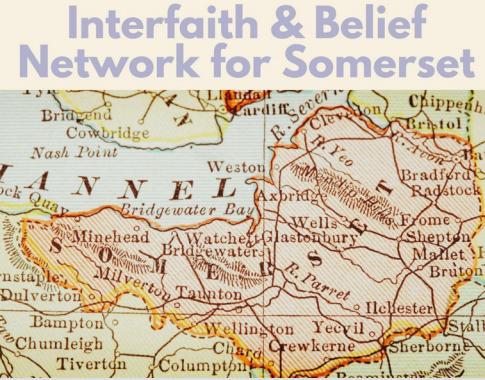


Curriculum Opportunities for Surprises of Rastafari in Somerset



Curriculum suggestions arising from an in-conversation session with Professor Shawn Sobers; November 2024



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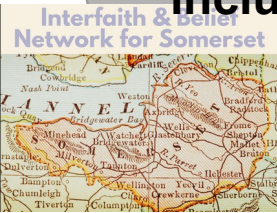


Context for curriculum advice

As part of the GLADE Centre commitment to supporting teachers and schools better engage with themes and concepts surrounding multi faith dialogue, we invited Prof Shawn Sobers to a school-community session where he gave an engaging talk and started new conversations around Rastafari and Somerset.

“ In-conversation, he offered insights into a highly misunderstood culture, that has surprisingly strong links with Somerset and the South West.

This presentation is owned by Prof. Sobers and is a snapshot of his advice for widening reach and understanding of Rastafari through the curriculum. We include it here with his permission. And we endorse his suggestions. ”



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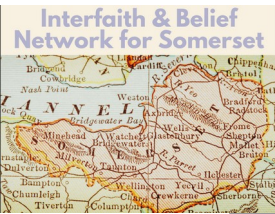
November
2024

The surprises of Rastafari, the South West, and the opportunities in education

- What is the connection between Somerset and Ethiopia?
- Why do members of Rastafari view an Ethiopia Emperor as God?
- What do Rastafari believe, and why is it important to be taught in schools, across the curriculum, for all ages?

In this engaging talk, Professor Shawn Sobers from the University of the West of England, will discuss the core history, beliefs, and culture of Rastafari, using his own research and life experiences.

As a photographer, filmmaker and anthropologist, Professor Sobers has used his own creative practices as a way to explore this dynamic culture, and will share these examples, and offer insights to how the topic can be used in schools for all ages, in subject areas as broad as history, religious studies, geography, creative arts, sociology, citizenship, languages, and even the sciences.



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Why Shawn ?

<http://www.shawnsobers.com/about-2/>

<https://people.uwe.ac.uk/Person/ShawnSobers>



Image courtesy of
Shawn-Naphtali
Sobers

Sample feedback from attendees of the session:-

Quality of delivery = 100% rated as excellent

Content = 100% rated as excellent

Techniques/ resources used = 100% rated as excellent or good

Usefulness to my practice = 100% rated as excellent or good

What did you find most useful & why;

personal stories

very good delivery

information to inform teaching

history and culture

conversations

presentation

discussion

Something to do resulting from the session;

develop my own lessons

tell others about it

read up

Interfaith & Belief
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Rastafari across the curriculum



“Education develops the intellect; and the intellect distinguishes man from other creatures. It is education that enables man to harness nature and utilise her resources for the well-being and improvement of his life. The key for the betterment and completeness of modern living is education.

But, 'Man cannot live by bread alone'. Man, after all, is also composed of intellect and soul. Therefore, education in general, and higher education in particular, must aim to provide, beyond the physical, food for the intellect and soul. That education which ignores man's intrinsic nature, and neglects his intellect and reasoning power can not be considered true education.”

Haile Selassie

History



League of Nations, Geneva, 30th June 1936

Colonialism and Resistance

Students can learn about Rastafari within the context of resistance to colonialism, particularly examining Jamaica's history and post-colonial identity. Lessons might cover the history of Haile Selassie I, the movement's view of Ethiopia as a spiritual homeland, and the impact of colonial rule on Jamaican society.

Pan-Africanism and Civil Rights

Rastafari beliefs in Black identity, pride, and freedom resonate with the Pan-African movement and the global civil rights movement. This could connect with broader lessons on African diasporic history, prominent Black leaders, and how Rastafari influenced figures like Marcus Garvey, whom many Rastafarians regard as a prophet.



"I assert that the issue before the Assembly today is not merely a question of the settlement in the matter of Italian aggression. It is a question of collective security; of the very existence of the League of Nations; of the trust placed by states in international treaties. If the value of promises made to small states that their integrity and independence shall be respected and assured... In a word, it is international morality that is at stake.

"It is us today, it will be you tomorrow..."

Emperor *Haile Selassie I*
League of Nations, Geneva, 30th June 1936

Religious Studies



Beliefs and Practices

Students can explore Rastafari's core beliefs, such as the divinity of Haile Selassie, the importance of living naturally, and concepts of peace and unity. This can be compared with other religious and spiritual traditions, highlighting similarities and differences, especially in views of prophecy, sacred texts, and eschatology.

Sacred Texts

Educators could introduce students to the texts that influence Rastafari teachings, such as the Bible, with a focus on its reinterpretation through the movement's lens. Students might analyse passages from the Psalms or Revelation that are significant to Rastafarians.

English Literature and Language



Music and Lyrics

The lyrics of Bob Marley, Benjamin Zephaniah, and other reggae artists offer rich texts for literary analysis. Students can study how Rastafari themes of justice, spiritual identity, and liberation are expressed through reggae music, often seen as a vehicle for Rastafari beliefs.

Dialect and Language

Rastafari has a unique linguistic style 'Iyaric', which replaces certain words to align with Rastafari ideology. Examining this use of language can offer students a lesson in linguistics, cultural expression, and the power of language to shape identity.

Language and resistance: memories of slavery and Rastafari language.
Shawn Sobers

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/beyond-trafficking-and-slavery/language-and-resistance-memories-of-slavery-and-rastafari-langua/>

Geography



Global Movement and Cultural Influence

Students could explore the global spread of Rastafari from Jamaica to the UK and beyond. This lesson could examine migration patterns, diaspora communities, and the influence of Rastafari in British society, particularly among Afro-Caribbean communities.

Ethiopia and Zion

Rastafari beliefs attach spiritual significance to Ethiopia. Students can study Ethiopia's geography, history, and cultural significance, including its unique Christian heritage and its symbol as a place of freedom and dignity in the Rastafari faith.

Music and Performing Arts



Reggae as Expression

Reggae music, deeply intertwined with Rastafari, can be taught as an art form rooted in political and social commentary. Students might examine reggae's rhythms, instruments, and lyrics as a form of cultural storytelling and resistance. Also, the more religious Nyabingi drums can be taught and learned about

Creative Performances

Music and drama classes could incorporate performances inspired by Rastafari themes, providing a platform for students to explore Rastafari's messages of peace, unity, and resilience.

PSHE (Personal, Social, Health, and Economic Education)



Identity and Belonging

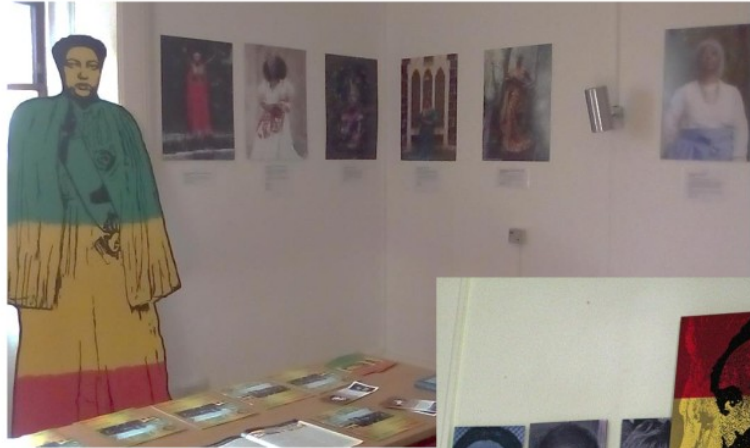
Rastafari encourages a strong sense of identity, rooted in African heritage and spiritual awareness. Lessons can foster discussions about belonging, cultural identity, and the challenges faced by minority communities, promoting respect and inclusivity.



Healthy Living

The Italo lifestyle of Rastafari emphasizes natural, plant-based diets. Discussions around Italo can serve as an introduction to dietary choices, cultural dietary practices, and the importance of sustainable and healthy eating.

Art and Design



Symbolism and Imagery

Students can study the symbolism of Rastafari, such as the Lion of Judah, colours like red, green, and gold, and iconography related to Ethiopia and Haile Selassie. They can create art that reflects Rastafari themes, learning how art is used to communicate spiritual and cultural identity.

Photography and Visual Storytelling

In visual arts, students can explore Rastafari through photography projects, focusing on Rastafari-inspired visuals in Jamaican communities or British African-Caribbean neighbourhoods. This encourages students to document and interpret the movement's cultural impact visually.



Citizenship



Ras Bandele
Rastafarian Elder



Human Rights and Justice

Rastafari teachings emphasise justice, equality, and the fight against oppression, resonating with broader human rights themes. Lessons in citizenship could include Rastafari perspectives on justice and how these align with global human rights issues.

Multiculturalism and Diversity

Given the presence of Rastafari communities in the UK, students can learn about the movement's role in British multiculturalism, fostering understanding of different faiths and their contributions to society.

www.fairfieldhousebath.co.uk



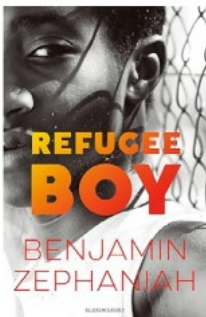
PLUG & QUESTION!

Fairfield House is available to book for school visits. £££???

- Historical tour of the house
- Museum
- Activities
- Meet members of community
- Good Food!



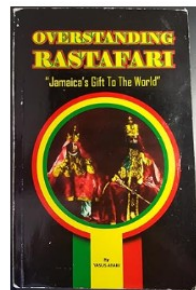
Booklist from GLADE



Refugee Boy is the story of a young refugee left in London is of even more power and pertinence today than when it was first published.

Life is not safe for Alem. His father is Ethiopian, his mother Eritrean. Their countries are at war, and Alem is welcome in neither place.

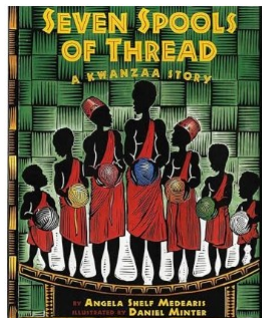
So Alem is excited to spend a holiday in London with his father – until he wakes up to find him gone. What seems like a betrayal is in fact an act of love, but now Alem is alone in a strange country, and he must forge his own path...



Overstanding Rastafari - Jamaica's Gift To The World by Yasus Afari Paperback – Illustrated, 29 March 2007

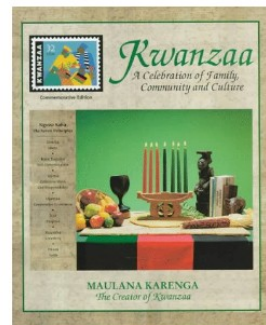
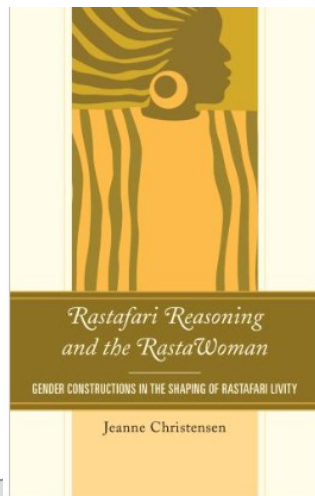


Imperial Exile by Keith Bowers Paperback – 5 May 2016

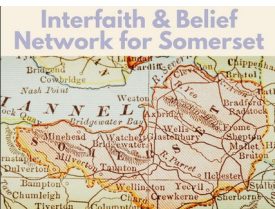
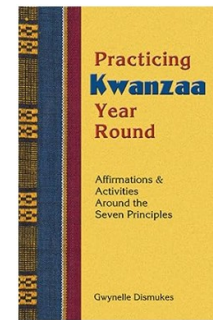


A story of seven brothers who make family life miserable with their constant fighting. When their father dies, he leaves an unusual will: by sundown, the brothers must make gold out of seven spools of thread. If they fail, they will be turned out as beggars.

Using the Nguzo Saba, or "seven principles" of Kwanzaa, the author has created an unforgettable story that shows how family members can pull together, for their own good and the good of the entire community.



Kwanzaa is celebrated by more than 17 million people worldwide. The Seven Principles of Kwanzaa can guide and uplift our actions and decisions on a daily basis. In addition to the African symbols and affirmations for the Seven Principles, this edition features activities designed to put each principle into practice in a meaningful way.



Acknowledgements

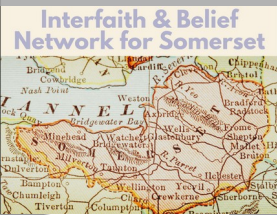
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Every effort has been made to trace the copyright holders and we apologise in advance for any unintentional omissions. We would be pleased to insert the appropriate acknowledgement in a subsequent edition of this material.

Items for handling from Ethiopia and Ethiopian diaspora at;

<https://glade.org/resources/global-resource-loans/country-collections/>

For information on aligned workshops, talks, booklists and for loans of items contact lynn@glade.org



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