

Faith Literacy: Bitesize

Leader's notes

Pre event publicity

Depending on arrangements in your workplace, you might publicise the event via:

- Staff newsletter
- Intranet
- Faith network / diversity network
- Bulletin board
- Team meetings where wider workplace issues get raised

You might like to link the publicity to your organisation's diversity and inclusion strategy. Religion and belief are one of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act, and a faith literacy course can help people with different beliefs and religions better understand each other, promoting inclusion.

This course is not designed to 'indoctrinate' people, but to teach some key aspects of faith literacy. While the course uses Christian beliefs to illustrate some of the points, we believe that the framework and ideas will also be helpful for understanding other religions and beliefs. (This is why it is called "faith literacy" rather than "faith knowledge" – it is the about the ability to 'engage' with the diversity of faith and belief, rather than 'know everything about' faith and belief – which would take a very long time!). It is intended that this course will enable people on all sides to have better informed conversations with people that have different beliefs from their own.

Considering the intended audience

It is important to try to encourage people that are not just those from your own religion to attend your sessions, otherwise there will be less benefit to increasing faith literacy and less opportunity for dialogue.

While everyone will benefit from some time to think about the issues, in our experience 'religious people' tend to understand where other 'religious people' are coming from, even if they don't agree with their beliefs.

The key group that may benefit the most from a short course on faith literacy are the people that are **not actively following a religion**. They will often not have a 'religious mindset' and will have fewer shared reference points, so they will be in more need of a guide to help them understand faith issues in society, or among their colleagues.

If this can also be achieved, having people from a **range of religious backgrounds** will help to ensure there is a richer discussion and development of the points made in the course.

Planning the sessions

It is envisaged that you could run this series of faith literacy sessions in a half hour slot, perhaps at lunchtime or towards the end of the day. It would be good to give people a few weeks' notice so that their diary slots can be kept free from other arrangements.

As the talk is pre-recorded, it should work well to do a hybrid session with people dialling in on video conferencing, or to have a face-to-face session. It is probably best not to record the sessions, so that people feel free to speak: You can always send links to the main video content to those that miss out.

You will need to book a room in your workplace with a screen and sufficient seating for the number you expect. Will people be dialling in remotely and what software will you use to allow you to stream video and also stream video conferencing?

Depending on numbers, it might be good to arrange the seats into small “café style” groups so that people feel less intimidated to discuss their views with others than if they were in a full plenary. Another benefit of this arrangement is that more people can speak at the same time (compared with a full plenary with one person speaking at a time).

If you provide copies of the slides to participants, then certain people might like to refer back to these as they formulate their thoughts before speaking (particularly introverts!).

You could consider offering a lunch after the session, as this would encourage people to stay and continue talking. However this is purely optional.

Running the sessions

You might like to allow people to be ‘anonymous’, rather than introducing everyone who is attending – perhaps apart from the facilitator.

You may want to set some ground rules, for example about explaining what you believe rather than criticising what other people believe.

The facilitator does not need to be an expert in religion, just a good facilitator who can steer the session in a helpful direction and avoid any person dominating.

You can use the questions suggested at the end of each video for discussion, or you can come up with your own ones.

If someone uses the opportunity to get on their ‘hobby horse’ about a particular issue, you may need to thank them for their observation but to restate the purpose of the session (which may not be to debate their point or unpack their past experiences). You can perhaps offer to meet up with them afterwards to discuss their point further?

We want to encourage people to engage in a shared process of learning and discovery that will enable participants to have more confident, informed and nuanced discussions about religion and belief.

After the course has finished

Have a think about what you might do to follow up on the course material:

- Could you ask one of the other workplace faith groups to also arrange a 6-8 minute talk on the key aspects of their religion/belief?
- Is there some other sort of course you could follow up with, for example Christianity Explored, for those that expressed an interest in learning more?