

# Encountering Faiths & Beliefs



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**Building Closer Communities**  
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# Lesson plan for Secondary School

## Introduction

To succeed in today's complex and diverse world, young people need to be able to communicate sensitively and effectively with anyone, regardless of beliefs or background.

This lesson enables your students to 'meet' people (speakers) of different faiths, beliefs and identities, telling their personal story of their lived experience of their faith or belief. This is a unique experience, as the speakers are opening up about what their beliefs mean to them, and it offers your students to relate, question, draw out similarities and identify differences in their own beliefs. This lesson enables students to find connection with someone they may not ordinarily meet and explore their own identities.

NB: Lesson length is 60 minutes, but can be broken up into several smaller lessons as required.

## Learning objectives

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- To think about why it is important to meet different people
- To make connections that everyone is similar and different, and that it is good to be open to learning about differences
- To practice skills of empathy and sensitivity

## What you will need

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- Speaker films:  
Go to the F&BF [Encountering Faiths & Beliefs](http://www.faithbeliefforum.org/resources/encountering-faiths-beliefs) webpage [www.faithbeliefforum.org/resources/encountering-faiths-beliefs] and find the 'Story Bank'. Then choose the speakers and stories you would like from the list of films. We advise you choose at least two.
- Safe Space film
- Presentation for class
- Worksheet:  
Copy per student or for use by teacher on whiteboard
- Speaker quizzes:  
Copy per student (optional)
- Activities:  
Extra activities are available from the F&BF [Encountering Faiths & Beliefs](http://www.faithbeliefforum.org/resources/encountering-faiths-beliefs) webpage (optional)

## Total lesson length

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60 mins

**Section, aims  
& timings**

**Script**

**What you will need**

**Introduction**

5 mins

Aims:

- Introduction to F&BF
- Preliminary thinking about why we are doing this work

Explain that today we are going to ‘meet’ (virtually, in person or on a film) some people that have different faiths and beliefs.

This is a project by the [Faith & Belief Forum](#), which is a charity that gets people with different views, beliefs or religions to meet and talk, so they can better understand each other. They work with 20,000 people each year across the UK in schools, universities, workplaces and communities.

Presentation

**Section, aims  
& timings**

**Script**

**What you will need**

**Activity 1: Think, pair & share**

Ask the students get into pairs / groups to discuss and answer the following question:

**Why is it important to meet people who are different than us?**

Possible answers:

- So we can understand people better
- So we can respect people better
- So we can meet new people
- So we might learn or discover something new

**Question: What do the words ‘interfaith’ or ‘interbelief’ mean?**

Possible answers:

- ‘Interfaith’ or ‘interbelief’ refers to cooperative, constructive, and positive interaction between people of different religions, faiths, traditions as well as spiritual and humanistic beliefs.
- It involves projects, events and dialogue that promotes understanding between different religions or beliefs to increase acceptance of others.

Discuss as a class and / alternatively ask the students to fill their thoughts on the worksheet.

Worksheet

**Section, aims  
& timings**

**Script**

**What you will need**

**Ice breaker**

5 mins

Aim:

Fun activity that will show how having different interpretations is normal and good!

Explain to the class that we will now think a little bit about things that connect us, that there are things that are the same and things that are different between everyone.

**Activity 2: Same but different!**

Explain to the students that you want them to draw the following image: a tree on the grass under a cloud with a sun in the corner.

Ask the students to show their pictures.

**Question: Are all of our images the same? Why not?**

Ask to answer in pairs:

Is it okay to interpret the world differently? Why or why not?

Discuss as a class and / alternatively ask the students to fill their thoughts on the worksheet.

Prompts on the presentation

Paper / books

**Section, aims  
& timings**

**Script**

**What you will need**

**Setting a  
Safe Space**  
15 mins

Aim:

To cultivate the  
principles of  
empathy and  
sensitivity

Explain to the students that we are now going to be learning about people's faiths and beliefs.

It is really important that we set ourselves up to do this in the best way that we can, so that everyone feels comfortable and safe to share.

Ask them to think about the meaning of the words 'dialogue' and 'debate'. And ask the class to explain the difference between the two words.

Explain we are now going to set a 'safe space' by using the acronym RADIO. To help explain this, play the F&BF [Safe Space film](#).

After the film ask the class if they have any questions or alternative principles that they would like to add.

Presentation

[Safe Space film](#)

Worksheet

**Section, aims  
& timings**

**Script**

**What you will need**

**Activity 3 (optional): Create a class Safe Space poster**

You could create your own class Safe Space acronym / agreement with other letters / phrases discussed by the students.

Or ask the students to create their own Safe Space posters as a home learning task.

A good place to break the lesson would be now.

Paper / books for drawing a poster

**Section, aims  
& timings**

**Script**

**What you will need**

**Speaker 1**  
10 mins

Explain that we are going to meet the F&BF speakers by watching a film they have made for us.

Choose a speaker film from the 'Story Bank' from the website.

**Play 'Speaker 1' film.**

You can ask the students to read along using the transcript of the story if they would like.

**Activity 4: Questions for the speaker**

Students have two minutes to come up with questions that they would like to ask the speaker, after which teacher asks students to share and / or write them down in their worksheets. write them up on whiteboard.

Explain that the students will be able to ask these questions to this very person safely online at a later date.

Speaker film

Speaker story transcript

Class worksheet

**Section, aims  
& timings**

**Script**

**What you will need**

**Speaker 2**  
10 mins

Same as above

Same as above

**Section, aims  
& timings**

**Script**

**What you will need**

**Questions for  
both speakers**

5 mins

**Activity 5: Questions for both speakers**

Give students time to think about questions they want to ask **both speakers** and pool answers or ask them to write them down in their worksheets.

If questions are only being directed towards one speaker, try to open them up to apply to the other speakers as well.

Remind the students will be able to ask these questions online at a later date.

Worksheet

**Section, aims  
& timings**

**Script**

**What you will need**

**Optional  
Speaker quiz:**  
10 mins

If appropriate for your class / age group / levels –  
there are some quizzes you can use to assess how well  
a student has listened to the speaker story films.

Speaker quiz sheets

Section, aims & timings	Script	What you will need
<p><b>Plenary</b> 5 mins</p> <p>Aim:</p> <p>Reflect on the experience</p>	<p><b>Activity 6: Think, pair &amp; share</b></p> <p><b>Final question for reflection: what is the difference between hearing a personal story from a person in a film, compared with reading or hearing facts about a faith or belief?</b></p> <p>Discuss with your partner for two minutes followed by short discussion in class.</p> <p>Write answers on class worksheet or ask students to write in the worksheet.</p> <p>Finally thank the class and summarise that it has been great learning together and that it is always so rewarding getting to learn about how we all have similarities and differences and they did a great job of discussing these issues in a respectful way!</p>	<p>Presentation</p> <p>Worksheet</p>

**Section, aims  
& timings**

**Script**

**What you will need**

**Extra activities**

Please go to '[Activity Bank](#)' for more activities you can use with your class in other lessons.

[Activity Bank](#)