

Taizé School & College Weeks

Notes for teachers and group-leaders

Taizé is an international and interdenominational monastery in eastern France (Burgundy) founded in 1940. For over 50 years the Taizé Community has welcomed young adults (15+) from a wide variety of backgrounds for week-long sessions of community building and discussion. 80,000 young people from all over the world take part in these each year.

At some times of year school groups (Years 10-13; *Scotland*: S3 - S6) and 6th-form college groups are especially invited.

Feedback from students:
www.taize.fr/feedback



What the week is about

A stay at Taizé helps young people mature in a safe but challenging environment.

- It is participation in a community life where each person is free to be who they are. It is accessible to those who do not think of themselves as being religious, as well as to those of other faiths. Visiting groups usually include non-Christian young people.
- Each day includes small international discussion groups, reflection in a larger group led by a brother of the Community, some practical activity and prayer with the monastic community.

Dates

- **any week between mid-June and mid-July.**
- It is also possible to come at half-term (February, May, October) or at Easter.
- Come Sunday to Sunday.
However, it is also possible to leave after the Saturday evening service to allow for a return to school on Monday.

Age and composition of the group

- Age: Minimum 15 years, i.e. Year 10 students and upwards. The meetings are by age group: 15-17 year-olds have activities together, as do 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 15-17 year-olds) or else participate with other young adults their own age.
- No group should 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 will best be able to explain Taizé to their peers when they return home.

Accommodation

All need to bring sleeping-bags. There are 2 possibilities:

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

2- Use our accommodation comprised of bunk-bed indoor dormitories (~8 places) and tent dormitories (20 places). *Advantage*: you don't need to bring or put up tents. *Disadvantages*: the dormitories for your 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 to wait before being accommodated.

In all situations we will allocate you accommodation in a way that complies with the child protection rules required by your school.

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

Cost

A week at Taizé is *inexpensive*. A contribution of between 85 and 115 euros (approx. £75-100 depending on the exchange rate) per young person covers the stay for a whole week (2024), including food and accommodation. Adults over 30 years normally contribute at a higher rate, but those acting as youth leaders may give their contribution at the youth rate. See https://www.taize.fr/en_article13891.html for full details.

Safeguarding

We are committed to making Taizé a safer place to visit. See http://www.taize.fr/en_article27899.html for full safeguarding information.

Travel

See the Taizé [website](#) for travel information. All the group will need passports. If the group includes pupils with non-UK/EU passports, look for advice, for example www.britishcouncil.org/school-resources/exchanges/travel-guidance

Resources available from Taizé

- Films and video clips on the School and College Weeks can be downloaded from Youtube and Vimeo via www.taize.fr/feedback and www.taize.fr/schools plus “[One Week in July](#)” – see below.
- Forms and information sheets (risk assessments, etc.) used by previous groups can be found on www.taize.fr/en_article11580.html. These can cut out a lot of work for first-time group leaders.
- Visits: Young people who are part of the international volunteer team at Taizé occasionally make visits to British schools and colleges. They can share their experiences of doing a gap year and speak about the 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, ...). It is full of character education through the experience of community living, and includes music and language experience. Some schools designate the week as *work experience* or plan the trip for *activities week*. The stay can qualify 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,...), and, in RC schools, the ‘Benedict XVI Caritas Award’.

Sacraments

The Catholic Mass is celebrated daily and priests are available for Confession. Communion services in the Anglican, Lutheran and Orthodox rites are celebrated when groups of these traditions are present.

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 (in 2016)

“One Week in July”

www.taize.fr/en_article17649.html

A film funded by the Jerusalem Trust (14 or 23 mins) and filmed by young people themselves.

“Awesome!”

Maggie Atkinson, former Children’s Commissioner for England

“Amazing!”

Dr. Bob Bowie, National Teaching Fellow, trainer of new teachers, Canterbury Christ Church University

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

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