



Social Issues

Religious Intolerance



Definition:

The refusal to accept or tolerate different religious views or beliefs and also the people who follow these different religious faiths.

Examples:

- A child can be excluded from social activities because his/her peers mark him/her out as being different because he/she is from a different religious background.
- The conflict between Palestinians (following Islam) and Israelis (Judaism) in the Gaza Strip.
- The problems faced by small religious communities living in a country that has one main faith.

Why the situation occurs?

People may feel threatened by another faith or set of beliefs because it is different to their own. This fear of the unknown may increase if played upon by those in a position of responsibility. This can result in a culture of intolerance and discrimination in countries., Certain religious communities can then find themselves marginalised and excluded from society.

Learning about religious differences and trying to understand the 'worldview' they present, meeting people of different faith beliefs may help people to overcome their intolerance of different faith communities.

How you can make a difference:

Tackle the issue - learn about the issue and how to identify with the situation. Learn about the different religions of the world and why intolerance can easily exist. What difficulties do marginalised religious communities or individuals face? What attitudes need to be changed and how can you help this?

Use the materials and tools provided to follow the process of:

1. Identifying the problem
2. Developing Awareness and Empathy
3. Taking action
4. Measuring the change

Resources and Links:

World Organization of the Scout Movement document "Scouting and Spiritual Development": http://www.scout.org/wsrc/ll/docs/spiritualdev_e.pdf (English)
http://www.scout.org/wsrc/ll/docs/spiritualdev_f.pdf (French)

Workshop 12: "Religion: men and women of peace" from the booklet "Building Peace Together" (A World Organization of the Scout Movement publication)
http://www.scout.org/wsrc/peaceworkshops/workshop12_e.pdf (English)

The general conclusions from then Valencia Interreligious Symposium, "Learning To Live Together, Tolerance and Solidarity: How to promote interreligious dialogue within the Scout Movement":
http://www.scout.org/wse/valencia/conclusions_e.pdf (English)
http://www.scout.org/wse/valencia/conclusions_f.pdf (French)

The website (English, French and Spanish) for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights contains information on the freedom of religion or belief:
<http://www.ohchr.org>