

# faith at home

Resources for Schools

**PHASE: SECONDARY**

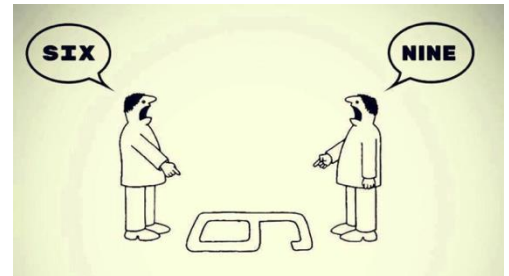
## Diversity and Inclusion



## KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

*"We need to eliminate the concept of division by class, skills, race, income, religion, and nationality. Every human requires food and water to survive and every human has a heart that bleeds, loves, and grieves." Suzy Kassem.*

It feels easy to spot things that divide us and make us different – Divide the world into Them and Us. It can be too easy to exclude 'Them' whilst only including 'Us' in the good things, the fun things, the nice things.



But just as we are all made different – Christianity teaches that we are all created in God's image, all are known and loved by God, all are precious in His sight.

How can we develop ways of looking at someone so that we see God's image and spirit within them? How can we act and speak that encourages everyone, empowers everyone, includes everyone?

How can we celebrate difference? How can we celebrate the things that unite us? How can we celebrate the good in everyone?

## BIBLE PASSAGE OF THE WEEK:

There are many Bible passages that speak of diversity and inclusion: Galatians 3:28 is about all being equal, 1 Corinthians 12:12-14 is about everyone having a part to play in Christ's body (the church), and Colossians 1:16-17 is about everything being created by God in Christ Jesus.



**The Bible passage below most explicitly reminds us that when we are in heaven, God's Kingdom to come, we will all be together and will worship together and all will be united:**

**Revelation 7:9-10** – "After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: 'Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.'"

## Gathering

Spend a few moments listing the things that are different about us.

Then spend a few moments listing the things that are the same about us.

Have a brief discussion about which felt easier to list, which felt more uncomfortable to name, about whether is made you anxious naming something about yourself that is different – or someone talking about something that you recognise in yourself.

When we look back at the two lists – which differences are not as straightforward as you think, which similarities may still be different for some.

If God's image is within us (see Genesis 1:27: 'So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.')

What is it, about us, that is in God's image?

## Engagement

We all have rights. Children and Young people have rights that our country has agreed to:

[https://www.unicef.org.uk/child-rights-partners/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2016/08/CRC\\_summary\\_leaflet\\_Child\\_Rights\\_Partners\\_web\\_final.pdf](https://www.unicef.org.uk/child-rights-partners/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2016/08/CRC_summary_leaflet_Child_Rights_Partners_web_final.pdf)

Watch one of these short films about rights: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pRGhrYmUjU4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hTlrSYbCbHE>(stop at 03:55)

But we all have responsibilities to stand up for these rights – for ourselves and each other. E.g. If we have the right to freedom of speech then we also have the responsibility to allow others to speak and be heard. Which rights are easy to have, easy to lose, easy to stand up for, difficult to fight for?

How can you be a champion for the rights of all people in your community?

Sometimes being different means others choose what is important for us. Sometimes they make good choices, sometimes bad choices and sometimes they ask us first, sometimes not.

Can you write a charter for your group that says how you think people should be included and supported?

**In the UK there are 'protected qualities' in our laws around equality:** age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

These are all ways that people have been made to feel excluded by their community, country, workplace and the world around them. Shaun Dellenty has written a book called 'Celebrating Difference', about a whole-school approach to LGBTQ+ inclusion. Within the book he recommends a simple strategy for 'checking in with ourselves' with regards to how we feel about difference and how this can lead to prejudice. He calls it 'Place your Prejudice on your Palm', or PPOP, and the concept below is included with permission from Shaun. Prejudice is a preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or



actual experience. We often pick up these ideas and do not know how or why. Shaun recommends that people visualise their prejudices on their palm and ask themselves questions, bringing **curiosity not judgement** to these. In going through a process like this, Shaun hopes that the fingers will not close around the prejudice thoughts we have and create a fist, which would lead to damage to those who are different to ourselves.

- Invite pupils to imagine the thoughts and feelings they sometimes have about people who are different which might feel negative in some way.
- Reassure pupils to not feel shame about these things that they sometimes think or feel, but instead to be curious about these ideas and to wonder for themselves about these thoughts and feelings and why they are there.
- There is no need for anyone to ever reveal what these thoughts and feelings are and the emphasis is always on being curious instead of being judgemental.



You might invite pupils to ask themselves questions such as:

- What are my prejudices towards people who are different?
- If I could imagine my prejudices here on my palm, what would they look like, feel like, taste like, smell like?
- If I give a voice to my prejudices,

what does that sound like?

- What texture would my prejudices have- are they bumpy or spikey? Could I hurt myself on them?
- Why are they here? Where did they come from?

## Response

Listen to this song by Bethel. Consider how we might respond to people if we believed that they were a child of God, loved by Him and trying their best to make it through the day in the only way they know:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e\\_bj6mjUj7k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e_bj6mjUj7k)

When people try to make decisions for us because they think they know best – how can we respond with respect and dignity to stand up for our rights and offer our own suggestions.

When we see others being discriminated against because of the way they look, the language they speak or the way their body looks or acts – how can we show ourselves to be models of inclusion, celebrators of diversity and encouragers of those who normally get left out or held back.

## Sending

Try looking at the world in a different way:

What would it look like if you couldn't climb steps, if you were sitting down instead of standing up.

What would it look like if you couldn't see colours and red warning signs were grey.

What would your school look like if you didn't understand the languages around you very easily?

What would your class be like if noise and the presence of people was overwhelming and made you panic?

How would you walk around your community and react to people who looked like they could do with some help? Would you walk past things on the floor and ignore hazards? Would you laugh at someone struggling or move away from someone different to you?

Now put on some imaginary glasses – the way God might see the world – where everyone deserves a chance, where everyone deserves to feel safe, loved and cared for. Now step out with your eyes open to the world around you and the choices in front of you.

Finish by reading again this passage from the Bible.

**Revelation 7:9-10** – "After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: 'Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.'"

## SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

*(practical ways to help us explore faith and develop spiritually at home together)*

### **EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:**

This film is about a toy that helps us to consider other people's perspectives, grow empathy for others and learn communication in new ways. How might a toy like this change your school?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMfaHYQ5Vok&t=31s>

If you have space to do this, try this:

Ask your group to group themselves together according to the shoes that they are wearing.

Colour, style, laces/no laces, zips, tags, brand name. Groups don't have to be the same size or anything.

One or two may feel left out as they don't feel they fit anywhere.

Ask them now to spend a minute finding out common things within that group apart from shoes – hobbies, interests, likes, dislikes...is there one thing that unites them all?

They most likely will find it difficult to unify around one thing.

Now ask the groups to split up and re-group according to hobbies or things they like doing.

Sports, tv watching, eating, going out, staying in. Is this easier to do? Is it an activity that sounds more exciting and happier?

Often, we group people according to what we think they will be like. E.g. Everyone who looks like that will like doing this. Everyone from that community likes this kind of food/music/fashion. Everyone who has this kind of disability will always want to talk about the same thing/need a wheelchair/walk with a stick.

Does this happen to you? Does it make you feel good or does it make you cross/frustrated/sad that no one asks you? How can we make better decisions about the judgements and choices we make in future?

Can you remember a time when someone made an assumption about you that was wrong?

Do you feel you can share it? (If not, don't worry – you don't have to).

Did it help you or hinder you? Did it start a conversation about what you needed or make a conversation difficult to have?

Have you ever assumed something about someone and it was right? If you had misjudged – what would have been the consequence?

Spend a few minutes talking, or play some music (e.g. One of Us by Joan Osborne or Martyn Joseph) and think about these questions. Ask God for forgiveness, and His help to make it different next time.

## **ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:**

### **Pick a Role Model:**

Choose someone who could be a role model for you this week.

(You may have several that you follow already – choose one of these).

Consider what it is about them that makes them a role model.

What about them makes them stand out for you? Is it their character, personality or confidence?

Is it their life story and something about their journey so far? Their faith, their vision or their resilience?

Could you write, draw or create something that reminds you of the thing you admire and the thing you want to be like? A picture, a poster, a poem or piece of writing, a slogan or quote to keep in your room, on your wall, in your pocket, on your phone?

In what ways could you find out more about them this week.

In what ways could you choose a couple of things they do or ways they act that you could try this week.

At the end of the week, think about whether anyone noticed the difference in you.

### **Gratitude Diary:**

At the beginning of the day think of something to do that will show your gratitude: post a card, say something to someone, send a message. Try and vary the people you are sending them to.

At the end of the day – record 3 things you are grateful for. Try and make one of them a person that you are grateful to – someone who helped you, someone who smiled, someone who made your day.

Our own gratitude often spills over into our behaviour. Our behaviour then helps others feel included, encouraged and valued. If we challenge ourselves to be grateful for many different people, and say thank you to more people than normal, then our own attitudes will grow to be more inclusive and caring over time.

### **How can I help?**

Select a wide array of film/tv characters and famous people. Add into this some people from your community maybe – local councillors, MP, police etc.

Spend some time thinking about how we can help these people – try some film villains for fun – can we help Darth Vader feel loved and accepted? Will that make him nicer to be with? Or Kermit the Frog – can we help him feel more confident so that he can be part of the community? How can we help our headteacher, our MP, the children in the local nursery? Little things count, not just the flashy things matter.

## **PRAYERS that can help us REFLECT:**

### **5, 4, 3, 2, 1.**

Sit comfortably, quieten the space and wait for these words:

Look around the space you are in and try and spot 5 colours. Think of some things that are also that colour and give thanks for those things that bring us colour and life and vibrancy.

Listen out for 4 sounds that you can hear. The ones you recognise and the ones you don't.

Ask God to help you listen to everyone around you for those you recognise and those you do not.

Reflect on 3 things that you can feel – temperature of where you are, the chair you are sat on, the clothes against your skin. Pray for those in need – of clothes, warmth, comfort.

Remember 2 places that you have been – one that you enjoyed and one that you didn't enjoy. Pray or think about those who are safe and for those who are not.

Bring to mind one promise made to you that means something special – that you are made in God's image, that God loves you, that you are loved and cherished by those who love you. Pray that you might help others know that they are loved, valued, accepted and celebrated for who God made them to be.

God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him will not be lost but have eternal life. Amen.

Use the **Examen prayer** to reflect on finding a diversity and inclusion:

It has 5 steps, so you might like to count them on your fingers.

1. GIVE THANKS ...For the things that make you different and the things that unite you with others.
2. ASK FOR HELP ...For the times we are judged and need to respond in confidence and love.
3. REFLECT ...On how our words might divide people, destroy trust or downplay discomfort..
4. SAY SORRY ...For the times we judge others and make assumptions that hurt.
5. DECIDE ...How you might see God's image in everyone you meet.

May God grant us the grace to forgive others as He forgives us for the things we find hard. Amen.

## **CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES:**

### Discussion starters for groups:

What skills do we need to learn that unite people, bring people together and encourage peace between people? How hard has it been to re-learn how to get along with people since coming out of lockdown?

How does the language we use exclude or divide people? Can you see that in mainstream media – newspapers, news sites etc – or social media posts – Twitter, Facebook, Instagram etc. What can we do challenge these? What can we do to include and connect with people?

Talk about things that you love – Who is with you on these? Who loves them too?

Can you find things that appear to be very different but when you look are actually have similarities? (Audible, Paperbacks or Kindle – they're still books. Worship in a cathedral or online – it's still worship using music, words, prayers and creating a space for us to feel close to God. Football, Uno or Mario Kart – it's still using your skills to have fun and challenge yourself and win!)

Talk about the things you used to like or dislike but have now changed your mind. What were these things? What changed your mind? Can you remember what it was like to feel that differently? Does this help us consider how we might change something else about how we feel? (An assumption, a feeling, a judgement, an anxiety.)

Why do some people always try and turn things into them and us? What do you think they are trying to do? Is it to make themselves feel stronger, better or safer?

## **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP – OUR APPROACH**

### **INVITATIONAL**

Everyone is welcome to take part in collective worship, as much or as little as they or their parents and carers are comfortable with. This means we use invitational language and consider carefully our choice of words and songs. Children are invited to pray but are not compelled or expected to do so; they always have a choice. We invite them to pray or reflect in whatever way they would usually as a family, if that is part of their home experience.

### **INCLUSIVE**

Acts of worship need to be inclusive of all. Therefore, we choose topics and ideas that are shared by different faiths and worldviews. When we present Christian teaching, we make it clear that this is 'what Christians believe', saying things like:

'I wonder why this story might be important to Christians?'

'The story today comes from the Bible (the holy book of Christians), which teaches that ...

Our worship should be accessible for children and young people with a range of different backgrounds, and so we take care that activities do not require expensive resources. We also offer a variety of activities, so that children and young people with differing needs can all find something they can engage with.

## **INSPIRING**

We aim for our acts of worship to inspire those engaging with them. How might it engage their emotions, enabling a sense of peace, comfort, hope or motivation? How might it inspire them into action, into thinking differently and considering their behaviour or actions? How might it inspire them to reflect on their faith or beliefs, and on the faith or beliefs of others?