

# Learning Outside the Classroom

## **The Place of Peace – a provider's perspective**

An innovative trail for pupils exploring the meaning and source of peace in two sacred spaces in Manchester. Manchester Cathedral and Manchester Buddhist Centre.

### **What were we trying to achieve?**

Pupils are given the opportunity to:

- explore two contrasting places of worship
- consider sources of inner peace and reflect upon religious attitudes towards peace and justice
- discuss peace and justice in relation to contemporary issues
- experience peace through the lighting of candles and a “meditative” stilling exercise

**Cost:** £5 per pupil

### **Who visits? How many?**

Both places of worship cater for a wide range of learners, including GCSE and special needs groups. The trail is suitable for pupils from Key Stages 2 -4 and is adapted as appropriate. Group sizes can be between 12 and 45 accompanied pupils. A lunch space is provided at the Cathedral. The Cathedral and Buddhist Centre are within easy walking distance of one another.

### **Preparation:**

To gain the most from the experience, it would be helpful for pupils to have an understanding of Christian and Buddhist worship and to consider how to behave in a sacred space.

### **How do we organize the learning?**

At Manchester Cathedral pupils are taken on a trail of the mediaeval building to consider what a peaceful place is and to learn about Christian teachings on peace. They are invited to discuss issues of war and peace in the Regiment Chapel, badly damaged in WW2 and again in 1996 by an IRA bomb. At the end of the visit pupils may light candles and offer prayers or poems for peace.

After lunch, pupils visit the Manchester Buddhist Centre, converted by volunteers from a Victorian cotton warehouse. Pupils consider how the design values express and contribute to a sense of peace and consider Buddhist teachings on ethics as a source of inner peace. Pupils have the opportunity to relax with an optional meditative stilling exercise.

This is an experiential religious education trail, where pupils can learn about and from religion by participating in a number of activities. The trail also covers aspects of history, citizenship and geography.

### **What is the impact of the experience?**

‘The trail allowed the children to recognise peace within themselves rather than their surroundings.’

‘This visit made the children think about peace and war and its consequences.’

‘Pupils had the opportunity to reflect and experience.’

‘Good clear links were made to the GCSE material.’

‘Just what the children needed!’

### **Follow up:**

Back at school, teachers have continued to develop themes covered during the trail, for example inviting students to participate in stilling exercises, or write poems or prayers promoting peace. Some schools developed ideas for creating their own peace garden.

### **Contacts and links:**

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Information about resources for Buddhism, and visits to Manchester Buddhist Centre:  
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