

YA

Young Ambassadors
for RE

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 @YA_4_RE
#YA4RE

APPLICATION PACK



A national scheme for students aged 11-18 to promote the value of Religious Education, developing the skills of young RE enthusiasts and allowing them to share their passion with others.

 **Religious Education Council**
of England and Wales

020 7250 8166

CAN Mezzanine, 49-51 East Road, Hoxton, London N1 6AH

religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk

@RECouncil

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About YA4RE

The Young Ambassadors for RE scheme was established by the **Religious Education Council of England and Wales** in 2013. Since then, pupils from different schools all over England and Wales have been promoting Religious Education in their schools and beyond as Young Ambassadors for RE. A **pupil-led project**, Young Ambassadors have promoted the value of Religious Education in a variety of ways – from helping out their school's RE department during open evenings to visiting their local MP in Parliament. Every year, the **YA4RE annual event in London** brings Young Ambassadors from across the country together to celebrate their passion for the importance of Religious Education. **Mini-assignments** set throughout the year provide an additional challenge and extra inspiration for enthusiastic pupils.



YA4RE gives students opportunities to...

Meet, collaborate and debate with other young people,

Gain leadership skills and experience,

Have their voices heard by adults who support RE at the highest levels,

Develop their communication skills with a wide range of audiences,

Build up relevant experience for CVs, university and job applications,

And share their interest in RE.

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For teachers and schools...

YA4RE helps teachers to **connect RE to wider educational issues and current affairs**. It can contribute to the dynamism of RE provision through the voices of students and supports the **professional development** of any teacher taking part. For the school, YA4RE has the potential to be **part of strategies for SMSC provision** in your departmental or school development plan, provide opportunities for **positive media coverage**, and contribute to **criteria for the RE Quality Mark**. In every school there are pupils who have a particular interest in or enthusiasm for RE. YA4RE enables them to share this with others, take on a leadership role, help their fellow students and to speak from their own experiences as young people. **We want the subject to benefit from their insights, ideas and voices and can use our connections at the RE Council to facilitate that process.**

Teachers say...

YA4RE has **raised the profile of the subject** among pupils and parents and across the whole school community. It has helped raise colleagues' awareness of the value of RE and increased their understanding around its links with other subjects across the curriculum.

YA4RE has provided excellent **professional development opportunities**, including enabling teachers to learn from different practices in other schools, encouraging collaboration with other schools and bodies such as the local SACRE, and generating motivation to **develop new skills** such as using social media.

YA4RE has given teachers the pleasure of **watching students flourish** and develop as subject leaders, and of taking pride in Young Ambassadors' maturity and ability when handling complex or sensitive topics in RE. YA4RE gives teachers the satisfaction of seeing students themselves take pride in their achievements and responsibilities as Young Ambassadors for RE.



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Activities for Young Ambassadors

Young Ambassadors keep up to date with each other's activities through the **Young Ambassadors for RE Twitter page** (@YA_4_RE) and the bi-annual **YA4RE newsletter**, which is distributed to YA4RE contact teachers. Teams are encouraged to **develop their own ideas and projects**, and as such there is a huge amount of variety in what the Young Ambassadors choose to do. Below are some examples of past activities from the YA4RE team:



YAs at The Queen Katherine School hosted an **interfaith lunch**.



YAs at St Lawrence Academy delivered an **assembly** at a local primary school talking about their diverse religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.



YAs at Ysgol Coedcae **wrote to their local MP**, who responded with an invitation to her office in Parliament to discuss the ethics of democracy.



YAs from across England and Wales chairing and participating in a **Youth Parliament debate**.

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How much of a commitment is YA4RE?

Teachers have said that the enthusiasm and work-ethic of their Young Ambassadors means that the project requires minimal additional work on their part.

The RE Council can't offer funding for YA4RE projects, but it needn't cost a thing. We will cover any travel costs if we invite a school's Ambassadors to speak on our behalf.

The time commitment is very flexible. It could be an after-school or lunchtime club, and can be run almost entirely by the students if they take the initiative.

Selection Criteria:

YA4RE recruits only **one team per school**. We recommend that a team consists of **no more than five members**, and all must be **aged 11-18 years**. Students must have:

- **Curiosity** about the world and a **positive attitude** towards others.
- The ability to **communicate** effectively and persuasively with their peers and others.
- **Confidence** talking about their own values and beliefs, both religious and non-religious.
- An enjoyment of open and lively **debate**.
- A **commitment** to Religious Education as a right for all young people, whatever their backgrounds or worldviews.
- **Readiness** to be Young Ambassadors for the rest of the school year, with the opportunity to continue if they have carried out the role successfully.

How to Apply:

Contact teachers must complete the application form, which is accessible via the YA4RE webpage on the RE Council's website: (www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/projects/young-ambassadors).

Each prospective YA4RE team will need to answer the following two questions:

1. **Why should we learn about each other's beliefs and values?**
2. **What does it mean to be a Young Ambassador for RE?**

Answers can be submitted in written/essay form (around 500-750 words), as an audio file/podcast, or as a short film uploaded to the web with a link we can follow to watch it.

*The completed application form and the answers to the above questions, along with any **inquiries**, should be emailed to:*

youngambassadors@religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk



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