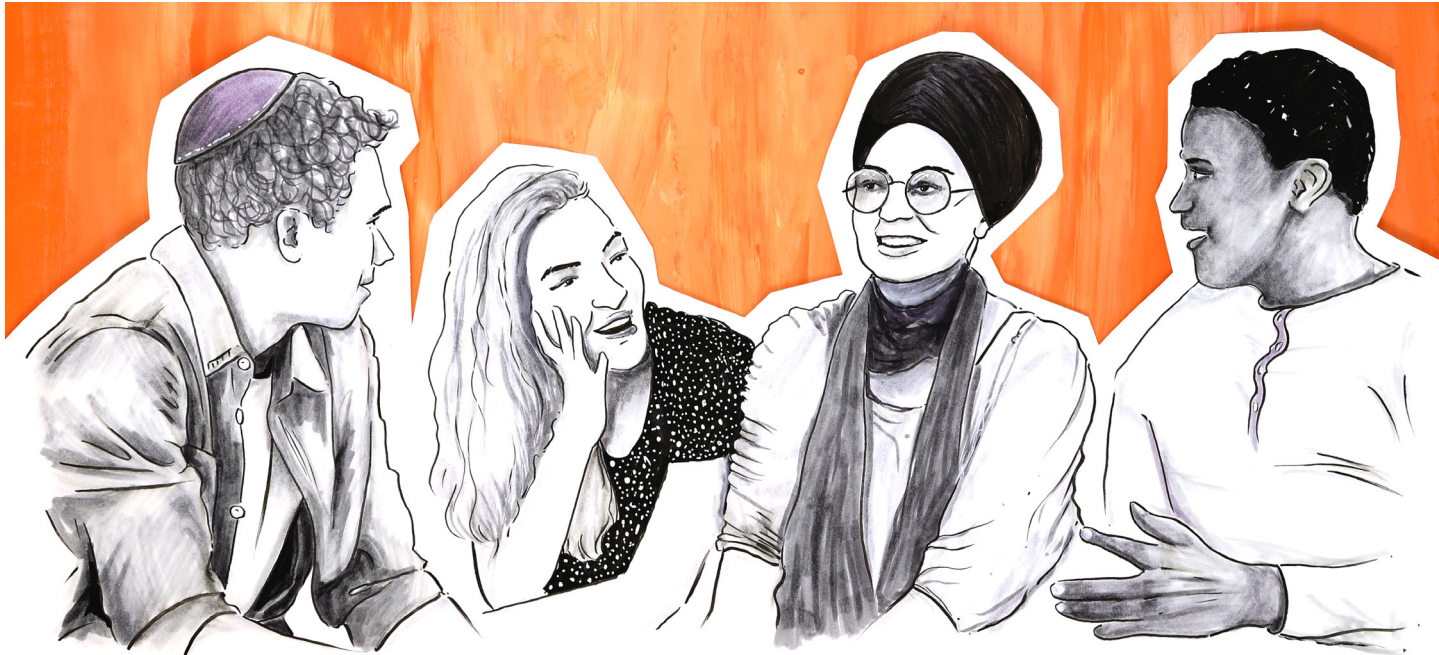


The Art of Q&A: Lesson Plan



Session aim

This two-part session introduces participants to tools and techniques that will help them to be able to ask and answer questions about sensitive questions such as faith, belief and identity with greater skill and confidence.

Session objectives

- Participant will have the opportunity to reflect on their own and others' identities.
- Participants will understand the impact that asking and answering questions about sensitive issues can have on others.
- Participants will be introduced to tools to be able to ask and answer questions about sensitive issues more skilfully.

Preparation

- PowerPoint presentation
- Board / flipchart
- A4 paper / pens / felt tip pens
- Flipchart paper / flipchart markers

Curriculum mapping

The following show indicative maps of where we think this package fits with the RE, PSHE and Citizenship curricula:

KS3

RE

- Enquiry, application, diversity, belief and practices

PSHE

- Focus on the idea of inclusivity for all: everyone deserves to be respected
- Stereotyping, respectful relationships, behaviours and emotions

Citizenship

- Crossover with PSHE and RE (respect and communities), identity, teaching students how to be responsible citizens

KS4

- Pupils should develop skills to be able to use a range of research strategies, weigh up evidence, make persuasive arguments and substantiate their conclusions

Running Time

Part 1: 60 minutes; Part 2: 60 minutes

Part 1: The Art of Asking / How to ask better questions

TIMINGS	ACTIVITY	RESOURCES
5 mins	<p data-bbox="331 373 667 408">Revisit Safe Space</p> <ul data-bbox="331 440 1413 842" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="331 440 1413 616">• It is recommended to deliver the Safe Space lesson plan before you deliver the Art of Q&A workshop. This is to support students to think about what they need in order to be able to talk about sensitive issues with confidence.<li data-bbox="331 663 1413 842">• If you have already delivered the Safe Space lesson plan, it is recommended to revisit the Safe Space video at the start of the Art of Q&A session as well as any learning agreement that you have created with your class.	PowerPoint Slide 3

TIMINGS

ACTIVITY

RESOURCES

15 mins

Two Truths & A Lie

You will need to think of two statements about your identity that are true and one that is false. If possible, try to choose things that might challenge the students' assumptions about your identity e.g. "I was born in x and raised in y, my mother was born in x & raised in y and my father was born in x and raised in y."

Explain: "I am going to say three statements, two of them are true and one is a lie, your job is to guess which one is a lie. I'll explain how it works as we go along as I'm going to ask you to move around the room."

Say the three statements one after another:

- Repeat statement 1 and ask people who think it's a lie to stand in one part of the room if they think that statement is the lie.
- Repeat statement 2 and ask people who think it's a lie to stand in another part of the room if they think that statement is the lie.
- Repeat statement 3 and ask people who think it's a lie to stand in a third part of the room if they think that statement is the lie.

Tell each group that they have to decide on one (**and only one**) question amongst themselves to ask you about the lie that they think you've told in order to catch you out and prove you are lying.

PowerPoint Slide 4

If you choose to ask students to move into different groups, you will need enough space for students to move around. If this is not possible, you can ask students to raise their hands instead, see note on variation.

Give the groups one minute to come up with **one** question and then go around each group and answer as briefly as possible each question trying to conceal your lie convincingly.

Once you have answered all three questions, give participants the option to move to another group if they have changed their mind after hearing your answers.

Reveal to the group your two truths and finally your lie, adding a bit more detail to each statement to provide some more context and to challenge any misconceptions / assumptions that they might have had about your identity.

Review / Reflection

- Ask students “Why do you think we do that activity with people?”
- Take answers and if it isn’t brought up, ensure you include the following:

Most of us make assumptions when we meet people we don’t know, which means we think we know something about someone even before we’ve met them or spoken to them. Sometimes if we’ve met someone from the same area / race / religion / country or background we think that they might be like another person we’ve met / read about who shares a part / parts of their identity.

TIMINGS	ACTIVITY	RESOURCES
30 mins	<p data-bbox="331 244 562 276">RSVP: Part 1</p> <p data-bbox="331 341 539 373">Introduction</p> <ul data-bbox="331 405 1335 746" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="331 405 1335 491">• Frame this activity in a playful way; ensure that students understand that their artistic talent is not being assessed. <li data-bbox="331 533 1061 564">• Ask students “Why do we ask questions?”. <li data-bbox="331 612 1335 746">• Explore some of these reasons e.g. to find out information / understand / learn, to open up conversation, to show we’re interested in others, to build relationship with others etc. <p data-bbox="331 807 611 839">Drawing Activity</p> <ul data-bbox="331 871 1554 1340" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="331 871 745 903">• Hand out paper / pens <li data-bbox="331 935 1514 1117">• Ask the students to give you a wave with the hand that they write with. Explain that in that in this activity you want them to draw a picture with their other hand so that there’s no pressure on them to create a beautiful piece of art. <li data-bbox="331 1142 1476 1276">• Tell students that they will have two minutes to draw a pair of shoes that they think would be good for students of their school to wear to school. They can be absolutely any type of shoe that they want. <li data-bbox="331 1302 1554 1340">• Time students for two minutes and then ask them to put their pens down. 	<p data-bbox="1653 244 2029 276">PowerPoint Slides 5–10</p> <p data-bbox="1653 341 1798 373">A4 paper</p> <p data-bbox="1653 437 2067 469">1 pencil / pen per student</p>

Questions

- Explain that you are going to ask some unskilful / unkind questions about their drawings on purpose.
- Walk around the room and look at the students' pictures, make sure that your manner and behaviour is evidently very playful / it's clear that your critiques & questions are not serious.

Question 1

- Move to a drawing of a shoe that looks uncomfortable to wear:
- Say to the student “Those shoes would be really uncomfortable to wear, wouldn't they be impossible to wear?”;
- Let them respond.

Question 2: Generalisations / Stereotypes

- Choose a girl who has drawn a shoe with heels, or a boy who has drawn trainers:
- Ask the girl “Why do all girls want to wear heels?”; or ask the boy “Why do boys always wear trainers?”;
- Let them respond.

Question 3: Statements

- Choose a picture that looks casual / impractical / high / low / boring / glamorous (or any other judgemental adjective).
- Ask the student “Don’t you think those shoes are a bit too casual / impractical / high / low / boring / glamorous (or any other adjective)?”;
- Let them respond.

Question 4: Provocative Language

- Choose a picture that looks very dramatic / exaggerated:
- Ask the student “Why are your shoes so extreme / over the top / out-there / show-off-y / attention seeking?”;
- Let them respond.

Review / Reflection

- Ask students “What did you notice about the answers that people gave to my questions? Were they open / friendly / informative / long / short?”.
- Ask the people who you asked the questions to to share how they felt when you asked them about their pictures.
- Repeat back some of their answers e.g. feelings /emotions / sensations / thoughts e.g. “So some people felt embarrassed, annoyed, angry, upset etc. by my questions about their drawing”.
- Explain to students that even being asked about imaginary shoes can feel a little uncomfortable and therefore we need to be thoughtful and respectful when it comes to asking other people questions about sensitive issues such as faith / belief / culture / identity.

RSVP: Part 2**RSVP?**

- Ask the students if they know what RSVP means.
- Explain that in French it stands for '*répondez s'il vous plait*', which translated means 'please reply', and is usually used on invitations.
- The RSVP tool we are about to look at is a bit like asking somebody to reply to our question, because if we ask questions well we are more likely to get a reply to them.
- Introduce RSVP on Slide 5.
- Explain that it's a tool to remember some tips about how to ask skilful and sensitive questions and also make it more likely that you'll get a reply to your question.

PowerPoint Slides 5–10

A4 paper

1 pencil / pen per student

Show Slide 6:

Really a Question?

- Talk through the following points with the students:
 - Are you really asking a question or are you telling somebody what you think you already know?
 - Have you already made up your mind without having any information/evidence to back-up your opinion?
 - If you think you already know the answer to a question before you've asked it then you are probably making an assumption.

Example: "Those shoes would be really uncomfortable to wear, wouldn't they be impossible to wear?"

- Explore this idea with your students.

Show Slide 7:

Stereotypes & generalisations

- Does your question contain any stereotypes of generalisations that suggest that all people from certain groups / with certain identities are all the same / similar?
- Questions using words such as all / never / always can often be unhelpful when asking questions about different groups because people who are part of the same group are often very different from one another.

Example: “Why do all girls want to wear heels?”;
or “Why do boys always wear trainers?”.

- Explore this idea with your students.

Show Slide 8:

Views

- Are you asking for the other person’s view or are you just stating your own view?
- Sometimes when we start a question with “Don’t you think...”, we’re actually saying what we think and often we’re trying to get the other person to agree with us.

Example: “Don’t you think your shoes are a bit extreme / over the top / out-there / dramatic / flamboyant / show-off-y / attention seeking?”

- Explore this idea with your students.

Show Slide 9:

Provocative Language

- Provocative language means using words that get a reaction from somebody, usually a negative one.
- Does your question include any language that is not respectful / insulting / offensive / judgemental / provocative? For example, words such as: arrogant / stupid / extreme / fanatical / stupid / extremist / fundamentalist / childish / unreasonable / irrational etc.

Example: “Why are your shoes are a bit extreme / over the top / out-there / dramatic / flamboyant / show-off-y / attention seeking?”

- Explore this idea with your students.

Show Slide 10:

? Question

- Does your question have any of the RSVP points in it (e.g assumptions, stereotypes, generalisations, statements, provocative language)?
- If so, how can you reframe or rephrase it to remove this language so that you are asking a better question that is more likely to get a better answer?

Example: “Why are your shoes always so over the top?” becomes “Why have you chosen to wear fluffy, fluorescent pink boots with a ten inch heel today?”.

TIMINGS	ACTIVITY	RESOURCES
10 mins	<p data-bbox="331 244 663 276">Review / Reflection</p> <p data-bbox="331 311 1413 391">Ask students to go into pairs for a couple of minutes to think about the following:</p> <ul data-bbox="331 422 1541 730" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="331 422 1272 454">• Is there one of the RSVP? points that really stands out?<li data-bbox="331 486 1541 619">• Have there been any times in your life when people have asked you questions about parts of your identity that you found uncomfortable? If so, why did you find those questions uncomfortable, how did you feel?<li data-bbox="331 651 1541 730">• How would you have preferred them to ask that question, or is there another question you would have preferred to have been asked instead? <p data-bbox="331 794 1350 874">Come together as a group and ask students to share what they have discussed.</p>	

Part 2: The Art of Asking (continued), and The Art of Answering: The role of Power & Privilege & how to give better answers

TIMINGS	ACTIVITY	RESOURCES
15 mins	<p>Who Is Asking & Answering? (Power & Privilege)</p> <p>This is an activity through which you can explore the impact of power and privilege when we are asking questions.</p> <p>Remind students of RSVP?:</p> <p>Ask students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “With RSVP?, we have thought about how the content of the questions we ask is important, are there any other things we need to think about when we are asking people questions? e.g. Is our identity and the identity of the person we are talking to important when we are asking questions?”. <p>“Let’s have a think about this”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain to the students that you are going to ask them a series of questions and you would like them to use their Post-its to write the feelings that the person being asked the question may be feeling and a brief explanation of why they may feel this way.• After each question give students a moment to write their answers and come up to the front to stick their Post-its onto the flip chart (have a flip chart or space available for answers to each questions).	<p>PowerPoint Slide 11</p> <p>Optional Worksheet 1: ‘Who Is Asking & Answering?’</p>

- Once students have stuck up their flip chart, select a small number of them to read out and comment / reinforce what is written with a short explanation of why this feeling might be experienced.
- Encourage students to think about and be aware of any power of privilege they have when they are asking questions to other people. Sometimes if we have more power/privilege than others we can make assumptions (think we know things about people without knowing for a fact) and ask insensitive questions even if we don't mean to cause harm.

- 1** A white British born person asks a black / Asian British born person where they're from. When they receive the answer that the person is from England / British, they then ask them where they're really from.
 - How do you think the black / asian person would feel? Why?

- 2** Somebody with a British passport who has done a lot of travelling for pleasure, study, work etc. asks somebody who hasn't had much opportunity to travel why they've never travelled the world.
 - How do you think the person who hasn't travelled would feel? Why?

- 3** Somebody from a wealthy background who has been to university asks somebody from a much poorer background why they haven't been to university.
 - How do you think the person who hasn't been to university might feel? Why?

- 4** A heterosexual (straight) person asks a homosexual (gay) person why they don't hold hands with their partner in public.
 - How do you think the gay person might feel? Why?

- 5** A man asks his female neighbour why she takes a taxi home from the train station at night when he always walks home from the station at night as it's so close to the road that they live on.
 - How might the woman feel? Why?

Review / Reflection

As a whole group come back together and ask the students what these questions have in common.

- Explain that in each example, the person asking the question has more power or privilege in a certain part of their identity compared with the other person. This means that they are able to do / have / influence some things more easily than the other person because the way that society is structured makes it easier for them.
- If needed, explain that power is the ability to influence people / things and make decisions that impact others. Privilege is being able to have advantages and benefits because of belonging to a particular group.

You may want to go through each examples and explore the power / privilege dynamic in each example, for example:

- 1** The British born white person has the privilege of being able to say they're British without being questioned or asked to prove themselves. The black / brown person has to explain that they are 'really' British and prove that they belong in Britain.
- 2** Having a British passport in the UK is a privilege that some asylum seekers / migrants etc. do not have. Having the money and confidence to travel for pleasure and also having the legal right to study / work / live abroad are also privileges that some people might not have. The British person is assuming that

the other person has had the same privileges as them.

- 3** Having the opportunity, confidence and money to attend university are privileges that not everybody has access to. The graduate is assuming that the other person has had the same privileges as them.
- 4** It is much safer for heterosexual couples to hold hands in public than it is for homosexual couples who might experience disapproval, discrimination or abuse. The straight person asking the question is not recognising that the gay person has less access to social approval / safety / freedom in society because of their sexuality.
- 5** The man asking the question has the gender privilege of being able to walk home alone at night with less risk of gender based harassment, abuse or violence. In this example he fails to see that his female neighbour has less access to the privilege of safety and to respect than men do.

TIMINGS	ACTIVITY	RESOURCES
15 mins	<p data-bbox="331 244 831 280">Question Reframing Activity</p> <p data-bbox="331 341 1503 472">Put students into pairs / small groups and give each group one of the questions to work with from the worksheet. On a piece of flipchart paper, ask them to:</p> <ul data-bbox="331 520 1435 1050" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="331 520 741 557">• Write out the question.<li data-bbox="331 600 1435 684">• With the help of the RSVP model, circle any problematic language if there is any.<li data-bbox="331 727 1330 764">• Jot down some notes about why they think it's problematic.<li data-bbox="331 807 920 844">• Write a new more skilful question.<li data-bbox="331 887 1435 971">• After students have finished the activity you can ask some groups to feedback and present their flipchart.<li data-bbox="331 1015 1402 1051">• Offer support & coaching with using the RSVP model if needed.	<p data-bbox="1653 244 1973 280">PowerPoint Slide 12</p> <p data-bbox="1653 341 2101 426">Optional Worksheet 2: 'Question Reframing Activity'</p> <p data-bbox="1653 488 2040 572">Optional flipchart, paper and pens</p>

Processing the activity: Teacher's Notes**Imagine asking this question to a Muslim:**

“Don't you think it's irrational to follow books written hundreds of years ago by people who didn't understand science?”

Why is it unhelpful? It's a statement, the person asking the question thinks following religious books is irrational.

Possible reframe:

“Science and evidence are hugely important to me, how do you see the relationship between the discoveries of modern science and the teachings in your holy book?”

Imagine asking this question to a Christian:

“Why can't religious people be gay?”.

Why is it unhelpful? The person asking the question is assuming that religious people can't be gay, when in reality there are many people of faith in the world who are gay.

Possible reframe:

“What are your views about Christianity and homosexuality?”

Imagine asking this question to an atheist:

“Why do militant atheists think that their belief in nothing has equal value to ancient beliefs in something?”

Why is it unhelpful? The use of the word ‘militant’ is judgemental and provocative, and the suggestion that atheists believe in nothing is also inaccurate and judgemental.

Possible reframe:

“Do you think that your non-religious beliefs have equal value to religious beliefs?”

Imagine asking this question to a religious person:

“Why is religion always causing wars?”

Why is it unhelpful? The use of the word ‘always’ suggests that this question is generalising and it suggests that religion is the only cause of war without taking into consideration all the other complex factors that can lead to war.

Possible reframe:

“What is your opinion about the relationship between religion and war?”

TIMINGS	ACTIVITY	RESOURCES
25 mins	<p>REPLY: Part 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain that “Now that we’ve spent some time thinking about skilful ways to ask questions, we’re going to spend some time thinking about skilful ways we could answer questions about our faith / belief / identity.” • You can ask the students to ask you some questions about a part of your identity that you don’t mind answering questions about (you can choose the topic e.g. your hobbies / your place of birth / hometown etc.) • When you answer their questions, model unskilful answers e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Use one word answers. – Use long, incomprehensible words and phrases. – Give answers that are long and boring. – React defensively or rudely to questions. – Change the topic and answer a completely different question that you would prefer to answer. • Ask the students if they found your answers helpful / engaging / informative, and if not, why not. • If they don’t pick up on what you were doing, explain the ways in which you were intentionally answering the questions unskilfully. 	<p>PowerPoint slides 14–19</p> <p>Optional Worksheet 3: ‘What’s Your Reply?’</p>

REPLY: Part 2

- Ask the students what they think are some important principles for answering questions about faith / belief / culture identity?
- Explain that the Faith & Belief Forum have a tool for answering questions which is very similar to the RSVP tool but with a few additional things thrown in.

- Show slide 14.

- Show slide 15 '**Respectful** Language':

Make sure your language is always respectful and sees the value and humanity in the other person, even if somebody has asked you an Oops question.

- Show slide 16 '**Emotions** are okay':

It's fine to say how you feel about a question, our emotions can often tell us what's important to us.

- 1 Example Non-oops question: "I'm glad that you asked me about my experience of sexism because it's important to me that people understand what it's like to be a woman in this society."

- 2 Example Oops question: "I feel frustrated that you asked me whether I was British because I think it's important that people understand that people of any colour can be British."

Explore these principles and discuss the examples with your students.

- Show slide 17 '**Provide** information':

You can use the opportunity to provide more information, questions are a good opportunity to help people understand things from your point of view.

- 1 Example: "Even in the twenty first century, on average women still get paid less than men, are less often in positions of power and are more likely to be the victims of gender-based violence."
- 2 Example: "Historically, Britain had many global colonies and there have also been many waves of migration and people seeking sanctuary from persecution, so people of any race can be British citizens."

Explore these principles and discuss the examples with your students.

- Show slide 18 '**Length**':

Keep it short and stick to the question you've been asked. Make sure that when you answer a question you keep to the topic and leave space for the other person to respond and join in the conversation.

- Show slide 19 **'You & I'**:

Remember to use I statements when you are talking about your own beliefs, opinions and experiences. This helps to avoid generalisations. If you can, it's sometimes helpful to include the opinions of other people who share your identity but have a different perspective from you. This helps to show diversity within groups.

- 1 Example: "As a feminist I think there is still a lot of work to do to achieve gender equality, however, I know that some women think that society has already achieved gender equality."
- 2 Example: "I was born in England and think of myself as a British Indian not as English. However, other Indians who were born in England think of themselves as English."

Explore these principles and discuss the examples with your students.

Part 3: What's Your REPLY?

- Show slide 21:
- You can give students the opportunity to practice their REPLY skills by asking some of the following questions (or you can choose your own questions about faith / belief / culture / identity).
- Ask students to discuss the questions in pairs/small groups using 'Worksheet 3: What's Your Reply?' and then take answers from individuals as a whole class group.
- Ensure that you are showing slide 20 during these activities so that students can refer back to the REPLY model to help formulate their answers.
- If needed, coach students to reframe their answers in a skilful way using the REPLY model.

PowerPoint slides 20–21

Questions

- 1** Do you think that society will become more religious in the future?
 - Using the **REPLY** model, you could encourage students to provide some information when answering this question.

- 2** Do you think that the media depicts UK minorities fairly (e.g. LGBT people / Muslims / people of colour / disabled people etc.)?
 - Using the **REPLY** model, you could encourage students to say how they feel when answering this question.

- 3** Do you think the state should have any control over what people wear?
 - Using the **REPLY** model, you could encourage students to use I statements about their views as well as acknowledging the perspectives of others, especially others who share parts of their identity, who have different opinions from them.

- 4** Do you think that the crisis in young people's mental health is caused by social media?
 - Using the **REPLY** model, you could encourage students to say how they feel when answering this question.

- 5** Choose any other question/questions that you think that your students would be interested in engaging with. Try to encourage them to use the **REPLY** model when they answer.

5 mins

End

- You can end this session by encouraging the students to use some of what they've learnt today to think about the way that they ask and answer questions about identity in the future.
- A nice activity you could end on is to ask students to think of one question that they would like somebody to ask them about their identity (you could also ask students about how they would like to be asked about their identity) e.g. a part of their identity that:
 - They'd really like to talk about
 - Share with others
 - Wish others understood better
 - They wish people would ask them about
- If you feel comfortable you can share a question that you would really love to be asked about your identity and how you'd like to be asked about it. If there is enough trust and safety within the class you could ask for volunteers to share their question if they feel comfortable doing so.
- You can summarise some of the themes that came up in the questions shared e.g. were a lot of the questions about the complexity of identity/passions & interests/faith & belief/country of origin/culture/being understood etc.? If so, what can the themes tell us about what people like to be asked about and how they like to be engaged with.

TIMINGS

ACTIVITY

RESOURCES

- If this exercise feels too vulnerable for students to share in front of the class you can simply leave them with the question to take away and ponder.