

Taizé School & College Weeks 2014

Notes for teachers and group-leaders

Taizé is an international and ecumenical monastic community founded in 1940 in the village of the same name, in Burgundy (France).

From the 1960s the Community has welcomed young adults (minimum age 15) for week-long international meetings. 80,000 young people from all over the world participate in these meetings each year.

In 2014, some weeks in June and July are designated as *school and college weeks* for which school groups (Years 10-13; *Scotland*: S3 - S6) and 6th-form college groups are especially invited.

Feedback from students after a school trip to Taizé:

<http://www.taize.fr/feedback>



What the week is about

A stay at Taizé helps young people mature in a safe but challenging environment. Each day includes biblical reflection, small international discussion groups, some practical activity and prayer with the whole community. It is a kind of slice of Christian community life which, because it is experienced rather than just talked about, is accessible to those who do not think of themselves as religious, or who are of other faiths. Nearly all school groups in previous years have included non-Christian young people.

Dates and times 2014

- Any of these weeks are suggested for schools and colleges in England and Wales: 22-29 June, 29 June - 6 July, 6 - 13, 13 - 20 or 20 - 27 July. (Scottish schools can also come earlier in June.) Easter break is also possible. Other weeks by arrangement.
- Groups should arrive if possible on Sunday and leave the following Sunday, from midday on. Groups may leave instead around 10pm on Saturday, after the evening service, if students need to be home on Sunday.

Age and group composition

- Age: Minimum 15 years, i.e. Year 10 students and upwards. The meetings at Taizé are streamed by age group: 15-16 years have activities together, and likewise there is a separate group for 17-18 year olds.
- During the group session times, young teachers and leaders in their 20s can either help alongside their students (especially if these are 15-16 year-olds) or else participate with other young adults their own age.
- Proportion of older adults: The group should not include more than 5 adults over 29 years.

Pilot groups

- Group leaders wishing to first run a “pilot group”, to have first-hand experience before organising a larger group, are welcome to do so. A pilot group should include at least a few students. It is they who can best explain Taizé to their peers when they return home.

Accommodation

There are 3 possibilities.

1- Bring your own tents. *Advantage*: you can keep the group together and have a ready-made area which can be used for informal group meetings.

2- Use the communal tents (20 places) belonging to the Community. *Advantage*: you don't need to bring or put up tents. *Disadvantages*: the tents for the group (boys/girls separately) will not necessarily be close together. We can allocate places only on Sunday afternoon, so if you arrive in the morning you will have a few hours wait before being accommodated.

3- A limited number of places can be available in our bunk-bed dormitories. *Advantage*: good for those who dislike camping. *Disadvantages*: same as option 2.

Enquiries - Please contact brother Paolo at Taizé – brpaolo@taize.fr

Cost

Example: If you arrive on Sunday morning, stay until the afternoon on the following Sunday and take a packed meal for the return journey, Taizé requests a contribution of between 56 and 78 euros* (currently approx. £49-68) per young person for the whole stay, including food and accommodation. Adults over 30 years normally contribute at a higher rate, but those acting as leaders for young people may give their contribution at the youth rate if they wish. Full details of costs: www.taize.fr/en_article13891.html

* This is the rate for 2013. Costs for 2014 will be similar and will be confirmed in January 2014.

Travel

Information on the weekly summer UK coach shuttle from Birmingham and London to Taizé is at www.taize.fr/en_article334.html Special pick-up points are possible for larger groups. Air: the nearest airport is Lyon. Passports are necessary. If the group includes pupils with non-EU passports, you can avoid the need for visas. See: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/home-information-centre-list-of-travellers-scheme.htm>

Resources available from Taizé

- DVD containing several short films and video clips on Taizé, the youth meetings, and the School and College Weeks. For a free copy contact brother Paolo, brpaolo@taize.fr, giving a postal address.
- Forms and information sheets (risk assessments, etc.) used by previous groups can be found on www.taize.fr/en_article11580.html. They cut out considerable work for first-time group leaders.
- **Visits to schools:** Volunteers sent from Taizé are making visits to British schools in *November 2013*, and, if there are sufficient requests, again in *March 2014*. And, at any time of year, we can try to arrange a visit by someone in your region who knows Taizé well. Contact Jane Shields (Wakefield), jane@laloge.co.uk, 01924 377921. The volunteers are young people from other countries who can share their own experiences, and about how they came to volunteer. They can meet groups and classes to present the international youth meetings at Taizé.

Connecting with the school curriculum

A week at Taizé connects with the Religious Studies syllabus (pilgrimage, faith practice, spirituality, bible study, discussion of important questions, ...), and has dimensions of community living ("citizenship") and language experience. Some schools designated the week as *work experience* or plan the trip for *activities week*. The stay qualifies as the residential experience for the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award scheme.

Scotland: Corresponds to the 'Curriculum for Excellence' (community living, confidence building, language experience,...). In Catholic schools it can count towards the 'Benedict XVI Caritas Award' (contact SCES).

Sacraments

There is daily opportunity to attend the Catholic Mass. Priests are available for Confession in a chapel of the church after evening prayer. Communion services in the Anglican, Lutheran and Orthodox rites are celebrated in the village church or in the crypt when groups of these traditions are present.

Support

For those who wish to support the School and College Weeks through donation, the UK Pilgrimage of Trust Fund, www.pilgrimageoftrust.org.uk, welcomes contributions (Gift Aid is possible). It helps fund volunteers' visits to UK schools (see above) and makes grants to enable the participation of some pupils unable to afford the whole cost of the trip.

I am very pleased that a good number of Catholic schools are taking a group to Taizé and I know it will be a very fruitful and happy experience. I warmly commend the School Weeks and hope there will be very many young people who will be able to share in the Taizé experience which is at the service of the Church.

Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor

Taizé offers a life-changing experience to young people for several reasons. Firstly, it is mind-blowing to worship day after day with hundreds, if not thousands of young people. Secondly, it is exciting to discover friendships right across Europe. Thirdly, the Taizé Community has long experience of helping young people to grow spiritually wherever they are on life's journey.

*Rev. Sheila Maxey,
Former Moderator of the United Reformed Church*

For detailed information about the youth meetings at Taizé: programme, costs, travel, etc., please see www.taize.fr