

The Multi-Faith Conference Experience

Our trip started when we received the letter through our doors from Marian asking us if we wanted to go to a multi-faith conference in the British Museum. On the 2nd of October all 14 willing participants (plus lucky Marian who was to supervise us) met at Edgware station bright and early to travel up to London.

As we approached the British Museum (noticing the Starbucks opposite) we were amazed at the size of the building and entered looking very much forward to the events in the coming day. I (Amy) was very nervous as Josh, Jonathan and I were to be filmed during the day although I was also quite excited of the prospect of being on the tele.

The first thing we did was to go down stairs to a special area where we were registered and chose what workshop we wanted to participate in later, I (Hannah) chose the workshop entitled 'All you wanted to know about religion, but were afraid to ask' whilst we (Amy and Alyssa) chose the workshop entitled 'How to disagree without falling out', before all going and feasting on biscuits and juice...yummy! Then everyone from all faiths and ethnic backgrounds went into a conference centre where we were to spend much of the day. After a 'quick' introduction, we split into mixed groups and talked about ourselves and feelings towards certain aspects of everyday life such as whether we had been discriminated about, single faith schools and different communities. We then had another chance to have a quick snack before going back into the conference centre.

The next item on the agenda was a talk from a 2 prominent members of Stamford Hill, 1 a Rabbi, 1 a high and respected member of the Muslim community as well as his friend. They spoke about the harmony in which they live between 2 faiths who are stereotyped to hate each other, we found this inspiring and came to realise that sectioning off each religion will increase racism and decrease the diversity of the prominent British culture.

Directly after, we had a quick introduction to a trail, which had been set up by people who had previously been to a multi-faith conference and had picked out items, which they found interesting. During and directly after the lunch break we were permitted to go around the museum either following the trail or to see exhibitions of interest to us. Us 3 plus Alex and Jonathan set out to view the Egyptian, Iran before Islam, Greek and Roman exhibition and after eventually giving into temptation and went to Starbucks to buy some delicious Frappicino's (vanilla for Amy and strawberry and cream for Hannah to be exact). After finishing them we went back into the museum for the second half of the conference.

The first thing for the afternoon was named 'Faith and the Wider World' back in the lecture theatre. It consisted of several speakers from different charities talking about the work they do in different places and how when charity is concerned faith of the people they help doesn't matter, as everyone is human and deserve the same rights and respect as one another.

Now was the chance to split into the groups and take part in the workshops we chose earlier that day. I (Hannah) learnt loads of new and interesting facts about many faiths

including 3 I had never heard about before- Jainism, Bahai and Zoroastrianism. I found it really good fun and a chance to ask questions about the different religions without feeling embarrassed as I in turn was asked questions about Judaism.

We (Amy and Alyssa) also really enjoyed our workshop about learning how have a fight without anyone getting upset; we learnt many things including that if you do something wrong you have to deeply consider both sides and that will allow you to find out why the other party is upset.

The workshops finished and we went back into the lecture theatre for the last time where we discussed what we thought about the day and had the last closing speeches by a nun and Hindu (most likely the best of the speakers). The last thing of the day was being squashed into the peace egg along with most of the people from EDRS- very amusing if not slightly scary!

We then left the British Museum, had a chance to go into Starbucks as the rest of the group wanted to go in and then headed home.

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