

# Colloquium: Believers Should Learn Friendship at School

## Vatican-Islam Dialogue Notes Common Aims in Education

VATICAN CITY, MAY 20, 2011 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- The Vatican's council for interreligious dialogue and a Jordan-based institute on interfaith studies say that schools should not be places to learn antagonism, but rather to form "identities open to other identities."

This was one of the points in a joint statement from the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Royal Institute for Interfaith Studies. The organizations concluded a two-day colloquium Thursday.

Eight Muslim and nine Catholic scholars considered "Human and religious values shared by Christians and Muslims for a common education."

According to a Vatican statement today, the participants highlighted four points.

First, they agreed that Christians and Muslims share basic human values such as seeing human life as sacred, and affirming inalienable rights based in human dignity.

They acknowledged that some religious values are shared, while others are not, but "respect for differences is in fact an important condition for an authentic dialogue," the statement noted.

The groups declared: "Education, religious in particular, should not form identities in antagonism or in conflict, but on the contrary, while helping the youth to be well rooted in their own religious identity, it should favor the formation of identities open to other identities."

Finally, they presented schools and universities, whether private or public, as a "privileged space of common education." They recommended that the experience of Christian and Muslim youth studying together should be "conserved and cherished, also because it gives the occasion to create strong and permanent friendships."

The council and the institute will meet again in two years, with a preparatory meeting beforehand.

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