

Skills For Dialogue, Sixth Form Student Workshops



**The
Faith
& Belief
Forum**



Introduction

This package of resources is a result of a partnership between staff and students at Forest School and the Faith & Belief Forum (F&BF). They are rooted in Faith & Belief Forum methodologies for interfaith dialogue. A core working group of experienced and passionate sixth form teachers offered their guidance and expertise to adapt F&BF activities to the sixth form context. Resources were tested and adapted following feedback from sixth form tutors and students at Forest School.

The partnership between Forest School and F&BF began in 2019 with Forest School participating in the School Linking Programme. The partnership developed further when a group of sixth form students at Forest School expressed an interest in working on diversity and inclusion. They were keen to understand and explore language and dialogue, how to have conversations about diversity, and what diversity looks like. Teachers were also having to manage many more complex discussions, but they reported feeling the need for more support with how to facilitate and navigate these complex and controversial conversations.

This was the context in which Forest School and F&BF developed the 'Dialogue Not Debate' project, of which these workshops are a crucial element. These workshops are designed for year 12 and year 13 students.

Overarching aims of the workshops

- To support students to increase their knowledge on the power of dialogue when discussing diversity, division, difference and controversy.
- Strengthening and honing skills of dialogue to encourage openness, understanding and empathy.

Workshop Outcomes

- An empowered group of students who feel confident in holding dialogue – showing empathy and a balanced understanding of others around encounter, diversity & difference.
- Increased teacher confidence in facilitating dialogue around controversial issues.

QUERY

By opening up dialogue about controversial issues, we want to support students to 'QUERY':

Q Question and challenge with sensitivity and empathy

U Understand others and themselves

E Enable and encourage a heightened awareness of the impact of context

R Respect and value diversity and difference

Y Yes to dialogue!

Programme Structure

There are eight weekly workshops. Each workshop is 45 minutes long.

Year 12 workshops	Year 13 workshops
1 The importance of shared, brave & safe spaces	5 Advantages & disadvantages of dialogue and the role of privilege
2 Active listening	6 Identity & the influences on development of identity
3 Power Roles & The Art of Asking	7 Controversial Issues – Critical Thinking & My biases
4 The art of REPLY	8 Controversial Issues – Emotional intelligence & post evaluation

Methodology

- It is important to recognise the behaviours that we see, and to acknowledge that there may be emotions, judgements and stereotypes that we do not see.
- It is also important to be aware of the different levels of consciousness / action / reaction / reflection at play (each bring their own baggage and barriers). The different levels are:

I
YOU
WE
TOPIC
CONTEXT

Teacher Guidance

Room Set-up

- It can be difficult to create space in classrooms, but if it is possible to change the set-up, consider having space so that students are not sat behind desks (desks can act as a barrier).
- Some activities will require group work or individual work; this is where having breakout spaces for students would be useful if available.
- Have the workshop title displayed on flip chart or whiteboard if one is available, this will help students to keep the purpose of the workshop in mind throughout the session.

Before Each Workshop

- Check your technology and ensure that you have the PowerPoint ready.
- Ensure that any worksheets needed are printed and resources needed are ready to hand (each workshop has a handy introduction sheet to help with this).
- Think about how you might need to adapt the workshop for the students in your class (see below for guidance).
- Think about additional prompt questions that you can add in / have to hand to aid discussion. There may have been a particular topic / news item / event happening that week that could be used as current stimulus making the session more relevant.
- It is important to recognise and acknowledge that you may have your own emotions, judgements, and stereotypes (we all have them!) acknowledging your own views about a topic will help you to raise awareness of your own beliefs and allow you to check your own stereotypes. It can be helpful to undertake the activities yourself before facilitating the workshops!

How to adapt workshop content

- As above, think about current topics / news / events that could be introduced as stimulus during the session to make it more relevant.
- Remember to have sensitivity, awareness and understanding when facilitating activities. You may have students that have specific needs or experiences that will cause them to engage differently. Never push a student to give a viewpoint, but always allow them to take participate, even if they are just listening.
- Check-in with any students that may have seemed disengaged or distant during workshops. Follow-up with any student comments or behaviours that may be of concern after the workshop.
- The lesson plans can be adapted to suit your class of students. Think about how activities can encourage more participation. For example, if you have a group of students who are less engaged, willing to share, use more of the 'think, pair, share' approach. You can also ask students to write thoughts on Post-it Notes, cluster similar answers and then open up dialogue based around the comments on post-its.
- Always refer back to the Safe Space 'RADIO' principles if students are using potentially offensive language or talking in ways which may be discriminatory or hurtful to others. These situations are great for modelling how to challenge and address prejudice without shutting conversations down. For example, pause conversations if needed and use the 'Ouch' to say that what is being said maybe hurtful and explaining why this is and then asking: 'How can we rephrase or reframe this question / comment considering others?'