



To learn more about RDJ contact:

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DUE TO
MS. FRYZEL
Thurs., Oct. 3

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Religious Diversity Journeys?

Religious Diversity Journeys (RDJ) is a field trip program that gives 7th graders the opportunity to visit a variety of houses of worship in the metropolitan Detroit area over the course of a school year. RDJ is offered to students in 7th grade specifically to enrich their Social Studies/World Religions curriculum. During each Journey trip, students learn about customs of a faith, ask questions, share a meal and participate in service-learning activities designed to promote the values of service to others and respect.

Which faiths will students be exposed to?

Students learn about five faiths. There is also a summation session at the Detroit Institute of Arts or the Holocaust Memorial Center.

- Christianity
- Hinduism
- Islam
- Judaism
- Sikhism

How are students selected?

Teachers at each participating school are responsible for selecting students. Most teachers ask students to write an essay or answer questions about why they think the program would benefit them and how they might share information learned with their schools and communities. RDJ provides schools with a student application and all registration materials.

Where do RDJ programs happen?

RDJ trips take place in Sikh gurdwaras, Hindu & Jewish temples, churches, synagogues & mosques. The faith communities we partner with are our right hand! We work in close partnership with houses of worship throughout the metropolitan area to develop and implement educational, engaging, appropriate and fun immersive learning experiences for RDJ students and their adult chaperones. Some of our faith-community partners include:

- Temple Israel
- Christ Church Cranbrook
- Geneva Presbyterian Church
- Sterling Heights Gurdwara
- Mata Tripta Ji Gurdwara Sahib
- Muslim Unity Center
- Islamic Center of America
- Bharatiya Hindu Temple
- Hindu Temple of Canton
- Sri Venkateswara Hindu Temple

What is the cost of the program?

The program cost for the 2019-2020 school year is \$120.00 per student. This fee covers six field trips, a textbook, a warm culturally-connected lunch at each house of faith and other enriching educational resources for each participant. In many cases, IFLC works with private foundations, individual donors and specific schools in order to assist schools with this cost.

What does a typical RDJ field-trip day look like?

While every house of worship highlights unique elements of their culture and faith during an RDJ day, the schedule for each Journey is generally similar. The average visit will consist of an icebreaker activity focused on diversity, communication and respect, an introduction to the faith and host community, and round robin educational sessions highlighting different elements of culture, history and faith. Students will enjoy a warm culturally-connected lunch, a service learning project and a wrap-up that connects to the core curriculum and relevant current events. Each RDJ day begins at 9:00 am and concludes by 1:45 pm. Some schools depart earlier to accommodate bussing schedules. Please see the sample schedule.

Religious Diversity Journeys 2019 - 2020

Dearborn Public Schools Student Application

Your Name: _____

Your email: _____

Your School: _____

Date: _____

How did you find out about the **Religious Diversity Journeys** program?

- My Social Studies teacher this year
- One of my teachers last year
- A brother or sister who was in RDJ.
- My parents
- A friend
- Other (*please explain*) _____

Please explain why you would like to attend **Religious Diversity Journeys**?

_____ Please answer on a separate paper.

What ways do you think you could share the information you learn on each RDJ field trip with your friends? What about with your entire school community?

_____ Separate paper

What ways do you think you could share the information you will learn with your family?

_____ Separate paper

What do you hope to gain personally from this experience?

_____ Separate paper.

Student Agreement:

As a student participant in Religious Diversity Journeys:

- ⇒ You must attend all six scheduled field trips.
- ⇒ You are expected to attend any in-school RDJ activities or meetings organized by your teachers.
- ⇒ You are always responsible for any school work that you miss during each RDJ field trip day.
- ⇒ You must always behave in a respectful and appropriate manner towards our hosts, remembering that you are a guest visiting a sacred space. Respect others as you would want them to respect you.
- ⇒ RDJ has zero tolerance for bullying or other not appropriate behavior. If you need help from an adult let a teacher, or the RDJ Director know.

I understand, and agree to abide by, each of these expectations.

My name: _____

Religious Diversity Journeys 2019 - 2020

Dearborn Public Schools Program Permission

Dear Parent,

Your child has been selected to participate in the 2019 - 2020 **Religious Diversity Journeys (RDJ)** program as a representative of their school. This program, now in its 19th year, is sponsored by the InterFaith Leadership Council of Metropolitan Detroit (www.detroitinterfaithcouncil.com). Your student will participate in six field trips that will take them on "Journeys" to houses of faith representing Sikhism, Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. In the Spring of 2020, students will conclude their experience with a final program wrap-up field trip. The purpose of RDJ is for participants to learn through immersive, age-appropriate and engaging experiences about the similarities that unite and the differences that enrich many of the cultural and religious communities that call South East Michigan home. As a result of their experiences, students gain an awareness and an appreciation for the many religions, cultures and customs that they will encounter as they grow into teenage learners and adult leaders in our diverse society.

Being involved in RDJ is an honor. Please tell your child you are proud of them for participating! If you have any question, you are always welcome to contact your child's teacher or connect with the RDJ Director, Wendy Miller Gamer, via email: Wendy.IFLC@gmail.com. Thank you for your support of interfaith literacy! Through their learning, today's youth will make our world a better place to live!

The organizers of Religious Diversity Journeys are very cognizant of the Constitutional provisions regarding the separation of religion and public education. The purpose of RDJ is to offer students a base of knowledge regarding the different religions and cultures in their community in order to dispel myths and stereotypes. Thus, students learn about each religion from a sociological perspective focused on traditions and holidays. Students will never be "preached at" or proselytized to. The houses of faith we work with are full partners in this endeavor and are all committed to maintaining this appropriate educational benchmark.

Lunch is an important part of the RDJ curriculum-day! As such, every faith community we visit serves participants a warm and culturally connected vegetarian lunch. Throughout the year students might experience new foods and customs connected to Indian culture, traditional Middle Eastern Islamic meals, Jewish culture & custom and Christian holiday treats. RDJ participants are always encouraged to try new foods. No one is expected to eat any food that an allergy or medical condition, strong dietary preference or cultural or religious custom or law would prohibit. If your child needs to bring their own food for any reason, they are welcome to do so in most cases, but they must always inform their teacher prior to their RDJ day. Some of our host sites have very strict guidelines regarding what types of food may and may not be brought into their sacred spaces. This information will be specifically communicated to teachers, parents and students prior to each field trip date. Please always respect these rules. On an RDJ day we are guests in someone else's home!

Participation Agreement:

My child _____ has my permission to participate in the Religious Diversity Journeys Program. I am aware that this program involves six field trip days and that my child will be responsible for informing teachers of their absence and completing missed classwork. Parent Name: _____ Parent e mail: _____

Media Permission:

I consent to my child being photographed and recorded while participating in any of the Religious Diversity Journeys programs. Any images of my child may be used as part of the profile of the InterFaith Leadership Council of Metropolitan Detroit. Video, voice recordings or photos may be distributed, transmitted, broadcast or exhibited without remuneration and without time limitation. Parent Name: _____

Emergency Contact:

Name: _____ Phone number: _____ Relationship to student: _____

2019 – 20 RDJ Schedule

NOVEMBER 8, 2019

Sikhism

Friday, November 8th, 2019

Sterling Heights Gurdwara

33340 Dequindre, Sterling Heights

DECEMBER 10, 2019

Christianity

Tuesday, December 10, 2019

First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham

1669 W. Maple Road, Birmingham

JANUARY 7, 2020

Judaism

Tuesday, January 7, 2020

Temple Emanu-El

14450 West Ten Mile Road, Oak Park

JANUARY 29, 2020

Islam

Wednesday, January 29, 2020

Islamic Center of America

19500 Ford Road, Dearborn

FEBRUARY 28, 2020

Holocaust Memorial Center Journey

Friday, February 28, 2020

Holocaust Memorial Center

28123 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills

March 24, 2020

Hinduism

Tuesday, March 24, 2020

Sri Balaji Temple of Great Lakes

3325 Middlebelt Road, West Bloomfield