

Session 1

Introduction

Key learning

In a divided and complex world, it can be hard to relate to each other well but we can build three reconciling habits which help us.

Application

Explore the three habits as a response to division and fracture.

Habits focus

The three habits are the framework for the course and for creating a healthy group culture.

Before the session

You will need:

- A very large sheet of paper or card (A1 or bigger) for your vision board (see p12)
- Felt-tip pens



Set up your room

Students will need to be able to gather round the vision board to reflect together.

Intro

 00:00

 5mins

 Slide 1

Aim of the course and the session

Welcome students to the *Difference* course and tell them what it's about:

- We live in a complicated, messy and divided world where it can be hard to relate to each other well.
 - Conflict is a normal part of home and school life but can be hard to navigate.
 - We might fear saying the wrong thing or not know how to handle differences.
 - Our communities can feel polarised or fragmented.
- Through *Difference*, we'll explore three habits: **Be Curious**, **Be Present** and **Reimagine**.
 - These reconciling habits come from the life of Jesus and the wisdom of expert peacemakers.
 - These habits can help us respond well to situations and build relationship with people, even when this feels difficult.
- There will be six sessions looking at the topics of crossing divides, navigating disagreement, justice, forgiveness and hope.

 Slide 2

In this session we are going to:

- Reflect on where we see division and broken relationships in the world today.
- Introduce three habits that helps us build good relationships with others and respond to difficult situations.
- Build a healthy group culture.

Story

 00:00

 20 mins

 Slide 3



Intro film

Short film unpacking the themes of *Difference* through the voices of young people.



Vision board

Identify the ways difference, division or disagreement impacts young people.

1. Lay out the very large piece of paper or card which you are going to use for your vision board.
2. Ask students to think of an example of difference, division or disagreement which matters to young people and which they have been aware of in the last month. (It might help if you give an example e.g. climate injustice, bullying.)
3. Ask students to write or draw these on the vision board, building up a 'graffiti wall' of responses (remember you will add to this vision board every session so leave enough space for future activities).
4. After a few minutes, invite students to look at all the responses and invite a few reflections.



Key learning

Please highlight the points below:

- We live in a world where there is division, disagreement and it can be difficult to relate well to each other.
- Many of the problems we see in the world and experience in our own lives are caused by broken relationships – with God, with others, with ourselves and with creation.
- In this course we will be building three habits that can help us respond to these situations and build stronger relationships.



Bible story

John 10:10b

Share the verse (explaining that these are Jesus' words):

"I have come in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness." (*Good News translation*)

Question for discussion:



What is needed for everyone to flourish and to live life in all its fullness?



How do our relationships with others affect impact this?



Key learning

Please highlight the points below:

- This verse shows us the abundant vision God has for human life – we were designed to receive life as a gift and flourish in it.
- We are made for relationship – other people help us experience life in all its fullness.
- When relationships are damaged, or where there is injustice or hostility, we don't experience life to the fullness of its potential.

Throughout this course we will be exploring and building three habits which help us build relationships with others and navigate a complex and divided world. They are the habits of being curious, being present and reimagining - let's consider them now with three short activities.



Optional film

 **1 min**

Introduction to the habits



Activity

 **10 mins**

Be Curious: Against the clock!

Understand what being curious is about and how it helps us relate better to others.

Start here



1

Introduce the habit, **Be Curious**, covering the key points on p6.

2

Each student pretends they have a buzzer, which they are ready to push and make a buzzing noise.

3

Willing contestants have to speak for a minute on the topic of 'being curious' without hesitating, going off-topic or repeating themselves – if anyone hears them do these things, they must press loudly on their pretend buzzer! It's now the next person's turn.

4

After a few rounds, write a word cloud on a whiteboard or flipchart, capturing the students responses. Ensure that the word cloud includes ideas related to:

- Understanding
- Not judging
- Finding out more
- Taking an interest
- Looking deeper
- Wondering why
- Being respectful



Key learning

Please highlight the points below:

- When we seek to understand and listen to someone else's story, we can build relationships and show them that we value them.
- This makes us less likely to react fearfully or judgementally.
- We are curious in a respectful manner, rather than a nosey or intrusive way.



Activity

🕒 10 mins

Be Present: Take the register

Understand the habit of being present and how it helps us relate better to others.

Start here



1

Introduce the habit, **Be Present**, covering the key points on p7.

2

Ask the students:

Why do we take a register at the start of the lesson?

If it doesn't come up, highlight:

- We know who is present.
- We can ensure that everyone who should be here, is here.
- We can follow up to make sure that those who are not present are safe and okay.
- We can ensure that students get to their lessons on time and so learn the value of good timekeeping.

3

Ask the students:

What does a register not do?

If it doesn't come up, highlight:

- It doesn't ensure people are ready to listen and learn.
- It does not mean everyone is happy, confident or wants to be there.
- It does not mean that everyone feels physically or emotionally well.

- It does not mean there will not be distractions e.g. a wasp in the classroom, or a fire drill.
- It does not help us understand what someone thinks, feels or believes.

4

(Optional) Ask the students:

What's the difference between a disagreement on social media and a conversation in person?

If it doesn't come up, highlight:

- In person, we can see facial expressions and body language so we understand better what the other person is trying to communicate.
- We sometimes find it harder to say hurtful things when we can see the other person's face.
- Social media can enable people to access and listen to different points of view.



Key learning

Please highlight the points below:

- The habit of being present is about encountering others authentically. It's about choosing to be ourselves.
- It is also about enabling other people to do the same, and be themselves.
- When we're really present with another person, it's easier to build a good relationship with them.



Activity

🕒 5 mins

Reimagine: Reimagining monsters

Understand the habit of reimagining and how it helps us relate better to others.

Start here

1 Introduce the habit, **Reimagine**, covering the key points on p7.

2 Give everyone in the class a blank piece of A4 paper and ask them to fold it into thirds.

3 On **Go**, start a 30-second timer and ask the students to draw the head of a monster on a third of the paper, with the neck up to the fold line.
On **Stop**, students fold the paper over and give it to someone else in the class.

4 On **Go**, start a 30-second timer and ask the students to draw the torso of a monster including 'arms' but not the legs, up to the second fold line.
On **Stop**, students fold the paper over and pass on to someone else in the room.

5 On **Go**, start a 30-second timer and ask the students to draw the 'legs' of a monster.

On **Stop**, students can open the paper and see their amazing monstrous creations.



Key learning

Please highlight the points below:

- Imagination enables us to be creative.
- This is even more true when we join with others and imagine together.
- We are confined by our own imaginations, but with others we can reimagine something new.

→ **Optional extra activity** ⌚ **+10 mins**

Find 'Walk' in Appendix 1 on p78.

Sanctuary

00:00

⌚ **10 mins**

Establish a healthy group culture

Introduction

Introduce the importance of setting a healthy group culture, highlighting the following points:

- During the *Difference* course, we'll explore things that matter to us.
- We won't agree on everything and that's ok – we need to be able to disagree with respect.
- We might talk about things that we find difficult – it's important to listen and not judge.
- No topic is neutral – something that is not hard for you may be very hard for someone else.
- Let's communicate honestly how we're feeling and let others, or the school staff team, know if we feel uncomfortable.

Explore some guidelines

Choose either Option 1 or Option 2

Option 1

Invite students to come up with some group guidelines and attitudes which will make the group safe enough to share personal thoughts, opinions and experiences.

You may like to use the guidelines below, which are based on the three *Difference* habits:



Be Curious

- Ask a respectful question if you hear something you disagree with.
- Avoid judging others.
- Listen carefully in order to understand others' perspectives.



Be Present

- Try to stay engaged and avoid distraction.
- Be honest.
- Don't interrupt people.
- Notice the thoughts and feelings you have during conversations.



Reimagine

- Be prepared for others to surprise you.
- Don't treat other people as a spokesperson for their culture or community.
- Remember that God is present in our conversations.

Option 2

If you already have some group guidelines that the students use, look at these and ask:

- If we're going to talk about things that might be personal to us, do these guidelines give us a safe space to do so? Why? Why not?
- If we're going to have conversations where we might disagree with each other, do these guidelines help us to do that without falling out?
- What guidelines might we need to add to help us do these things?
- How can the three habits of Being Curious, Being Present and Reimagining help us have a healthy group culture?



Closing prayer

Loving God, as we begin the *Difference* course together, inspire us to be curious, to be present and to reimagine as we seek a world where everyone can flourish. In Jesus' name. Amen

Notes

End of session 1