

Schools Resource

Face to Faith



Face to Faith is an opportunity for young people to discuss religion, faith and belief at a Personal, Local and Global level.

The activities and resources in this booklet result from a successful pilot of a face to faith project funded by Swindon Borough Council and the National Association of SACREs in 2009. This is detailed further on the DVD enclosed. The content is designed to encourage young people to engage in a spiritual exploration and to prompt dialogue and discussion about respect and difference.

Activities can be adapted and mixed to suit the age, interests of participants and timescale for delivery. In addition, the experience of the participant will be richer if they are supported to interact with people who are willing to share their own personal, spiritual and non spiritual perspective.

Face to Faith can be run as an after school or lunch club, but is ideally a workshop. Young people of mixed age ranges and with differing or no Religious or World views should be encouraged to take part—with the aim of creating a presentation to express the impact of a topic or concept they have learnt about.. This could be a series of photographs, a piece of art, poetry, dance, film, music, drama or animation. This work can then be used as a resource and inspiration for future participants.

To deliver a Face to Faith project, participants need a safe space to ask questions, express views and challenge assumptions. The workshop activities proposed encourage participants to explore their identity. This supports personal confidence building and links to curriculum inputs on citizenship and religious education.

National Association of SACREs

SACRE



In the pilot Face to Faith worked with Create Studios [www.createstudios.org.uk] to commission artists to work alongside pupils in the last stages of the project.

Involvement in a range of media production (film, animation, music, visual arts) can be an effective way of crystalising and sharing important learning on any topic. With the Face to Faith project, participants were able to grapple with challenging, sensitive and important themes in a way that built up their own learning and understanding and encouraged them to communicate these issues to a new audience.



Activity 2

Ask students to think of three ground rules/ top tips for living/ morals that they would always try to stick to.

Discussion:

What influences us to adopt these rules? Religion, family values, personal convictions, peers, passions etc.

Build consensus within the group for example, ask Can we choose 3 that we all agree with?

Activity 1

Common Ground

Ask students to stand in a line. Explain that a series of statements will be read out. They should step forwards if they agree, step backwards if they disagree and stand still if they don't know. For example...

- I am a religious person.
- I can talk about what I believe in openly at School
- What I believe affects how I behave at School
- What I believe affects how I behave at Home
- I like to make my own mind up
- I am easily influenced by my friends
- You shouldn't make judgements about people because of their beliefs
- I think there are lots of similarities between different religions
- I have seen or heard someone get labelled, teased or bullied because of their religious beliefs
- I enjoy going to RE lessons at school
- I think of Christmas as a religious festival

Additional questions should be inserted to reflect the participants and some non-related questions can make the activity more fun, e.g. Rugby is better than football. Talk to participants about shared values and differing views when appropriate.



Activity 3

1994

This individual activity encourages participants to identify moments in their life that determine a belief on an individual timeline. On a long piece of paper—ask participants to draw a line across the middle. Mark the start “birth” and the end with “current age”. Along the chart, individuals need to mark down events in their life, which led them to believe in something, or influenced their worldview.

Encourage a discussion and look for similarities and differences amongst the group.

Note: For this activity—it is possible that participants may reveal difficult or emotional personal experiences. Ensure that the participants feel comfortable in expressing themselves and that anything they don’t want to talk about can be left out.

Activity 4

Symbols

Look at some examples of the symbols associated with different Religions. Participants can work individually or in small groups to design a logo about their own or shared beliefs. This may incorporate an existing religious symbol or be something new. Ask



participants to describe why they chose their design and what are the important aspects of it.



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“Talk about why people might engage in these activities and try to focus on feelings”



Activity 5

Shrine

Talk about some of the activities or customs associated with different religions—Prayer, Celebration, Meditation, Pilgrimage, Fasting etc. Talk about why people might engage in these activities. Include a focus on feelings, peace, calm, reflection and the personal, spiritual impact of religious activity.

Explain to participants that they are going to create a shrine. What kind of feelings do they want to feel when they visit the shrine? What would they like to see there? How will they negotiate what goes into the Shrine?

Give the participants access to fabric, rugs, furniture, stones, ornaments, incense, flowers, coins, photographs mirrors, holy books, poems, music—anything they might want to consider as part of the Shrine. Encourage discussion and debate. When the Shrine is

complete ask the participants to think about how they want to visit the shrine, are there any rules?

Encourage a group visit to the Shrine. Try listening to some music if that is appropriate.

After the visit encourage a discussion about how the experience made the participants feel.

Activity 6

Photographs

Choose some photographs as a starting point for discussion—choose images that will provoke a debate appropriate for the age and maturity of the participants. This activity is a good starting point for identifying stereotypes and assumptions. Some of the photographs used could include people in religious clothing, famous religious people, events associated with religions etc

Ensure that participants feel safe to express their views but where necessary support them to identify stereotyping or misrepresentation.



Activity 8

Media impact

Research Faith-related articles on National newspaper websites. Choose a selection that demonstrate the power of the media to layer our understanding with assumptions, for example—“Sikh Girl wins right to wear bangle” “Catholic Girl expelled for wearing cross”. Encourage a discussion around media spin and the positive or negative impact of it.

This activity can be enhanced by providing participants with the opportunity to interview a faith representative or religious person and ask for their views on how their faith is represented in the media.

Activity 7

Headlines you will never see

Ask participants to write an article for a *newspaper with a difference* with headlines you will never see ‘i.e. stories where faiths are making a positive contribution, community celebrations, inter-faith dialogue or positive relationship building.’ Some prompts could be: What are the similarities between Islam and Christianity? Research the achievements of a British born Sikh.



Insights from the Pilot's Projects

Facilitators of Face to Faith work need to take responsibility to maintain a respectful environment where views can be shared and heard and that participants feel able to explore ideas and views. Don't be afraid of tackling potentially unfamiliar or difficult issues. Pupils enjoyed being allowed and encouraged to look at potentially unfamiliar or difficult issues. Promote peer moderation through a shared agreement to challenge comments or views that may be discriminatory or misinformed.

Many participants will get confused between Religion/Faith, Culture and Heritage. Allow the sessions to unpick whether a behaviour or custom is cultural or religious and look for links and connections in other cultures or religions.

Be conscious of use of language. Words like "them", "us" and "our" can indicate that a participant is categorising people in an unhelpful and potentially discriminatory way. Challenge in an appropriate way - it is important to question and reflect on comments and views but never damage the "safe space" created for open and honest discussion. Develop a culture where the participants feel able to challenge each other if offensive language is used.

Tips for Challenging include:

Re-framing: repeat the main points of a participant's contribution but remove any discriminatory language or implications.

Explanation: If a participant makes an assumption explain why this may be considered offensive and insulting and ask them not to use it.

Direct Challenge: Always challenge language, which you

know to be offensive. It helps to have a stock statement such as "language like that is insulting and unacceptable - please do not use it".

Mythbusting: where a view based on assumption, stereotype or deep-seated belief emerges; it may be helpful to build in an opportunity to identify an alternative view.



For further information about Swindon's Face to Faith pilot, please contact the Community Support Team on 01793 466418.



For further information about working with artists on the Face to Faith DVD please contact Swindon's Create Studios on 01793 465333.



Top Tips for Mythbusting

1. Identify the root causes of the myth - is it generated through fear, ignorance, anxiety, prioritizing others, physical consequences? Use this information to steer your mythbusting responses.
2. Bring people together who can understand and communicate with the people and communities associated with the issue.
3. If there is a practical and appropriate solution, tackle the issue or problem early on.
4. Challenge misinformation.
5. Remember experiences are not always positive for people believing a myth and those that are the subject of it. Mythbusting should include a response to both. Events, learning and activities that allow for positive encounters should be supported and developed.
6. Be prepared to repeat the activity or revisit it again in the future. Populations and issues change and tensions can emerge at any time. Established partnerships with a collective commitment to cohesion and equality enable mythbusting to move forward effectively.

Recommendations:

- Avoid making assumptions about individuals based on religion and belief, e.g. don't assume that everyone is the same e.g. "Sikhs don't cut their hair"
- Do not assume that a person's appearance defines their Religious belief
- Avoid the term "Christian name". Instead try "forename"
- Avoid language that could offend people's feelings around their religion faith and/or belief.
- Allow participants to deviate from the subject of Religion. The topic is very personal and participants need to be able to express ideas around their own identity and purpose.

This information about Face to Faith is available on the internet at www.swindon.gov.uk. It can be produced in a range of languages and formats (such as large print, Braille or other accessible formats) by contacting the Customer Services Department on tel: 01793 445500 or fax: 01793 463331 or e-mail: customerservices@swindon.gov.uk