

EduCare

LET'S GROW TOGETHER!



7
2014



UNITY of RELIGIONS

Educational magazine for children, kids, families
and schools with human value focus



Dear Readers,

Most classes today are made up of a bustling group of kids coming from mixed cultures and religious backgrounds. They sit and study together, learn and grow together, and their nearness helps them see how diversity is an outer vestige, that they are equals and the same.

By simply being together they broaden their outlook and learn to understand and adjust to the differences of customs, traditions and faiths, an attitude that is winning as it leaves no scope for prejudice or discrimination to take root. They become friends.

What a wonderful terrain in which to raise awareness and to sow the seeds of unity among religions as a way to build peace and harmony in our world. Where better than in a classroom could we stress how the values that all religions profess are the threads that make the fabric of society stable and strong? Where else than at home should we learn to respect and revere the good morals and right living upheld by all religions? All religions preach that man should love his fellow beings and all creation, and exhort their followers to "be good, do good, see good". All religions encourage values such as brotherhood and compassion, forbearance and forgiveness.

Religions and spiritual pathways support and sustain and offer deeper meaning and sacredness to human existence. To expose our children to their spiritual riches and wealth, promotes the practice of human values in a spirit of unity in diversity, and the development of a good character.

Summary

5 Topic focus

Unity of religions
Quotations - Goals - Dictionary

7 Close up on educare

One Truth, One Love

9 Kid's Study Circle

Unity of religions

11 Let's learn from

Parliament of the world's religions

13 Think about it!

All religions say it!

15 Comics

Marty

17 Stories and legends

The frog and the snake
points for reflection
Practice the precept!
The language of the Heart
The leaf

23 In Class with Human Values

Unity of religions
Unity beyond religions
"let's imagine it"

27 Activity

29 Popular stories and legends

Iran: The Simurgh

35 Activity

Teo and... the golden rule
Many signs... one sun

37 Did you know that?

A cup is a cup

39 Let's make the difference

The One who guides
and loves the many

41 The song

The song of the religions

Winding up

Appendix

Editor-in-Chief

Suzanne Palermo
email: kiba09@sunrise.ch

Editorial team

Branislava Babić
email: bana.bb@love.com
Marina Ciccolella
email: marinaciccolella@teletu.it
Daniel Conci
email: soham.db@libero.it
Borna Lulić
email: borna.lulic@gmail.com
Maria Marena
email: maria.mare@yahoo.com
Olga Emmanuel
email: olga.k.emmanuel@gmail.com
Adrienne Palermo
email: gbpalermo@gmail.com

Design and Layout

Daniel Conci.

Project and Illustrations

Daniel Conci, Suzanne Palermo.



ISSUE 7
4nd trimester 2014

Copyright © ISSE.SE
All rights reserved

Produced and published by ISSE. SE
48018 Faenza RA, Italy
www.isseducare.org
email: secretary@isseducare.org
Director: George Bebedelis
in collaboration with
SaiCare Stiftung Germany
www.saicare-stiftung.de

Unity of religions



Quotations

"...let us, the true followers of Buddha, the true followers of Jesus Christ, the true followers of Confucius and the followers of truth, unite ourselves for the sake of helping the helpless and living glorious lives of brotherhood under the control of truth."
Shaku Soyen- 2004 Interfaith Parliament New Pathways to Peace, Barcelona, Spain

"I always believe that it is much better to have a variety of religions, a variety of philosophies, rather than one single religion or philosophy. This is necessary because of the different mental dispositions of each human being. Each religion has certain unique ideas of techniques, and learning about them can only enrich one's own faith."
Tenzin Gyatso, the XIVth Dalai Lama

"Whatever one's religion may be, everyone should cultivate respect for other faiths. One who does not have such an attitude of tolerance and respect for other religions is not a true follower of his/her own religion. It is not enough merely to adhere strictly to the practices of one's own religion. One should also try to see the essential unity of all religions. Only then will man be able to experience the oneness of Divinity.... Love must bind all believers together."
Sathya Sai



Goals

The topic of unity of religions has the following goals: to learn about the different world religions and to pin point the principles and moral values that they have in common; to promote understanding and respect for the different faiths and their forms of worship; to create a greater sense of community in a spirit of unity in diversity (i.e. brotherhood); to understand one's own spiritual needs and grasp the sense and purpose of spiritual inquiry; to activate ones 'exploratory aspect' – i.e. the energy that moves us beyond what we see and grasp with our senses to fathom the unknown; to kindle love for the Highest.

"As a mother with her own life guards the life of her own child, may you have thoughts to guard all the living things in the world".

Jain Religion



Dictionnary

UNITY OF RELIGIONS BUILDS:

BROTHERHOOD
COOPERATION
RESPECT OF DIFFERENCES
SHARING
UNDERSTANDING
UNITY

LACK OF UNITY OF RELIGIONS BRINGS:

CONFLICT
DISCONNECTEDNESS
DIVERGENCE
GREED
INDIVIDUALISM
PREJUDICE
TOLERANCE



One Truth, One Love

It would be impossible to speak of human values without taking into account the world religions that uphold and foster them in their precept and practice.

Our aim, however, is not to 'teach religion', but to point to the process that religion – any religion – involves, emphasizing the good morals and spiritual principles they all have in common.

All religions believe in and are devoted to a Supreme Being, or higher Good, which has incarnated and been made manifest throughout the ages by messengers, prophets, saints and divine masters. Their focused teachings and inspiring examples of selfless living are 'good company' for our children who learn that by being mindful thoughts and actions can be transformed and purified, and consciously directed towards noble ideals and a more purposeful way of living.

Today, unless backed up by a family devout in its religious beliefs, children lack moral and spiritual guidance and, as a consequence, of essential 'life skills', such as a sense of virtue, the faculty of discerning right from wrong, and, more simply, social respect and responsibility. Furthermore, the allure of glamor and of fleeting pleasures teach our children to put their confidence in self-indulgement and in the acquisition of material wealth, rather than in themselves. The result? They quickly lose track of their truer and more authentic aspect, spiritual in nature,



and become lost and disoriented; for this aspect is 'the needle of the compass'.

To recognize one's spiritual needs and learn to fulfill them is crucial for attaining balanced and harmonious lives, but to do so one needs to first be conscious of this inner self, this spiritual aspect.

A chance to build awareness.

To introduce the different religions and the meaning of spirituality to our children not only fosters unity and brotherhood. It is a chance to build awareness about one's spiritual self, which thrives on growth and expansion, and on giving and forgiving, and when cultivated and refined can reveal the beauty and goodness of the human soul.

The method

Sathya Sai Education in Human Values includes Unity of faiths in its curriculum by integrating Unity of Faith lessons into the value lessons. It aims at developing an understanding of the underlying unity of all major religions, at the same time instilling reverence and respect for all people. The program proposes to enrich the children's hearts with deeper love for their own religious roots as well, and through the acknowledgment of their own faith to foster a profound understanding of the love others hold for their own.

"Whatever one's religion may be, everyone should cultivate respect for other faiths. One who does not have such an attitude of tolerance and respect for other religions is not a true follower of his/her own religion. It is not enough merely to adhere strictly to the practices of one's own religion. One should also try to see the essential unity of all religions. Only then will man be able to experience the oneness of Divinity."

Sathya Sai

Unity of religions

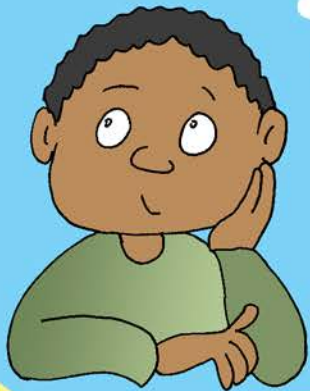
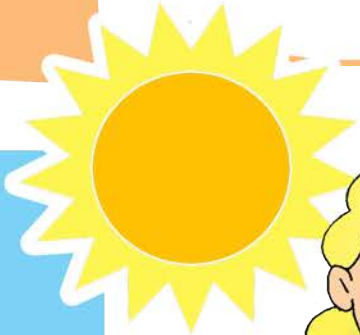


You're right!



IT'S IMPORTANT TO TALK ABOUT UNITY OF RELIGIONS. TOGETHER THEY CAN BRING PEACE TO THE WORLD.

ALL RELIGIONS UPHOLD THE SAME VALUES OF TRUTH AND LOVE, BROTHERHOOD AND COMPASSION.



THEY ONLY SEEM DIFFERENT BECAUSE OF THE DIFFERENT FORMS AND NAMES THEY HAVE GIVEN TO GOD.

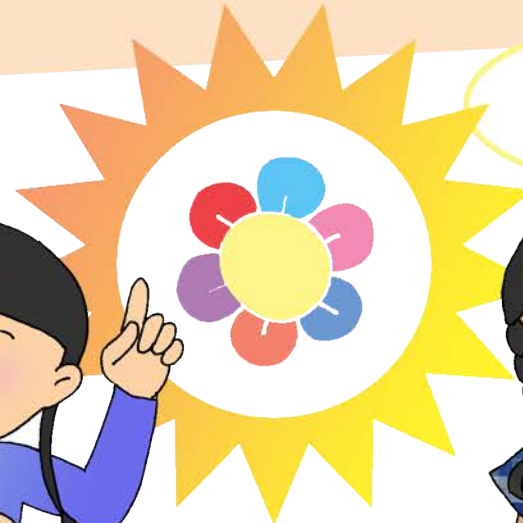


BUT THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD, AND GOD BELONGS TO EVERYONE!

Different forms?
One GOD?



HEY! THEN GOD IS LIKE THE SUN, REFLECTING THE SAME DIVINE LIGHT AND LOVE IN DIFFERENT VESSELS ...



IT'S FRAGRANCE IS LOVE!



RELIGIONS ARE LIKE PETALS OF THE SAME FLOWER.



THEY ALL LEAD TO THE SPARK OF GOD WITHIN US! GOD IS LOVE, AND SO ARE WE!

Did you know that there is a Parliament of the World's Religions?



It was founded in 1893 by extraordinary, inspired people from around the world. They belonged to hundreds of different faith traditions and came together with global leaders to create a better planet. The first World Congress of Religions, which marked an unprecedented gathering and assembly of Eastern and Western spiritual traditions, is when formal interreligious dialogue was born on a worldwide scale!

Since then luminaries and lay leaders who believe that common bonds and prayers transcend spiritual paths and national origin, have continued to meet over the years to promote their ideals of peace and unity, and empower the worldwide interfaith movement. Their vision and mission lie in the love they share for humanity and in the common spiritual and moral values they promote in unison.

During its first Interfaith Congress Swami Vivekananda – a Hindu Monk - stunned the 5,000 assembled delegates by greeting them as 'Sisters and brother's of America', stressing

how the world is one home, one family. He is credited to raising interfaith awareness and his words bear the truth of this ideal until today. "If the Parliament of Religions has shown anything to the world it is this: It has proved to the world that holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world, and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character. In the face of this evidence, if anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own religion and the destruction of the others, I pity him from the bottom of my heart, and point out to him that upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, in spite of resistance:



"Help and not Fight,"

"Assimilation and not Destruction,"

"Harmony and Peace and not Dissension."

Swami Vivekananda, 1893

THE PARLIAMENT, WHICH SUSTAINS AND BELIEVES THAT "THERE WILL BE NO PEACE AMONG THE NATIONS WITHOUT PEACE AMONG THE RELIGIONS" (HANS KUNG, THEOLOGIAN AND AUTHOR OF THE GLOBAL ETHIC) WILL MEET AGAIN IN 2017.





BE GOOD!

ALL RELIGIONS SAY IT!

What do we mean when we talk about being good?

Behaving? Obeying? Doing what others expect us to do? Think about it. What does 'good' refer to? What human values make you feel good and act good?

BEING GOOD MAKES ME THINK OF KINDNESS!

Why do you think that all religions and spiritual paths point to Goodness?

When we are good what kind of relations can we build? How will we speak to people? Will we think of ourselves all the time, or give some time to others?

BEING KIND IS EASY WHEN YOU TREAT OTHERS THE WAY YOU WOULD LIKE THEM TO TREAT YOU!



KINDNESS



speak good



Do good



Think good



See good



Be Love!

TRUE RELIGION IS REAL LIVING; LIVING WITH ALL ONE'S SOUL, WITH ALL ONE'S GOODNESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

The following quotation by an anonymous writer is an eye-opener!

"DEAR TEACHER, I AM A SURVIVOR OF A CONCENTRATION CAMP. MY EYES SAW WHAT NO PERSON SHOULD WITNESS... GAS CHAMBERS BUILT BY LEARNED ENGINEERS... CHILDREN POISONED BY EDUCATED PHYSICIANS... INFANTS KILLED BY TRAINED NURSES... WOMEN AND BABIES SHOT AND BURNT BY HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE GRADUATES. SO I AM SUSPICIOUS ABOUT EDUCATION. MY REQUEST IS TO HELP YOUR STUDENTS TO BECOME MORE HUMAN. YOUR EFFORTS MUST NEVER PRODUCE LEARNED MONSTERS, SKILLED PSYCHOPATHS AND EDUCATED EICHMANNS. READING, WRITING AND ARITHMETIC ARE IMPORTANT ONLY IF THEY SERVE TO MAKE OUR CHILDREN MORE HUMANE."



You can explore outside and inside to understand the world, and yourself!

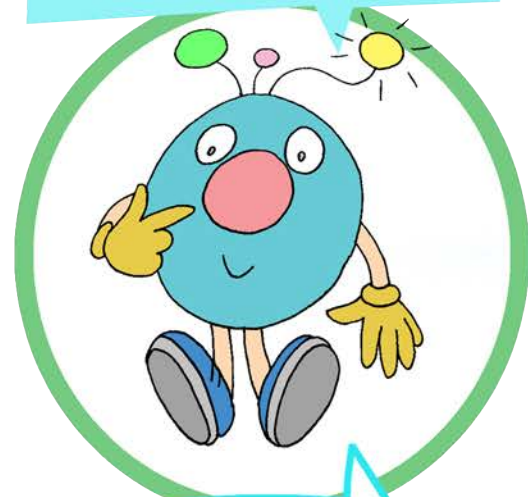
EDUCATION TODAY IS BASED ON OUTER INVESTIGATION. IT TEACHES YOU EVERYTHING ABOUT THE EXTERNAL WORLD LEAVING OUT THE KNOWLEDGE OF YOURSELF. SPIRITUAL EDUCATION IS EDUCATION OF THE SELF. OUTER INQUIRY AND INNER INQUIRY NEED TO WALK HAND IN HAND, BECAUSE SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY (CON-SCIENCE) ARE LIKE TWO HALVES OF THE SAME CIRCLE. THEY NEED TO BE INTEGRATED TO COMPLETE THE CIRCLE OF LIFE! IT'S EASY TO DO WHEN WE MOULD HUMAN VALUES INTO OUR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES AND PROMOTE THEM AT ALL LEVELS OF SOCIETY!



EVERYONE ON PLANET EARTH
FOLLOWS SOME KIND OF PATH...

ME TOO!

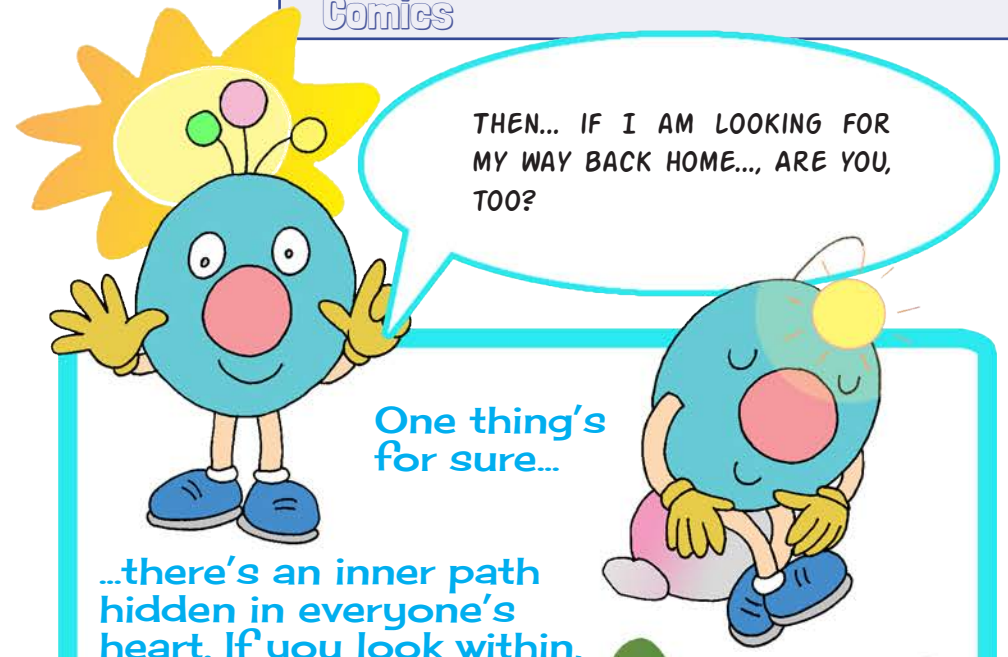
IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE WALKING
IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS ...



... BUT I HEARD THAT THE
PATHS COME TOGETHER.



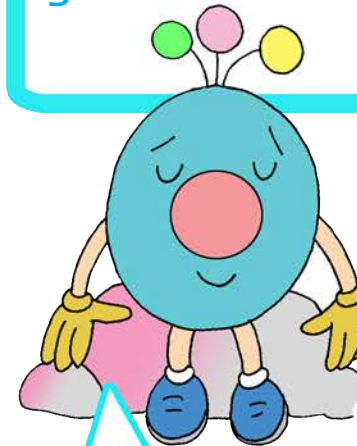
DOES THAT MEAN THAT AT SOME
POINT WE MEET ALONG THE
WAY?



THEN... IF I AM LOOKING FOR
MY WAY BACK HOME..., ARE YOU,
TOO?

One thing's
for sure...

...there's an inner path
hidden in everyone's
heart. If you look within,
you'll find it.



YOUR CONSCIENCE TELLS YOU
WHICH STEPS TO TAKE AND
WHICH ROAD TO FOLLOW!



PATHS MAY BE DIFFERENT
BUT LOVE IS ONE. IT'S
THE PATH, THE MEETING
POINT AND THE GOAL!

THE FROG AND THE SNAKE

Once upon a time there was a little frog that came upon a long, thin, shiny and colorful animal lying across the way.

-Hello, what are you doing there stretched out on the road?

-I'm heating up in the sunlight. I'm a little snake, what are you?

-A frog. Shall we play?

And they played in the jungle all morning.

-I'll teach you to jump, said the frog.

And they jumped around the road all afternoon.

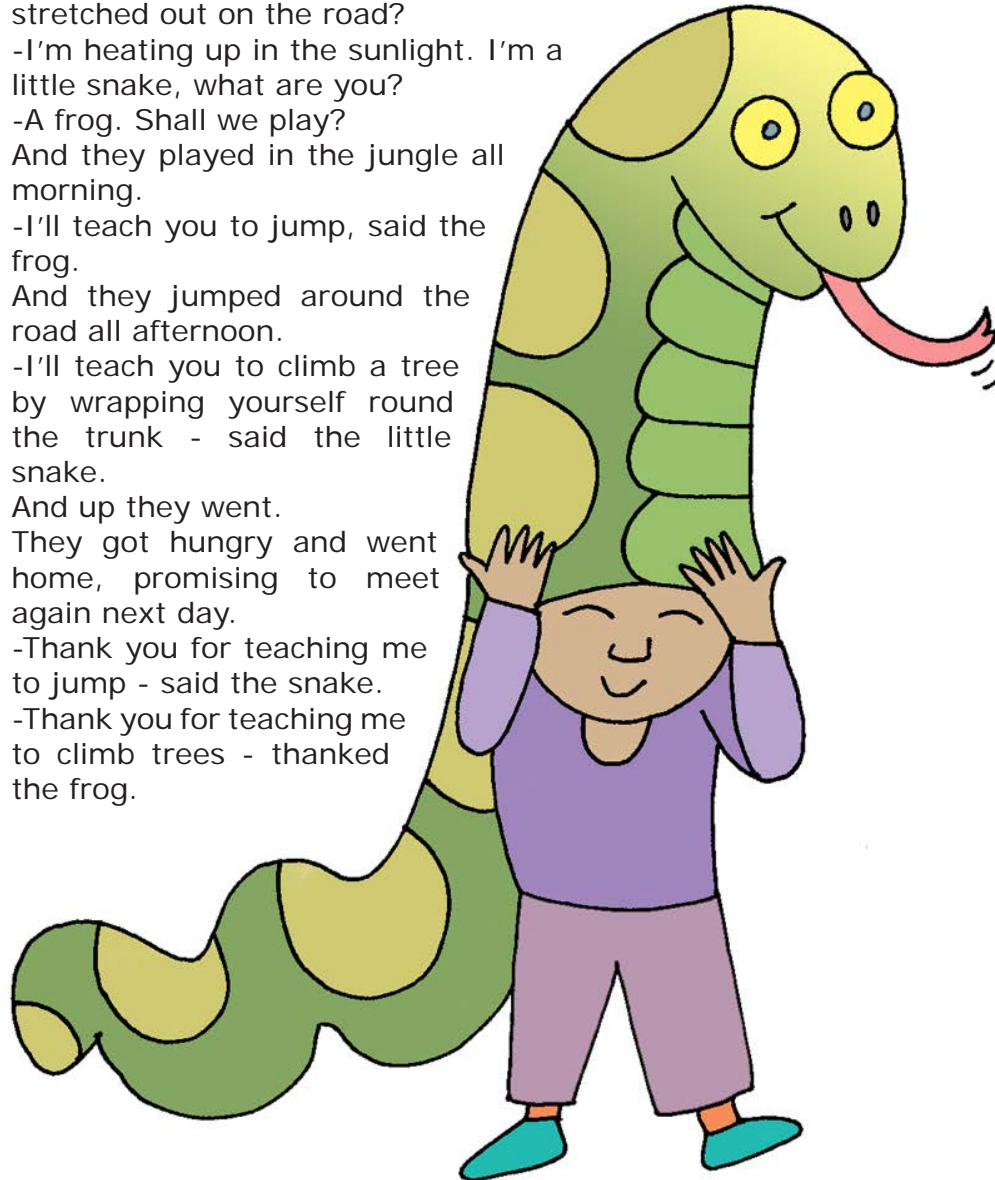
-I'll teach you to climb a tree by wrapping yourself round the trunk - said the little snake.

And up they went.

They got hungry and went home, promising to meet again next day.

-Thank you for teaching me to jump - said the snake.

-Thank you for teaching me to climb trees - thanked the frog.



At home, the frog showed it's Mommy how it could crawl. She asked:

-Who taught you that my son?

-My friend the snake.

-Didn't you know that the snake's family are no good? They are poisonous, you might die. You are not to play with snakes and I want no crawling around either. It is not becoming! - scolded the frog's mother.

At home, the snake too showed her mother how she learned to jump.

-Who taught you that? asked the mother in a fright.

-My friend the frog.

-Don't be silly! Didn't you know we never got along with the frog family? Next time, grab the frog and... bon appétit! And stop jumping! We snakes don't do that.

Next day, they kept to themselves.

-I don't think I can crawl with you today - said the frog.

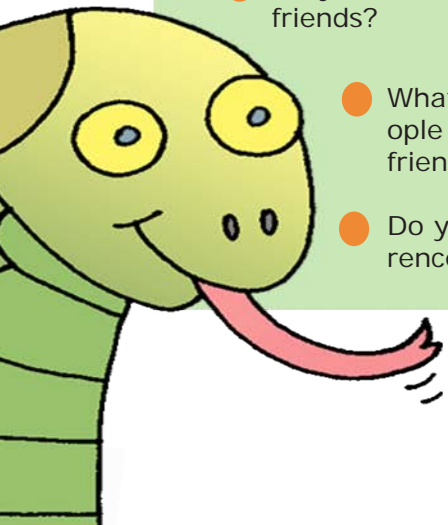
The snake looked, remembered it's mother's advice and thought: if frog comes close, I will jump and devour him. But then the snake also remembered how they were happy the day before and how it learned to jump with frog. Snake sighed and slithered off into the jungle.

From that day on, frog and snake no longer played together, but they lay out in the sun thinking of the one day they played and were really friends.



POINTS FOR REFLECTION

- What kind of relationship did frog and snake have?
- What did they teach each other?
- How did they feel when they were together?
- Did the frog and the snake look alike? And did they feel alike?
- Why were they forbidden to play together?
- Do you know what prejudice is?
- Did you ever decide not to be friends with someone because of the way they looked?
- Do you let other people speak ill of your friends?
- What qualities do you think people should have in order to be friends?
- Do you think that physical differences can drive people apart?



Practice the precept!



Do you know the story of Hussain, the son of Rabbia Malik of Persia? Every morning, he would rise early and go to the mosque to pray, moved out of great diligence and devotion. When he returned home, after his prayers, the servants of the house would still be sound asleep on their mats. Hussain would become very angry at them, to the point that he would grow wild, swearing and cursing them because they were neglecting their religious duties. But one day his father scolded him for using curse words and behaving so unkindly towards the servants. He said, "son, why do you get angry with those poor souls who work so hard that they are too tired to wake up early? Do not wipe off the good results of your adherence to the rule of God by not respecting these innocent slaves. I wish you would rather rise later and abstain from going to the mosque, for now you have grown proud, feeling that you are better and more religious than these men are, and you dare blame them for faults of which they are not even responsible."

The Language of the Heart



Once a ship had to make a forced halt near some tiny islands along the African coast. Among its passengers was a bishop who noticed some movements on one of the islands. Eager with zeal he decided to use the time profitably.

He reached the island in a small row boat and found that only three men lived there. On inquiring, the bishop found them completely ignorant about religion. When asked how they remembered the Lord, they said: "We lift our hands to Heaven and say: "We three, You three, have Mercy on us."

The bishop was appalled by this barbaric practice, so he proceeded to teach them the Lord's prayer, which would help them save their souls. A whole day of intensive practice followed, and by evening they could manage to recite the prayer. Satisfied the bishop returned to the ship, just as it was getting dark.

No sooner had he reached the ship, he saw a bright light coming his way, coming closer and closer. To his amazement he saw three men running on the water straight towards him. On boarding the ship, gasping for breath, they fell at his feet and begged him to teach them the prayer again, for they had forgotten it.

The bishop was dumbstruck. Gathering courage, and with great humility, he requested them to return to the island and continue their old practice of lifting their hands to Heaven and reciting: "We three, You three, have Mercy on us."

The leaf

It was dark, that night. As dark as a dark night can be. No moon, no star shining over the great vast valley. The Masters sat in silence. They had assembled to pray for the health and happiness of mankind, and for harmony on Mother Earth.

"Today the world doesn't need much." Said the first Master.

"They are looking for new order, new education, new systems and maybe even new religions". Said the second.

"The remedy lies in a new mind...", said the third.

"... and a heart- filled with holiness", said the fourth.

The other Masters sat quietly, and then they all prayed together. Silently, they opened their hearts to the Highest of the High, whom they had all humbly served in the human world. They knew that the power of Divine Love could make any change happen.

Their prayers united and rose to the sky on the wings of celestial music, and soon the night was studded with stars.

The next morning, a morning as bright as a morning can be, when people awoke they found a golden leaf laying on their pillow. Words like 'calm', or 'peace' and 'loving kindness' were inscribed on each leaf, and their hearts tingled when they thought of these words. They knew they would have brought something good to their lives.

Time went by and one day the golden leaves blew away. They had served their purpose. The Earth people had taken them to heart, transforming their minds and filling their hearts with holiness. So world peace became the new order, human values the basis of a new social system and the new religion was love.

"Whoever cultivates love in the field of his or her heart is a true Christian, a true Sikh, a true Hindu, a true Muslim. In reality, he or she, is a true human being and a true Master."

Sathya Sai



UNITY OF RELIGIONS

Unity Beyond Religions

"Let's *imagine* it"

Until now, I had never treated the theme of 'unity of religions' in class. It is not an easy topic to handle, and is generally the concern of the teacher of Religious Studies, when this subject is offered within the school curriculum, which is the case in Italy.

To talk about religions, naturally implies a knowledge of the fundamentals of their different cultural and historical backgrounds. However, the main aim of our topic is to recognize that there is no substantial difference among religions, as there is no substantial difference among people when it comes to ethics and the distinction between good and evil. If I were a teacher of Religious Studies, I would begin by tracing a road-map pointing to the heart of the topic. As I teach in multi-racial classes with a majority of Catholic students, I would need to find a strategy capable of unifying, in place of dividing; an approach that, instead of leading us from the centre to the periphery, would softly lead us from the periphery to the centre, which is ultimately our objective.



Starting points to work out in class

I would ask the students:

- If they have ever associated with people from different religions;
- If they have ever read any passage or book considered 'holy' by other cultures and religions;
- If they have ever visited the places of worship of other cultures and religions;
- If they believe that there are common values or moral reference points in all cultures and religions.
- To define those factors that, according to them, unite, and those that divide.

And, last but not the least, what **they** actually **think** of the matter.

Follow-up

- 1) Students or groups of students could be involved in doing research on the topic, by gathering texts or pages on themes related to a selected religion, to be later shared with the class and the teacher;
- 2) Each student/group presents their work as if he/they actually belonged to the religion they have explored;
- 3) An 'observers and/or supervisors group' records the basic points of each presentation and at the end of phase 2, draws its conclusions, emphasizing the common traits. By so doing, the students will see for themselves - and demonstrate - how the differences are



not substantial but only formal, the result of different cultural backgrounds, geographical areas and traditions.

The teacher's note: it would be very interesting to take note of how personal and creative the students' conclusions can be. Their ideas are never banal, and it is always striking to observe how fresh, original and varied they can be. Each personal contribution is not only enriching for the overall research, but 90 out of 100% of the students surprisingly hit the target: that is, they grasp the meaning for which the research was launched in the first place.

A further step The famous song, "IMAGINE", by John Lennon, needs no presentation. Everyone, even the younger generation, knows it. Its lyrics point to deep levels of ethical and spiritual meaning. The leitmotiv of 'unity' is stressed from the very beginning of the song: *Imagine there's no heaven*. This could seem blasphemous, but it is not, as above us there is *only sky* - a poetical image for a world in which differences do not exist - unified by the sky, which is one and the same *for all the people living life in peace*. The text of this song can be used by any teacher for a variety of purposes; any verse can give way to a lesson. "Imagine" ends by saying something near and dear to most of us, something that most students deeply feel and believe in, i.e. 'there is one

religion, that of our heart". Lennon's vision was of 'no *religion too*' as a consequence of *the brotherhood of man for all the people sharing all the world*, while the final theme of the **dreamer** deserves our attention, considering that other famous dreamers have had a deep impact on the history of humanity (King, Gandhi, Mandela).

Final step

The didactical module would require a series of lessons, the number of which would depend on the suggestions and proposals of the students themselves. An ideal way to conclude could be the choral performance of the song "Imagine". There's nothing like a choral representation of the concept of unity.

When I was working on this article and drafting this tentative plan, I mentioned the topic to my students, who lost no time to turn into 'little artists'. The caption of their drawing (The rainbow is made up of so many different colours"), shows how they immediately grasped the feeling and meaning of the topic, reaching the very heart of the matter. Any teacher concerned with a Human Values approach can easily discern, that whatever value-based topic may be brought to the students' attention, is readily understood by them. This understanding springs forth, clear and fresh, as it is already part of them. The image of the rainbow describes the 'unity' of the 'different colours', representing the





various religions united by one common path

Once a 16-year-old student, referring to the unity of faiths, said: *"Although I don't follow any religious belief myself, I think we **should respect** the beliefs of other people."* I feel, that when we reach this kind of response, we are certainly on track, keeping in mind that our goal is not to introduce an alternative to religion at school, but to nurture our students so that they may grow and blossom according to what is already inside them: the Human Values we are all made of.



Malala Yousafzai was recently awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. In her historical UN address (12 July 2013), she says among many other outstanding things:

"...even if I had a gun in my hand and he (the terrorist) would stand in front of me, I would not shoot him. This is the Compassion which I have learnt from Mohammed, the prophet of Muslims, and Jesus Christ and lord Buddha..."

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3rNhZu3ttIU>).

I showed the video to my students and it had a great impact on them, thanks to Malala's strength of character, the way she highlighted unity among religions, and above all, thanks to her young age, which makes her 'one of them'.

M. Ciccolella

Petals of the same flower

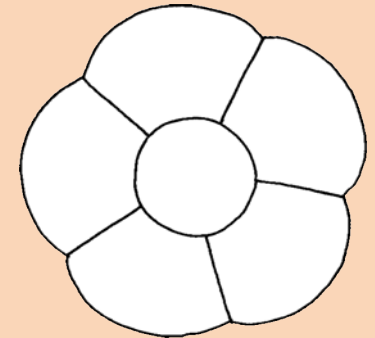
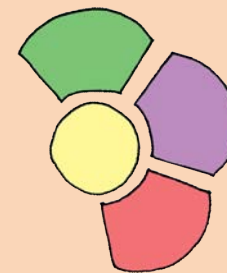
ACTIVITY

RELIGIONS ARE LIKE PETALS
OF THE SAME FLOWER!

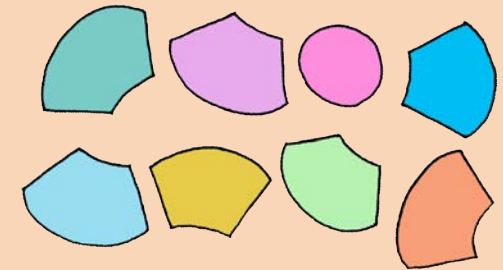


You can use the model or draw your own flower, with as many petals as you want! Write down the names of the various religions on the petals. Then chose a value for the centre of your flower.

You can have fun by making a collage, too!



WE'RE MAKING RAINBOW
FLOWERS!



Talk about the different religions with your friends and why they belong to the same flower!

The Simurgh

HI!
MY NAME IS NAKISSA.
I LIVE IN IRAN.
I AM IRANIAN.



*"One, two, three, follow me!
Come and see my country!
Read the story, for young and old,
of a precious feather made of gold!"*

Once upon a time thousands of birds lived together in the woods. They were very poor and... always mad about something, or jealous about something, or fighting about something!

But one day a very old bird, the oldest bird of the population, went to them and said:



*"You silly birds! You cry and shout,
but do not know what life's about!
You silly birds! You live and die!
But none of you know really why!
Your life is precious, your time is too!
To make it so is up to you!"*

"Have you forgotten the Simurgh?"
asked the old bird.



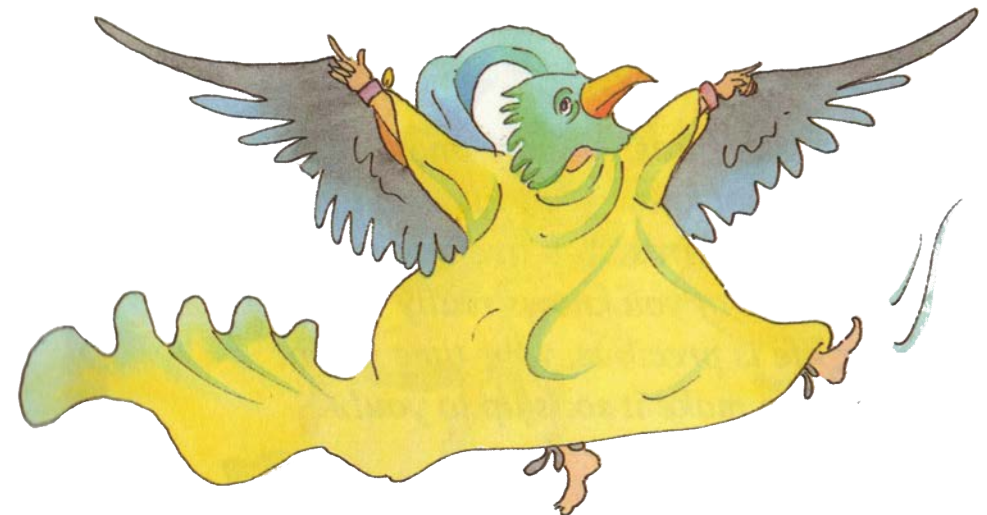
"What is the Simurgh?", asked the other birds.

"The Simurgh is a golden bird. It shines like a thousand suns and sings a song of peace and love. And it reminds us that we must not waste our time in silly

behaviour!".

"We are always fighting.", said the birds.

"We are always mad about something! Our lives are full of misery! Perhaps we are wasting our time. What can we do?"





"Look for the Simurgh!" ,
said the oldest bird. "And
fill your lives with happi-
ness!"
"Impossible!", said a black
crow. "It doesn't exist any-
more!
It disappeared thousands
of years ago!"



"No!", said the old bird. "The Simurgh exists! Look! Here is
one of its golden feathers!"
"Oooh! "Where does the Simurgh live?," asked a lark.
"At the end of the world, beyond the seven dark inaccessible
oceans!"
"But it's impossible to cross the seven oceans!"
"Nothing is impossible!", said the old bird.



*"North, South, East and West!
Fly high! Fly your best!
You will succeed in any test,
and find the Simurgh's nest!"*



So the birds divided themselves
into four groups. Some flew
North, some South, some East,
some West. For years and years
they searched for the Simurgh...
Many of them gave up along the
way...
"This is an impossible dream!",
cried a seagull.
"It's a waste of time to search for
something that doesn't exist!",
cried a swallow.
But some did not give up at all.
"We will find the Simurgh!", they
said.
"We must not give up!"

*"Don't give up,
no matter what your task is!
You can make it only if your try!
Only if you try and try!
Only if you do your best!"*

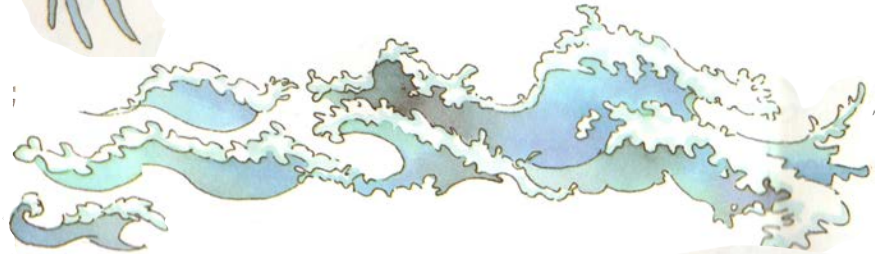
When they finally reached the
seven oceans, the birds were
only three hundred.
"We don't like the look of those
black oceans!", cried a pigeon.
"We're going back."



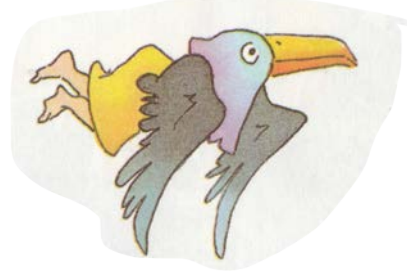
"Three hundred birds up in the sky...
Now two hundred birds are flying high!
Two hundred birds up in the sky...
now one hundred birds are flying high!"



One hundred birds flew over the oceans.
"We see no sign of the Simurgh!" they
said. And some of them were so dis-
couraged that they also left.



"On hundred birds up in the sky...
Now fifty birds are flying high!
Fifty birds up in the sky...
Now thirty birds are flying high!"



Only thirty birds were in the sky
when the old bird said: "If you
want to find a pearl you must
dive deep into the ocean!"

The birds understood the mes-
sage and dove down into the first
ocean. Then into the second, the
third, the fourth, the fifth, the
sixth and the seventh. Finally
they reached the kingdom of the
Simurgh, tired and exhausted.



"Look!", creid a dove. "There are mirrors
everywhere! But no one is here!"
"Look better!", whispered the old bird.



The birds looked around and wherever they looked
they saw their own image reflected to infinity!
"Look at our feathers!", said a stork.
"They are gold! Then... we are the Simurgh!"



"A pearl, a diamond, a heart of gold,
Are in all living creaturese, young and old!
Look for them! Be brave and bold!
It's the oldest story ever told!"



Teo and... The golden rule

"HI! OUR CLASS DID SOME GREAT RESEARCH AND LEARNED ABOUT ALL THE VALUES THAT THE WORLD RELIGIONS HAVE IN COMMON! THIS GOLDEN RULE IS A PRECIOUS RECIPE THAT ALL OF THEM UPHOLD AND RESPECT!"



Hinduism: This is the essence of morality: do not do unto others that which if done to you would cause you pain.

Judaism: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Buddhism: Treat all creatures as you would like to be treated.

Confucianism: Try your best to treat others as you would wish to be treated yourself, and you will find that this is the shortest way to benevolence."

Cristianity: Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

Islam: No one of you is a believer until you desire for your neighbor that which you desire for yourself.

Jainism: "In happiness and suffering, in joy and grief, we should regard all creatures as we regard our own self." Lord Mahavira, 24th Tirthankara.

Bahai Faith : "And if thine eyes be turned towards justice, choose thou for thy neighbour that which thou chooseth for thyself."

Sikhism: "Don't create enmity with anyone as God is within everyone." Guru Arjan Devji 259

Taicism: "Regard your neighbor's gain as your own gain, and your neighbor's loss as your own loss."

Zoroastrianism: "Whatever is disagreeable to yourself do not do unto others."

CARRY OUT YOUR OWN RESEARCH!

MANY SIGNS, ONE SUN



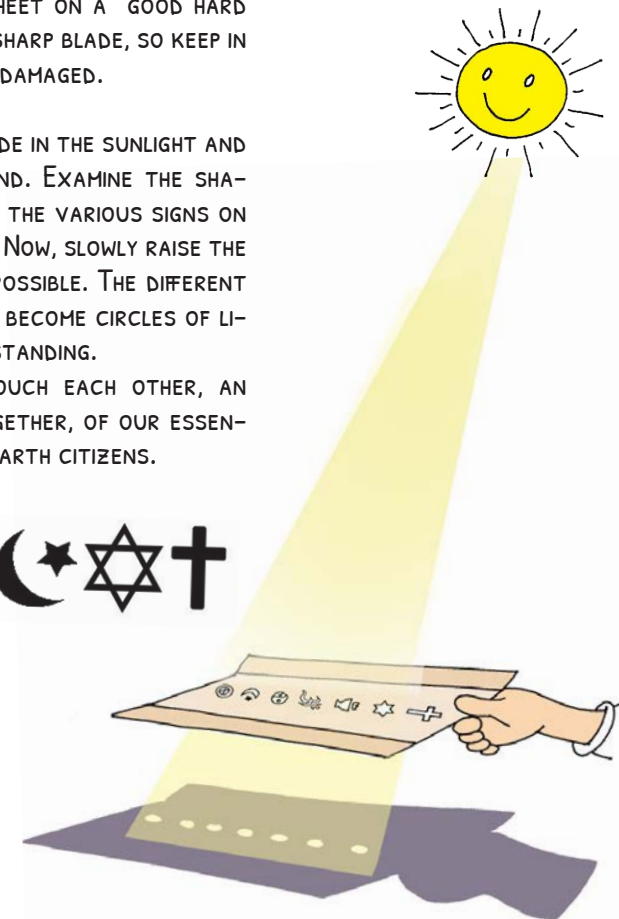
TAKE A CARD SHEET AND DRAW THE BELOW SYMBOLS ON IT. CAREFULLY CUT OUT THE SYMBOLS WITH A SIMPLE UTILITY KNIFE. YOU CAN FIND THESE IN JUST ABOUT ANY CRAFTS STORE. BE SURE TO PLACE YOUR CARD SHEET ON A GOOD HARD BACKING. YOU WILL BE CUTTING WITH A SHARP BLADE, SO KEEP IN MIND THAT WHATEVER YOU USE WILL BE DAMAGED.

ONCE THE SYMBOLS ARE CUT GO OUTSIDE IN THE SUNLIGHT AND HOLD THE CARD CLOSE TO THE GROUND. EXAMINE THE SHADOW CAST BY THE CARD. YOU WILL SEE THE VARIOUS SIGNS ON THE CARD PROJECTED ON THE GROUND. NOW, SLOWLY RAISE THE CARD TOWARDS THE SUN AS HIGH AS POSSIBLE. THE DIFFERENT SIGNS ALL BECOME THE SAME! THEY ALL BECOME CIRCLES OF LIGHT, CIRCLES OF OUR BROADER UNDERSTANDING. AS YOU GO HIGHER, THE CIRCLES TOUCH EACH OTHER, AN EXPRESSION OF UNITY, OF COMING TOGETHER, OF OUR ESSENTIAL ONENESS AS HUMAN BEINGS AND EARTH CITIZENS.



WHY DOES THIS HAPPEN?

THIS IS NOT A MIRACLE. IT IS BASED ON THE SCIENCE OF OPTICS. THE CIRCLES OF LIGHT THAT YOU SEE ARE ALL THE IMAGES OF THE SUN. THEREFORE, "MANY SIGNS, ONE SUN". THEY ARE ROUND BECAUSE THE SUN IS ROUND. THIS EFFECT CAN ALSO BE SEEN IN A PINHOLE CAMERA.



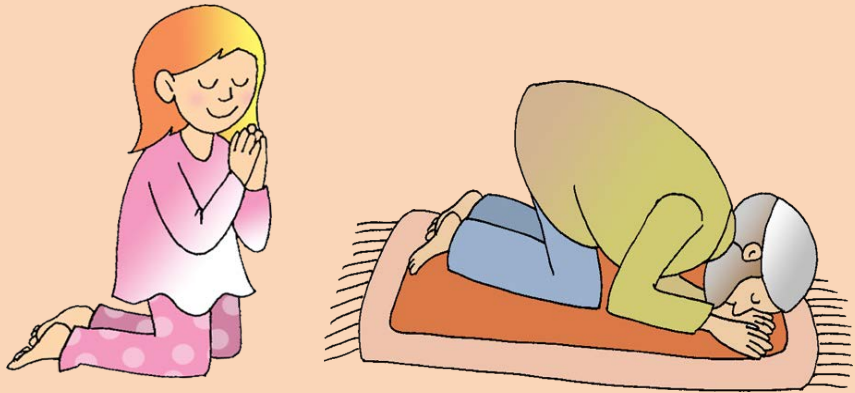
DR. VIVEK MONTERIO/COURTESY
-WWW.ARVINDGUPTATOYS.COM

A CUP IS A CUP!

Rituals and worship are important parts of all religions. The gestures, words and objects that are used may be different, but all forms of worship are meant to kindle feelings of respect, reverence and humillity, and to help people cultivate faith in divinity.

Christians kneel and join their hands to pray. Muslims bow and use a prayer carpet. Hindus sit in the lotus position.

To remind oneself of all the good things that God represents, things like perfect all-knowing wisdom, boundless love and grace, people sometimes use images, statues and symbols.



Candles, incense and flowers are symbols of purity, light and beauty. When the flowers fade we are reminded that things come and go, and that life in our body doesn't last for ever. Religion makes us think about the meaning of life and death. It also reminds us that we can improve the quality of our lives and other peoples' lives by being more patient and more forgiving, more kind and caring. Religions teach us to love all and serve all.



The word religion - from the latin word relig-are - means to bind and re-unite. And that's what religions are meant for! They aim at re-uniting man to God! And they all know that God is Pure Love.



People who do yoga join their thumbs to their index fingers. It reminds them that they are one with God. The thumb represents God, while the index finger represents themselves. When the index finger is bent under the thumb it is a sign of surrender. The meaning of yoga is "union" !



An Englishman, a Frenchman, an Indian and a Chinese were all looking at a cup. The Englishman said, "That's a cup." The Frenchman answered, "No it's not. It's a tasse." The Indian said, "You're both wrong. It's a katora" And the Chinese laughing at the others said, "What fools you are. It's a Bei." "I can prove that it is a cup". said the Englishman. "My dictionary says so." "Your dictionary is wrong," said the Frenchman. "My dictionary clearly says it is a tasse." The Chinese scoffed at them. "My dictionary is thousands of years older than yours, so it must be right. It is for sure a bei" The Indian argued that it could only be a katora. While the four men were squabbling and arguing with each other, a Buddhist walked up and drank from the cup. He then turned to the others and said, "Whether you call it a cup, a tasse, a bei or a katora, a cup is meant to be used. Stop arguing and drink, stop squabbling and refresh your thirst."

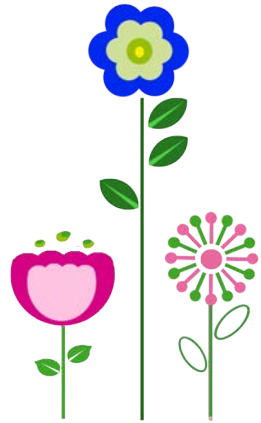
A story that says it all!

The One who guides and loves the Many



Bees and wasps in a meadow

Imagine a beautiful meadow, full of various kinds of flowers in many different colours. Now imagine that this meadow is the world, and the flowers a multitude of religions. What would you prefer to see? Just one kind of flower, or a bouquet of the most varied and colourful ones? If religions were these flowers, then people could choose either the role of bees or wasps. Both of them are in the midst of flowers, and both collect pollen, but only bees will turn it into honey. Its nectar would yield the sweetness of good, happy and moral living. Where is God in our tale? He can be associated to Mother Earth, who nourishes the flowers, the wasps and the bees, and to the Sun, who imparts his light and warmth on all.



Wise advice becomes religions

Throughout human history, prophets and saints recorded the word of God, or the words of great Teachers who walked the earth, such as Jesus, the Buddha and Krishna. This is how the Holy Scriptures came to be, giving rise to the world religions. We could somehow say that religions were brought about to transmit God's advice to people, to tell them how to live a better, happier and more meaningful life. Although religions came into existence at different times and in different places, they all teach man the same



values: to speak the truth, act in the right way, live a moral life, believe in eternal life, pray and help others, and most of all, to love God and your neighbour.

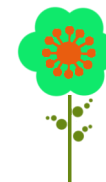
Many differences with one thing in common

Muslims worship in mosques on Friday, Jews in synagogues on Saturday and Christians in churches on Sunday. Muslim prayers are said by imams, Hebrew prayers by rabbis and Christian prayers by priests. Muslims pray to Allah, Jews to Yahweh and Christians to Jesus Christ. Muslims read the Qur'an, Jews the Torah and Christians the New Testament. Religions are different because of the language they use, the architecture of their temples, the clothes they wear and the manner in which their rituals are observed; but there is one thought that echoes behind all of these differences: „God, my Lord, please, help me!“.



Unity in diversity

Other elements are present and identical in all the world religions, too. Among these: trust in God, belief that man has a soul, that there is life after death, that there is a reward or a form of punishment after this life, belief in angels, in the equality of humankind, the observance of holy days, sites of pilgrimage,





The One in the Many



spiritual communities, fasting and prayer. Finally, all religions have a mosaic of saints and wise people, who reveal the steps to holiness and God-realisation.

The most important facet of religions is that regardless of the fact that we call God by different names, and that we celebrate and invoke God in different languages, different places and in different ways, there is only one divine Principle present in them all! This Principle is our own divine origin, which is why we say that God made man in his own image. Indeed, it is time to recognise this truth and start living in accordance with it. This is the meaning of religion and the very purpose of life.

Borna Lulic

The One and the Many

*Stars are many, but the sky is one.
Religions are many, but God is one.
Prayers are many, but their goal is one.
God's names are many,
but God answers to each and everyone.
God is like a mother, who always comes running
when summoned by her child.
God is the Father of all, and people,
despite their faiths, are brothers and sisters.*

The song of the religions

Reflections

The unifying note of every religion is love. Love is like a golden thread that runs through the sacred traditions, uniting them all. Its cohesive force binds them together. The result: one religion; the religion of love.

When we consider that the word religion derives from the Latin word religare, which means to reunite or become one with, it becomes easy for us to grasp how religions aim at leading us to a reunification with God. And when we realize that the true form of God is Love, the highest and purest love we can imagine, we will see how the only way to realize unity with this divine principle is through love.

Love is the force that moves the Universe, "and the sun and the stars". Its power of attraction is mighty and magnetic, and there is nothing superior to this power of love. Sooner or later we all turn to this vibrant magnet and embark on a spiritual path. Guided by the love in our hearts, we know that one day we will become one with the heart of Love.

Love expresses itself differently in each religion, and manifests as 'love for thy neighbour as thyself', as compassion, purification, righteousness (dharma), as devotion and surrender. Surrender to nothing else but love.

These qualities and virtues have their origin in love, and are nurtured by love. Love is all-embracing, all-powerful and all-knowing, and is the guiding and guardian light of us all.

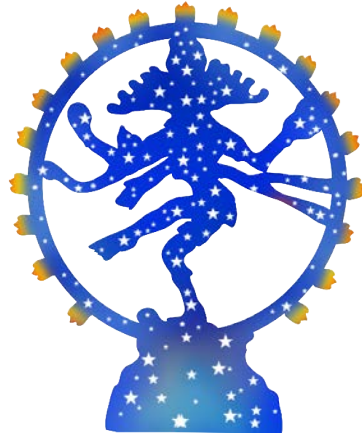
"There is only one religion. The religion of love".

Sathya Sai

Hinduism

Listen to the sacred Om
resounding in your hearts.
Its sacred sound is a song of love,
and is where divinity starts.

Listen to this secret call,
throughout the universe.
Its love divine embraces all,
the lost and the averse.



Buddhism

Remember the wheel
of cause and consequence,
Of deed and destiny;
a divine order and sequence.
Remember the wheel of dharma
that guides it all;
Be calm and content
and you will never fall.



Judaism

Hear Israel the Lord,
our Lord is One.
One God, One Love,
a divine sum.
What you do not like,
do not do to your neighbour.
If you follow this law,
the Lord, His Love,
will carry the weight
of your labour.



Confucianism

To care for others,
and less for yourself,
is an ideal to live by:
true human wealth.
At home and in town,
if you do things right,
you will always be wise,
and never lost in the night.

Zoroastrianism



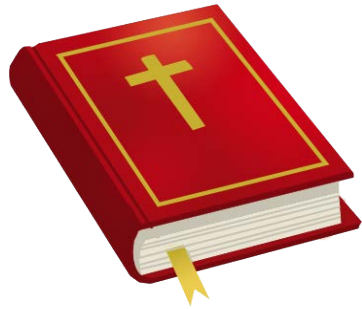
Offer all your bitterness in the sacred fire, the petty frustration of
wordly desire. Emerge grand, great, godly and good, by sacrificing
what is wrong and what you know you should. 'Tis a sacrifice prompted
by God's own love, celebrated and cheered in heaven above.

Tao

Mother nature comes and goes,
And shows us how to be,
along the way to happiness,
in rhyme with harmony.
And on the way two rivers flow,
and by them two ends meet,
from two to one, a wondrous sum
love's universal feat.



Christianity



When your ego in battle on the spiritual field is sacrificed, and on the cross dies. You are set free and like an eternal angel your soul is uplifted and flies. This is the victory of love over death, delusion, confusion and pain. It is God's victory, the truth of all truths, and your eternal gain.

Islam

Be faithful like a star at night, steady and pure, in the cool moonlight. Fixed in the firmament of the soothing embrace, of a love, so divine, beyond human space.



Bibliography

- *Education in Human Values Magazine, Serra - Cidade da Gente*
- *Hello! English - n.45 R.C.S. Libri & Grandi Opere. E.Bussolati, D.Conci, S. Palermo, per Tavi.*
- *How do you spell God = Hart and Gellman, Morrow Junior Books, N.York, 1995.*
- *Reflections of Divinity – the voice of world religions, Prashanti Nilayam, 1999*
- *Stories for Children 1 – Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust – Publications Division.*



WINDING UP

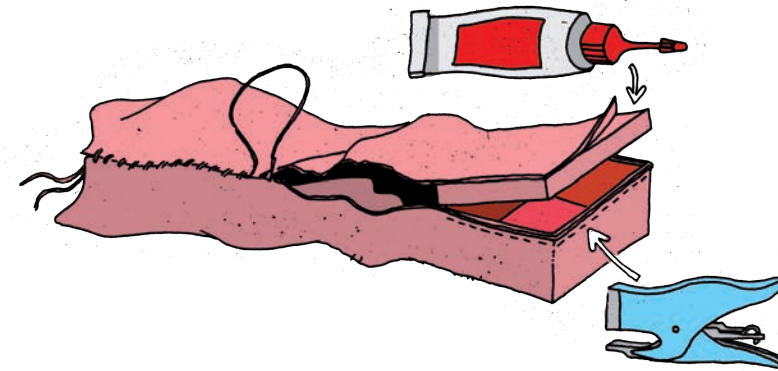
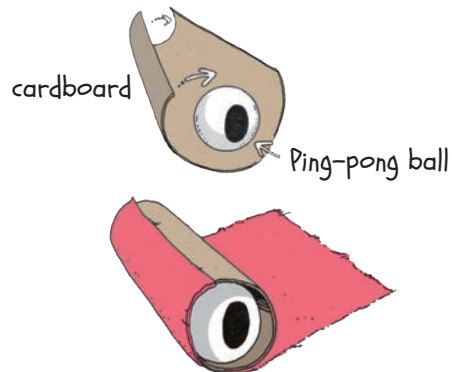
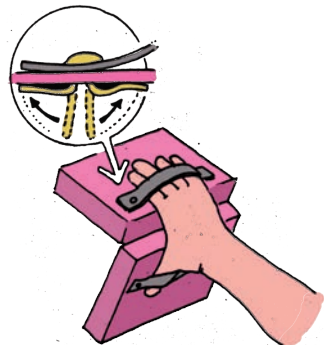
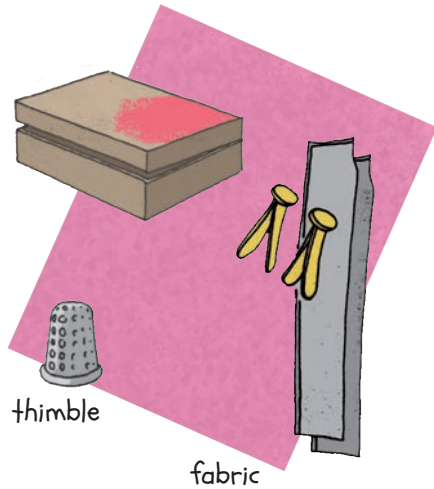
Religions are like petals of the same flower and facets of the same diamond. They guide us towards a deeper and more soul-felt connection to life. All of them refer to a higher power of pure love and compassion, and point to the ideal of Divine Nature. An ideal which is not impossible to attain when we learn to know that God is our best friend; that he is the Best within our very own selves. If all religions would walk together, as friendly partners in the glorious task of nourishing the moral and spiritual life of all people, they would mark the way towards world peace. The study of the different faiths and religions and the acknowledgement of spirituality, is of paramount importance for our children. To learn to respect the wisdom inherent in all sacred teachings, to recognize not only ones material needs but spiritual needs as well, and to abide by the rules of good conduct, are essential parts of growing up.

Religion	Founder	Holy scriptures	Symbol
Hinduism	Enlightened teacher (the Avatars, gurus, yogis and rishis)	The Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad-Gita	AUM
Judaism	Moses	Torah, Talmud, Kabala	David's Star
Taosim	Lao Tzu	Tao Te Ching	Ying-Yang
Buddhism	The Buddha	The Dhammapada, The Tripitaka	The Wheel
Confucianism	Kung Fu-tse	The Five classics: the Classic of History, The Classic of Changes, Book of the Records, Spring and Autumn Annals	The Bell
Zoroastrianism	Zoroaster	The Gathas and Avestas	Fire
Christianity	Jesus Christ	The Bible	The Cross
Islam	Mohamed	Qur'an	Star and Crescent

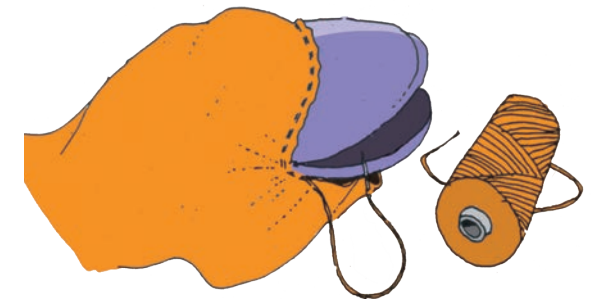
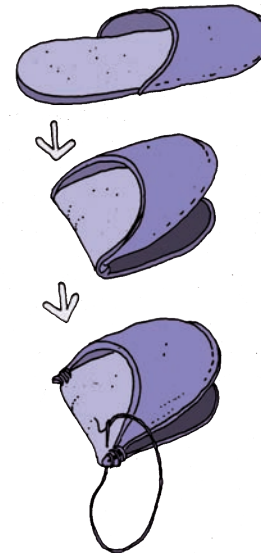
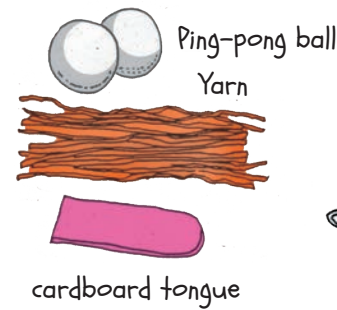


Visual aids to help you be more fun and creative in story telling, are offered as an appendix in the Educare magazine. Step by step explanations will show you how to realize the different kinds of support involving the children in their making and in the art of story telling. You can photocopy the illustrations you find in this magazine or use them as a model for the children to refer to when making their own.

Doll- puppets with a movable mouth



... made out of slippers



In the next issue



When trees are young they need some kind of support to help them grow straight and strong. Their trunk is fragile and their roots haven't had time to create a solid and safe basis under the soil. If no one ties them to a pole the little plants will bend over and break with the first gust of wind. For sure they will grow crooked! Children need the right kind of support to help them grow straight and sturdy too. This kind of support is called discipline. No poles or sticks to be tied to, but rules to follow and limits to observe. Discipline and love walk hand in hand and are the topic of our next issue!