


AIM: An exercise for participants to reflect on expressions/words we use about other people and groups of people in our everyday language. The aim is to create awareness of what language we use when describing other people or groups, and how often we tend to stereotype through our associations of them.


Participants: 6 - 20


Duration: 20 – 30 minutes


Required Material: pen and paper


Category: Dialogue exercise / inter-faith, inter-cultural

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- A. This exercise can be sensitive to some participants as some of the associations with the different words may create stereotypes of some people/groups of people.
- B. It is important to allow the participants to express their association without being judged.

STEPS

Preparation (2 minutes)

Papers are spread out evenly around the room.

Activity (15 minutes)

To create a more relaxing environment and create a safe space, have some suitable music playing in the background.

On each paper there is written a word (see below).

Tell the participants to spread themselves evenly between the papers. They should write their associations with the words. The associations don't need to be long but should be linked to what these words mean to the participants.

| | |
|---|---|
| | <p>Slave</p> <p>Bullying victim</p> <p>Father</p> <p>Friend</p> <p>Bully</p> <p>Gypsy</p> <p>Mother</p> <p>Refugee</p> <p>Gay</p> <p>Jew</p> <p>Terrorist</p> <p>God</p> <p>Female</p> <p>Friendship</p> <p>Muslim</p> <p>Christian</p> <p>Partner</p> <p>Poor</p> <p>Rich</p> <p>Enemy</p> <p>Other options can be used, depending on the location and context (what are the positive or negative/offensive words the participants use in their daily life?).</p> <p>Put the papers on the wall afterwards and read them out loud. Try to engage in a dialogue about the associations attached to the words.</p> |
| <p>Reflection (15 minutes)</p> | <p>Questions for discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does the word mean to us? • Is there a connection between the original meaning of the words and how we use |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do we use such words interchangeably; what function does the word have? (Descriptive, loving, derogatory, etc.)? • Some of the words are used in the Holy scriptures. What words do you think they are and how are they used? • How much of our identity can we associate with one word (sister / brother, son / daughter, friend, etc.)? • Can such descriptive words (nickname, offensive words or other words) stay with us, and will this mean something for our identity? • What do you as a Christian/Muslim/Jew/Hindu/Buddhist think of using a collective term for a group of people? Do you think there is any guidelines in your Holy scripture on how you should talk to each other? |
| <p>Conclusion (5 minutes)</p> | <p>Thank everyone for their participation, and summarize what was learned.</p> |