

## Session 2

# Crossing Divides

### Key learning

Sometimes our own assumptions or prejudice divide us from one another.

### Application

Challenge our assumptions and engage with others who are different from us.

### Habits focus

Be curious by listening to the story we don't know.

**i Important:** Explain to your group that this session is about the people we avoid for the wrong reasons – because our own assumptions and opinions mean we hold them at arm's length. It is **not** about any situations where distance is needed for us to stay safe – for example, in situations of abuse, or where others put us in danger.

## Before the session

### You will need:

- Sticky notes
- Marker pens
- A suitable wall or room divider on which to attach the sticky notes (or hardback books or boxes such as shoeboxes)
- Your group's vision board



### Set up your room

Decide where and how to 'build the wall' for the **Space** activity.

# Intro

 00:00

 5mins

 Slide 1

## Aim of the session

This session is called **Crossing Divides**.

### In this session we are going to:


- Discover the assumptions or prejudices we have about others.
- Explore how we can engage better with people who are different from us.
- Practise being curious by asking questions and taking an interest in others.



## Recap

Recap the previous session and remind the group of the three habits of being curious, being present, and reimagining.

Ask your group what they remember from the previous session and if they have any examples of actions or stories from the past week related to the theme.

 Slide 2

# Story

 00:00

 20 mins




## Film

### Discuss:

**What do we learn about crossing divides in this film?**

Draw out examples of where the students see the habit of being curious - asking questions; taking an interest in others; overcoming assumptions; choosing not to judge another person.

 Slide 3

 Slide 4

## Option 1






### Bible story

#### The woman at the well

**Read the retelling of the passage to your group.** You can find this in Appendix 2 on p80, at the end of this guide. You may like to invite young people to take on the roles of Jesus and the Samaritan woman.

#### Questions for discussion:

-  What was the first thing Jesus did when he met the woman in the story?
-  Why was it unusual for Jesus and the woman to have a conversation?
-  What questions did Jesus and the Samaritan woman ask each other? Could they have had such a long conversation without asking questions?



### Key learning

#### Please highlight the points below:

- Jesus and the Samaritan woman were able to cross the religious, cultural and gender divides that separated them. They did this by being curious – asking each other questions during their conversation.
- Jesus and the Samaritan woman were present – they took time to listen to each other.
- Also draw on the **Key learning** from the Bible verse on p29.

## Option 2



### Bible verse Genesis 1:26a

**Share the verse:**

“So God created human beings, making them to be like himself.” *(Good News translation)*

**Question for discussion:**



Why is this important in our relationships with people who are different from us?



Where do you see similar principles and values in other faiths, worldviews or cultures and community traditions?

Slide 7

Slide 8



### Key learning

**Please highlight the points below:**

- This verse tells us that every person is of deep value – their story is worth listening to.
- When we are curious – wondering what life is like for the other person, asking respectful questions in order to understand them better – we show them that they matter.



## Activity part 1

 10 mins

# Discovering our walls

Discover the ways prejudices divide us from others.

Start here



**i Important:** Remind students that this activity is about the people we avoid for the wrong reasons, because our own assumptions and opinions mean we hold them at arm's length, sometimes without us even realising it. It is **not** about removing boundaries protecting us from harmful, abusive or bullying situations.

**Give every participant a sticky note and use the following instructions to guide your group:**

**1**

Think of a person or group of people you keep your distance from – people you don't engage with or feel uncomfortable with because they're different. For example, people with different dress style, age, music taste, beliefs, backgrounds, political views, friendship groups. (You won't have to name them aloud.)



**Note to facilitator:** This is about people we keep at arm's length for the wrong reasons. Give your own example – this will model the boundaries of this activity for the students. It may be helpful to name cliques or groups which exist in your school or context.

**2**

Reflect:

- Why do you find it hard to engage with them?
- How do you feel when you think about them?  
(e.g. "I feel nervous", "I feel excluded", "I feel disrespected")

**3** Call out words to describe how you feel when you think of these people.

**4** On your sticky note, write how you might respond negatively to the people you have in mind. *E.g. "I walk away", "I ignore/block them", "I make jokes at them" "I keep the conversation short", "I don't follow them".*

**5** Come up and stick your sticky notes on the wall or divider. These negative actions and behaviours are like bricks that build a wall and create divides between us and other people.  
(When everyone has finished, invite the group to gather around the wall of sticky notes. Ask someone to read the words aloud.) What do you notice?



## Key learning

**Whilst standing around the wall of sticky notes please highlight the points below:**

- It's normal for human beings to stick with people like ourselves. We often find ourselves in echo chambers – but this can lead to presumptions and prejudices about those who are not like us.
- Our reactions can build a wall between us and others (sometimes these may not be fair or justified).
- This wall can become so high we stop seeing the person on the other side – we only see the image we've created of them.
- In this activity, we have been curious – asking questions to discover more about ourselves and others.

## → Optional extra activity ⌚ +10 mins

Find 'Thoughts, feelings, responses' in Appendix 3 on p82.



## Activity part 2

# Dismantling our walls

🕒 10 mins

Find the steps we can take to overcome our prejudice.

Start here



**Standing around the wall of sticky notes, guide your group as follows:**

1

Now imagine that you are that person or group of people that you were thinking of. Try to step into their shoes.

- How do you think that other person/group of people might feel this week?
- What might make it hard for them to engage with people who are different from them?

2

**Reflect:** What one step could you take this week to encounter someone on the other side of your wall?

**Invite:** Call out your ideas. [As people share these steps aloud, take down the sticky notes one by one, thus removing some of the 'bricks' in the 'wall'.]



## Key learning

**Please highlight the points below:**

- It can be difficult to shake off our own opinions about someone and instead wonder what it is like for them.
- Simple actions can help us overcome the assumptions we make about others and help us recognise everyone's high value and worth.
- In this activity, we have been curious – wondering what another person's experience is like.



## Vision board

**Guide your group through this activity using the instructions below:**

- 1.** Draw or stick a brick on the vision board.
- 2.** Inside the brick, write the action you thought of to encounter the person on the other side of your 'wall'.



## Top takeaway

**Ask your group (to write down or say aloud):**

What is something you want to remember from this session? Give them a minute to reflect before answering.



## Prayer and reflection

**Please use this as a prayer or guide for reflection:**

Loving God, fill us with your Spirit now.

**We think about what we have learnt about asking questions and wondering about another person's experiences.**

Help us to **be curious** about others' stories – listening as often as we speak.

**We think about the stories we have heard about encountering others different from ourselves.**

Give us the courage to **be present** – showing up and sticking around.

**We think about the things we have learned about crossing divides in this session.**

Inspire us to **reimagine** what's possible – finding hope, knowing that you can transform all things.

In Jesus' name. Amen

## End of session 2