

# My Identity, Beliefs & Values Story

## Teacher Guidance



### Who is this lesson for?

This activity is designed primarily for KS4 and KS5 students and can be used in youth settings. It can also be adapted and used for younger students.

### Objectives

1. Help young people explore who they are and what matters to them.
2. Identify how family, friends, and culture, influence identity and beliefs.
4. Use personal stories to find common ground with others and understand different points of view.
5. Discover how sharing stories can challenge stereotypes and create change.

### Outcome:

- ✓ Better understanding of identity and values.
- ✓ See how different people and experiences shape your beliefs and choices.
- ✓ Feel more comfortable talking about who you are and what you believe.
- ✓ Develop an appreciation for people who see the world differently from you.
- ✓ Recognise how stories can challenge stereotypes and bring people together.

### Lesson Structure

This lesson has been designed to be delivered either as a one-hour session, or as four 15-minute activities (for use in form time, etc.).

Teachers are welcome to make any reasonable changes to the content in order for it to meet their students' needs.

### Creating a Safe Space for Activities

In order to deal with sensitive topics, safe, brave, trusting and respectful environments are key. These need to be developed & practised over time and so it is worth revisiting your group expectations before these workshops. For more guidance on creating a 'Framework for Encounter' visit <https://faithbeliefforum.org/resources/>.

### Possible Next Steps

#### Extension Activities:

There is an extension activity at the end of this lesson plan. This could be used to extend learning for those students that are interested in knowing more.

Further resources, guidance, and lesson plans on developing skills for dialogue; creating safe spaces; and facilitating dialogue on controversial issues can also be found on the Faith & Belief Forum webpage <https://faithbeliefforum.org/resources/>.

Slide	Timings	Content Guidance
1	Title Slide	My Identity, Beliefs & Values Story
2	Contents	
3	Part 1: The Importance of understanding your identity	
4	5 minutes	<p><b>Present slide:</b>  <b>Importance of Understanding Your Identity</b>  Knowing your identity fosters...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Self-Awareness</b> – Helps recognize strengths, weaknesses, and motivations.</li> <li>• <b>Purpose</b> – Guides life choices in alignment with values and goals.</li> <li>• <b>Relationships</b> – Encourages genuine connections with others.</li> <li>• <b>Decision-Making</b> – Ensures choices reflect personal values.</li> <li>• <b>Resilience &amp; Confidence</b> – Strengthens self-esteem and adaptability.</li> <li>• <b>Community Belonging</b> – Enhances connection to social groups.</li> </ul>
5	5 mins	<p><b>What can influence your identity?</b>  Explain that you will be exploring what is being said in this clip, focusing on what influenced America Ferrera’s identity and the impact that some of the things had on her. (Facilitators to watch the clip beforehand and pull out your own reflections to share if needed to encourage dialogue).</p> <p><b>Watch the clip below (4mins 16 seconds)</b>  <b>Your identity is your superpower   America Ferrera</b>, from TED2019  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQJhRDbsDzl">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQJhRDbsDzl</a></p>
6	5 mins	<p><b>As a whole group, discuss some of the below questions.</b>  <b>Understanding influence on Identity</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are some stereotypes America Ferrera faced, and how did they impact her?</li> <li>2. What do you think she means when she says, “My identity is my superpower”?</li> </ol> <p><b>Embracing Who You Are</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. What helped America Ferrera feel proud of her identity instead of hiding it?</li> <li>4. How can people feel more confident about who they are?</li> </ol> <p><b>Other thoughts &amp; reflections...</b> opportunity for students to share other thoughts.</p>
7	Part 2: My Values & Beliefs	
8	15 minutes	<p><b>Circles of Influence &amp; Values</b></p> <p>This can be done as an individual activity, allowing students to navigate each circle themselves, or you can help students through the activity by explaining each circle one at a time offering examples from a ‘completed sample’ before allowing students to complete the relevant circle.</p> <p>Ask students to copy the circles on screen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain that the smallest circle in the centre represents you, at your core, your likes, dislikes and what you value. Write what makes you, you inside the smallest circle (start by writing your name). You can use the</li> </ul>

		<p>following questions as a guide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What beliefs are important to you? (e.g. equality / protecting the environment / human rights / animal rights?)</li> <li>- What makes you laugh / what do you enjoy doing?</li> <li>- What are your hobbies or interests?</li> <li>- Do you have a faith, religion or belief?</li> <li>- What are your hopes for the future?</li> <li>- What can you do really well?</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The second circle from the middle represents your household, the people that you live with. Who are they? Write them into the circle and write the things that you have learnt from them? What influence have they had on you and your values or beliefs? What experiences have you shared that you treasure?</li> <li>● The third circle represents friends. Think about what you have learnt from them? What influence have they had on you and your values or beliefs? What experiences have you shared that you treasure?</li> <li>● The biggest circle is the community that you live in and groups that you are a part of. Think about experiences that you have had in the community or this group; this could be about the places that you go to; the people that you have met outside of family or school; the religious community that you belong to; or the groups that you meet as part of your hobbies and interests. What have you learnt from these experiences? How may they have changed you? Write these in the largest circle.</li> </ul> <p><b>Whole group reflection (if time):</b> Are there any other people or places that have influenced you? What makes us choose some things and not others?</p> <p><b>Summary statement:</b> Explain that it is important to understand the influences on identities and that many things can influence who we are, and that this can change over time.</p>
9	Part 3: Writing my story	
10	15 minutes	<p><b>My Story</b></p> <p>The Power of Stories</p> <p>Our lives are made up of many stories. Sharing stories is a brilliant way to learn about each other. Why? We believe that they are an effective way to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Inform &amp; educate about different faiths, beliefs, real life experiences and diversity</i></li> <li>● <i>Help people see connections with their own lives and those of people of different faiths / beliefs</i></li> <li>● <i>Create safe and brave spaces for practising dialogue and asking questions, including some that may be difficult</i></li> <li>● <i>Model good relations between people of different faiths / beliefs / values / views</i></li> <li>● <i>Build empathy and curiosity through the power of storytelling</i></li> </ul>
11		<p><b>Thinking about my story &amp; beginning to write my story...</b> We would like you to start to write your story, what would you include (use your Circles of Values and Influence for inspiration).</p>

		<p>Use the structure below as a guide...</p> <p><b>Section 1: About Me</b>          -Your name (does your name have a meaning or could you share who named you) / identity (use your circles) / background / family / important places</p> <p><b>Section 2: About my Faith/Belief/Values/Experiences</b>          -An important belief/teaching/value from your faith/belief/family/life experiences for you?          OR          -What is your favourite festival/ceremony/celebration &amp; why?          OR          -Significant moments / experiences?</p> <p><b>Section 3: Topics</b>          Pick two or three of the topics below and using the prompts write a short paragraph that you are happy to share with others.</p> <p><b>Tell us about someone who is important to you:</b>  <i>This could be a family member, a friend or a teacher.</i>          Who is this person?          How do you know them?          Why are they important to you?          Share two things that are special about them?</p> <p><b>Tell us about an achievement that you are proud of:</b>          Tell us about the achievement?          What was involved in you getting this achievement?          How did it make you feel when you got this achievement?</p> <p><b>Tell us about a place that is important to you:</b>          Where is this place?          Why is it important to you?          Share two things about this place that make you happy?</p> <p><b>Tell us about something that is important to you:</b>  <i>This could be a group you are part of, a faith or belief or a value that you hold</i>          Tell us what is important to you?          Why is this so important to you?</p> <p><b>Tell us something about your hope for the future:</b>          What would you like to be good at in the future?          How would you like people to treat each other?</p> <p><b>Explain that we will go onto sharing our stories in the next part, but that each person can decide what they would like to share from their story.</b></p>
	Part 4: Sharing Stories	
13	15 minutes	<p><b>Setting a Safe &amp; Brave space</b></p> <p>Before we share our stories with each other in small groups, we need to remember some key things that will help everyone feel safe and brave enough to share their personal stories. It can feel quite daunting to talk about yourself, but we can help each other by remembering the following key principles in this video...</p> <p><b>Setting a safe space, the Faith &amp; Belief Forum Way! (2mins 35 seconds)</b>  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G4DcznP6Hk0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G4DcznP6Hk0</a></p>

14		<p><b>Telling your story...</b> Get into groups of three and take it in turns to tell the parts of your story that you are happy to share for just 2 minutes each (you will be timed and reminded when it is time to move onto the next person). The others in the group will need to listen to the stories without interrupting.</p>
15		<p><b>Reflection</b> As a whole group, reflect on the process of being able to share parts of your story with others. How did it feel to have the other people's full attention? How did it feel to talk about yourself? How did it feel to listen to another person's story? How did you feel about any similarities that you may have connected with between stories? How did you feel about differences that you heard between stories?</p> <p><b>Summary</b> <i>Storytelling through personal personal/biographical stories can create more of a connection and hold emotive meaning through the amount of vulnerability involved. This helps to understand where another person is coming from, to build connections and understanding between individuals.</i></p>

	Extension Activity	
	15 minutes	<p><b>The Power of Storytelling</b></p> <p>The following quote is taken from a TED Talk by writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche titled 'The Danger of a Single Story' in 2009...</p> <p><i>"Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity."</i></p> <p><b>What do you think Adiche is saying here?</b> In groups, explore the meaning of this quote by focusing in on one of the following lines to really unpick and unpack what is behind what is being said. (look up the meaning of the words and compare the extremes that are being expressed through the words).</p> <p><i>"Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize."</i></p> <p>OR</p> <p><i>"Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity."</i></p> <p>Once you have explored the meaning of the quote, spend some time thinking of / researching examples of stories in the world that 'empower and humanise' and 'repair that broken dignity'. Create a list of some of these stories that you can share with others (these can be fiction or non-fiction).</p>