

Alexis

THE WORD AND THE ACT

Bibliodrama in intercultural dialogue

Edited by Maria Schejbal

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I

Peta Jones Pellach

Bibliodrama in the Context of Interreligious Dialogue: Refining the art of conversation

When the Holy One, blessed be He, came to create Adam, the ministering angels formed themselves into groups and parties. Some of them said, 'Let him be created,' while others urged, 'Let him not be created.' ... Truth said, 'Let him not be created, because he is full of falsehood.' Justice said, 'Let him be created, because he will perform deeds of justice.' ... What did the Lord do? He took Truth and cast it to the ground. The ministering angels said before the Holy One, blessed be He, 'Sovereign of the Universe! Why do You despise Your seal?' [God replied,] 'Let Truth arise from the earth!' Hence it is written, 'Let truth spring up from the earth.'

Rabbinic literature

'While accepting that Christianity in its various forms has historically been the main religion in most, though not all, European countries we are today living in a multi-faith society. Some countries, such as France are secular states whilst Britain is not. In England, though not in Wales or Scotland, the Church of England is the established church with the monarch as its head. Yet all church leaders throughout our continents also recognise the multi-faith nature of today's Europe and the need to maintain dialogue and mutual respect'. Dr Tara Kumar Mukherjee, Chairman, European Multicultural Foundation, May 2004.

The idea of Europe as 'Christendom' is not only no longer a realistic description, it is not even an aspiration. Europe is acknowledged and acclaimed as a multi-cultural and multi-religious community. However, this reality is not without its difficulties. Religion is still a dominant factor in people's identity and thus religion can be the source of division and mutual suspicion. Beyond convincing people that their neighbours of different faiths are equal citizens of the various nation-states that comprise Europe, proponents of interreligious dialogue aim to convince Europeans that they can all benefit and be enriched by the wisdom that each faith community can bring. Interreligious dialogue goes beyond creating the circumstances in which people of different religions can live together peacefully; it aims to nurture appreciation and respect of the other.

'Interfaith' or 'interreligious' dialogue refers to a range of cooperative and positive interaction between people of different religious traditions and spiritual or humanistic beliefs, at both the individual and institutional level. Many of these initiatives have the aim of establishing what all people of faith have in common, of deriving a common ground in belief through a concentration on similarities between faiths, understanding of shared values, and commitment to the world. Dialogue is finding a balance between that which unites us as human

beings and those things that differentiate between cultures. The philosopher Isaiah Berlin expressed a belief in universal moral values. "There are universal values. This is an empirical fact about mankind . . . The idea of human rights rests on the true belief that there are certain goods – freedom, justice, pursuit of happiness, honesty, love – that are in the interest of all human beings as such, not as members of this or that nationality, religion, professional, character. . . There are certain things which human beings require as such . . . because they lead human lives as men and women." Those universal values can be expressed in countless ways and find various expressions in different cultures and religious traditions.

Dialogue on a deeper level can be achieved only when we go beyond that which we share and develop a positive appreciation of difference and a recognition that we have much to learn from the wisdom of other traditions. The ideal of a European society based on appreciation of the unique contribution of the wisdom of each religious tradition will require a shift in thinking which will only come about through education and activism. It begins with acknowledging that there are multiple valid, 'truthful' belief systems.

In the rabbinic literature, a strange event occurred during the creation of mankind:

When the Holy One, blessed be He, came to create Adam, the ministering angels formed themselves into groups and parties. Some of them said, 'Let him be created,' while others urged, 'Let him not be created.' ... Truth said, 'Let him not be created, because he is full of falsehood.' Justice said, 'Let him be created, because he will perform deeds of justice.' .. What did the Lord do? He took Truth and cast it to the ground. The ministering angels said before the Holy One, blessed be He, 'Sovereign of the Universe! Why do You despise Your seal?' [God replied,] 'Let Truth arise from the earth!' Hence it is written, 'Let truth spring up from the earth.'

The somewhat difficult passage above (which is read as a parable) suggests that 'Truth' with a capital 'T' existed prior to the creation, in the Heavenly sphere, and that it was thrown down and shattered into pieces as part of the creative process. This was a necessary condition for the existence of human beings – for we humans are not capable of apprehending (or comprehending) divine Truth. All our truths are partial. This is so on an individual level and for different religious traditions.

For those who believe that there is one God, Who created all the world and thus created people of different faith traditions, the passage from the Quran in Surat Al-Maaidah (5:48) expresses an important principle: "To each of you We prescribed a law and a method. Had Allah willed, He would have made you one nation [united in religion], but [He intended] to test you in what He has given you; so race to [all that is] good. To Allah is your return all together, and He will [then] inform you concerning that over which you used to differ."

It is this sentiment that leads Rabbi Jack Bemporad to surmise that "To be religious is to be interreligious." It is this recognition that leads contemporary American theologian, Yitz Greenberg, to say, "Pluralism means more than accepting or even affirming the other. It entails recognizing the blessings in the other's existence, because it balances one's own position and brings all of us closer to the ultimate goal. Even when we are right in our own position, the other who contradicts our position may be our corrective or our check against going to excess."

Sadly, this is not universally appreciated. Religion has been, and continues to be, a powerful contributing factor in violent conflict. In 2005, Dr Hans Küng, a Professor of Ecumenical Theology and President of the Foundation for a Global Ethic, made his hallmark proclamation: "There will be no peace among the nations without peace among the religions. There will be no peace among the religions without dialogue among the religions." At its most basic level, interfaith dialogue involves people of different religious faiths coming together to have a conversation. 'Conversation' in this sense is not limited to verbal exchange alone. In his seminal work, *Habits of the Heart*, sociologist Robert Bellah placed conversation at the very heart of civilization, defining cultures as "dramatic conversations about things that matter to their participants."

Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks in his important book, *'The Dignity of Difference'* wrote: "Cultures are like languages. The world they describe is the same but the ways they do so are almost infinitely varied. English is not French. Italian is not German. Urdu is not Ugaritic. Each language is the product of a specific community and its history, its shared experiences and sensibilities. There is no universal language. There is no way we can speak, communicate or even think without placing ourselves within the constraints of a particular language whose contours were shaped by hundreds of generations of speakers, storytellers, artists and visionaries who came before us, whose legacy we inherit and of whose story we become a part. Within any language we can say something new. No language is fixed, unalterable, complete. What we cannot do is place ourselves outside the peculiarities of language to arrive at a truth, a way of understanding and responding to the world that applies to everyone at all times. That is not the essence of humanity but an attempt to escape from humanity. ... 'we must learn the art of conversation... we must make ourselves open to their stories, which may profoundly conflict with ours'.

The notion of interfaith dialogue encompasses many different types of conversations but interfaith dialogue is definitely not intended to be a debate. It is aimed at mutual understanding, not competing; at mutual problem solving, not proselytizing. Martin Buber explained in *'I and Thou'*, "There is genuine dialogue – no matter whether spoken or silent – where each of the participants really has in mind the other or others in their present and particular being and turns to them with the intention of establishing a living mutual relation between himself and them. There is technical dialogue, which is prompted solely by the need of objective understanding. And there is monologue disguised as dialogue, in which two or more men, meeting in space, speak each with himself in strangely tortuous and circuitous ways and yet imagine they have escaped the torment of being thrown back on their own resources." It should not be assumed that genuine dialogue is easy to achieve, even by those coming together with the best motives. Moving from monologue to dialogue is always a process. However, there are different ways of achieving the aim of mutual respect and appreciation of the wisdom of another culture.

It is possible to identify two categories of genuine interreligious dialogue.

- The first is based on building relationships, emphasising the commonalities between 'people of faith', and often involves joint projects or advocating causes together. These dialogues are premised on the belief that through engagement and friendship on a personal level, peace can be achieved on a communal level. It can be argued that demonstrable deeds of reconciliation are often much more effective than engaging in conversation. These deeds may also be classified under the rubric of interfaith dialogue because they share a devotion to high ideals. Participants from different faith traditions jointly affirm transcendent ideals such as honour, justice, compassion, forgiveness, and freedom. Sharing of wisdom may eventuate as an outcome of the close relationships so acquired.

- The second type is more intellectually based. It begins with the sharing of wisdom between people firmly rooted in different faiths/ religious affiliations, based on the belief that wisdom does not reside in one belief–system alone and that we benefit and become wiser from a close engagement with each other's sources. Personal relationships will develop as a result of the respect that is inevitable as we appreciate the wisdom of the other.

The process of dialogue works in two directions. Working together, we open ourselves to learning about and from each other; through sharing wisdom we can learn to appreciate each other and to work more effectively together. Devoted practitioners of interreligious dialogue not only believe that adherents of other religious cultures have access to wisdom that complements their own; they also see practical benefits in the conversation for individuals and their communities. One of the challenges for proponents of dialogue is to identify the projects which can bring communities together and those which will assist in moving communities from joint activities to the sharing of wisdom. Even when people show willingness to move to this level, making the wisdom of one tradition accessible to adherents of another, is fraught with difficulties. Continuing the analogy of languages, there is a need for translation.

Bibliodrama has the potential to be the 'translator'. It is a way of making the culture of one religious tradition accessible to another. It is a way to present the sacred texts of different religious cultures in an interreligious context authentically. In doing so, we are able to discover the common human values, the universal moral values identified by Berlin, while at the same time we recognise that they can be expressed multiple ways. More than that, we will discover in each tradition elements of Truth unique to it, wisdom from which we all can be enriched. A bibliodrama experience can be a conversation using words but it has the advantage that it can also be one that goes beyond words. Through using movement and silence, as well as verbal exchanges, bibliodrama transcends the barriers of language and allows participants to communicate with each other authentically. Each participant is enriched through the encounter with the other; each grows in understanding and wisdom.

Leonard Swidler of Temple University describes the benefits of dialogue in three stages:

- To know oneself ever more profoundly and enrich and round out one's appreciation of one's own faith tradition
- To know the other ever more authentically and gain a friendly understanding of others as they are and not in caricature
- To live ever more fully accordingly and to establish a more solid foundation for community of life and action among persons of various traditions

Bibliodrama, done right, a medium for genuine dialogue, could provide one platform for that better personal and communal life.



II

Maria Schejbal

WHY BIBLIODRAMA AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE?

I've never done interfaith before, but just by imagining a more dialogue-based meeting, I think bibliodrama is in fact a faster way for people to break down their barriers. We spoke from our 'human' side and not just from our theological side, and that allowed us to cling to our common beliefs and values. For example, when we had the theological debate between the one G-d versus the many gods, it suddenly hit me that practically everyone in the room believed in one god and that monotheism was binding us all together. That was interesting for me. Instead of thinking how different we are, I saw a tremendous shared belief we had. We spent so much time talking about human feelings that by the end of the evening I saw people, whereas earlier, when I was walking towards the institute I was thinking 'I'm going to be in a room full of Christians'. I think bibliodrama "turned them into people", so to speak, faster than a dialogue would. In addition, they were able to see that Jews can be funny, creative and human much more easily than a theological debate would allow. And vice versa, we were able to see that they can be funny, creative and human.

*Participant of pilot workshops
Jerusalem, Israel, 2012*

THE PROJECT

The idea of using bibliodrama in intercultural education was an attempt to answer to social antipathy toward "the different" and "the unfamiliar", which is often present in our everyday lives as various drastic forms of behaviour, and requires an explicit reaction. Paradoxically, religious beliefs, which should be directed at the realm of values and high ideals, are often the source of hostility towards otherness. The sphere of feelings and emotions which are being addressed are not susceptible to modification, therefore some unorthodox didactic methods had to be found. Bibliodrama, which is based on role-playing religious texts, seems to be the perfect method for achieving the goals of intercultural, and above all interfaith, dialogue. Our conviction that this is an appealing and efficient method of tackling the problem resulted in creating the project called: "Bibliodrama as a Way of Intercultural Learning for Adults", which in 2011 received financial support from the European Commission within the Grundtvig "Lifelong Learning Programme".

The project is being carried out by six partner organisations from Poland, Hungary, Iceland, Turkey, and Israel from October 2011 until October 2013. Its main goal is to use bibliodrama in upgrading intercultural skills and promoting the dialogue between the cultures and traditions which coexist in Europe. The quest to find a model of educational methods which would help in pursuing the goal was carried out simultaneously in all the countries

taking part in the project in its first, experimental phase (January – September 2012). The bibliodramatic–intercultural workshops for people who work in broadly defined education of adults (thematic training, self–development coaching, therapy) allowed us to collect materials documenting almost 500 hours of pilot activities. Out of these rich resources we chose the ideas and methods which proved most useful for encouraging openness towards different cultural and religious traditions. They consist of the 15 scenarios for activities described in this publication as detailed instructions for educators interested in implementing the new method. The full version of the scenarios is available on an e–learning platform created especially for the purposes of the project: www.bibliodramatic.net

THE DIALOGUE

The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue launched in Strasbourg in 2008 by the Council of Europe has been our inspiration for carrying out the goals of the project. The conclusions and recommendations presented in the paper are worth mentioning, because they are the basis for interpreting the content of the didactic material.

The White Paper defines intercultural dialogue as "an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals, groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage on the basis of mutual understanding and respect". It also emphasises that in the contemporary world pluralism and tolerance are more important than ever before. This belief shared by the representatives from 47 member countries of the Council of Europe confirms the validity of focusing in intercultural education on supporting the attitude of openness and respect towards those people who are perceived as "different" or "unfamiliar". For this reason, it is those aspects of bibliodramatic experiences which have been especially emphasised in the programme of workshops and in the content of the scenarios for activities developed as a result of the pilot workshops.

The Council of Europe's document highlights the importance of religion in sustaining intercultural dialogue, and points out that not only should it be held between religions, but also within them (the intrafaith dialogue). Two types of groups were formed as a part of the project; the first one consisted of representatives of different religions, and the second one was homogeneous in terms of faith, but their members differed as far as their approach to their beliefs was concerned. The members from the groups of the first type had direct contact with various traditions – through mutual relations and confrontations on the bibliodramatic stage; the members from the groups of the second type broadened their knowledge of the rich cultural, religious, and traditional heritage to be found in different communities. In both contexts the validity of invoking religious texts and other literary testimonies of faith as a method of looking for a common ground for various worldviews that would support mutual understanding and acceptance was tested.

The recommendations concerning activities related to culture and art in service of intercultural dialogue which have been included in the White Paper were harnessed to the full. "Cultural creativity offers significant potential for enhancing the respect of otherness. The arts are also a playground of contradiction and symbolic confrontation, allowing for individual expression, critical self–reflection and mediation. They thus naturally cross borders and connect and speak directly to people's emotions." The paratheatrical character of bibliodrama, and its spontaneity and creativity, undoubtedly help the participants to gain knowledge about the world and to critique stereotypical thinking about "others", because they are involved at many levels of their personal and group experience. "Only dialogue allows people to live in unity in diversity". However, it "(...) is not a cure for all evils and an answer to all questions, and one has to recognise that its scope can be limited". These statements included

in the paper concerning intercultural dialogue could be used as a motto for this publication. The project testing the fitness of bibliodrama for enhancing intercultural skills confirms the potential of this method for influencing attitudes and beliefs, and at the same time showcases how difficult and complicated is the matter of dialogue and agreement between different traditions.

BIBLIODRAMA

Bibliodrama is, most of all, a unique possibility to encounter biblical texts through teamwork. Participants of bibliodrama classes play roles of characters from the Holy Scripture and stage biblical stories. This gives them a chance to better understand and experience the contents of the Bible. The extent of the project includes constructive analysis of the New and Old Testament, as well as other texts important for understanding different religious traditions such as: The Torah and Talmud, Rumi's Masnavi, the Quran, or various versions of the 'Golden Rule', which is present in the holy scriptures of many religions, and various legends and folk tales.

The programme of pilot workshops followed two bibliodrama schools: "bibliodrama" based on the principles of Jacob Levi Moreno's psychodrama (which allows free interpretation of texts through role playing) and "bibliolog"-type bibliodrama created by Peter Pitzele (also Moreno inspired, but adhering more closely to the text - asking the characters from a chosen text to answer questions that deepen their profile). The essence of both methods is role playing, which makes it possible to identify with the reality presented in the source text. During the workshops, other creative techniques were also used. They were focussed on artistic expression and creative storytelling. In both methods, it was also important to consider the dynamics of the group process – concern for creating a safe and friendly atmosphere during sessions, controlling events taking place in the group, and reacting to needs and difficulties as they arose.

Structure of a Bibliodrama Session

The bibliodrama that refers to Moreno's method uses the structure of a psychodrama session which includes three main phases: warm-up, play, and a summary of the whole process. The first part is usually the so called 'pulse' (integration circle). It is a time for short statements from the participants who speak about their current mood, possibly referring to previous meetings and focusing on their own emotions. The warm-up after the pulse may have various forms and natures, and is often based on physical activity which engages body expression ('physical starter'). The purpose of the warm-up is to prepare the participants to work as a team and to introduce the subject of the sessions. Therefore, the choice of warm-up exercises depends on many factors – the nature of the group, current needs and limitations of its participants, and discussed issues.

The main part of a bibliodrama session is acting out scenes from a collectively chosen and read out text. The Word is a starting point for an improvised action which engages the whole group, is interactive, and allows participants to confront different attitudes and interpretations. Characters, places, feelings, and objects may all come onto the stage in bibliodrama. By identifying with them, participants have a unique chance to experience the described events and states. This experience is drastically different from the traditional analysis of text, or from just discussing it. During play, various objects are used – usually coloured scarves which serve as props, decorations and characters' images. Their shape, texture and colour strengthen the non-verbal expression. An important element of every class is the reflection that ends the activities. It can have a form of a discussion – in a circle or in smaller groups – or be a physical or artistic activity that gives an answer to key questions for the goals established at the beginning of the session.



BIBLIODRAMA – MEETING THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Leaders: Péter Varga and Beata Pozsar (Church Forum Foundation)

Let's look inside the words, beyond the text. Let's try to see a broader context.

PULSE

At the beginning of the workshop all the participants meet while forming a circle. In the middle, there is a lit candle and colourful scarves. In the background, some calm, meditative music is playing. The coaches briefly explain the rules for group work and clarify the essence of the bibliodramatic adventure. "It's important that each of us takes care of themselves in this process, sets themselves free. You can always say that a proposed activity crosses your boundaries. But at the same time, try to take care of the group process – do not give up on your roles, do not leave the room during the play. Bibliodrama is our meeting with the Biblical text and the texts coming from other sacred books." Each participant says a few words about themselves, and about how they are feeling.

WARM–UP

The first suggested exercise is self–presentation through talking about our names – why did we get them, what do they mean, are there any stories related to them? This way the participants learn many things about each other, reveal their sensitivity and individual expression. After this static warm–up, it's time for some movement activities – so called "physical starter". "Now, we're going to wake up our bodies. Rub your hands and touch your faces. Stretch a little and find the type of movement you need right now. Move around the whole room in your own rhythm. Concentrate on your heads – how are they linked to your bodies? Look around – what is this space that you are in? Feel the climate of the place inside which we will be working together. Choose one of the scarves and find a place for yourselves in the room – safe and comfortable. Take a position that expresses your mood. Describe it with one word." The leaders successively come up to each participant and touch their arm giving them a signal to start speaking.

The next stage in getting to know each other and describing our feelings and beliefs is associated with the presence of the sacred books in the shared space. Various translations of the Bible, the Torah, and the Quran lay on the scarves in the central spot. The leaders invite the participants to wander around the room and find a place that expresses their individual attitudes towards the religious texts. "The distance between you and the books, the physical expressions should convey your personal relations with the content of these books. I want everyone of you to say out loud what you're experiencing now. *Let's stay in this situation for a while and look inside ourselves. Maybe we'd like to change something about our attitude? And now, let's say "goodbye" to this scene.*"

READING THE TEXT

The next stage of working with the Biblical text begins with some group reading. The participants wander around the whole room, one person reads out loud the parable of the Good Samaritan in English, and then the same text is read out, line by line, by different people, in a few languages. Before staging the story, the leader explains the choice of this particular text, drawing our attention to its deep intercultural meaning. The issues of otherness and strangeness are presented in this parable in many dimensions: the Jews and the Samaritans are strangers to each other, and both the church dignitaries and the wrongdoers who assaulted the wanderer are distinctly different to the average members of society.

ARRANGING THE SPACE AND CHOOSING ROLES

The leader describes the environments in which the action will take place: the wrongdoers' cave, the temple of Jerusalem, the roadside inn, the place where the victim is lying, and the road which is the centre of the parable. The participants are invited to choose the roles for themselves and to make up their names, age, occupations, and family status. The presence of the main characters is the most important, but the participants are free to choose the roles of feelings, props, plants, and animals. The group is given some time to decide and to get accustomed to the fictional surroundings.

Everybody creates a broader background for their characters, determines the realities of their everyday lives. "Think about how your characters carry on with their lives, what their problems, duties, and jobs are. And now find your place in the play space." When all the participants are in the right places in the imaginary scenery, the leaders start to interview the characters. A conversation with one of the muggers might serve as an example: "How old are you?" "I'm 30." "Have you eaten anything yet?" "No, I'm extremely hungry." "Do you have a family?" "I hate people, because they've been mean to me." "Why do you do what you do?" "I need money to buy clothes and food." Next to the human characters, some other appear in the play: an old tree at the parting of the roads and a ubiquitous pain. The leaders emphasise that everyone must listen carefully to all the interviews, because the information included in them is the material for later improvisation. "You need to know who they are and what they are like, so that you can understand what is going on on the stage. This way the meaningful play space comes into being and mutual relations are shaped."

BIBLIODRAMATIC PLAY

The action of the play begins on the day before the events from the parable. The leader gives a signal and the muggers initiate the play. It's evening, three people are planning to commit a robbery the next day, but they begin to argue. At first the conversation is being carried out in English and then everyone starts to speak in their native languages – Polish, Icelandic, and Turkish. After a while the leader stops the play and the action moves successively to different places, followed by interviews. The inn's owner, the priests in the temple, the tree standing by the road, the Samaritan, the pain waiting for its prey, and a merchant girding up his loins talk about their current situation and feelings. When a bell announcing the beginning of the play rings, all the characters start improvising. The scene is very chaotic and loud; the action develops simultaneously in many places, the characters interact with each other. When the play reaches its culminating point – the assault of the wanderer, the leaders stop the action and ask everyone how they feel. Afterwards the play continues and then the leaders signal that the time is up. "A few hours have passed. The situation has changed. What is going on now?" During the further play the leaders draw the group's attention to a few important events and briefly interview some of the characters.

REFLECTION CIRCLE

At the end of the bibliodramatic experience, the group comes back to the "here and now" reality. The participants help each other to come out of their roles referring to each other by their real names. The summarising conversation in a circle focuses on three issues: "How do I perceive my choice of role? What happened in this story? How do I see the connection between the play and my own life?"

Specificity of Bibliolog

In bibliodrama, the main focus is acquiring a deeper understanding of a text by identifying with chosen characters. While studying the text together in a group, we always concentrate on a specific story, remaining within the situation presented in the text, searching for hidden truths and meanings, knowledge of the world, and knowledge of ourselves. The specifics of the acting, improvisation, or expression are not important here. The primary tool for encounter and communication is verbal expression, naming, interpretation, honing ideas, and getting to the bottom of things. In bibliolog, the leader asks the participants questions, as if they themselves were the characters in the story being analysed. The participants give answers from within the characters, always using the first person, i.e. "I" or "we".

The possibility of changing roles repeatedly during the activity is very valuable. It enables us to directly experience different perspectives and points of view, which is conducive to verification of attitudes and opinions; it facilitates dialogue with people who think differently. The structure of bibliolog, like bibliodrama, is based on Moreno's methodology, based on three distinct stages: Warm-ups, various activities and role-playing, and a summary and reflection of the group's work.

ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR IN BIBLIOLOG—BASED BIBLIODRAMA

By Yael Unterman and Peta Jones Pellach

The bibliolog facilitator (or director, as Peter Pitzele calls the experienced facilitator) requires a number of different skill sets and entails a number of different activities.

1) Choosing. The facilitator needs to be able to choose a text that will work bibliodramatically. Not all texts are suitable, the best ones being those containing profound human dynamics (which can include spiritual dynamics or even theological questions), encounters and conflicts, and with elements that are a bit mysterious or at least make us curious.

Interfaith or multicultural work might invite texts about encounters between people of different nationalities, or conflictual encounter.

2) Limiting. The facilitator needs to work out at which point in the text to begin the bibliolog and (ideally, if time allows) to end it.

3) Preparing. The facilitator needs to decide what techniques will work well with the text chosen as well as with the people in the group. Should it be conducted with more text-based and sitting down techniques or is there room for looser, more liberated and theatrical ones (closer to bibliodrama)? What combination of techniques will create an enjoyable experience for the group, while building upon each other?

The questions asked by the facilitator during a bibliolog are crucial and they should be prepared, although she may also trust her instincts to ask new questions that come to her spontaneously during the session itself. The facilitator also prepares any poem or other text to be used for teaching at the end.

4) Introducing bibliodrama. In the first few sessions, the facilitator should explain to and then remind the group of what we are doing here. She should remind the group of the need for safe space and protecting our own boundaries, and create a relaxed yet stimulating atmosphere.

The introduction to a bibliolog session might include, "Don't be afraid to get the 'wrong answer' – we're just playing here and exploring. If you're shy – wait till you're ready. You don't have to participate, but will get much more out of it if you do. And if you do speak – you must speak as a character. Don't analyse the text, become the character. Your sentences must be phrased using the word 'I' and not he and she".

5) Introducing the story. It is important that the facilitator explain and provide sufficient background to the text so that people understand what the story is about and the basic historical facts. Although bibliodrama is not a history lesson, leaving people to play stories in a factually inaccurate manner is not educational.

6) During a bibliolog, the facilitator does a number of things:

I. **Invites people** to read verses

II. **Asks questions** to the characters

III. **Reflects** back what people reply, by **echoing** what they said, in first person, but in different words. For example:

The facilitator has asked, "*Cain, why did you decide to bring an offering to God?*"

One participant answered "*I had heard my parents talking about God and I wanted to speak to God also.*"

The facilitator echoes, "*I am very curious, who is this God my parents have mentioned? So I bring an offering to open a channel of communication, to say 'Hello God, are You out there?'*"

Such echoing serves four purposes: a) It gives the participant who spoke a feeling of validation; (b) it checks to see if the facilitator has truly understood what the participant said. If they echo wrong, the participant can say "*Well that's not exactly what I meant...*"; (c) If members of the group weren't listening when their fellow participant spoke, or did not understand what s/he said, they can come back into the loop when the facilitator repeats it; (d) the facilitator can echo in a manner that is more dramatic than the participant, thus raising the level of drama in the room (for example, when echoing the sentence above, the facilitator can raise her voice or even change her voice while saying *Hello God, are You out there?*)

IV. **Prompts.** When a participant says something, the facilitator does not suffice with that, but encourages him or her to say more, by prompting with words like "Because..." "So..." "And this makes me feel..."

V. **Notices** if something one participant said dialogues with or contradicts in something another participant said – weaves together an interesting way the different narratives the participants are building in their fleshing out of characters, to help them grasp what is going on during this bibliolog.

7) **Leading the sharing process** at the end, creating space for people to open up and be personal. Discussing what we went through today and how we feel as a group.

8) **Challenging and educating.** In bibliolog, in addition to allowing participants to draw their own lessons from the text and to sit with their spontaneous emotional responses, the skilled facilitator can direct discussion so that participants **learn** from the text and from each other.

The use of bibliodrama and bibliolog together create an incredibly flexible set of techniques, and can range from being a very group—led process, involving only exercises and feedback and barely any input from the facilitator, to a facilitator—led process in which the facilitator even becomes a teacher for a while.

Intercultural Issues in Bibliodrama

Pilot workshops conducted within the scope of the project revealed various possibilities of using bibliodrama to develop and strengthen the intercultural and interfaith dialogue. The possibilities concern both the messages and contents contained within the texts themselves (and in the rich narration related to the sphere of religiousness in different cultural traditions), as well as specifics of the bibliodrama method – its stimulating nature and specific techniques that contribute to intensified emotional experiences.

To achieve the planned goal – developing intercultural competences through bibliodrama – **the choice of text** to work on with the group is crucial. The aforementioned biblical parable of the Good Samaritan is a model example of a story that presents different attitudes towards people we meet during our lives. The clash of opposing behaviours in this parable provokes us to adopt our own stance, to assess the situation, and draw conclusions from it. Its metaphorical meaning is universal. There are many similar sources in the scriptures of all religions, and pointing out similarities and proximities between different faiths is one of the most important aspects of developing openness towards ‘others’ and ‘strangers’ in the context of the intercultural dialogue. A similar function is fulfilled by **the choice of the protagonist** – a central figure around which the workshop activities are arranged. This can be a specific medium for promoting acceptance and understanding like, for example, the figure of Moses, which is present in the religions of Jews, Christians and Muslims, and unites them ‘above the divisions’. In bibliodrama directed towards dialogue and tolerance, the analysis of each religious text with regard to those universal values present in the text is very important. It is this dimension of the bibliodrama experience that turned out to be the most important and most fruitful in the workshop process, and this is confirmed by numerous statements made by the participants. This is emphasised in the workshop programme in various ways, especially by showing that all people experience the same feelings, dilemmas and dramas, which is expressed in narrations of all religions.

The choice of the text is directly related to **the way it is read**. The specificity of bibliodrama is to develop a personal relationship with the written Word in which unconventional activities and multiple referrals to significant parts of the text may help. Next to traditional reading – individually in silence, or by reading out a given excerpt by one of the members of the group – bibliodrama uses physical activities, reading out with participants divided into roles, interactions with other participants, and artistic expression. This way it is often possible to discover new aspects of whole stories or individual statements (even of those commonly known). Creating surprising and unique circumstances for the readings promotes the discovery of hidden and ambiguous meanings, and encourages the effort of creative interpretation and to ‘look inside of words, outside of the text’.

In bibliodrama, the reading of the text is a starting point for analysing the depicted world – being immersed in its structure and symbolic space by **role playing**. Being someone or something else on the stage always requires a change in behaviour and submission to the imposed rules. It takes effort to understand the played characters and to identify with their feelings, which makes a unique exercise of intercultural skills. It is based, firstly, on an emotional experience which is only later subjected to intellectual analysis, and finally translates into behaviours and attitudes assumed in everyday life. This unique aspect of educational experience distinguishes bibliodrama from traditional forms of studying texts related to different faiths and cultures. Thanks to its influence on the participants of the workshop process, it verifies the preserved stereotypical beliefs, and breaks one away from indifference and passiveness. What is important in this respect is the bibliodrama technique called the **role switch (reversal)**. It allows actors to empathise with both sides of a conflict or dialogue. By talking with any character summoned to the stage we have a chance to give answers to ourselves – on the character's behalf. It requires the participants to put themselves in the position of 'someone else' who thinks, feels, and acts differently.

The **element of fun** related to the free and improvised nature of the activities is vital in a bibliodrama. This is also important for the purpose of getting accustomed to otherness by neutralising tensions and the intensity of confrontations which always appear in the context of different beliefs and outlooks. What helps in identifying with the reality created on the stage are the objects used in a bibliodrama – cloths, masks and costumes. For the goal of developing intercultural competences, next to role playing, **various methods and techniques** within the scope of the workshop are used. Especially useful and effective turned out to be forms of artistic expression that allowed metaphorical and ambiguous statements, and ones that revealed different contexts. The pilot sessions confirmed the (otherwise obvious) assumptions that if a certain subject is analysed in numerous ways by using diverse cognitive tools, it increases curiosity, involvement, and the skill of critical reflection in people actively participating in the process. All of these attributes are essential for attempting any kind of dialogue.

Bibliodrama's strength as an educational method is also influenced by its **collective nature**. Just the context of close cooperation with others itself requires the ability to reach a compromise and adjust one's preferences to the dynamics of teamwork. Furthermore, constant confrontation of one's opinions with the views of other participants, which is the essence of the bibliodrama method, creates a rich and diverse background for seeking answers to the problematic questions about truths, values and reasons. In a bibliodrama play, every statement and every action receive an immediate response, not only on the verbal plane but also in the sphere of emotional reactions through non-verbal messages (body language) and the development of created events itself.

METHODOLOGY

The experiences gained during the pilot workshops served to create an activity plan that presents different ways of using bibliodrama for intercultural purposes. The structure of the scenarios involves two main parts: defining the intercultural context and a detailed plan of activities. The first part of each scenario opens with a list of intercultural competences to which the suggested techniques and the course of the workshop directly refer. A study by Martyn Barrett (Centre for Research on Nationalism, Ethnicity and Multiculturalism – CRONEM): <http://www.theewc.org/content/resources/intercultural.competence/#models> was used in the description of competences and in their division into **attitudes, skills and knowledge**. To further specify the intercultural dimension of the activities, the leader's goals and predicted results – a specific influence on the participants –

are determined. This part of the outline also contains remarks about the nature of the group to which the script is addressed and, in brief, its agenda. The whole first part of the scenarios' structure, devoted to intercultural competences, is essential for the innovative application of bibliodrama in education, for it describes the very rich potential of the intercultural and interfaith content which may be created thanks to the method of role playing and using the heritage of sacred texts of various faiths. What is particularly important is to indicate the areas of specific knowledge and skills ('learning outcomes') related to active participation in the intercultural dialogue which adult participants of this programme may achieve.

The second part of the scenarios consists of in–depth 'step–by–step' descriptions of each activity. They contain many hints about introducing bibliodrama techniques and about the host's role. Especially worth noting is the component devoted to information on various religious and cultural traditions, and their historical, geographical and social circumstances. It was included in the materials related to working with a text to ensure the proper context for analysis and interpretation searches. Thanks to the presence of such information, the group's improvised and spontaneous activities are embedded in specific realities and the participants gain knowledge useful for understanding the literary reality in question.

Using bibliodrama in intercultural education requires workshop leaders to have unique skills in leading a group project. An extremely important issue is to control the emotional engagements of the participants, as they can sometimes become similar to those in a psychodrama session, which focuses on therapeutic goals and requires a different approach. Setting the bibliodrama experience in the sphere of feelings determines the strength of this method but is also a source of potential threats because it can trigger difficult feelings and emotional states.

Scenarios can be introduced in different contexts and to different groups, both as a suggestion of a multi–stage programme or a single class. The quoted texts are taken mainly from the scriptures of the three great monotheistic religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam. However, the origin of the sacred narrations is not the only or the most important factor that determines the programme's intercultural overtone. The fundamental matter in this respect is the structure and logic of individual sessions directed towards arousing sensitivity, empathy and an open attitude towards issues of religion and cultural traditions. Participation in the suggested exercises is, above all, supposed to help in overcoming stereotypical notions and common thought patterns, and in building relations with 'others', without prejudices. The bibliodrama experience, most of all, allows us to understand and intensify our own faith and beliefs. It is (seemingly paradoxically) the condition for accepting and respecting other points of view, because reaching the fundamental universal values, which are the basis for all religions, facilitates dialogue and agreement.

The methods of working with a group presented in the scenarios consist of session modules ready to be copied and used as a whole or in fragments. However, their authors hope that they will also become an inspiration to creating new educational programmes that meet the complex challenges of intercultural dialogue.



III

TEACHING SCENARIOS

Hungary

THE STORY OF JOSEPH
BEING A STRANGER – NAOMI AND RUTH
THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Poland

SHAPING ONE'S FATE – MOSES AND THE BURNING BUSH
LEGENDS OF ENCHANTMENT – HASIDIC JEWS' MYSTICISM
THE WORD AND THE PATH – A MEETING WITH RUMI

Iceland

HUMANITY AND BROTHERHOOD: THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN
BROTHERHOOD AND HUMANITY: BIBLIODRAMA WITH THE METHODS OF CREATIVE WRITING
INTERCULTURAL AND INTERFAITH COMMUNICATION:
THE MIXED MEDIA BIBLIODRAMA EXERCISE

Turkey

RUMI: FOUR PEOPLE WHO DID NOT UNDERSTAND ONE ANOTHER
RUMI: IMMORTALITY TREE
RUMI: THE DEAF'S VISIT TO THE SICK

Israel

BIBLIODRAMA ON HEROES
Number 1: RABBI AKIVA AND RACHEL
Number 2: St CLARE
Number 3: RUMI AND SHAMS

Hungary

THE STORY OF JOSEPH

BEING A STRANGER – NAOMI AND RUTH

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

A series of workshops were organised in Budapest beginning in February 2012 and running until July 2012. The group met regularly, every fortnight for 4 hours at a time, with some occasional whole-day sessions, and a full weekend together at the end. The workshops were run by two experienced bibliodrama leaders:

Tünde Majsai–Hideg (Reformed), theologian, psychodrama leader, bibliodrama trainer, supervisor, family consultant, mental health counsellor, teacher.

Péter Pius Varga (Catholic), teacher, psychodrama leader, bibliodrama trainer, University assistant professor for literature at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest. Experienced leader of adult training seminars. Member of European Bibliodrama Network.

Our concept had been that the composition of the group should reflect Hungary's cultural and religious diversity as well as social strata. The target groups of our call were, among others, Catholic youth Bible groups, Reformed congregations, liberal Jewish communities, Gypsy cultural and adult education organizations, the participants of previous bibliodrama groups. Our aim was for the issues and tensions of everyday reality to appear, which could be processed with the tools of bibliodrama, in the "as if" space of the biblical texts.

At the beginning of the 100-hour workshops, the main aim was to create group cohesion and trust as soon as possible. The thematic focus of the sessions was built around the opposite between experiencing oneself and stranger and passages related to this topic were chosen for every session. The notes and personal feedback faithfully reflect the process in which the group members opened up to each other more and more and both in their personal involvement and in their reflection on the main topic were better and better able to express

themselves and communicate with each other. The length of the group process and the strengthening of the group trust lead to a cathartic conversation, whose emphasis was Christian–Jewish dialogue and the clearing up of historic traumas and misunderstood religious gestures and symbols. We devoted one of the sessions entirely to this dialogue, and this further deepened the tolerance and the openness and readiness for dialogue within the group. The intensive sessions stand out of the group process; two times one whole day, immediately after the normal sessions and the two and a half–day long closing session, memorable to all. In these sessions, participants could typically experience more intensive togetherness, more intimate group work and deeper personal involvement.

At the end of the workshops, several people expressed their wish to take part in further bibliodrama training, which they felt they would use in their professional fields. A need was also expressed that the group should be present more intensively and share its experiences in inter–religion dialogue in the media and on internet forums.

Over 20 people applied to our advertisement published in various forums in December 2011 and 21 people participated in the first session. In order to survey the expectations of the participants, we asked everybody to fill out a questionnaire, in which we asked about basic personal details and a short professional introduction as well as what their motivation to participate was and how they would later be able to use their experiences gained in the group.

All the expected religious and cultural diversity did appear in the group, although representatives of The Romani did not. From a religious point of view, the representatives of Christian churches were in the majority (Roman and Greek Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, Pentecostal), whereas the diversity of Jewishness was also present (religious, liberal, secularized, converted), as well as non–religious views. As for the participants' professions, most of them were working in adult education as teachers, psychologists, counsellors, social workers and other jobs. The group itself was diverse and, through the participants' jobs, the problems of much wider social strata also appeared within the group, such as Romani, historical traumas, minorities, poverty.

THE STORY OF JOSEPH

Aspects of intercultural competence addressed

Attitudes

Recognition of the special characters of other cultures; learning to be present in a community based on dialogical partnership

Skills

Practicing tolerance through interactions with people of different culture or religion, recognition of jealousy, discrimination, working on these emotions by understanding their nature

Knowledge

Culture-specific knowledge: the story of the Jewish forefather, Jacob and his family, psychological knowledge: through Joseph's story participants encounter one of the deepest human emotions, jealousy.

Target audience

This scenario is suitable for working with culturally mixed groups.

Aims

- To discover common problems in other cultures such as discrimination, favouritism, jealousy, anger, confrontation. To understand the fact that privilege is not easy to accept, it results in jealousy which causes guilt, and people try to find a scapegoat to project guilt onto an external "enemy"
- To deal with the problem of privileges and confrontation between nations, religions through the identification with the biblical characters. To highlight the importance of self-reflection
- To encourage participants to learn from universal life situations through the story of a biblical family and compare them with their own patterns

Learning outcomes

Having completed the workshop successfully, the learners will have gained:

- A detailed knowledge of the story of Joseph and his family which is an important part in the history of Judaism
- A deeper understanding of the historical context and the psychological mechanism of human behaviour
- Recognition of discrimination in society caused by jealousy through understanding the parallels with their own life story
- Understanding the special character of the Judaism (which considers its believers as the chosen people of God)
- Understanding the fact and discussion of its impact on society that both Jews and Christians think themselves as the chosen people of God.

Structure of activities

- I. Integration circle
- II. Warm-up
- III. Introduction to the historical context and background
- IV. Enacting the story
- V. Feedback on the roles
- VI. Final sharing and evaluation

Description of activities

I. Integration circle

Steps to follow

Ask participants how they are, in what physical and mental condition they arrived. Questions to ask: What have you left behind in your daily life? Have you thought any issues further since the last workshop session?

II. Warm-up

Steps to follow

1. The participants are standing. Ask them to walk in the room, everyone at his own pace. Tell the participants to speed up, then speed up a bit more and finally slow down again.
2. Instructions: Take up a posture which reflects that you feel yourself successful, satisfied and full of self-confidence. Walk around this way and look at each other calmly. A few minutes later: Let this condition go, shake it off and walk at your own pace again.
3. Walk like someone who feels inferior to the others in knowledge, will or beauty. All of your body should reflect that your power and self-confidence have gone. After a few minutes: Shake this feeling off and walk around in the room calmly.
4. Make two groups, equal in number. One side of the room should be occupied by the winners and the losers should be at the other side. It might help if you recall a situation when you felt like that in real life. Walk around the room accordingly.
5. Now the self-confident, successful people meet the inferiors. Those who belong to the winner group should signal non-verbally that they look down on the members of the other group. Make this behaviour more intense. Swap roles after about 4 minutes.
6. Choose a partner by eye contact. Share your experiences with each other in couples. You have 4–4 minutes for it.
7. Now couples should find another couple and make groups of four. Discuss all the important issues in 10–12 minutes. When time is up, ask participants to round off the discussion and say: Prepare for making a live sculpture jointly, based on your emotions and experiences.
8. Every group presents its sculpture to the others. The joint work is not easy as wills and ideas can confront, some of them have to withdraw or change their original concept, etc. This task helps to involve the feeling of rivalry into the group.
9. Look at the sculpture carefully. What are your associations? Give it a title!

Coffee break

III. Introduction to the historical context and background

Text reading – Genesis 37,2–8, 12–14, 18–25, 27–28

Steps to follow

1. Presentation of Joseph's the family tree as relations between the 12 sons and their mothers are complicated.
2. Write the name of the characters on a piece of paper (with a few words of explanation) and place it on the ground, so participants can walk around them and choose the one which gives them inspiration.
3. Other roles can be chosen too: The Midianite merchants who sold Joseph for 20 shekels of silver.

IV. Enacting the story

Choosing the roles

Steps to follow

1. Suggestions to the participants while they are choosing their roles:
2. Have you been touched by any of the characters? You might identify yourself with an anti–role to watch the events from a new, different perspective.
3. After a few minutes: If you have made your decision, step next to the piece of paper on which the name of your chosen character is written. Get on a scarf to signal that you have identified with the character. Take your time and look inside.
4. After about two minutes of silence: If you are ready, please, introduce yourself!
5. Now find your family members and your place in the family or join your group. Warm up each other for the role by asking questions like: Who are you? How old are you? What do you want to do?
6. After about 10 minutes the facilitators interview the characters one by one, focusing on the different scenes alternately.

Drama play

Scene 1 Jacob is at home with his family. The two younger sons are Joseph and Benjamin. Rachel, their mother, has already died. Second wives and servants can also be present.

Scene 2 The ten brothers pasture the animals.

Scene 3 The encounter of Joseph and his brothers by the well.

V. Feedback on the roles

Steps to follow

1. The first feedback on the roles takes place at the end of the play through individual interviews.
Ask: How does it feel now? What are your feelings now?
2. The facilitator instructs participants to let their role go and return to their real personality.

3. The second feedback on roles takes place at group level. Facilitators have to be prepared for the possibility of intense confrontation at the crucial scenes. Strong emotions can emerge. Jealousy and fear might appear in group dynamics as well. More time needed for discussion and ventilation of emotions.
4. Instruction: Make groups of three and discuss your most important experiences. Possible questions to prompt discussion: Why did you choose this particular role? What surprised you during the play? Did anything hurt you?

VI. Final sharing and evaluation

Steps to follow

1. Possible questions: How did you feel in your roles? What will you take home at a personal level and regarding the intercultural dialogue?
2. Facilitators have to be aware that participants might have heavy feelings even at this stage. Please bring back any important issues to the group for next workshop for further discussion.

Source texts

The Bible, Genesis 37

Christian the Chergé: *L'échelle mystique du dialogue* (The Mystical Ladder of Dialogue)

BEING A STRANGER — NAOMI AND RUTH

Aspects of intercultural competence addressed

Attitudes

Respect for other cultures; curiosity about other cultures; valuing cultural diversity

Skills

Ability to interact with people from other cultures, ability to adapt to different cultural environments

Knowledge

Jewish values and traditions

Target audience

The scenario can be used with both homogeneous and mixed groups.

Aims

- To explore the condition of being "the other" in society through identification with a biblical character
- To highlight the importance of empathy and to contribute to its development through enacting biblical scenes
- To encourage participants to learn about values and traditions of a different culture through enacting selected texts of the Bible

Learning outcomes

Having completed the workshop successfully, the learners will have gained:

- Enhanced knowledge on an important source of Jewish values
- Empathy with the characters featured in the narrative
- Enhanced understanding of the position of the stranger in society
- Awareness of their own feelings towards strangers
- New anger management strategies in a safe environment

Structure of activities

- I. Integration circle
- II. Warm-up activities (A, B, C)
- III. Text reading
- IV. Historical background of the Book of Ruth
- V. Enacting the story: "Ruth in a foreign country"
- VI. Final sharing and evaluation

Description of activities**I. Integration circle**

Steps to follow

Questions to ask:

What have you left behind in your daily life? Have you thought through any issues further since the last workshop session?

II. Warm-up exercises (A, B, C)

Warm-up (A)

"Spring – body expression"

Steps to follow

1. Invite the participants to walk around the space, relax and feel the spirit of spring. They listen to the leader's narration and follow his suggestions: *It is the first day of the spring – take yourself a role in this beginning spring. You can be anything, a tree which begins to bud, a little daffodil which starts to grow in the warm sunlight. You may begin as little seeds*

which slowly grow. Find a place in the room and assume a specific pose which expresses your feelings.

2. Instructions: *It can help if you close your eyes and try to imagine a garden or a forest in spring. What scents and what colors can you perceive? Where is your place in the scene?*
3. Let participants do the activity at their own pace. Instructions: *Take your time! You are free to stay in your protected seed form and you can grow slowly as well.* Try to counter resistance with every word.
4. Ask participants to look around and see how diverse the world is.
5. Instruction: *Take up the position which expresses your feelings the most! Address each person individually by touching their arms and asking to explain what they feel. Who are you at the moment? How does it feel?*
6. Ask participants to leave their roles slowly and come back to the reality of "here and now".

Warm-up (B)

"Going back home"

The main objective of this second warm-up session is the mobilization of deeper layers in each individual.

Steps to follow

1. Invite participants to read the text aloud and repeat one selected sentence crucial for enacting this part of the story: *"I went out full, and the Lord has sent me back again with nothing"* (Ruth 1: 20–21).
2. Using a strip of material, divide the workshop space into two areas representing Bethlehem and Moab.
Instructions: *At this side of the room you can recall moments of your life when you had a deep sense of personal fulfillment.* (The facilitator can show this state of satisfaction with body posture.) *The other side of the room is where you can experience the sense of having nothing or being exploited.*
3. Suggestions to counter resistance: *Take your time! Feel free to walk from one side to another, even repeatedly. You can stay there for a while to recall feelings or images and you can also return.*
4. It also helps to overcome resistance if participants are informed that it is an inner journey and the feelings experienced are not to be shared now.
5. Close the session after about 10 minutes with the following suggestions: *Let your inner image go and return to the group, to our common space. Walk around and look at the others, greeting them with eye contact.*

Warm-up (C)

"Naomi's return"

"The whole city was stirred" (Ruth 1:19) In this session we invite participants to experience a group activity. Participants can arrive from their deep individual journey to each other and can try out new roles.

Steps to follow

1. Instruction: *You can be anybody in the stirred city.* It is spontaneous play, a busy city scene.
2. Participants play the roles of inhabitants busy with their everyday routine at the beginning of the harvest season. They should act spontaneously and interact with each other.
3. Interview participants about how they felt.

III. Text reading

Ruth 2:1–3, 2:8–11 – The encounter of Ruth and Boaz and the beginning of a new life

Main objective: Participants should experience the condition of being a stranger, someone who was accepted or integrated, and the related problems.

IV. Historical background of the Book of Ruth

Participants find out about Jewish traditions and rituals associated with the harvest season and attitudes of Jewish society toward foreign cultures.

Steps to follow

1. After the historical explanation participants should choose their roles. To help their decision the facilitator writes the name of the characters on pieces of paper and places them on the ground.
2. After the participants have chosen their characters, a 15 minutes break follows. Participants can prepare for their roles during the break.

V. Enacting the story: "Ruth in a foreign country"

The chosen section of the Book of Ruth is read aloud.

Steps to follow

1. Participants choose roles, create simple costumes using scarves and define the settings: Naomi's house, Boaz's house and field, other scenes.
2. Interview participants, ask for their names, position in the society, current feelings. All characters briefly present themselves.
3. Give a signal to start acting and say: *"It's early morning, people are beginning to work in the fields."* The developing action is interrupted by interviews and announcements of time passing e.g. *"One hour later"*.
4. At the end of the play ask for feedback on the roles from each participant one by one. *How do you feel now?*
5. Ask participants to step out of their roles and release themselves from all the relationships they entered during the play.

VI. Final sharing and evaluation*Steps to follow*

1. Ask participants to share and discuss their common experiences in small groups.
2. Ask participants to finish the discussion and let their role go.
3. Discuss the experiences in relation to intercultural dialogue.

4. *Why did you choose this particular role? Did you change as a result of others' reaction?*
5. Give reflections to each participant, referring to wider context and group dynamics.

Source texts

The Bible, Book of Ruth: 1, 19–21; 2, 1–3; 8, 10–13

The Bible, Book of Ruth: 2, 1–3; 8, 10–13

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Aspects of intercultural competence addressed

Attitudes

Practicing openness and empathy towards those who think differently; to overcome communication blocks between individuals (or groups) who are alienated from each other as a result of different cultural or religious traditions

Skills

Practicing tolerance towards people of different cultural customs and religious traditions, understanding their values and developing openness and curiosity towards them; practicing non–judgmental behavior, learning not to make our own values and beliefs absolute for others

Knowledge

Culture–specific knowledge: Participants learn about the historical contexts of the biblical parable, especially the historical roots of conflict between the Jews and Samaritans. During the workshop we highlight the cultural and religious prejudices related to the story (with a special emphasis on the related anti–Semitic discourse)

Target audience

This scenario is particularly suitable for working with culturally mixed groups.

Aims

- To overcome prejudices
- To support the acceptance of cultural differences
- To understand the nature of inter–faith conflicts
- To practice the patterns of asking for and accepting help
- To understand the importance of empathy, improve empathy

Learning outcomes

Having completed the workshop successfully, the learners will have gained:

- Understanding of the nature of inter–faith conflict
- A psychological experience of the way love can be expressed in a culture–specific context (special values and particular limitations)
- Awareness of prejudices
- Enhanced understanding of personal boundaries
- Empathy towards the other

Structure of activities

- I. Integration circle
- II. Warm–up activities
- III. Text reading and introduction to the historical background
- IV. Enacting the story
- V. Feedback on roles
- VI. Final sharing and evaluation

Description of activities

I. Integration circle

The integration circle helps participants to recall the events and experiences of the previous workshop. It also provides room for participants to share reflections on their current physical and mental condition through which individuals can feel closely integrated into the group.

Steps to follow

1. Place plenty of colourful scarves in the middle of the room. Ask participants: *What colour represents your current feelings? Choose one of them! Take it into your hands and try to form something out of it. If you are ready, place it on the ground in front of you so we can see the result.*
2. Questions to ask: *Have any issues developed further within you since the last workshop? How did you arrive here? Why did you choose this colour and form? What did you want to express?*

II. Warm–up activities

This warm–up exercise prepares participants for the decision to choose a role of a helper or non–helper. It is also important to try out anti–roles for deeper understanding.

Steps to follow

1. Instruction to the participants: *Walk in the room at your own pace, greet each other with eye contact and a nod. Speed up your pace for a minute, then slow down again.*
2. *Choose someone from the group and take up his/her pace and walk together for a while, then find someone else and join him/her, then find someone else again. Stop after 4–5 encounters.*

3. *Please make two groups equal in numbers. People in one group are in trouble and ask or even beg for help. Try to imagine a concrete difficulty and find a place and a posture to express it. The members of the other group do not pay attention to those who are in need, and walk away carelessly. Think of a good reason why you have to hurry and pass by the troubled one. Give yourself a minute and go!*
4. After about five minutes give a signal to the participants to stop and release their roles. Then they should swap roles and continue the activity for another five minutes. Stop the activity when everybody has met most of the group members.
5. **Mental Warm-up.** Instruction to the participants: Recall an event of your life when you received help surprisingly and unexpectedly. It might have happened a long time ago or recently.
6. Make groups of three and discuss your thoughts and experiences.

III. Introduction to the historical context and background

Reading the text and introduction to the historical background

The Good Samaritan: Luke 10,25–36

Steps to follow

Following the introduction place pieces of paper on the ground. On each piece of paper the names of the characters in the story (which represent religious groups in ancient Judaism) are written with key words of explanation.

IV. Enacting the story

Choosing the roles

Suggestions to the participants: *Have you been touched by any of the characters? You might want to identify yourself with an anti-role to watch the story from a new, different or unknown point of view.*

After the participants have made their decision a break follows during which they can prepare for their roles in their minds.

Steps to follow

1. After the break facilitators read the text aloud again.
2. Instructions: *Put on a scarf to signal that you have identified with the chosen character. Take your time and look inside yourselves. Imagine where you are at the moment, in what clothes, in what environment and what your intentions are.*
3. After about two minutes of silence: *If you are ready, please, introduce yourself!*
4. Suggestions to participants: *Please, create the scenes. There is a 27 km long road between Jericho and Jerusalem. It is a very dangerous section, robbers can lie in ambush along the road. There is an inn by the road. A merchant travels with his donkey.*
5. Those who who have formed a group meet and warm up with each other for their roles. *Tell each other who you are and what your intentions are.*

6. After about 8 minutes facilitators ask for silence and freeze the scenes. Tell participants to look around. Step to the participants one by one and ask: *Who are you? Where are you from? Why are you here? What do you want to do?* Then unfreeze them and let the play go on.
7. After the robbery takes place and the Samaritan arrives to help and tries to take the wounded man to the inn, freeze the scenes again. Interview participants asking: *How do you feel at the moment? What is happening within you?* Then unfreeze them and let the play go on. Let the play continue for a while, then give a signal to end the play.

V. Feedback on the roles

Steps to follow

1. The first feedback on the roles takes place at the end of the play, right after the scenes, with individual interviews. The facilitator asks: *What are your feelings now?*
2. After every participant has been interviewed, the facilitator instructs participants to let their roles go and return to their real personalities.
3. The second feedback on roles takes place at group level. Instruction: *Make groups of three and discuss your most important experiences.* Possible questions to prompt discussion: *Why did you choose this particular role? What surprised you during the play? Did anything hurt you? How does it relate to your own life?*

VI. Final sharing and evaluation

Steps to follow

1. Possible questions to prompt the discussion: *How did you feel in your roles? What will you take home at a personal level and regarding our main subject, intercultural dialogue?*
2. A good method for further development is to ask participants to write down their thoughts at home and send it to the group by e-mail.

Source texts

The New Testament, Luke 10, 25–36

Poland

SHAPING ONE'S FATE – MOSES AND THE BURNING BUSH

LEGENDS OF ENCHANTMENT – HASIDIC JEWS' MYSTICISM

THE WORD AND THE PATH – A MEETING WITH RUMI

A workshop group was organised in Bielsko–Biata as a part of the project. The workshops were run from January until June 2012 at Grodzki Theatre. They were two–day meetings held on Saturdays and Sundays – 7 sessions which lasted for 100 hours altogether. Two people were responsible for formulating and executing the programme of the workshops:

Krystyna Sztuka – Doctor of Psychology, clinical psychology and psychology of creativity specialist, academic teacher. For many years she's been carrying out her therapeutic practice and bibliodramatic workshops (bibliodrama understood as supporting broadly defined human development and adult education; integrating bibliodrama with Ignatius' of Loyola method and Moreno's psychodrama). She is a member of the European Bibliodrama Network, and a Catholic.

I understand bibliodrama as trying to express the biblical images and narrations in the language of art, so as to bring out as many layers of spiritual and psychological depth as possible. The biblical text is the main material for interpreting our own emotional experiences through creative expression (stage play, mime, dance, spatial movement, creating through compositions of lines, colours, rhythm, and spatial forms). Despite many years of practice in the field, being a leader during these particular workshops has been an enriching and ennobling experience. I always thought that bibliodrama was a method of educating and enabling deeper understanding of oneself, for people rooted in Christianity, and a ground for people from different religious traditions to meet. While working with this particular group, bibliodrama was used to deepen the reflection on one's own cultural tradition in relation to traditions coming from the three major world religions. Undeniably, the participants had the opportunity to reflect on their attitude towards the so called "cultural obviousness", they could challenge their schemas, entrenched opinions, and change their emotional evaluation of what is "ours" and what is "unfamiliar".

Piotr Kostuchowski – philosopher, teacher, instructor of educational and art classes, author and coordinator of educational projects in Grodzki Theatre. Catholic.

In recent years my activities have been focused around educational projects, mainly concerning educating adults. I became interested in bibliodrama after discovering that psychodrama provides us with experiences I had never known before. My first direct contact with this method occurred during workshops carried out by Peter Varga. On the one hand, I realised that the Bible is a text that needs to be complemented with personal experiences and reflections, on the other hand the workshops showed me how the biblical texts might be completed with new contents. They helped me to change my view of the Bible. I had never actively taken part in an inter-cultural or interfaith dialogue before. Only the challenge of carrying out the workshops as a part of the BASICS project obliged me to deepen those matters and speak out in front of the group.

The workshop group consisted of 15 people representing various professions – a psychiatrist, a research fellow, therapists, teachers, a catechist, a psychologist, and a group therapy instructor. The group was culturally homogeneous – one person described themselves as a non-believer, and the rest were Catholics. Despite the homogeneity, a great diversity of attitudes and ways of experiencing faith and religiousness occurred. All the participants were Polish, but they came from different regions of the country, which had different cultural traditions and different experiences in contacts with "heterodoxies" and representatives of other cultures. During the workshops it became apparent that the group could be divided into two factions – "dogmatic" and "progressive". The tension between them decreased slowly. Their focus on their differences, and referring to existing knowledge and authorities were replaced by personal relationships. People kept their religious identities, but started looking for ways to reach agreement and enable discussion.

The paramount objective of the workshops was conceptualised as finding in bibliodrama some methods and means of shaping an attitude of openness and dialogue with other cultures and religions. The main idea was that the holy books of different religions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam) convey the general experiences and quandaries of humankind. This existential dimension might be revealed, experienced, and reflected on during the workshops. On that basis we can build openness and find paths to discussion and agreement.

SHAPING ONE'S FATE – MOSES AND THE BURNING BUSH

Aspects of intercultural competence addressed

Attitudes

Respect for other cultures; openness to people from other cultures; valuing cultural diversity

Skills

Skills in discovering information about other cultures; skills of interpreting cultures and relating cultures to one another

Knowledge

Cultural self-awareness; knowledge of the elements relating three monotheistic religions

Target audience

This scenario may be used with homogeneous (of a single religion or cultural background) or mixed groups. The best results however, will come when used with a group made up of Christians, as they are likely to be much more familiar with the New Testament, and the proposed activities are aimed at exploring the spirit of the Old Testament. In mixed groups, including Jewish, Christian and Muslim members, the activities proposed can lead to a fruitful exchange of knowledge about the prophet Moses as seen from different religious perspectives.

Aims

- To raise awareness of the role of one's decisions in shaping one's fate, and the consequences of choices which realise higher values than personal success and comfort
- To develop the skill of critically and objectively seeing one's own and other cultures, showing the similarity of human dilemmas through analysis, discussion, references to participants' experiences related to the consent for accepting ethical norms, God's requirements or those of other authorities
- To encourage participants to reflect on the essence of every religion and to look for the elements which are common in all faiths

Learning outcomes

Having completed the workshop successfully, the learners will have gained:

- A deeper knowledge about Moses (recognised in Judaism, Christianity and Islam), and a more complete image of the prophet
- A more open attitude towards other cultures and religions through discovering their common aspects and the universal nature of any religious experience
- Awareness of the universal character of human dilemmas related to shaping one's fate – dilemmas which cross cultural borders
- A deeper understanding of one's feelings and attitudes towards religions and cultural environments, both foreign and familiar

Structure of activities

- I. Integration Circle
- II. Warm-Up
- III. Reading the Text and Working in Pairs
- IV. Group Game – Moses coming home
- V. Map – What's most important in every religion?
- VI. Activity Analysis

Description of activities**I. Integration Circle***Steps to follow*

1. Greet the participants and gather them in a semi circle, surrounding an imaginary stage.
2. Set two chairs on the stage. One of them, turned upside down, is a space of difficult emotions, and the other – good feelings.
3. Invite the participants to come to the stage one by one, sit on a chair of their choosing, and speak about important feelings, changing (as many times as necessary) from one chair to another. You can go on stage first to encourage the group to share their emotions.

II. Warm-Up*Steps to follow*

1. Ask one participant to be a volunteer.
2. Explain what the exercise involves. Ask the rest to surround the volunteer, who is sitting on the floor with his eyes closed, cringing, isolated from the world. All the participants try to make contact with this person, calling out his name in different ways: trying nicknames and diminutives, using different tones and timbres of voice.
3. Stop the game when the participant who is in the middle of the action starts reacting to the group. Ask him to share his experiences – what associations came to his mind, which ways got to him the most and why.
4. Encourage other participants to take place in the middle of the circle to experience the situation of being called to.
5. Invite the group to walk or run around the space, greeting each other and relaxing.

III. Reading the text and working in pairs*Steps to follow*

1. Hand out a printed fragment of text to participants which will become the subject of analysis (Old Testament, Book of Exodus: 3,1–14 and 4,1–18).
2. Ask the participants to sit down and study the text quietly, marking out three issues that they find the most important or significant to themselves.

3. Invite the group to start wandering, reading out the story of Yahweh who revealed Himself to Moses as the burning bush. One person reads out the whole text and then the rest comes in when it's time for the fragments they previously marked.
4. Propose another form of studying the text – reading its dialogues in pairs. At first one person plays God and the other plays Moses, and then they change over.
5. Ask each pair to choose a fragment of a dialogue which they will stage and show to others.
6. Gather all participants in a circle and let them express their reflections and thoughts about all the presented scenes. Try to summarise the discussion and focus on Moses' attitude, his worries, dilemmas and feelings.

IV. Group game – Moses coming back home

Steps to follow

1. Invite the participants to create a scene of Moses coming home after his conversation with Yahweh: "From meeting God to meeting people...". Encourage them to share ideas, to analyse the state of Moses' spirit, to recall different fragments from the Bible concerning his attitude.
2. Give the participants some time to choose roles, prepare staging and agree on the initial situation to start joint actions.
3. Give the signal to start improvised action and let it develop freely.
4. Stop the action when it comes to a point of making decisions and solving problematic issues.
5. Invite the participants to sit down in a circle and discuss the course of action. Ask how the person playing Moses, and his relatives and other actors in the scene felt, and what attitudes, characters and difficulties the acting has revealed. What made Moses accept his fate? What did his decision lead to?

V. Map – What's most important in every religion?

Steps to follow:

1. Place a bunch of coloured scarves in the middle of the room. Explain that they will serve as symbolic representations of elements which can be found in every religion. Emphasise that the group should refer to the story of Moses which has been explored during the workshop.
2. Choose three scarves and place them, one by one, in three different spots. Name each of them explaining what they represent. Explain also, why you chose these specific pieces of fabric, referring to their colour, shape, texture. For instance: this big piece of red silk represents CALLING. This is how I see something tempting, alarming and calling for an answer.
3. Invite the group to complete the map of elements essential for all religions, following your example. Encourage them to explain each choice with personal stories and reflections.
4. Ask the participants to stand next to the scarf representing the aspect of religious experience which is most important for them.
5. Ask the group to clean up the space and move to the next activity.

VI. Analysing the exercises

Steps to follow

1. Divide the participants into 3 groups and ask each one to discuss the following problems and answer the following questions:
 - Does the story of Moses have any meaning for people living in the 21st century?
 - What choices about his fate did Moses have to make and are they somehow universal?
 - Have you enriched your knowledge about your own choices and attitudes?
 - Is it worth giving up your own comfort and personal success?
2. Gather the participants in a circle. Ask all the groups to present their answers and findings. Give the group some time to discuss the issues raised.
3. Ask the participants to summarise their experience of the workshop in a few sentences.

Source texts

The Bible, Exodus 3,1–14 and 4,1–18

LEGENDS OF ENCHANTMENT – HASIDIC JEWS' MYSTICISM

Aspects of intercultural competence addressed

Attitudes

Respect for other cultures; willingness to learn about other cultures and to suspend judgement; valuing cultural diversity

Skills

Skills of interpreting cultures and relating cultures to one another; skills in critically evaluating cultural perspectives, practices and products, including those of one's own culture; cognitive flexibility

Knowledge

Cultural self-awareness; knowledge of Jewish culture, in particular Hasidic values and traditions

Target audience

This scenario may be used with homogeneous or mixed groups. The best results however, will come when used with a group of Christians, whose knowledge about Hasidism may be very limited. The scenario is also meant for touching on sensitive issues such as anti-Semitism. An introduction to Hasidic mysticism opens the door to the Jewish culture.

Aims

- To introduce participants to an important part of Jewish tradition and culture (Hasidism) and to let them identify with characters and situations created on the basis of literature which expresses the Hasidic spirit
- To foster participants' openness to other people's and cultures' identity and to encourage them to implement this attitude in life
- To stimulate reflection on participants' attitudes to Jews and Judaism and make them discuss stereotypes and prejudices associated that go together with an anti-Semitic attitude

Learning outcomes

Having completed the workshop successfully the learners will have gained:

- Knowledge of Hasidism, and a more complete picture of differentiated streams of Judaism
- A deeper understanding of Jewish religious traditions through an encounter with the imaginary Tzadik – a Jewish master of life
- A more open attitude towards "otherness" based on discovering values common for different religions and cultures
- A deepened ability to reflect on problematic issues and to discuss them with others

Structure of activities

- I. Integration Circle
- II. Warm-Up
- III. Plastic Expression
- IV. Information About Hasidism
- V. Reading Texts and Working in Pairs
- VI. The Tzadik's Chair
- VII. Summary Discussion and Creative Activity

Description of activities

I. Integration Circle

Steps to follow

1. Gather all the participants in a circle. Place a bunch of coloured scarves in the middle of the circle.
2. Ask the first volunteer to choose a few scarves, return to his place, and talk about his feelings, assigning to each of them a chosen fabric. All participants repeat the same action, one by one, explaining also the choice of colour or shape of their material. The leader may specify that each chooses, for example, only three scarves and talks about the three most important feelings that accompany him at the time.

II. Warm-Up

Steps to follow

1. Invite the participants to dance and tell them to try to express the atmosphere of the music by their movement. Prior to this, prepare the Hasidic dancing music and play it back.
2. After a while ask the group to form a circle. Let the circle expand and contract, even change directions. Let people come inside alone, in pairs or in small groups and dance. Encourage the participants to dance spontaneously and joyfully.
3. Stop the exercise when the participants begin to dance less enthusiastically. Give them a while to cool down and move on to the next part.

III. Plastic expression

Steps to follow

1. Invite the participants to join in a creative activity. Give each person a large sheet of paper (A0 size: 841x1184cm or B1: 707x1000cm) and a wide selection of paints, paintbrushes, markers, pieces of sponge. Prior to this, write three words on each piece of paper: Jew, Judaism, Israel.
2. Ask the participants to reflect on the above words through creating images, posters, paintings representing their feelings, personal experience and knowledge associated with the given topics. Give the group about half an hour to complete the task.
3. Arrange space for an exhibition and invite all the participants to place their works in it. Let them walk around and look at the pictures created by everyone.
4. Ask the participants to briefly present their works to the others. Encourage them to explain about the main graphic elements, the colours and shapes used and their meanings and symbolic connotations. Let the group discuss the issues raised, and share stories and reflections.
5. Place all the works aside to be "witnesses" to further actions.

IV. Information on Hasidism

The leader introduces Hasidism as an answer to an "erudite" Judaism based on pursuing the law. As an alternative, Hasidism was a way of practising religious life by ordinary, uneducated people, under the spiritual leadership of Tzadiks, who gave inspiration on how to live. It is important to emphasise that Hasidism has nothing to do with martyrdom. It keeps away from sentimentality and ostentatious emotionalism. It promotes joy, in which the spirit grows towards the Divine. "The Tales of Rabbi Nachman" by Martin Buber can be used as a source of information to be presented to the group.

Steps to follow

1. Ask the participants if they recognised the music they danced to during the warm-up activities. Do they know what cultural background it comes from? If they don't mention Hasidism, give them the right answer.
2. Ask the group about the connotations they have with this term and write them down on the flipchart.

3. Introduce the basic information about Hasidism, placing some important historical data on the flipchart.
4. Draw the attention of the group to the difference between dry information and life. Read the following text by Jiří Langer ("Nine gates to the Hasidic Mysteries") aloud. "A rabbi was once asked to tell a story. A story – said the rabbi – should be told in such a way as to become a real help in itself. And he told the following one: My grandfather was lame. Once he was asked to say something about his teacher. He started talking how pious Baalshem used to dance and jump while he was praying. When he was saying that he himself stood up and his tale carried him away, so he started to jump and dance just like his master used to do. And since then he stopped being lame. This is how stories should be told."
5. Encourage the participants to share stories and examples about life situations directly influenced by a religious experience.

V. Reading Texts and Working in Pairs

Steps to follow

1. Distribute the prepared texts, which come from the book "Tales of the Hasidim" by Martin Buber. Ask the participants to read them in silence; let them take their time. These texts are very short, in general consisting of just a few sentences each, so you can select 10 short stories.
2. Ask each person to pick two tales which are especially close or touching for them. Let everybody inform the others about their choice. When two people share at least one tale they should form a pair.
3. Ask each pair to agree on one tale and to prepare its staging. The form of presentations is free, including pantomime, living sculpture, and acting with dialogues.
4. Invite all the pairs to present their scenes one by one, and initiate analysis and discussion after each presentation. They are important, because the texts selected are very rich and the included metaphors have great potential for interpretation. Ask the audience which story they saw and how they understood it. Do they recognise what the actors wanted to show?
5. After all the scenes have been discussed, ask if individual presentations had anything in common.

VI. Tzadik's chair

This exercise is a variation of a hot chair. It consists of preparing a significant question to oneself and answering it, using a role reversal technique. We usually ask a question to somebody who is an authority. In this particular situation we have to answer ourselves on behalf of this person. We need to look inside ourselves and at the problem from his/her perspective. Our authorities are very often people who we cannot meet physically and thanks to this exercise we can lead a certain form of a dialogue.

Steps to follow

1. Remind the group about the role of spiritual leaders in Hasidic communities – Tzadiks. Talk about pilgrimages to them, requests and questions which were directed to them in seeking help and advice on what to do in life, or with a particular problem.

2. Put a chair in the middle of the room and underline its special character with a visual mark (for instance, by placing a coloured scarf on it). This is the Tzadik's seat. Place another chair facing it. Ask the participants to walk around the room and think about one question they would like to ask the Tzadik.
3. Set up some chairs for the audience too. When the participants have thought up their questions, give them sheets of paper and something to write with. Ask them to write down the questions.
4. Ask for two volunteers to be the Tzadik and the first person coming to ask for advice. Encourage them to play the greeting scene and pose a question. At this point role reversal is needed. The actors change places and the visitor, sitting on the Tzadik's chair, answers his/her own question. Then the actors change places once again and act out the final scene (thanking each other, and saying goodbye).
5. Ask the other members of the group to visit the Tzadik and follow the rules presented by the first visitor.
6. Gather all the participants in a circle surrounding the Tzadik's chair. Ask them how they felt during the visit to the Tzadik and what they discovered during this exercise.

VII. Summary Discussion and Creative Activity

Steps to follow

1. Bring back the artworks created by the group at the beginning of the workshop. Ask the participants to look for their own painting. Each person finds a comfortable place in the room and completes their work with new images, words and symbols.
2. Ask the participants to arrange an exhibition of all works, using the whole space.
3. Invite the group to visit the exhibition and ask each participant to briefly talk about their work when the others approach it. Encourage the participants to explain the changes they made in their paintings and also to refer to their experience of the whole session.
4. Ask the participants to answer the evaluation questions: What did the workshop change in your perception of the world? Was it something important? If you have learned anything about Hasidism, write about it.
5. Gather all the participants in a circle and invite them to the final dance. Play the Hasidic music. It can be the same piece as the one already used at the beginning of the session or another musical fragment.

Source texts

Martin Buber, "Tales of the Hasidim"

Martin Buber, "The Tales of Rabbi Nachman"

Jiří Langer, "Nine gates to the Hasidic Mysteries"

THE WORD AND THE PATH A MEETING WITH RUMI (MAULANA, OR "MASTER")

Aspects of intercultural competence addressed

Attitudes

Respect for other cultures; curiosity about other cultures; valuing cultural diversity

Skills

Skills of interpreting cultures and relating cultures to one another; empathy; cognitive flexibility

Knowledge

Culture-specific knowledge, especially knowledge of Sufism values and traditions

Target audience

This scenario may be used with homogeneous or mixed groups. The best results however, will come when used with a group made up of those only familiar with Islamic history and culture from a limited perspective, e.g. from television, or the media.

Aims

- To experience what it's like to be a person from an Islamic culture by identifying with a character from a fragment of Rumi's "Masnavi"
- To emphasise the universality of poetry as a means of expression in all cultures
- To develop a critical and objective understanding of one's own culture and of Islamic cultures, to show the identity of people's dilemmas through analysis, discussion, and appeal to the participants' experiences of European and Persian poetry
- To stimulate curiosity and interest in other religious and cultural traditions

Learning outcomes

Having completed the workshop successfully, the learners will have gained:

- Knowledge of Sufism, an important denomination of Islam, the image of it presented by Rumi, and familiarity with a fragment of the Masnavi
- A deeper understanding of Islam through an encounter with its mystical aspects and experience of the feelings and emotions it evokes
- A new, emphatic outlook on adherents to Islam, thanks to becoming absorbed in their cultural and religious identities
- Broader understanding of their feelings and attitudes towards the poetry and the beliefs present in both their own and in foreign cultures

Structure of activities

- I. Pulse
- II. Warm-up
- III. Map – Poetry and Prose
- IV. Information about Rumi
- V. Reading Materials
- VI. Discussion

Description of activities**I. Pulse***Steps to follow*

1. Greet the participants and invite them to take a seat in a circle.
2. Ask the participants: How are you today? How are you feeling about the workshop? Assign the order of speaking, e.g. clockwise. Another idea is to indicate the first speaker and then ask them to suggest the next one. All the participants should have their turn to speak.

II. Warm-up*Steps to follow*

1. The participants are standing. Ask them to approach each other and greet, although not in a traditional way (with a handshake or a nod), but differently, for example by rubbing elbows, bumping hips, placing their hands on each others' shoulders, etc.
2. During the whole exercise there is music playing in the background. Tell the participants to find inspiration for their actions in the music. The music should be associated with Rumi, e.g. Iranian or something featuring Iranian instruments: daf, ney, tanbur, setar, tar, rebab, tonbak.
3. Ask the participants to stand in a circle at arm's length from each other.
4. Give them the following directions: Try to spin anti-clockwise to the music. Raise your right hands and try to spin on your left feet. (The leader should demonstrate this movement. This exercise refers to Sama – the dance of the Whirling Dervishes. The music is playing in the background.)
5. After a while the dance should be stopped. The leader says, "Stop and cross your arms and legs. It's time to cool off."

III. Map – Poetry and Prose*Steps to follow*

1. Determine the continuum by putting two white scarves on the floor to show its extremes. Explain to the participants that one of the scarves symbolises prose, and the other one – poetry. Ask the participants to wander between and around the scarves, and to try recreating in their memory experiences associated with poetry and prose.

2. Ask the participants to find some objects in the room that are associated with the spirits of poetry and prose and to put them on the spots which best express their feeling and attitudes towards these literary genres.
3. When the participants choose their spots, ask them why they're standing in those particular places, and what objects they used to describe poetry and prose. Allow them to talk freely.

IV. Information about Rumi

The leader introduces Rumi. The given information should concern the meaning of this poet and mystic to Sufism. It is extremely important to emphasise that his most essential thoughts were expressed in poetry.

Steps to follow

1. Introduce the extraordinary figure that Rumi is. Do not begin with presenting the biographical facts, but rather quote some of his thoughts, e.g. "This world is but foam full of floating jetsam. Yet, through the turning of the waves, and the rhythmic surging of the sea in constant motion, this foam takes on a certain beauty. But this beauty is a borrowed thing coming from elsewhere. It is a false coin that sparkles to the eye." (excerpt from *Fihi Ma Fihi*, translation by A.J. Arberry, "Discourses of Rumi").
2. Try to engage the participants in conversation. Answer any questions about his creations, the style of his poetry, and his life. It's important to emphasise that originally the works were written in Persian in the XIII century and that Rumi was a Muslim; he came from a land which gathered people of many cultures and religions. Ask the participants: Who do you think came to Rumi's funeral? There were representants of Muslims, the Greek Catholics, the Armenians, the Persians, and the Jews.

V. Reading Materials

Steps to follow

1. Give everyone a printout of the text. It is a fragment of "Masnavi", Book II, "Moses and the Shepherd", verses 1720–1791. Ask the participants to read the text quietly.
2. Ask the participants about the characters presented in the poem, and their characteristics. The participants focus on comparing the two main characters – Moses and the shepherd; they answer the questions concerning the differences between the two, their relationship with God, their attitudes.
3. Ask the participants to prepare one scene involving all of them. The basis for the scene is the poem. Explain that their task is to spontaneously act out the story depicted in the text. Do not use Rumi's lines word-for-word as the dialogues, but paraphrase them, keeping the original sense. You can use any objects present in the room. Everyone should choose a role to play. Give the participants only a few minutes to prepare in order not to let them overthink the scenario.
4. Ask the participants to step out of their roles and take a seat in the circle.

VI. Discussion and evaluation

Steps to follow

Ask the participants: How did you feel in your roles? What did you experience? What did you discover? What did you find out? Can you spot any similarities between Rumi’s path and Christianity? What is the role of freedom and love in Sufism? What did you find out about yourselves? Finish the sentences: Islam is... Whenever I encounter a foreign culture, I will try to...

Source texts

Jalal ad-Dīn Muhammad Rumi, "Masnavi", Book II, "Moses and The Shepherd", verses 1720–1791.

Internet resources:

<http://www.dar-al-masnavi.org/n.a-II-1720.html>

<http://www.dar-al-masnavi.org/n.a-II-1750.html>

<http://www.dar-al-masnavi.org/n.a-II-1765.html>

<http://www.dar-al-masnavi.org/n.a-II-1772.html>

Iceland

HUMANITY AND BROTHERHOOD: THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

BROTHERHOOD AND HUMANITY: BIBLIODRAMA WITH THE METHODS OF CREATIVE WRITING

INTERCULTURAL AND INTERFAITH COMMUNICATION: THE MIXED MEDIA BIBLIODRAMA EXERCISE

Workshops were conducted in a number of venues to suit the needs of the participants. Starting in January 2012, developmental groups were organised and run until November 2012, totalling 100 hours. The duration of the workshops varied according to each group and the context. It turned out to be impossible to run a continuous workshop for weeks or months, due to difficulty in getting the participants to commit themselves. The programmes were developed and conducted by two primary leaders.

Björg Árnadóttir – Adult educator for thirty years. An art teacher who later studied broadcast media and educational studies, her MA–research emphasises art education and curriculum studies. For most of her career she has mostly been a freelance teacher and has primarily taught creative subjects and self–empowerment in which interfaith and intercultural matters are often addressed. For some years she was the manager of an Adult Education Center which, inter alia, dealt with immigrant education.

Bibliodrama is a welcome addition to my teacher's tool kit. I use bibliodrama for two purposes, on one hand I use the methods and topics of bibliodrama as an addition to my methods in other teaching, and on the other hand I'm a bibliodrama trainer in interfaith and multicultural context.

When I started teaching bibliodrama myself after attending one introductory course I was rather confused about this method, which simultaneously was close to my heart and foreign to me. I found it difficult to transfer what I'd learned in an international environment to Icelandic situation where the religious discourse is a bit taboo.

The unfortunate side effect of the financial crisis in Iceland is that the intercultural dialogue has taken a down turn, but is in an urgent need for revival, to hamper the flourishing of prejudice towards foreign things. In Iceland we have the advantage of being able to learn from the mistakes of other nations in immigration matters since the multicultural society is just starting to form here. Bibliodrama has the advantage of being able to

address ethical and existential matters of opinions in an easy and playful way. Bibliodrama discussions tend to be at the same time profound and entertaining, personal and global.

Halldór Reynisson – Protestant/Lutheran. Pastor and educator in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland. For the past three years he has been involved in, amongst others: Educational work such as seminars, workshops, conferences for church workers mainly in youth work and adult education (human growth, empowerment, retreats); Organization and execution of bereavement activities, lectures on grief and bereavement, leading support groups for the bereaved; Part time pastoral work.

The whole concept of bibliodrama appealed to me in two ways when I was introduced to the concept:

Firstly, I considered this to be a good method of people, with different backgrounds, faith or no faith sharing their insights of the ancient texts and stories of our Judeo–Christian heritage (but possibly also of our old Nordic background) and to discover or rediscover the obvious and latent meaning of these stories, with or without a religious approach. The common denominator is that many of these stories are a key factor in understanding much of Western cultural history. Sometimes the faithful are viewing these stories/texts as something so sacred that you are not supposed to question or ponder the meaning (sometimes the many layers of meaning which history has heaped upon them). These ancient texts are both literature and – counter literature in the sense that they have an existential or religious meaning – a message. As such they can often teach us much about history and culture, besides helping us to contemplate our existence whichever our religious orientation is.

Secondly, I found the method of a dialogue between people of different religious orientation through reading and dramatizing together sacred texts from their respective religions a fascinating way of drawing people together. The goal has been a better understanding of each others differences through those sacred texts – but also looking for a common human wisdom, and also what they told us about our common human predicament.

The programme was conducted with 6 different groups, composed of participants from Reykjavík Academy (independent scholars), The Evangelical Lutheran Church, adult educators, immigrants, refugees, single mothers groups, youth groups, clients attending addiction rehabilitation, and official representatives of minority churches and non–believer organisations. The size of the groups ranged from 6 to 14 participants.

HUMANITY AND BROTHERHOOD: THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Aspects of intercultural competence addressed

Attitudes

Respect and openness for other cultures, willingness to suspend judgement and to value cultural diversity

Skills

Skills in relating culture and religions to one another through studying the Golden Rule of different religions, skills in showing empathy with people of different ethnic origin, religions and social status, skills in critically evaluating cultural perspectives

Knowledge

Culture-specific knowledge of the social situation in the Judea region (present-day Israel/Palestine) during the days of Jesus

Target audience

The scenario can be used in working with both homogeneous groups and mixed groups. It is highly effective in multicultural/interfaith group.

Aims

Empathy, respect and tolerance between people of different origins and mindsets, finding of similarities in different religions and the insight that people are not to be judged and treated differently by their ethnic origin or social position

Learning outcomes

Having completed the workshop successfully, the learners will have gained:

Detailed knowledge of a key story in Christianity,, The Good Samaritan, a deeper understanding of charity, empathy and brotherhood and increased knowledge of similar values in different religions

Structure of activities

- I. Pulse
- II. Warm up
- III. Enacting a story: The Good Samaritan
- IV. Historical background of the story
- V. Closure and evaluation

Description of activities

I. Pulse (20 minutes)

The workshop starts with an integration circle in order to share thoughts, emotions and experiences since the last workshop.

Steps to follow

1. Arrange the chairs in a circle. Invite the participants to take a seat. With the participants and the leader sitting in a circle, they are able to see each other – this formation is conducive for contact. None of the seats in the circle is marked out as special, everyone is equal.
2. Ask the participants: *How are you today? How are you feeling about this workshop?* The question might have a different form, but it should be aimed at uncovering the participants' inner worlds. In this case, participants can choose from a selection of scarves to describe their current state of mind, feelings and thoughts about the last workshop and expectations towards the one that is starting. Put the scarves in the middle of the integration circle, be sure that there are more than there are participants. Some people find it easier to talk about their thoughts and feelings with the help of an object while others find it more difficult because they find no relationship between their thoughts and the things but usually they gradually understand the purpose of the inspirational material.

II. Warm-up: Movement – body expression (45 minutes)

The warm up exercise introduces the group to the subjects present in the biblical story of the Good Samaritan: Humanity and brotherly love.

Steps to follow

1. Ask participants to build groups of two to four. Deal out papers with one quotation on each. The quotations are the Golden Rule from nine different religions. Choose as many as the number of groups.
2. Ask the groups to discuss their quotation and express the meaning of it in a human sculpture. Examine each sculpture, one at a time. Let other participants ask the persons forming the sculpture (one at a time by touching her lightly) five questions in order to better understand the bodily expressions. When all sculptures have been studied ask one person from each group to read aloud their quotation and where they come from.
3. Ask participants to sit in a circle and discuss the Golden Rule and why it is central in many religions. The discussion is crucial for making the participants ready for the interpretation of the parable of the good Samaritan.

The Golden Rule Quotations:

Lay not on any soul a load that you would not wish to be laid upon you, and desire not for anyone the things you would not desire for yourself.
Baha'u'llah, Gleanings

Treat not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.
The Buddha, Udana–Varga 5.18

Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them.

Christianity. Bible, Matthew 7.12

Not one of you is a believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.

Islam. Forty Hadith of an-Nawawi 13

Try your best to treat others as you would wish to be treated yourself, and you will find that this is the shortest way to benevolence.

Confucianism. Mencius VII.A.4

One should not behave towards others in a way which is disagreeable to oneself. This is the essence of morality. All other activities are due to selfish desire.

Hinduism. Mahabharata, Anusasana Parva 113.8

One going to take a pointed stick to pinch a baby bird should first try it on himself to feel how it hurts.

African Traditional Religions. Yoruba Proverb (Nigeria)

What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor: that is the whole Torah; all the rest of it is commentary; go and learn."

Judaism. Talmud, Shabbat 31a

Young was I once, I walked alone,
and bewildered seemed in the way;
then I found me another and rich I thought me,
for man is the joy of man.

Nordic mythology. Hávamál 47 (from Poetic Edda)

III. Enacting a story: The Parable of the Good Samaritan (one hour)

The sacred text worked with in this workshop is one of the key stories of the New Testament: The Parable of the Good Samaritan. The term "good Samaritan" is used as a common metaphor in many languages to mean someone who helps a stranger. The name has consequently been used for a number of charitable organizations.

The story takes place on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. The road is presumably dangerous for travellers since it provides excellent hiding places for robbers. A man is travelling alone on the road. He falls into the hands of robbers who leave him stripped, beaten and dying. A priest walks by. He chooses to ignore the man's cry for help and so does a Levite who also passes by. These two men are representatives of organized religion. A Samaritan is travelling this same road and sees the wounded man. He belongs, in contrast to the priest and Levite, to a despised group (perhaps similar to the immigrants of our time?) The Samaritan is moved by pity. He puts the man on his own donkey and brings him to an inn. When the Samaritan leaves he gives the inn-keeper enough money to sustain the wounded man and asks him to take care of him. He tells the inn-keeper that if the nursing of the man costs more money he will pay when he returns.

Steps to follow

1. Ask the participants to read the text and ask one of them to retell it, in order to ensure everybody's knowledge of the narrative.
2. Create a stage: Use scarves or other items to make a path through the story. The trainer is first to make the path for the participants to understand the essence of the activity. Scenes in the path:
 - The Man's Route
 - The Temple
 - Robbers' Dwelling

Setting of the Robbery
 The Journey of the Good Samaritan
 The Inn

3. Ask for volunteers to enact the characters. The "path" technique means that the improvisation takes place at all settings at the same time; nonetheless the course of events follows the path of the travelling man and the Good Samaritan. Participants are enacting the play on all stages through the whole activity. This time all participants have roles in the play. If there are not enough roles for all the participants, you can create some new ones. Roles with suggestions for extra roles:
 - The travelling man (a donkey travelling with him)
 - The priest
 - The Levite (more priests and Levites)
 - Robbers (number depends on size of the group)
 - The Good Samaritan (his donkey)
 - The inn-keeper (the inn-keeper's family, servants)
 - (The voice of Pain, or other embodied feelings, which talk to the actors)
 - (Animals, trees or anything else in the surroundings)
4. Performers take their places on stage. The scarves used in the integration circle can now be used as costumes. Ask actors to start improvising their activities. Let them improvise for a while before you ask the participant who interprets the travelling man to begin his journey. Before asking the man to start moving along the setting, ask all actors who they are interpreting, their names and positions and their current feelings. Use the freeze technique to stop characters at crucial moments; ask what they are feeling and experiencing. (Freeze technique means that you gently touch the arm of the person you want to address and the whole play freezes while you are having the conversation.)
 Performance starts. Only one scene is active at a time. Performers move to their places as the man travels. Use the freeze technique at important moments to stop and interview participants.
5. Ask performers to step out of their roles and free themselves from all the relationships they entered during the play.
6. As a leader you need to be prepared for any individual becoming too prominent. When that happens, regain balance by interviewing the person.

IV. Historical background of the story of the Good Samaritan to share with participants

A large part of the recorded teachings of Jesus of Nazareth consists of parables. These are most often simple stories about situations in everyday life used as a means of teaching about spiritual things. Usually they are thought of as emphasizing a single point but some Christian authors have seen them as analogies, where every detail of the story has some hidden meaning.

This Parable depicts the situation in Israel/Palestine during the days of Jesus as that of a multicultural society with different religious and ethnic groups. There were Jews, Greeks, Romans and a group called Samaritans, a name relating to Samaria the old capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel before it was conquered by Assyrians in the eighth Century BCE.

There are different interpretations about the origins of the Samaritans. They themselves taught that they

descended from Northern Israeli tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, but Jewish sources claim they were the descendants of people the Assyrians repopulated in Samaria in place of the Hebrews they deported. Be that as it may, during the time of Jesus they represented a different socio/religious group with their religion, though bearing resemblance to Judaism. However, there was a feud between the two groups and little communication – the two groups despising each other. Therefore, it is remarkable that Jesus being Jewish, and addressing his fellow Jews, makes a Samaritan, someone despised by them, the hero of the story. By this he is emphasizing that it is the good deed that matters, not socio–religious background or status.

V. Closure and evaluation (one hour)

The final stage of the process is dedicated to reflection and discussions of the common experience and those aspects of the play which the participants find relevant for their own lives.

Steps to follow

1. Ask participants to discuss the common experience in small groups. They should reflect on those aspects they find relevant to their own lives. *Did I mirror myself in my character? Did I picture myself in any other character?*
2. Gather the participants in a circle to discuss the main topics of the session. Prompt the discussion with the following questions: Do cultural beliefs and values play an important role in the way people show neighbourliness and charity? Who is The Good Samaritan in your society?

Source texts

The Parable of the Good Samaritan: New Testament: Luke 10:25–37

BROTHERHOOD AND HUMANITY: BIBLIODRAMA WITH THE METHODS OF CREATIVE WRITING

The methods of creative learning here presented can actually be used on all the stories within this bibliodrama curriculum. The creative writing exercise appears as an additional workshop after the traditional bibliodrama workshop.

Aspects of intercultural competence addressed

Attitudes

Respect and openness for other cultures, willingness to suspend judgment and value cultural diversity

Skills

Skills in interpreting cultures and in relating culture and religions to one another, skills in seeing modern values in old stories

Knowledge

Culture-specific knowledge of the the story worked with, general knowledge about the values of the story

Target audience

The scenario can be used in working with both homogeneous groups and mixed groups.

Aims

To enhance empathy, respect and tolerance between people of different origins and mindsets as the chosen story presents

Learning outcomes

Having completed the workshop successfully, the learners will have gained:

A detailed knowledge of the story worked with, a deeper understanding of the values worked with as well as understanding of the values of contemporary society compared to the values of an ancient and distant society

Structure of activities

- I. Pulse
- II. Warm up exercise
- III. Enacting Bibliodrama: Writing a story
- IV. Closure and evaluation

Description of activities**I. Pulse (25 minutes)**

As usual the workshop starts with an intergration circle in order to calm the minds and share thoughts, emotions and experiences since the last workshop. This time the integration circle is a little different since it preferably takes place around a table, with participants equipped with pens and paper. Prepare participants for this different workshop. If anyone is for some reason afraid of writing, make sure they feel comfortable, for example by assuring them that they won't have to read their writings aloud unless they want to.

Steps to follow

1. Give everyone any kind of a postcard. Ask them to write about their expectation to the workshop.
2. Ask participants to share their writings by reading or retelling.

II. Warm up exercise (35 minutes)

The purpose of the warm up exercise is to warm up the writing skills of the participants before the main story of the workshop is written.

Steps to follow

1. Tell the participants that you will read to them three short paragraphs. The paragraphs could be the following or any others you choose:

"Please taste this," he said while he passed us the odd-smelling fish. "This is a specialty of the region."

"I stared at my reflection and thought of how much I have changed since I moved here".

"I don't pray for God to take my problems away, I pray only for God to give me the strength to get through them."

2. Read aloud the first paragraph and ask participants to write it down and compose the continuation. Stop them after four minutes, participants don't have to finish. Repeat the procedure with the second and third sentences.
3. Ask participants to read or recount for the first narrative. Repeat with the two others.
4. When all three texts have been shared, open discussion about the intercultural and interfaith contents of the short stories. Don't forget to pay compliments for their efforts and point out any literary highlights in the texts.

III. Enacting Bibliodrama: Writing a story

Since the participants have already worked with the story, preferably the last time they met, the story will still be fresh in their minds. In this case the participants repeat their work with the Good Samaritan but now with a different method.

Steps to follow

1. Explain to participants that they are going to write a short story based on the parable of the good Samaritan (or any other story the group has worked with). The stories will be set in modern times. Draw some simple human figures on the whiteboard, as many as you want to have characters in the story, for example the travelling man, the good Samaritan, the priest, a robber, the inn-keeper.
2. Ask participants to discuss and decide on the main facts; the names, age, race, ethnic origin, residence, family status of characters in modern times. How many details you decide on depends on the group's willingness to make shared decisions but most often they have fun with it. Write the information on the whiteboard.
3. Divide characters between participants. More than one participant can write about the same character. Ask participants to write the modern version of the story, either individually or in small groups if many are writing about the same character. Each story is written from the point of view of one character. The authors use the available details but otherwise write freely. More characters can appear in the stories than just those discussed by the group.

IV. Closure and evaluation

The last part of the workshop is as normally devoted to reflection on what has been done.

Steps to follow

1. Participants are asked to sit in a circle.
2. Participants read their stories aloud, one at a time. Every reading is followed by a discussion about the message and moral (and even literary qualities) of each story. The workshop closes with a discussion in small groups about what seemed to be the main theme of the short stories. What do the stories tell us about values in modern times? Was there a difference between the moral in the modern stories and the ancient one?

Source text

Any story the group has already studied

Comments

Creative writing is an alternative way of working with the texts and their intercultural contexts. Different languages can be a problem in sharing the work that participants have produced; people often choose to write in their own language even if they speak in the common language of the group. Instead of reading out the texts as written in the mother tongue, participants can retell the story in the common language.

INTERCULTURAL AND INTERFAITH COMMUNICATION: THE MIXED MEDIA BIBLIODRAMA EXERCISE

Aspects of intercultural competence addressed*Attitudes*

Curiosity and willingness to create a common understanding in a group. Readiness to value cultural diversity

Skills

Skills in listening and interacting with people from other cultures and religions, skills in discovering information about other cultures and passing new knowledge to others. Skills in critically evaluating cultural perspectives including that of one's own culture

Knowledge

Cultural self-awareness and communicative awareness, general cultural knowledge, especially knowledge of processes of cultural, societal and individual interaction

Target audience

The scenario can be used in working with both homogeneous groups and mixed groups. The scenario is highly effective in multicultural/interfaith groups.

Aims

To inspire a dialogue between different people about interfaith and cultural diversity in order to fuel positive and unprejudiced attitudes about the diversity of humanity, to put participants in a scenario reminiscent of a confusing, multicultural situation where people of different origin are obliged to come to a common conclusion and make a concrete product, to promote the use of creative ways in intercultural learning and developing methodological proficiency for the intercultural classroom

Learning outcomes

Having completed the workshop successfully, the learners will have gained:

Increased general knowledge about the different tasks participants are allocated to work with, increased skills in coming to a common conclusion in an intercultural group, creating an intellectual

piece of work out of the material worked with, presenting the outcomes and explaining the working process, increased ability to connect different objects and concepts in a meaningful way and enlighten other people with the working experience, increased ability to work on complex projects with people from different backgrounds.

Structure of activities

- I. Pulse
- II. Warm up
- III. Enacting bibliodrama: The Mixed Media Exercise
- IV. Closure and evaluation
- V. Inspirational material

Description of activities

I. Pulse (20 minutes)

Steps to follow

1. Before the workshop starts, arrange inspirational objects in an eye-catching manner, making sure they look inviting to the participants. The inspirational objects can be books about religions and different cultures, art-making materials of choice, simple musical instruments and theater props.
2. Arrange the chairs in a circle. Greet the participants and invite them to take a seat. With the participants and the leader sitting in a circle, they are able to see each other – this formation is conducive to contact. None of the seats in the circle is marked out as special, everyone is equal.
3. Ask the participants: How are you today? How are you feeling about this workshop? The question might take a different form, but it should be aimed at uncovering the participants' inner worlds.
4. This particular workshop should not be the first workshop in a bibliodrama course since it is different from other workshops. Explain to participants that they are invited to try an alternative bibliodrama. Ask them if they are ready to leave their "bibliodrama comfort zone". This scenario presents a different approach since there are no stories being dramatized and analyzed. Instead there are presented some people, objects and concepts related to interfaith and intercultural and worked with by means of art and research.

II. Warm-up exercise (20 minutes)

Steps to follow

Ask the participants to walk across the room, paying attention to one another. When they have been walking around for some time, start to discreetly deal out pieces of paper, one to each person. On the notes are written the names of different emotions and participants are asked to walk around expressing this feeling facially, vocally or bodily. Three to five receive the same feeling and the purpose of the exercise is to get people to find others they share the feeling with. When everyone has found his partner announce that these are the groups that will work together in the Mixed Media Exercise.

III. Enacting Bibliodrama: Mixed Media Exercise (100 minutes)

Steps to follow

1. Ask people to sit in a circle while you explain the upcoming exercise. The groups of three to five (created in the warm-up exercise) preferably sit side by side.
2. On sheets of paper in seven different colours there are some words written. Each colour has one category of topics. You are free to choose other categories than those we present here, and to use more or fewer than the seven suggested. The more there are the more complex the exercise gets. In this case the seven categories are: stereotypical quotations, inspirational passages, colours, religious objects, fusion music, people, ways to inner wellbeing.
3. Ask each group to take seven notes in total, one in each of the seven different colours from a bowl. One group could for example get the notes:
 - All Turkish men are horny for blond and blue-eyed women
 - "Help me never to judge another until I have walked a mile in his moccasins." – Indian prayer
 - Purple
 - Dream catcher
 - Jazz-rock fusion
 - Anne Frank
 - Worship
4. Explain the task: To create a work of art or make a study of the subjects. The words on the notes should not be taken too literally – participants are allowed to use the material freely! The participants should look behind the words, find their different meanings and make connections in a meaningful work of art. The outcome of the exercise is impossible to predict. The product could be in the form of music, visual arts, performing arts, literature, report or presentation – or a multimedia performance.
5. Make sure after half an hour of working that all groups are heading towards a solution. Give ideas and encouragement if needed.

IV. Closure and evaluation (100 minutes)

The closure/evaluation part is extremely important in this exercise. Make sure to have enough time for presentations and performances as well as for a discussion.

Steps to follow

1. Check what kind of presentations the participants have prepared. Find the appropriate space and support equipment needed. Start the sharing of each group's contribution. It can be a good idea to examine each work again after the group has explained the meaning behind the work. Discuss the meaning and messages of all the products with the whole group.
2. Finally, ask the participants to discuss in smaller groups the contribution of this exercise to the intercultural bibliodrama workshops. Did the somewhat chaotic atmosphere of the exercise make participants feel insecure as they sometimes do in intercultural situations? How did they deal with that?

V. Inspirational material

Stereotypical quotations:

- Polish people are the most ignorant people in the world.
- All Turkish men are horny for blond and blue-eyed women.
- All Jews are money-hungry.
- Hungarians have a very annoying noise, called language.
- All Icelanders are vikings.

Intercultural and interfaith inspirational passages:

- People in all these cultures are basically the same; they eat like us, they dress like us, so they must think like us
- God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
The courage to change the things I can,
And wisdom to know the difference. (Reinhold Niebuhr)
- When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion. (Ethiopian Proverb)
- "Help me never to judge another until I have walked a mile in his moccasins." (Indian prayer)
- "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres... And now these three remain: faith hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." (Bible, I Corinthians 13:4-7, 13)

Colors:

Blue, purple, red, white, gold

Ways to inner being or wellbeing:

Meditation, confession, worship, prayer, 12 step program...

Religious objects:

Dream catcher, consecrated wafer, coat of many colors, sacred lotus, prayer wheel...

Persons related to interculture:

Gandhi, Hitler, Anne Frank, Genghis Khan, Nelson Mandela...

Fusion music:

Jazz-rock fusion, reggae, Afro-Cuban, folk punk, rock, Latin house...

Comments

This exercise is possible to perform in a very short time, making the participants think and act quickly, but also for a long time. If your workshop time is limited you can shorten the pulse and the warm-up process especially if participants already know each other.



Turkey

RUMI: FOUR PEOPLE WHO DID NOT UNDERSTAND ONE ANOTHER

RUMI: IMMORTALITY TREE

RUMI: THE DEAF'S VISIT TO THE SICK

Three different workshop groups were organized in Turkey as part of the project (two groups in Istanbul and one in Bursa). They took place between January 2012 and September 2012 every week. The sessions in Istanbul were three and a half hours long each; the sessions in Bursa were five–six hours long each. Two people were responsible for formulating and executing the programme of the workshops.

Şafak Ebru Toksoy – studied guidance and psychological counseling at both undergraduate and graduate levels. She worked as a psychological counselor in the education sector for fifteen years. During this period she provided service to teachers and school managers, as well. Toksoy works as a psychological counselor and psychotherapist in Kocaeli University Medical School Psychiatry Service for the last five years, mainly working with adults. Her work focus is trauma and its recovery. Toksoy has a special interest in cultural factors, values and beliefs that influence thoughts and behaviors of individuals and groups. Toksoy is engaged in training in Transactional Analysis since 1999 with trainers from International and European Transactional Analysis Organizations.

Aslı Yeşil – studied psychology in undergraduate level and then coupled it with graduates studies in education in psychological trauma. She has been working as a consultant and trainer in the health sector for seven years. Yeşil has been engaged in training in psychodrama since 2009 and has been awarded with the title "co–therapist". Yeşil has observed the influence of cultural and communal value systems on individual experiences in her work and training experiences. She is interested in the impact of geographical location on different cultural identities and how they change in time.

In the beginning there were questions in our minds such as: "Will we be able to hold the different identities together?", "Will we be able to find enough participants?". We were worried that creation of a common ground that would give voice to the differences would not be an easy matter because of the biases that we had assumed to exist. Furthermore, bibliodrama was not a method that was widely known nor widely used in Turkey prior to our practice.

We started the first groups session with an understandable unease and curiosity. Group consisted of participants coming from different ethnical backgrounds and spiritual identities. Naturally, this common ground created through the diverse cultural and spiritual identities of the individuals was open to both good and bad surprises. We think that the use of Rumi's Masnavi has softened this issue, embracing the entire group and making it easy for everyone to share because all of the participants were familiar with Rumi and his humanistic philosophy and an initial common ground was built through the text.

In the later sessions, the participants wanted to hear and experience different texts reflecting each other's belief systems. Thus we began to experience texts from the Koran, Torah and Bible through the technique of bibliodrama.

The participants in Istanbul had different backgrounds such as Christianity, Judaism and Islam with Armenian, Kurdish and/or Turkish heritages. The participants in Bursa came from different parts of the country and belonged to different occupational groups. The occupations of the participants were, among the others: actress, psychological counselor, psychologist, teacher, midwife, trainer, craftsman, public relations specialist and artists.

The composition and the dynamics of the two groups working in Istanbul, as well as the results achieved were very much comparable. Throughout the working process the participants came to realize their biases, corrected the misinformation that they had about each other and filled the gaps of information. The similarities between the different cultures and belief systems of the participants in terms of basic human values and life situations were expressed during group work. The participants shared many episodes of discrimination and having to work through the biases and the traces within themselves left by the fears caused by these biases and differences. They focused on experiences in which they felt helpless and hopeless and how they coped with these experiences. The third group work carried out in Bursa was unique in terms of its context: Its aim was to create an awareness of the cultural components of the participants coming from different regions of Turkey belonging to different professional groups. Within this framework, the aim was to underline the enriching potential of the differences apart from the potential of the differences to create conflict. The group in Bursa had a meaningful outcome in which they realized their biases towards one another and were able to develop their skills in dialogue. Furthermore, the individuals got to know their own cultural origins and realize that this could be used for their personal and social development.

The main aim of the workshops was to enable the participants to use their experience in bibliodrama as a method to understand others with different occupations, cultural backgrounds, belief systems and to understand the society that they were living in. Furthermore, the participants were expected to obtain more information about the different cultures and values residing within their communities through the bibliodrama experience as an end—result of which the participants would develop a sense of tolerance and command of the technique of bibliodrama to be used by themselves in both their personal and professional lives.

"FOUR PEOPLE WHO DID NOT UNDERSTAND ONE ANOTHER" RUMI (MAULANA)

Aspects of intercultural competence addressed

Attitudes

Respect and acceptance for differences, interest and curiosity in other cultures, sensitivity to the needs of the others, solution focused conflict resolution approach, universal perception of the human being

Skills

Understanding and interpreting the different intercultural communication processes, empathy, making use of communication processes focused on solutions in conflict situations

Knowledge

Culture-specific knowledge, especially knowledge of Sufism values and traditions

Target audience

This scenario can be used with both homogenous and heterogeneous groups. However, it can be especially beneficial when working with groups coming from different belief systems and cultural backgrounds.

Aims

- To make people aware of the importance of listening to one another and understanding each other.
- To experience and explore the various options for hearing, understanding and getting along.
- To experience the importance of sensitivity and awareness for the needs of one another in inter-personal and inter-cultural relationships.
- To see the common characteristics of being human
- To encourage the participants to learn, experience and think more about Sufism and the Islamic tradition.

Learning outcomes

Having completed the workshop successfully, the learners:

- Will understand the importance of communication in inter-personal and inter-cultural relationships
- Will develop a deeper understanding for the causes of and the solutions for the conflicts in inter-personal and inter-cultural relationships
- Will develop an understanding about the universal concept of a human being by observing that human beings have similar interests and needs which is beyond all the cultural, lingual and spiritual differences
- Will develop a more engaged and open approach towards other cultures and belief systems

Structure of activities

- I. Integration Circle – Pulse
- II. Warm-up and Information about Rumi's Story
- III. Enacting a Story "Four People Who Did Not Understand One Another"
Reading and Dramatization
- IV. Closure and Evaluation

Description of activities

I. Integration Circle – Pulse

Steps to follow

1. Participants are welcomed by the group leader and are invited to sit in one of the chairs that have been arranged beforehand in a circular pattern. Care should be taken to ensure that all of the chairs are of the same model and none of them should be placed either in the front or at the back of the circular line created by the other chairs. Sitting in a circular seating arrangement allows all of the participants to see each other and makes it easier for the group to communicate.
2. The leader starts by asking the group the following questions: "*How are you?*", "*What are your thoughts and feelings that you brought with you to the group work today?*" All of the group members are allowed to express themselves within the framework of these questions. The group leader should pay great care not to interrupt the participants as they speak and he/she should not make comments about the group members' words. The leader also makes sure that the group listen to one another without interrupting each other. After the group members express themselves, the leader begins to a warm-up exercise.

II. Warm-up

Steps to follow

1. Pieces of fabric with different colours and patterns are left in the middle of the room randomly.
2. Instrumental music is playing in the background.
3. The group leader tells the group to listen to the music and to express their feelings, as they listen to the music, with movements and dance by using the pieces of fabric in the middle in any way that they choose, but without using words.
4. After this exercise, which lasts about 10–12 minutes, the music fades off and the leader invites the participants to sit down. The participants are allowed to rest for a couple of minutes.
5. After that, the leader introduces the participants to the story by saying "We will continue the work of the day with a story from Masnavi – Four People Who Did Not Understand One Another".

III. Enacting a Story "Four People Who Did Not Understand One Another"

Steps to follow

Reading:

1. The group leader gives the task of reading the story to a volunteer. The participant reads the story to the group loudly enough for all the members to hear the story (if the members of the group feel the need the story can be read once more)

Dramatization:

2. After the story is read, the leader tells the group members that they can act out the story by choosing any one of the following roles from it: characters, objects, places, sounds, time, etc. Participants can get into any role that they like by using the materials which had been prepared beforehand (colourful fabrics, papers, costumes, crayons, candles, etc.)
3. By asking the participants their names or what their role is, the group leader allows the entire group to hear about the roles that are being played. After this, dramatization starts.
4. Throughout the dramatization the leader:
 - Facilitates and encourages the participants to try out different roles
 - During the improvisations, whenever the emotions become elevated, and whenever discussions, conflicts, movements, hesitations or blocks arise, the leader stops the dramatization and creates the necessary conditions for the participants to realize what they are experiencing at that moment. To achieve this aim the leader asks the following questions: "*What is happening now?*", "*What are you feeling?*", "*What are you thinking?*". After collecting participants' answers, the leader tells the group to continue with the play. Such interventions provide the background for the participants to deeply experience the roles that they bring to life.
 - Each dramatization involves a process which includes the elements of the initial story and the actors themselves. Therefore the leader welcomes every effort of the participants as they try to convey themselves through the roles that they play. During this time the leader observes the process.
5. Upon completion of the dramatization, the group leader tells the participants to step out of their roles, to set them aside, and invites them to sit in a circular pattern.

IV. Closure and Evaluation

During the closing and evaluation which form the last step of the session, the entire group evaluates the group work and connections are made between experiences during the group work and real life. The leader facilitates an all-round evaluation in which emotions, thoughts and behaviour are included.

Steps to follow

1. Primarily, the experiences connected with the role that was played are evaluated. To achieve this aim the leader asks the following questions: "*What did you feel during the dramatization of the part that you chose to play?*", "*What did you experience?*". After that, the leader asks the following questions to enable the participants to share their daily life experiences: "*Did the things that you experienced during the dramatization include elements from your daily life?*", "*What things did you realize in relation to this?*"
2. The session continues with a discussion about the similarities, differences and associations between the experiences during the dramatizations and real life. Lastly, the leader asks the question, "*What are the things that you became aware of during this session in terms of the communication processes of yourselves and others?*" He/she receives the answers of the participants upon which the group work is completed.

Source texts

STORY

FOUR PEOPLE WHO DID NOT UNDERSTAND ONE ANOTHER

A man made payments to four others who worked for him in return for their efforts. One of those four was a Turk, one was an Arab, one was an Iranian and the last one was Greek.

The Iranian told his friends to buy "engür" with the money they earned.

The Arab opposed the Iranian, saying "No, no way! I want "ineb" and need not an "engür".

The Turk got into the conversation saying "This money is mine. I want neither ineb nor engür. I want "üzüm".

Lastly, the Greek entered the conversation telling the others to forget about whatever they said and tried to convince them to buy "istafil".

Although engür, ineb, üzüm and istafil all meant the same thing, these four people from four different languages did not understand one another and got into a conflict about what to buy. Then the conflict transformed into a fight.

**Source: Akbaş, A. Vahap (2011). Adapted from Mesnevi Volume: 2, Verses: 3719–3729. Mesnevi Stories, Timaş Publications, Istanbul.*

"IMMORTALITY TREE" RUMI (MAULANA)

Aspects of intercultural competence addressed

Attitudes

Respect for and acceptance of diversity; curiosity about other cultures, faiths and values; openness to communication and dialogue with other cultures and faiths

Skills

Being able to understand and interpret the perspectives of different cultures and faiths, empathy

Knowledge

Culture-specific knowledge, especially knowledge of the values and traditions of Sufism

Target audience

This scenario can be used when working with both homogeneous and heterogeneous groups. However, it will be even more effective when working with groups that have different faith and cultural backgrounds. It can be used to question the purpose of life and realizing this in light of the relationship between form and substance. Additionally, it can be used to observe how our lifestyles and choices are influenced by our religious beliefs and cultural identity.

Aims

- To promote awareness about the 'meaning' of life
- To promote awareness about 'form' in life
- To promote awareness about the relationship – and contradictions – between 'meaning' and 'form'
- To obtain information about the perspectives of different faiths and cultures on death and immortality
- To encourage participants to think about and experience Sufi and Islamic traditions

Learning outcomes

Having completed the workshop successfully, the learners:

- Will grasp the influence of beliefs and culture on how we live
- Will develop a deep understanding of factors such as culture and faith that determine the meaning of human life
- Will develop tolerance for different cultures and beliefs based upon a Sufi perspective

Structure of activities

- I. Integration Circle – Pulse
- II. Warm–up and Information about Rumi
- III. Enacting a Story: "Immortality Tree"
Reading and Game or Discussion
- IV. Closure and Evaluation

Description of activities**I. Integration Circle – Pulse**

The same rules of holding the integration circle as in the first scenario should be applied.

II. Warm–up*Steps to follow*

1. The leader tells the participants that he/she is going to play the *azan* – the call to prayer (church bells or hymns could be played as well).
2. After listening to the *azan* quietly, the participants share their thoughts and feelings.
3. After that, the leader reads the following lines from Rumi:

"Come, come, whoever you are.
Wanderer, worshipper, lover of living, it doesn't matter
Ours is not a caravan of despair.
Come even if you have broken your vow a thousand times,
Come, yet again, come, come.
.....
When we are dead, seek not our tomb in the earth,
But find it in the hearts of men."
4. After that he/she announces, "We'll continue our workshop with a story from Masnavi on the meaning of life" and invites the participants to listen to the story.

III. Enacting a Story "Immortality Tree"

Steps to follow

Reading:

The group leader gives the text of the story to a volunteer to read. The participant reads the story loud enough so that everyone can hear (the story can be read again if participants feel it's necessary)

Game:

1. After the story is read, the leader tells the participants that they can act out the roles of the people, objects, voices/sounds, time, etc. in the story as they desire. Using materials prepared in advance (coloured fabrics, paper, clothes, crayons, candles, etc.) participants assume their roles.
2. Asking the question, "What is your name?" or "Who are you?", the leader makes sure that all the participants get to know each other's roles. Following that the acting starts.
3. During the re-enactment, the leader:
 - Gives participants the opportunity to adopt different roles and encourages them to do so.
 - During the re-enactment, which involves improvisation, in moments when the emotion level gets really high, and discussions, dilemmas, movements, or obstruction happens, he/she will pause the play and try to make the participants become aware of what is going on. To do that he/she will ask the following questions: "What is happening now?", "How do you feel?", "What do you think?" etc. After receiving answers from the participants, he/she will tell them to continue the play. This kind of intervention will help provide the foundation for participants to experience their roles more deeply.
 - In addition to what happens in the story, each re-enactment is a process in which participants incorporate something of themselves as well. Therefore, the leader will be accepting of however the participants want to express themselves in their roles. Meanwhile he/she will observe the process.

After the re-enactment is over the group leader will tell the participants to stop acting and ask them to sit once again in a circle.

The other option: Rather than acting out the story, participants might prefer talking about it. In this case:

Steps to follow

1. After the story is over, the leader asks the participants: "How did this story make you feel?"
2. Participants express their feelings and thoughts.
3. During the discussion time, the leader will draw attention to differences and commonalities in the perspectives of different belief systems and cultures.

IV. Closure and evaluation

During closure and evaluation, everything experienced during the group session is evaluated and connected with real life experiences. The leader makes sure that participants evaluate everything experienced in terms of their emotions, thoughts and behaviours.

If participants re-enacted the story:

Steps to follow

1. First the experiences regarding the roles are evaluated. In order to do this the leader asks the following questions: "What did you feel while acting your role?", "What did you experience?" After that, encourage participants to share experiences from their daily life by asking the following question: "Does your experience in the play resemble any of your daily life experiences?"
2. Next, the following question is asked: "What are the similarities, differences and connections between what happens in the play and what happens in real life?" Finally, the leader asks, "What have you realized in this session that will help you recognize and satisfy both your own needs and those of other people?" After receiving participants' answers, the leader ends the workshop.

The other option, in case participants preferred talking about the story rather than acting it out:

Steps to follow

1. The leader starts the evaluation by asking the following questions: "What kind of experiences have you had today?", "What did you realize about your perspective on life in this session?" and, "Have you been influenced by the other participants and have you felt any difference within yourself?"
2. The participants are asked about the similarities, differences and connections between what happened during the session and real life. After getting responses from the participants, the leader ends the session.

Source texts

STORY

IMMORTALITY TREE

A certain wise man related that in Hindustan there was a tree of such wonderful virtue that whosoever ate of its fruit lived forever. Hearing this, a king deputed one of his courtiers to go in quest of it. The courtier accordingly proceeded to Hindustan, and traveled all over that country, inquiring of every one he met where this tree was to be found. Some of these persons professed their entire ignorance, others joked him, and others gave him false information; and, finally, he had to return to his country with his mission unaccomplished. He then, as a last resource, betook himself to the sage who had first spoken of the tree, and begged for further information about it, and the sage replied to him as follows:

*The Shaikh laughed, and said to him, "O friend,
This is the tree of knowledge, O knowing one;
Very high, very fine, very expansive,
The very water of life from the circumfluent ocean.
Thou hast run after form, O ill-informed one,
Wherefore thou lackest the fruit of the tree of substance.*

Source: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/isl/masnavi/msn02.htm>

"THE DEAF'S VISIT TO THE SICK" RUMI (MAULANA)

Aspects of intercultural competence addressed

Attitudes

Respect for and acceptance of diversity; curiosity about other cultures; openness to communication with other cultures; sensitivity toward others needs

Skills

Empathy; being able to understand and interpret different patterns of cross-cultural communications

Knowledge

Culture-specific knowledge, especially knowledge of Sufism values and traditions

Target audience

This scenario can be used when working with both homogeneous and heterogeneous groups. However, it will be even more effective when working with groups that have different faith and cultural backgrounds.

Aims

- To experience the outcomes of different needs and expectations in the interpersonal and cross-cultural relations
- To experience the importance of sensitivity and awareness of each others needs in interpersonal and cross-cultural relations
- To realize the formation of prejudice and its outcomes in interpersonal and cross-cultural relations
- To encourage participants to obtain information and experience about Sufism and Islamic tradition and to think about them

Learning outcomes

Having completed the workshop successfully, the learners:

- Will comprehend the importance of empathy in interpersonal and cross-cultural communications
- Will develop a deeper understanding concerning the roots and solutions of problems like prejudice, anger, conflict, etc. in interpersonal and cross-cultural relations
- Will develop a more welcoming approach toward different cultures and faiths

Structure of activities

- I. Integration Circle – Pulse
- II. Warm-up and Information about Rumi
- III. Enacting a Story "The Deaf's Visit To The Sick"
Reading and Game
- IV. Closure and Evaluation

Description of activities

I. Integration Circle – Pulse

The same rules of holding the integration circle as in the first scenario should be applied.

II. Warm–up

Steps to follow

1. The leader lets the participants know that he/she is going to play mystical music and tells them to feel free to listen however they wish – standing up, sitting, laying down, dancing, etc. He/she starts the music.
2. When the leader thinks that the participants are focused enough, which usually takes 7–8 minutes, he/she decreases the volume and eventually turns it off.
3. Right after that he/she asks the following question: "*Hear!* Masnavi (The book Rumi wrote) starts with this word: *Hear!* We started our workshop by listening to mystical music. Could you please express what you heard in one word?"
4. The leader listens to the participants' one–word answers without asking anything or making any comments as long as the answers are understandable.
5. Afterwards, he/she tells the participants, "We'll continue our workshop with a story on "hearing, listening" from Masnavi," and asks them to have a seat.

III. Enacting a Story "The Deaf `s Visit To the Sick"

Steps to follow

Reading:

The group leader gives the text of the story to a volunteer to read. The participant reads the story loud enough so that everyone can hear (the story can be read again if participants feel it's necessary)

Dramatization

1. After the story is read, the leader tells the participants that they can act out the roles of the people, objects, voices/sounds, time, etc. in the story as they desire. Using materials prepared in advance (coloured fabrics, paper, clothes, crayons, candles, etc.) participants assume their roles.
2. Asking the question, "What is your name?" or "Who are you?", the leader makes sure that all the participants get to know each other's roles. Following that, the acting starts.
3. During the re–enactment, the leader:
 - Gives participants the opportunity to adopt different roles and encourages them to do so.
 - During the re–enactment, which involves improvisation, in moments when the emotion level gets really high, and discussions, dilemmas, movements, or obstruction happens, he/she will pause the play and try to make the participants become aware of what is going on. To do that he/she will ask the following questions: "What is happening now?", "How do you feel?", "What do you think?" etc. After receiving answers from the participants, he/she will tell them to continue the play. This kind of intervention will help provide the foundation for participants to experience their roles more deeply.

- In addition to what happens in the story, each re-enactment is a process in which participants incorporate something of themselves as well. Therefore, the leader will be accepting of however the participants want to express themselves in their roles. Meanwhile he/she will observe the process.
4. After the re-enactment is over the group leader will tell the participants to stop acting and ask them to sit once again in a circle.

IV. Closure and Evaluation

During closure and evaluation, everything experienced during the group session is evaluated and connected with real life experiences. The leader makes sure that participants evaluate everything experienced in terms of their emotions, thoughts and behaviours.

Steps to follow

1. The leader starts the evaluation by asking the following questions: "How did you feel while you were acting?", "What kind of experiences have you had today?", "Did what you experienced in the play include anything from real life? If so, what did you realize about it?" By answering these questions, participants share their daily life experiences as well.
2. The participants are asked about the similarities, differences and connections between what happened during the session and real life. Finally, the leader asks the following question: "What have you realized in this session that will help you recognize and satisfy both your own needs and those of other people?" After getting responses from the participants, the leader ends the session.

Source texts

STORY

THE DEAF'S VISIT TO THE SICK

There was a poor fellow who was hard of hearing. One day he was told that his neighbor had become sick. The man felt very sorry for his neighbor and decided to visit him. Then he thought to himself: "But how am I going to understand what my neighbor says with my ears hard on hearing? Added to that the possibility of his voice being hard to understand due to the sickness... Yet visiting the sick is very important. I really should go."

The man could not decide what to do for a while. In the end he came up with the idea that he could guess what the sick would say, and hence he could be prepared.

He told himself that he could start by saying "My dear suffering neighbor, how are you?" after greeting. The polite reply, he guessed, would be "I am fine or good" for sure. Then he could continue saying "Thank God" and ask him what he was eating. He thought the neighbor would respond by saying sherbet or lentil soup for sure. He planned to say "Have good health, good appetite. Which doctors are taking care of you?" in return. He guessed his neighbor would mention the name of a doctor. Then he planned to reply by saying "His presence is very fortuitous. When he comes your issues start going well. Whoever he sees gets healed." This way, he thought, he could complete his duty as a neighbor.

The man went to see his sick neighbor with these questions and answers in mind. After greeting he asked the neighbor how he was. The sick was very painful and looked exhausted. He replied, "I feel

like I am dead." The man replied back by saying "Thank God.", thinking that he got the answer he constructed in mind before. The sick neighbor felt offended and hurt. "What kind of a saying is that", he muttered, thinking that he was malicious.

The man went on with his second question and asked the neighbor what he ate. The neighbor who was upset with the first question replied by saying "poison". The man said "Good, good. Have a good appetite" in return.

Upon these lines of conversation the sick neighbor's anger increased even more. Then came the visitor's last question. The man asked which doctor was treating the sick neighbor. The neighbor replied with agony "Enough is enough! The angel of death is coming!". The visitor replied with a smile, unaware of what was going on, "Very good indeed. His presence is very fortuitous. You better feel good and rejoice."

While the sick was overstressed by the situation the man was happy. He was thankful to God that he was able to complete his neighborly duty.

Source: Akbaş, A. Vahap (2011). Adapted from Mesnevi Volume: 1, Verses: 3469–3485. Mesnevi Stories, Timaş Publications, İstanbul, 2011.

Israel

BIBLIODRAMA ON HEROES

Number 1: RABBI AKIVA AND RACHEL

Number 2: St CLARE

Number 3: RUMI AND SHAMS

Workshop sessions in Jerusalem were held between October 2011 and September 2012, totalling 60 hours: Sixteen sessions of 2.5 – 3.5 hours' duration each for the ongoing group, four one-off sessions of varying lengths with different groups and special training sessions for individuals wishing to use the method in other settings.

Yael Unterman (Primary trainer) – a teacher, writer, actress and life coach. She is experienced in a Jewish/American-based school of bibliodrama, which in Europe is termed 'bibliolog', to differentiate it from the Christian-based bibliodrama emerging from there. She has run bibliodramas for Jewish adults since 2002, trained Jewish teachers worldwide in bibliodrama, and has taught Jewish texts extensively. She has also performed around the world in a one-woman show on the subject of Cain and Abel, which emerged from her work with bibliodrama.

Peta Jones Pellach (Assistant trainer) – Director of Educational Activities of the Elijah Interfaith Institute. She came to the project with experience and expertise in the field of interreligious dialogue and adult education. Her specialization is in adapting theological and philosophical material from six religions for use by a broader audience, creating educational resources from academic writing, and training dialogue leaders. She is also a Jewish educator with in-depth knowledge of the Jewish canon of sacred texts.

In Israel, perhaps more than anywhere else, religion does not manage to exploit its potential to be a unifying force; in addition, the religious divisions have political significance. The Elijah Interfaith Institute is based on the premise that sharing religious wisdom fosters peace. Here was an opportunity to demonstrate the power for religion to be an avenue to peace, through the technique of bibliodrama, and we were optimistic that it would succeed. The training session in Poland in November 2011 granted us an expanded repertoire of techniques.

We found bibliodrama to be a great equalizer and a wonderful method for exchanging ideas. Participants felt trust in the trainer and the group. Participants of each faith found it affirming to see the 'others' participate so respectfully and with deep insight into their sacred texts, and even ended up seeing new meaning in them through the bibliodrama.

While we all experienced our common universal humanity, in the way we all related to the drama and dilemmas, it was of equal interest to discover the different interpretations, preconceptions and supplementary knowledge brought to the bibliodrama. Significantly, these did not fall along sharply demarcated faith lines – a Christian might challenge or support the mainstream view, and so might a Jew. Different interpretations of the character were much more a product of our personalities and life–experiences than of religious affiliation. This served to break down barriers between us. We also experienced moments of song, laughter and emotional reflection together.

The Jerusalem group came to respect and feel affection towards each other. It could be said that sustained meetings of any type – and not just bibliodrama – over that number of hours would achieve a similar result. However, much of what transpired, particularly in later sessions, involved participants sharing very personal insights and uncertainties, expressions of deep faith and raw feelings, which would not be revealed in most environments. Through the medium of the text, each participant's humanity came to the fore. We learnt about each other's faith and we also learned about each other. It is expected that many of us will stay in contact with each other.

Most members of the Jerusalem group are in positions of leadership or in teaching roles within their own religious communities and will certainly employ the methodology they have learnt with their students and followers, and some in interreligious contexts, too.

The ongoing Jerusalem group consisted primarily of Jews and Christians, with the occasional Muslim participant. The Jewish participants all live in Israel, mostly in West Jerusalem. Most of the Christians were in Israel on a temporary basis in a variety of frameworks. Most of them currently live in East Jerusalem.

Four 'one-off' meetings were held with visiting groups: psychologists from Australia, who joined up for one session with our regular group (mostly Christians or of no religion, and two Jews); a group of international students of theology in Israel for Biblical studies; a group of Roman Catholic theological students from various countries, supplemented by Jewish students (both residents and visitors to Israel); and two groups of international students from the Conservative Yeshiva (Jewish) and the Bat Kol Summer School (Christian), both in Israel for 1–3 months, who joined together for this session.

BIBLIODRAMA ON HEROES

NUMBER 1: RABBI AKIVA AND RACHEL

Summary

The first of three bibliodramas on the topic of Great People/ Heroes, aiming to examine the concept of "greatness" in each of three religious traditions, to highlight common elements and also the distinctions. They also allow participants to get in touch with their own notions of greatness. The texts are deliberately not drawn from the Bible or Quran, but from folk tales and legends.

Number 1 is a multi–technique bibliodrama on two Jewish heroes, Rabbi Akiva and his wife.

Aspects of intercultural competence addressed

Attitudes

Respect for other cultures; willingness to learn about other cultures; openness to people from other cultures; willingness to suspend judgement

Skills

Skills of listening to people from other cultures; skills of interacting with people from other cultures; skills in discovering information about other cultures; empathy; multi–perspectivity; cognitive flexibility

Knowledge

Knowledge of a text important to Jews; knowledge about Jewish concepts of 'heroism'; knowledge of one of the most important heroes of Jewish history, Rabbi Akiva, and his equally but differently 'heroic' wife, Rachel

Target audience

Adult learners who identify with a specific religious tradition, including Jews and non–Jews. The non–Jews are assumed to have minimal knowledge of Judea in the period after the destruction of the Second Temple or of the Talmud and the Rabbis described in it.

Aims

- To share and explore with a group of Jews and non–Jews a narrative important to Jews but unfamiliar to the non–Jews
- To read the text with respect, even when elements in it differ culturally from the values and practices of [some of] the participants. To empathise with the characters in the narrative through speaking in their voices
- To discover in a Jewish sacred text values that are shared by non–Jews
- To show Jews that non–Jews can teach them something about their own tradition
- To explore the concept of 'heroism' and to recognise two points: firstly, that there are many values and behaviours that are universally regarded as 'heroic'; and secondly, some values and behaviours are admired by one culture more than others

Learning outcomes

Having completed the workshop successfully, the learners will have gained:

Attitudes

- Participants will have empathy for the characters in the narrative and for Jews who uphold them as role-models
- Participants will gain appreciation of the emphasis in Judaism on modesty and on learning
- Jewish participants will have some of their heroes 'validated' by non-Jewish participants, leading to increased commitment to their own tradition; non-Jewish participants will appreciate the 'heroism' of someone outside their own tradition, while not being pressured to adopt this hero as one of their own, increasing their openness to diversity

Skills

- Participants will increase their 'tool-box' of various activities to break down cultural barriers.
- Participants may learn to listen more effectively, after grappling with a text that is unfamiliar and challenging, learning from other members of the group.
- Participants may gain skills in communicating effectively, after sharing a text that is familiar to them with others for whom it is new, taking the role of guiding and informing.
- Participants will be able to apply a number of techniques from bibliodrama.

Knowledge

- Participants will have an enhanced understanding of the concept of 'heroism' and the concept of a 'righteous person' in the Jewish tradition.
- Participants will become familiar with the stories of Rabbi Akiva and Rachel and the heroic aspects of their lives.

Structure of activities

- I. Warm-up Exercises
- II. Introduction to Sacred Narrative
- III. Bibliodrama
- IV. Sharing

Description of activities**I. Warm-up Exercises***Steps to follow*

Inner/ Outer Circles on "What is Greatness?"

Stage 1:

1. The group gets into two circles – one inner, one outer. Each person is thus partnered with someone opposite them.
2. The inner circle tells the partner in the outer what, for them, characterizes a great human being – in a word or a phrase (e.g. "humility"). Their partner then responds in the same way.
3. All people in the inner circle move one to the left. They say their word or phrase again to the new partner.

4. This happens a couple of times (depends on the size of the group) – moving to the left, saying again. They can say the same thing each time, or change their answer.

Stage 2:

This time, with the partner, they must make a body gesture while speaking to express what they're saying. This is also done a couple of times.

Stage 3:

Now, they move to a new partner and do only the body gesture. (OPTIONAL: The partner shares what the body gesture seems to mean).

Stage 4:

The circles merge into one group circle and then at the count of three, the entire group does their gestures altogether.

Stage 5:

Share briefly.

II. Introduction to Sacred Narrative

Steps to follow

1. Give over a brief historical background to Talmud and to the important role of Torah study for Jews, as follows:
Jews and Christians share the Hebrew Bible as a sacred text. Indeed, many of the stories in the Hebrew Bible are also included, sometimes with variations either small or significant, in the Quran. The most important sacred text unique to Jews, which underscores the 'parting of the ways' between Judaism and Christianity, is the Talmud. The Talmud, completed around the 6th Century, is a compilation of legalistic and ethical discussions which have shaped Jewish law and practice. There are two 'versions' of the Talmud, the Jerusalem and the Babylonian, of which the latter is the more comprehensive and therefore generally (but not for every subject) considered the more authoritative. Alongside the technical discussions are narratives set mainly in the Second Temple period, some brief and some long and descriptive of significant incidents or personalities. Rabbi Akiva is one of the most prominent subjects of narratives in Talmudic literature. He is also one of the most important contributors of ideas, values and laws on whom the later Rabbis, including a whole generation who were his students, base their discussions.
Important to know about Rabbi Akiva, although not part of the bibliodrama, is that he is greatly admired by Jews because he defied the Roman ban on Torah study and was consequently cruelly tortured and put to death by the Romans for his disobedience. He compared the need for Jews to be engaged in Torah study to the need to fish to live in water and not to come out onto dry land, and compared the Romans to the fox who would try to lure the fish away from their natural habitat.
2. The selection of this text enables participants to enter bibliodrama through texts that are folk legends rather than the Bible or Quran, the latter of which could be a bit more intimidating.

III. Bibliodrama

Steps to follow

Introduction:

1. Today we are going to do the first of three bibliodramas on the topic of heroes, from different religious traditions. We turn to a very important text for the Jews, named the Talmud. Has anyone here heard of the Talmud?
2. The following is one of the most well-known legends about one of the greatest rabbis in Jewish history – Akiva. He started off with very humble beginnings, as an ignorant shepherd working for a wealthy man. The symbolism of the shepherd is important in Jewish tradition, as some of the greatest heroes and leaders began as shepherds – for example, Moses and David – and it is thought that the way in which someone leads his sheep indicates how he will be as a leader of people. Akiva's wife is not named in the story we are about to read, but in the lines after the story the Talmud indicates that she is called Rachel.
3. We are going to use a number of techniques today. Our first one is the bibliolog-type of bibliodrama. In bibliolog, the group is asked questions as if you were a character in the story and you have to make up the answers. Just try to think what the answer could be, and don't be shy. Make sure to always reply in first person "I" and "we", speaking directly as the character.

Stage 1: Bibliolog

1. Read through story till the words "with consent."
2. Go back and read the first paragraph again.
3. Facilitator asks questions of the group, who answer as the characters – for example asking:
 - Ben Kalba Savua, the richest man in town. Are you content? What do you dream of?
 - Akiva the shepherd: What is your life like as a shepherd of Ben Kalba Savua's? Do you enjoy working for him? What do you think about when you are out with your sheep?
 - Daughter Rachel – what is your life like. What do you think about?
4. Facilitator invites the group to ask, saying: "Are there any other important questions to ask at this stage?"

Stage 2: Three-role staging

1. Three chairs are placed at the front (the "stage area").
2. Three volunteers are asked to come up from the group. Each chooses to be one of the three characters: Akiva, Rachel and Ben Kalba Savua. They are given props (scarves etc), and encouraged to choose body gestures that express the character.
3. The facilitator interviews each one with inquisitive questions (how old are you? do you like the people around you?) and repeats their answers (through the "doubling" technique, i.e. speaking in first person).
4. Then facilitator says:
 - It's the morning of the day when Akiva and Rachel have their conversation. Starting with Ben Kalba Savua, the richest man in town. Show us your waking. How do you feel today?
 - Rachel. What is your waking like on this day? How do you feel today?
 - Akiva the shepherd. How about you– how did you wake up today?"
5. Now read the first lines of the story and then let them play the scene out freely.

6. At some point, facilitator says "Freeze!" and asks: "What are you feeling right now? What inner thoughts aren't you revealing to the others?" Then claps hands to start action again.
7. Turn to the group: "If you want to replace anyone here, just come up and touch the person you would like to play."
8. If the story is progressing too slowly, say "One hour later" or "One day later."
9. When the story of the first paragraph is over, ask the people who played roles: "Can you tell us, in summary – what important turning point just happened in your life? How do you feel right now?"

Stage 3: Time Gap Mirror Exercise

1. Read up to "he returned with 12000 disciples."
2. Facilitator says:
 - At this point all characters in the story are 12 years older. I think they might have changed somewhat. I want to invite you to stand up and get into twos.
 - Pick someone to be A and someone to be B.
 - Person A – can you move as Akiva when he was a shepherd? Now the person B – can you move as Akiva, the learned rabbi with 12000 disciples? The first person, look at the second as if you are seeing yourself in a mirror, and feeling the passing of the 12 years. The second person, look at the first person as if you are looking at an old photograph, and feeling the passing of the 12 years.
 - Person A: Can you gesture as Rachel, the rich man's daughter? Person B, move as Rachel, a woman living alone in poverty, waiting for husband to return? The first person, look at the second as if you are seeing yourself in a mirror, and feeling the passing of those 12 years. The second person, look at the first person as if you are looking at an old photograph, and feeling the passing of the 12 years.
 - Person A. Can you move as Ben Kalba Savua, a rich man who has everything he wants? Person B, can you move as Ben Kalba Savua, who cut off his daughter from his estate and has not seen her since? The first person, look at the second as if in a mirror, and feeling the passing of those 12 years. The second person, look at the first person as if you are looking at an old photograph, and feeling the passing of the 12 years.
3. Everyone sits back down in the group.
4. Facilitator says: Speaking as the characters, do you wish to tell us how it feels to be a different person from who you were 12 years ago? Is it sad or happy?

Stage 4: Bibliolog in Two Groups

1. Read to the end of the story.
2. Split the group into two – questioners and answerers.
3. Ask the questioner group to interview the answerer group as Akiva and Rachel, concerning the 12 years when they were apart.
4. The answerer group speak as the characters.
5. The facilitator can jump in if the group gets stuck or forgets to ask some important questions.
 - Some examples: Akiva – what's it like being away from your wife? Do you think of her often? Do you enjoy your learning? Rachel – what is it like for you? How do you support yourself?
6. Now ask the questioner group to interview the answerers as the old man, Akiva and Rachel in the scene where Akiva comes home.
7. – Some examples: Old man, who are you? Rachel how do you feel when you answer him? Akiva why do you not speak to her?

Stage 5: Bibliolog in One Group

1. The entire group becomes answerers once again.
2. Facilitator says:
 - I'd like now a snapshot of Akiva's emotions while walking away – a one word emotion. (e.g. relief, pride, amazement)
 - Akiva – as you walked away, was your head turning back or looking forward? (Show me the head motion).
 - Rachel what did you think as you set out to receive him?
 - Neighbors – tell us about Rachel.
 - Akiva and Rachel, how did it feel at the moment of being reunited?
 - What about the scene at the end – Ben Kalba Savua, tell us how you feel throughout this scene?
 - Who else needs to speak right now?
3. Note: the scene with the neighbors is very interesting. If you have time you might choose to play it out bibliodramatically – i.e. allow the group to be the neighbors, and let them chat and gossip to each other in free play. Or they could play Akiva's attendants.

Stage 6: Sharing

1. Go round and say real names.
2. Facilitator:
 - What touched you in this story? What process did you go through in this story?
 - (Optional): Share by completing the sentence: "It was powerful for me when..." and "It was difficult for me when..."
 - What message does this Jewish story give over about what is greatness?

Source texts**BABYLONIAN TALMUD, TRACTATE KETUBOT 62B**

R. Akiva was a shepherd of Ben Kalba Savua, whose daughter noticed that he was modest and noble. She said to him, "Were I to become betrothed to you, would you go study at the academy?" "Yes" he replied. She was secretly betrothed to him, and sent him away. When her father heard, he banished her from his house and vowed she should not benefit from his estate henceforth.

Akiva went and studied for twelve years at the academy. He returned with 12000 disciples.

He heard an old man saying to her, "How long will you live as a virtual widow!"

"If he listens to me, he'll sit a further twelve!" she replied.

Akiva said: "Then I am acting with consent."

He went and studied for another twelve years at the academy, and returned with 24000 pupils. His wife heard, and was setting out to receive him, when her neighbors said, "Borrow some clothes and cover yourself (get dressed)!" She replied, "The saint knows the soul of his beast."

On approaching him, she fell on her face and kissed his feet. His attendants were pushing her aside, and he said, "Leave her be! Everything I or you possess, is hers."

Her father heard that a great man had come to town and resolved, "I shall go to him; maybe he will cancel my vow." When he came, Akiva asked, "Would you have made your vow if you had known he was a great man?" He replied, "Even one verse or one halacha!" He said to him, "I am he!" Ben Kalba Savua fell upon his face and kissed his feet, and gave him half his money.

BIBLIODRAMA ON HEROES NUMBER 2: ST CLARE

Summary

The second of three bibliodramas on the topic of Great People/ Heroes: a bibliolog–type bibliodrama on a Christian hero, St. Clare, involving a technique where participants get to cross over to the other side. This scenario appears here in shortened form; the full scenario appears on our website at <http://www.bibliodramatic.net/>

For aspects of intercultural competence addressed, target audience, aims, and learning outcomes please see full scenario on website.

Structure of activities

- I. Warm–up Exercise**
- II. Introduction to Sacred Narrative**
- III. Bibliodrama**
- IV. Processing**
- V. Sharing**

Description of activities

I. Warm–up Exercise

Steps to follow

Movement Around Circle

1. The group stands in a circle.
2. One participant does a movement that expresses "how am I feeling right now."
3. The person to the right copies the movement and it thus moves round the circle.
4. When the movement finally comes back to the first person, it is then the turn of the next participant to do a new movement.
5. Do this until all participants have had a turn.

My personal hero

1. Participants pair up.
2. Each shares a story of someone in their life who was a personal hero of theirs or did a deed they consider great, for 5–10 minutes.

II. Introduction to Sacred Narrative

Steps to follow

1. Give over a brief historical background to the story and a theological understanding of Saints. The facilitator may choose to impart some or all of the historical background prior to the bibliodrama.
2. It is recommended to give the setting (early 13th Century) and to mention that the title 'saint' has a particular meaning for Roman Catholics. St. Clare was 'canonized' shortly after her death, meaning that her life of virtue and her performance of miracles were officially recognised by the Church.

The rest of the historical background appears in full on our website.

III. Bibliodrama

Steps to follow

Introduction:

Today we continue to explore religious texts that are not the Bible or Quran. Today's story is that of St. Clare.

Stage 1: Reading

The group reads the story of St. Clare aloud.

Stage 2: Instruction

Facilitator says:

– Today's session is a bibliolog–type bibliodrama which will also bring up questions of "them" and "us." In today's bibliodrama, one faith group – in this case, the Christians – will get to answer, with the others asking the questions. The Christians will sit on one side of the room and the others on the other side. The others will ask the Christians questions as characters from the story, and the Christians will answer speaking as the characters. For example: "Clare, what was it like for you growing up?"

– When a questioner feels s/he actually want to start answering, s/he can move over to the other side and become an answerer – but should stay there until the end. It's important to note to the Christians – we are not intending here to put the spotlight on you in an uncomfortable way. Instead, we are inviting you to get in touch with your own story, and we are inviting other people to come join you in that if they wish.

So everyone now get into place, and the non–Christians can start asking questions. When you feel like crossing over and becoming an answerer, move your chair to join the Christians.

Stage 3: Bibliolog

The group carries out the instructions and splits up. The facilitator asks the questioners to ask on paragraph 1. When that is done, move to paragraph 2. and so on until the entire story is done. Every ten minutes, the facilitator reminds the non–Christians that they can join the Christian answerers if they wish.

Some examples of questions, if the group gets stuck:

– Clare what it was like growing up? Are you close to your mother? What do you think of your

father? Do you think you would have been who you are had you not grown up rich? or what in your life made you who you are?

– What emotion did you feel meeting St. Francis? Was it weird meeting a poor person? What do you think his words meant?

– Bishop Guido – tell us about Clare from your perspective.

– Mother at the end. Why did you join?

– Father at the end – you are all alone, sitting in your rich house. What are you thinking?)

Facilitator can ask at the end:

– Clare – what was it like for you to be bibliodramatised like this? What do you feel about the Christians in the room? What do you feel about the non–Christians?

Stage 4: Processing

1. Return to sitting in a full circle
2. Go round and say real names (deroling).
3. Place five chairs in the front, and lay a different scarf over each chair
4. Explain that the chairs represent Clare, Francis, Clare's mother, Clare's father, the bishop
5. Invite the participants one by one to come up to one of the chairs.
6. They can either (a) sit in the chair and say something as the character that the participant would also say in real life or (b) stand behind the chair and say something to that character, again as their real self.

Example of (a) – participant sits in the chair of Clare's father and says "I try to control everyone around me."

Example of (b) – participant stands behind the chair of Clare's father and says to 'him' "I refuse to let people like you control me."

Stage 5: Sharing

Facilitator:

– What touched you in this story? What process did you go through in this story?

– What portrait of greatness did we see here? Did it speak to you?

– What was it like for the Christian group? For the other group?

– Why did people cross over, and how did that feel? What about the people who did not cross over?

– Can we share our stories with each other? Are they meaningful?

Source texts

St. Clare of Assisi (adapted from various sources)

St. Clare was born Chiara, the eldest daughter of the wealthy Favorino Scifi, Count of Sasso–Rosso and his wife Ortolana, a devout woman who had undertaken pilgrimages to Rome and the Holy Land. Though Clare was beautiful and destined for a profitable marriage, she displayed little interest in the worldly advantages offered by her highborn state... (The rest of the text can be found on our website).

BIBLIODRAMA ON HEROES NUMBER 3: RUMI AND SHAMS

Summary

The third of three bibliodramas on the topic of Great People/ Heroes: a three-stage unit relating both to the overall theme of heroes and to two Muslim heroes, Rumi and Shams. This scenario appears here in shortened form; the full scenario appears on our website at <http://www.bibliodramatic.net/>

For aspects of intercultural competence addressed, target audience, aims, and learning outcomes please see full scenario on website.

Structure of activities

- I. Game – Guess the Hero
- II. Introduction to Sacred Narrative
- III. Bibliodrama
- IV. Processing Heroes and Greatness 3–Part Unit

Description of activities

I. Game – "Guess the Hero"

Steps to follow

1. Everyone is asked to pick a hero/heroine from their faith texts and tales (or, if they are not so educated in faith heroes, they can pick a cultural hero).
2. They write down on a piece of paper a few sentences in first person that describe this person – but without giving away very revealing details. For example, for Moses: "I led my people for many years. I started my life living amongst a strange people and had a mother who was not my own. We travelled a lot during the course of my lifetime. My brother and sister were very important too. I am very humble."
3. Two chairs are placed in the front – one of the chairs can have a scarf draped over it like a cape. Each participant in turn comes up to sit on the chair with the scarf, and reads out what s/he wrote, slowly, line by line.
4. At any point while s/he is reading, anyone from the group who thinks they have guessed comes up and sits on the other chair. They ask a question that begins with "What was it like for you when..." or "What did you think when" which shows that they definitely know who the person is. For example in the case of Moses, they might ask "What was it like for you when you were up on Mount Sinai?"
5. If they have guessed wrongly, the first person says "No" and the second person returns to her chair.
6. If guessed correctly, the first person answers accordingly ("I was on a high for forty days, I don't even remember it clearly") and the second person can then go on to ask another question or two (optional: the group could also ask a couple of questions). Each hero/ heroine segment can last from 3–10 minutes approx, depending on how long you have for this technique.

7. At the end, open a discussion of what it was like for them to speak as their own hero/ heroine, and to hear about those from their own faith and others. You can start by inviting them to start a sentence beginning "It was powerful for me when..." This will help to immediately focus in on the most meaningful moments.

II. Introduction to Sacred Narrative

Steps to follow

Give over a brief historical background to Rumi and Shams. The historical background appears in full on our website.

III. Bibliodrama

Steps to follow

Introduction:

Today we continue to explore religious texts that are not the Bible or Quran. We turn to a figure who is important for Iranian, Turkish, Afghani and other Central Asian Muslims as well as the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent, who have all greatly appreciated his spiritual legacy in the past seven centuries.

Stage 1: Owning the Text

We start with a technique used to help people digest an unfamiliar text:

1. The first part of the story of Rumi and Shams is read aloud (the text can be found on our website).
2. (Note about the text: The text is long and can be cut – for example, before the words "you know better." The longer text can be played out as a full bibliodrama, with people choosing roles as Rumi, Shams, the students, sellers in the marketplace etc.).
3. While it is being read the participants are invited to find a word or short phrase that jumps out at them from the text, seems interesting or important. For example, from the text below (Rumi and Shams) someone might pick "religious rebel" or "no one spoke from the heart."
4. When the text reading is completed, go round the circle, and each participant dramatically says aloud the word/ phrase they picked, and the entire group repeats it after them, even more dramatically. Thus for example, if one participant says "religious rebel," the group echoes back loudly and dramatically "RELIGIOUS REBEL!"
5. When everyone has had a turn, the facilitator turns to the group and says "And now, on the count of three, we will say all of our phrases together. One, two, three!" The entire group says their phrases together.

Stage 2: Bibliolog

1. Read the first paragraph again. Ask the group to answer questions as Shams, such as:
 - Shams, what is your life like?
 - Why do you choose to live this way?
 - Have you always been this way, since childhood?

- Is your life hard or are you happy?
- What are your encounters with ordinary people and with scholars like?
- When you sit by your candle at night, what do you think of?
(Invite group to think of any more questions to ask.)
- 2. Read second paragraph again. Ask the group to answer questions as Rumi, such as:
 - What is your life like?
 - Are you happy and satisfied?
 - Is anything missing?
 - When you sit by your candle at night, what do you think of?
(Invite group to think of any more questions to ask.)
- 3. Read through to the end.
- 4. Two volunteers to become Rumi and Shams, and sit on two chairs at the front.
- 5. Participants ask questions of these figures. The two can also talk to each other.
- 6. Next, the facilitator asks:
 - Is there anyone else who needs to tell us something?
- 7. Deroling: Go round the circle and say our real names, to step out of the bibliodrama.

Stage 3: Paired Sharing Exercise

1. Everyone gets into pairs and shares the question: In life am I a Rumi or a Shams? Why?
2. Share in main group
3. Facilitator:
 - What touched you in this story? What process did you go through in this story?
 - (Optional): Share by completing the sentence: "It was powerful for me when..." and "It was difficult for me when..."
 - What message does this Muslim story give over about what is greatness? What do we think of these heroes?

IV. Processing Heroes and Greatness 3—Part Unit

Steps to follow

Stage 1: Heroes' Conversation

1. Three chairs are placed in the center. Each chair represents one story and the hero(es) in it: St. Clare; Rabbi Akiva and Rachel; Rumi and Shams.
2. Participants are asked what conversations could take place between the great people in each story, and those in the other story.
3. They are invited one by one to come sit down in the chair representing that hero and speak to the other chair, e.g. St. Clare could say to Rabbi Akiva's wife: "Like me, you gave up all your wealth for spiritual pursuit."
4. If there is a person already sitting in the other chair, they respond. Otherwise a participant can come sit down and respond.

Stage 2: Traits of greatness

1. Participants are asked to recall what traits of greatness were seen in each story.
2. As they name each trait, they pick a scarf that represents that trait, and it is laid over the back of the chair.
3. Next, participants are asked which trait of greatness they want to take for themselves to develop. They step forward and take the scarf representing that trait.

Source texts

Rumi and Shams

It was the middle of the 13th Century. For years, a religious rebel named Shams of Tabriz had traveled from town to town quizzing every scholar he met. He was searching for a teacher but none had the answers he sought. While all quoted from books and scripture, no one spoke from the heart, from personal experience. Shams wanted to go beyond books to the heart of God, through the heart of man. Everywhere he went, the townspeople called him crazy, a blasphemer, and he pitied them... (The rest of the text can be found on our website).

IV.

Aleksander Schejbal

CONCLUSIONS: BENEFITS REPORTED BY THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE BASICS WORKSHOPS

Increased self–knowledge and acquaintance with basic sources of one's own culture/beliefs

I questioned myself with this story. Can I insist on my own ideas when there are many others around? I think it is not that easy.

Increased knowledge of other religions and cultures

We get to know and more important, experience, what is deeply important to others of different religious and different types of the same religion.

Clearer awareness of prejudices and stereotypes inherent in one's own perceptions of other faiths

I used not to think as deeply as this. I realized that things are not as they seem and that the words I use to describe the spiritual world are not sufficient.

Improved ability to engage in intercultural/interfaith dialogue

The exercises let us experience the dialogue in view of substantial differences between us, get to know each other and work out common solutions which leads to opening up to diversity and otherness.

More open and tolerant attitude to the other

Not everyone thinks the same way about an issue. Hearing others' thoughts opens one's own mind. "Otherness" then does not have to be a dividing factor.

The BASICS workshop programme run in different cultural and religious settings in Poland, Hungary, Iceland, Turkey and Israel resulted in designing a compendium of bibliodrama–based scenarios aiming at fostering interfaith dialogue skills and intercultural competence. These scenarios are presented in this publication in an abridged version. Each of them specifies the aspects of intercultural competence which can be addressed in interreligious/intercultural bibliodrama, lists specific aims directly relating to these aspects and sets a number of well defined learning outcomes which can be achieved in workshops based on the proposed scenarios.

The proper definition of learning outcomes is an essential issue in planning any form of learning experience, both formal and informal. The authors of the scenarios have taken all the opportunities to encourage their prospective users to carefully consider the proposed learning outcomes for each scenario and focus on those which are relevant to their particular educational context and groups. In order to "measure" the extent to which these outcomes have been achieved, the workshop leaders should implement an assessment procedure comprising at least some "rating" of the baseline level of the group entering the intercultural bibliodrama. The baseline will be the point of reference for assessing the changes which the participants have undergone in terms of new attitudes, skills or knowledge relating to the aspects of intercultural competence addressed in the workshop. The structure of a typical bibliodrama session includes two phases which can be adapted to such a survey: the pulse in its initial stage and the sharing at the workshop closure. The scenarios do not include lists of ready questions to ask – they have to be developed by the trainers themselves and adjusted to the specific context of the training (diverse communicative abilities of the participants, different learning outcomes targeted, varying group dynamics, etc). In any case, what is important is to gather feedback from the participants on the value of the learning experience in a form which can be assessed.

This was the procedure implemented in the BASICS pilot workshops which helped us to design, test and fine-tune the training scenarios presented in the book. At this stage we would like to share with you some feedback from the participants of this programme on the intercultural competences gained through the bibliodrama-based workshops. We had to engage with three major difficulties inherent in any attempt to grasp the value of bibliodrama as a tool of interfaith/intercultural training to present an overall summary of the results. First, bibliodrama embraces many different approaches, methods and techniques, some well known in education like role-playing of characters taken from literary sources, and some as controversial as clowning around with themes taken from religious books. Secondly, the actual use of these methods to a large extent depends on the skills of the facilitator and so called "group dynamics", which can become so dynamic as to overflow the boundaries of a rational, objective analysis. Thirdly, bibliodramatists proclaim to deal with "spiritual aspects of cognition" and perceptions of "basic human values" which do not easily translate into concrete attitudes, skills or knowledge to be formulated as outcomes of a workshop learning experience.

We would therefore propose to follow an empirical route and conclude the book with a brief record of benefits reported by the participants of the BASICS workshops. From a wealth of observations, comments and reflections shared with us through participant feedback questionnaires and interviews we selected and categorised those which refer to concrete educational outcomes of the training in its intercultural aspect.

Increased self-knowledge and acquaintance with basic sources of one's own culture/ beliefs

This benefit is not only visible as an outcome of a bibliodrama run for a group of participants detached from the religious background of their culture. Interestingly, it is also evident in a group of highly educated people, well versed in the content of the scriptures which influenced their beliefs and order of values. Bibliodrama offers the possibility of a close investigation of a religious narrative as it helps to "enter" particular situations and characters described in such texts, encapsulating certain core perceptions. This can also be achieved through reading, although rarely with such intense insights as reported by the BASICS workshop participants:

You can get deeper into your self—identity, get to know yourself in an atmosphere of acceptance and openness, experience things "on yourself".

Particularly fascinating, what I learned from listening to the Jews, I never saw that story that way. The Old Testament is like the roots for me. Brought me to questions about God and why God runs things a certain way.

When I depart I begin to question my values and beliefs. I think we all are the part of the something collective. If we realize and recognize each other's existence as much as we can then we can find the meaning same as much.

We went beyond the play and the story, getting in touch with our own lives. This is the result of enactment as a chosen method.

I questioned myself with this story. Can I insist on my own ideas when there are many others around? I think it is not that easy.

Increased knowledge of other religions and cultures

Similarly to the above, interfaith bibliodrama helps to "enter" other religious stories, including those virtually unknown to the participants. This is particularly important in the case of explorations of texts which are held as sacred by other members of a multicultural society afflicted by inherent tensions and conflicts. A bibliodramatic workshop can be run with a specific focus on intercultural encounters of people representing different religions or belief systems. As such, bibliodrama discloses its full potential as a way of gaining direct knowledge of beliefs and values cherished by others:

I get to know other religions' stories, which is new for me, and is really enriching. Besides for that, the fact that our group is so varied makes every interaction special and allows me to get to know, through the bibliodrama, different cultures and religions in a way that surprises me every time!

Epecially important was the cognitive dimension in relation to other cultures and their perception through stereotypes – interesting engagement with the Bible and Koran ..."

Certainly as a Jew I came with hardly no knowledge of the Christian and Muslim perspective of the holy writings and I feel much more comfortable now meeting the "other".

Since we have to act out a person with other experiences and background it can really open your eyes.

We get to know and more important, experience, what is deeply important to others of different religious and different types of the same religion.

Ordinarily the discussion would not have been so open and accepting and on so many levels. I met and got an inner glimpse into the thoughts of people I would ordinarily have no chance to associate with.

Clearer awareness of prejudices and stereotypes inherent in one's own perceptions of other faiths

Direct acquaintance with other religious sources can certainly lead to a revision of stereotyped perceptions and prejudices by itself. However, bibliodrama offers much more than direct knowledge acquisition. There are a number of techniques used in bibliodramatic sessions which help participants to see some contentious issues from the point of view of the other, or even experience their meaning with the other's frame of reference. It is at

this stage that we can grasp the added value of the method, which puts so much stress on "experiential learning":

I realized that I looked at many things from a limited angle.

This is a great technique to construct bonding and knowing of people from other cultures and to establish an honest relationship which enables to see the similarities and differences, but not from a stereotype point of view.

I used to view myself as a person who could think independent of other influences. It was surprising to see my tendency to comply with the group norms. Now I understand better how and why people comply with group norms.

We were upstairs in a synagogue, with Jews, looking at a passage of the New Testament, and they were so respectful, sympathetic and understanding. They really seemed to understand at a deeper level what was going on.

I was brought up to see Christian doctrine as fundamentally illogical and irrational and here I was able to leave the session with a new respect for the meaning it would have for a Christian.

I used not to think as deeply as this. I realized that things are not as they seem and that the words I use to describe the spiritual world are not sufficient.

In the last session I thought about the concept of being understanding. In this session I thought about being not prejudiced and to value both myself and my surroundings. I sure will rethink over these.

Improved ability to engage in intercultural/interfaith dialogue

Dialogue skills are conditioned not only by the interlocutors' level of knowledge about the issues being disputed. To a large extent this ability is influenced by their emotional engagement in the encounter and their attitudes to each other. The bibliodrama workshop can become a safe place for an interfaith/intercultural encounter and an open learning environment for a peaceful confrontation of different outlooks on life:

Struggling to come to a personal understanding of a text gives a common focus which allows an enrichment to emerge from the group's diversity.

The (bibliodrama) exercises present different methods of engaging in dialogue, also in non-verbal form through artistic expression, thus offering many perspectives on meeting the other.

I have always been interested in talking to others but I would do it with a closed mind and now I can speak what I feel and I am willing to accept other opinions.

A very interesting experience – to see the difference between one's own perception and its reception by the group. I discovered many common elements between the group members, despite our dissimilarities and different standpoints and experiences.

I belong to a Christian community involved in reconciliation and I see this (bibliodrama) as a way of different people getting to know each other at a deeper level.

I do not like to see religious views to be tabooed. It makes me feel relaxed to see that in the group things were discussed openly without being tabooed and the atmosphere was respectful.

The exercises let us experience the dialogue in view of substantial differences between us, get to know each other and work out common solutions which leads to opening up to diversity and otherness.

More open and tolerant attitude to the other

A bibliodrama workshop, especially a long-term programme like the BASICS pilot workshop cycle, creates opportunities for getting closer to the other participants. This is certainly the case in other training programmes, in which people meet regularly over a long period of time. However, bibliodramatic encounters focus on themes of high emotional significance to the participants, hence the communication during the sessions is very intense and helps to create authentic bonds of friendship and mutual understanding and respect, especially that the participants discover things which unite them, although they cut across lines of faith:

It (bibliodrama workshop environment) helps very much because it creates friendly atmosphere and a good learning experience from one another.

I see the universal issues, themes and questions common to all of us. It is inspiring and exciting to have a space of respect, sharing and openness with people of other faiths.

Listening to others allows me to reconsider previously held conceptions. One can recognize the differences/ similarities they share, finding a common group for dialogue from there.

The exercises raise curiosity and openness to other religions as well as encourage us to search for shared values.

I learnt that, looking through the filter of our life experiences, the same event may influence one person positively and the other negatively. We often cannot know this in advance, but we may find out through communication.

It was very different to experience these things in the groups (to be strangers in a foreign land and the acceptance or rejection of immigrants) as to think of them on our own.

Not everyone thinks the same way about an issue. Hearing others' thoughts opens one's own mind. "Otherness" then does not have to be a dividing factor.

We spent so much time talking about human feelings that by the end of the evening I saw people, whereas earlier, when I was walking towards the institute I was thinking 'I'm going to be in a room full of Christians'. I think bibliodrama "turned them into people", so to speak, faster than a dialogue would.

The feedback from the BASICS workshops run in all the partner countries is overwhelmingly positive. However, we have also gathered a number of interesting questions which are an encouragement to further explore the interface of bibliodrama and intercultural/interfaith education. To this end we have created an interactive platform for sharing observations on the value of the BASICS scenarios as they emerge from their implementations in different cultural and religious contexts.

You're welcome to join our exchange on www.bibliodramatic.net to get an access to more learning resources and networking opportunities in the field of intercultural/interfaith bibliodrama.

V. FURTHER BASICS RESOURCES

Krzysztof Tusiewicz Cinematic Struggles with Bibliodrama



The BASICS project assumed there would be two versions of the publication – a book and a film, both documenting the process and achievements of the pilot workshops. For the purpose of the film I would record workshop activities in Poland (an instructional seminar for coaches) and in Iceland (an intercultural meeting of the pilot workshops' participants), but what proved to be a challenge was not the number of recorded groups but the choice of the method of organising and classifying the recorded material.

First of all, I needed to be certain about the suitability of the basic idea, that is recording and publishing the fleeting and often personal events that take place during bibliodrama sessions. I am convinced that these events are worth recording on film despite the risk of their limited clarity for the viewer and controversial reactions that they may cause, because film narration allows us to show real emotions and interactions in a group, which are crucial for the bibliodrama experience. Secondly, it had to be decided whether the film should be instructional and show all the details of the process or whether perhaps it should be a summary of the intercultural atmosphere of the whole project.

When recording, and later editing the film, I was aware that the choice of the situations and their composition is subjective. To a spectator who encounters bibliodrama via film for the first time, the events may seem random and overly expressive. This stems from the fact that the camera accompanied dynamic drama scenes more often than reflective discussions. It focused more on plain summaries than on calmer moments of group work. Such are the specifics of this medium. To really experience bibliodrama, one has to actively participate. This film shows merely a fragment of the process, its outer layer.

A particular challenge was to record the intercultural interactions. They took place during the workshops but often also appeared spontaneously outside of them. I think that their effects are mainly visible in the everyday lives of the participants who turned their workshop experiences into practical activities in educational work.

The final version of the film is, to a certain degree, a compromise which takes into consideration all of the ideas mentioned above. The film has three parts. The first part shows the bibliodrama process, the second part – the bibliolog process. They are both instructional and are supposed to help educators who take up the intercultural

subject matter in the practical application of the bibliodrama techniques. The third part, which consists of interviews with the participants of the session in Iceland, is a testimony of the actual influence of the project on the people who participate in it. This part also shows them in action – reveals live emotions, engagement in the session, the dynamics of group work, and the specific nature of the bibliodrama experience.

The film, broken up into smaller pieces, is currently available on our E–Learning platform at:
www.bibliodramatic.net

BASICS EXCHANGE AND COMMUNICATION PLATFORM

We invite you to visit the learning and communication environment for educational professionals in the field of bibliodrama, adult education and intercultural understanding. There you can find bibliodrama– and bibliolog–based resources to increase your tool–box of activities as well as a space to communicate with peers.

The platform is open for everyone working with issues related to intercultural communication and interfaith dialogue.

It is available at no cost; simply register and begin browsing the site.

www.bibliodramatic.net

VI. BASICS PROJECT PARTNERS

Bielskie Stowarzyszenie Artystyczne Teatr Grodzki (The Bielsko Artistic Association Grodzki Theatre, Poland) was founded in 1999 and brings together artists, pedagogues, and entrepreneurs to support socially excluded groups. Its activities include arts and educational workshops, editing and publishing projects, training programs for instructors, teachers, therapists, artists, and volunteers, and vocational training programs for socially excluded groups.

www.teatrgrodzki.pl

Egyházfórum (Church Forum Foundation, Hungary) has been involved in innovative and alternative religious mental care for more than 20 years. Its main activity is the translation and distribution of contemporary theological literature, and developing catechetical educational methods in workshops.

www.egyhazforum.hu

Reykjavík Akadémían (The Reykjavic Academy, Iceland) is an academic institute and site for independently working scholars, founded in 1997. Members of the academy are individuals, institutions, and corporations. Björg Árnadóttir, a member of the Reykjavic Academy, is an adult educator working in fields such as creative writing and theological dialogues.

www.akademia.is

Kocaeli Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi (Kocaeli University Institute of Health Sciences, Turkey) is a major research institution highly experienced in the development and implementing of training programs, with specialists dealing in religious attitudes and approaches to life and their advantages and consequences in trauma and disaster therapy.

tip.kocaeli.edu.tr

Placówka Kształcenia Ustawicznego EST (EST Education Centre, Poland) is an adult education provider founded in 1994 offering training in fields such as foreign languages, ICT training, and communication skills courses. EST has been involved with a number of intercultural communication programmes and also has extensive experience as a project evaluator.

www.est.edu.pl

The Elijah Interfaith Institute (Israel) is a multinational organisation dedicated to fostering peace between the world's diverse faith communities through interfaith dialogue, education, research, and dissemination. Elijah's unique programming generates interfaith dialogue at the highest levels, bringing together world religious leaders and renowned scholars the world over, through research projects, public conferences and community-based initiatives.

www.elijah-interfaith.org

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