

Ice-breakers

These activities are intended for use at the beginning of a project or session where participants may not know each other. They introduce young people to each other and help them to feel comfortable talking to each other about issues of religion and identity.

1. Character drawing

Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: flipcharts stuck to the wall, or white board and coloured pens

Method:

- Give each participant a pen and ask them to draw a picture of themselves with their name beside it.
- Then ask them to write down ten words to describe themselves, around the picture.
- These can be words that describe their identity (eg, Jewish, Chinese, northerner, footballer), physical attributes (eg, short, skinny, ginger) or characteristics (eg, funny, shy, bossy).
- The participants should then stand by their portrait and introduce themselves. Everyone can then look at all of the portraits and find out a bit more about each other.
- If possible, leave the pictures up on the wall. They will help the participants remember each other's names and act as a conversation starter.

2. 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 a mixture of people from different faiths and backgrounds.
- 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.



PARTNER ORGANISATIONS:

3. 'About yourself' cards

Time: 20 minutes

Equipment: blank postcards, stickers or pieces of paper and felt-tip pens

Method:

- Give each participant a blank postcard and ask them to write their name in the middle.
- Then ask them to draw a symbol or picture of something that is important to their lives, in each corner of the paper. Examples might include a musical instrument, the flag of a country they feel connected to, a religious symbol, a basketball net, a planet to show that they care about the environment, or even a PlayStation.
- If participants aren't comfortable drawing, then they can write down their ideas instead.
- Remind the group not to draw anything they don't want to talk about!
- Ask the participants to mix for five minutes, introducing themselves to people by swapping cards and then talking about the pictures and their meanings.
- After a few minutes, stop the activity and ask participants to introduce the people they are talking to, to the rest of the group.
- This activity could be extended to creating a mural representing the things that are important to the group.

4. Concentric circles

Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: none - although this activity needs at least 12 people

Method:

- Divide the participants into two equal groups. Ask them to form two circles, one inside the other.
- Members of the outer circle should face inwards, and members of the inner circle should face outwards. Each participant should now be facing someone else.
- Read out one of the questions below. The participants should spend one minute discussing the question with the person opposite.
- When the facilitator shouts 'Outer circle, step to the right!' all of the participants on the outer circle move, so that they are now facing a new partner.
- The facilitator now asks a new question. And so the process continues. The questions can become more personal as the young people become more confident.

Sample questions:

- Why did you decide to get involved in this project?
- Do you think people from different religions get on well in your area?
- What is the best thing about your local area?
- What would you most like to change about your local area?
- What do you think is the biggest issue facing the world today?
- Are you religious? How do you think this affects your life?

PARTNER ORGANISATIONS:

5. Who am I?

Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: post-it notes with the names of famous people on them (try to choose from a range of faith/cultural backgrounds)

Method:

- Write the names of some famous people onto post-it notes. For ideas of people that could be used see the list below. Remember to think carefully about your group of young people and whether they will have heard of the suggested people.
- Stick a post-it note on each participant's head. They are not to look at it, and they are not to ask anyone to tell them who they are.
- Participants should work in pairs, asking questions to try and work out who they are (eg, Am I a man or a woman? Am I on television?)

Ideas of famous people for Who am I?

50 Cent; Tony Blair; George Galloway; David Beckham; Nelson Mandela; Meera Syal; June Sarpong; Naomi Campbell; Lemar; Mohamed Al Fayed; Muhammad Ali; Steven Spielberg; Britney Spears; Jonathan Ross; Bob Dylan; Gwyneth Paltrow; Paris Hilton; Salma Hayek; Yasser Arafat; George Bush; Amir Khan; Keira Knightley; Krishnan GuruMurthy; Jackie Chan; Brad Pitt; Malcolm X; David Schwimmer; David Baddiel; Robert Winston; Ben Stiller; Bono; Jerry Springer; Zinedine Zidane; Trevor Nelson; Wayne Rooney; Bart Simpson; Madonna; Angelina Jolie; Tom Cruise; Didier Drogba.

6. I have something in common with...

Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: chairs for all participants bar one

Method:

- Ask participants to sit in a circle.
- One participant or the leader should stand in the middle and say "I have something in common with..." and insert something about themselves which is true and visible, for example, "I have something in common with people who are wearing jeans."
- All those wearing jeans should swap places, while the person in the middle dashes for a chair. This should leave a new person in the middle and the game continues.
- After a few turns the game can progress to saying things that are true but invisible, for example, "I have something in common with people who like to read."

7. 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 and try and fill their sheet. They shouldn't write the same name down twice, if there are more 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:

