

# Guidelines for Engaging in Dialogue

**Suggested Duration: 60 minutes**

## Learning Objectives

- ▶ To explore the ground rules for engaging in dialogue
- ▶ To explain that these ground rules apply whenever you are engaging in dialogue
- ▶ To understand that Islam encourages dialogue in order to seek the truth and to build relationships

## Key Words

- ▶ Dialogue, ground rules, common ground, manners, agree to differ

## Islamic Values

Islam encourages dialogue and the building of strong relationships between different people.

## Citizenship Values

Citizenship encourages dialogue, listening, understanding others and coming to common agreements.



## Resources

Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.0201:  
Lesson Objectives

Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.0202:  
Ground Rules

Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.0203:  
Definition of Dialogue

## Activities

Ask some quick questions to recap the last lesson.

Ask pupils what five things they learnt about citizenship in the last lesson. What did they learn about Islam and citizenship?

### A Starter Activity

Ask pupils what sort of *adab* (behaviour/attitude/manners) they follow when talking to their parents and elders. Would their behaviour be the same when talking to their friends or brothers and sisters? Should they follow the same *adab* at school?

Take quick feedback and share the lesson objectives.

### B Development

#### Activity 1: Agreeing Ground Rules for Engaging in Dialogue

Ask pupils if they have ever had to agree upon a set of rules that would govern their behaviour in class – for example, 'Listen while someone is speaking' or 'No shouting'. Explain that these are known as 'ground rules'.

Ask pupils to work in small groups and develop a set of rules for how they would behave together, especially when talking and listening. Give them ten minutes for the activity and ask them to choose a spokesperson to give feedback.

Take feedback, work out the common elements and then write up the agreed ground rules, which can be displayed in the classroom.

Pupils might suggest the following:

- ▶ arriving on time
- ▶ respecting health and safety regulations
- ▶ switching off mobile phones
- ▶ not interrupting fellow students
- ▶ respecting other people's contributions
- ▶ only having one conversation at a time in the class.

Explain that discussing and working in this way is a constructive way of engaging in dialogue.

#### Activity 2: Definition of Dialogue

Ask pupils to define the word 'dialogue'. Take feedback and then offer the following definition (as in Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.0203).

Having a dialogue requires the following:

- ▶ listening carefully to each other
- ▶ attempting to understand each other's point of view
- ▶ responding politely
- ▶ attempting to come to a common agreement.

Finally, if a common agreement cannot be reached, the dialogue should end with: 'Let's agree to disagree.'

Ask: What happens during a healthy dialogue? Take feedback and offer the following suggestions.

In a healthy dialogue:

- ▶ information is exchanged
- ▶ stories and experiences are shared
- ▶ viewpoints are clarified
- ▶ participants listen in order to understand each other, with the aim of coming up with solutions to problems.

### Activity 3: Islamic Guidance

Ask a pupil to recite the following verses. Explain the meaning.

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ  
بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ

*'Say, O People of the Book! Come now to a word agreed upon between us and you...'* (Surat Alee Imran 3:64)

Explain that this verse encourages Muslims to engage in dialogue with others. The Qur`an also teaches us ways of engaging in dialogue, for example, to look for similarities and common ground as a starting point.

وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ  
فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ

*'And do not insult those who worship other than God, because they may insult God in a hostile way without knowledge...'* (Surat al-An`am 6:108)

**Question:** Should we make fun of anybody or their religion?

**Suggested answer:** No, because if we make fun of other people and their religion they will also do the same to us.

*'God will not be kind to him who is not kind to people.'*  
(Bukhari)

Here the word 'people' includes Muslims and non-Muslims. A Muslim is told to be kind to all people, regardless of their religion, colour or race. Being kind includes listening and talking politely to each other and trying to understand the views of the other person.

*'Your soul is always attracted to impoliteness, and you are supposed to be polite. One's self naturally opposes you, but you must try to prevent it from doing evil deeds. If you let yourself go, you will be a partner in the corruption that follows. If you aid yourself in following selfish desires, you are a partner in spiritually killing your own soul.'* (Mishkat al-Anwar)

**Question:** What do you think will happen to those who are not kind to other people?

*'All creation is God's family and the best in God's sight is the one who benefits his family.'* (Muslim)

**Suggested answer:** Muslims have distinct beliefs and practices, but they are part of the human family and therefore must respect and be kind to all human beings, since they are also part of God's family. This hadith tells us of the unity of mankind.

### Resources

Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.0204:  
Islamic Guidance

## Resources

Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.0205:  
Feedback

Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.0206:  
Follow-up Worksheet

## C Plenary

Sum up the lesson and stress the following:

- ▶ Today we have agreed a set of ground rules.
- ▶ We have all agreed to follow these rules, especially when it comes to talking and listening to each other.
- ▶ We have learnt that citizenship teaches us to do this and to try and agree upon a way forward as a result of discussion.
- ▶ We know now that this is what we are required to do as Muslims.
- ▶ We must listen politely and try to understand the other person's point of view, even though it may be very different from our own.

Take feedback using Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.0205.

## Suggested Follow-up Work

Give instructions for follow-up work:

Think of a time when you were talking with your friends or family when you listened politely and attentively.

Now think of a time when everybody was arguing with each other and not listening.

Which of these two occasions do you think was the best?

Give three reasons why.

Use Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.0206.

## Lesson Objectives

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## Ground Rules

Working in small groups, develop a set of rules that you will follow, especially when talking and listening.

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### Definition of Dialogue

Dialogue is:

- ▶ listening carefully to each other
- ▶ attempting to understand each other's point of view
- ▶ responding politely
- ▶ attempting to come to a common agreement.

Finally, if a common agreement cannot be reached, the dialogue should end with: 'Let's agree to disagree.'

## Islamic Guidance

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ  
بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ

*'Say, O People of the Book! Come now to a word agreed upon between us and you...'*  
(Alee Imran 3:64)

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فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ

*'And do not insult those who worship other than God, because they will insult God in a hostile way without knowledge...'* (Surat al-An`am 6:108)

*'God will not be kind to him who is not kind to people.'* (Bukhari)

*'Your soul is always attracted to impoliteness, and you are supposed to be polite. One's self naturally opposes you, but you must try to prevent it from doing evil deeds. If you let yourself go, you will be a partner in the corruption that follows. If you aid yourself in following selfish desires, you are a partner in spiritually killing your own soul.'* (Mishkat al-Anwar)

*'All creation is God's family and the best in God's sight is the one who benefits his family.'* (Muslim)

## Feedback

Lesson Title: Guidelines for Engaging in Dialogue

Name: .....

Madrasah/Organisation: .....

Today I have learnt about:

As a result of this lesson I have learnt that a good Muslim should:

I am going to follow up this topic in my home/school/community by:

### Follow-up Worksheet

Lesson Title: Guidelines for Engaging in Dialogue

Name: .....

Madrasah/Organisation: .....

Task:

Think of a time when you were talking with your friends or family when you listened politely and attentively.

Now think of a time when everybody was arguing with each other and not listening.

Which of these two occasions do you think was the best? Give three reasons why.

Write your answer here.