



What's it like to be you?

The session outline provided serves as a guide for exploring the idea of identity and character. The purpose of the session is to get the young people to share a bit about themselves, to talk about the things that influence them and make them who they are and ultimately to discuss the role that their faith plays both in shaping their identities and challenging them to develop 'godly' characteristics.

This resource was written for MYX, The Christian Muslim Forum Youth Partnership and has been adapted for The Feast.

Session Outline

Time	Activity	Description	Materials
15 min	Arrive and register	Get people to make name labels. Introduce day, house-keeping	Labels Pens
15 min	Prized possessions	Everyone items in the middles, taking turns to guess who's who.	Items
5 min	Guidelines for Dialogue	Go through the guidelines to create a safe space for discussions.	Guidelines for Dialogue
15 min	20 questions	Get the young people in their pairs and to ask one another 20 questions.	Question sheets
30 min	Getting to know you	Small group discussions.	
15 min	Break	Drinks, snacks and mingling	
15 min	What makes you 'you'?	Drawing your unique body!	Body outlines
30 min	Visible and invisible	Faith discussions about how religion impact our decisions, values etc.	Questions
45 min	Lunch break	Food and mingling	
30 min	Encouraging you to be 'you'	Listening to people's stories of how God has impacted them.	
15 min	Rise to the Challenge	A reflection using a drawing of people's hands.	A4 paper Pens
30 min	Sharing the challenge	Encouraging each other by sharing positive things we've noticed about each other.	A4 paper Pens
10 min	Feedback		Feedback forms
5 min	End		

Leader's Notes

Arrive

It's really important to make people feel at ease as they come in, especially as some might be particularly nervous. Making name labels takes the pressure off learning names, which can be hard in a big group.

It might be an idea to play some music as people come in, and make sure leaders are welcoming and chatting to the young people informally.

Gather everyone together and take the opportunity to run through any housekeeping issues (toilets, emergencies etc).

Prized possessions

Get everyone to bring an item that reveals something about them. Put them all the middle and take turns picking an item. They have three chances to guess who the item belongs to. If they guess correctly the owner or the item explains to the group why it's important.

This will involve a bit of forward planning! Contact the leaders of the groups who'll be attending and ask them to get *everyone* to bring a personal item with them on the day, preferably not something very expensive, but the more obscure the better! It could be a piece of sports equipment they use, a toy or game, a trophy, a souvenir or an item of clothing that's special to them. In terms of how the game runs, the idea is to get young people in pairs. So, when someone guesses correctly, they pair up with the owner of the item they picked, retrieve their own item and tell their partner what it is and what it means to them. People who guess incorrectly rejoin the group and wait for a second turn or for someone to guess their item correctly.

Guidelines for Dialogue

These are essential in setting the right tone before entering in to faith discussions. They are available on our website [here](#), simply click to download. There are many ways you can through them with your group, here are two ideas;

Method One

Take turns reading a guideline out loud each, going round in a circle. Elaborate on what some of them mean, and ask why they young people think they're important. At the end make sure everyone agrees to stick to them.

Method Two

Give everyone a few minutes to read the guidelines by themselves quietly. Then get them into pairs and ask them to tell each other what their favourite guideline is and why. Ask a few of them to share with the whole group. Make sure everyone agrees to stick to them.

20 Questions

You could either provide sheets for each pair to ask one another questions or have questions on a board or screen for them to use. It might be easier, rather than put them on the spot by asking their own questions of one another, to get everyone in the group to write down a question they'd like to ask as they're registering at the start of the day and incorporate these into a set of questions you've already prepared. Try to keep the questions varied – things about one another's family (number of siblings, who's the oldest, where the family is from), favourite sports/subject at school, hidden talent/party trick, likes and dislikes etc.

Getting to know you

To get them into larger groups so they can get to know others and to start to broaden their thinking to consider how our relationships with others shape us and how the people we're closest to know the most about us. To make this possible you'll either need to get a family member or friend to provide answers to specific questions ahead of time (this might be something that could be sent out with details of the day) or get friends to give answers for one another as they arrive. It's probably best to limit the questions to keep things fair and simple. You have three questions that they have to give one answer for each (obviously they'll need who gave the answers about them) which will then be checked against the answers given in an envelope marked with their name.

What makes you 'you'?

Time for the young people to think about the different aspects of their lives. This is an important part of the day, partly in terms of everyone recognising for themselves the many influences and features that make them unique and also by establishing the idea that we're all complex individuals and so much of what we are is affected by a whole web of experiences, relationships and values.

The 'iceberg' principle comes into play here – that 90% of its mass is below the surface, therefore, the majority of what makes us individual is unseen. You can find body outline templates on the Internet – a good basic outline can be found at: www.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Outline-body.png

It's up to you whether you give guidelines on the sheet for the kinds of things they might include, although it might help guide their thoughts if you were to provide headings around the sheet such as those given in the session outline: physical features, emotions, values and beliefs, ideas, likes, dislikes, relationships and talents.

Visible and Invisible

This activities helps to introduce the idea that our faith is something that should have a broad impact on our whole lives and is a big part of what drives our decisions, values, efforts and the way we choose to spend our time.

The things that they wrote in the previous activity should provide the material for the discussion in this session but it's important to provide some additional pointers to help them think less subjectively about the role faith plays in their lives.

Again, it might be helpful to provide the groups with sheets giving the questions in the session outline as a starter for discussion and include scripture passages from the Qu'ran and Bible that are relevant to this discussion. Provide examples of events, festivals and celebrations that are important to Muslims and Christians and which help to shape their religious experience.

Encouraging you to be 'you' 1

To take the focus off the group, consider other people's experience of faith and the role their faith has played in shaping their lives and work. This should help the group to identify the role faith plays in our lives and how, if we allow God to work in our individual experiences, we can overcome challenges and achieve things we wouldn't have expected.

For this you'll probably need the help of people in your local Mosque or Church. Ask friends or colleagues if they'll share their story about how they came to have faith, what their faith has enabled them to do, the challenges they've faced and what they've learnt about themselves and about God in the process. If you know anyone who's competent with a camcorder and good at editing you might want to enlist their help too! It'd be good to hear a range of stories and experiences – maybe six stories altogether – including people who maybe didn't grow up with a faith and people who struggled with their faith and overcame big challenges.

Encouraging you to be 'you' 2

A big part of what shapes people's opinions of us are the things we say and do, or sometimes, what we don't say or do! Think about the way your faith relates to different areas of your life... Are there attitudes, actions or issues that you want to develop; things that you care about but maybe don't give enough time or energy to? Alternatively, are there things that you do, say or think about that you'd rather leave behind?

Give everyone a piece of paper. Get everyone to draw around their open hand on one side of the sheet and around it write down the things they want to 'let go of'. On the other side, ask them to draw around their clenched hands and down write the things they want to 'hold on to'.

Sharing the challenge

To finish the day, gather the young people into their individual groups and get them to write their name at the top of a sheet of paper. They are to pass their pieces of paper around the group and, one after the other, everyone else is to write something that they've learned about that person, a positive characteristic that they recognise in him or her and something

to encourage them with as they part. Once they've got their sheets back, read them out to one another.

Feedback and Close

There are lots of different ways to get feedback, the easiest is to collate forms, but these can be a bit boring (although some young people do love them!). Here are two alternative methods;

Feedback Circle

Stand or sit in one big circle. Use a bean-bag or a juggling ball and take turns throwing it around the circle saying the thing that you enjoyed the most about the day, ensuring everyone has the bean-bag once.

Action Replay

Splitting the group into groups of 4-6 ask them to prepare a news report on what's happened that day, including the high-lights. Each group should perform their news report to the others.