Appendices: Extracts from Research Discussions

Inter Faith Encounter and Religious Understanding in an Inner City Primary School

Julia Ipgrave

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Note on names in the dialogue transcriptions
In the following extracts the names of the children taking part in the research project are indicated with initials. The initials JI are used for the researcher. Pseudonyms are used for people referred to by the participants.
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APPENDICES: Extracts from Research Discussions

A

From a Discussion with a Group of Year 4 Children (ages 8-9)

The children were engaged in word card activity, turning over a series of cards with words printed on them, and responding to each one.

Members of the group are:

AK: a boy of Gujarati origin who identifies as Hindu
AN: a White boy who identifies as Christian
BT: a boy of Gujarati origin who identifies as Hindu
CA: a girl of African Caribbean origin who identifies as Christian
CS: a boy of African Caribbean origin who identifies as Christian
DY: a girl of dual heritage (African Caribbean and White) who identifies as Christian

Card: GOD

1 BT: Important person
2 AN: It can do – it can turn into anything
3 AN: It's the creator of the world
6  CS: Very powerful
7  AN: The creator of everything
8  CA: He lives in heaven
9  BT: He’s kind. He can do anything
10 JI: Lots of ideas. Is it a word you ever use?
11 GENERAL: Yeah
12 BT: Like when you say, God
13 AK: When you pray
14 JI: Is there just one, or many?
15 AN: Quite many to the Romans – and the – so there’s quite many
16 AK: Yeah-
17 AN: Got Janus and all that
18 AK: Janus, Jupiter
19 AN: They’ve got Janus who looks back
20 DY: He’s got two heads
21 AN: To the New Year. That’s why they name him after January
22 CS: Janus has got two heads, one looks back and one looks forwards
23 AN: And Julius Caesar
24
25 Card: RAMADHAN
26 DY: I don’t know
27 AN: I don’t know
28 AK: No one's Muslim here
29 CS: My aunty's Muslim
30 AK: Erm - it means they fast - Muslims, and it's a festival for the Muslims
31 AN: Like you get *el dia bute mutelosa* - Halloween for the Mexicans
32 AK: They fast
33 CS: No, but it's not Halloween
34 CA: Special day. Pray sometimes
35 CS: It's a time for thinking of others and for thinking of - erm -
36 BT: The poor
37 CS: The poor - and - erm - and fasting
38 JI: And you say this is as time for Muslims. Is there a fasting time for other people?
39 CS: Yeah, yeah - Jewish people - Christians - when Jesus was in the desert
40 CA: They dress up nice for ramadhan
41 JI: Does anyone here ever fast?
42 AN: No one. None of us here's Muslim, that's why
43 JI: Well CS was just saying that there's a fasting time for Christians as well
44 BT: Yeah, at our festival
45 AK: We do at Diwali
46 AN: We don't eat something when we starve - like when we get ill
47 AK: And sometimes we can eat but we can't eat salt
48 AN: And sometimes you're not supposed to wash up - that's New Year's Day
JI: Sounds like a nice day if you’re not meant to wash up. I like this idea!

(General laugh)

AN: You get bad luck for eight years – I mean seven

JI: What’s that? If you wash up?

AN: On New Year’s Day

JI: I haven’t heard that. Who told you that?

AN: It tells me in this book in the library. It tells you in “Strange but True”. That’s how it is

DY: Ramadhan’s special for Muslims

CA: Carnival is special for us

CS: I go carnival

CA: Christmas is special for us – and Easter

AN: Valentine’s Day

CS: Muslims are not interested in Valentine’s Day

BT: They go, ‘Eh, what a crap day!’

CS: That’s Muslims!

DY: You’re not supposed to say that word

AN: When we say, ‘It’s Christmas’, like next week, they go, ‘Eeh!’ and all that

CS: So?

BT: That’s what they say – they don’t listen to other people’s religions

CS: They go, ‘So, what – I don’t care.’
JI: Do they? But if they say to you, ‘It’s ‘Id next week,’ you go ‘mmmm’ [bored noise]?

BT: No, I go, ‘Wow!’ [excited]

AN: I just go, ‘what’s the matter about that?’

CS: I just say, ‘OK, it’s ‘Id, but why’re you told me for, innit?’

CA: Because I’m not a Muslim

CS: I know. Well my aunty is

CA: I’ve got no family that are Muslim

JI: So when your aunty says ‘It’s ‘Id’, do you

CS: I say, ‘Hurray, good for you! – Bye, bye’

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Card: CHRISTIAN

BT: A Christian?

DY: Someone who doesn’t celebrate ‘Id, Diwali and -

AN: Ramadhan

DY: Ramadhan. We celebrate Christmas and believe in God and -

CS: And celebrate Carnival and Easter – and they pray at night sometimes and
sometimes they say all these things about God still loves them and all that

DY: Christians have different religions – I mean they do different things at

different times like sometimes they don’t sit down to pray

AN: Sometimes they’re fidgeting and their Mum tells them, ‘You so-and-so, say

“so-and-so”’
93  CS: They go to church – to church and pray
94  AN: On Sundays I go to Sunday School
95  JI: Could you tell if someone was a Christian or not just by looking at them?
96  CA: I couldn’t
97  CS: I could – I could –
98  BT: By the face – if they’re white
99  DY: Their clothes – their clothes –
100 BT: If they’re black
101 AY: It depends – I think it depends on your ears
102 CA: You can’t – some people might be Muslims but they look like Christians
103 DY: It depends on your clothes
104 BT: You’ve got small ears - you’ve got small ears – you’ve got small ears
105 AN: Nosir – I can tell his ears because they’re quite small
106 JI: What does that tell you?
107 AN: It depends on the shape – I can’t remember what shape he is inside
108 CA: The way they speak
109 CS: It depends on their personality – how they walk, what clothes they wear, how
110 they talk and their ideas they’ve got – they develop how they look
111 CA: The way they speak. Unless if you first meet them and you said to them and
112 they said in different language, you could easily tell, and even if they said it
113 the same you can tell
114 CS: No, some Christians have a different language
JI: So how can you tell from the way they walk?

CS: Sort of — I can't explain -

JI: No? — It's not coming? — well if you think later what you mean, that's fine.

Did you want to say something, CA? — earlier?

CA: Erm — just the celebrations

JI: Is anyone here a Christian?

AN: Four — these two are Hindus

CA: Most people in this school are Muslims

BT: They tease you

CA: They tease your religion. They tease us by not — they say, er — 'We've got more so-and-so than England' or things like that

BT: They say your religion's so stupid and all that

CS: You said your God's a statue

BT: No

CA: You said he's an elephant

They say there should be more mosques in England

DY: Than churches

AN: And there shouldn't be so many churches

AK: Do you know, some people — they say to us that 'Your God is just made up — a fake'

BT: I feel I could punch them on the face!
CS: In their own religion sometimes they say that – erm – the Hindu gods are
elephants

AN: I know what it is, it’s K – Krishna

Card: HALAL

AN: It depends what food you eat

CA: It’s – erm – like it’s a special kind of food people eat – like sometimes it’s
halal or vegetarian food

(General discussion on food)

JI: Why do you think the Muslim children eat different food, then?

CS: They say, ‘We’re not allowed to eat jelly or else we’ll get “guna”’

JI: And what do they mean by that?

AN: You get punished by God

CS: You get put in this fire

DY: In Hell

CA: You know, if people do something really wrong, they’ll probably go to Hell

AN: Yeah, like if they’re in prison and they lie or something like that

Card: SPIRIT

AK: It’s sort of like a ghost

AN: Like the el di thingy for the Mexicans – the things that the spirits come out –

last year, all the spirits of the children came out – they lit this thingy and -
And in the morning they blew the candle out and they thought all the spirits were gone.

What is a spirit?

A kind of ghost. Sometimes Chinese people — yeah — because they’re the most people that do karate — when they’re teaching people they say, ‘Believe in the spirit within and then that will take you’ — and all that — and praying and all that.

Some of them — they make these skeleton-head sweets and they put these patterns on and they put their name on — it’s kind of like a dead person — and some people say the spirits go into Heaven and all that — like on Halloween, they come back — they go like to the place where they lived and they go wandering about.

Sometimes spirits haunt you — sometimes they’re horrible ones.

Miss — we’ve got spirits inside us.

Card: HINDU

Hindu people

Hindu temple

They go to temples to pray to God or sometimes they pray at home.

Sometimes they pray on this cushion thing.
AN: Miss - in India, people have to walk about five miles to get water mostly, and it’s so hot in the day like outdoors, when it’s in winter, they go outdoor swimming - cos it’s so hot there

Card: JAH

DY: Jah’s something what people do every year

CS: It’s either short for Jewish or it’s a god – I know, what Jah means – it means Gods – I’ve heard it in these songs – these African songs – they say Jah’s always with us and all that

Card: GUNA

AN: Punish by God – I know what it means – punish by God. If you nick something from someone, when you go to God you get punished

DY: When you do something wrong and you shouldn’t be doing it, and like when somebody else hears you do that, they say you’re going to get ‘guna’ because you’ve done something very bad

JI: Is it a word you use?

GENERAL: No – no

CS: Christians don’t use it

AK: I think Muslims – Muslims

CA: It’s a word only Muslims use it – if somebody does something wrong they say, ‘Eeh, you’ve got ‘guna’!”
DY: You'll be punished by God

AK: Sometimes, when I go to Hassan's house, they use the word 'guna', like when they get punished

Card: MADRASSA

AN: Something for the Jewish people

AK: I think it's for Muslims

CS: I know what it is

AK: D'you know my mum - she's got some Muslim friends - they say that. I think it's something like a festival for them

BT: No, they go to a mosque, at night. They go to a mosque - a madrassa - to do something

CS: It's a lady - a person - it's got all snakes in her hair and all that lot

CA: Is it Jewish?

JI: Well, actually, I think that BT was the closest, weren't you?

AN: What did you say?

BT: Muslim people go at night to the madrassa to pray

Card: ALLAH

AK: Ah - that's a Muslim's god's name

CS: There's only one god

AN: They go to mosque
It's only the Muslim’s god because we call our god ‘Jesus’

No, we call our god ‘God’

‘Lord’

And I call Jesus a prophet – like the Prophet Muhammad, innit?

Miss, they go to mosques and they get teached by the teacher. They have teachers in the mosque to learn how to write

When they go to mosque, sometimes, like on weekends, CA heard this man singing out this thing on the mosque (tries to imitate)

On Berner’s Street

Is it near Berner’s Street?

I’ve heard it

Yeah, I’ve heard it

Do you know in our class, some people always say that – that, ‘Ah, you’re going to get told off by Allah’ and that

Allah’s going to put you in fire – Allah’s going to put you in fire

To someone else. I hear them

Miss, they say that Allah’s going to put you in fire when you die and this and that and that!

Yeah, made with snakes!

I don’t believe them

I say, ‘Eh, what you lying for?’
AN: People in the mosque say like if you do something wrong, eh, the Muslim God tells you, ‘guna’

CS: You know, when you’ve done something wrong, like wicked or something, they go like, ‘Allaah – you’re going to get ‘guna’!’

Card: RELIGIOUS

CS: A holy priest

AK: It’s a person that believes in a God. It doesn’t tease religions

CA: It’s kind of, like, believes in religions

AN: I know loads of religious people like the Pope, mosque teacher, God, priest – because they tell you – they help you to pray and say what you’re supposed to say and they’re religious people

CS: I know my Nana – my Nana’s religious. She goes church and she sings prayers and she goes, ‘Thank the Lord’ and all that

She watches programmes about God. She watches programmes about Jesus

CA: I like watching the cartoons

CS: She watches – she reads books –

CA: Like believe in lots of different things, like Allah for Muslims, and God for Christians and all that, and all different for Hindus

AN: I’m religious because I watch things on TV, like on Saturdays – on Cable, like, you’ve got things that come up on the screen – singalongs from church

BT: And Power Rangers
JI: Is there anyone here who thinks they’re religious?

AK: Yeah, like we went to a trip in the church

AN: Cathedral?

AK: Yeah, cathedral – and I don’t tease Hussain, even though he’s a Muslim, and he’s my best friend

DY: I think I’m religious because every Sunday I pray to Jesus

CA: My mum sends us to church

DY: WY [CA’s sister] says, ‘Oh, I don’t want to go. It’s boring!’

CA: No, it’s not true!

DY: WY says it

CS: You know on Sunday, yes, there’s this cartoon called ‘Storytellers’ and it like tells you many years ago, like when Jesus -

AN: Romans

CS: When the Romans, yeah – there were these families, yeah -

AN: Caesar

CS: Kept telling stories about God and Jesus and all that lot – Storykeepers – it’s every Sunday after Disney Club

CA: Do you know, when you get christened, why do they have to put you in a potato weigher and put some water – hot water – underneath?

BT: At 8 o’clock, there’s this programme – it’s called Poppin, and they tell you all about Jesus before Motor Combat – so, I wake up early because I want to watch Motor Combat, and it comes on about Jesus
CS: There's this channel called 'God' and I watch it

CA: Sometimes if you're a Christian and you go to church, sometimes, you have bread and wine and all that – when we went to church we had that and it ain’t real wine, it’s special kind – it’s special communion wine and all that – and you have to go round shaking people’s hand and taking them to the front and all that, singing a song – it was a song about shaking people’s hand and being friendly and all that

AN: Do you know we had a free channel and on Cable it had History Channel and it had a Christian channel. I watched it sometimes

JI: Is there anyone you know at school who’s religious? You’ve talked about yourselves?

BT: Teachers – they know about everyone’s religion

AN: Like you are, because you do RE things

DY: About Jesus and assemblies - I know one who is
From a Discussion with a Group of Year 4 Pupils (ages 8-9)

The children were engaged in word card activity, turning over a series of cards with words printed on them, and responding to each one.

Members of the group are:

JA: a girl of Gujarati origin who identifies as Hindu
JE: a boy of African Caribbean origin who identifies as Christian
JO: a boy of dual heritage (African Caribbean and White) who identifies as Christian
MA: a boy of Gujarati origin who identifies as Hindu
ME: a girl of Gujarati origin who identifies as Hindu
PR: a boy of Gujarati origin who identifies as Hindu
PT: a girl of Gujarati origin who identifies as Hindu

1 Card: TOPI
2 PR: Hat (giggles)
3 PT: It means hat
4 MA: Muslim hat
5 JA: Religious hat? – precious hat?
6 JI: Does anyone here wear this hat?
7 GENERAL: No
8 JI: Why not?
9 JA: Because we’re not -
10 JE: We’re not Muslims
11 JI: So why do Muslims wear them then?
12 PR: Because they’re Muslims.
13 JE: They’re religious aren’t they
14 MA: Their God told them to
15 JI: Do they always wear them?
16 GENERAL: No
17 JO: Just sometimes, to show they’re Muslims

Card: CHRISTIAN

20 JE: It’s a religion
21 JA: You’re one
22 JI: How do you know that?
23 JE: Because God made us one
24 JI: Can you tell a Christian when you see one?
25 JA: No
26 JE: No
27 JO: Catholic – catholic
28 JI: Do you know what it means to be Christian?
29 JO: Believe in Jesus
30 JI: So who is Jesus, then?
31 JA: He’s a prophet
32 JO: He’s our God
33 JE: He’s our God’s son
34 JI: And where do you find out about him?
JE: In the Holy Bible
JA: You told us the story

38 Card: GUNA
(General cries of recognition)

JO: If Muslims – if they do something bad or eat something that’s -
PR: P.I.G.

JO: That - er -
JE: That you can’t eat -
JO: Yeah, they get ‘guna’ – that’s what they say
JI: So what is it?
JO: Er – their god -
JE: Badness
JO: Their god will do something bad to them
JE: It’s like they’re trying to disobey their god
JO: They’re saying they’ll go through fire and all that
JA: Heads and snakes and all that
JI: Is it a word you use ever?
GENERAL: No
JE: That’s why they go like this (waves his hand over his mouth) – Muslims -
(General giggles)
JA: They go like this (makes the same gesture)
PT: Because we’re not Muslims
JO: This guy – he rubbed out his god’s name and he went like this (waves hand over mouth. Giggles) All three of them did it; Farzana, Talha, Shabana
Because if they sing a song, yeah, they have to do like that what they do

No — it's because he rubbed out his god's name. They say they're not allowed
to do that, and then they do this (same gesture)

So why do they do that on their faces?

I don't know

To protect them

It might be to say sorry

Is it a word they ever use for you?

No, they just say 'Aah'. If they do something bad, 'they'll get 'guna', like that.

They say we can't sing today — that sort of thing

Because they'll get 'guna'

You can't say P.I.G.

They can't eat pigs as well, I don't know why

So, it's about eating it's about things they say it's about singing as well is it?

Yes

Because they can't marry a Christian

Because they're different religion — their god don't want them to do that

That's what my friend said to me

Which one?

Ashraf— chubby one

Card: RAMADHAN

A time to pray

It's time for Muslims to fast

What do you mean by fast?
JA: Can’t eat anything
PT: They could eat in the morning
JO: I know – if you get ‘guna’ now – I know it’s halal if you can’t eat it – or
haram
JI: They eat in the morning -?
PT: Until they break their fast when they come back
JO: When Ramadhan’s finished
PT: When Ramadhan’s finished
JO: When they get to eat – they have a big meal and they celebrate – because like
today – because they haven’t ate for a long time
JI: Do any of you ever fast?
JO: Yeah, sometimes. I do
JI: You do. So what’s your fast like?
JA: On - I have to fast for five days – four days – I’m not allowed eating food that
has salt in it and on the next day I am allowed but I have to only eat once, and
if I want to eat two times I have to stay sitting down
JI: For how long?
JA: For how much I can – for kind of how much I’m hungry
JI: And why do you do that?
JA: I don’t know. My mum tells me I have to do it five times – in the summer
holidays
JI: Do you talk about your fast to your friends?
JA: No
JI: What about your Muslim friends. Do you tell them you’re fasting?
JA: No
Ji: Do they tell you when they’re fasting?
Ja: Yes
Ji: So why don’t you tell them, then?
Ja: I don’t want to
Jo: It’s kind of secret
Je: No one knows
Ja: Because I don’t feel like it
Ji: Anyone else who fasts?
Pt: Yes
Ji: You do – is it the same sort of fast as JA?
Pt: Same thing as JA
Ji: Is it really boring eating food with no salt in?
Pt: Yes, very boring. And one of the fasts I do, I have to ask my brother ‘Can I eat?’ or ‘Do I have to play or eat?’ When the moon comes up I have to look at it and ask him
Jo: We fast forty days or something – when Jesus was in the desert – er – and the devil said something to him – I can’t remember. We were talking about it in centre [community centre after school club] today. (to Je) Do you remember?
Je: No
Ja: So it’s five weeks or six weeks, I think
Jo: Forty days and forty nights
Je: The Christian – my friend, he’s a Christian, he told me when it’s near Easter time, sometimes Christians fast
Pt: You know my Dad fasts on Saturday. He only has to eat one time. If he eats two times he has – he can’t eat another time
MI: My Mum fasts every Thursday. In the morning she can’t eat anything, she can only drink tea and at night she can eat.

JE: (to me) Do you ever fast?

JI: Yes, I do during Lent, the time before Easter, JO was talking about. I fast on Fridays and don’t eat until it’s night and miss out on some other things.

JO: When I go to my Dad sometimes, it’s like fasting. I don’t even eat in the day and when I sleep there at night we just go downstairs and have a feast. That’s how my Dad does it.

PT: A midnight feast

Card: HARAM

MA: They can’t eat

MI: It means to Muslims – some Muslims say small Mars bars are haram.

JE: Gelatine

JI: Gelatine? So why is gelatine haram?

JE: Because it’s got pig in it.

PT: You know, once my aunty ate a [?] and she says that in crisps if there are too many things added in there like tomatoes and all other things, it is haram for them to eat.

JI: So is it just food that’s haram?

JE: It’s food that they can’t eat like pigs.

JI: Is there any food you can’t eat? – you’re not allowed to eat?

JO: I don’t know.

PT: I don’t know.

MA: I can’t eat beef because that’s our god.
JA: I can't eat any food that has any animal things in it

JI: So you’re a complete vegetarian

JA: Yeah

JI: Do you know why?

JA: No

PT: We can't eat beef because the cow is our god

JO: Mrs Ipgrave, I’m supposed to be vegetarian but sometimes I just eat meat

JI: Why are you supposed to be vegetarian?

JO: Because that’s what my Mum says. She wants me to grow up strong. She wants me and my two other brothers to be her bodyguard

JI: Well that’s a good idea. Perhaps I should get my three sons to be my bodyguards!

Card: NAMAZ

JA: I know, it’s a sort of praying for Muslims. They pray in the mosque when they go there

PT: You know even they do it at home. They’ve got a rug and on that rug there’s a Muslim temple – they -

JO: The holy kabah

PT: A mosque – and you know they have to bend down and pray

JA: Some teachers – they go in the mosque and the teachers learn them all of these prayers. I think they go at four o’clock and come at six

JO: We’ve got this board in our centre – it shows all the prayers and all that

JA: All the times of prayer

MA: They don’t go every day. I think they go Monday to Friday
JA: And every Saturday

JO: At dawn - they go at dawn sometimes

JI: Do you go to anything like that yourselves?

JA: No, I've seen it but I don't go

JI: You've seen it? How have you seen it? Have you been inside?

JA: When I go outside my house I see it and I hear them pray

JI: So why do they go to pray every day?

JA: Because their god makes them. He makes them go to the mosque and when they go to the mosque they learn things - they don't go there to pray only

JI: So what things do they learn?

JE: To believe in their god

JO: To pray to their god

JE: To know who their god is

JA: My next door neighbour, she always has a time when she can pray - once in a day she has a time to pray. She goes quietly in her house. She doesn't go out.

JI: So do any of you pray?

JE: No

JA: Yes

JO: Night and morning

JE: I pray when I'm in bed

JO: I pray in the morning and when I get my dinner

JI: What sort of things do you pray?

JE: Sometimes, when I play football, I pray that I could score

JO: I go like this: Our Father -
Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy
will be done, give us this day our daily bread -

Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy
will be done, give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as
we forgive them -

Who trespass against us -

Lead us not into temptation, deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the
power and the glory for ever -

and ever, Amen

I learned it from my Grandma

You learned it from your Grandma – did your Grandma teach you?

My Mum

No – from my aunty

So is that what you say at night when you go to bed?

Yeah, when I have my feast

We used to do that in the Infants – say some prayer before we ate

JA, you had your hand up

I pray when I wash myself – go in a room where there’s pictures of my gods
and I pray there about my god. I have special prayers I’m learning about them

Who teaches you?

My Mum – sometimes I learn by myself

So do you have a book you learn from?

Yeah
PT: You know, when we go to the temple we have to wash our hands and take our shoes off. You know, we go in and we see this big picture of our God and we have to sing songs about it.

JA: I go in the holidays. Dad has to work in the temple – do hoovering and that.

JO: My aunty works at a church.

JI: Oh does she? Which church does she work at?

JO: Wesleyan Holiness.

JI: Does she? What work does she do there?

JO: She just teaches everyone – little babies that come and all that, and, erm-

MA: Do they put water on their head?

JO: No, it's oil.

JE: Baptise.

JI: So what does that mean then?

JO: A baby is born – you get baptised.

JE: Put water on your forehead.

JO: You know, when we were doing the Christmas Play, yeah – I could have been called Malacci – there was a choice – there was a choice out of JO and Malacci. But my Mum chose JO.

JI: Oh, really? So you could have been Malacci? You were Malacci in the play and that's a coincidence! So you've been called both names now, in fact, because you were it in the play! (to JE) So have you been baptised?

JE: No – I've been christened.

Card: KRISHNA

JA: It's a Hindu god – it's a Hindu god. It's a god that we pray to. It was born -
MA: In a jail -

JA: When a demon was king

MA: His uncle – he used to kill all the babies – his brothers

JI: So his brothers were killed by his uncle?

MA: Yeah

JA: He has a brother, and he kills the demons. When he was small he killed about six or seven demons

JI: So Krishna killed the demons

JA: Yeah, because they came to kill him – a demon sented them – he was –‘When he grows up, then kill him’

JI: You say you pray to him, so is he still around?

JA: No. I know a god that’s still alive and he – when – in the Hindu temples when the sort of story – it’s a real story – it’s Rama – and when they say it and all of it, they turn into people and they go there. We don’t know what they turn into.

PT: Miss, you know one of our gods knows every language

JO: I heard this man – he’s knows every language in this world. He’s travelled all the way round the world. He’s already started the length of Africa

JI: So how’s Krishna different from Jesus? They were talking about Jesus

JA: Because he’s a Hindu god and Jesus isn’t a Hindu god. We believe in Krishna but we don’t believe in Jesus because we don’t know if it’s true or not

JE: I know for a fact

JI: So Krishna’s for Hindus?

JO: And Vishnu. Vishnu’s a Hindu god

JA: Vishnu’s Krishna’s god. Two names – Vishnu and Krishna

JI: What about Ram? Where does he fit in?
JA: Krishna was born twice. Once he was called Ram and the other one he was called Krishna

PT: Mrs Ipgrave – you know at home, I’ve got a picture of Krishna. Can I bring it in?

JI: I would be very interested to see it. Yes, if it’s all right for you to bring it in.

Check with your Mum

Card: HALAL

MA: We did that I think

JA: No, we did haram

JO: Muslims are halal. They eat halal food

JA: I know – it’s a thing that Muslims can eat

JE: Yeah, that – like if they go to a chip shop, right, and there’s a man, Muslim man, he might put a sign and say ‘Halal food – halal food sold here’, so everyone can get it

JI: Do you ever eat halal food?

GENERAL: No

JE: I know MA does

JO: He’s supposed to be vegetarian [school dinners] but he just changed all of a sudden like he doesn’t care. I have halal chips

Card: ALLAH

JO: Muslim god

MA: Can’t say that word

JO: Why can’t you say that word - god?
MA: Because it’s a Muslim god. What Muslim people say

JO: So what?

JE: They say Jesus – what? – You can say their god’s name if they can say ours

MA: Khatijah said

JA: They said your god’s name?

MA: Yes

JE: If they said your god’s name – you can say theirs

PR: Hussain does. Ahmed does

JE: Yeah, one time my friend was telling me. He was trying to tell me the prayer of a Muslim, to turn me into a Muslim. He tried to tell me some prayer to turn me into a Muslim

(others laugh)

JE: He’s not turning me into a Muslim. I stay Christian

JI: Why do you want to stay Christian?

JE: Because my family’s Christian?

JI: So do you believe there is someone called Allah?

GENERAL: Yeah

JA: A Muslim god

JI: So he’s different from your god?

JA: Yeah – his name is a different name

MA: Muslims don’t even know what he looks like

JE: They say he’s got different personality

PR: They say that he’s got -

JO: I know my god’s name – it’s something like Jehosephah
JE: Like they say their god's going to be bad to them when they die - he's going -
if they do something bad they're going to - they say their god's going to
chuck them in the fire and make them eat some cockroaches
JA: Our god's not like - our god's not like -
JH: If you pray to him it'll just be all right - if we say sorry and all that - when we
go to heaven he'll just say, 'Why did you do all these things' and that, and
might punish us a little bit -
JE: How do you know? Have you been to heaven or something?
JI: So you think your god has a different personality do you?
JO: Yeah
JE: Yeah
JI: What do you think your god's personality is?
JE: I think when we go to heaven I think our god's going to be good to us - if we
do go to heaven
JO: I wish I could just go in heaven and then come down and tell everyone how it
is
JA: Because you won't be able to see heaven
JE: Why can't you just go on an aeroplane to heaven?!
JI: Why not?
JA: Because it's too high - too high
PR: It's so high
JO: It's so, so high - it's past space
JI: So could you go in a space rocket?
GENERAL: (laugh) No!
JI: So do you believe in heaven? Do you think there's a heaven?
JA and PR: Yes

JA: Not hell

JE: If they don’t believe in heaven where would they go when somebody had died?

MA: I’ll come back, come back to – come back down

JE: Reincarnation

MA: My mum told me that if you be bad – yeah – and you go up to heaven you’ll come back down, be borned. If you be good, you can be -

JA: Oh, stop!

JE: Miss – miss – when you die – when your soul goes up to heaven – when you die – how come it can’t come back down in a new body?

JI: Well, this is what MA was saying. He thinks it can

JO: A cat has nine lives

JI: Do you think it could?

JE: Nooo

JA: I think it could. The only reincarnation -

JO: Like my brother. He saw this picture of a dog and he said, ‘Oh – I used to be that dog.’

GENERAL: Eeeeh! (laugh)

JI: (to PR) Do you believe in heaven?

PR: But not in hell – hell’s a bad place

JE: One person – he went to heaven. He told me that 2,000 people – er –

JI: You believe in heaven, do you?

JE: Yes. It even says so in the paper. I’ll bring it in tomorrow if I can find it

PR: Daily Mail
JI: Do your Muslim friends ever talk about what will happen when they die?

JE: Yes, they just say they’re going to die –

PR: They’ll just die and go to heaven, and Hindus will go to hell – and Christians

JE: I believe everybody goes to heaven. I feel angry when they say something like

that. They just make – some people make fun of my religion – I feel so angry!

They say their god is better than our god

PR: They say your god is made out of stone

JA: Yeah – they say my god is not strong and that

JE: How come their god punishes them?

JO: If we say sorry, he’ll believe us

JE: They’re trying to say – trying to say-

JO: Their god’s better than ours –

JE: Their god’s bigger than ours – they’re saying

PR: Our god’s made of stone

JE: One time Ashfaq told me – he said he prayed to his god and his god dropped

money down

GENERAL: (laugh)

MA: That ain’t true

JH: That’s so stupid!

JA: Everybody used to say that our god is stronger and our god is better than your

god and they tease you – they used to tease our god

JO: Yeah – Muslims – they think their god is best

JA: I feel very sad – I feel like going and teasing their god but I don’t – I feel like

going to heaven. If I tease their god – hell

JI: Do any of you tease your Muslim friends’ religion?
GENERAL: No

JI: In honesty?

PR: I do

JE: I just say back to them - I say our god's better than their god

JO: I just say I don't believe in your god so I don't need to say anything

JE: One day he was trying to cussing my god down and then I was getting so angry with this person sitting next to me - so I was watching this film called Ghost and I was just about to say something bad to him and there are these demons in Ghost and I kept thinking they was going to come and get me when I die if I be bad so I just left him - to call my god whatever because I believe my god's good. I don't - he can say whatever he wants because I know my god's good

JO: They're saying, 'Ah, I don't believe in your god, that's stupid there's only one god and his name is Allah'

JE: Yeah, they're saying Christian –

JO: I believe in loads of gods but I don't know more about them than my god

JE: They say we're Allah's children!

PR: We've got hundreds of gods, man!

JE: They're trying to say I'm Allah's children

JO: I believe there's loads of gods

JE: They say Allah made everything

PR: He made us

PT: He made even the Christians and children and all them

JE: Their god made us? No! Our god made us, their god made them - Muslims' god made them
JO: How could he make the Hindus and Christians? What, did someone go off and say ‘I don’t want to be Muslim’, and then someone went ‘I don’t want to be Muslim, I want to be Christian – I don’t want to be a Muslim, I want to be Hindu’

JI: Where do you think Christians and Hindus come from, then?

JA: From their god?

JE: They’re from heaven

JO: I believe in loads of gods

JE: They’re stocked up in heaven, then your mum gets pregnant and you come down. When I was two - yeah – I used to believe that my mum, she went to heaven and then she picked us and God put me in her tummy

JI: Girls, where do you think Christians and Hindus come from?

JE: Their god made them – our god made us – Muslims’ god made them

JI: So you believe in lots of god?

JE: Yeah

MI: Zaheera says there’s only one god but you call it different names. I don’t know

JE: I don’t think it’s right. I think there’s one Jesus and one Vishnu

Card: GOD

PR: God is God

JA: God –

PR: God is God

MA: God is – erm –

JO: God is a leader – he’s – erm – a kind of –

JA: Dad
Father

Our Father is like --

God is the one who gave us life

Yeah, that’s what we mean by Our Father – he made us and all that –

(whispering) God

That’s why he’s our father

He supplies food for us and all that

God

God? What does that mean to you?

God is God – definitely

Father – I believe – it says a kind of cupboard – there’s father inside – yeah –

and you kind of open it and he’s looking this way – just say he’s looking this

way, and he’s looking this way (demonstrating). There’s two curtains, yes –

just say there’s two and one person’s talking and then they say someone talks

– the other comes in and he closes this curtain and he opens this one – and

when there’s nothing – he just closes it and puts the other one –

Then they talk

Where’s this from?

Erm – it’s the Christian god

(surprised) What?

I’ve seen in films

Yeah

And so who’s behind the curtain?

er – God

Prophet
MA: Father – God the father

JE: Our church – when we’re talking to God at our church I just saw this woman just jumping about and her hat was coming off her head. This woman – she was going all like this (waves arms)

JI: What church was that?

JE: What – what we go to – er – Wesleyan Holiness Church

JI: (turning to the rest of the group) You three, the word ‘God’ – any ideas?

PT: Ramadhan

MI: I know one god – my god – Hanuman

JA: Rama

JO: Oh, yeah – Rama’s brother

JA: Rama’s brother?

JO: Yeah, Hanuman

JA: I didn’t know it was Rama’s brother

JO: Didn’t you know that?

MA: He can turn – his dad is the wind

JA: His dad is the wind

MA: His dad is the wind – he can make him fly

JE: Yeah, I’ve heard this story

MA: And then he can turn big and he can turn small and he is strong

PT: Yeah, I know about it

MA: He has a kind of weapon – a kind of ball

PT: Yes – yes!

MA: He just goes flying in the sky

MI: Miss, it’s a monkey
PT: Miss – miss –

MA: Around the world

MI: Miss, do you know, Hanuman – you know, when he opened his chest you could see Rama and Sita

MA: He opens his chest and you can see our god inside

PT: Ram – Ram. Ram is our god

MA: Ram and Sita – you can see inside

PT: Miss, you know my aunty, she’s a Hindu as well and she’s got a cassette of it – a cassette of it at home. Can I – can we watch that if I bring it?

JI: I’d be interested to look at it myself

MA: Miss, you know Hanuman, yeah – once – last time – I know this story – I saw it on t.v.

JA: He came on t.v.?

MA: On – on Africa. There’s this story – there’s this Hanuman, yeah – he can fly. He went up to the sun and he watched it. He said ‘What’s that up there?’ and his mum said, ‘It’s the sun’. He said, ‘I want to eat it’, but she said, ‘It’s not to eat’. He doesn’t listen to his mum so he just fled in the sky and went to the sun and then this person, he gets an arrow – a bow and arrow – and throws it in the sky. He chucks it, then Hanuman falls down off the sky and then his mum, yeah – he’s still got a piece of sun in his mouth. He’s got to his mum, yeah, and then he waked up and she says take out the sun and then take out the sun, and his mouth went round and kind of round

JI: Oh, so that’s why. That’s interesting. I’ve seen pictures of him with a round mouth

37
JA: It's like people who like talking about religions like if you –

JE: She likes talking about Hindus or Christians or Muslims or Sikhs

JI: So JA’s a religious person

JE: Yes

JA: Yes, because I’m a Hindu

JI: Because you’re a Hindu? So what do you think a religious person is?

JA: It’s a person that has a religion, like it might be a Muslim, a Hindu, a Christian

MA: A Sikh

JA: Or a Sikh

JI: So are all Muslims religious? Are all Hindus religious? What do you think JE?

JA: Yeah – I don’t know, because some people don’t know about anything, they just know a little

JO: I know a woman who I know who is religious because she talks about all different things like Christians, Hindus, Muslims. She’s Tina at the [community] centre, ain’t it, JE?

JE: Oh, yes
Extracts from a Discussion with a Group of Year 5 Pupils

(a faulty tape meant that only short extracts of this discussion were recorded)

The children were engaged in word card activity, turning over a series of cards with words printed on them, and responding to each one.

Members of the group are:

AY: a White girl who identifies as Christian
JN: a boy of African Caribbean origin who identifies as Christian
LH: a girl of African Caribbean origin who identifies as Christian
SN: a dual heritage boy (African Caribbean and White) who identifies as Christian
TR: a girl of Gujarati origin who identifies as Hindu
SH: a boy of Gujarati origin who identifies as Hindu

1 Card: CHRISTIAN
2 JI: How can you tell if someone is Christian?
3 AY: Black or white – a different colour from Muslims
4 SN: Their god is Jesus
5 SH: Muslim goes to mosque, Hindu goes to a temple, Christian goes to a church
6
7 Card: ALLAH
8 SN: The Muslim’s god
9 TR: Hafsa tells me you have to be scared of Allah
JN: The man at our church tells us you have to be scared of what Jesus will do to you if you don’t be good

Card: GOD

JN: Christians have one god, Muslims have like different gods
TR: No, they don’t, they have one god
SN: Created us – made all people

Card: SPIRIT

JN: It’s in you. It’s God’s spirit and it makes you do good things. It guides you.
   We sing a song about the spirit in Church
SN: Do you feel the spirit is in you?
JN: Sometimes
AY: I do, like, if I’ve been naughty and my mum and dad are cross with me. I go to my room and I feel upset, and I feel God’s spirit in me and it makes me feel better
SN: If you didn’t have the spirit in you, you’d be dead

Card: RAMADHAN

SN: Fasting. It’s what Muslims do
TR: I fast – I can eat but I don’t have any salt on my food
JN: I fast because in the Bible Jesus fasts for thirty days and thirty nights and we fast to see what it’s like
JI: Do you talk about your fasting to your friends?
JN: No, they’ll think it’s funny. They don’t want to listen
SN: I fast

Card: GUNA

(instant recognition and laughter)

AY: It’s what Muslims say

SN: Punishment

AY: For Muslims. They say ‘guna’ and put their hand over their mouth like this

(waves hand over mouth)

SN: It’s guna – it’s haram

JN: ManU 1: Gunner 0

SN: It’s a Muslim word – like you get guna – it’s a punishment

JN: I saw a Muslim boy smoking – he was a little boy and another boy said,

‘You’ll get guna’, and he said, ‘I don’t believe in guna’ and then he said ‘I’m sorry I said that. I do believe in guna’

SN: Hassan said lies and Ahmed said he would get guna and he was sick

Card: TOPI

SN: (reading word in an Indian accent) Topi

LH: Why did you say topi in a voice like that?

SN: Because it’s how Indians say it

TR: It’s not an Indian hat. Muslims wear it

LH: It’s a hat with embroidery on it

JN: They wear it so God can see they’re religious

SN: Mohammed, the prophet made an invention and it was a topi hat and he held it

(holding out his hands) and said to God, ‘This is a symbol of my love for God’
JN: Don’t laugh about it

SN: I’m not

TR: I think it’s because of the shape – you know – Mohammed and the dates – it’s like a date, that’s why they wear it

AY: Some Christians wear crosses

JN: I wear a cross sometimes with Jesus on it. It’s like if you have a problem, then Jesus will guide you. Once I got a red eye when I got too much shampoo in it and I prayed to God and it got better, but not straight away – you have to wait

SN: Suleman has a ring with Allah on it. I asked him what it said and he said, ‘Allah. You must obey’

Card: RELIGIOUS

JN: That’s me – I am religious because I go to church every Sunday and I pray and I read the Bible and I’m good in church

SN: He is in church. I’m religious because I go to church every Sunday –

JN: You don’t – you don’t when I come to call! Rukshana is religious because she prays and she’s always talking about her religion and she wears a scarf and she believes in her god and doesn’t get in trouble. And TR

TR: Can I ask you a question? Why do you think I am religious?

JN: Because if someone teases her about her religion she goes into the toilet and doesn’t say anything

TR: I don’t. I don’t often go to the toilet
SN: I think you (addressed to JI) are religious because you wear a cross, and your
husband is a priest and you tell us stories in assembly and you support
Leicester City

SN: I think you (addressed to JI) are religious because you wear a cross, and your
husband is a priest and you tell us stories in assembly and you support
Leicester City

Card: CHRISTIAN

JN: That’s me

SN: Me

AY: I’m not a Christian. I’m only half Christian. My dad says I’m Christian but my
mum says I’m Church of England

Card: JAH

SN: The god for the Jamaicans

JI: Is it just the Jamaican god?

SN: No, it’s Jamaica and the Caribbean. It’s not really Jah, though, it’s Jahno
From a Discussion with a Group of Year 6 Pupils (ages 10 – 11)

The children were engaged in word card activity, turning over a series of cards with words printed on them, and responding to each one.

Members of the group are:

CH: a boy of Gujarati origin who identifies as Hindu
JK: a girl of Gujarati origin who identifies as Hindu
NI: a girl of Gujarati origin who identifies as Hindu
RA: a girl of dual heritage (African Caribbean and White) who identifies as Christian
RJ: a boy of Gujarati origin who identifies as Hindu

1 Card: GUNA

2 RA: Being punished. It’s what Muslims say

3 JI: So do they ever say to you that you’re going to get guna?

4 JK: Yeah, they do

5 RA: Sometimes

6 JK: When I done a mistake they say, ‘you’re going to get guna’ and all that

7 JI: And what do you say to them?

8 JK: I say – I don’t say anything because then they – if I say ‘no, I don’t believe it’

9 then they will go ‘guna’ and all that

10 JI: Is it a word you ever use yourself?

11 JK: Yes
JI: Why do you use it if you don’t believe it?

JK: Because they tell me it’s the guna and all that because I was doing something wrong, and when they do something wrong no-one tells them ‘guna’ so I just say, ‘you’re going to get guna’

Card: MADRASSA

JK: It’s a language, I think

CH: (whispering to the other children) It’s mosque – they go to mosque (aloud) It’s where they go to pray, miss

RA: I’ve heard of it

JK: I haven’t

RA: Is it like a temple or –

CH: No – it’s where Muslim people go to pray

RA: Like a mosque?

CH: Yeah

JI: When do they go?

RA: After school

JK: Four till six

CH: Five till seven

RA: They have to take their shoes off when they go in

CH: They have to clean themselves

RA: And –

JK: They do lessons

RA: They have to wear scarves when they go in – and topis

JI: Do you see people going to madrassa?
37 RA: Yes
38 JK: After school sometimes – 4 o’clock or 3.45
39 RA: They have books
40 JK: They tell us they’re going – because when we have choir, they have to go early

43 Card: RELIGIOUS

44 NI: They’ve got different religions. Religious is a very good person – believes a lot in their own religion
45 RJ: A lot of religions
46 RA: Some people are more holy than others
47 JI: What would make them more holy?
48 RA: Somebody goes to – if they’re Christian then they might go to church every day – they might only go sometimes
49 JI: So is there anyone in your class you think is particularly religious?
50 RA: Ayesha is
51 RJ: Shabana is
52 JI: Why do you think Ayesha is?
53 RA: Well, she’s not allowed to watch television
54 JK: Yes, because it’s part of her religion. She doesn’t watch it
55 RJ: They’re not allowed to watch t.v.
56 JK: They don’t have a television – she’s quite strict
57 RJ: Miss, even Salim
58 RA: He’s not that strict because he’s always naughty
59 RJ: But he doesn’t have television
RA: Doesn't he?

JI: So you think that Ayesha's religious because she doesn't watch television?

RJ: Yes

RA: And she's always wearing a scarf

JI: And what about Shabana?

NI: She's not allowed to do a lot that we can do

RA: Like go to clubs after school because they might be late for mosque

NI: They're not allowed to dance to music

JK: They tell us it's guna, that's what they say; it's guna. It's haram, haram.

RA: Some people aren't allowed to draw faces

JK: Oh yeah, the pictures

RA: And they can't put faces in their houses

JK: Because –

RA: Because there's eyes. They see that the eyes are going to come alive (laughs)

JK: (giggles) They say the picture's going to come alive and eat them

(giggles all round) because their god - they put a name of their god in their home - their god doesn't like it

RA: To protect them

JK: And they're not allowed to wear shoes

RA: That's just some people though - because if you've got dirty shoes and you've been walking outside, then it'll go on the carpet. If you're praying on the floor, then you'll get it on the mat

JI: So when they say to you that the eyes in their house are going to come alive, do you laugh?

JK: No, because all of the people say that and I get used to it
RA: And I think if they believe it, then I don’t think it’s nice to laugh

JK: Because we went to Beaumanor Hall [a residential field centre] and –

RA: These girls were trying to scare these other girls saying that the badger’s going
to come alive and eat them

JK: Because it had a picture of a badger at the back of them – and then they say,
‘Oh, this picture’s going to come alive – I’m not sleeping here’ and all that.

They say ‘in the night they’re going to eat us’

JI: And what did you say about that? Did you say anything?

RA: We told her it wasn’t likely because she was getting really scared and she
wasn’t going to go to bed

JK: And then we just ignored them because Amina was a really naughty girl and
she kept on

RA: She wanted to scare her

JI: Do you think you’re religious, anyone?

RA: A little bit – I don’t think I’m too strict

JK: A little bit because I go –

RA: I don’t go to church everyday

JK: Not me – just sometimes on Sundays

RA: I sometimes go at the weekend with my grandma, but then not for most of the
time

JI: So what would you do if you were a lot religious?

RA: I would go to church every day

RJ: Read the Holy Bible?

RA: I don’t know
Card: ALLAH

CH: Miss, it’s a god

JK: It’s a god

RA: Muslims believe in him

JK: Yeah, but people say they haven’t seen him, they’ve only seen his feet.

JI: Who says that they’ve only seen his feet?

JK: This girl that lives next to me – and she says that they’ve got a picture of Allah

but not the face or anything, just the feet – just his feet (giggles)

JI: You think that’s funny?

JK: But I don’t laugh to them because they find it bad

RA: They find it – it affects them because they believe it and people laughing at

them – it’s not very nice

NI: Mohammed is a prophet of Allah

JI: What do you imagine Allah’s like? Have you any idea what he’s like?

RA: Peaceful

JK: He must be good

JI: Why do you think he must be peaceful?

CH: (whispers) He’s a god

RA: Because lots of people respect him and if he was bad then I don’t think they

would. Not only Muslims think Allah’s their god – some other people think he

is

JI: Do you think he is?

RA: Probably

JK: When I was in Year 3, this girl said to me that your god is not real. She said

that to me and I told the teacher but she never done anything –
137 RA: Did it upset you?
138 JK: Yeah, I was upset and everything. She even says that Jesus isn't true
139 RA: Some people don't believe in all gods. Sometimes they believe in one god but not lots of gods.
140 JK: Mr D
141 RA: Yeah, Mr D doesn't
142 JK: He said, 'I don't believe in any religion – just nice children'
143
145 Card: TOPI
146 RA: It's a hat
147 RJ: A Muslim hat
148 JK: Boy's wear that
149 RA: They've got patterns on them
150 RJ: Miss, it's for they wear it when they go to mosque
151 JK: It's religious
152 RA: To cover their hair
153 RJ: What?
154 RA: No, that's the girls isn't it – sorry
155 RJ: It's for boys when they go to mosque, they have to wear it
156 RA: It's like respect – to respect. Sometimes they wear it in school
157 RJ: It's like to protect them or something like that
158 JI: To protect them from what?
159 JK: From evil
160 NI: Evil spirits or ghosts
161 RA: It's a bit like necklaces
They say that if they’re ill and if they press those necklaces, inside there’s Allah’s name.

A little parcel.

Inside there’s Allah’s name.

There’s paper – little pieces of paper wrapped up in a cloth – a bit like what you’ve got there (to RJ).

And then press it. If they’re ill they press it and they say that –

Mr. looks after you.

They feel better.

Miss, it’s like – it protects you.

It’s like a metal thing with Allah on it.

Sometimes it’s metal – a bit of metal like a mini Bible – mosque book.

I think that’s good because if they press it they feel right.

Do you have anything like that that you use yourselves?

Some people have a rosary, I think.

Do you know we have these beads –

Like that (pointing to RJ) – that’s it.

Miss, this is like beads.

We have these beads all around and they protect us as well – these pendants.

Normally people – if you go to the mosque - the person in charge – he’ll make – he or she will make you one.

Do they talk about them – your Muslim friends?

Sometimes. They’re not allowed to take them off cos then it’s like – it’s like a shield – if they’ve got one on then it’ll protect them from evil spirits.

Spirits and ghosts.
RA: And if they haven’t got it on they might – something might happen to them

**Card: KRISHNA**

RA: A blue god
JK: Hindu god
RA: He’s normally blue
JK: He has a …
RA: Flute – he has a flute – he’s in stories
JK: He’s in stories – a lot of stories
RA: He has a – is it his wife? Rama?
JK: No, Sita. He’s a prophet
RA: He’s a bit like Mohammed
JK: A messenger of God
RA: A messenger – an angel – a bit like an angel, like the angel who came to tell
Mary she was going to have a baby – a bit like that
CH: A prophet? What? Who?
JK: I only believe in one god, any god
RA: I believe there’s lots of gods
RJ: There’s lots of gods but some people just believe in one god
JK: I just believe in one
RA: I think there’s lots of gods
JK: I only believe in one – that’s anyone
JI: So what’s Krishna? You think Krishna’s a prophet?
JK: I think – my mum says that sometimes – sometimes it’s not real you know, it’s
just made up and all that
What? Some of the stories?

Yeah, and she says that sometimes Krishna’s not really – he’s just made up

What do you think CH? If I just gave that word to you who would you say Krishna was?

He’s a god

He’s a little god like Sita

He’s married to Sita

No, he isn’t – no, he isn’t

What do you mean by a little god?

Like you’ve got one big god and then you’ve got lots of little gods

Little, little gods

Little gods which come from him

Like you have a mum and all the little children and all that

Yes, like you’ve got God and he’s got a little child and then another little one

And then the children’s got toys

And they get – and then they fly away and have their babies and you carry on

And then the children have toys and that’s us

That’s what I think

Miss, it’s when Muslims go to pray in a different country in Saudi Arabia

They go somewhere to pray?

Yeah, in Saudi Arabia

A bit like when they go to that kind of like – is it Mecca? – a big box where they pray around it
RJ: They say there’s Allah inside the little box
RA: You have to go once in your life or something bad will happen to you
JK: Muslims believe in God because in – I don’t know – Mecca – I don’t know – they’ve got this flying rock. There’s this flying rock. They say that Allah done it – this flying rock
RA: Flying rock?
JK: Something at Mecca – I don’t know
CH: They build tents there – to sleep
JI: Have any of your friends been on Hajj?
RA: Shabana
JK: Shabana’s mum
RA: Ayesha – Ayesha’s been there as well. Ayesha’s been everywhere though.
RJ: Miss, Irfan has
JI: Do they tell you about it?
RJ: Yeah
RA: Yeah, when they come back they do – how nice it was –
RJ: Miss, they even get this ring – and there’s this –
RA: Like God in it
RJ: This ring, and then it’s got a black thing in it
RA: Stone
RJ: Yes – stone in there. And that’s what they say it protects them as well
RA: A bit like a necklace. A bit like what Mohammed got?
RJ: Yes
RA: Right
RJ: Miss, when he came back he says, ‘I got this ring from Mecca’
262  JI: Why do you think they go?
263  RJ: To pray
264  JK: Because it’s a holy city for them
265  RA: To show respect to their god – to Allah
266  JK: There’s this little box
267  RA: It’s not little, it’s massive
268  JK: Yeah, I know, but they say if they put this box on a different country the whole country will be covered – it’ll turn big – that’s what they say
269  RA: It’ll turn if it’s put in a different country? Oh yeah. Is it old, this box?
270  RJ: It’s made out of stone.
271  JK: It’s with curtains around it
272  RJ: Made out of marble
273  RA: It looks like a box. They have – it’s like a symbol – a bit like a cross because they have it on their praying mats and lots of things
274  JK: It’s a holy book
275  RA: It’s a bit like a Bible
276  RJ: It’s a holy book for Hindus
277  RA: Hindus?
278  JK: No (laughs) Muslims. And they believe so much in it that they’ve got –
279  RA: It’s a prayer book. You start on small ones where it says ‘eh, beh, teh’ that –
280  RJ: and then they go to bigger ones
281  RA: You have to hold it like that, you can’t hold it like that (demonstrates)
282  NI: You have to hold it like this in your hands
RA: They have a sort of thing like that (demonstrates)

JK: A stand

RJ: Miss there’s this thing and when they look at it and then they go like that (rocking up and down) as well

RA: They have to learn it off by heart

JK: And then they put this mat around it and go like this (demonstrates wrapping it)

RA: If they’re in trouble then sometimes they say it like for their god to help them – a bit like the Bible – you read it in chapters

Card: PRIEST

JK: It’s like a holy man – kind of like a religious man

RA: That’s like a little god who takes over – not takes over, he looks after a church or somewhere like that. He helps people.

JK: Yeah, he helps people and in some churches he’s got this wall, like curtains around him, and they tell his problems

RA: Miss, it’s like a box. You go inside and tell them all your bad things and wait

JK: And then they tell them – they solve their problems

RA: They tell them –

JK: ‘Don’t worry’

RA: They say that God’s forgiven you now

JI: How do you know that?

JK: We’ve seen it in pictures

RA: My grandma’s done it. And they have that piece of bread and some wine

JK: I’ve been inside a church
RA: It's – the bread's Jesus' body and the wine is –

JK: Jesus' blood

RA: [the priest] wears a white colour

JK: And black. We have – we have a kind of man with a cloth around him –

orange coloured cloth around him – holy

RA: Is that when they march with no shoes on outside?

JK: It's like Gandhi – Gandhi

RA: And they march outside with no shoes on and with swords in their hands

JK: No

RA: Is that Sikhs?

JK: It's just like Gandhi – just like Gandhi

RA: A sort of turban and like tunic thing what's orange – bright orange

JK: It's just like Gandhi

Card: GURU

RA: Is it a piece of clothing that Muslims wear?

NI: It's religions

JK: Guru – it's kind of like a god

RA: Oh, is it a god? I think I've heard it. I thought it was like a little thing that

Muslim men wear inside

JI: What do you think a guru is, RJ?

RJ: Miss, they come to your house. You have to call them and sometimes they

come to your house and just say you'll have happy feelings and things like

that. They come. They're people and they say it's going to be a good life for

you and your life is going to be all right and have no worries like that. Miss,
there’s a man here and there’s a woman here and there’s fire going on. Then
the man gives you a red thing and then he gets rice and then he puts it on the
woman and the man and then –
JK: It’s kind of like powder and thing
RJ: Yes
RA: Does it happen in India?
RJ: Yes
JK: But that was here
RJ: Miss, I think I’m wrong – they put it here (points to forehead) and then they
put some rice on it. They put some rice like that
Card: HARAM
JK: If it’s jelly and they can’t eat jelly, they say its haram and all that
RA: If its got gelatine in it or if its got – they think pigs are dirty so they don’t eat
pork and it’s the opposite of – they eat beef though
RJ: They don’t go next to pigs
RA: Some Hindus eat beef
JK: Eeh
RA: And some don’t
JK: They don’t
RA: No, I mean they don’t eat beef, they eat pork, but some don’t eat pork
JI: So haram is to do with food is it?
RA: Not always
JK: They say that –
Sometimes it’s to do – if you do something – actually most times it is, but if they see a pig they’re not allowed to look at pigs. If they go to a farm, they’re not allowed to look at pigs. Something dirty – they think it’s dirty?

They say that pigs are dirty because the pink colour. They say that God didn’t make pigs. They say that God made all the animals so I said ‘why don’t they like pigs?’ They say because it’s pink, that’s what they say. I told my friend that – I said ‘just because it’s pink’ and she turned her back on me and walked back.

Miss, I think it’s because – you know they spend most of their time – they like to roll around in mud and they eat like a pig.

It means go

Jah, jah! It’s an Indian word. It’s an Indian word – any kind of religion word, and they say ‘go away’ in Gujarati

Sort of like ‘go away, shoo!’ You say it to cats if your next door neighbours’ cat comes to you

Jah! Jah!

If you don’t know English some people in Gujarati say ‘jah, jah’

I know it’s when Muslims wash before they go to mosque to pray

Or sometimes they do it at home

They put a mat

They go namaz. They say ‘I’m doing my namaz’ then they go like this (bow)
Then they pray, then they pray

They bow and then they put that Bible, what’s it called again?
The Qur’an

They bow to it. They bow to the mat because the mat’s got that box – that rock, I mean, that –

No, no the book. They bow to the book. It’s a clean mat.

That’s why they take their shoes off. When they put the mat down it might have dirt on the floor or you’re not allowed to stand above the Qur’an because it’s supposed to be – you should be respectful. My friend prays sometimes and when they’re just about to go to mosque – if they put it on the table they can’t stand over it because it’ll look like – it’s a bit like saying, ‘I’m bigger than you’.

In the library – this guy called Hassan who works in the library, he does it every time – he goes to a special room and then he puts a mat so no one can see and then he prays – Me and NI have seen it

Why in the library?

Because it’s his job – his job’s in the library

A ghost – because all my friends say that they go – they come into your body, like if you go in the park, yeah, at night, they come into your body and make you do all these bad things

Do you believe in jinns?

No
RA: They’re like ghosts but they go into your body and take over and they make you do things like if you’re supposed to go to mosque at 4 o’clock then they might stop you from going – they might take control of your mind and make you still play and if your mum’s saying ‘come on you’ve got to go to mosque now’, then they make you not – trying to stop you.

JI: Is this something that you believe is really there?

RA: Not really.

JK: My next door neighbour, she’s got a baby that’s jinn. It’s all white – white – that means that this ghost comes to the lady and then they go in the lady and the lady has a birth and it’s a jinn – it’s white.

JI: So what do they do about it?

JK: Some people kill it but she kept it – nextdoor neighbour lady – it’s all white and YN knows about it.

JI: Is it still a baby?

JK: No, it’s past twenty one – twenty two.

JI: So how do people treat this person?

JA: They treat it like it’s only a child – because it’s grown up and if they throw it away the council –

RA: They wouldn’t let them kill it would they?

JK: They’d charge them money.

RA: Charge them? They’d put them in prison for murder.
From a Discussion with a Group of Year 6 Pupils (ages 10 – 11)

The children were engaged in word card activity, turning over a series of cards with words printed on them, and responding to each one.

Members of the group are:

HA: a girl of Gujarati origin who identifies as Hindu
JH: a boy of African Caribbean origin who identifies as Rastafarian-Christian
NA: a girl of Gujarati origin who identifies as Hindu
YN: a boy of Gujarati origin who identifies as Hindu

Card: GOD

JH: God means that - to me it means there’s a person in the sky that made all of us and the world and God means love as well. He’s given us friends and families and make people reproduce and help people when they’re ill

JI: Do you ever talk about God?

NA: Yeah

JI: Who do you talk about God with?

NA: My sister. We say how come God’s gave us all these things and we – and one day me and my sister think that we want to give him something if only we met him

JH: He gave us life and that and there’s bad people in the world killing and shooting each other and they’re saying that – they’re using God as an excuse to say that he said that he wants everyone to kill. He never put us on this earth
to kill people, he put us on this earth to be friends and love each other like brothers and sisters

YN: I use the word with my brother because I say to him that why did God make all the bad people because he should have only made the good people

HA: My friends talk about God like how he went up there – friends at home

**Card: RAMADHAN**

GENERAL: (laugh)

JI: Anyone heard that word before? What does it mean?

NA: Fasting

HA: Fasting

JH: A Muslim word – fasting. People – Ramadhan means that when people fast it means that all the people - in Africa people that starve. They starve for thirty days – when they starve they’re just starving to see how it feels – see how it feels about all the people in all the different countries that starve – they want to – you know, pray for them that they get food sometime and that when they fast they want to know that how it feels to them that they don’t have food all their lives

JI: Is that what you’ve learnt from –

JH: Friends

JI: Does anyone here fast?

NA: I only fast sometimes

JH: I do sometimes – when it’s our Christmas because I’m – I’m a Christian but I believe that – the church I go to believes that Jesus was born in July – so, when it’s our Christmas, we have the big feast and next day after our
Christmas we have our twenty four days of fasting. We wake up about six in the morning and just have bread and water that has to last for the rest of the day.

JI: Why do you do that?

JH: To show how in Ethiopia and all them countries, how they feel fasting

JI: (to HA and NA) And what do you do when you fast?

NA: We fast for about ten days. I often fast from Diwali sometimes and in the morning we only have to have fruit and then we fast the whole day. Every time we have to do that and – erm – if sometimes people say to me that don’t break that fast or you will get punished by God and you’re not helping those poor people

JI: Do you talk about fasting to your friends?

NA: No

JI: Do they talk about their fasting to you?

NA: Yeah, and I like to hear about theirs but I don’t – I’ve heard mine a lot because I know mine, but I want to hear about theirs and how different it is

JI: And they might want to hear about yours

NA: No idea

Card: CHRISTIANITY

HA: It’s a religion

JH: Faith in God. Everyone has a religion so they can believe in God

Card: HALAL

JH: Miss, it means –
YN: Meat

JH: Miss, it's like – because some Muslims and Hindus – like when I go home I do eat a bit of meat, but sometimes I mostly eat vegetarian because my mum – it’s like – Christian people, when they get meat, they kill it but they don’t drain a lot of blood because in the Bible that I read, it's like drinking the cow's blood. What everything eats – it’s like drinking its blood – so you shouldn't do that because it was alive and now it's dead. It's just like – like my mum – when we go - we always go to a halal meat shop because my mum says that they drain most of the blood.

JI: Is halal just about meat?

HA: Yep

JH: Don't know

Card: SPIRIT

NA: It's like a ghost

JH: It's like a ghost but you can't see so people call God a spirit as well because you can't see him but he's everywhere so you can't – He's everywhere. He's even sitting in that chair there.

NA: Invisible

JH: You can't see him. Invisible means you can't see them. Just like sitting on the desk but you can't see him

JI: Is it a word you use much?

YN: No

JH: I do
NA: Sometimes – only a few times, but about spirits. I talk about it sometimes with my sister. I said, 'Imagine if there was a spirit next to us – imagine it'. Because my grandma died and I think that her spirit still lives (animated) I think she's just right next to me right now.

JH: (points) Just there?

NA: Yes! And sometimes I think that, imagine if there's a spirit next to all of you – yeah, it'd be so good, too.

JH: My dad's dad died. He died in his house and when I go to my dad – I always like – cos, when I have to pray, you know, use my Bible four chapters every night – after I read my Bible, I put my Bible open and like – it's like I always talk to my granddad – it's not like – because I believe that when you speak to them you can actually hear them, but you can't hear them so like I sit down and just like speak to my granddad, and in my head I think I can hear him.

NA: What does he say?

JH: He says 'Don't worry', but I say to him sometimes, 'I'll see you sometime, I'll see you soon granddad, when I die'. And he goes – he just speaks to me about how heaven is and what it looks like, how he's always there, he's always watching over all of us and mostly my dad because my dad is in hospital now – so he watches – every time I go and see him I always go to the toilet and I always go and speak to him cos he watches.

JI: Did you know your granddad well?

JH: No. He died when I was four.

Card: HINDU

YN: It's a religion that believes in a lot of gods.
JI: What does it mean to be a Hindu? Is a Hindu different from a Muslim?

YN: Like they go to different worship places and they believe in different gods.

HA: We go to different worship places, we eat different things – anyway, I don’t eat meat cos we’re not allowed

YN: Yeah, because they worship cows

Card: GUNA

HA: Oh, yeah, Muslim people use it. I think it’s something to do with punishment

YN: You do something bad

JH: Mustafa always says that. Say like I get fouled, he goes – whoever fouled me –he goes ‘Guna!’ , like that – all that

YN: He goes that, ‘You sweared so you’re going to get –

JH: Guna, yeah

HA: Say that you’ve done something bad, you’re just going to get punishment

JH: Burn in a red fire. Like people that are shooting in – what is it?

HA: Algeria

JH: Ireland and Algeria – slitting people’s heads – they’re going to be burnt in a Hell of fire, I believe, because I don’t think they prayed – if they prayed to God, they’re praying to him for no reason, cos I believe if you ever do anything wrong you have to go on your hands and knees and you’ve got to pray to God for forgiveness and you promise him you won’t do it again

JI: And then do you think the guna goes?

JH: Yes

JI: Do you use the word yourselves?

NA, HA, JH, YN: No
Sometimes I think that – sometimes I like to use it somehow. You know those people in Algeria – those Muslims who are cutting their throats – I think that they’re not being proper Muslims, they are not following their religion, I don’t think.

So you’d like to use it for them?

(nods)

Do you ever use it for people in your class? If they use it for you, do you ever say it back?

No. I don’t feel like it. Sometimes I think that because I’m a Hindu, sometimes they think that because I use it I’m doing something wrong, but I think that I’m not doing anything wrong – it’s just a word

Card: TOPI

Hat

Hat

What Muslims wear

Yeah, sometimes Hindus can wear that

It means like you’re a good person

(sniggers)

You are!

Not when you smoke in it

Yeah, sometimes

Sometimes – because when we were over there, we saw some Muslim boys lighting a fag and going (imitates) like that

And they were wearing holy hats

65
JI: And what did you think?

JH: Bad Muslims. Don't follow their religion

YN: Plus it's their 'Id

JH: It's their 'Id

YN: It's a bad start to the day

JI: So when people wear topis it doesn't necessarily mean they're good people?

JH: No

JI: So why do they wear them?

JH: For religion

NA: So people - so God thinks that they're good

JI: You said that Hindus wear topis, too -

HA: We don't wear them for religion. We wear them for fashion

JH: What I want to know about Hindus - Why do you have that red spot?

YN: It's only for fashion. That's for fashion - that's for fashion

JH: Ah - just asking

Card: ALLAH

JH: God

ALL: Muslims' god

JI: Muslims' god - so it's not your god?

ALL: No

JH: (trying to read next card in the pile) It looks like my god coming now - next in the pile

YN: It's all the same

NA: Yeah, they think there's only one god
JH: They think there’s only one god – how many gods do you think there is?

NA: We’ve got a lot

YN: Yeah, we’ve got enough

JH: I’ve got one

YN: A lot of people believe that there’s one, heh

JH: Next

Card: JAH

JI: Does it mean anything to you? I know it does to JH

HA, NA and YN: No

JI: Right, JH, would you like to explain what it means?

JH: It’s – that’s what my name is, JH, because it’s the beginning of the god that I – the religion that I come from that’s Rasta – it’s not the actual god’s name but – who is it? What’s he called? He’s like Jahovah, but we call him Jah for short. It’s that – that’s my name, JH, because I’ve got his first name. So my mum named me that and over it the priest – not the priest but the people that always speak – when I was born, had – I don’t know what it was but my mum had – my dad took a photo – they had like these sticks, and my mum’s still got them. She puts them in the house and it’s like all the evil spirits just go away.

And he had like this stick and he was shaking it around me with smoke on it - and my mum said I was coughing – like it had smoke and it was tipping over me like that. I had my eyes closed. He was tipping it and they’d got it all around me and they said these prayers and I always remember them. It goes that, ‘Jah always be with you no matter – through sickness and health. You will be a good child when you grow up and you’ll never die in Hell’. I always
remember that. My mum told me when I was four. I’ll never forget it. I only
properly knew that when I was six. My mum told me what it meant. She sat
down with me and showed me all the books and I had to read – the book was
about this thick and I had to read all of it in fourteen nights – a fortnight – and
I managed to do it. Now I understand why we’ve got a god and what for. And
when I was four my mum said that I asked her why – my mum told me that
we’ve got gods and that, and when I was four I didn’t really understand. My
mum said when I was about five and a half I asked her why? Who put us on
this earth? And that’s when my mum said I have to read this book

JI: So is there any difference do you think between Jah and Allah?

JH: No. No difference. Just different words

Card: RELIGIOUS

JH: It’s like a holy person. They believe in God

YN: All the time

JH: And don’t disobey his rules. It’s not like them people I saw smoking. They
disobeyed their god’s rules. And the people in Algeria – they’re not religious
at all.

JI: So do you know anyone who’s religious?

NA: There’s people in our class.

JH: Miss, you’re religious as well

HA: A lot of my friends. They all believe in God. I think every time they talk about
God to me they say this is what we do, this is what we do – what we do about
God. They talk a lot about God and I think they’re being proper Muslims
because they always follow their religion
JI: What does it mean to follow their religion?
HA: Go to mosque
JH: Do what’s in their religion and don’t do bad
YN: Yeah
JH: And be good
NA: They taught me some things about religion – what they do. Sometimes they say that if we do something wrong in the mosque the headmaster will hit you. And I don’t think they should do that because –
JH: That’s wrong – that’s wrong
YN: Miss, that’s wrong
JH: That’s wrong to hit
NA: In Hindus we never do that. They treat us fairly. I think Christian people, they don’t do that
JH: In Christians they don’t do that. Even if you does – even if you’re just naughty, not. Where I go to is just like a big hall and it’s got an upstairs and it’s got a downstairs – and it’s like here there’s twelve – what is it? – the twelve people, and like there’s people sitting there and like a balcony with the rest of the people sitting there, and he just speaks about God and that. And even if like you’re downstairs and you’re like talking to your friend, like, they don’t say nothing, they just say – they don’t even do anything, all they say is like when you’re going out, ‘What have I said?’ And you have to tell them, and if you don’t, you don’t get beats or nothing, you just get – what’s it called? – punished. You only go to church when you’re fasting and if we’re naughty you have to add two extra days on. So when everyone else is eating you’re sitting down not doing anything
JI: So do you think the headmaster they were talking about is a religious person?

NA: Only a bit

JH: A bit, because he prays – kind of – but not beating them and that

NA: Sometimes they tell me their mosque teacher’s religious and if they don’t do things like – they just get hit and –

HA: I don’t think that’s very nice. I think their parents want them to be pure

YN: It’s like the Victorians

JH: They have to bend over – ‘tchu, tchu!’

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Card: JINN

YN: Miss, is it a Muslim? Or like a devil

NA: It’s a devil isn’t it?

JI: Have you heard people use the word?

YN: Yes, Mustafa uses it a lot

JH: He don’t use jinn

YN: He goes like –

JH: Shetan

YN: Yes, Shetan. And he uses jinn as well. He’s like taking the mick out of -

JH: If you’re taking the mick out of him, saying he’s a fat blob or something, he just goes, ‘Shetan on your head’ It means –

NA: Devil

JH: Devil

HA: Devil

YN: They say if you don’t wear your hat on your head all the time – their religion –
Sometimes I think that he says that because he says that you've talked about me, now you're going to be harmed by the devil

A lot of people say it

So do you believe in jinns?

No

All I know is the devil is down there and God is up there, and whoever's bad, at the end of time, when everyone dies, God – this is what I believe – God lines you up and then he says how good you've been and if you've been bad – he just sends you – down there. You burn in Hell fire for the rest of your life.

If you're bad the devil will harm you.

A church leader – he wears like a shaped hat – goes like that (indicating a mitre shape). In churches people sit in rows and he's always at the front, you know, speaking the Bible and stuff like that and they have the choir at the back and then a table where the bread and wine is

I don't believe it, but sometimes I think that priests are very holy people who believe in God all the time. I don't think they do anything really bad. They're Christians

Like Muslim people – like they eat something with gelatine or something like that - and they go that it's haram

It means that you can't eat it. It's got to do with Muslims

Because they go that it's like –
JH: Pigs

YN: Yeah, pig bones. And then they boil it and then get something soft – I don’t get it

JH: Gelatine

JI: So why do you think it’s not good to eat gelatine?

JH: Pigs

YN: Because the pigs might have a disease that might go round his bone and then you cook the bone and it goes all soft and then they put it into sweets and all that

JH: You know, like in the Bible – it’s like whoever’s got a foot like a sheep – whoever’s got a foot like that you can eat, but whoever’s got a foot like a pig – flat-you shouldn’t eat

JI: But you don’t eat pigs

JH: No, pig’s not a clean animal. M and Ms [sweets] are haram

JI: That’s because of the gelatine

YN: No, they have this other thing

JH: Because there’s a number they have to look for. What was it?

YN: E6 – something like that

JH: E7 – something like that. They have to look on the back and it says E7 and they can’t eat it. I always look on it and if I don’t want it I just give it to someone else

Card: GURU

NA: Sikh people

JH: Sikh
HA: Yeah

YN: Probably their leader

NA: They tell stories. I heard the story from Guru Nanak. Something to do with Sikhs. Kind of leader

Card: NAMAZ

YN: Like Muslim people they go to prayers. They probably went today

HA: They worship their god. Sometimes in the mosque I hear this man who does this kind of voice

YN: Yeah, miss, and then you can hear it all around the streets, it’s so loud

JH: And there’s like this big microphone – some big microphone – you just hear him

NA: One of my friends says that it’s a calling time and that you have to pray now

JH: Calling God

JI: Does it make you want to go and pray?

NA: No

JH: No, cos mostly when I hear it I’m going sleeping because every day of the week, I’ve got to go somewhere. I’ve got football, I’ve got karate, I’ve got running or something

JI: So do many of your friends go to pray when they hear the call?

JH: Yes, Zunaid, Mustafa –

HA: I heard it in the park

YN: Yes, miss, they’ve got something in the park today. A big tent

JH: A big white tent and we can’t play – we can’t have football training now
YN: They put it up two days ago. Miss, and there’s a big road blockage or

something

JH: Yeah, a road blockage
From a Discussion between three Year 6 Pupils (ages 10 – 11)

The task given was to formulate a series of questions to give to the other children remaining in school during the ‘Id festival (ie. the non Muslim children)

Members of the discussion group are:

JH: a boy of African Caribbean origin who identifies as Rastafarian-Christian

JK: a girl of Gujarati origin who identifies as Hindu

RA: a girl of dual heritage (African Caribbean and White) who identifies as Christian

1  JH: How do they feel about not being the same as everyone else?

2  RA: Do you think you’re different?

3  JH: Different because dressed differently like Sikhs wear them hats and carry around knives

4  RA: March with orange turbans – orange and bare-footed

5  JK: Most people wear religious clothes

6  RA: Scarves – topis

7  JH: Turbans

8  RA: Necklaces

9  JH: You know like Sikhs, they go to – what was it called? – they go to them – it’s just like a mosque

10 RA: Temple

11 JH: Temple – or what kind of thing is it like?

12 JK: How is it like in a mosque?
JH: How is it like – ask them if they've ever been to a mosque or been inside a
mosque

JI: If they say ‘yes’ what would the next question be?

JH: Is it any different to your temple or is it mostly just the same?

JK: If ‘no’ –

RA: What do you think it’s like?

JI: Anything else?

JH: Special celebrations – like the Caribbean Carnival – have they ever seen it and
is it similar?

JK: Some of my friends who are Muslim, they say they go to our occasion and
celebrate as well, you know, with stick dances. They even go as well

JI: How would you ask a question that would bring that out?

JK: Do you ever celebrate with another religion?

RA: Or cultures?

JH: I’ve seen quite a lot of Sikhs joining in the carnival and one Sikh that I’ve seen
– I’ve forgotten his name – Mr Singh, or something – he brings this boy
group, and it’s like – because last year Singh religion, they joined the carnival
last year and they came third, but most people think that many people can’t
dance, but when you’ve seen them dance, they dance well – they were actually
moving to the beat and that

JI: Any more questions about celebrations?

JK: Miss, some of the Muslims say that your god isn’t real and –

JH: Here’s one – you could say to them - cos most of my friends think there’s
thousands of gods, but you ask them how many gods do they think there is?

RA: And who?
And what do they call them? Because they call them Allah and we call them God. Some people call them – I’ve forgotten now

Hindus have lots of gods

And what were you saying, JK?

Miss, some of my friends, when we were small, they say that ‘Your god is not real and my god is’, so you can tell them, ‘Have you ever believed in other people’s god?’

Gods

Or do you?

So what do you mean by other people’s gods?

Erm, like if Muslims believe in my Hindu god.

Do you think it’s likely that they’d say yes?

I don’t know

I don’t think so

Why not?

Because Muslims only believe in their own god

Yeah. Quite a lot of my friends only believe – I say to them, ‘Do you believe about Jesus?’ They go ‘No’. But when they ask me, I say, ‘Yes, I believe that there’s only one god’. And they ask me, ‘what colour do you think he is?’ And most people my colour will say he’s black, but I think he’s all mixed colours, black, white, Asian – blue, pink. I think he’s every single colour in the world, I don’t just think he’s one particular colour. Because you can’t just have – even though you can have one god – people think the devil is red, which he probably is because he’s burnt – but God must be like everyone’s colour because to me, I think he’s everyone’s God, because in my religion I think
there's only one God and he's everyone's God, so he's got to be everyone's
different colour. He can't just be black and then he's everyone's God
JK: Muslims believe in green God – green is their colour
RA: And blue for Hindu
JK: I don't know (laughs) He's all mixed colours
RA: What about teasing? 'Do you ever –
JH: Have you ever – Has anyone while you've been alive –
RA: Has anyone –
JK: Ever teased you about your religion? – teased about your gods?
JH: Teased about your gods
JH: And if they say 'yes'?
RA: Why?
JH: Why, do you think?
JH: What answer would you give? If you say someone has teased you about your
religion and about your gods, why do you think they do?
JK: Because they only believe in their god and – Miss, I say that 'If your god
made me then how come I believe in my god? I believe in my god – if your
god made me, how come I believe in my god?'
JH: And what do they say to that?
JK: They don't say anything
JH: Any other questions?
RA: How do you feel?
JH: Why do you think they do it? You could say, 'Have you ever said it back to
them?'
RA: And then underneath, 'Why do you?'
90  JH: If you say, ‘Why do you?’ you’ve already got an answer, like they were teasing your god. You tease them back
91  JI: If they say ‘no’ that would be interesting
92  JH: If they say ‘No, never tease them back’
93  RA: What do you do? What do you do then?
94  JH: What do you do about it?
95  JK: Tell the teacher
96  RA: Ignore them. Just ignore them
97  JH: Tell the teacher, tell your mum or just keep it to yourself. (to the girls) What do you do about it?
98  JK: I just tease them back
99  JH: Why?
100 JK: Because I believe in all gods
101 RA: I would have just ignored them. If you tease them back then they’re more likely to carry on doing it
102 JH: Just carry on
103 RA: Or they’ll go and tell the teacher and then you’ll get in trouble yourself
104 JH: And go ‘Oh, Miss, he did this’ and then Miss’ll say, ‘Why did you do it?’
105 ‘Because he teased me’ and you’ll both get told off so you might as well just go and tell the teacher that he did it first
106 RA: Or just ignore them. If you tease them back then, when you get to tell Miss, then the teachers won’t take much notice
107 JH: ‘You’re just as bad as them; just as bad as them; just as bad. Take no notice’
108 and she’ll go, ‘Ahh, stop doing tittle tattle’ Mrs K will say, ‘Stop selling out on your friends’
JK: I just say ‘Your gods – who made me?’ And they say the devil and all that and
I say ‘If the devil made me then how come – how come I’ve got my own god;
how come I believe in gods’, and then they can’t do anything

JH: Some people just believe in the devil. I know one of my friends – he’s not a
punk but he’s one of those people that believe in death and –

JK: They say that my gods are devils

JH: When you go to my friend’s house it’s always got pictures of people stabbing
and dragons and swords and all of them – like Robin Hood – like we’ve got
Robin Hood – a nice big picture. He’s got one with a knife in his hands and
he’s stabbing a woman

Miss, I’ve got another question. My other question is, ‘Have you got – are
they allowed – because my friend’s a Sikh and he’s not allowed any friends
that are Hindu, Muslim or my black Christian, but the reason why he’s friends
with me is because he said to me he’s only got one friend – me, because we’ve
been – he sneaks out – because he’s not allowed – in his religion it’s not
allowed to be – you have to have friends that are just Sikh, but he doesn’t like
it so me and him play but like I’m not allowed in his house

JK: What if his mum finds out?

JH: He said he’ll get punished – they punish him

JI: So are you allowed to what?

JH: Have friends of other religions

RA: If you are a Muslim, are you a Muslim because your parents are? So – do you
believe different things that your parents do? Like what JH said like his
parents said that he’s not allowed to have any friends which are different to
him – maybe he might think that he should
Sometimes the parents may be – When the parents – they can just make it up like they don’t really know that you can’t do that and you can’t do that – they can just make it up and tell their kids and they tell their kids They might say it because they think that it’s going to make – so that they might say it because they think they’re protecting their children, but they don’t believe it, but their parents might do Protecting their children from what? Other religions They might change them They think – because they think one thing, like they think there’s only one god. Their friends say, ‘There are two gods – don’t believe your mum, man, there are 50,000 gods – don’t believe your mum, your mum’s always wrong’. And then you’re going to go, ‘Yeah, he’s right, you know’, and then you follow him. That’s why sometimes parents do these things.

You know, when they go to mosque and they call someone – the teacher – if they haven’t seen God, how can they believe in God if they haven’t seen God? They say that even Adam was the first person to come on earth. Are they Muslims or Hindus or black or white? I believe that – my parents think they were black. My best mate thinks they were white. My other best mate thinks they were Indian – Asian – Adam and Eve – both of them Some people say they were Hindus They’re Hindus – some people say they were monkeys They can’t be all at once We don’t really know until we die and go to heaven and see them
RA: In India there's a footprint where people – where some people – where Muslims think it was Adam's – no, Mohammed's I think – different people's footprint.

JI: People say that when it was a long time ago, they had gods walking on this earth and then when they die – but I want to know how come they just become gods because don't they still walk on this earth?

JH: This is what I want to know – how did God make this world?

JK: They say that first of all it was dark.

RA: Is there any stories that you believe about God making people?

JH: There's plenty of stories I've read.

RA: In a book there's a story that God made this big basket and inside he put flowers and animals and then he had two spirit people and he had a cold so when he sneezed they fell into the basket, and they were Adam and Eve, and then they made clay babies because –

JK: Yeah, they made clay babies.

RA: And then they put them into the fire and some of them got burnt and that's why they're different colours.

JK: I've got one. The earth was dark and God was getting bored of – you know, doing nothing and not dying people or anything, and so he decided to make some animals first and then –

JH: Yeah, I've heard this one.

JK: Some people – because then the people can eat animals.

JH: And them two people make kids and their kids make kids and kids, kids, kids,

JK: They make them out of clay.
RA: Then they breathe and make life into them

JH: I've heard so many. He makes the ground, plants, everything, flowers and then he gets some dust, makes Adam and takes one of Adam's - I've forgot what it is now (points to side) - takes something from Adam, then gets some other dust and gives it to Eve and then makes Adam and Eve. That's what I've heard. I want to know, how did God ever make? – how did it? – when did he? because if I ever do get to heaven, which I probably might not do, there's a big question I'm going to ask God when I get there: how did he make the earth?

RA: Do you believe that there's a heaven?

JH: Yep

RA: Do you believe in an after life

JH: I believe there's after life. Here's what I believe: I believe that when Almighty God – every single person in this world – he's going to bring all the spirits up and give them new life – everlasting life

JK: Everlasting? – but if they give everlasting life the whole earth will be full because they make babies and they make babies, no one died and even Adam – they say that Adam ate an apple, that he die. If they don't eat it then they don't die – but they eat it

RA: God told Adam not to eat the apple but he ate it – I can't remember what happened

JK: They died

JI: Where did you find that out?

JK: Everyone was telling that story so I was hearing – everybody was talking about it – the story

JI: You mean at school?
JK: Yeah

JH: What I want to know – after everyone dies and say God never makes anyone again, what will happen to the world and how will he feel?

JK: He might be getting bored

JH: I wish I was a little baby again – start all over again – start my life again – start to behave myself again because it’s too late now

JI: I don’t think it’s too late when you’re 11 years old

JH: I’m going to secondary school – I know I’m going to do that, but I want to start over again at infant school and behave myself all the way through

JK: Behave! (laugh)

Mrs Ipgrave, when our friends go, ‘Your god is not alive’ and that, they don’t – I believe in every god, but they think Jesus is a prophet – that’s what one of them said, ‘Jesus is a prophet’.

Muslims just think about Jesus like real and don’t think that Hindu gods are real

RA: Some people think that, like if you’re a Muslim and you thought that Allah is real, they might think that he was – they might not think that other gods are important

JH: A few friends have told me – not friends, but I’ve heard people say that their god’s most important

RA: They think they’re most important, that’s why they say that

JK: Mr D doesn’t believe in any god – he hates religion

JH: Any religion – plus Fatima lied to him and it was ramadhan

JK: You can have another question saying ‘Do you believe in any god or do you believe in no god?’
RA: 'Do you believe in religion?' Or 'If you do believe in religion, what religion do you believe in?', because I believe in lots of gods

JK: I just believe in loads of --

Mrs. Ipgrave, we went to this thing in Diwali and one of the religions --

Bengalis -- they believe in our god so much -- they worship our god -- so I told one of my friends mum that I believe in every god. She said that if Muslims don't believe in our god why should we believe in their god? But I said, 'No, I still believe in every god'

If there's a school with all white people in it and Indian people come -- I've heard of stories a lot about this -- about one week or two they go away because of the people teasing them about their religion -- all the white children in the whole school

RA: Do you like [this school] and why?

JI: Do you think it would be different going to a school where most of the children were Hindu or from a similar background to you?

JH: Yep. If you go to a school of the same religion you all believe the same thing -- there'd be no arguing about who likes who

JK: I don't care if I go as long as I make friends there

RA: I like [this school] because it's got lots of different -- if you go to a school where there aren't other religions so you're more likely to believe in only one god and when you're older you might not believe in other gods because you don't know much about them

JH: You only know about one particular god

RA: It might make you racist, too

JH: Yeah
RA: Because if you’re in a school where everyone is white and you’re the only black person there and other people have been horrid to you, you might think every white person is like that.

JI: You think it’s good to come to a school like this?

RA: There’s more toleration.

JK: There’s a boy in dinner time who sits next to me, his name’s Hussain, he’s a bit racist. He goes ‘Your god is a devil and he’s not real’.

JH: I’ve heard quite a lot of black people, white people and some Asians say that the reason why most of the schools are filled up is because in Highfields people say there’s too much Asians.

JI: So who says that – grown ups? – children?

JH: Yeah, grown ups. Quite a lot of grown ups say there’s too much Asians in the schools, that’s why most schools are fully filled up, and they say especially [the local secondary school] and my school, especially those.

JI: So would you like to go to a school where it was mainly black children?

JH: No, I’d like to be at a school where it was balanced – white, black, Asians, Chinese – different colours so I can learn about all of them, so I know that when I am grown up I know about everyone and know that their gods – who they are, and I won’t be a racist.

JI: In this school there are different groups – would it be different if the groups were equal?

JH: Yes. Probably, yes.

RA: Yes.

JH: It’d be mixed. Because there’s quite a lot of Asians in the school – little black and little white. To me it don’t seem balanced enough because Hindus and
Muslims – I know quite a lot about them – friends are Muslims and things. I don’t know much about Chinese people, I don’t know much about –

RA: The way you say Chinese people! Chinese people are people from China – it doesn’t mean that’s their religion though, so they might be Hindus or they might be Muslims or they might be Sikhs. It’s only where they come from, isn’t it?

I don’t think it would be better if it was more balanced because if it was balanced you wouldn’t learn so much about other people

JH: If it was balanced you would, because if it was balanced Hindus, Muslims, Chinese, Black, White, mixed race, pink, blue – anything, whatever colour, you can learn more about each other because there’s quite a lot of Hindus and Muslims, I know most about them. I can just go to JK or any of my friends and go, ‘Who do you believe in?’ I can go to quite a few other people in the school but not quite many of them.

JI: What if it was equal – a third Christian, a third Hindu, a third Muslim?

RA: You get more ideas because some Muslims think that you’re not allowed to go to graveyards because – well women aren’t allowed to go to graveyards because the spirits can see them naked (JK laughs) but some Muslims don’t think that. You would learn about more ideas that Muslims have. Some Muslims are stronger than others – most children in this school aren’t that religious

JH: There are about sixteen boys in this school who skive mosque every day; Zahid Kazi skives; his brother skives – there are quite a lot of people I know that skive mosque – I think –
I am a Rastafarian. People think that Rastafarian is a different religion to Christian, but it’s just a different name, and just like church, you go into a church you pray and that. We do the same thing. We have to wear a hat.

JK: If we have more Hindus then they have rude words in their religion so anyone, like RA, JH or any black or white people, can learn them and say them to their mum – say them to people outside that are Hindu and –

JH: And they’ll get mad

RA: They’ll upset them

JK: Like JH says rude words in Hindu

JH: Quite a lot – I don’t know what they mean

JK: Yeah, that’s why

RA: If you know what the meaning is it’s alright, but if you say it you might be upsetting someone – you don’t know what it means

REVIEW OF QUESTIONS SO FAR.

JI: Do your parents mind who you play with?

JK: No

RA: No

JH: No – I can play with anyone but they mustn’t be a bad influence on me

JI: Who’s likely to be a bad influence on you?

JH: Where I live there’s quite a lot of robbers. There’s this lady, she’s got eleven children. Every one of them is. I play with one of them but my mum says
don’t bring them here because we’ve got CD player, Hi Fi, Saturn play station, computers

JK: The robbers can just see the whole house and –
RA: And they can make a plan, can’t they?

SHARING OF EXAMPLES OF THEFT IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

RA: ‘Do you get racist comments round Highfields?’
JH: Another page and we can put racist comments on top
RA: My next door neighbour’s horrible. Because she’s old sometimes, when she wants – she needs help with things like cooking and cleaning so, when, if she – sometimes she knows she’s being horrible to my mum saying – once she lost her purse. It was a brown one and she asked my mum on purpose if she’d seen her ‘nigger brown’ purse
JH: Her what?
RA: Nigger brown
JH: Nigger brown purse?
RA: My mum didn’t talk to her for a bit. She did it on purpose – she knows what she’s saying
JH: Once down Highfields I got arrested but it wasn’t my fault

THERE FOLLOWS A DETAILED ACCOUNT OF JH’S BRUSH WITH THE LAW WHEN HE FOUGHT WITH A BOY WHO CALLED HIM ‘NIGGER’.
JH: So when I went down the station with my mum, my mum was just telling [the police officers] what happened and what happened and they said, ‘Ah, sorry - sorry for messing you about because we thought you were making trouble as usually black kids do, they cause trouble’. My mum went mad, she went, ‘Hey!’

I can see what they’re saying, though, because down near Highfields, Brown Street, there are all black kids that hang around, mess about and –

RA: Take drugs

JH: Most of my cousins that I’ve got – they live in Highfields – stole cars and – yes, so I can see what they mean but I was only 10 – no, I was 11 – no 10 And my mum was saying ‘Why are you saying it’s all the black kids for? Sometimes it’s white kids and half caste kids, mixed race’ – but if you go down Brown Street there is a mix – there’s white kids, half caste kids and sometimes even Asian kids that I see mixed together and they go round. So after that my mum just got mad and my mum just says, ‘Look JH, if anyone calls you any bad names, especially if you’re in the school, don’t fight, go and tell [the headteacher], but outside, you know what to do – tump them down

JI: (to JK) Have you ever had trouble with racist remarks?

JK: Yes, my mum had a friend. She was white and we were going on holiday so we kept all the gold chains in to her because we were afraid of robbery and we came back and we went to her house and she said, ‘I don’t know you. Get out, you Indian, before I call the police!’ So we got home and we called the police and they came and then they said to her, ‘Do you know her?’ and so she said, ‘No’ and they checked her house and they found it.
I've even heard people - cos there was this old man that used to live at Highfields. He's one of those people that are not disabled but he's always drunken and hanging down and spitting and one time this white guy was walking and he spit on his shoe and he said, 'What are you doing, you Paki?'
and because he was all dribbling and everything like that, so I just - my mum's friend just brought him into the house and cleaned him up, but the guy just walked off and then when I seen him coming down the street before at about three and a half hours later - it was about nine or ten, and I was messing around and playing outside - I seen him again with a friend who was Asian

Does it happen in school?

A lot

Miss, even Zahir Suleman - he called me a nigger and stabbed me with a knife

Who did?

Zahir and I told [the headteacher] I'll show you - there (lifts trouser leg)

He stabbed you with a knife?

No - scissors - and [the headteacher] took him

In our class there's this boy called Shezad - he was calling out. He and this girl Nazia, was calling each other horrible names and Shezad called Nazia a nigger

How come he called her a nigger?

I know - exactly. And he didn't know what he was saying. He didn't know what it meant so he said it anyway and later on when he wanted - because sometimes I play football - he was asking me if I wanted to play and I said I didn't want to play because he was being racist and he said, 'I didn't say
anything – all I said was “nigger”.’ He didn’t know what it meant, but he still
said it, though

JI: So what about you, JK?

JK: This girl – when I was in nursery – this girl kept calling me rude names like
‘Indian’ – the one with the pony, she always had pony or plaits on

RA: Emma? Yes, she had dirty bits in her ear

JK: Yeah. I’ve got a question; ‘If you’re Indian, if you’re in a white school or if
you’re white and in an Indian school, how do you feel if anyone calls you
names?’

RA: I’ve thought of a question, too. If you’re mixed race is there any names that
people call you that you don’t like – or if you’re black people call you nasty
names. I don’t like people calling me half caste I like mixed raced or dual
heritage.

JK: When some people say bad words, I say ‘What does that mean?’, so they said,
‘I don’t know’, and I say, ‘You shouldn’t be saying that if you don’t know
what that means’ and they just kick me, and I kick them back, and we’re
starting a fight

RA: Because some people call Asian people ‘Indians’.

JK: I think they should just call them their own names, or something

Most Muslims are racist because they think that – white people, they don’t
really communicate, but Muslims – they think if they’ve got more people –
more Muslims – then they can fight back more in this school, they can fight
back more.

They’ve got so many people behind them, behind their back
RA: I think that if you get a big group of Muslim people, sometimes they think that because there’s lots of Muslim people, that they can start – they can sort of like – not rule, but they can start saying – like in Highfields, lots of Muslim people live there, they can start deciding where they want to put mosques, if they want to take other buildings down they feel they can decide themselves without having a meeting and invite everyone else as a community except for just the one religion. I don’t mind people putting mosques up, it’s just when they people don’t ask everyone, then –

JK: They don’t put any temples or any churches. They don’t build any

JH: Do you know what I think?

RA: There are some old churches, but they don’t really –

JK: They don’t build new ones

RA: Like, you know that little one - There were three churches and now there are only two. I think there are two or three, but there are loads of mosques

JH: I think that the Muslims have got most of the places because they could build more churches, they could build more temples, build more for Hindus, more for Sikhs, but every time there’s something gone Muslims rush and go and buy it quick because one’s – like there’s a building down Green Lane Road,

Muslims have got that – that church down there – that little Christian church

JK: That old one

RA: And the one next to Spinney Hill Park – the one big one

JH: And the Red Star – Melbourne Hall – they’ve got that. And they’ve got – plenty – the one down Melbourne Road

JK: Berner’s Street
They’ve got plenty – and they could build more churches or anything – and
there’s this factory that might be going, and I bet when it goes, they’ll rip to go
and buy that

That’s even racist – that’s even racist because they don’t build any temples,
they don’t build any churches – there’s only three churches and only three
temples

Why do you think that is?

Because there’s more Muslims in Highfields

Because they have more money to build more things

Than Christians or Hindus. There’s only one synagogue – I don’t see why you
can’t just have one building where everyone can go

So why do you think they have so many?

Maybe some people think that – instead of just making it because they want to
pray there, they might want to make it so they can say, ‘Oh, our mosque and
your church’ or whatever

My mum says that there’s more people in Highfields that are Muslim and
when they fast they give £5, but they don’t because they must have been
spending it on things – on mosques

I bet even if we close the school down –

They might take it

I bet it’d be Muslims that’d take the school

Because there’s even one classroom [Qur’an class] over there in the tuck shop

Yeah, even the Muslims have got our school. It belongs to us and I think if we
close this school down and Highfields closes down – Muslims have already
got that Highfields – Highfields School – and I bet if – and they’ve even got
this school – the mobile - and I bet if we closed down this big building here

Muslims would take it

JI: Why would they take it? What would they want it for?

JH: Mosque. They’d use our hall for a mosque. Probably even the classrooms

RA: I don’t think there’s too many mosques but I think that, if you’re going to

make more, I don’t think they need that many. Not everyone even goes to

mosque every day, only some people. Like you know, in the Moat Community

Centre, there’s a room where people go to pray that’s fine for children.

There’s here – this school. I don’t think it’s wrong Muslims taking – buying

houses and things to make mosque, but I think that they should consider every

one else who’s here cos I think that the Muslims in Highfields think that

Highfields belongs to them and that they can do whatever they want, but they

should really make sure that everyone wants the same thing

JH: Yeah, have a vote. Tony Blair should stand up and say – Tony Blair should go,

‘I order a vote. If you want the mosque you vote and if you don’t want a

mosque, you want something else, you vote.’ Most people want other things

JK: But actually there’s more Muslims and they would vote

JH: I think quite a lot of Hindus would put –

JK: I think Hindus are lazy cos if the go vote they might get one [temple] – even

Christians, they might even get a church or things – I think they’re lazy

RA: I think they should be fighting for the right to have more churches

JK: Yeah

RA: But I don’t think you really need that many – so many places of worship. I

know you need about three or four, but when there’s not really that many

people who are going to go to it every day then there isn’t, like – they don’t
really need lots and lots of places for people to worship because it's like
everyone needs one mosque they can go to and there's lots of mosques, isn't
there?

JK: You know, when someone's being racist to you and it's your friend, and you
don't want to break up because it's your only friend and you're playing
outside and they're being racist to you -- then, at 5 o'clock till 7 o'clock all the
Hindus get a rest because all the Muslims are gone mosque and you get a little
rest and not being called names. It's all quiet in my street

JH: Yes, even in my street
From a Discussion with a Group of Year 4 Pupils (ages 8-9)

The children are answering the questions set for them by Year 6 pupils.

Members of the discussion group are:

AK: a boy of Gujarati origin who identifies as Hindu

CS: a boy of African Caribbean origin who identifies as Christian

JS: a boy of dual heritage (African Caribbean and White) who identifies as Christian

1. **Question: Do you think you are different from most children at school?**

2. JS: I think I’m different because I’m more – how do you say – lively – more

3. fashionable

4. CS: I think –

5. AK: I’m not

6. CS: I think a small group of us do feel different because it’s – they’ve got sort of

7. different ways of life and different times when they do things and do different

8. things – do things different from us

9. JI: So which people are you talking about when you say, ‘they’?

10. CS: Mostly the Muslims

11. JI: What’s different? In what ways is your life different from theirs?

12. CS: Erm – we get to eat different stuff – we go into different buildings and – erm –

13. they call God –

14. AK: Different temples – religions

15. JS: Allah
Different names

Question: Have you ever been in a mosque?

In my life – you mean have I ever seen in a mosque? I’ve never ever ever seen inside a mosque

Lots of pictures of their gods

You probably know

A big picture

I think it’s really big and there’s a big mat, a big chair and lamps and things

and they just kneel down on the mat

And some seats – some people sit and some kneel down

Question: Is it different to your temple/church or is it mostly just the same

How do you think a mosque would be different from, say, a temple? Let’s ask AK first

I think they have different rooms for different classes and they have to pray

Don’t you have that in temples?

You just have different rooms where our gods are and you have to pray

What about differences between churches and mosques?

For a start we have stained glass windows

Do we?

And – erm – at some churches actually offer food to the grown ups as – in the service – erm – bread and wine

No, yes, sometimes we offer bread and wine – yes, sometimes

And – erm – we sing

Yeah, we sing voices

And what about in a mosque
JS: No, I just think, they sort of like have separate classes but different sort of children, I think

AK: I think – they’re always talking about like praying kind of thing

CS: I think they do sing but not in a singing like tune way – in a sort of talkative way

**Question: Do you ever celebrate with another religion?**

JS: Erm, that’s a good question

CS: A bit, because my aunty’s Muslim – she still celebrates Christmas

JI: Do you celebrate ‘Id with her?

CS: I think she just celebrates it on her own with her boyfriend


CS: Do you celebrate Christmas?

AK: Yes

CS: What do you do?

AK: I just play about, get some things, get some presents

JS: Do you celebrate it though – like do you get lots and lots of presents?

CS: I think lots of people do actually celebrate different cultures – nearly everybody in Leicester goes to the [Caribbean] Carnival every year

JS: I don’t see much Muslims

CS: Most people do celebrate again because one’s carnival, nearly everyone celebrates, and another – erm – Halloween

JS: At that Caribbean thing – Carnival – they still come, Hindus and Muslims still come – some, not most

AK: I celebrate my – Diwali. I go to my cousin’s house because they’ve got fireworks. My dad gets some fireworks and he takes me to my cousin’s house
And mostly everybody celebrates New Year.

**Question:** How many gods do you think there are?

JS and CS: One

AK: Lots

JS: I think there's only one god

CS: I think there's only one but I think people of different cultures just call them different names

AK: Yes

JS: That's what I was going to say

JI: So if a Muslim talks about Allah, do you think he's talking about the same god?

JS: Yes

CS: Yeah

AK: I don't know because we have lots of gods

JS: You have about eighty at least

CS: But I don't see the fuss really, why people come in different religions, because it would be much more

JS: Easier for people

CS: Easier

JS: To understand

CS: One religion

JS: It's one god, yeah

JI: You think it would be better if there were one religion?

JS: Yeah

JI: Why would it be better?
We'd be able to do the same kind of thing

Not so much arguing

There'll be less fights and things like that – there'll be less fuss

So what would the religion be like if there were just one?

Like – people say, like arguing, 'Oh, my god's better than your god', but I think it's just the same god and if we understand that we have one god it's just sort of like – we'll get on together – we will do the same things

We'll have to eat the same stuff.

But what I think is, God's getting quite annoyed now 'cos everyone's just making a fuss. He thinks that you should just settle your differences and all be the same – and – erm – as if the people – as if some of the white people are like attacking black people and that is – erm – I feel sorry for those people who are beating the people up because their mind’s really messed up really

Do you think it would be possible? Do you think people would ever agree to one religion?

No

You say ‘no’, AK, why not?

Because, you know, they would fight over it. They’d say ‘Everyone like be in our religion’ and they’d have a fight

They should, they should just not choose any of the religions

Yes

What they should do is, they should just not choose any of the religions and just have one new religion

How do you start a new religion?

All the – erm – religious – religious people get together and
find different languages and everything, and actually find a language that
actually says a word that’s appropriate for being a religion, and then people
can get along and I think it will be much more – there won’t be so much
trouble in the future because they’ll have more technology, but it’s not just the
technology, it’s the – if people are getting on – so I think they’ve got to – get
on more

JS: Are you trying to say – are you trying to say a new name or a new god?

CS: No one can make a new god

JS: I know, but –

CS: God’s just there

JS: I know, but what are you trying to say, though? – a new name or something?

CS: People make one big religion that no one disagrees with – every –

JS: You can’t make a new religion really, can you?

CS: Yeah

JS: How?

CS: I’ll explain that to you later

JI: No, I’d like you to explain that now. Can you explain it now? It’s very

interesting

CS: I’ve just told him – I don’t think a new language in general, just as new word

JS: Like say God came down to Earth today, sort of like to settle it down

JI: Do you think God could make a new religion?

JS: Yeah

CS: But I think first it’s going to need someone that gives a lot of dedication to his

name before he can come down to Earth, then he can actually take on that

person’s body and he can – his soul – the God’s soul will be in the person’s
body, but it will be the person's body and –

JS: That means he, the person will like – you're saying God's soul will be in that
person's body – that means like he's something like God!

CS: Yeah, but –

JS: So he can say, 'I’ve made a new religion' – er – he can – I can't –

CS: God can make peace on Earth

JI: So you feel that people need to do something first?

CS: People have to do something first before – erm – God gives them something
Back – like if it’s a fairy – a fairy’s not going to start doing it for you – like,
say they’re going to put a new suit on – you’re not going to just stand there
and get a new suit on – like you’re going to have to twirl around or something
– just do a little thing until the fairy actually does something

JS: You have to do something, and then do you make an effort at it and it'll
probably happen

CS: Do something and you'll get something back

JS: Yeah, like if you just stand there and say, 'Oh, please just get me a pair of new
slippers' – you have to really do an effort to like –

CS: Like be nice to the person

JS: To get the thing that you want. Like you can go, like – say you want God to
come down, you have to make a big effort – try your best

Question: How many gods do you think there are? What are their names?

JS: I think there's Allah, God, whatever – they're just the same thing. It's a waste
of time making them different

CS: It's just the same thing – Allah's just the same as God in a different language,

JS: Yeah, just say they speak in Gujarati, they're saying the same thing but in a
different language - like - er - (to AK) so can you say Allah in Gujarati?

AK: No

JS: That means - What’s God in Gujarati?

AK: Bhagavan

JS: That means you call, Allah Bhagavan

JI: So what do you think, AK? Do you think there are lots of gods?

AK: Yes

JS: How much actual gods have you got?

AK: There are lots of important ones

JS: How many are there? Do you know? Have you got over - at least fifteen gods? Over –

AK: I only know some of them because I think there’s a lot more than I know

JS: You think there’s about over fifteen?

AK: Yeah. I’ve got some pictures in my house, but I don’t think I’ve got all

JS: But one day will more mosques –

JI: Temples?

JS: Do you go to a temple? Will your temple stick to one god one day, any day?

AK: I don’t know

CS: Erm – making an effort is just like, really, how you put good – like how I put good clothes on to go to –

JS: Weddings

CS: Church – or a wedding, or a funeral – I’m making an effort and I’ll get – I’ll get something back by going there

JS: Yes, yes, I know what you mean

Question: Do you believe in other people’s gods?
JS: Erm –

CS: Not really because there’s just one god – I believe there’s just one god

JS: But they’re all just one god

JI: What about you, AK? Do you believe in other people’s gods?

AK: I don’t know

JS: He’s got more than one god, you see

**Question:** Has anyone ever teased you about your religion?

JS: Yes

CS: Yes

AK: Yes, in Year 3 – in Year 2 and Year 3 I was the only Hindu in our class and the Muslims, they used to say, ‘Our god’s better than yours’ and used to tease me. I felt bad.

JI: Did you ever tease them back?

AK: I didn’t have anything to say

JS: When I was about in Infants, in about Year 1 or 2, I remember they always used to argue like – who was in my class? There was Emma, me and CS was in my class – we were the only Christians. Most - there was about four to ten Muslims, but most were Hindus – I mean the other way round – and they were all just – they were all taking sides, like they were making plans and everything – saying things about our god. They were saying, like – er – one day, ‘Our god’s like going to take over’

AK: Yeah

JS: Your god and –

AK: Yeah, and we will go to hell, and things like that

JS: And all the Christians are going to hell because they haven’t got the real -
because they've chose god what they want and that ain't the right god

AK: Yeah

JS: And then we’re going to go down to hell and they are just going to go happily
up to heaven.

CS: They – and they always say that – erm – ‘your god’s shit’ and all that lot, and
erm, they say ‘My god’s going to kill your god’ and everything

JI: And what do you feel about that?

CS: I feel quite insulted by that. I feel the same way when people tease me about
my colour, as well.

JS: Yeah, that’s true. You feel like you just want to get them and go (strangling
gesture) and like you just want to kill them because they’re being racist

JI: Does it ever make you feel you wish you were Muslim like them so they
wouldn’t tease you?

CS: No

JS: No

AK: No

JS: I’m happy what God made me and if he made me a Muslim, whatever –
whatever he makes me – you know, whatever culture he makes me like Indian
or Red Indian or African, I’d be proud what he made me

AK: Yeah

CS: I’m proud of who I am because really it’s my ancestors that started this and
I’m going to carry on for them

JS: Yeah, that’s true

CS: I just feel sorry for them because they were taken – they were actual slaves,
and I don’t want that to happen again – people to be slaves, and not this time
by colour, but by religion and colour - both

**Question: Why do you think they do it?**

CS: They're jealous

JS: Yeah, I think they're jealous because they think, 'Oh, that - yeah, their god's true but I should appreciate what god I've got and I can't step back'

AK: They just want more - they just want people to turn into Muslims - definitely

CS: And - well - some people do turn into Muslims by force

JS: Like your aunty did

CS: My aunty didn’t turn into Muslim by force

JS: Because her boyfriend –

CS: She actually done it by herself cos she could've told him, 'Oh, why don’t you be a Christian?', but instead she just went and be a Muslim – she was reasonable

JS: Once there was this woman - she went out with a Hindu and sort of like - the lady, she went in the library and she was a Christian and her boyfriend was a Hindu. In the library she looked up this Qur'an book and she took it up – she wanted to know how it differed from from her and she read the whole book and the whole book, and now – the lady had a sister, and she gave all her good clothes to her sister, and she took all the Hindu clothes, and now she's a Hindu

CS: And - erm – before my sister actually got married, she had to have a special bath and everything and being blessed - but I think actual being a Christian is sort of better, because you – you know, you can eat any food you want, any drink, can really do anything – I know my uncle’s girlfriend – she knows someone that – erm – ‘s turned Muslim she was taking drugs
Last year they were saying things like — er — stop — like every Friday — they’ll say, ‘Stop singing, stop it — you’re forcing me to sing — it’s Friday, and we’re not allowed to sing on Friday’

Question: When you were teased about your religion, how did you feel?

How did I feel? — I felt like —

When they tease me, I feel angry

Like I was bullied

You feel like hitting them, but the teacher said — Plus there are more Muslims and I’m the only Hindu, and this was Year 3

Actually, I do feel bad about it. I feel bad about it because I feel sorry for them, like I feel sorry for the racist people because they’re taking it out on us when we’re not really doing anything to them, like say these white kids just killed a boy — that would not be fair — but you know, if more of us would be able to get along better, it would boost the chance of even more people getting along better, and if kids do it, then the grown ups might try and do it too — so it’s like we’re sort of teaching the grown ups

So do you think that’s your role as young people

Yes — to teach other generations

When they tease us sometimes they say that you’re going to hell, but they’re the ones teasing us so they might go to hell — they’re doing the bad things like teasing us

Question: What did you do about it?

You told us what you felt about it — what you wanted to do — what did you actually do?

Ignore them
JS: I think if I do something wrong – something like – something bad’s going to happen to me, so in a way – say I will start and say something like – say that, ‘Oh, stop saying things about our god’ and I wouldn’t say something rude or anything, because something bad could happen to me when I do. I will do something like I’ll say, ‘Don’t do that because you’re doing something wrong’ or I’ll go teacher or something

CS: Sometimes I get quite angry and I start calling them ‘Idiot!’ and pushing them a bit if I get really angry

Question: Have you ever teased them back?

CS: Erm – a few times, but – when we were in class once we were singing – just going ‘la, la, la, la, la, la’ and they were saying we were being racist

JS: No, because we were just going –

AK: JS was going ‘Ooh la la’ and they thought JS was teasing their god

JS: We weren’t saying ‘Allah’, we were sort of saying ‘la, la’ and we were saying it in French

JI: Have you ever done it on purpose?

JS: Once or twice

CS: Yeah

JS: I said that ‘Your god’s – your god’s just a pure statue!;’

CS: One time – I know something that JS said – one time he said that Hindu’s god is an elephant

JS: When I was really young in about Year 1, like all these boys – they were about in like Year 2, nearly Year 3 – they were blackmailing me and saying that, ‘If you don’t – if you don’t start believing in our god, you’ll see what will be happening’
Question: Is your best friend your religion and culture?

JI: (to AK) Is Hussain still your best friend?

AK: Yes

JI: Does it make any difference that he's not your religion or culture?

AK: We don't bring it up

JS: My best friend - both of them - they're the same as me. One's a girl so that's one difference

JI: (to CS) What about you?

CS: Yeah, they're all Christians

Question: Are you allowed to play with children with other religions?

CS: Not if they're racist

JS: If they're racist my mum will say, 'Don't play with them' because my mum hates racist people

AK: You know when they kept on teasing me and they hit me, I came to my mum and she said, 'You shouldn't really play with them - they're racist'

Question: Are your beliefs the same as your parents’?

JS: Yeah

CS: Yeah

AK: Yeah

CS: I've got - I've got loads of bibles in my house

JI: So you don't disagree with your parents about religion

CS: No

JS: Definitely no

JI: Do you think you might do in the future or do you think you'll always have the same beliefs?
CS: Erm – I think if my kids sort of disagreed I’d try to reason with them, but if I couldn’t it would be difficult

JS: I’d sort of like – if they didn’t understand it what our family religion – our religion, yeah, and they never wanted to – what I’d do really, either discuss it with them, if they never – or I’d just take them to church and something

CS: Yeah, but that would probably be offensive to them if they wanted to be different religion

JS: Yeah, but they haven’t – they don’t know – if they wanted to be a different religion, CS, they would have wanted – I can’t explain it – they haven’t – they want to be a different religion and they haven’t been to that place where they want to be a different religion, so you want to go take them church before they pop into that religion – so they can see

Question: Do you believe in religions?

JI: Do you believe there are some religions which are right and some which are wrong?

CS: Yeah, I think that the Muslim religion is wrong to say that they can’t eat certain things and they can’t do certain things, because everyone has the right to do what they feel is right

JS: Yeah

JI: So when they say, ‘Allah tells us we must do this and we mustn’t do this’, do you think that they’re wrong?

CS: Yeah, because he’s not telling you that – it’s just some person who’s wrote a book and they don’t even know if all these stories are true or not. They’re just saying that they are.

Question: Do you like this school?
AK: There’s so much Muslims

JS: My mum thinks that because the dinner ladies are all Muslims and most of
them are the same family – my mum thinks that it isn’t right that they all five
– six – are Muslim. She thought it was wrong and so I think the same. You
could at least get a different culture.

CS: I don’t think the system’s quite fair because – it’s mostly the system of the
holidays because we have different holidays from them and they have
different holidays from us – like if they have –

JS: Like if they go to Pakistan

CS: I’m not talking about that kind of holiday, I’m talking about when you get
time off school – like they have ‘Id – we stay at school, but while it’s
Christmas everyone has a holiday

JS: And I think that when we have the two weeks off for Christmas, they – it ain’t
their time for their religion – it’s our time for our religion and they should be
at school. When we have our two weeks Christmas, all the Muslims and
Hindus, they haven’t got no religion in those two weeks – I think they should
stay at school – like all the teachers – there aren’t that many teachers that are
Muslims or Hindus. They should at least get some supply teachers.

CS: Or if they have two weeks off at our time, when it’s ‘Id, when it’s their
festivals, we can have some time off school as well
From a Discussion with a Group of Year 5 Pupils (ages 9-10)

The children are answering the questions set for them by Year 6 pupils.

Members of the discussion group are:

AY: a White girl who identifies as Christian

JN: a boy of African Caribbean origin who identifies as Christian

LH: a girl of African Caribbean origin who identifies as Christian

NH: a girl of Gujarati origin who identifies as Hindu

SH: a boy of Gujarati origin who identifies as Hindu

SN: a dual heritage boy (African Caribbean and White) who identifies as Christian

TR: a girl of Gujarati origin who identifies as Hindu

Question: Do you think you are different from most children at school?

TR: I sometimes feel a bit left out because some of the religions are racist and not very nice about what religion you are.

Question: Have you ever been in a mosque?

JN: I haven’t been in a mosque, but I don’t intend to.

JI: Why not?

JN: Because I feel that what they teach us at my church - that there’s only one religion and there’s only one god, because I am a Christian so I feel I should be always go to church, I don’t really want to go to a mosque

JI: Not just out of interest
**Question: What do you think it’s like inside?**

**TR:** Full of lots of people – Muslims

**SN:** This big hall with people sitting down and praying to their gods, and then the – er – teacher at the front of the class –

**JN:** This big hall and there’s – they have these little mats each – a little one each – and they kneel down on it and pray, and they have these like statues in it

**SN:** Statues of their gods

**AY:** I’ve just seen inside but I haven’t been in. I’ve seen writing on the walls

**SH:** (whisper) It says Allah in Arabic

**SN:** They have this kind of shaped roof at the top of the building

**JN:** It’s like – it goes like this (outlining dome with hand movement)

**Question: Is it different to your temple/church or is it mostly just the same?**

**TR:** Some people – Muslims say like they don’t know what their god looks like so they won’t have statues in. In our temples we have lots of statues.

**JN:** Mosques, they have all these mats and they kneel all on the floor and we just sit down and pray and sing songs when we –

**SN:** Songs of Praise

**JN:** Like rejoice – like we rejoice

**JI:** And what is there in the mosque

**NH:** Just praying all day – pray all day

**JN:** People tell me that in the Muslims, if you’re naughty, you get whipped with a cane or something, and people showed me where they got hit and they got marks on their arm

**LH:** That’s wicked!
AY: That's - that's - what's it called again

JN: Intending to be good. They take it more seriously than they usually do because

If they don't, they'll get ripped

SN: You can get arrested for that - that's child abuse!

JN: That's shit

JI: Why do you think that's wicked, LH?

SN: (whisper) They hit them with any weapon

LH: It's just - er - people say that if they're talking or something, in the mosque,

when the teacher's gone out, they have to go to -

TR: They have to go to that molly-sab-thing and get whacked and all that

LH: Yes

JN: Yeah, they get whacked

TR: They talk when they're praying so why not talk something else. We don't have
to be whipped

NH: We don't get whipped

TR: They have to wash their faces, then they have to wash their right armpit, then
do something else with your left armpit

JI: Why do you think you don't have to do that in churches?

SN: It's not our religion is it?

JN: We can come to church constantly or we can come to church when we like it

AY: We don't have exams in church like in mosque

JN: Yes, we do

TR: Miss, if they drop their book on the floor then they have to kiss it and all that

JN: Eh?

LH & AY: Yeah!
AY: That's what it says – you have to tread on the ground or something

SH: Have to kiss the ground

AY: Or, like if they’re swearing, they have to do something like this (waves hand over mouth)

JN: No, they go like this (refining movement)

OTHERS: Yeah!

JI: Why do they do that?

AY: They’re saying ‘sorry’ to their god

TR: I think it’s weird, don’t you?

SN: To wipe their mouth. Especially -

AY: If they’ve said something about a Muslim –

about someone else

TR: They’re washing their mouth out of sin or something

SH: They say, ‘guna’

**Question: Do you ever celebrate with another religion or culture?**

JN: No

AY: No

TR: No

AY: You do!

TR: No, we don’t

AY: You celebrate Christmas!

JN: I don’t think it’s right to celebrate other people – other religions

TR: JN, we don’t even celebrate, all we do is get presents

AY: But we don’t get presents on Diwali

LH: I don’t think it’s fair. When it’s Christmas, everyone gets it off [from school]
and when it’s Easter, everyone gets it off. When it’s ‘Id, we don’t get it off

AY: We should get ‘Id off too

TR: They should have Diwali and everything off because we all get two weeks for

Christmas

SN: We should complain about it

JI: Shall we go back to what JN was saying – you don’t think it’s right to

celebrate another religion – why don’t you think it’s right to celebrate another

religion?

JN: Because they celebrate – if you’re going to celebrate a time what you

celebrate, it’s best to celebrate it properly, because – like – if you celebrate

‘Id, some people don’t know what – some people don’t know how you

celebrate it – like you pray or you get any presents or –

SN: I just say ‘congratulations’ to them

JN: If you celebrate it – you might as well celebrate it properly – we’d get it wrong

to do it

SN: I still congratulate them

JI: (to TR) But you celebrate Christmas?

TR: We don’t actually celebrate it – we get presents and a Christmas tree and that

AY: But that is celebrating then, isn’t it – getting presents

Question: How many gods do you think there are?

AY: I think there’s one and he’s called all different things

NH: I was going to say that!

AY: Same!

TR: Miss, we can’t actually say that because we’ve got so many gods

AY: Yeah, but they could be called – em –
SH: We have to believe all of them because all of them have got something
different, like special

JN: Yeah, because – look, they can all – they can all be the same god because God
can – God can –

AY: Do lots of things

JN: Change into different – like different features – like he can be in you

SN: He can come into anybody

NH: He can change into anything

TR: We’ve got like a god who you can actually see

JN: Do you have to praise every one of them?

TR: What do you mean by ‘pray’? All you have to do is kneel down

JN: Praise – praise

TR: Not like every week

JN: Like we pray to Jesus – do you have to pray to all of them?

TR: I don’t know how you lot pray to Jesus

JN: No –

AY: No, do you know – like your god

SN: You go to one god and say ‘Our Father who art in heaven’. You do it for an
hour and then you go to another god

TR: Not an hour! I don’t know what -

AY: And then you go to –

SH: They all have different – they’re special for something else – they’re special
for different things

JN: What I think – what I’ve been brought up to believe is there’s one god and
there’s all kinds of names
AY: Yeah, like there's 99 names

JN: So I don't like say all the things that you're calling Shiva. I know like Allah as
Jesus because I believe Jesus is just one god or you call Allah just one god

AY: Yeah, he's got lots of names

TR: Cos, like some people just go round saying, like, 'Our god made your god'
and all that, but -

AY: We say that only one god created the world

JI: Who says my god created your god?

TR: Some people go round – the Muslims go round saying 'Allah made this world'

AY: I know, and 'Your god – Jesus or something - didn't make this world'

TR: That you're on this world for no reason

SH: Some Muslim people say God created the world

JI: What do you mean TR 'That you're on this earth for no reason'?

TR: Em- like you're not Muslims so why are you on this earth and things like that

SH: Yeah

AY: That's nasty – I think that's cruel

TR: I wasn't brought up to think like that. People do go round being racist saying
like 'our god created you'

AY: And they come round saying – we started arguing, this boy and me – and they
say 'Allah created the world' and I say' 'No, he didn’t'

SN: They say 'Allah created you'

AY: Yeah, they say, 'Well we pray a lot more than you'

TR: Yes, because some people are brought up to think that only their god – is the
only –

SH: Some people don’t let other people play because they’re different religions
AY: I know – that’s terrible

LH: That’s how they act in the playground

TR: They don’t let me play – I think that’s racist

AY: and they wouldn’t let me play, and I say, ‘just because I’m white’. I went up
and said, ‘Can I play?’ and then they all just started going round each other,
they started whispering and they said, ‘No’

TR: That’s what Tasneem does.

JN: how do you know it’s because you’re white? How do you know that?

AY: They were saying that to CA and WY [CA’s sister] and everything, just
because they were black – weren’t they?

LH: Yeah, they did that to all of us

AY: Yeah

JN: Well say – well you should have said this – well, your god must have been
more black than Asian because he was brought up in one of the hottest places
in the world - so that means he must be sort of dark brown

(General laughter)

JI: SH, do you ever find people don’t want to play with you because of your
religion?

JN: That’s common round here

SH: Yeah

AY: I know – there’s a lot more Muslims around here than other people

SH: This boy was playing football with other Muslims and I asked if I could play
and he said, ‘No, because you’re a different religion’

JN: Just say – I know I’m a Christian – I was born Christian, so I’m going to just –
if they all like tease me that I’m a Christian , I’m not going to do anything, I’m
going to say, ‘Yeah, I’m a Christian and I’m proud of it’

TR: Miss, they go around going, ‘Oh Allah, Allah’ right, and they are being racist to you. Is that what they’re taught to be?

SN: And that’s crap

AY: Like, when I was talking to Amreen remember, and Aysha and Hawa and them lot, and I just turned and when I looked round again they were running up to the block and so they wouldn’t even talk to me

TR: What did their god teach them – to be racist to everyone?

SN: I know their god teached them to be good to anyone and then they just say – they just laugh

JN: I swear, SN, Allah must be God of the Unknown!

(LH tells a lengthy story of a racist exchange between her mother and a shopkeeper)

Question: How many gods do you think there are?

JN: One

TR: Millions

Question: Who are they and what do you call them?

TR: We’ve got lots of names

AY: Christ, God, Jesus

JN: Jesus, God, Lord, Jehovah, Immanuel – erm – erm – come on – some people call him Omega and erm Alpha

JI: Where did you learn these names?

JN: Church – I just remembered them

LH: We learned them at Sunday School

JI: Would you be able to tell us some names, TR, or would they go on forever

TR: Forever!
JI: What are the most important ones?

TR: The one who walks in India, who lives in India. I think his name’s Sai Baba

SN: Christ

AY: I said Christ

TR: There’s all sorts

JN: Almighty

SH: Miss, what happens is that – their parents can go like – are the most powerful and there’s their children – there’s lots of them

JN: Mohammed

SN: You’ve got an elephant, ain’t it?

JN: Allah

TR: (to SN) Do you know what happened? (tells SN an account of how Ganesh got his elephant head in a whisper)

JI: What are you saying, TR?

SN: About this elephant god, and how he became an elephant

JN: Jesus

Question: Do you believe in other people’s gods?

AY: Yes

JN: I do

AY: I believe in the gods because people, like – they have like pictures of them, like – they have like necklaces and things and books

JN: That ain’t answering the question

JI: So you believe those things that they have are real – really God?

AY: Yeah

JN: No! How can you believe in that? Who? – who? – Have you ever seen a god
that's gold – that's rock solid gold?

SN: If you've got one god, how can you believe in other gods?

JN: It's one god with different names, so we believe in all the gods.

TR: That's what I was going to say

SH: They say that Allah created the world and they go that other people's gods didn't

SN: You know what they tease about Hindus, yeah – they say that what's with the red spot on your head – they say that all the time

LH: They say that we were made out of shit

TR: some people commit suicide because of that – I've read about people that did - and one of my friends nearly did – she got teased about these girls at her school

JI: Why do they tease you?

SN: Because you're a different religion. Because they think we're just the bad people of the world

TR: I think they're desperate. They can't get no attention or something, like they fight at home, and when they come to school, they take it out on other people

SN: I think it's the parents

LH: I think the parents told them – tease someone about their religion because their god's different

SN: Their father passes it in

SH: They just want to show off about their god and going that we're best

SN: Because their colour – and they carry it on through their family

JN: I'd laugh if it reverses round, to see how they would feel

TR: I think what they think is 'There's more of us so if we go and tease someone
they're not exactly going to try and hit us or anything, because there’s more of us so we’d be able to beat them up’ or something

SN: Some Muslims don’t like black people because they’re just black

JN: I know. People are afraid of black people. When I’m like doing a little jump, they all run away from me like I’m going to hit them

SN: When I was coming down the street with my two brothers’ friends, I saw Ashfaq, right, and he just ran away

JI: Why do you think they’re afraid?

TR: I think they’re confused. We don’t go around saying, ‘Our god made you’ – if they believe in another god – we don’t go around saying, ‘Oh, your god’s nasty’ and all that

**Question: How did you feel?**

SH: I feel left out

LH: Yeah, sometimes you really do feel like giving them a good punch

AY: Not hard, though, because then it’d hurt them like it hurt you

JN: Violence is not the answer

SN: Why do you say someone’s going to be in the ambulance, then?

**Question: What do you do about it?**

LH: The reason I don’t tell the teacher is because all they say is to apologise and then if we hit back they say, ‘Oh, I’ve already spoken to you and you have to miss break’. I tell my mum

JI: Does it ever make you wish you were a different religion yourself so you wouldn’t get teased?

ALL: No, no

TR: Because I’m happy the way I am
SN: I'm proud of what I am

**Question: Have you ever teased them back?**

SH: I've teased them back and they've kicked me and everything and I swear at them and say, 'Back to you!'

TR: I don't think you should tease them back because you know how you felt when you were bullied — so you don't want them to go through it

LH: I say, 'I don't know why you're calling me it because we're all the same — it's only colour and religion and things like that'. And they say to me, 'I don't let you play because you're black' and I say, 'We're the same'

**Question: Are your beliefs the same as your parents?**

JI: Do you ever disagree with your parents about religion?

ALL: No

JN: I do disagree with my mum sometimes — My mum says, 'If you go to...’ — she says — if we have a children's day — 'you don't have to go because you're not going to learn anything anyway’. I disagree with that because you are going to learn something new

AY: My mum says that I'm Church of England but she says that I'm not Christian

— I think I am Christian

JI: What makes you think that?

AY: Because I just think I am

**Question: Do you believe in religions?**

JI: Or do you believe in just one religion?

JN, SN, AY: One religion

TR: One and a half

JI: What's the half?
TR: Christmas

AY: Religions, not celebrations!

SN: How can you be half a Christian?

JN: You have to be a Christian or not a Christian

SN: You can't be half a Christian

JN: If you're half a Christian you cut your body in half and say, 'I'm half a Christian'

Question: Do you like this school?

JN: I would like to stay at this school but –

SH: Like there's too much Muslims. Because there's not too much Christians and Hindus. I like the right amount of each religion

NH: Because then people would let us be and they wouldn't bully us

SH: If there was one religion and there was more of another, then the other people – if other religions were teasing you, the same religion will stick up for you

TR: All the Muslims like spread out – say you want to go and sit somewhere, or play, they're there already and won't let you play

SN: I think the school should have a percentage of six tenths – there's good teaching here

AY: I think the teaching is good. It's just the racism

JN: I think it's good being a small group because all of the black people can get along together
From a Discussion with a Group of Year 6 Pupils (ages 10-11)

The children are answering the questions set for them by other Year 6 pupils.

Members of the discussion group are:

AI: a boy of African Caribbean origin who identifies as Christian
DK: a boy of Gujarati origin who identifies as Hindu
RH: a boy of Gujarati origin who identifies as Hindu
SC: a White boy who identifies as Christian

Question: Do you think you’re different from most children at school?

AI: Yeah, I think I’m different
JI: In what way are you different?
AI: I’m black and most people in this school aren’t, and that’s it really
SC: Miss, the same, but just different colour
DK: I’m the only one in my class who’s Hindu, the rest are Muslim
JI: And is that an obvious difference to you? Do you feel it?
AI: I’d say I would!
JI: Why do you think you would if you were Hindu?
AI: Because, like, you’re one colour but most people are a different kind to you
and you’re the odd one out
JI: Do you sometimes feel you’re the odd one out?
DK: Yes, odd one out
AI: (whisper) And RH
JI: What about you, RH, do you want to say something? Do you feel you’re different?

RH: I don’t really care

SC: Miss, he’s the only one in our class that’s Hindu. Miss, and Nikita, who’s on holiday

JI: Do you notice that he’s Hindu?

SC: Miss, you can come to school and look at say some of the Muslims and RH and you’d just guess that’s he’s a Muslim again

AI: If you come to school and see all different Indians, you don’t know if they’re Muslims or Hindu

SC: Miss, cos some people can be white and they’re Muslim like Ifet [a Bosnian classmate]

AI: Some people can be black and they’re Muslim

Question: Have you ever been in a mosque?

SC: I’ve seen a mosque from the outside

AI: I’ve seen a mosque

JI: How do you know, looking from the outside, that it is a mosque?

AI: They look very interesting – interesting – I’d like to go into one and see what it’s like

DK: They’ve got this sign, like a moon and a star

SC: They’ve got, like, that big thing on top

DK: I’d like to know how they make it

Question: What do you think it’s like inside?

AI: I think it’s spacious

RH: The people come
40 AI: The people have carpets and they pray
41 SC: It’s like a big hall and there are places – like divided up into places where you
can –
42 AI: Like there’s a girls’ section and there’s a boys’ section – it’s divided up into
each rooms
43 Question: Is it different from your temple/church or is it mostly just the same?
44 JI: How do you think it might be different from a Hindu temple?
45 DK: We’ve got some gods – statues of gods
46 RH: And photos
47 DK: We can – we don’t have mats in
48 RH: They haven’t got any photos in
49 AI: They’ve only got names – God’s name – and this stand with a book on and
you have to wash your hands several times before you touch it – you have to
pray from that book – it’s the Qur’an
50 JI: You say you’ve been to church – how is it different?
51 AI: It’s like the cross inside
52 SC: And when you walk in you’ve just got these benches and there’s an aisle down
the middle
53 AI: And there’s a cross right at the top with Jesus on which people go up and pray
54 Question: Do you ever celebrate with another religion?
55 JI: Do you ever share in their celebrations?
56 RH: Sometimes my people celebrate Christmas
57 JI: What do you do at Christmas time?
58 RH: We just get, like, fancy food
59 AI: Yeah, we do Diwali. We’ve done it in school – Diwali
JI: Do you ever celebrate 'Id?

AI: We like it in school when no one’s there

RH: Yeah

JI: So you enjoy 'Id

RH: There are only three people in my class

Question: How many gods do you think there are?

DK: Altogether?

SC: I think it’s all just one god, but people from different religions call him by different names

AI: I don’t know – I really don’t know because there’s like he’s got – how many gods have you got?

DK: We don’t know

AI: There’s so many – there’s one Allah, one Jesus and things like that, so I get in trouble – I don’t know if there’s one or ten or how many there are

SC: I think there’s one but it’s just like people call him by different names

AI: There’s one – just all gods put together – there’s really the same god but they call him by different names – so Allah’s really just talking about the same god

SC: Yeah

DK: Yeah

AI: Well, they may think he looks as different type but he’s just the same

Question: Who are they? What do you call them?

AI: We call ours Jesus, and theirs – the Muslims call theirs Allah, and what do you call yours?

DK: We call ours Ganesh, Krishna, Hanuman

AI: Ganesh, Krishna, Hanuman. Which is the main one?
90 DK: The main one’s Ganesh
91 RH: It’s Ganesh. There’s this story—I forgot it—
92 JI: And do you think he’s the same as Allah or different?
93 DK: Different
94 RH: Different
95 JI: And what about Jesus, do you think he’s the same as Jesus or different?
96 DK: Not sure
97 AI: I don’t think he’s a different god from the other gods
98 SC: All the same
99 **Question:** Has anyone ever teased you about your religion?
100 SC: Some people have
101 DK: Some people have
102 RH: They get punished
103 JI: Punished by?
104 DK: God
105 RH: God
106 AI: Their god
107 DK: They say your god’s not real and things like that—and especially that’s Hindu. I feel really angry
108 SC: Just to get at you
109 AI: Yeah, just to make you angry—to tease and make you angry inside
110 DK: Like if we do something better than them they just want to get us back
112 RH: Yeah, yeah
113 **Question:** What did you do about it?
114 DK: I told my dad and we went down to his house and told him
Al: Did that work?

DK: Yeah, he stopped

RH: You feel like you want to fight but you can't do it

JI: Do you think if your school were like a lot of schools in Leicester and most of
the children were Hindus – do you think you would be teased in the same
way?

DK: No, I don't think so because if there's just Hindus, you've got people that feel
the same thing to you that they say –

RH: They stick up for you

DK: They stick up for you, yeah, and you can get on with them, and if they tease
your god, they're teasing the same god so they get punished

JI: If you were in a school where there were a few Muslims and mostly Hindus
would the Muslims still tease you?

DK: No, because they'd know that there's more of them and they would have a
fight – the Hindus would

SC: Other way round

AI: If there was more Muslims than Hindus the Muslims would take the mick out
of the Hindus, but not if there lots of Hindus

**Question: Have you ever teased them back?**

DK: No, I haven't

RH: No, I'd get punished by God

AI: I've teased some people, but not their religion

SC: I've teased about other things but not their religion because that's not fair –
then they would tease you back and you wouldn't like it

AI: I will be honest – I have taken the mick out of some people's colour, but not
truly – they have teased me back and I know that I don’t like it as well, so I’ve
never done it again, really – but – but I have done it a few times

Question: Is your best friend your religion and culture?

SC: Miss, I’ve got two best friends – one is and one ain’t

DK: Yeah, he’s a different colour and he doesn’t say much about me

RH: I’ve got one and he’s the same

Question: Are you allowed to play with children from other religions?

DK: My parents say you don’t play with children who are racist and who tease you

and things like that

Question: Are your beliefs the same as your parents

ALL: Yes

JI: Do you think you’ll ever have different beliefs from your parents or do you

expect to stay the same?

SC: I expect to stay the same

JI: How would you feel if, say, you were parents and your children wanted to

believe something different – have another religion?

AI: I’d be very upset but it’s up to them

SC: Miss, because they’re the ones that have got to live with it. I’d try to persuade

them not to, but if they didn’t want to I’d just leave them to go

AI: Yeah, cos it’s really their choice, innit?

DK: You could try to stop them but if they want to it’s their choice

SC: It’s their life

DK: They might not like it if we forced them to believe in what we say and things

SC: No

Question: Do you believe in religions? Which?
DK: I believe in every god

AI: I believe in Christian religion, but I do believe in his god, and Muslim god –

but – em – I’m not too sure about that

SC: Miss, I do believe in the Christian god but miss, the Christian god is everyone’s god so, miss, I believe in everyone’s god

Question: Do you like this school?

DK: I don’t because there’s lots of Muslims and they tease and swear

AI: I do like this school, but sometimes I don’t like it because there are good friends here and you can get along with people sometimes – I don’t like people who tease you very much and take the mick out of your god and all that

RH: There’s fights

JI: And does religion come into it?

SC: Yes, like if it’s a Christian against someone like a Muslim, the Christians will help the Christians and the Muslims will help the Muslims

AI: The people should stop taking the mick out of religions and just live with them

DK: It’s especially after school

SC: After school, yeah

AI: Fights and things

SC: Yes, it usually happens on Friday because then there’s the weekend and they think that you’ll forget about it so you won’t tell teachers

Question: Do you like being in a smaller group?

SC: No, because if you’re like the odd one out, cos, like there’s one gigantic group of Muslims and you’ve got the small groups of Hindus and you’ve got the small groups of Christians –

AI: I’d like to be in the small group – like us here – us four. It’d be nice because
you've got like two Christians and two Hindus so you can get along with each other. Two and two is the same, do if they take the mick, we could take the mick off them – it’s not worth it.

So, if you have like a small group of four, like two the same and two the same, and we’re still friends – and you could have two Muslims as well

JI: So how do you think it would change if the school had a third Christians, a third Hindus and a third Muslims?

SC: No arguments and all that

AI: You’d just get along – it’s like – it’s how big the group is really. If the Muslims are bigger than the Christians and Hindus, the Muslims will take the mick out of all of us. If we have the same group we don’t argue about religion, so you can’t take the mick out of people because we’ve got the same people in each group so –

DK: Really there’s most of the Muslims

RH: I think there are a lot of Muslims in Highfields because there’s lots of mosques and lots of Muslims go to that mosque

AI: So there’s more Muslims than Christians