

## Concentric Circles

*Time for this module is approximately 60 minutes, depending on how the session is facilitated.*

### ✓ PREPARATION

- ▶ Write in your discussion questions into the stock PowerPoint slides provided on the [BRIDGE website](#). If you don't want to use PowerPoint in the room, write these questions on large sheets of paper in advance to use in the session.
- ▶ Cue video 4.4 [The Interfaith Triangle](#).

### LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- ▶ Deepen understanding of interfaith cooperation and ways to pursue civic pluralism Increase ability to articulate one's values and beliefs and how they influence one's life
- ▶ Perform thoughtful and empathetic listening

### ➔ INTRODUCTION AND INTERFAITH TRIANGLE (10 minutes)

**Tell participants:** We know that interfaith cooperation builds relationships between people with differing worldviews. But in order to get to know another's beliefs, we have to talk about them! Today we're going to practice interfaith engagement with the goal of building relationships. I will be asking you to talk directly about your worldview during this activity I want to acknowledge that this could be awkward or difficult for some of you. I encourage you to be brave and to support one another as we explore worldview engagement.

The ultimate goal of worldview engagement is to foster religious pluralism, which is defined (in short) as the positive engagement of diversity to a proactive end. Diversity is a fact; pluralism is an achievement.<sup>1</sup> A way to build pluralism is through the building of appreciative knowledge, healthy relationships, and positive attitudes toward people of other worldviews. Let's take a minute to explore why relationships are so essential.

*[Play video, Lesson 4. Module 4.4: The Interfaith Triangle]*

**Ask participants and pause for discussion between questions:** What did you take away from watching this video? What does this video tell you about impactful ways to build interfaith cooperation?

<sup>1</sup> Eck, Diana. *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2001.

## CONCENTRIC CIRCLES ACTIVITY (30 minutes)

**Tell participants:** A big takeaway is that we don't try to get to know one another just for personal enrichment—it's also because relationships help us build stronger communities. When divisive rhetoric comes along, we know each other well enough not to revert to stereotypes or to resort to discrimination or violence toward those who are different from us.

There are ways that we can build relationships across worldview, mainly through structured discussions, which we are going to practice with one another for the remainder of the workshop.

### *[Optional Slide: CONCENTRIC CIRCLES DIALOGUE]*

**Remind participants of the community agreements and that these agreements are essential for everyone to feel safe and comfortable participating in this activity.**

- ▶ Use of "I" statements (speak from your own experience, not on behalf of your entire tradition)
- ▶ You're here for dialogue not debate
- ▶ Show respect for your fellow participants

**Tell participants:** I will ask everyone to partner up with someone they don't know. Once everyone has a partner, decide who will be a "1" and who will be a "2." Then form two concentric circles—1s in the inner circle and 2s in the outer circle. The 1s and 2s should face one another for conversation.

I'm going to ask you a series of questions and you will have four minutes to discuss them (2 minutes for each partner).

We will change partners after each question, and I will instruct you when to move. Be aware that things will get a bit loud with so many people talking at once, so do your best to focus on your partner!

***The questions will start simply. As the questions progress, they should become more focused on the personal background and beliefs participants hold and how those personal experiences motivate them to build healthy relationships with others.***

***\*Note: If this is a more challenging idea for your audience—talking with a stranger about worldview—you can do one run-through with only the fun and personal questions, take a break, and do the exercise a second time to get into worldview. It's up to you and the time you have available.***

### **How to facilitate:**

1. Ask the question. Instruct the 1's to answer first.
2. After two minutes call out for people to switch, and give the 2's two minutes to answer the same question.
3. After each question, instruct the 2's to move two people to their right. 1's stay in place.
4. Repeat 3-4 times.

### **Example question series (outside circle rotates between each question):**

*Note: Depending on the room and audience size, you may want to have a digital timer on the monitor.*

1. What's your favorite movie and why?
  2. Talk about a person you know (or know of) who inspires you
  3. How does your worldview influence your life?
- 
1. If your life was a line of lyrics from a song, what would it be and why?
  2. What made you want to join the staff at (your institution)?
  3. When have you felt particularly inspired by or challenged by discussions around worldview?

1. What qualities do you admire in the students you work with?
2. When do you feel most a part of a community?
3. How does your worldview influence your interactions with others?

## **DEBRIEF (10 minutes)**

*[Optional slide: CONCENTRIC CIRCLES DIALOGUE]*

**Now break up the circles and ask the participants to return to their seats.**

**Ask participants:**

- ▶ Tell me about something you learned, something you found inspiring, surprising or challenging.
- ▶ How deep were you willing or able to go in your responses about your worldview?
- ▶ What are some of the factors that influenced your ability to do so?
- ▶ Is this something you've done before?

## **FINAL DISCUSSION AND TAKEAWAYS (10 minutes)**

**Ask participants:** Now that we've established the importance of relationship building in the interfaith triangle, let's think more about how we take this experience beyond this room.

- ▶ What is our charge in working with students?
- ▶ What is one specific action you can take to continue to grow your ability to engage worldview difference in a healthy way?

***If you are ending the entire session here...***

**Tell participants:** Thank you so much for your participation today! I will be sending a follow-up email that includes a link to a survey so you can provide feedback about your experience and how this workshop could be strengthened in the future. We really appreciate your input, so thank you for your time in advance. I'll also include some follow-up resources. Lastly, please don't hesitate to be in touch and consider me a thought partner for incorporating worldview into your daily work. Thanks again!

## Shared Values Dialogue

*Time for this module is approximately 60 minutes, depending on how the session is facilitated.*

### ✓ PREPARATION

- ▶ Select the Shared Values texts you would like to use for this activity: [Service](#) or [Hospitality](#).
- ▶ Print a copy for each participant.
- ▶ Cue video 4.4 [The Interfaith Triangle](#).

### LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- ▶ Increase awareness around the converging and diverging worldview perspectives in the group
- ▶ Diversify understanding of the various religious/worldview identities that exist and how they can be expressed
- ▶ Explain shared values that exist across worldview identities

### ➔ INTRODUCTION AND INTERFAITH TRIANGLE (10 minutes)

**Tell participants:** Now that we've done some personal reflection and explored the challenges of religious diversity, we're going to practice interfaith engagement with the purpose of building relationships. I will be asking you to speak about your worldview during this activity so I want to acknowledge that this could be awkward or difficult for some of you. I encourage you to be brave and to support one another as we explore worldview engagement.

One of the things that is essential in opening the space for students to develop healthy ways of conversing about worldview difference is to model it for them. This exercise is a way to get comfortable doing that ourselves.

The ultimate goal of worldview engagement is to foster religious pluralism, which is defined (in short) as the proactive engagement of diversity to a positive end. Diversity is a fact; pluralism is an achievement.<sup>1</sup> A way to build pluralism is through the building of appreciative knowledge, healthy relationships, and positive attitudes toward people of other worldviews. Let's take a minute to explore why relationships are so essential.

**[Play video, Lesson 4. Module 4.4: The Interfaith Triangle]**

**Ask participants, pausing for conversation between questions:** What insights did you gain from this video? What does it tell you about "what works" when it comes to interfaith engagement?

<sup>1</sup> Eck, Diana. *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2001.

## SHARED VALUES DIALOGUE (30 minutes)

### *Frame the Conversation*

*Invite participants to gather in a circle or, depending on the size of your group, in small circles for conversation.*

**Tell participants:** This activity provides us an opportunity to both build our knowledge of different traditions while engaging in relationship-building conversation with one another. It's a great example of a simple way to start interfaith conversations. We'll be reflecting both on texts from a variety of worldviews as well as your own understanding and synthesis of those texts. While every tradition and worldview is unique, we can nevertheless find shared values between them.

*This workshop offers texts on the Shared Values of Service and Hospitality and you should select one set prior to the workshop.<sup>2</sup> Before distributing the worksheets, ask participants to reflect together on the selected topic. Here are some questions to guide your conversation (we'll use Hospitality as an example; you'll need to adjust these questions if you choose a different set of texts):*

- ▶ How do you personally define/understand hospitality?
- ▶ What does it mean to be hospitable to others, especially those who are different from us?
- ▶ Is there a story you can share from your life that illustrates the power of hospitality?

### *Texts on Shared Values*

*Distribute the Shared Values worksheet to each participant. Ask your group to go around the circle and read the texts aloud. Make it clear that no one has to read if they feel uncomfortable doing so. This is a textual exploration so you will probably encounter terms or words you're unfamiliar with, own that and do the best you can!*

**Ask the group to reflect on what they've read:**

- ▶ Did any of these – either from your own tradition or not – particularly resonate with you?
- ▶ Did you hear anything that you found challenging?
- ▶ Did you hear anything that helped you to think about this particular value in a new way?
- ▶ What are some of the distinctions and differences you noticed between the texts?
- ▶ How did listening to these texts help you learn something new about the worldviews represented?
- ▶ Are there traditions you don't see included on the worksheet? If so what writing around this value would you recommend to the group?

*Explain that these words offer us a chance to think about how we interact with people who are different from us in light of our shared values, and provides points of commonality to return to in time of disagreement.*

## SHARED VALUES DIALOGUE DEBRIEF (15 minutes)

**Tell participants:** Thanks for your active participation in that activity. Let's step out of the conversation now and reflect on what we just did together.

**Walk through the reflection questions below one by one, pausing between each for conversation and synthesis:**

- ▶ How did you personally experience that conversation? What were your thoughts and feelings throughout?
- ▶ What surprised you about that experience? Did anything feel uncomfortable or enjoyable?
- ▶ What did you think was effective about that conversation in terms of your learning? Was anything ineffective?

<sup>2</sup> IFYC's library of online resources has a longer version of this activity with difference foci available at [www.ifyc.org/resources](http://www.ifyc.org/resources).

- ▶ How did your experience in that conversation connect to what we learned about the interfaith triangle?
- ▶ What do those connections tell you about how to engage in effective interfaith work?
- ▶ How does this experience make you think about bringing this kind of experience to the students and professionals you work with?

***If you are ending the entire session here...***

**Tell participants:** Thank you so much for your participation today! I will be sending a follow-up email that includes a link to a survey so you can provide feedback about your experience and how this workshop could be strengthened in the future. We really appreciate your input, so thank you for your time in advance. I'll also include some follow-up resources. Lastly, please don't hesitate to be in touch and consider me a thought partner for incorporating worldview into your daily work. Thanks again!

## Shared Value of Service

### **Baha'i Tradition on Service (from Abdu'l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha)**

One amongst His Teachings is this, that love and good faith must so dominate the human heart that men will regard the stranger as a familiar friend, the malefactor as one of their own, the alien even as a loved one, the enemy as a companion dear and close.

### **Buddhist Tradition of Service (from Itivuttaka 18)**

If beings knew, as I know, the fruit of sharing gifts, they would not enjoy their use without sharing them, nor would the taint of stinginess obsess the heart and stay there. Even if it were their last bit, their last morsel of food, they would not enjoy its use without sharing it, if there were anyone to receive it.

### **Christian Tradition of Service (Matthew 25:35)**

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

### **Hindu Tradition of Service (from Bhagavad Gita 3.10)**

At the beginning, mankind and the obligation of selfless service were created together. "Through selfless service, you will always be fruitful and find the fulfillment of your desires": this is the promise of the Creator....

### **Jain Tradition of Service (from Tattvarthasutra 5.21)**

Rendering help to another is the function of all human beings.

### **Jewish Tradition of Service (Deuteronomy 10:17)**

For the LORD your G-d is G-d supreme and Lord supreme, the great, the mighty, and the awesome G-d, who shows no favor and takes no bribe, but upholds the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and befriends the stranger, providing him with food and clothing. You too must befriend the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

### **Muslim Tradition of Service (from the Holy Quran, verse 93:1-11)**

I call to witness the early hours of morning, and the night when dark and still, your Lord has neither left you, nor despises you. What is to come is better for you than what has gone before; for your Lord will certainly give you, and you will be content. Did He not find you an orphan and take care of you? Did He not find you perplexed, and show you the way? Did He not find you poor and enrich you? So do not oppress the orphan, and do not drive the beggar away, and keep recounting the favors of your Lord.

### **Secular Humanism Tradition of Service (from the writings of Pablo Neruda)**

To feel the intimacy of brothers is a marvelous thing in life. To feel the love of people whom we love is a fire that feeds our life. But to feel the affection that comes from those whom we do not know, from those unknown to us, who are watching over our sleep and solitude, over our dangers and our weaknesses– that is something still greater and more beautiful because it widens out the boundaries of our being and unites all living things.

### **Sikh Tradition of Service (from Guru Granth Sahib)**

The individual who performs selfless service without thought of reward shall attain God's salvation.

## Shared Value of Hospitality

### **Baha'i Tradition (from Abdu'l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha)**

One amongst His Teachings is this, that love and good faith must so dominate the human heart that men will regard the stranger as a familiar friend, the malefactor as one of their own, the alien even as a loved one, the enemy as a companion dear and close.

### **Buddhist Tradition (from Itivuttaka 18)**

If beings knew, as I know, the fruit of sharing gifts, they would not enjoy their use without sharing them, nor would the taint of stinginess obsess the heart and stay there. Even if it were their last bit, their last morsel of food, they would not enjoy its use without sharing it, if there were anyone to receive it.

### **Christian Tradition (Matthew 25:35-40)**

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the King will answer them, "Truly, I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

### **Hindu Tradition (from Taitiriya Upanishad 1.11.2)**

Let a person never turn away a stranger from his house, that is the rule. Therefore a man should, by all means, acquire much food, for good people say to the stranger: "There is enough food for you."

### **Jewish Tradition (Deuteronomy 10:17)**

For the Lord your G-d is G-d supreme and Lord supreme, the great, the mighty, and the awesome G-d, who shows no favor and takes no bribe, but upholds the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and befriends the stranger, providing him with food and clothing. You too must befriend the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

### **Muslim Tradition (from the Holy Quran, verse 4:36)**

Do good unto your parents, and near of kin, and unto orphans, and the needy, and the neighbor from among your own people, and the neighbor who is a stranger, and the friend by your side, the wayfarer, and your servants.

### **Secular Humanism Tradition (from the writings of Pablo Neruda)**

To feel the intimacy of brothers is a marvelous thing in life. To feel the love of people whom we love is a fire that feeds our life. But to feel the affection that comes from those whom we do not know, from those unknown to us, who are watching over our sleep and solitude, over our dangers and our weaknesses—that is something still greater and more beautiful because it widens out the boundaries of our being, and unites all living things.

### **Sikh Tradition (from Guru Granth Sahib)**

None is our enemy, none is stranger to us, we are in accord with one and all.

### **Native American Tradition (from Chief Tecumseh, Shawnee Nation)**

Always give a word or a sign of salute when meeting a passing friend, even a stranger, when in a lonely place. Show respect to all people and grovel to none.

## Shared Values Exploration

*Time for this module is approximately 40 minutes, depending on how the session is facilitated.*

### ✓ PREPARATION

- ▶ Complete Module 1, [Introduction/Space Setting](#) which is approximately 20 minutes, depending on how the session is facilitated
- ▶ Print one copy of the Shared Values BINGO worksheet for each participant
- ▶ Provide a writing utensil for each participant

### LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- ▶ Articulate one's worldview and find shared values with others in the session
- ▶ Connect and build relationships across lines of religious difference

### ➔ WELCOME AND OVERVIEW

**Tell participants:** Interfaith cooperation begins with an important step — relationship building. For us to be able to lead conversations about worldview, we must first explore our own worldviews and seek to understand others.

Research tell us that building relationships across religious difference is transformative in opening up appreciative attitudes towards others. Robert Putnam and David Campbell's research in American Grace tells us that when you build a relationship with someone of a different worldview identity, you develop greater appreciation towards that particular identity as well as for other diverse worldview identities. Our goal in this activity is to lean into the possible discomfort of discussing worldview and interfaith cooperation, actively engage in conversation, remain curious about your own and others' worldviews and find shared values between each other. This is a great relationship development activity, which also provides an opportunity to learn more about each other.

### 📖 BRIEF DEFINITIONS

- ▶ [Module 2](#) (This is session is approximately 10 minutes, depending on how it is facilitated)
- ▶ Distribute the [Glossary of Terms](#) handout

**Tell participants:** A clear understanding of terms is essential when discussing identity and worldview. The activity we are going to partake in today has one term I would like to define before we get started. Although there are many terms on the handout I am passing out, for today's activity we will focus in on the term, interfaith.

- ▶ **Interfaith:** This term is best understood by separating it into two parts, "inter" and "faith... Put together, "interfaith" is about how our interactions with those who are religiously, spiritually, and secularly different from us impacts the way we relate to our religious and ethical traditions, and how our relationships with our own traditions impact our interactions with those who hold various worldviews.<sup>2</sup>

Please let me know if you have any questions.

## **SHARED VALUES BINGO (20 minutes)**

**Tell participants:** Each of you has a handout mirroring the game BINGO. You will notice there are 5 rows and 5 columns forming 20 boxes. Although the worksheet mirrors the game BINGO, the goals here are different.

Each box has a unique question for you to explore- you can begin anywhere. As a reminder, the goal is not to fill-in or complete the worksheet, but to participate in the activity, learn from one another, and find commonalities and differences.

Remind participants of the [community agreements](#). These agreements are essential for everyone to feel safe and comfortable participating in this activity.

- ▶ Use "I" statements (speak from your own experience, not on behalf of your entire tradition)
- ▶ You're here for dialogue not debate
- ▶ Show respect for your fellow participants

## **DEBRIEF (10 minutes)**

**Ask participants:**

- ▶ How did participating in this activity feel for you? Were you uncomfortable? Was it easy to share? Why?
- ▶ What did you learn about yourself?
- ▶ What surprised you?
- ▶ Was it easy to identify shared values with your conversation partners? Why or why not?
- ▶ What was your biggest take-away from this activity?

**Tell participants:** Thank you so much for your participation today! I will be sending a follow-up email that includes a link to a survey so you can provide feedback about your experience and how this workshop could be strengthened in the future. We really appreciate your input, so thank you for your time in advance. I'll also include some follow-up resources to support your continued engagement with worldview identity. Lastly, please don't hesitate to be in touch and consider me a thought partner for incorporating worldview into your daily work. Thanks again!

---

<sup>1</sup> Patel, E. (2017). *Interfaith leadership: A Primer*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press).

# SHARED VALUES BINGO



Please take a few minutes to read through the boxes. Although this handout mirrors a BINGO worksheet, the rules and goals are different from BINGO.

Each box has a unique question for you to explore. Please walk around the room, if you are able, and choose a question to discuss with a partner. The goal is not to fill in the boxes and win, but to have a conversation, learn from each other, and find a shared value — you can begin anywhere. After you have found a shared value, sign each other's box, move to a new person and question, and continue exploring. Please continue doing this until time is called.

B	I	N	G	O
Do you believe in a higher power? More than one? None?	Have you made a pilgrimage to a place of religious/spiritual or personal significance?	When did you start engaging in interfaith work? What did that work look like?	Is there a moment where you felt humbled? Do you consider humility a religious, spiritual, or personal value?	Do you observe a regular religious, spiritual, or values-based practice (like weekly services)?
How would you describe your leadership style?	Do you engage in a meditation practice?	How do you center yourself during challenging times?	Does nature have a specific meaning to you?	In your opinion, what is the most urgent issue of our time?
To whom do you feel ultimately responsible?	How do you create community with people who believe differently than you?		What role does interfaith work play in your personal and professional life?	From where do you draw inspiration to do interfaith work?
Do you pray? What does that practice look like for you?	What unique perspective do you bring to interfaith work?	Is there a personal experience that motivates your interfaith work?	How do you engage with someone who is drastically different from you?	How does your religious or ethical identity inform your work on social issues?
Is there a concrete skill you have developed doing interfaith work?	Who is one interfaith leader who inspires you?	What is a challenge of engaging interfaith work that you are currently sitting with?	What other causes/movements do you feel compelled to work on?	Is there a verse, text, or poem you draw inspiration or strength from?