

Module 4: Life of The Church - Church Life - Dialoguing with other non-Christian Faiths

Work With It

Using the previous three journal reflections, create a scenario where there is misunderstanding between a non-Catholic student and a Catholic in a school setting. For example, you might imagine a scenario where a Catholic teacher is unsure of how to respond to a faith concern by a non-Catholic student or a non-Catholic student is unsure how to respond to a faith concern by a Catholic student or teacher. The scenario might be based on an actual experience or completely hypothetical. You may consider such issues as accommodating people with dietary restrictions, prayer times, religious articles of clothing, particular moral codes, statements of belief, religious articles such as crosses and turbans, religious celebrations such as the mass or non-Catholic religious holidays, scriptural differences, etc. In the spirit of ecumenism or inter-religious dialogue, what steps would you take to resolve the uncertainty?

Portfolio icon Place a copy of your scenario and resolution in your Portfolio.

The scenario I would like to share demonstrates misunderstanding between non-Catholic students, and a teacher in a Catholic school setting. This is a true scenario involving myself, two grade 9 students of Muslim faith who were siblings, and members of the school cross country team. During one of our practices in September I noticed and recorded the siblings under performing. Next day at practice I noticed and recorded the same decrease in performance. I took the siblings aside after practice to gather information on what factors could be contributing to the decrease in performance. They reported their bodies were just tired. Next practice, the siblings were absent. They did not report their absences to me or their team mates. I called home to speak to parent / guardian but unfortunately the father did not speak english. The next day the siblings were absent from practice again and their team mates were beginning to express frustration and disappointment in the siblings lack of commitment to the team. I finally received some clarification into the situation when I contacted the siblings grade 8 teacher and she informed that their father is a devote practicing Muslim and encourages his children to practice Ramadan. When I spoke to the siblings they expressed their disappointment in their performances, missing practices and letting the team down. The siblings also expressed perceived negative emotions from their team mates creating an unaccepting atmosphere.

Looking back at my previous journal reflections and readings on non-Catholic students in a Catholic school setting I began to realize how central my role is in facilitating oneness amongst the differing faiths of my students. In the Message for the End of Ramadan, the Vatican (2014) states, we perceive the importance of promoting a fruitful dialogue built upon mutual respect and friendship. Inspired by our shared values and strengthened by our sentiments of genuine fraternity, we are called to work together for justice, peace and respect for the rights and dignity of every person. In order to do so we as a Catholic educators should be informed of non-Catholic faiths in order to build and promote an inclusive environment for student engagement.

In addition, in the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, Pope Paul VI said “No foundation therefore remains for any theory or practice that leads to discrimination between man and man or people and people, so far as their human dignity and rights flowing from it are concerned.” It is vital teachers and administrators of Catholic schools not discriminate against any people, whether it be by sex, race, social class or any other.

Module 4: Life of The Church - Church Life - Dialoguing with other non-Christian Faiths

Furthermore, in moving forward to attempt to establish resolution of mutual respect and solidarity between students of Catholic and Muslim religions in this situation, I would recommend using *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct* as a guideline for action.

Table 1. Recommendations and Actions based on *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct* as a guideline for action.

Recommendation	Action
<p>study the issues set out in this document and where appropriate formulate guidelines for conduct regarding Christian witness applicable to their particular contexts. Where possible this should be done ecumenically, and in consultation with representatives of other religions.</p>	<p>In this situation, I did not have any understanding of what is Ramadan and therefore I was not able to facilitate immediate resolve due my lack on knowledge and understanding.</p>
<p>build relationships of respect and trust with people of all religions, in particular at institutional levels between churches and other religious communities, engaging in on-going interreligious dialogue as part of their Christian commitment.</p>	<p>I would share my understanding of Ramadan with the Catholic students of team and draw similarities between Ramadan and Lent to assist in building relationships of respect and trust</p>
<p>encourage Christians to strengthen their own religious identity and faith while deepening their knowledge and understanding of different religions, and to do so also taking into account the perspectives of the adherents of those religions. Christians should avoid misrepresenting the beliefs and practices of people of different religions</p>	<p>Misrepresentation of misinformation can be the cause of great descension between people especially in our youth. It is my job to uphold the Ontario College of Teachers Ethical Standards to demonstrate; care, commitment, integrity and respect, through continuing to development my professional practice by always having a growing mind set, where I am open to learning from and about others in the environment in which we live.</p>
<p>Summary: Through the awareness of what is Ramadan, sharing it's teachings with the team we will be able to encourage all team members of Catholic and non-Catholic faith to appreciate each others religion creating an caring inclusive environment based on understanding, respect and trust. As the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue Message for the End of Ramadan states, "May our friendship inspire us always to cooperate in facing these many challenges with wisdom and prudence. In this way we will help to diminish tension and conflict, and advance the common good. We will also demonstrate that religions can be a source of harmony for the benefit of society as a whole.</p>	

References

Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (n. d.). *Circular Letter to the Presidents of Bishops' Conferences on Religious Education in Schools*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20090505_circ-insegn-relig_en.html 28 February 2016.

Module 4: Life of The Church - Church Life - Dialoguing with other non-Christian Faiths

Tauran, J.L. (2014). Message for the end of Ramadan 'Id al-Fitr 1435 H. / 2014 A.D. Towards a Genuine Fraternity between Christians and Muslims. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_20140624_ramadan-2014_en.html 28 February 2016.

Vatican: The Holy See. (2015). Christian witness in a multi-religious world: Recommendations for conduct. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_20111110_testimonianza-cristiana_en.html. 28 February 2016.