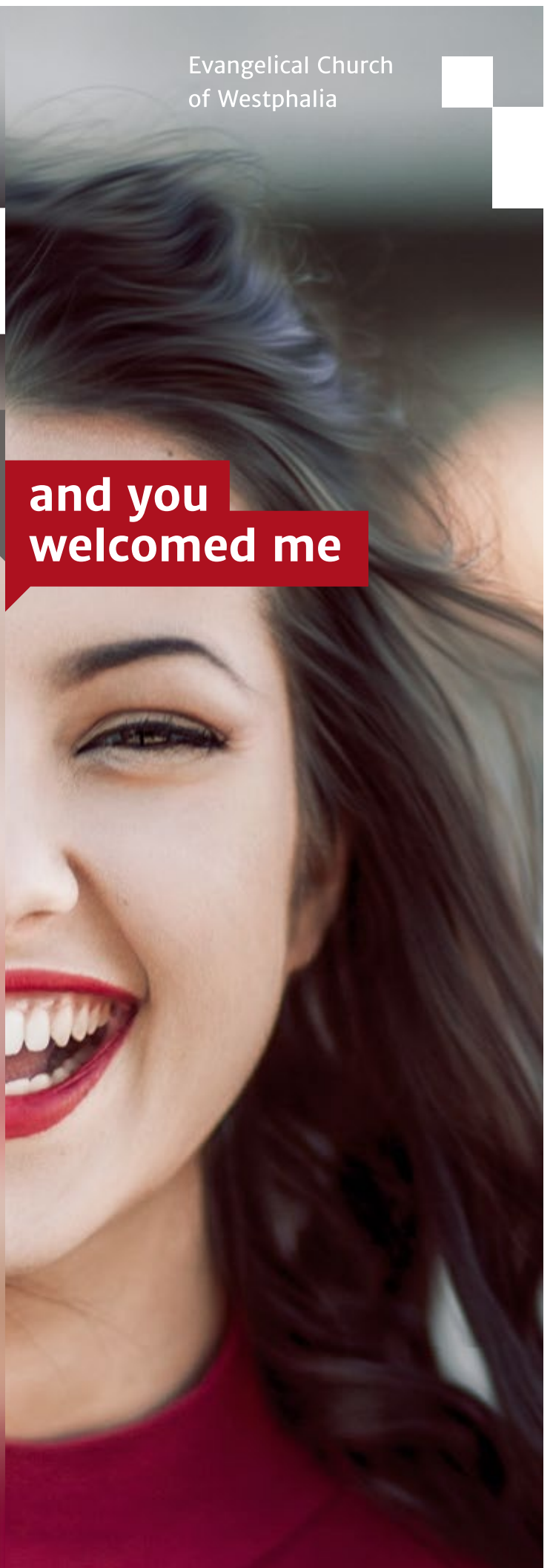


**Resource materials  
for the keynote paper**

**I was a  
stranger**

**and you  
welcomed me**



# Shaping growing diversity

## Lesson modules for secondary level I/years 9 and 10

by Ursula August, Education Institute

### The issue and why it is worth exploring

Religious education reflects the challenge we face when dealing with societal and global pluralism and its many different perspectives, including on and by religions. In school 'society,' students have the opportunity to become consciously aware of what is their own and what they find strange. The syllabus of Protestant Religious Education at secondary level I (NRW) puts it as follows: A responsible educational handling of pluralism involves supporting students in seeking their religious identity in their own religious and cultural contexts and in communicating with other denominational and religious communities and beliefs, in order to enable tolerance and active peace-making.

### Propositions and text modules from the keynote paper

The keynote paper in 2.3 "Shaping growing diversity" deals with religious plurality in our society and describes the challenges arising for the religious communities and the state (PDF page 27):

- "Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, Yazidi, Alevi, Bah'ai, Sikhs and believers from other religious groups live in North Rhine-Westphalia." Many mosques with their minarets are a visible part of the city scene (cf. also 4.1.).
- "The religions and religious communities are challenged to say how they understand the coexistence of their view of faith, life, the world and God and put them into practice. It is necessary to be able to give information about your own faith and, at the same time, share views on the connecting, but also dividing claims to truth (PDF page 29).
- "The religiously neutral state looks for sustainable conditions and options to further develop the basically religion-friendly German constitution for different religious communities." 4.4 "Taking a position" refers to human rights and gives a theological grounding: "Human dignity is inviolable... Human beings are made in the image of God... Consequently our church [the EKvW] advocates in many different ways for the rights of refugees, migrants and people with a migration history. In doing so, we uphold the principle that all members of society have a right to participation and just life prospects..." (see PDF pages 29 and 52)

- 4.1 "Deepening the dialogue," describes the significance of interfaith dialogue for living together: "There is a good tradition of interreligious dialogue in Westphalia. In past decades, relations characterized by respect and trust have been built up in order to promote mutual understanding, reconciliation and cooperation for the common good. This forms a good basis for tackling the religious, human and socio-political challenges of the present" (PDF page 45).

### Where do the propositions and text modules from the keynote paper link up with religious education?

The keynote paper finds links in the following areas of the syllabus for Protestant Religious Education for secondary level I (comprehensive school/high school/higher elementary school):

- Area 3: Advocating for justice and human rights
- Area 5: Religions and worldviews in dialogue
- Area 6: Religious phenomena in daily life and the environment

### Materials and media on DVD

- Film on the intercultural migration team of Diakonie Hagen
- Film on volunteers in refugee work

## Practical ideas

### Modules for a lesson series (following the propositions and text modules listed under 3)

- **Our everyday life: observations and experiences of diversity.** The lesson series begins by getting to know about the variety of religions and naming challenges, points in common and differences. This can be illustrated by the text: “Arriving in the new home: building mosques as a visible sign” (with other links to the set-up and organisation of a mosque). It is also possible to make a “virtual tour through the photo gallery” across the different sections of the keynote paper. This is a way of discovering different cultures, houses of worship and languages (see the interactive online version of the keynote paper).
- **What religions have to say about how different cultures and ‘strangers’ should live together.** Students compare and contrast verses from the Torah, Bible and Koran. You can refer to excerpts from chapter 1 “Biblical and theological reassurance” (PDF pages 11–13). A worksheet with texts from the Koran should be added, e.g. Suras 4, 5, 17, 29 or 51)
- **The right to recognition and protection.** The students recognise the importance of national and international law if religions and cultures are to live together with equal rights. There follows a discussion on the right to freedom of religion (article 4, German constitution) and human rights as reflected in articles 1 and 3 (cf. PDF pages 29 and 52). You could use materials from the Intercultural Week (4.1 online version) or the film on volunteering for refugee work (DVD on the keynote paper).
- **Interreligious dialogue – an example of flourishing conviviality.** You could start with the text: “Opening an Alevi burial field” (4.1 interactive online version). Go more into depth by presenting the Week of Brotherhood (4.1) or the Abraham House in Marl ([abrahamshaus-marl.de](http://abrahamshaus-marl.de)).

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