

Benchmarks for the Organization of Religious or Inter-Faith Activities

According to government guidelines for the service some activities may be of a religious or inter-faith nature, according to the circumstances of the community. However, in order to observe the non-confessional status of the service, the decision as to whether or not to propose such activities and their content must be based on **sound reasons**.

The **benchmarks** below, which were validated at various consultation sessions and pilot projects at the elementary level, can be used to **guide the animator and the school team** in their choices. Each school, while exercising good judgment, can refer to these benchmarks and make a decision while taking into account the local community.

- **Exceptional and circumstantial nature of these activities**
These activities are infrequent and take place when a community's particular situation necessitates the decision.
- **Educational relevance of carrying out these activities in the school rather than in places of worship**
These activities meet the educational objectives that correspond to the aims of the service and are included in the annual planning. Failing this, these activities can be performed in various places of worship which would serve as an "educational relay" in this case.
- **Respect for freedom of conscience and religion**
These activities do not impose any specific beliefs or practices on the students that are contrary to their own convictions.
- **Equal and fair treatment for all students**
These activities do not deprive any student from benefiting from the quantity and quality of services that other students receive.
- **Accent on dialogue and interaction with people from different faiths**
These activities circumvent the segregation of students according to their religious convictions and encourages an openness and mutual understanding of one another's beliefs.
- **No preference is given to any particular confessional or religious affiliation**
These activities do not promote one belief as being superior to any other or as being necessary for personal accomplishment.
- **No structured process oriented to any particular faith development**
These activities are not part of a structure or a strategy aimed at encouraging students to espouse one group or another or to be greater believers, even if, from the student's point of view, all activities including those of a non-religious nature, could have an impact on his/her beliefs.