

BRIDGE Interfaith Literacy Ethics and Theologies of Interfaith Cooperation

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

Preparation

- To help participants prepare for the session send an introductory email (sample text available online) at least one week prior to your scheduled time together
- Provide one blank sheet of paper for each participant
- Complete [Module 1, Introduction/Space Setting](#) (approximately 20 minutes, depending on how the session is facilitated)
- If this the first BRIDGE module you are facilitating for this group, please take time to review the [Glossary of Terms](#) specifically highlighting and discussing interfaith cooperation and worldview after the Space Setting activity (approximately 10 minutes, depending on how the session is facilitated)
- Cue video, Introduction to Interfaith Leadership, [Module 6. 2 Ethics and Theologies of Interfaith Cooperation From the Field](#) (approximately 13 minutes)

Learning Outcomes

- Define and understand the concept of ethics and theologies of interfaith cooperation
- Identify and articulate one's ethic or theology of interfaith cooperation
- Identify ways to further develop one's interfaith literacy

Introduction (3-5 minutes)

Tell participants: Today we will be discussing interfaith literacy. Interfaith literacy is the type of knowledge that contributes to building positive attitudes and relationships across difference, both of which ultimately contribute to a civic social good.

Within this idea, there are four main categories for exploration:

1. Theologies or ethics of interfaith cooperation
2. Appreciative knowledge of diverse religious traditions
3. Shared values between diverse religious traditions
4. The history of interfaith cooperation

Today we will be discussing the first area, theologies and/or ethics of interfaith cooperation. Our time together will not be a crash course of the major world religions, but rather a time where we will reflect and begin crafting our own theology or ethic of interfaith cooperation to share with the group as well as a time to learn about the ethics and theologies of interfaith cooperation from the traditions present in this group.

Theology is the study of the nature of God or religious belief and many religious traditions over centuries have expounded upon that question—what is the nature of God and belief—again and again. We talk about a theology or ethic because this exercise is important for people of all worldviews. We do not engage diversity despite our religious, spiritual or secular identities but often because of them. This exercise anchors our commitment to respecting religious and non-religious identity, building relationships and working for the common good in our core values. What from your worldview inspires you to build relationships across difference? This question is both deeply personal and strategic—connecting to the heart of why people do what they do is important in building respect, relationships and partnerships.

Activity: Individual Work (10 minutes)

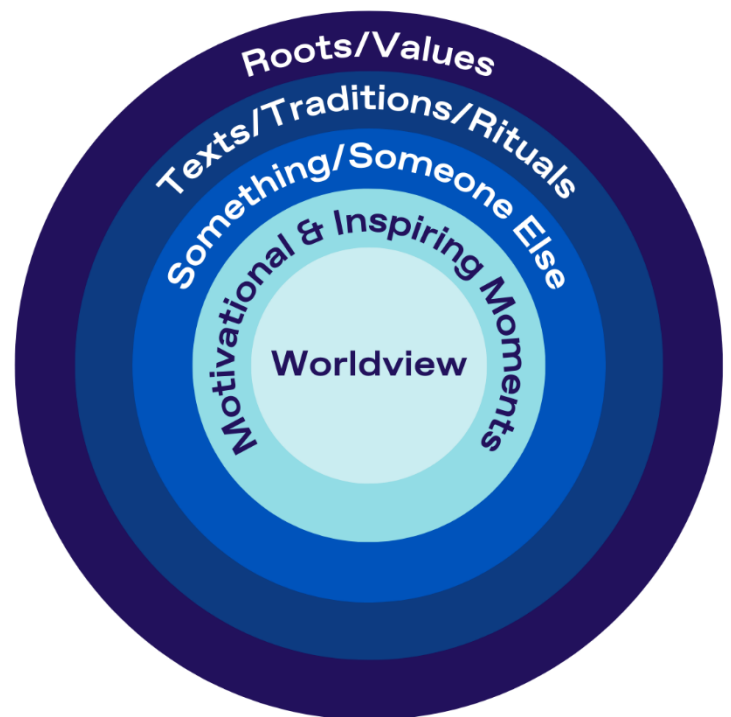
Pass out one blank sheet of paper to each participant, and display the diagram below in the training room.

Tell participants: To help us begin thinking about our own theology and/or ethic of interfaith cooperation, I'm going to ask you a few questions. Depending on how you learn best feel free to write out your responses or fill in the circle as seen on the handout. Either way this is a silent activity. Please give each other the necessary time and

space to answer these questions individually. As you hear these questions, rest assured that they are not intended to define or limit you. What you develop today will be different than the way your theology or ethic of interfaith cooperation will come together next week, and next year, and a decade from now. The value of a theology or ethic of interfaith cooperation is both to enhance your own learning and to connect with and educate others. The story you weave articulates what in your worldview drives you to be in relationships with people who are different from you; that story becomes an invitation for others to share, learn, and connect.

As the facilitator this will be the ideal time to share your own theology or ethic of interfaith cooperation. Role modeling and sharing your own theology or ethic of interfaith cooperation will encourage participants to do the same and help them think through the following questions. This is something you must be prepared to do, and not something you can simply craft together on the day of the workshop. Please take the time to reflect on your own theology or ethic of interfaith cooperation and share it with the group. Thank you in advance for being vulnerable and for sharing your story with participants.

- What are the central texts/experiences from my tradition that highlight this philosophy? [Worldview & Texts/Traditions/Rituals & Roots/Values]
- Who are the historical or present figure(s) from my tradition that espouse this philosophy? [Motivational & Inspiring Moments & Something/Someone Else & Roots/Values]
- Are there current or historical moments where your tradition prioritized interfaith cooperation? [Motivational & Inspiring Moments & Texts/Traditions/Rituals & Roots/Values]
- Is there art (i.e. paintings, sculptures, or poems) that inspires you to pursue interfaith cooperation? [Motivational & Inspiring Moments, Something/Someone Else & Texts/Traditions/Rituals]



This reflection time is the perfect opportunity to play some light music and allow participants to be introspective.

Tell participants: Thank you for taking the time to reflect upon and work through some questions that might not be commonly raised in this setting. I hope you've enjoyed the time to mull over these questions and dive deeper into your own theology or ethic of interfaith cooperation. Please begin wrapping up your responses and let's move back into the larger group.

[Cue video: Introduction to Interfaith Leadership, Module 6. 2 Ethics and Theologies of Interfaith Cooperation From the Field \(approximately 13 minutes\).](#)

Tell participants: Sometimes beginning to craft our ethic or theology for interfaith cooperation can be difficult as it is the first time that many of us are embarking on this work. For this reason, I hope you have enjoyed the opportunity to reflect on your own theology or ethic of interfaith cooperation. As we work on articulating our own ethic or theology, it would be beneficial to hear from others who have already written and shared their ethic or theology of interfaith cooperation with the world. I'd like to share a video from Interfaith Youth Core's blended learning curriculum which highlights a few individuals sharing their own personal ethic and/or theology of interfaith cooperation.

Introduction to Interfaith Leadership (15 Minutes)

Tell participants: Now that we had an opportunity to reflect, write, and listen to various theologies and ethics of interfaith cooperation, it's time to articulate our own out loud and for one another. Let's form groups (3 to 5 people) and discuss our own worldview, motivational and inspiring moments, individuals and figures, texts, traditions, rituals as well as roots and values that make up our ethic/theology of interfaith cooperation. Remember, these are individuals' stories. These are not theologies or ethics as you would hear them in the classroom or in religious education. These are individuals' stories told for the sake of coming to know one another and, in the midst of that, learning about the varied expressions of religious, spiritual, and secular identities in the world.

Small group conversations (Groups of 3 to 5)

Tell participants: Each person will have 3-5 minutes to share about their ethic or theology of interfaith cooperation. During your time please make sure to share and lift up examples up about your own worldview, motivational and inspiring moments, individuals and figures, texts, traditions, rituals as well as roots and values that make up your ethic/theology of interfaith cooperation.

When you are sharing, you will be increasing the interfaith literacy of the other group members; when others are sharing, you are actively increasing your own. While one person is sharing, please listen, take notes, and write down questions. Please pay attention to your non-verbal communication and convey to the speaker that you are actively listening and curious about their ethic and theology of interfaith cooperation.

Allow each person to fill the entire 3-5 minutes with their thoughts. After they finish sharing, the next person should begin. Once everyone in the group has shared please feel free to ask clarifying questions of one another until time is called.

Tell participants: Please move into your small groups. I will monitor our time so that everyone gets a turn.

Manage time: Keep an eye on the clock and instruct the group to keep moving through individuals so each person has a chance to speak. When the activity is complete, reconvene the full group.

Large group discussion (3-5 minutes)

Ask participants:

- What is something you learned, something you found inspiring, surprising, or challenging?
- What is something you had in common with another participant's ethic or theology of interfaith cooperation?
- How do you think this kind of knowledge sharing will help you build bridges across lines of religious, spiritual, and secular differences in the future?

Wrapping Up (5 Minutes)

It's important to help participants think about how they can continue to build their interfaith literacy in intentional ways.

Tell Participants: No one is ever fully “interfaith literate,” rather, we must commit to continually expanding our knowledgebase and be aware of the gaps in our understanding. Remember, I mentioned there are multiple components to interfaith literacy—today we addressed the first, developing an ethic or theology of interfaith cooperation. The others are: 2) Learning appreciative knowledge of diverse religious traditions, 3) Understanding the shared values between diverse religious traditions, and 4) Knowing the history of interfaith cooperation.

Through sharing and listening today I hope you learned something appreciative about a worldview other than your own, you found connection between diverse religious

traditions and even learned part of the history how people who orient around religion differently have interacted and partnered in the past. If you are interested in digging into those other components further, you'll find videos and additional references for similar to what we viewed today, linked in the [follow-up e-mail](#).

Ask participants: Building interfaith literacy is a lifelong endeavor. What other ways can you commit to building this important knowledgebase in your life?

Tell participants: Thank you for leaning into today's session and sharing your ethic and theology of interfaith cooperation. My hope is that you continue to do so in the various spaces you inhabit. This practice will help you increase your level of comfort in sharing your ethic or theology of interfaith cooperation as well as your colleagues' and students'.

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 and thank you for your time in advance. I'll also include some follow-up resources that will help support your continued engagement with worldview. Please don't hesitate to be in touch to continue the conversation about how you can incorporate this into your daily work. Thanks again!