

<b>Syllabus Aim</b>	To identify the characteristics of communities of faith / churches (Syllabus p8)
<b>Syllabus Objectives</b>	As a result of studying this section students should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• recognise the importance of respecting their own beliefs and the beliefs and convictions of others</li><li>• understand the implications of sectarianism in Ireland and elsewhere</li><li>• be aware of the ecumenical movement, especially in their own community</li><li>• understand the meaning of inter-faith dialogue</li></ul> (Syllabus p12)
<b>Key Concepts</b>	Tolerance, sectarianism, ecumenism, inter-faith dialogue.
<b>Description of Content</b>	Exploring the relationships between different communities of faith and particularly between different Christian denominations in Ireland. Looking at some examples of conflict as a result of religious difference, in Ireland and elsewhere.
<b>Methodology</b>	A variety of methodologies are used including self-assessment activities, discussion, concept formation, interpretation of data.

## Procedure

### Introduction

Every human being is unique and individual. No two people in the world are exactly the same. Not even the most identical twins. They too have individual traits and differences. Factors other than how people look and act make people different from one and other. These include things like nationality, age, sex, language and religion to mention a few. Complete the exercise WE ARE ALL DIFFERENT from “Show Us The Way” The New Christian Way Series 2, p.116 to explore some of the things that make the students in the class different from one another. When finished the students share their answers with a partner.

Discuss with the whole class:

1. What things had you in common with your partner?
2. What differences did you come across?
3. Did any of the answers you had in common / different surprise you? Why?

*Student Assignment:*

Finish the following sentence: From doing this exercise I learned ...

### Respecting difference

Read the story on THE RAINBOW PEOPLE from W.J. Bausch “Storytelling, Imagination and Faith” p.152 - 154. Discuss: What do you think is the meaning of the story?

Or THE RED ROSE CLAN from “Show Us the Way” -The New Christian Way Series 2, p.118 - 119

Discuss:

1. What happened in the beginning of the story?
2. What were the rules like when Roaleen was growing up?
3. By what bug was Rosaleen bitten? What did she discover?
4. Why were the Elders so cross with her? What did they say to her?
5. What happened when a new Elder came to rule?
6. How did Rosaleen, Rosanne and Pinky get along when they first met, and then when they got to know each other better?
7. Explain the last line ‘All of us roses, red and white, pink and yellow, are better and richer since we discovered one another.’
8. What do you think is the meaning of the story?

*Student Assignment:* One of the ways in which people can differ is in their religious beliefs, whether they believe or not. In pairs come up with a response to the following question: What can we learn from this story about respecting our own beliefs and the beliefs and convictions of others?

Or In pairs / small groups produce a collage which depicts either of the following statements:  
Difference is good. Difference should be respected.

Or Divide the class into two groups to play the Rafa Rafa simulation game.

(“Values and Visions”- Sally Burns & Georgeanne Lamont)

When the students in each have had the experience of what it is like to be excluded from a group, conclude by discussing with the whole class:

1. What were the similarities / differences between the ambassadors view of the group and the characteristics out of which the group was operating?
2. What did you like about the activity?
3. What did you dislike about the activity?
4. Did anything surprise you?
5. What real-life situations are similar to this one?
6. Have you ever been in a situation like this?
7. How did you feel then?
8. Do you know anyone else who has been or is in this situation?
9. What have you learned from the activity?

Distribute copies of a picture with composite images e.g. The Gateway Series 1- p.16

Ask students to spend time in silence looking at the picture.

Give students time to describe:

What do you see in the picture?

How many people do you see in the picture?

How would you describe the people? - What age, gender, mood etc.?

Note all answers on the chalkboard and discuss:

1. Were your responses similar / different? Why?
2. How do you know your answers are correct?
3. Could this be a picture of two people with shadows, rather than four people?  
(Profile other ways of seeing this picture to those suggested by the students)
4. What does this teach us?

## **Sectarianism**

Distribute *Student Work: SECTARIANISM* asking students to list the religious groups found in Ireland, and the ones, which they themselves have encountered.

When the students have completed this part of their Student Work take feedback and profile on the chalkboard their answers to the following questions:

- What are the names of the major world religions and denominations that are found in Ireland?
- Which of these religions and denominations have you encountered?
- Which of them are to be found in your area?
- Which of them have you heard about on the news?
- Why were they on the news?

Give students time to complete the Research Assignment on *Student Work: SECTARIANISM* and in pairs / small groups of 5 or 6 get students to discuss and answer the following questions:

1. What evidence do you have that there is/is not sectarianism in your local area?
2. What evidence do you have that there is/is not sectarianism in other parts of the country?
3. Why are people sectarian?
4. What makes a person attack another person because of sectarianism? What might make them turn their attitude into action?

Take feedback from the students on their pair / small group discussion.

*Student Assignment:*

Using a copy / photograph of sectarian graffiti, ask them to answer the following questions:

1. Where in Ireland would you be most likely to see graffiti like this? Why?
2. Explain how this is an example of sectarianism.
3. Why does sectarianism occur?

Or Distribute *Student Work*: CASE STUDIES and give the students time to read it. Ask one student to read each Case Study aloud and discuss the questions with the whole class. Record students' responses on chalkboard and summarise the main points in each of the case studies. Point out the common elements in the three case studies: People, dislike or hate other persons because of their religious beliefs.

Discuss: If all these three case studies were put together on a computer file what could that file be called? (Remind students of common elements) Once students have come up with/been given the word "sectarianism" ask them to take down the following definition in their copies: Sectarianism is hatred of another person because of their religious belief.

*Written Assignments:*

1. Write a paragraph about each case study explaining how it is an example of sectarianism.
2. Choose one example of sectarianism from a newspaper/magazine. Describe what happened in your own words and explain how it is an example of sectarianism.
3. Draw a picture/write a story about sectarianism.

### **Examples of conflict as a result of religious difference in Ireland and elsewhere**

*Using Student Work*: CONFLICT & RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCE

Read *Sean's Story* and discuss:

1. What religion is Sean?
2. What religion are most people in his area?
3. What happened at the first roadblock?
4. What did the man intend to do with the brick?
5. Why did the men at the roadblock treat Sean and his father this way?
6. What happened at the second roadblock?
7. Give one example of sectarianism in the story.
8. Give an example of one person in the story that was not sectarian?
9. Where in the story does sectarianism almost lead to conflict?

Or Read *Rachel's story* and discuss:

1. What religion are Rachel's next-door neighbours?
2. What religion are the other families on the estate?
3. Why had shots been fired through the front windows of the next-door neighbours' house?
4. Give one example of sectarianism in this story.
5. Where in the story does sectarianism lead to conflict?

*Research Assignment:*

- Look through the newspapers or a history book.
- Identify two situations where conflict resulted from religious difference in Ireland or elsewhere.
- Describe what happened using either words or pictures.

### **Ecumenism**

Today there are over 250 Christian churches recognised by the World Council of Churches. Since the first Christians came together after the death of Jesus, a number of divisions have occurred, causing groups to separate and set up their own church. Ecumenism is the name given to the efforts that Christians make to understand and respect each other, and to grow more united. One group of people who are involved in Christian unity meet every year in a place in France called Taizé.

Read *Student Work*: THE TAIZÉ COMMUNITY or TAIZÉ - Teach Me Your Ways -The Light of the World Series 3 (Gill and Macmillan) Or Refer students to video / pictures of TAIZÉ

Discuss with the whole class:

1. What activities take place during the day in Taizé?
2. What efforts are the people making to understand and respect each other?
3. What do they try to do in their own parish / community when they return?
4. Taizé is a good example of ecumenism in action. Explain.

*Written Assignment:*

Write 3 sentences about the Taizé Community that shows that it is an example of an ecumenical community.

Or Write a paragraph explaining how Taizé is a good example of ecumenism in action with reference to:

- The activities which take place in Taizé as seen in video / photos.
- The efforts that the people make there to show understanding and respect for each other.

*Table Quiz:* Organise the students into groups of four and give each group a number. Give each group time to make an answer sheet for recording their score.

Table Quiz - Questions Round 1:

1. Taizé is a small village of brothers where?
2. Approximately how many brothers are there in Taizé?
3. What religion are they?
4. Where do they come from?
5. Write down the wrong one in the following statement: The brothers live together in joy, luxury / wealth and mercy.
6. What age group of people mainly visit Taizé each year?
7. How many times a day does the community worship?
8. How long do visitors usually spend in Taizé?
9. Which of the following is nearer to the number of people who visit Taizé each year  
a) ten b) thousand c) tens of thousands
10. What are visitors encouraged to do when they return home?

Round 1 Answers:

1. Eastern France
2. 100
3. Christian: they come from many different Christian denominations
4. Everywhere: 25 countries and 5 continents
5. Luxury / wealth: their lifestyle is very simplistic
6. 17 -30
7. Three times a day
8. A week
9. Tens of thousands
10. Take back what they have discovered and put it into practice in their parish, work, study, family.

Round 2 Questions:

11. Who started Taizé?
12. When did it begin?
13. What age was he?
14. What did he start doing there?
15. In what year did Taizé take its place as part of the great monastic family?
16. Life in Taizé turns around three things: Work, Hospitality and what?
17. How many times a day does the community pray?
18. Is the prayer very Charismatic or Meditative?
19. What is the name of the Church where worship takes place?
20. Why was this Church extended?

Round 2 Answers:

11. Brother Rodger
12. 1940
13. 25 years old
14. Offered shelter to political refugees (mainly the Jews fleeing from the Nazis) and to work out the call to follow Christ in community, a community that would attempt to live the Gospel call to reconciliation day after day
15. 1949
16. Prayer
17. Three times a day
18. Meditative: singing and silence have always played a large part
19. The Church of Reconciliation
20. To accommodate the increasing number of visitors, especially from Eastern Europe

Round 3 Questions:

21. Who supports the community (i.e. with money and food)?
22. What do they do with donations?
23. The type of lifestyle they live is called Extravagant or Simplistic?
24. Name one other place in the world where the brothers can be found today.
25. Everyone is welcome in Taizé, name two groupings which have visited Taizé?
26. Give two reasons why so many young people visit Taizé.
27. What is a 'pilgrimage of trust on earth'?
28. Name one place where such a pilgrimage has taken place?
29. Name two church leaders who have visited Taizé?
30. Which denomination do each of these belong to?

Round 3 Answers:

21. The community supports itself by its own labour
22. They refuse any donations for its own life (they accept donations towards accommodation and food from visitors, which they have used themselves). They do not accept family inheritance
23. Simplistic
24. Africa, Asia, North & South America
25. Jewish refugees in World War 2, French war orphans, German prisoners of war, Spanish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Rwandan and Bosnian families uprooted from their lands. Young adults from practically every country in the world from a great many different church backgrounds or from none at all, Adults, children and families
26. They are searching for some meaning. Searching for commitment. Searching for a deeper relationship with God. They go to meet other Christians
27. A pilgrimage of trust on earth involves meetings and visits on every continent
28. Paris, London, Prague, Budapest, Vienna, Rome, Munich, Johannesburg, Ohio, Manila, Madras in India
29. Pope John Paul II, Dr. George Carey, the Archbishop of Canterbury
30. Catholic, Anglican

There are a number of groups in Ireland who are working for a greater understanding and respect between Christians in Ireland.

They include: The Corrymeela Centre - Rostrevor Christian Renewal Centre - Columba House in Derry etc.

Discuss: Why do you think ecumenism is needed so urgently in Ireland?

*Research Report:* Produce a one-page report about the work that is done by these groups and how it contributes to greater understanding and respect among Christians in Ireland.

*Or* Produce a one-page report about the ecumenical activities that take place in your own locality.

### *Inter-faith dialogue*

The major world religions and Christian churches have a number of fundamental elements in common. They also have differences. Inter-faith dialogue is when the similarities and differences that exist between major world religions and Christian denominations are embraced with genuine openness, so that communities of faith can learn from each other. For example the documents of the Second Vatican Council referred to inter-faith dialogue. Read *Student Work: INTER-FAITH DIALOGUE*.

Discuss:

1. What is meant by inter-faith dialogue?
2. What is the benefit of inter-faith dialogue?
3. What is meant by the phrase ‘enter with prudence and charity into discussions and collaboration’?
4. Why does the Second Vatican Council call for such an approach to discussions and collaboration?
5. Is inter-faith dialogue asking people to change their religion? Give reasons for your answer.

*Student Assignment:*

Finish off the following sentence: Inter-faith dialogue means ...

*Resources which teachers have suggested include:*

A New Commandment Gill and Macmillan Series, p. 111.

All About Faith 2 Gill and Macmillan Series, p. 91-94.

Believe The Good News Gill and Macmillan Series, p.198-201.

Community of Faith Veritas, p. 58-60; 101-102.

Community of Hope Veritas, p.19-21.

Cyberclass Manuel, pages 1-7 and Scholastech Disk 3.

Power To Hurt Justice and Peace Commission, p.11-18.

Show us the Way New Christian way Series 2 Veritas, p. 120-121.

Storytelling, Imagination and Faith by W.J. Bausch , Mystic Connecticut, Twenty Third Publications, 1984.

The Gateway Series 1, In God’s Image p.16.

Values and Visions, Sally Burns & Georgeanne Lamont.

### *Student Work: SECTARIANISM*

<i>Name the religions and denominations that are found in Ireland.</i>	<i>Which of them have you heard about on the news?</i>	<i>Why were they on the news?</i>

Sectarianism is hatred of another person because of their religious belief.  
Circle a number below, which best expresses, your opinion on the following statements.

1	=	I agree totally with this statement					
2	=	I agree with this statement					
3	=	I am undecided about this statement					
4	=	I disagree with this statement					
5	=	I disagree totally with this statement					
There is no sectarianism in Ireland			1	2	3	4	5
There is no sectarianism in my neighbourhood			1	2	3	4	5
The only sectarianism in Ireland is in Northern Ireland			1	2	3	4	5
There is a lot of sectarianism in Ireland			1	2	3	4	5
People have died because of sectarianism			1	2	3	4	5
People have killed because of sectarianism			1	2	3	4	5

### *Student Work: CASE STUDIES*

My name is Jenny. I am twelve years old. My aunt Jane is married to a Protestant named George. My uncle Jerry will not talk to Jane because she is married to George who is a Protestant. Jerry has three children and Jane has four. Some of them go to the same school. Jerry won't let his children talk to Jane's children. Neither will his wife Fidelma because she knows Jerry would go mad.

I think that Jerry is wrong to behave like this. He wouldn't like it if a Protestant ignored him. My mother tries to get Jerry to talk to Jane, but he won't hear of it. I hope that he will change his mind because he is setting a bad example for his children.

*Questions:*

1. Who is Jenny annoyed with?
2. Why is she annoyed with him?
3. Why does Jerry behave in this way?
4. Why does Jerry dislike Jane's husband, George?

My name is Mike and I am thirteen years old. I am in First Year in secondary school. One day my friends and I were sitting on the wall outside my house when my neighbours who are Jehovah Witnesses passed by on their way to church. Some older lads who were sitting nearby started to jeer at them because they wore suits to their church. They called them hurtful names. My friends and I told the older lads to "stop" but they wouldn't. They kept on shouting horrible names after my neighbours. I was amazed. I couldn't believe how nasty these lads were to them, and all, because my neighbours have different religious beliefs.

*Questions:*

1. What happened outside Mike's house?
2. Why did the older lads call Mike's neighbours hurtful names?
3. How do the older lads feel about Jehovah Witnesses?
4. Why do they feel this way about Jehovah Witnesses?

My name is Anne. I am thirteen years old. When I was in Third Class in primary school a girl called Miriam joined my class. She came from Iran and she was Muslim. One day she showed us how she prayed. She showed us the mat that she used for prayer. At break-time someone got her prayer mat, cut it in half and scribbled, "We don't want any of your religion here". I knew the girls who had done this and I told them to leave her alone. However, because of what happened Miriam decided to go to a different school.

*Questions:*

1. What happened when Anne was in Third Class?
2. Why did some girls destroy Miriam's prayer mat?
3. How do these girls feel about Miriam?
4. Why do they feel that way about her?

(RE Dept. St. Leo's College, Carlow)

## *Student Work:* **CONFLICT & RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCE**

### *Sean's Story:*

Sean is twelve years old and lives in a small country village on the outskirts of a larger town. His family is one of the few Catholic families living in the area. Most of the other families are Protestant. This is his story.

It was the 12th of July and Daddy and I were coming from our village in his works van to visit my Granny. As we came around a corner into the town we noticed a roadblock and a group of local Protestant men guarding it. We drove up to the roadblock and Daddy called to one of the men to let us through. They were very angry and refused to let us go on, so we just sat in the van and Daddy switched the radio on.

One of the men left the road block but soon came back with a huge brick in his hands and Daddy had to move the van back quickly because the man was coming straight for us and would have thrown the brick at the windscreen. We turned around and took a side road but there was another roadblock only this time it was a big tree that had been cut down. Daddy had gone very quiet and he drove up to the roadblock without saying a word. One of the men on this roadblock was a Protestant neighbour of ours and he made some room for us to get through but we had to drive right up on the grass. The other men called us "bleedin' Taigs" and were angry that the van got through but we drove to Granny's.

### *Rachel's Story:*

Rachel is twelve years old and lives in a small estate in a larger town. Apart for her next-door neighbours, all of the families living in this estate are Catholic. This is her story:

My mum and Dad had gone away to the city to see my cousin and I had to stay at my friend's house for the night. The night before had been a very sad night because my cousin was dying and I was not myself.

My mom phoned early the following morning, very upset, because she had seen the news on T.V. that shots had been fired through the front window of our next-door neighbours' house. Luckily, no one was hurt. Our next-door neighbours decided to move. The shots had been fired to frighten them away from the area.

(RE Dept. St. Leo's College, Carlow)

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## *Student Work:* **THE TAIZÉ COMMUNITY**

For many people the name 'Taizé' evokes a certain style of singing that has become popular in more and more churches. For some, the word also suggests gatherings that attract large numbers of young adults. Still others are aware that Taizé is in fact ecumenical community of brothers located in a small village in eastern France. Today the Taizé Community is composed of around a hundred brothers. They come from different Christian traditions, from over twenty-five countries and every continent. They make a life commitment to live together in joy, simplicity and mercy as a "parable of community" a sign of the Gospel's call to reconciliation at the heart of the world.

Around the brothers, tens of thousands of people, mainly between the ages of 17 and 30, come each year to spend a week returning to the roots of the Christian faith. They join in the community's worship three times a day, listen to Bible introductions on the sources of the faith, spend time reflecting in silence, and meet in small sharing groups. Spending a week listening to people one's own age from countries as diverse as Lithuania, Canada, the Philippines and Portugal, all of whom are sharing deeply about their searching and their struggles to live out their faith, can be a life-transforming experience for those who take part. And the community encourages participants to return home and to take back what they have discovered and put it into practice in the concrete conditions of their life their parishes, their work or study, their families. There has never been any question of creating a "Taizé movement" or my formal structure, which might get in the way of people's commitment at home.

Taizé began with one man, Brother Roger. In 1940 he came to what was then a semi-abandoned village in Burgundy, the region his mother's family had originated from. He was 25 years old, and he had come there to offer shelter to political refugees, notably Jews fleeing the Nazi persecution, and to work out a call to follow Christ in community, a community that would attempt to live the Gospel call to reconciliation day after day. A few years later his first brothers joined him and in 1949, several of them committed themselves for life to celibacy and to material and spiritual sharing. Taizé thus took its place as part of the great monastic family.

Life at Taizé, following the monastic tradition, has always turned around three main axes prayer, work and hospitality. The three times of prayer provide the basic rhythm of the day. It is a very meditative form of prayer in which singing and silence have always played a large part. Since 1962 this worship has taken place in the Church of Reconciliation, recently more than doubled in size to accommodate the increasing numbers of visitors, especially from Eastern Europe. The community has always supported itself by its own labour, refusing any donations for its own life, even family inheritances. If this leads to a certain simplicity of lifestyle, that is yet another way to make the Gospel apparent, to focus on the essential.

In addition, for a long time now some of the brothers have gone to live in situations of poverty and division throughout the world, as a concrete sign of solidarity. Today, there are brothers living, praying and working in Africa, Asia and North and South America. From 1962 on, brothers began visiting Eastern Europe, to be close to those who were trapped within their borders.

Taizé has always been a place of welcome for victims of war and injustice. If during World War 11 that meant political refugees, afterwards it meant French war orphans and German prisoners-of-war. In later years, the community has offered a haven to Spanish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Rwandan and Bosnian families uprooted from their lands. But for the past thirty years, a more short-term welcome has been extended to young adults from practically every country in the world and from a great many different church backgrounds or from none at all. Adults come too, and families with little children, so that no one is excluded. Since the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, Central and Eastern Europeans have made up a significant percentage of those present in Taizé each week.

What attracts so many young people to Taizé? This question keeps on recurring, and the brothers have no answer. Those who come are very different among themselves, but all are searching for meaning, for commitment, or for a deeper relationship with God in prayer, for a chance to meet other Christians their own age, for an experience of community rooted in the Gospel. Many are active in churches at home; others find it difficult to find a church where they feel welcomed and listened to. This wish to help people find ways of continuing their journey of faith, of being creators of reconciliation in the places where they live led the community to launch, together with the young, a "pilgrimage of trust on earth" involving meetings and visits on every continent. In the context of this "pilgrimage," large gatherings regularly bring together many in the churches of Europe and the other continents. At the end of 1994, over 100,000 young adults from throughout Europe met in Paris for five days of prayer and sharing; they were offered hospitality by churches and families in Paris and the surrounding area. Such meetings were previously held in such cities as London,

Prague, Budapest, Vienna, Rome and Munich. Similar events have taken place in 1995 in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 1992 in Dayton, Ohio, USA, in 1991 in Manila, and in 1988 in Madras, India. Church leaders come to Taizé as well. On October 5, 1986, the community welcomed Pope John Paul 11. As he said in his address to the young people present, "Like yourselves, pilgrims and friends of the community, the Pope is just passing through. But you pass through Taizé as you pass close to a spring of water." In August 1992, Dr. George Carey, the Archbishop of Canterbury, spent a week in Taizé with 1000 young Anglicans from all the dioceses in England. Since then, other church leaders have followed his example in coming to Taizé with their young people. Throughout the year, it is possible to come to Taizé for a week of prayer, personal reflection and sharing with others from around the world. People arrive on Sunday and stay till the following Sunday. Accommodation is very simple: there are beds for adults, but space is limited. Everyone is asked to contribute a modest amount to defray the costs of meals and lodging. Taizé is located in eastern France, south-west of Paris, north of Lyons, due west of Geneva, Switzerland, between the towns of Chalon-sur-Saone and Macon.

(RE Dept. Davis College, Mallow, Co. Cork)

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### *Student Work: INTER-FAITH DIALOGUE*

It is widely recognised that most of the major world religions and church denominations have a number of fundamental elements in common e.g. all believe in the existence of a divine being of some sort. They also have differences that can be of benefit if used it to widen minds and broaden perspectives. When the similarities and differences that exist between religions and church denominations are embraced with genuine openness, the communities of faith can learn from each other. This is what is meant by inter-faith dialogue. Inter-faith dialogue is encouraged by the various churches and religions. The Documents of the Second Vatican Council state for example: 'The Church, therefore, urges her sons to enter with prudence and charity into discussions and collaboration with members of other religions. Let Christians, while witnessing to their own faith and way of life, acknowledge, preserve and encourage the spiritual and moral truths found among non-Christians, also their social life and culture.'

(Second Vatican Council –  
Declaration on the Relation of the Church to non-Christian Religions –  
Paragraph 3)