

 **AIM:** The exercise invites participants to share and respond to existential and faith questions.

 **Participants:** 5-30 participants / **Age range:** 22 - 45

 **Duration:** 60 minutes

 **Required Material:** paper and pens

 **Category:** Dialogue exercise / multifaith or one faith

THINGS TO CONSIDER

If you are facilitating a group where people come from different religions, there will always be some of no faith or people who do not describe themselves as religious. Be sensitive to the participants and include not only faith questions but also existential questions within the description of the activity.

STEPS

<p>Preparation (5 minutes)</p>	<p>Introduce the activity and tell the group that this exercise can be sensitive, so people need to be respectful of the questions they are reading and answering. It takes courage to share the deepest questions of our faith and lives, but most people will have come across these same questions, so the hope is that there will be a lot of recognition. This exercise will only be fruitful if there is trust and confidentiality in the group.</p>
<p>Activity (40 minutes)</p>	<p>Divide the group into smaller groups of 4-5 people. Each person will write a question he or she is presently struggling with or pondering on a piece of paper, or an unanswered question that keeps lingering in the soul. (Examples of questions could be: If there is a loving God, why do small children die? Why can we not live in peace with each other?). Give each participant at least 5 minutes to think about which question to write down.</p>

	<p>Each person folds the paper with the question and puts it in the middle.</p> <p>Each person takes one of the folded papers with a question. If a person has taken the question he or she wrote, they should exchange it for another.</p> <p>In each group, they take turns to answer the new question they have picked up from the middle. The response need not be a full and finished answer to the question. The participants should share their own thoughts, insights and experiences of this same question. It is better to say that you have no answer than to offer a "closed" and finished answer to the question. Existential and faith questions often don't have finished answers, so they should be treated as such. Each response should be no more than 2-4 minutes.</p> <p>Each group can decide whether they want to keep the participants anonymous or they want to reveal at the end who wrote which question.</p>
<p>Evaluation (10 minutes)</p>	<p>Ask the groups to finish and join the bigger group. As a facilitator, you cannot ask what questions or responses were given. However, you can ask the group if someone would like to share how it was to have their question answered by another person (of another faith.)</p> <p>How was it to respond to a question? Did you identify with the question?</p>
<p>Conclusion (5 minutes)</p>	<p>Thank everyone for their participation, remind that what has been shared is confidential and not for discussion and summarise what was learned.</p>