

Video reviews

Not in My Name

(2009) Alice Bartlett, Theatre Veritae

Gateway [4.2](#)

This resource comes as a play in book form and a DVD of the play performed by young people. It is recommended for use with year 10 and above. It deals with an imaginary suicide bomb attack in a northern town. The play begins with the attack and then deals with the aftermath through survivors and others who have been affected including friends and family of the bomber. The script of the play is based on interviews that Alice Bartlett carried out as part of her research for the play. At the beginning of the book there are a number of helpful suggestions for how students can be prepared for watching or reading the play and how to follow it up afterwards.

The best way to use the resource would be to book a live performance; however, this may not be possible and so watching the DVD or reading the play as a class is a good alternative. I showed the DVD to a group of Year 10 students and some of their thoughts were:

'The message of the play is that not all Muslims are terrorists and that people shouldn't be stereotyped. Just because one person from a certain community does something doesn't mean that everyone else in the community is like that.'

'I would recommend the play to those who have a negative image about Muslims.'

'I think it is effective because the message is put across in a way that makes you think.'

Overall, I feel the play and DVD are effective in getting across the message and certainly got my Year 10 students thinking and talking about the issues. One slight concern my students had with the DVD was that it would have been better if the actors hadn't got multiple roles as this caused some confusion at times.

Teaching RE to Muslim students: studying Islam

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zO58uLoCVoo>

Gateway: [1.1](#)

Review 1

This is a valuable further resource signposted for Gateway Document 1.1: Controversial and Contentious Issues – terms at the heart of REsilience. Using the typical Teachers TV format, this 14-minute edited clip of an RE lesson in a majority Muslim school provides a real-life example of an RE teacher and pupils tackling controversy in RE. The lesson focuses on the representation of Islam in the media and the concept of Jihad. The clip gives an insight into the thinking and planning behind the lesson, and at one point, shows a heated debate between pupils and the teacher's handling of it. The value of this clip lies in the potential it has to raise awareness of how teachers might show respect and use appropriate language to create a climate for pupils to engage with controversial issues in a meaningful way. In addition, it is a useful starting point for discussion and reflection upon these issues.

This is aided by a linked document written by Lat Blaylock that raises specific questions in relation to the clip. Some aspects of the lesson may provoke disagreement amongst teachers, and given the highly edited version of the lesson, teachers may want to know more about what was said. Nonetheless, this is a very accessible resource that will appeal because it is real, and makes achievable the prospect of successfully dealing with potentially explosive material in RE.

Review 2

Following my first assignment on the Oxford Muslim Pupils' Programme I was interested to see how this teacher in a majority Muslim school tackled controversial issues with Muslim students.

This video is of a Year 10 RE lesson in Nab Wood School Bradford which has a 70% Muslim intake. The clip explores how Mike Walker, the head of RE, handles a controversial lesson on Jihad with a group of mainly Muslim students.

The learning objectives are:

- *To be able to assess how the media reports Islam and to what extent this encourages negative stereotyping of Muslims as violent extremists*
- *To know and understand what Muslims mean by Jihad*
- *To have a balanced understanding of Muslim attitudes to peace and conflict*

Through a series of three tasks Mike enables the students to explore the concept of Jihad through positive and negative media images of Islam and to discover through balanced discussion what the Qur'an says about Jihad, peace, conflict and suicide.

This is a helpful video for the inexperienced teacher. Although the students are clearly well-behaved and engaged in their learning, Mike explains in the supporting commentary some of the key features and ground rules that support this. For example:

- *Young people are interested in discussing controversial issues*
- *The importance of creating an environment of mutual respect*
- *The need for teachers to speak with authority, avoid stereotyping and demonstrate, sensitivity and respect for the faith*
- *For teachers to use correct terminology and treat artefacts with respect.*