

Sample getting to know you session

Time: 1hr 45 minutes

Aims:

- participants from different faith backgrounds are brought together to find out more about each other's faiths and identities and to reduce misunderstanding between different groups
- participants are encouraged to make a commitment to meet again.

Activity one: Ground rules

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: flipchart paper and pens

Method:

- Introduce the aims of the session, ie. to get to know new people from different areas and with different experiences. Explain that because of this it is a good idea for the group to have some basic ground rules so that everybody feels that they can express themselves and get something positive out of the session.
- Explain that these rules could be things like 'feel free to ask questions' or 'think before you speak'.
- Put the flipchart paper on the wall and hand out some pens.
- Ask the group to write up ground rules that they think are fair.
- Recap these and check that all participants agree.

Activity two: Human bingo

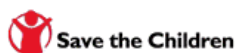
Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: pens, enough copies of a bingo sheet for participants to have one each, a prize (optional)

Method:

- Hand out the bingo sheets. An example sheet is included on the next page.
- Explain that the idea of the game is to find people for whom the statements on the sheet are true.
- Participants should talk to as many people as possible to try to fill up their sheet. They shouldn't write the same name down twice. (Although allow repetition if there are fewer than 15 participants).
- The game stops when someone completes their sheet and shouts Bingo!

PARTNER ORGANISATIONS:



| Find someone who... | | |
|---|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Was born in another country | Has something in common with you | Is interested in fashion |
| Can speak a language other than English | Likes listening to music | Wants to travel and see new places |
| Can play a musical instrument | Likes meeting new people | Believes in life after death |
| Enjoys playing football | Attends a place of worship | Has a different religion to you |
| Has a brother or sister | Likes chatting online | Has a part-time job |

PARTNER ORGANISATIONS:



Activity three: Inside the circle

Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: pens, flipchart paper, Blu Tack

Method:

- Divide the participants into small groups of four or five. Engineer this so that each group is made up of at least two people from each of the youth groups.
- Give each group a sheet of flipchart paper and a pen.
- Tell the groups to draw a large circle on the paper.
- Tell the participants to introduce themselves to the rest of the group. Inside the circle they should write down four things that the whole group have in common. Outside the circle they should write something that is unique to each member (see below for an example).
- Feed back to the whole group and display the sheets for the rest of the session.



Activity four: Agree/Disagree

Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: none, but a large room is helpful with space cleared

Method:

- Tell all of the participants that one end of the room means agree, another end of the room means disagree, the space in the middle means 'not sure'.
- Explain that you are going to read out a number of statements (see examples below).
- The participants should position themselves in the room according to whether or not they agree or disagree with the statement. After each statement they should discuss with someone near them why they said what they did. Anyone confident enough can explain their choices to the whole group.

It is a good idea to start with less serious statements and move up to harder issues, for example:

- I like listening to music
- I like playing sports

PARTNER ORGANISATIONS:

- I love going to school
- After school I want to go to university
- I can't wait to get a job and earn some money
- I want to travel and see the world

- I like living here
- There is lots to do for young people round here

- All of my friends are from the same faith
- I want to know more about people from different faiths
- It is easy to meet people from different faiths in this town

- Sometimes I feel awkward talking about my religion
- Sometimes people who are different from me scare me
- I would feel strange going to someone else's place of worship.

Activity five: Discussion

Time: 20 minutes

Equipment: none (or pen/ paper to record ideas)

Method:

- Bring participants back together and sit in a circle.
- Introduce the discussion, reminding participants of the purpose of the session, to encourage them to get to know each other.
- Introduce the topic (see questions below). If discussion does not flow, prompt, or break into smaller groups. Encourage participants to talk to each other rather than through the facilitator and remind them of the ground rules if necessary.

Discussion questions

- **What are the different religions that people follow in this town?**
- **How well do different religions live alongside each other in this town/ city/ region?** (Prompts: Are they friends? Do they lead separate lives? Do they understand and respect each other? What are the good and bad things about interfaith relations in the city? Have you or your friends ever been treated badly because of your religion?)

- **How do you think this will change in the future?** (Prompts: Do you think your thoughts on living in a multicultural society are different to your parents? How do you think your children will experience things? Will everyone become mixed together in the future? Will cultures change? Are you an optimist or a pessimist?)

- **How do you think other people see your religion?** (Prompts: Eg, people in school/ in the media? Do people know much about your religion? Have you ever been discriminated against?)

- **Would you prefer to live in an area with lots of different religions or where you knew everyone was from the same religion?**

PARTNER ORGANISATIONS:



Activity six: Ideas tree

Time: 20 minutes

Equipment: flipchart paper with a picture of a tree, cut-out leaves, pens, Blu Tack

Method:

- Ask the participants to think about some of the aspects that make a good community. These might include trust, lots of events and things to do, friendships between people of different religions and ages, nice spaces to hang out in, and so on.
- The young people should write these ideas onto different branches of the tree.
- Discuss the 'community branches' among the group.
- Then ask them to think about things that they (or other people such as the government) could do to make these ideas a reality.
- They should write these ideas on the leaves and stick them onto the tree. They might include making new friends, running a joint event, talking to your neighbours and other ideas.
- They should attach these leaves to the relevant branches.
- If possible this tree should remain on display for future meetings.

Activity seven: The tangled web

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: ball of string

Method:

- Ask participants to stand in a circle.
- Explain that through meeting together today we have shown that we are linked, either through interests, or through where we live, etc.
- Explain we will throw around the ball of string. As you receive it you should tell the group: something you enjoyed doing today, and something you would like to do in the future. Eg, 'Today I enjoyed meeting these new people and in the future I would like to meet them again and organise some joint activities. '
- By the time the string has been thrown around, there should be an obvious web of string between the participants. This shows that they are all linked to each other.

PARTNER ORGANISATIONS:

