

The Torah is the Five Books of Moses and the founding legal and ethical religious texts of Judaism. It is the first of three parts of the Tanakh, the Hebrew Bible, the founding religious document of Judaism. It is divided into five books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. According to Jewish teachings the Torah was created 974 generations (2,000 years) before the world was created, and is the blueprint that God used to create the world. Jews believe that everything created in this world is for the purpose of carrying out the word of the Torah.

Talmud

The Talmud is the recorded teachings and interpretations of Jewish law by generations of Rabbis. It is the basis of day to day living for Jewish people, in the same way that the Sunnah is for Islamic people.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was agreed by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948 at the Palais de Chaillot in Paris. The Declaration has been translated into at least 375 languages and dialects. The Declaration arose directly from the experience of the Second World War and represents the first global expression of rights to which all human beings are entitled. It consists of 30 articles which have been developed and implemented in a number of international treaties, national constitutions and laws since 1948.



What people are saying

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There is a great deal of value in exploring across religious and cultural boundaries how sacred text is understood in our society.

The experience of Coming together to examine similarities and differences inherent in our communities allows us, as individuals and collectively, to better understand our faith traditions, and more importantly, each other

DR PHIL HENRY
DIRECTOR OF THE
MULTI FAITH CENTRE





‘It is very educating and it is good that it mentions that we need to love one another no matter what religion or background’

‘It is good because it is acting for peace and gives values to live in peace’

PARTICIPANTS OF THE
YOUTH INTERFAITH FORUM FOR DERBY

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OUR FAITHS AND OUR SHARED FUTURES – DERBY





Thank you

This booklet could not have been produced without the input, advice, help and assistance of the following people, organisations and communities:

Faith Narratives Committee

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- Allama Mohammed
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Notes





OUR FAITHS AND OUR SHARED FUTURES - DERBY





Peace Shalom Salaam



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