

ACTIVITY 27: JOSEPH/YUSUF, ABRAHAM/IBRAHIM, JOB/AYOUB

Overview of the activity

This activity connects religious heritage to personal values to build bridges between faiths. While focusing on the Abrahamic religions, it can be adapted to other religious traditions. Participants read one of the stories from the Bible, Torah or Quran centred around the religious figures of Joseph/Yusuf, Abraham/Ibrahim or Job/Ayoub.

Objectives

The objective of this activity is to work around similarities in religious heritage in order to stress these similarities instead of the differences

Duration (in minutes)

Take at least 60 minutes for this exercise, but it is up to the facilitator to decide how deep to go

Min/max number of participants

- Recommended: No recommendation
- Minimum: 4

Room/space requirements

Enough space to make circles of chairs for 3 or four people

Minimum knowledge requirements of participants

Some religious knowledge might be required

Materials needed

Print outs of the stories you want to work with, preferably from all the books

You have to prepare yourself properly by reading and understanding the stories you want to work with. It might be useful to talk to a religious 'leader' about these stories to gain deeper insight.

Instructions

1. Create groups of 4 participants (or 3). Ensure a good mix of religious backgrounds if possible.
2. Give the groups the stories you chose, preferably in a version from the Quran and from the Bible, and, if needed, also the Torah.
3. Ask the groups to read the story. One person should read it out loud.
4. Invite one of the participants to reflect on the story they just listened to. You can use the following questions:
 - What touches you in this story and why?
 - What is the meaning of the story according to you?
 - What do you think the meaning of the story is to others?
 - What values does this story contain for you?
 - Do you think this story is still topical, or is it truly heritage?
5. Then invite the other participants to respond.
6. Repeat this with the other participants. If a good discussion starts, let it happen.
7. Ask the participants to create a collective document, writing down the shared values. You can use a big sheet/poster for this and put all of the posters next to each other at the end of the activity.

Learning outcomes / evidence collected

The documents with shared values

Evaluation

At the end of this activity undertake a debriefing with the entire group. You can use the posters that were created in the last step of the activity. You can ask the following questions:

- How was it to talk about things that are important to you?
- What did you learn from the stories of others?
- What did you most appreciate in the stories you heard?
- What touched you most in the stories you listened to?
- What did you learn about your own religious 'heritage'?
- Do you now look differently at other religions and people practising other religions?

One of the dynamics of this exercise is to move people from speaking in terms of religious opinions (or even dogmas) to speaking of personal stories of belief, revealing that many aspects in different religions are based on the same values and often come from the same source. If you feel that a true understanding has been achieved in the group, you might even point out that these stories are often used to stress differences, instead of thinking of the core stories that are often not so different in the end.

When you have finished this activity, ask yourself if the group has been able to come to this awareness. Did you build a proper foundation enabling behavioural change among the participants?

Teaching tips, stories and experiences during piloting

Often the groups have to work on their own, as you might not have enough facilitators to join every group. In

this case, take care that the groups follow the structure. For example, hand out brief instructions on paper, with some concrete questions, such as:

- What touches you in this story and why?
- What is the meaning of the story according to you?
- What do you think the meaning of the story is to others?
- What values does this story contain for you?
- Do you think this story is still topical, or is it truly heritage?

Questions for self-reflection in the teaching practice

What is your religious origin? In what way is religion and/or secularity present in your teaching practice? Does your own view on religion have an impact on the learning space? Do you factor in the religious diversity of participants when planning an activity?