COMMUNITY DIALOGUE MANUAL SERIES

Connecting Communities

Noah's Pudding

DIALOGUE SOCIETY

COMMUNITY
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MANUAL
SERIES

To readers of this manual:

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If you have any comments on this, or any of the other manuals in the series, we would be very glad to have your feedback. Please email your comments to manual@dialoguesociety.org

We would like to showcase the valuable work and effort of groups that use the Community Dialogue Manuals to help inspire other groups to take part also. Please get in touch and let us know how this manual helped you and your group with any photographs and testimonials. Please email these to manual@dialoguesociety.org

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The Dialogue Society is a registered charity, established in London in 1999, with the aim of advancing social cohesion by connecting communities through dialogue. It operates nation-wide with regional branches across the UK. Through localised community projects, discussion forums and teaching programmes it enables people to venture across boundaries of religion, culture and social class. It provides a platform where people can meet to share narratives and perspectives, discover the values they have in common and be at ease with their differences.

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SOCIETY

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Noah's Pudding

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Overview 01

Preface

The Dialogue Society is a registered charity, established in London in 1999, with the aim of advancing social cohesion by connecting communities through dialogue. It operates nation-wide with regional branches across the UK. Through localised community projects, discussion forums and teaching programmes it enables people to venture across boundaries of religion, culture and social class. It provides a platform where people can meet to share narratives and perspectives, discover the values they have in common and be at ease with their differences. It has done this through a wide range of events including community celebrations, interfaith sharing circles, and open cultural festivals as well as a broad variety of dialogue meetings and seminars.

The manual you hold in your hand is part of a series of ten Community Dialogue Manuals developed by the Dialogue Society to encourage interaction between members of different communities. The primary aim of the series is to help people to bring their communities together through a number of approaches and events that the Dialogue Society has found successful. We have always found that the most successful events have been those with clear objectives and where attention has been paid to detail. Therefore the manuals are full of advice, tips and checklists to help everything go smoothly as you plan, organise and host your own events.

This manual will help you to host a delightful and delicious Noah's Pudding event and facilitate neighbourly interaction on the Muslim festival of Ashurah, or indeed at any time of year. For almost ten years we at the Dialogue Society have been encouraging Muslims celebrating Ashurah to share the Noah's Pudding not just with their nearest Muslim neighbour but with all their neighbours. Taking a nice bowl of pudding next door, or serving it up to a whole neighbourhood, community group or church congregation has proved a wonderful ice-breaker and an ideal way to build respect and friendship across the community. It is amazing what can be achieved with the last remnants from a prophet's onboard larder!

Please get in touch with us to let us know if and how the manual was helpful, to give any feedback and comments about the manual's content, style and structure and with any other enquiries. Please see inside cover for contact details.

We hope that this manual and perhaps others will be helpful to you, and that you will enjoy uniting your community through the events you hold.

The Dialogue Society

Introduction

The purpose of this manual is to stimulate and motivate individuals and community groups to engage in dialogue while at the same time providing useful ideas through which effective dialogue can take place. It is designed to help you to bring people together through the tradition of Noah's Pudding. Sharing food is a wonderful way to promote interaction and friendship between people regardless of faith or culture.

Children enjoy hearing the story of Noah's Pudding and of course eating it! Because Jews, Christians, Quakers and Baha'is all recognise the Prophet Noah (peace be upon Him), sharing Noah's Pudding with them can be a great way of celebrating what people of different faiths have in common. But primarily these activities are recommended to you as a way of initiating sharing, interaction and dialogue with people around you, whatever they believe and whoever they are.

Even the characteristics of the pudding itself make it well suited to use in dialogue. Noah's Pudding is made from an oddment of ingredients that you would not usually expect to mix well together. In fact they make a most appetising dessert. The variety of ingredients of different shapes, tastes and textures can be likened to people. In Noah's Pudding, the mixing of different ingredients results in a delicious explosion of flavours. So too, when diverse communities come together something good can come about from their interaction and conversation. Appropriately, while they all contribute to a single delicious pudding, the ingredients in Noah's Pudding retain their own individual tastes and textures. Similarly, dialogue events are about bringing different people together around shared values and aspirations without denying their individual characteristics, their distinctive "flavours".

Because the Islamic calendar is shorter than the Gregorian calendar, the Islamic months begin approximately eleven days earlier each year. Consequently the day of *Ashurah* (10th Muharram) will fall ten or eleven days earlier next year than it did this year. If you want to share Noah's Pudding on the day of *Ashurah* please check the date. However, please note that Noah's Pudding does not have to be given out on that day. The pudding is a matter of custom and can be shared at any time of the year. The Dialogue Society has organised many Noah's Pudding events outside the Ashurah season.

Although this is a Muslim tradition, you do not need to be a Muslim to use this as a means of dialogue and engagement. Non-Muslim community groups have also prepared and distributed Noah's Pudding and organised Noah's Pudding events. The objective is to make use of any means available that is sufficiently interesting and stimulating to initiate contact and dialogue.

The overview near the beginning of this manual will give you a better idea of the range of events that you might like to consider, providing a short explanation of each kind of event. In the main body of the manual you will find advice, checklists and hints and

tips for organising each kind of event successfully. And in the appendices you will find an array of sample emails, letters and forms to give you ideas for writing and designing invitations and materials.

This fairly long manual is not intended to be read from cover to cover. The intention is that reading the overview will give you ideas for possible events. You will then find support for whatever you choose to do in the relevant section of the manual. And perhaps on another occasion you will turn to it again for advice on a different kind of event.

The Story of Noah's Pudding in Muslim Tradition

In the Qur'an we read the story of Prophet Noah and the Ark.[1] The account is not at all dissimilar to the one that Christians and Jews may know from the book of Genesis in the Old Testament and the Torah. Prophet Noah is sent to warn his people to abandon their wicked ways and avoid God's punishment. They will not listen and mock him as he begins to build the ark as instructed by God. Prophet Noah takes in pairs of animals, male and female, and supplies of food. The flood waters rise and Prophet Noah, members of his family and the few who believe his words are saved from drowning. After the flood the Ark comes to rest on the mountain Al-Jūdī[2] on the day of *Ashurah*[3] . God sends Prophet Noah and his companions out of the Ark with blessings to flourish and multiply.

Muslim tradition tells that as the waters began to recede, Prophet Noah and his family gathered up all of the food remaining on the Ark and made a delicious meal out of it. In remembrance of Prophet Noah and as a thanksgiving to God, the people of Anatolia and other Muslims have made it a custom to prepare Noah's Pudding, traditionally known as '*Ashurah*,' on this day and share it with neighbours and friends. The story of Noah's Pudding and the custom of preparing such a pudding and sharing this with neighbours and friends is Muslim tradition and not a religious practice. However, it is a pleasant custom that is most useful for bringing people together around a commonly known story. Whether one believes in Prophet Noah or not, most will have heard of the story of the Great Flood.

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[1] The Story of Prophet Noah and the great flood are referred to in the Holy Qur'an, Chapter 11, Al- Hūd verses 25-48, and Chapter 71, Nūh.

[2] The mountain of Al Jūdī is named in the Qur'an as the Ark's 'resting place' (Chapter 11, Al- Hūd, verse 44). It is situated in what is today north-western Iran.

[3] The day of Ashurah is the 10th day of the month of Muharram (the first month of the Islamic lunar calendar). The day of Ashurah is a day of great historical importance for Muslims for a number of reasons. Throughout history, on this particular day numerous Prophets mentioned in the Holy Qur'an escaped calamities with God's help and blessings. It is also commemorated by Shi'a Muslims as a day of mourning for the martyrdom of Hussain ibn Ali, the grandson of Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon Him) at the Battle of Karbala in the year 61 AH (680 CE).

The Story of Noah's Pudding Dialogue Events

Over the past six years, we at the Dialogue Society have facilitated the distribution of approximately 10,000 individual bowls of Noah's Pudding each year in the UK, by encouraging and enabling ordinary people to share their puddings amongst neighbours, students, schools, community groups and faith organisations. We have been successfully organising many small and large scale Noah's Pudding events across the UK for almost a decade.

The idea to put this project into action first came from observing the traditions of the Turkish community in London. Anatolian tradition recommends that this slightly odd looking but rather delicious pudding be distributed to neighbours and friends on the day of Ashurah. We found that Turkish-speaking families in London were preparing the pudding and driving 10-15 minutes to another Turkish-speaking family to exchange bowls of the same dessert instead of offering these to their immediate neighbours.

Having made this observation, we thought that the Noah's Pudding tradition would be a great way of stimulating neighbourly interaction and exchange in general, if we could motivate people to offer these puddings to their immediate neighbours and others, as opposed to their friends and people within their own community group. We therefore sought to convince community elders and family members in general of the importance of continuing to celebrate this tradition by offering their puddings to their immediate neighbours, teachers at their child's school, local churches and community centres, their local police station and so forth. The idea was that the pudding stimulates some form of encounter and engagement with people who would otherwise pass each other by.

The response we received was that this was a rather odd looking pudding and that the story behind it would be difficult to explain, especially in English. Many lacked the confidence to knock on their neighbours' door and offer a bowl of pudding. As a result, we prepared a small glossy card (see Appendix 8) which explained the story on one side and listed the ingredients on the other, with a small slot at the bottom to put a name and house number in. With this in hand we continued to make the case for engaging with wider society. After plenty of encouragement and guidance the project finally kicked off as a great success. What marks it out is that ordinary people are taking part and contributing to dialogue and cohesive societies and that this small effort yields immediate results by reaching those who may not otherwise attend a dialogue event.

And so in 2004 the Noah's Pudding project was born. Members of communities who have taken part in this project say they now know at least ten of their neighbours on a first name basis and that neighbours also reciprocate with their own traditional gifts or food parcels.

Since its humble origins, the project has gone from strength to strength, with Muslim and non-Muslim individuals, voluntary organisations and community groups across the UK delivering this project within their own local communities. We hope that through the continued efforts of local communities, this simple project will build the foundations for stronger, cohesive communities and neighbourhoods.

Aims and Objectives of This Manual

1. To encourage and support individuals and groups to engage in dialogue
2. To provide strategies, tips, advice and know-how for organising successful events
3. To initiate dialogue through a tangible, enjoyable event
4. To facilitate neighbourly and community interaction
5. To bring about dialogue between cultural, community and faith-based organisations
6. To encourage inclusion of people who may not necessarily be interested in dialogue
7. To encourage the opening up of different communities to one another
8. To provide an example of how a cultural festival can be used in many ways to engage in meaningful dialogue

NB. What is important to remember is that the purpose of these events is to interact and engage with people of other cultures or faiths. When you first go to a religious congregation, community group or other organisation to suggest holding these events they may be reluctant for a whole range of reasons. The most common reason is suspicion that this is an attempt to proselytise and convert others. It is therefore extremely important that you put them at ease by explaining at the outset that your intention is not to convince the other group of your own faith but simply to engage and interact with them. On the day of the event, it is important to impress upon your team that they should not engage in theological discussion unless it is prompted and then only to inform rather than convince. Dialogue is interaction with others while respecting them as they are.

Who is This Manual For?

- Individuals and families who would like to reach out to their neighbours
- Muslim communities
- Other religious groups
- Community groups
- University students

Overview of the Varieties of Noah's Pudding Events

1. Events for Individuals

a) Neighbourhood Distribution of Puddings 14

Take a pudding with an explanatory card to your neighbours - an excellent way to get to know them!

2. Events in the Neighbourhood and the Local Community

a) Distribution at a Local Place of Worship/Community Group 15

Take puddings to a local church, synagogue, temple, Salvation Army group or Senior Citizens club, to distribute after the service or meeting. These events promote interaction and friendship between your community and a local religious community or community group.

b) Community Events 17

Hold an Ashurah event at a mosque, church building or town hall, with puddings and a speaker or entertainment. A widely advertised event on a larger scale can bring diverse sections of the community together.

You might also like to consider inviting a particular local community group, organisation or professional group, or local stakeholders such as the local police force or local councillors. This is an excellent way of building positive relationships with the invited group.

3. Events with Schools

a) Home-Time Pudding Distribution at Schools 34

After-school distribution: distribute puddings among parents at your child's school when they come to pick up their children.

b) School Activities 35

Go to your local school or your child's school and involve children in the story of Noah's Pudding, and in sharing it. Many schools, particularly primary schools, welcome parental involvement in assemblies and lessons. If the school has a "Celebrate Our Differences" week, or a "Culture" week, this provides a perfect opportunity for such participation.

4. Events at Universities

a) University Pudding Distribution 37

Distribute puddings among neighbours in your student accommodation, or among students on your course.

b) University Event 37

Invite non-Muslim groups, clubs or societies to a Noah's Pudding event with puddings and a speaker or entertainment.

Appendices 40

Sample materials and extra resources (as listed in "Contents")

COMMUNITY DIALOGUE MANUAL SERIES

Varieties of Noah's Pudding Events

02

1. Events for Individuals/Families

a) Neighbourhood Distribution of Puddings

OBJECTIVE: to initiate interaction, helping neighbours to get to know each other

"At first I was reluctant. But then my friends persuaded me to give it a go. So I prepared the pudding. Put it in one of my best bowls. On top went the card. I then went and knocked on my neighbour's door – the neighbour I had for 4 years but never had any extended conversation with. She peaked through the window looking a bit puzzled. Then she opened the door slowly. I could see she wasn't sure why I was knocking. I then gave her the pudding and all went well from here. We now know each other very well and go out for coffee from time to time."

Dialogue Society Volunteer, Leeds

Try to take a Noah's Pudding to five different neighbours. Take it round, ring/knock and present it with a card to explain its significance, and with a smile.

It is really worth knocking on that door, even if you feel shy. This simple action can be the start of a friendlier neighbourhood and perhaps even of some valuable friendships, as one of our volunteers from Leeds found when she tried it three years ago. If you havechildren or grandchildren get them to come with you and knock on the door sincepeople are more receptive and friendly around children.

Checklist

- Pudding (see Appendix 7 for recipe)
- Card - don't forget to sign your name (see Appendix 8)
- Smile
- Hints and Tips
- Leave out the nuts in case neighbours have nut allergies
- Knock at reasonable hours of the day
- If you use a non-disposable plate or bowl, your neighbour is more likely to return it (with something of their own) leading to more interaction and discussion

2. Events for the Local Community

a) Distribution at a Local Place of Worship/Community Group[4]

OBJECTIVE: to promote interaction and friendship between your community and a local religious community or community group

"For the last couple of years our local dialogue group has been organising Ashurah events with our local church. Normally we prepare the Noah's Pudding and distribute it to the church congregation. This year we were surprised to find that our hosts had also made the pudding by following the instructions on the cards we had given out last year. In fact their pudding tasted better than ours!"

Arzu Yilmaz, Women's Association, London

Sharing Noah's Pudding can be an excellent way of making contact with a local faith or community group. The simplest way of doing this is to distribute Noah's Pudding at a local church, synagogue or other place of worship after a service, or after a community group meeting. The vicar, minister, priest, rabbi or other leader will probably be happy to help you arrange and publicise the event.

When you approach people through their place of worship they may be particularly sensitive to the concern that you might be trying to convert them. You will need to make sure that you put the leader and congregation at ease by explaining at the outset that your intention is not to convince the congregation about your own faith but simply to engage and interact with them. On the day of the event, it is important to impress upon your team that they should not engage in theological discussion unless it is prompted and then only to inform rather than convince. Dialogue is interaction with others while respecting them as they are.

Checklist

Planning and Invitations

(Start at least 6 weeks before the event)

- Introduce the idea to the congregation of your local mosque and ask for support. Form a group of volunteers to plan and help with the event.
- Contact the priest, rabbi or other leader. Introduce the idea of bringing puddings and suggest a meeting.
- At the meeting fix a date and time and find out how large the congregation is.
- Prepare and print plenty of invitations to introduce your group and let people know that there will be Noah's Pudding at the agreed venue on the date decided.

[4] Such as Senior Citizens clubs, women's groups (Women's Institute groups etc), cultural community groups, youth groups and Scouts groups

- Ask the priest/rabbi/community leader to tell the congregation/group about the event at least a fortnight prior to it and to give out invitations. Or, even better, attend a service and invite the congregation yourself.
- If you are not already familiar with the church, go along to a service or two and meet some people there.
- Prepare a short, interesting presentation explaining Noah's Pudding and the aim of your event. (It may be helpful to look at "Aims and Objectives of This Manual; The Story of Noah's Pudding" and "The Story of Noah's Pudding Dialogue Events,")

Practical Preparations

(In the 2 weeks before the event)

- Buy your ingredients (see Appendix 7). Plan to make more than you are likely to need. For example, if the church/synagogue often has a congregation of 50 make enough for 65-70.
- Buy plenty of plastic bowls and cutlery, napkins and bin bags for clearing up.

On the Day

- Arrive at least an hour before the service.
- Serve the pudding into individual bowls. Cover them (with a tray or Clingfilm). Put them out of the way.
- Attend the service.
- Explain to the congregation the significance of Noah's Pudding and your aims in bringing it to share with them.
- Serve the pudding and get to know the congregation.
- Clear up thoroughly. Dispose of rubbish properly and make sure that nothing is left behind.

After the Event

- Keep in touch with the congregation and particularly the people you spoke to. Get to know them better.

Hints and Tips

- If visiting a religious congregation remember you are a guest at another place of worship. Avoid any action or words that may offend. Always show absolute respect to the place of worship, faith and congregation at which you are speaking. (See the *Celebrating Festivals* Community Dialogue Manual for advice on attending different religious services.)
- Resist the temptation to group with the other organisers. It may help if you give yourself a target: try to have a conversation with at least five people that

you do not know. Encourage all the volunteers to do this.

- After the event you might like to invite the congregation of the church/ synagogue to visit the mosque, invite them to other events or suggest organising joint events together.
- If you have cards, take them with you. It can be useful to exchange contact details with the people you meet to enable you to keep in touch after the event itself. Or provide pen and paper and invite guests to leave contact details so that you can keep in touch after the event.

b) Community Event

OBJECTIVE: to bring the community together and encourage interaction, community spirit and social cohesion

"The Rumi Mosque situated across the road from the station contacted us about organising an Ashurah event. They gave a short presentation about the story of Noah's Pudding and explained that the diverse combination of ingredients made a delicious pudding. Similarly, when diverse communities come together, some good can come about from the interaction. I had tried the pudding before, but it tasted so much better when I knew the significance and story behind it."

Chief Superintendent David Osborne, Borough Commander, Edmonton Police Station

If you would like to share Noah's Pudding on a larger scale, you could find a suitable venue and invite members of your local community to a Noah's Pudding event, with puddings, other refreshments and perhaps one or two speakers and/or a presentation. Events like this can really increase community spirit and are well worth the effort involved.

Hosting an event at your local mosque or community centre can be one way of opening the doors and welcoming members of your immediate community to your centre or local place of worship, but if you don't have a suitable space to host the event, why not ask a local church to work in partnership with you and to provide the venue.

This kind of event can also be used to host local stakeholders such as your local MP, Mayor, councillors or council workers, or your local police force. This is a good way to bring your community into contact with stakeholders, building trust and goodwill.

What's more, you could also offer to distribute Noah's Puddings at a local community event on a completely different theme organised by another community group or by a local stakeholder. You could invite members of your own community group to attend and help with the distribution of the pudding. This is an excellent way of engaging with people who might not otherwise attend a Noah's Pudding event or similar dialogue event.

Such events, of course, require a lot more organisation than the smaller events covered in this manual. For this reason, advice on organising these events has been split into the following sections below:

- Working in Partnership
- Planning Your Event
- Event Publicity
- Preparing for Your Event
- Extras
- Event Essentials
- Checklist

Working in Partnership

For extensive advice on finding local partners and working in partnership please refer to the Building Partnerships *Community Dialogue Manual.*

Consider inviting another community group, charity or religious congregation to work with you on the planning and organisation of the project. The benefits of partnership go far beyond just the sharing of the workload:

- It unites your ends and your means; your goal of promoting interaction and friendship between different groups is served even at the planning stages of your event as your group and another work together on the project and get to know each other.
- It expands your range of expertise by bringing in the skills of members of another group.
- It expands your range of guests, as you can invite all your partners' contacts to your event(s).
- It can bring you new insight into the perspectives and concerns of a different cultural, social or religious group.
- It increases the credibility of your dialogue work by showing that even as you plan your events you are practising what you preach and engaging with other groups.
- It can increase trust and interest in your organisation; some sectors of the community who are unfamiliar with your work may already know and trust your partner organisation, and be more inclined to get involved with your projects because of the connection.
- It helps keep your work genuinely rooted in dialogue. Even as you work on your project you are engaging in a form of dialogue, and probably growing in appreciation and understanding of a different group.

- It can establish a lasting, mutually beneficial relationship where each partner can sometimes benefit from the support, expertise, contacts and facilities of the other.

Tips for Working in Partnership

- Attending events run by other organisations with objectives linked to your own will give opportunities to meet possible partners.
- It is a good idea to invite prospective partners to an informal, social meeting, perhaps over lunch or tea. If they are interested in what you do and in working with you on the project you propose you can then arrange another meeting.
- Choose your prospective partners carefully. The most successful partnerships are those that serve the objectives of both/all partner organisations. You need partners who share your enthusiasm for bringing the community together through this event.
- When contacting an organisation to propose a meeting or collaboration on a particular project, emphasise the objectives that you share and show how collaboration makes sense for you both.
- Make sure that your partners have the opportunity to be involved at every level. If possible, try to get them involved in planning from the early stages, so that they are really part of the team.
- Make sure that your partners feel valued and recognised; be sure to include their names and details on any materials for a jointly organised event, and ensure that they are visible and acknowledged on the day.

Planning Your Event

Form a Planning Committee

Gather a committee from among your congregation/organisation/group.

Consider Partnership

Decide whether you want to work in partnership with one or more other organisations. Contact them accordingly so that they join in the planning process as soon as possible.

Decide on Event Size and Target Audience

Decide on the size or your event, and your target audience. If you want to keep it simple for your first event you could just invite your immediate neighbourhood or the congregation of the nearest church/synagogue. If you feel ambitious and have plenty of helpers you can invite more groups and/or deliver more invitations to local people.

Set Date, Time, Duration and Venue

Find and book a venue, such as a church hall, town hall or community centre. Try to ensure that the venue has parking and has convenient public transport links (bus stops/ tube stations).

Set date, time and duration with your target audience in mind.

People have more time at weekends, but avoid a day when there is another significant local event such as a football match.

Bear in mind that many Jews would not be able to attend on the Sabbath (Shabbat), which lasts from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday, making both those evenings difficult.

Identify Key Speakers or VIP Guests

The attendance of an important local stakeholder, such as an MP, the Mayor or another local councillor, can raise the profile of your event, attract more guests and bring your community into contact with an influential local figure. It may be worth contacting possible VIP guests at the start of the planning process, and choosing a date that works for them.

See also "Event Publicity" below.

Draft Content for Promotional Literature

You will need to design/prepare posters, an event booklet for people to refer to on the day and letters/emails of invitation for all your potential guests.

See "Event Publicity", page 21 and Appendices 1-4, below.

Plan Food

Decide how you will provide the puddings and other refreshments for the evening. Volunteers? Buy from food outlets? Caterers?

Plan Extras

Think about 'extras' that can be included in your event.

Possibilities which may enhance the interest and enjoyment of the event include:

- Speeches
- Displays – posters, artwork, notices, children's work
- Information on organisations represented
- Music/poetry
- Drama

See "Extras" section below for more details.

Check Licensing

Find out if you need any licences for the event and arrange to obtain them (see "Extras" section, below, page 26).

Plan Finances

Work out how much the event will cost and plan how you will meet the costs (donations of food/money from your group, sponsorship by a local business etc).

Plan Human Resources

Assign volunteers responsibility for different areas: food, venue, design, invitations etc.

It may be helpful to produce a human resources plan for the day. (See below, page 23 for further details on human resources planning).

Event Publicity

Designing and Preparing Invitations

You will need to design posters, invitations and event booklets for people to refer to on the day (giving the programme, organisers' contact details and any forthcoming events). You will also need to prepare letters/emails of invitation.

Identifying Who to Invite and Sending Invitations

See the *Building Partnerships* Community Dialogue Manual for advice on finding and contacting a range of community groups, religious groups, businesses and stakeholders.

Groups/individuals you may like to approach include:

Local stakeholders:

- MPs
- MEPs
- London Assembly Members
- Mayor
- Councillors
- The Council
- NHS health professionals
- School teachers and support staff
- University lecturers and academics
- Police and police community support officers

Local community groups:

- Faith groups and religious leaders
- Local support and development organisations
- Supplementary schools
- "Friends of" groups
- Tenants and residents organisations
- Older people's groups
- Women's groups
- Cultural community groups
- Local charities and voluntary organisations[5]
- Local campaign/issue-focused groups
- Sports groups
- Music/art groups

Local businesses

- Local business and shop owners

When inviting a community group/religious group consider attending a service/meeting and inviting your guests in person. Leave printed invitations for reference. (See the *Celebrating Festivals* Community Dialogue Manual for advice on attending different religious services.) Ask the local priest or rabbi to print details of the event in the church's/synagogue's printed notices or newsletter, if there is one.

Preparing a Press Release and Contacting the Media

Invite members of the press to attend and to cover the event in their publications. Contact as many local media outlets as possible two weeks in advance. Avoid sending emails with attachments. In your initial email give a brief, clear explanation of what is happening. The journalist will contact you if he/she is interested and you can then send a press release (see Appendix 3). Follow up with a call one week before the event.

For further advice on engaging with the media and on producing successful press releases see the *Media Engagement* Community Dialogue Manual.

[5] Find your local organisation through http://www.navca.org.uk/membersdirectory (England)/ http://www.voluntaryactionscotland.org.uk/third_sector_interfaces.html (Scotland)/ http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/grants/voluntary/contact/?lang=en (Wales)

Local support and development organisations are organisations that provide support to voluntary organisations and volunteers in a particular borough, district or city. They provide a range of valuable resources, from free or affordable training to networking and funding opportunities.

Preparing for Your Event

Human Resources

Early in the planning process, make particular people responsible for different areas of work:

- General coordination (finalising programme and chairing meetings)
- Non-designed materials (introductory presentation, feedback forms)
- Venue organisation
- Food and drink
- Publicity coordination
- Design
- VIPs
- Media
- Technical management
- Records of the event: filming, photography, interviews etc
- Performers
- Displays
- HR planning for the day
- Health and safety/first aid
- Venue preparation and decoration

It may be helpful to have a Human Resources plan to identify roles and responsibilities on the day and the number of volunteers needed. The table below is a guide to assist you in identifying such roles. Some roles will be determined by the size and type of event that you hope to organise. Whilst identifying areas of responsibility, bear in mind that one person may be able to take on multiple areas of responsibility throughout the event.

Sample Human Resource Plan

Role	Responsibility	No
EVENT COORDINATOR	▪ Liaise with Food Manager, speakers and VIP liaison officers to ensure that the event runs to schedule	1
WELCOMER	▪ Count number of guests entering ▪ Watch out for any security issues and act on them	1-2
REGISTRATION TABLE	▪ Greet and register guests ▪ Direct to drinks area/seating	1-2

INTRODUCTORY SPEAKER(S)	▪ Welcome people ▪ Explain the aims of the event and the background and meaning of Noah's Pudding ▪ Give practical information such as fire procedures and explain that there will be photography/filming ▪ Introduce any other speaker(s) including VIPs ▪ Thank guests and organisers at the end, mentioning feedback forms, contact lists etc	1-2
TECHNICAL SUPPORT	▪ Check all equipment, control the music	1-2
FOOD MANAGER	▪ Direct food distribution and volunteers ▪ Ensure the health and safety regulations	1
FOOD AND REFRESHMENTS	▪ Prepare food ready to be served ▪ Make sure the food stand is clean at all times	2-5
AMENITIES INSPECTOR	▪ Check toilets for cleanliness & hygiene ▪ Dispose of rubbish regularly	1-2
PHOTOGRAPHER	▪ Take photos of the people eating and talking	1-2
VIDEO CAMERAMAN	▪ Tape scenes from the evening ▪ Interview people about their experience of the evening	1
MEDIA LIAISON OFFICER	▪ Look after media representatives and meet their needs	1-2
VIP LIAISON OFFICER	▪ Greet VIP's and show them to their places ▪ Look after them and meet their needs	1-4
FIRST AIDER	▪ Be on site at all times to respond to accidents and medical problems.	1-2

Food

You need to find out about any dietary requirements that guests have before preparing the food. Ask them to state dietary requirements on your invitations. If they do not mention any when they send their RSVP, check when you respond to confirm their place.

Make sure that you have signs to indicate vegetarian/vegan food, and food containing ingredients to which guests may be allergic, such as nuts. If you are serving food to guests in their seats, make sure you cater for their dietary requirements. You should ideally have records of which guests require vegetarian/vegan/nut-free dishes etc.

Bear in mind the dietary requirements of the followers of certain religions. There is often considerable variation in the practice of different groups/individuals belonging to a religion. If you are inviting a religious congregation it is probably worth asking a contact for guidance on the dietary needs of their group.

- If you are inviting Buddhist or Hindu guests remember that many of the followers of both religions are vegetarian. Note that Hindu vegetarians generally do not eat eggs, though they can consume milk and dairy products.
- Note that while Sikh principles do not require adherents to be vegetarian, some Sikhs adhere to the principle of refraining from any meat that has been ritually slaughtered: they do not eat halal or kosher meat.
- If you are inviting Jewish guests remember that many only eat certified kosher meat. Other Jewish food laws are explained in the Fast Breaking Dinner and Community Engagement Dinner Community Dialogue Manuals.
- If you are inviting Jains remember that they are strict vegetarians because of their careful adherence to the principle of non-violence. They do not eat eggs and some do not consume milk or milk products. In addition, honey is forbidden because of the violence done to bees in its collection and root vegetables are not eaten because harvesting them destroys the whole plant.
- Non-Muslims inviting Muslims should remember that they do not eat pork products and that meat must be halal.

A vegetarian option (especially if it excludes eggs) will ensure that there is an acceptable meal for most guests (although if you know that vegans and/or Jains will be attending remember that they have stricter dietary restrictions).

Make sure that you brief volunteers to maintain high standards of hygiene and safety throughout. Volunteers working with food must make sure they wash their hands regularly and where possible serve food with gloves; any food being cooked or reheated must be piping hot all the way through; cold cooked food should be kept chilled.

Materials

Aside from publicity materials and designed materials, think about and prepare the following:

- A short, interesting presentation explaining the significance of Noah's Pudding and what you are aiming to achieve with this event. (It may be helpful to look at "Aims and Objectives of This Manual"; "The Story of Noah's Pudding" and "The Story of Noah's Pudding Dialogue Events", pages 8-10 above.)
- A little event booklet to hand out at the event, giving the programme, organisers' contact details and any forthcoming events.
- Feedback forms so that you can learn from people's experience of your event (see Appendix 5 for sample form).

Extras

You could add interest to your event by organising some additional features to compliment the event. Possible ideas that can be incorporated into your evening are given below:

Speeches

If you have VIPs coming, you may want to invite them to make a speech. Guests should be asked to keep speeches succinct. Include them in your printed programme.

Displays – Posters, Artwork, Notices, Children's Work, Photos

Provide displays to give people something extra to look at. At an event targeting different faith communities, for example, you may like to make a colourful display giving information on religions represented at the event, asking for contributions from the religious groups attending.

Children may like to contribute pictures or posters, and photos from other community events are always interesting.

Invite any partner groups to contribute displays/photos.

Information on Organisations Represented

When inviting local organisations to your event, or when they reply, invite them to provide leaflets and posters to be displayed at the event.

Music/Poetry[6]

A performance from a local choir or instrumental group provides an enjoyable extra element to the evening. Alternatively, you could ask local school children to read some poetry.

Background music while people are arriving, mingling or eating is also a pleasant addition.

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[6] NB if your event will include the performance of a play, an exhibition of a film, the performance of live music or the playing of recorded music and your venue does not have a premises licence, you will need a Temporary Event Notice. Incidental (background) music is an exception and does not require a licence.

You will need to fill in a Temporary Event Notice form and send it to the Council's Licensing section, and to the local police, a minimum of ten working days before the event. The Licensing section will be able to give you the appropriate form and advise you on whom you should send the police copy to. An individual can apply for up to five TENs in a year, and a single premises can be used up to twelve times. Currently an application costs £21.

If you are going to play recorded music you will need a licence from the Performing Rights Society. The PRS for Music website (http://prsformusic.com) has a "Charity and community" section (http://prsformusic.com/users/businessesandliveevents/musicforbusinesses/charityandcommunity/Pages/default.aspx#10). You can call them on 08453093090 or can request a callback via the website.

Rotating Quotes on a Screen

A PowerPoint display of inspiring quotes projected onto a screen or wall while people are arriving and mingling provides extra interest. Including quotes from diverse sources will add to an atmosphere of sharing and mutual respect. For an interfaith/intercultural event you could use quotes from religious texts and from inspirational figures such as Rumi, Gandhi and Mother Theresa. For an inter-organisational networking event consider preparing a set of rotating quotes concerned with dialogue and partnership. (See *Celebrating Festivals* Community Dialogue Manual for a selection of inspiring quotes from a wide range of sources.)

Drama[7]

Add extra entertainment to your event by arranging a performance from a local amateur dramatics society or school/college/university drama club. You could even invite a local comedian. If you do this make sure you are familiar with his/her work and feel confident that it won't cause any real offence to anyone

Event Essentials

Attention to detail can determine the success of your Noah's Pudding evening. Below are some essential details worthy of your attention!

The Venue

Make sure the venue is very clean and aired and decorate it. If possible bring in some flowers/plants.

Health and Safety

Appoint a health and safety coordinator to talk through health and safety with the volunteers and make sure that they know what to do in an emergency.

Appoint a fire warden. Check that your fire alarm is working and that fire exits are fully accessible and clearly signposted.

Make sure that you have a well-equipped first aid kit and that your volunteers know where it is.

Make sure you have a qualified First Aider on site in the event of an emergency.[8]

When introducing the event remember to include safety information, including the location of fire exits.

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[7] See footnote 6 above

[8] St John's Ambulance (http://www.sja.org.uk/sja/training-courses.aspx) and the British Red Cross (http://www.redcrossfirstaidtraining.co.uk/) provide a range of first aid courses. Local branches can also offer first aid cover for events at competitive rates.

Alternatively, if you know a doctor or nurse personally you could ask him/her to be present at the event and provide First Aid cover.

See http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Accidents-and-first-aid/Pages/Introduction.aspx for a First Aid guide.

Guests

Make sure there are some volunteers whose responsibilities include simply taking time to chat to visitors. They may have another minor role too, but they should talk to their guests.

Make sure that there are people at the door to welcome people in and to thank them for coming as they leave. Don't let people just drift out without feeling that their attendance has been appreciated.

Leave out a visitors' book/contact list and invite guests to add their details to it. You may wish to include a column that they can tick if they wish to help at future events.

Feedback Forms

Remember to make sure that guests fill these out shortly before the end of the evening.

Filming and Photography

Try to take plenty of photographs on the day so that you can use them for future articles, newsletters, website etc. If possible investing in a professional photographer can be worthwhile if you are likely to use the photos for future publications or brochures.

If you have or can hire a video camera, filming from the event can be a valuable resource to use later. Record interviews from participants offering reflections at the end of the event.

At the beginning of the event, inform guests that there will be some photography and filming during the evening and explain the purpose of this.

To Remember on the Day

Smile! There is no substitute. It will make people feel welcome.

Talk to your guests. Give yourself a target of talking to at least five people you do not know.

Make sure everyone knows exactly what their job is and is confident doing it.

Checklist

{Comments referring specifically to university events are given in italics within curly brackets}

Planning: Why, What, How, When, Where

(At least 2-3 months in advance)

- Set clear objectives for the event: what are you trying to achieve?
- Tell the whole congregation of your mosque/group {or your university Islamic society, or group of Muslim friends}. Form a planning group to take responsibility for organising the event but remember to give regular updates

to the whole congregation/group. Your planning group will need to meet regularly, perhaps once a week/fortnight.

- Think of possible partners for the project, such as community groups (whether Muslim or not), religious groups, local stakeholders or businesses. Meet with potential partners and invite them to join your planning group (see Appendix 1 for sample email).
- In your planning group decide on a target audience (see "Planning Your Event", p 19).
- Decide what you want to include in the event (see "Planning Your Event", p 19; "Extras", p 26).
- Set a date. Think of your target audience and VIP guests when setting dates.
- Plan where you would like to hold the event.
- Organise your speaker and/or entertainment. Who will perform/speak? At what time? Will you need to pay them and how much?

Practical Priorities

(2-3 months in advance)

- Arrange a venue.
- Work out what the event is likely to cost altogether.
- Ensure that your mosque's congregation/group can meet the cost of the event together. If the mosque doesn't have a budget for this kind of event you could ask for donations from the congregation - again, after Friday prayers might be a good time. Perhaps a local business would be interested in sponsoring the event, giving a donation or more likely providing free or discounted goods. (Remember to acknowledge your sponsors in publicity materials.) {Establish whether your group/society will need extra funds and how you will raise these. You could ask the chaplaincy team about possible sources of financial support or ask guests for small contributions.}
- Write to the council regarding parking or similar permits.

Design

- Design and print cards to place on top of bowls (Appendix 8).
- Design posters.
- Design event booklets (giving the programme, organisers' contact details and any forthcoming events).
- Design A5 invitations.

Marketing and Invitations

(Begin 2-3 months in advance)

- Plan marketing with the input of any partners. If you are organizing this event in partnership publicity and attracting guests will be easier (see "Working in Partnership", page 18 and *Building Partnerships* Community Dialogue Manual).
- Print plenty of copies of designed invitations.
- Draft invitation emails and letters.
- As soon as possible send letters to the Mayor, councillors, MPs and other important people in your community inviting them to the event (see Appendix 4 for sample letter of invitation).
- Send all invitations at least 1-2 months in advance if possible.
- Invite all members of your own group 4-8 weeks in advance. For example, after Friday prayers announce the details of the event and give out invitations to your congregation.
- Give plenty of invitations to the priest of your local church, the rabbi of your local synagogue and/or other religious leader(s). Ask them to announce the event after a service. Even better, go along and invite the congregation yourself (see the *Celebrating Festivals* Community Dialogue Manual for advice on attending different religious services). {Give plenty of invitations to representatives of the groups you want to invite, asking them to announce the event after a service/meeting. Even better, go and invite the congregation/group yourself}. Ask the priest/rabbi/organiser to put the event in printed notices/newsletter.
- Prepare a press release (see Appendix 3).
- Put up posters in local shops, Post Offices, community centres, places of worship etc with the permission of owners.
- Identify and contact as many media outlets as possible two weeks in advance. Follow up with a phone call the week before.
- 1-2 weeks prior to the event send reminder emails to confirmed guests.
- Ask contacts at local churches/synagogues to remind their congregations at the last service before the event.
- Remind all members of your own group the week before the event. For example, remind everyone at the mosque on the last Friday before the event.
- Make sure that there are enough English speaking people from within your community planning to attend.

Preparing for Your Event: Human Resources, Food, Materials

- Early on in the planning process delegate responsibility for different areas of work: food, cleaning and decoration etc.
- Find your volunteers and assign them to the various roles. (Make sure you have a balance of male and female volunteers.)
- Meet volunteers regularly to ensure they understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Decide what other refreshments you will provide.
- Decide whether to make or buy puddings.
- If you are buying puddings or other food check well in advance that your chosen supplier can supply what you want.
- Decide on the quantity of food you will need to provide. The initial response generated by the publicity material will give you some indication of attendance levels and help you plan.
- Take allergies into account; for example, be careful to provide information on whether food may contain nuts. It is best not to put nuts in the puddings or garnish with nuts for the sake of allergy sufferers.
- Cater for vegetarians.
- Plan where the food will be made, how it will be transported, stored, prepared/heated and served. Make sure that you have all the necessary equipment, serving dishes/implements, oven gloves, kitchen towel, tea towels etc at the right locations.
- Buy tea and coffee, milk, sugar, and cold drinks.
- Buy Noah's Puddings/ingredients to make them (see Appendix 7). Always buy/make extra. If you are expecting more than 50 people to attend buy/make at least 20-25 extra puddings.
- Ensure that all volunteers working with food are briefed on maintaining high standards of hygiene, washing hands regularly, covering any cuts etc.
- Make your Noah's Pudding the day before the event or on the morning of the event. It may be easier to transport the pudding in the pan it was made in and serve into bowls at the venue.
- Put together and print items to give guests on the day: event booklets and feedback forms (see Appendices 5 and 10).
- Prepare a short, interesting presentation explaining Noah's Pudding and your event's aims.

General Practical Preparations

(In the month before the event)

- Make sure you have a microphone, computer, projector and/or any other necessary equipment and that it works in the venue.
- If you have a speaker coming or anyone providing entertainment, phone or email them to make sure that they have not forgotten and that they know all necessary details.
- Buy/borrow plates, bowls, glasses, cutlery and serviettes as required.
- Buy serviettes, bin bags, and any stationery necessary to decorate the venue.
- Buy a visitors' book and/or a clipboard for your contact list.

(In the final few days)

- Have a meeting with all volunteers and go through checklists to make sure that all preparations have been made and that there is someone to do all the remaining jobs.
- Make sure the venue is cleaned thoroughly.
- Decorate the venue if prior access is given.
- Put out a visitors' book/contact list and pens for people to leave contact details and brief comments (including a column that they can tick if they wish to help at future events).

(On the Day)

- Volunteers should arrive at the venue at least two hours before the event is due to start
- Do any cleaning and decorating that could not be done in advance.
- Arrange tables and seating.
- Put out feedback forms, contact lists and plenty of pens.
- Make sure that everything has been delivered to the venue.
- Set up and check all technical equipment.
- Serve the pudding into individual bowls. Lay out the puddings and have at least two people behind the table to hand them out.
- Volunteers assigned to greet guests should be ready at the door at least ½ hour in advance.
- If you have a seating plan, designated volunteers should show guests to their seats.
- Make sure that the part of the room furthest from the door is filled up first, so that there is space for latecomers to come in without too much disruption.

- Remember to include safety information in the introduction to the event and to notify guests that photography and filming will be taking place.
- Follow the programme as closely as possible.
- Your designated photographer should take plenty of photos.
- Volunteers need to be careful to engage with guests and not to group with each other.
- Make sure everyone is handed a feedback form and collect these before guests leave.
- Before guests leave thank everyone for coming and mention any forthcoming events.
- Volunteers need to stay to clear up the venue.
- Make sure that the rubbish is properly disposed of.
- Make sure that no equipment and/or materials are left at the venue.

Follow-up

- Write thank you letters to anyone who helped.
- Within a week, get in touch with all who came on the day and thank them for coming (see Appendix 6 for sample thank you email).
- Put all the photographs from the day on the website, if you have one.
- Send the link to photographs uploaded onto website in thank you emails.
- Also include any memorable comments.
- Edit video footage and add to website if required.
- Process feedback forms/questionnaires.
- Reimburse any expenses.
- Hold a post-event debriefing meeting with the planning group and volunteers. Evaluate the event and discuss improvements for next time. Ensure that everybody's efforts are acknowledged and appreciated.
- And then, keep in touch with your guests and get to know them better. Suggest that they attend/help with other events.

3. Events with Schools

a) Home-Time Pudding Distribution at Schools

OBJECTIVE: to encourage interaction and friendship between parents

"Having obtained permission from my child's school, I took along about 50 bowls of Noah's Pudding near home-time. We placed the puddings on a small table near the exit and together with my daughter we distributed it to all the parents and pupils as they left the classroom. It was received really well and I managed to meet and speak to a lot of parents in my child's class whom I had not previously spoken to."

Nilgun Aydemir, Southgate, London

If you have a child, why not share Noah's Pudding with other parents at your child's school? This is a great way to increase friendly interaction between parents waiting at the school gates. You can take a number of puddings when you go to collect your child and give them to other parents waiting for their children. Give a card with the pudding so the parents who receive it have an explanation of its meaning and a list of ingredients. Why not suggest to Muslim friends that they do the same thing on the same day? If a few of your friends are happy to help you may be able to make and distribute puddings to your child's whole class or year group.

Checklist

- Obtain permission from the school first by informing them of what you would like to do (see Appendix 2). If you do this in advance, say, two weeks before the event, the teacher will be able to let parents know and they can make sure they have time to stay, take a pudding and have a chat.
- Make the puddings (see Appendix 7 for recipe).
- Disposable containers for the puddings with lids.
- Disposable spoons.
- Cards - don't forget to sign your name (see Appendix 8).
- Come to the school early with your puddings.
- Smile.

Hints and Tips

- Leave out nuts in case children or adults have nut allergies. You can always have some crushed nuts available to garnish the puddings for parents to help themselves.
- Give the puddings to parents so that they can check the ingredients and make sure their children are not allergic to any of them before letting the children eat the puddings.

b) School Activities

OBJECTIVE: to engage children with the story of Noah's Pudding and with Muslim families in the community; to increase interaction between parents and the school, building the sense of the wider school community

"I was approached by my child's teacher asking if I could contribute to the 'Celebrate Our Differences' week organised by the school. The Dialogue Society provided me with ideas and materials to do an interactive classroom activity. We read the story of Prophet Noah and the children pretended to make pudding through role-play. The children really enjoyed it and I had great fun too!"

Mehtap Meric, Barnet volunteer

If you want to do more to involve local children with Noah's Pudding, you may be able to visit a local school. Contact the head teacher and ask if you can come in during school hours to teach the children about the story of Noah's Pudding. If you are not a parent but know parents at the school ask them to help; it will be easier for parents to approach teachers they know and parent-teacher cooperation is very helpful for building a supportive school community. You can involve children in the story of Noah's Pudding, and in serving and sharing it. Explain the meaning of Ashurah, perhaps using games to get the children involved and interested. Children may enjoy serving portions from a big bowl of pudding. Alternatively you could take in individual bowls ready to distribute at the end of the lesson.

Checklist

Planning (Four weeks before the event)

- Decide what you want to do: which age group of children you want to involve, how you are going to tell the story etc.
- Contact the head teacher (by email or letter, providing your address and post code) or ask a friend with children at the school to approach a teacher they know, explaining what you want to do and why and asking to meet (see Appendix 2 for sample email).
- Meet with the head teacher and/or other relevant staff and make arrangements for your visit.

Preparations

- Buy or prepare any materials that will help you involve the children: games, art equipment (the school may be able to provide this if you ask teachers in advance) etc.
- Practise what you're going to do so that you can see how long it will take and so that you feel confident (see Appendix 9: Telling the story to children).

- Make sure you have all the plastic bowls and spoons that you will need. If the children are going to help serve the pudding you will need a big bowl and a big spoon as well.
- Buy the ingredients (see Appendix 7 for recipe).

Making the Pudding

(Begin the day before the morning you need to make the pudding)

- Soak the ingredients requiring soaking overnight.
- Prepare/cook ingredients.
- Mix and complete cooking process (see instructions in recipe, Appendix 7).

On the Day

- Arrive in good time and get everything ready.
- Tell the story and get the children involved in any games or activities that you have prepared.
- Serve the pudding with the children and enjoy eating it together. Or distribute ready-made puddings at the end of the session.

In the Week After the Event

- Write to thank the teachers involved for letting you come in, and perhaps suggesting similar events in future.

Note that in a secondary school with kitchen facilities you might be able to involve children in the final stages of the making of the pudding. You would need to soak and pre-cook the individual ingredients in advance.

Hints and Tips

- At primary schools it is usually best to visit at the end of the day, or at the end of the morning.
- Think carefully about the age of the children you will be talking to when planning your visit. Ask parents and teachers you know for advice if you are not sure what will be suitable.
- Leave out nuts in case of allergies.
- See Appendix 10 for suggestions for children's activities.
- Be aware that schools have to restrict outsiders' access to pupils in line with their child protection policies. Policies vary to some extent from school to school. Do not be offended if you can't be left alone with children. Some schools may even require you to show them a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check. (For more information on CRB checks see www.direct.gov.uk/crb)

4. Events at Universities

a) University Pudding Distribution

OBJECTIVE: to encourage new interactions and friendships between students of different faiths and cultures

"Last year, I prepared some Noah's Pudding using my mum's recipe and served it to my flatmates as well as other students living in the same student accommodation. I found it to be a really good ice-breaker and a way to meet new people. I'll be doing it again next year too."

Ugur Bar, Kent University

Why not try distributing puddings among neighbours in your student accommodation? Try to take a pudding to at least five different neighbours. This will help you get to know your neighbours and contribute to interaction between students of different cultural and religious backgrounds.

A variation on this activity is to distribute puddings among students on your course after a meeting or seminar. Ask a friend to help you prepare and distribute the puddings. Distributing puddings in the Student Union or a common room is another possibility.

Checklist

- Puddings (see Appendix 7 for recipe)
- Suitable containers for the puddings
- Cards - don't forget to sign your name (see Appendix 8)

Hints and Tips

- Think carefully about the best time and place to distribute your puddings. You don't want to do it after a lecture if a lot of students have to go straight on to the next one. You could do it at the end of the lecture before lunchtime or before a coffee break. If students have a coffee break in a common space this could be an ideal time and location.
- Leave out nuts in case of allergies.

b) University Event

OBJECTIVE: to encourage new interactions and friendships between students of different faiths and cultures, and between different student societies

If you would like to share Noah's Pudding with the student community on a larger scale, find a suitable venue and invite non-Muslim students and staff to a Noah's Pudding event, with puddings, other refreshments and perhaps a speaker. A university Islamic Society would be well placed to organise this kind of event, but you could also

organise it with a few friends. Book a room with plenty of space for your guests.

You could advertise with posters or fliers in the Student's Union, common rooms and halls of residence and hand out fliers after a lecture or meeting. To maximise attendance it may be worth posting invitations to individuals.

You could ask the university chaplain or a member of the Christian Union/Jewish Society to pass on invitations, or go along to a service/meeting in person to invite the congregation/group. Ashurah will have particular relevance to Christian and Jewish students who recognise Prophet Noah, and to Baha'is, Jehovah's Witnesses and Quakers. But you could also invite other faith groups (Buddhist, Sikh, Hindu, Jain, Zoroastrian etc), University departments (your own, or perhaps the Theology or Religious Studies department) or societies you know or that may be interested regardless of religious affiliations. Another idea is to ask other students, University societies and groups to contribute with their own traditional dishes and food making the event all the more inclusive and lively.

For Checklist see "Community Event" section above, p 17

Hints and Tips

- If you don't know how to book a room for the event ask a tutor, chaplain or student union representative. Or check in the university handbook, if you have one, or on the students' website, or students' section of the main university website.
- If you need to ask guests for contributions, check with the person in charge of room bookings whether you can do this at the event, and in what form. It may be, for example, that you are not allowed to charge for entry in a university venue, but that you can bring a collections tin and ask for donations.
- A university event on Friday or Saturday evening is likely to be competing with many other events. You may attract more people by holding it on a different evening. Or make sure you advertise it very early on, so that it is the first event that goes into people's diaries for that weekend.
- At the event, leave out a pad of paper for people to write down their contact details if they would like to hear about future events. It may be worth providing a separate list for people to sign if they are interested in helping with a future event. Make sure you draw people's attention to the contact list(s) at some point in the evening (perhaps after the puddings have been eaten).

COMMUNITY DIALOGUE MANUAL SERIES

Appendices

03

You can copy materials from appendices via:

www.dialoguesociety.org/publications

Sample Email for Contacting a Local Faith Group

Dear [Title Surname],

My name is [Name Surname] and I am writing to you on behalf of [Name of Their Organisation].

We are hoping to organise a community celebration for Ashurah. Traditionally at this time of year we make a special pudding, called Noah's Pudding, and share it with our neighbours. It symbolises the food that Prophet Noah made at the end of the flood.

EITHER, for distribution after a service:

We would very much like to share our Noah's Pudding this year with members of [Name of Their Organisation/Group]. We would like to bring some Noah's Pudding for [Name of Their Organisation/ Group] to share at the end of one of your [services/meetings] on or close to the day of Ashurah, which falls this year on [Date].

OR, for an event:

We would very much like to share our Noah's Pudding this year with members of [Name of Their Organisation]. We intend to hold an [event/meal] with Noah's Pudding on [Date]. We hope that many members of your [congregation/group] will be able to attend, and if any are interested in helping with the event they would be more than welcome. We are currently looking for a suitable venue, as we do not have a suitable space in the mosque. We wondered if the [Church/Synagogue] might be able to host the event.

Would it be possible for you to meet with our planning group to discuss this? If you are free at [Suggested Times] on [Suggested Dates], please let me know and come for a discussion and a cup of tea with us at [Location].

Best wishes,

[Name Surname]
[Address]
[Telephone]
[Email]

Sample Emails for Contacting Your Local School

a. After-School Distribution

Dear [Title Surname],

My name is [Name Surname]. I live close to your school, on [Name of Street and Postcode] and attend the [Mosque Name] Mosque located on [Name of Street and Postcode]

Or I am [Child's Name's mother/father/a friend of Child's Name's parents].

I am writing to request permission for my friend, [Name Surname] and I to come to the school to involve the children and their parents in the tradition of Noah's Pudding. This special dish is traditionally made on the day of Ashurah, which falls this year on [Date], and it symbolises the food that Prophet Noah made at the end of the flood. In remembrance of Prophet Noah, the people of Anatolia and other Muslims have a custom to prepare this pudding and share it with friends and neighbours. We would like to bring portions of Noah's Pudding to distribute among parents and pupils at the end of the school day. We are able to come on the day itself, or any day that week.

We would omit nuts from the puddings in case of allergies and would provide cards with a full list of ingredients for parents to check before giving the pudding to children. Please find enclosed a sample card which outlines the tradition of Noah's Pudding and lists the ingredients. We would also ask you to pass on some fliers to the children to let the parents know in advance.

Please let me know if you are happy for us to do this. I would be very happy to come and discuss it further with you after school one day when your diary permits.

I look forward to your reply.

Best wishes,

[Name Surname]
[Address]
[Telephone]
[Email]

b. School Visit

Dear [Title Surname],

My name is [Name Surname]. I live close to your school, on [Name of Street and Postcode] and attend the [Mosque Name] Mosque.

Or I am [Child's Name's mother/father/a friend of Child's Name's parents].

I am writing to ask if my friend, [Name Surname] and I could come to the school to involve the children in the tradition of Noah's Pudding. This special dish is traditionally made on the day of Ashurah, which falls this year on [Date], and it symbolises the food that Prophet Noah made at the end of the Great Flood. It is customary to take portions of puddings to neighbours. Children usually enjoy hearing the story of Noah's Pudding and of course eating it. We think that sharing Noah's Pudding with children from different cultural and religious backgrounds at the school will help strengthen friendship and understanding between them.

Perhaps we could visit a class during an RE lesson. We would like to visit a [Key Stage 3/Key Stage 4] class if possible [Include this if you are writing to a secondary school teacher]. We would tell the story and discuss the significance of Ashurah before sharing it with the children.

The visit should contribute to the children's progress in national curriculum RE. It will provide an encounter with people and practices belonging to a major religious tradition. We hope that this encounter will help the development of respect and sensitivity towards diverse religious traditions. For a Primary School visit: It will contribute to the children's exploration of religious stories and of celebrations.

For a Key Stage 3 visit: It will contribute to the children's exploration of the diversity of religious practices and of the relationships between religious traditions.

For a Key Stage 4 visit: It will contribute to the children's exploration of different forms of cultural and religious expression.

Enclosed is a card which explains the tradition in more detail as well as listing the ingredients of the pudding. Please let me know if you think that this would be possible. I would be very happy to come and discuss it with you after school one day if that would be convenient.

Best wishes,

[Name Surname]
[Address]
[Telephone]
[Email]

Sample Press Release

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Edmonton Muslims welcome neighbours to share prophetic pudding

The congregation of Rumi Mosque seek to promote community cohesion through a tasty tradition

(Edmonton, [Date, Year]) On [Date] volunteers from the Mevlana Rumi Mosque and Dialogue Centre will welcome guests from a range of local community groups to a Noah's Pudding evening hosted by All Saints Church, Edmonton in the church hall. In addition to the traditional Anatolian dessert, which represents the food which the Prophet Noah gave the Ark's inhabitants after the Great Flood, guests will be treated to a buffet dinner and entertainment from local music groups. The stated aim of the evening is to bring together local people of different cultures in a spirit of sharing and friendship.

As well as several small local voluntary organisations, the event will be attended by three church groups and representatives of local Jewish and Buddhist organisations. The story of Noah is told in all the Abrahamic religions, but the event is intended to reach out not just to Christians and Jews but also to people of other faiths and none. Rumi Mosque volunteers are working in partnership with members of All Saints Church to prepare a good meal and an enjoyable programme. Music will be provided by local folk group [Name of Group] and by [Name of Youth Choir]. The Mayor of Enfield, Cllr [Name Surname] will be attending together with a number of other local councillors.

[Name Surname], Director of the Rumi Mosque and Dialogue Centre, said: "We at the Mevlana Rumi Mosque, and our friends at All Saints Church, are looking forward to this opportunity to bring different community groups together. Traditionally, Noah's Pudding is made at the Muslim festival of Ashurah and shared with neighbours. We are keen to take this tradition of sharing outside the Muslim community and use it to encourage dialogue and friendship between people of different faiths and cultures."

Cllr [Name Surname] of Enfield Borough Council said: "I welcome this initiative of the Rumi Mosque. It is an inspired way of using a cultural tradition to unite different local groups, and it is lovely to see Mosque and Church working together in harmony."

#Ends#

Notes to editors

1. For further information contact [Name Surname], Director of the Mevlana Rumi Mosque on [Email Address] or on [Number].
2. The Mevlana Rumi Mosque was founded by the Anatolian Muslims Society in 2009. See http://www.rumicentre.org.uk/aboutus.html
3. All Saints' Anglican Church, Edmonton, is a diverse community of Christians with a strong history of commitment to social justice and intercultural relations. It has been collaborating with the Mevlana Rumi Mosque since 2007. Contact the vicar [Name of Vicar] on [Vicar's Email].

Sample Letter to Local Dignitary

[Your name]
[Position and Organisation]
[Address], [Postcode]
[Telephone]
[Email]
[Date]

[Title Name Surname]
[Position and Organisation]
[Address], [Postcode]

Dear [Title Surname],

RE: Invitation to a Noah's Pudding Evening, [Date]

On behalf of the congregation and Events Committee of the [Name of Organisation] and the congregation of [Name of Partner Organisation], I would like to invite you to attend and give a short speech at a Noah's Pudding Evening to be held from [Time] to [Time] on [Date] at [Location].

Traditionally during the Muslim Festival of Ashurah we make a special dessert, called Noah's Pudding, and share it with our neighbours. It symbolises the food that Prophet Noah made at the end of the flood. This Ashurah, the congregation of [Name of Organisation] is joining forces with [Name of Partner Organisation] to share Noah's Pudding with the wider community in a spirit of friendship. We anticipate high attendance and look forward to welcoming local people from all walks of life.

We would be honoured to have your presence at the event, and would like to extend the invitation to your [wife/husband/partner and family]. We would also like to invite you to say a few words about local community cohesion at the beginning of the evening.

Please contact me by telephone or email to confirm your attendance, or for further information. If you are able to join us please let me know of any dietary requirements.

Yours sincerely,

[Name Surname]
[Position]
[Organisation]

Sample Event Feedback Form

Noah's Pudding Evening Feedback Form

For each question please tick the box closest to what you feel.

Were you made to feel welcome?	☐ *Yes, very* ☐ *Yes* ☐ *Not very* ☐ *No*
Was the Noah's Pudding, and the festival of Ashurah, explained well?	☐ *Entirely* ☐ *Pretty well* ☐ *Not very well* ☐ *Poorly*
Were the aims of the event clear?	☐ *Yes, very* ☐ *Yes* ☐ *Not very* ☐ *No*
How closely did the event follow the advertised programme?	☐ *Entirely* ☐ *Pretty well* ☐ *Not very well* ☐ *Not at all*
How was the entertainment?	☐ *Very good* ☐ *Good* ☐ *Ok* ☐ *Not so good*
How was the pudding?	☐ *Very good* ☐ *Good* ☐ *Ok* ☐ *Not so good*
How were other refreshments?	☐ *Very good* ☐ *Good* ☐ *Ok* ☐ *Not so good*
Would you want to come to another community event like this?	☐ *Definately* ☐ *Probably* ☐ *Maybe* ☐ *Probably not*
Where do you expect to see the people you met today again?	☐ *We have arranged to meet* ☐ *Visiting a religious service* ☐ *At another event like this* ☐ *Nowhere*

Please add any comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you!

Sample Thank You Email for Attendees

Dear [Title Surname/First Name (depending on whether you spoke on first name terms at the event)],

I am emailing on behalf of [Name of Organisation(s)] to thank you for attending our Noah's Pudding event on [Day]. It was a pleasure to meet you and we really appreciate your support for our event. I hope that we will meet again before long.

Please find below a link to the programme on our website with photos from the day: [Include link if there is one]

We are planning to hold another event to bring the community together. [Brief explanation of what the event is.] If you would like to help in any way with this event, provisionally planned for [Date], I would love to hear from you. We will be having our next planning meeting on [Date].

I will send details nearer the time and hope to see you there.

Once again, many thanks for your support.

With best wishes,

[Name Surname]
[Address]
[Telephone]
[Email]

Noah's Pudding Recipe (ashura)

(Serves 6)

Ingredients

- 1 cup of pearl barley
- ⅓ cup of chickpeas
- ⅓ cup of dry white beans
- 2 tablespoons of rice
- 12 ½ cups of water
- 10 pieces of dried apricots
- 5 pieces of dried figs
- ½ cup of raisins (seedless)
- 1 small orange
- 1 ⅔ cups of sugar
- 2 tablespoons of rose water
- ⅔ cup of walnuts (not crushed)
- ½ small pomegranate

Preparation

Wash the pearl barley, chickpeas and dried beans. Soak them overnight. Soak the beans and chickpeas separately in 1 cup of water each and the pearl barley in 2 cups of water.

Add 3 cups of water to the pearl barley and 2 cups of water each to the chickpeas and beans and cook them separately on the hob. Cook the pearl barley until the grains break up and the starch comes out. If necessary boil the chickpeas in a pressure cooker. Cook the rice.

Wash the dried fruit and soak for 2 hours in 1 ½ cups of water

Mix the cooked ingredients and the dried fruit in a pan and cook for 15 minutes

Peel the orange and cut the rind, including the white inner part, into strips 3-4 cm long and 1cm wide. Divide the orange segments into 4-5 pieces.

Add them all together to the mixture and cook for another 5 minutes. Add the sugar and cook for 1-2 minutes and then remove from the hob. Add the rose water and stir.

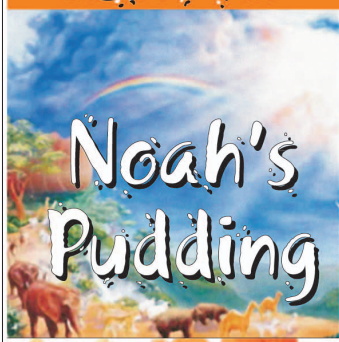
Pour into pudding bowls. Garnish with walnuts and pomegranate. Best served cold.

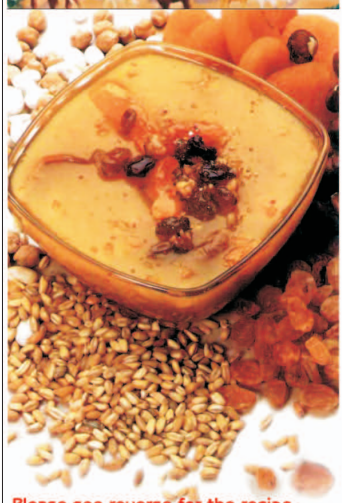
Sample Card to Put on Top of Bowl

Side A

"ashura"

In hope that you will accept and enjoy
as was once enjoyed many centuries ago ...





Please see reverse for the recipe.

According to Muslim tradition, when the waters of the Great Flood began to recede, Prophet Noah and his family are said to have gathered up all of the food remaining on the Ark and cooked a delicious pudding out of it. "Ashura" also known as Noah's Pudding is the name given to this dish.

In remembrance of Prophet Noah and as a thanksgiving to God, the people of Anatolia and other Muslims have made it a custom to prepare this pudding on this day and share it with neighbours and friends.

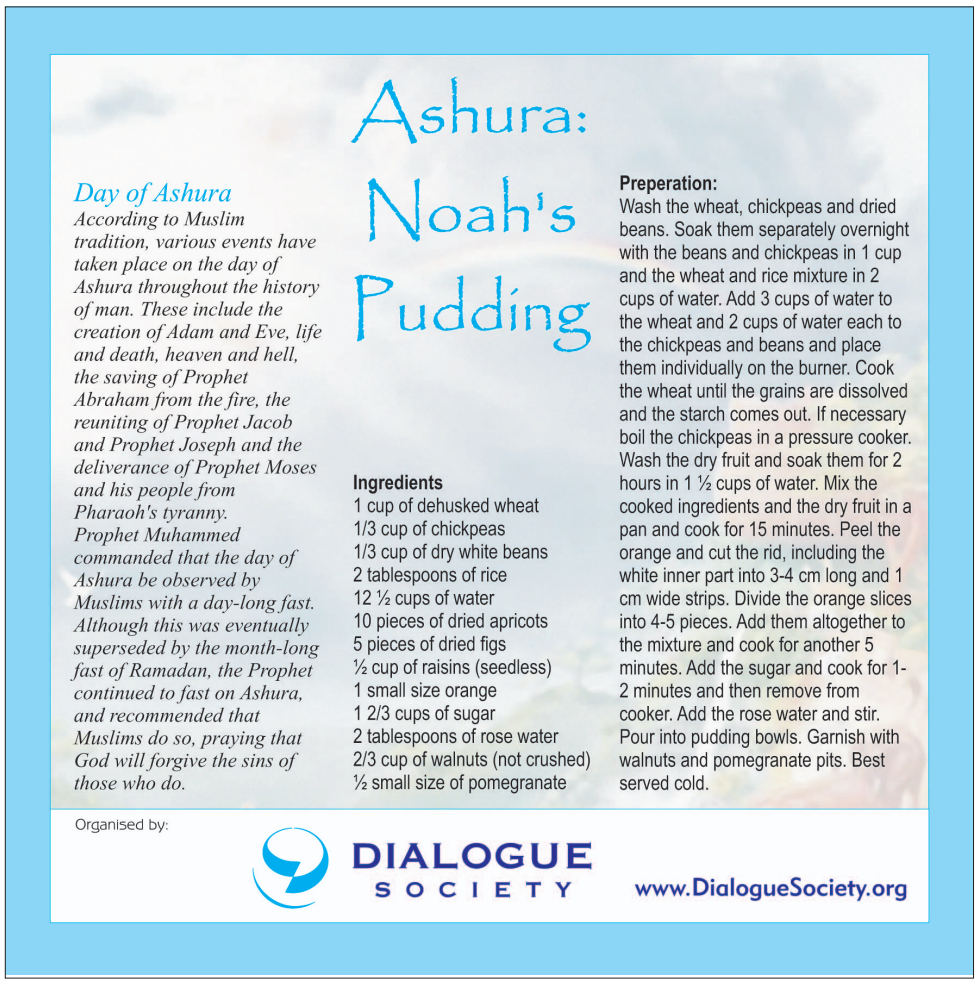
Sharing food offers a way to reaffirm unity and the essential relationship of humans to one another, regardless of personal faith, background and belief. To continue this good tradition and expand the experience of sharing, love, peace and compassion, we too are offering you a sample of Prophet Noah's home made pudding.

Bon Appetite! Afiyet Olsun!
Guten appetit! Buon appetito!
Smakelijk eten! Noosh-e jan! Bete'avon!

with compliments of:

Sample Card to Put on Top of Bowl

Side B



Telling the Story to Children

The story of the Prophet Noah (peace be upon Him) can be found in the Qur'an (in the Surahs called Hud and Nuh) and also in the Torah and the Bible (in the first book, Genesis). So Muslims, Christians and Jews all tell the story of Prophet Noah.

Involve children in the story by asking them questions. You can fill them in when they don't know the answer and expand on what they do know.

Below are the examples of possible questions that you may want to explore as part of the story:

- Where do we find the story of Prophet Noah?
- During Noah's time there were a lot of people around who did bad things and disobeyed God. But Prophet Noah was a good man and God chose him to be a messenger. (In Islamic tradition) What do we call messengers of God?
- What was Prophet Noah's message to his people?
- Did the people listen to Prophet Noah?
- What did God tell Prophet Noah to do?
- Who/what did Prophet Noah take with him onto the Ark?
- And what happened next?

Ideas for Children's Activities

- Play a game of Noah's Ark pairs. The children can play at finding pairs of each animal and putting them into a cardboard Ark. You could bring a picture (or even a model) of an Ark or get the children to help draw and colour one onto a cardboard box. You may be able to buy a set of animal playing cards at a toyshop or supermarket. Or why not ask the children to help make a set? Cut out cards in advance and get each child, or each pair of children, to draw the same animal on two cards.
- Tell the children the story of Prophet Noah's Ark and get them to draw a picture of it afterwards, or as you go along.
- Get the children to fill in the blanks in an account of the story of Prophet Noah, or make them complete a word search or a cross word.
- Tell the story, and then get the children to act it out. Costumes or facemasks will make this more fun. Young children would enjoy making animal masks with paper (cut these out in advance), felt-tip pens and elastic.

- With older children, ask them to tell the story, and discuss what it means. Their Religious Studies teacher might be able to help get the discussion going. Issues for the children to consider:
    - What the story is saying about God, the world and human beings; the presence of Prophet Noah in the scriptures of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and the significance of this; other associations of Ashurah, and its particular significance in Shi'a communities; what religious festivals like Ashurah mean in the children's families, neighbourhoods and religious groups.

(You can find an array of resources on the internet which can assist in planning, developing and delivering your classroom session. Just search via a search engine such as Google.)

At the end of the story you can explain what Prophet Noah did with the leftovers and then share your pudding.

Notes

COMMUNITY
DIALOGUE
MANUAL
SERIES

This manual is part of the Dialogue Society's Community Dialogue Manual Series:

1. Building Partnerships
2. Noah's Pudding
3. Celebrating Festivals
4. Community Fairs
5. Community Engagement Dinners
6. Community Centres Branching Out
7. Speed Dialogue
8. Open Mosque Day
9. Fasting Breaking Dinners
10. Media Engagement

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