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PRACTICAL PEACE SOLUTIONS SESSION ACTIVITY LEADER GUIDE *How to Reduce Bias in Interfaith Conversations* Version 12102025

Contents

(Hover over a question and use Ctrl + Click to take you to its answer; or, scroll down.)

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Thank You for Accelerating Peace!

Thank you for bringing a group together to learn better ways to solve real-life conflicts and get along with each other. You are helping others increase peace in their relationships and communities! We are grateful.

Session Purpose

You are presenting a practical peace solutions session titled “How to Reduce Bias in Interfaith Conversations.”

This session is useful in everyday situations, such as:

- Navigating Conversations where misunderstandings about faith traditions arise.
- Responding to comments rooted in stereotypes, misinformation, or assumptions.

- Building stronger, more respectful relationships across different faith backgrounds.

The purpose of this session is to help participants recognize and reduce bias in interfaith conversations by using practical dialogue skills that lower defensiveness, promote understanding, and prevent harm.

At the conclusion of the session, participants will be able to:

- Identify strategies for interrupting bias in interfaith conversations.
- Apply these strategies to real-life interfaith dialogue settings.
- Practice responding constructively when prejudiced or misinformed comments occur.

People who may find this session especially useful include:

- Community members in interfaith or diverse spaces.
- Students, educators, or youth leaders navigating identity-related conversations.
- Anyone seeking to build understanding and reduce interfaith prejudice.

Now's your time to confirm that this is the subject you want to teach others. If yes, then continue reading. If no, you have options! We have other [practical peace solutions subjects](#), an [action planning activity](#), and a series of [essential peace skills trainings](#) that you could lead instead. Write us at volunteering@peacethroughaction.org if you want to switch your activity.

Activity Leader Guide Purpose

This guide gives instructions to activity leaders (that's you!) for presenting a practical peace solutions session.

This activity leader guide is a companion to our activity delivery worksheet and activity delivery guide. Those materials give instructions for preparing sessions. You will find the delivery worksheet and guide on the [Peace Accelerators Activity Leader Package webpage](#).

You will use both guides: the activity delivery worksheet and guide for setting up your session, and this activity leader guide for presenting your session.

Presentation Materials

Our [Practical Peace Solutions webpage](#) and [Peace Accelerators Activity Leader Package webpage](#) have all the materials you will need or want to have available when leading your session.

To make preparation easier for you, we divide the materials into two categories: materials to print and materials with print and digital versions.

Materials to Print

Please have printed copies of the following items available when leading this session:

- **Activity Leader Guide**—for leading your session. *(If you prefer to read the script from a device rather than a print copy, you may. We strongly recommend you have a print copy in case of technology or power failure.)* Print one copy.
- **Activity Summary**—takeaway for participants; includes QR codes for the post-session survey, email sign-up, media consent, and other follow-up actions. Make enough copies for the estimated number of participants.
- **Session Sign-In Sheet**—for participants who wish to share their contact information. Print five or more copies.

Materials with Print and Digital Versions

These materials support your leadership of the session and participant learning. You may print them if you want, or you may use the digital versions we provide. The digital versions are accessible by displaying content on a screen, summarizing content aloud, directing participants to scan QR codes, and/or sharing hyperlinks with participants.

Leader Materials – If you decide to print them, make one copy for you.

- **PowerPoint Presentation**—optional visual aid to help participants follow the session.
- Some sessions may have **Additional Leader Materials**. You will find out if your session has them when you go to the activity leader package webpage and see the session's resources.
- **Session Information Form**—for the leader to report how your session went.

Participant Materials—If you decide to print them, make enough copies for the estimated number of participants.

- Some sessions may have **Participant Materials**. You will find out if your session has them when you go to the activity leader package and see the session's resources.
- **Post-Session Survey**—measures effects of the session on participants.
- **Media Release Form**—collects participant consent to use names, images, and voices in publicity.
- [Do Something Information Webpages and Sheets](#) for activity leaders and participants on these subjects: .
- [Choose Peace Practices Information Webpages and Sheets](#) for activity leaders and participants on these subjects: .

After the Session

After your session concludes, please complete the following steps:

1. **Complete the Session Information Form** (within a few days)

This quick [form](#) helps Peace Through Action understand how the session went, how participants engaged, and what improvements may be helpful.



Session Information Form

2. Submit Collected Participant Materials (within a few days)

If you collected print copies of the post-session survey, session sign-in sheet, and/or media release form, please get them to us, by:

- Sending them by U.S. mail to Peace Through Action USA, PO Box 73466, Washington DC 20056-3466.
- Sending them to us in the pre-stamped, pre-addressed envelope that you asked us to provide you when you were preparing for your session. (Or you can ask us to send you one now by email to volunteering@peacethroughaction.org).
- Scanning them and sending by email to volunteering@peacethroughaction.org.

Also, if you collected any photos or videos of your session, email them to volunteering@peacethroughaction.org.

3. Schedule Your Follow-Up Gratitude & Encouragement Email (same day as the session)

Set a reminder for **6–8 weeks after your session** to send a short gratitude note to participants who shared their email address and opted in for follow-up.

This message helps encourage participants to revisit their action step.

4. Send the Gratitude & Encouragement Email (6–8 weeks later)

When your reminder pops up, send a brief message to participants using the sample text below or your own words.

Sample Follow-Up Email

Subject: Thank you again for joining our Practical Peace Solutions Session

Greetings -

Thank you again for participating in the Practical Peace Solutions session on [date]. I'm reaching out with a friendly check-in about the peace solution you developed during our time together.

Is there one small step you feel ready to take this week? Even small actions can make a difference.

If you'd like to share how it's going, I'd be glad to hear from you.

Thank you for contributing to peace in your relationships and communities.

With appreciation,

[Your Name]

Peace Skills Activity Leader volunteer

Peace Through Action® USA

Presentation Content Structure

1. The content is divided into parts.
2. Underlined text is slide titles from the session's *optional* PowerPoint presentation.
3. *Italicized text is instructions.*
4. Sentences in large font size are script.
5. The script is set up for activity leaders who prefer to read out loud exactly what to say.
6. Activity leaders who are confident presenters or prefer a casual delivery style may want to follow the talking points instead. You can get talking points two ways.
 - Follow the script's full content and present it in your own words.
 - The session's PowerPoint presentation slides contain talking points.

THE SESSION SCRIPT BEGINS ON THE NEXT PAGE

Session Content

1. Opening (2 Minutes)

Greeting and Introduction (1 Minute)

How to Reduce Bias in Interfaith Conversations

Welcome participants. Thank them for attending.

Introduce yourself. If all session participants already know your name and role, you may skip an introduction. But please do still identify yourself as a Peace Through Action volunteer.

Welcome! Thank you for choosing to join this session on *How to Reduce Bias in Interfaith Conversations*. I'm looking forward to learning how we can increase peace in our relationships and communities.

I'm [state your first name and last name.] [State any role you hold that explains why you are leading this session.]

I'm leading this session as a volunteer with Peace Through Action USA.

Mission (1 Minute)

Our Mission

Peace Through Action helps everyday people, like us gathered now, do something to increase peace in our relationships and communities.

What We Do

They go about their mission work in several ways, including by producing sessions like this and supporting volunteers like me to present them.

2. Orientation (5 Minutes)

Centering (1 Minute)

Orientation

Quiet and focus participants with a guided breathing exercise.

Let's start by settling ourselves and taking a moment to clear our minds so that we concentrate on the information ahead. Let's take three slow, deep breaths together. In . . . and out . . . In . . . and out . . . In . . . and out.

Agenda (1 Minute)Session Outline

Present the session agenda.

Let's review the session agenda. First up is an orientation to the rules of the road. Then I will present a short lesson. After that, we will do what's called guided practice to get comfortable with the real-life situation we are considering. After that, we will do an applied practice to dive deeper into a practical solution. We will take a moment to reflect on what we learned. And close out with a call to action. We should wrap up by [state the intended end time].

Setting Expectations (1 Minute)Safety and Sociability

Review session arrangements. Use script version 1 for virtual presentations and version 2 for in-person presentations.

I want to review the conditions we will have in place to ensure this session is safe and comfortable for all.

Version 1 (Virtual)

I hope we can connect with each other even in this virtual format. Please introduce yourself in the chat, sharing whatever information you want.

Unless you wish to stay anonymous. In that case, I recommend you change your participant name, mute your microphone, and keep your video off.

The session may be recorded.

Finally, we recommend you turn on Speakers' view or Gallery view.

Version 2 (In-Person)

Be comfortable! Sit, stand, and stretch as you wish. Step away if you need.

Restrooms are located [provide direction]. A water fountain [or other water source] is located [provide direction]. If we need to leave due to an emergency, the nearest exit is [provide direction.]

Group Agreement (1 Minute)

Present and affirm the group agreement.

Let me propose a few ways we can make sure everyone feels safe, respected, and heard.

First, we will practice mutual respect. We will show kindness toward each other and listen to each other.

Second, we will use "I" statements and not speak for others.

Third, we will be mindful not to dominate the discussion. We will take turns when sharing. At the same time, we don't want to pressure anyone to share.

Fourth, we will assume confidentiality. What is shared stays. What is learned leaves.

Participant Introductions (1 minute)

You may skip participant introductions if all participants know each other.

Let's go around the group and introduce ourselves by our names. If you would rather not disclose your name or other information, that's okay too.

3. Lesson (5 Minutes)

Purpose (1 Minute)

Lesson

Session Purpose

State the purpose of the session.

In this session, we are going to practice how to interrupt bias in interfaith conversations without escalating the conversation into tension or conflict.

These situations often happen quickly, casually, and under time pressure. Someone makes a comment, a joke, or a dismissal, and we're left deciding whether to let it slide or risk making things awkward.

We will focus on a short, practical sequence you can use in those moments to slow the interaction, examine assumptions, and reduce harm even if the conversation doesn't fully resolve.

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- Recognize when bias or assumptions are showing up through assumptions or generalizations.
- Use a simple three-step strategy sequence to interrupt bias in real time.
- Respond constructively even when the situation is imperfect or uncomfortable.

The Three-Step Bias Interruption Sequence (4 Minutes)

Three Practical Tools for Interrupting Bias in Interfaith Conversations

While bias can sometimes appear directly or blatantly hostile, it can often sound more casual, practical, or subtle. These are tools designed to interrupt that moment just enough to slow it down and reduce harm.

Step 1: Slow the Claim

What this means:

Pause the conversation by asking the speaker to be more specific about what they just said.

Why this works:

Broad or loaded statements lose momentum when specificity is required. Slowing the language slows the reaction.

You might say:

- When you say that, who or what are you referring to specifically?
- Is that something you've experienced directly, or something you've heard?
- Can you say a bit more about what you mean by that?

Step 2: Make the Assumption Explicit

What this means:

Name the assumption you're hearing and invite clarification or correction.

Why this works:

Bias often hides between what was said and what was unsaid. Identifying the assumption allows the speaker to adjust without feeling accused.

You might say:

- It sounds like the assumption is that this practice is optional for everyone. Is that what you mean?
- Just to check my understanding, are you saying that applies to all people in that faith?
- Am I hearing that correctly or am I misunderstanding?

Step 3: Offer a Repair Path

What this means:

Invite the speaker to restate their point in a clearer or more specific way.

Why this works:

This gives the speaker a way to reset without losing face or doubling down.

You might say:

- Would you be willing to say that again in a more specific way?
- I think I get what you're aiming at, can you rephrase it?
- Let's reset that. What specific concern are you trying to raise

You may not use all three steps every time. That still counts.

Success here means interrupting bias just enough to keep the conversation from sliding further and causing more harm.

4. Guided Practice (4 Minutes)

Activity: Pairs Role-Play (4 minutes)

Guided Practice

Instructions:

- *Divide participants into pairs.*
- *Direct participants to enact the role play using the scenario.*
- *After participants have completed the role play, debrief as a whole group.*

Please turn to a partner. We are going to act out a role-play now. One of you will play the "Speaker" and the other will play the "Responder."

Scenario Options (choose one):

- "I don't really get why they need special accommodations. Religion should be a private thing."
- "That's just how that religion is. They're usually pretty strict about stuff like that."
- "Do we really need to change the plan for one person's beliefs?"
- "I'm not trying to be offensive, but that faith feels kind of outdated."
- "Everyone compromises sometimes. Why should this be any different?"

Constraints for the Responder:

- You have about 90 seconds to respond.
- Your goal is to interrupt bias, not persuade or debate.
- You are not required to resolve the issue or reach an agreement.
- Focus on language and assumptions, not intent or character.

Allow time for the role play for about two minutes total

Debrief:

Ask the responders first:

- Which step of the sequence did you reach?”
- “Where did the conversation naturally slow down or shift?”

Then ask the group:

- “What felt most natural to say?”
- What felt awkward or unfamiliar?”

Take break here (5 minutes)

5. Applied Practice (5 Minutes)

Activity: Small Groups of 4-5 (5 Minutes)

Applied Practice

Instructions:

- *Divide participants into small groups of 4-5.*
- *Direct participants to enact the role play using the scenario.*
- *After participants have completed the role play, debrief as a whole group.*

Now we are going to practice the same three-step sequence in a more realistic setting. Please form small groups of 4-5. Choose roles within your group:

One person will play the *speaker*.

One person will play the *responder*.

Everyone else will be the *observers*.

The scenario is: Your group is planning an event or meeting. One person raises a faith-based request, such as a dietary need or scheduling concern. Another person responds dismissively by saying:

“Do we really need to change the whole plan for that?”

This is happening in a setting where no one expects a long discussion about faith and there is a mild time pressure to move forward.

Each group will have three minutes total to run through the scenario.

Constraints for the Responder:

- You are not the facilitator or meeting leader.
- You do not have authority to set rules or procedures.
- You want to keep this meeting moving, not derail it.

Given the context:

- You have about 90 seconds total.
- Your goal is to interrupt bias just enough to slow the moment.
- You are not trying to persuade, debate, or reach an agreement.

Constraints for the Speaker

- Deliver dismissive comment once.
- Assume you are trying to be practical, not offensive.
- Respond naturally if asked to clarify or rephrase.

Constraints for the Observers:

- Observe silently.
- Do not coach, correct, or intervene.
- Listen for specific phrases.

Note at what moments the responders decide to shift from each step.

Debrief:

Start with Observers:

- What is one phrase you heard that felt realistic and useful in a setting like this?
- Where did the interaction slow down or shift?

Then invite responders:

- Which step of the sequence felt easiest to use here?
- Which step felt hardest under time or social pressure?

6. Reflection (3 Minutes)

Integrating Strategies (3 Minutes)

Reflection

As a whole group, invite participants to reflect on what they learned.

Before we wrap up, let's take a moment to reflect on what we just practiced.

Ask 2-3 of the following questions, depending on time:

- Which step of the sequence felt most natural for you to use?
- Which step felt the hardest to reach in the moment?
- Was there a phrase you heard today that you could imagine using outside this room?
- Where do you think this kind of interruption would be most useful in your own life?

Allow 2-4 brief responses.

7. Call to Action (8 Minutes)

Key Takeaways (1 Minute)

Call to Action

Key Takeaways

As we close, I want to reinforce that moments of bias or dismissal in interfaith conversations frequently arise without warning. They happen quickly, casually, and often when people are trying to move on.

What we practiced today is a way to interrupt those moments without escalating them. You now have a simple sequence that you can use when bias shows up: **Slow the claim → Make the assumption explicit → Offer a repair path.**

You don't need to use every step every time. Even one well-placed sentence can make a difference.

Practical Solutions Summary (5 Minutes)

Distribute session summary sheets to participants.

Peace Through Action has prepared information for you to take with you. It has QR codes and weblinks to actions to continue what we started today.

Post-Session Survey

Complete

Peace Through Action asks you to complete a brief survey about what you learned from this session. It helps them figure out if this session is doing what it's supposed to. It also helps them report to donors and supporters.

If you are passing out print post-session surveys...

I'm passing around the survey now.

If you are also directing/only directing participants to an online post-session survey...

You can complete the survey online by scanning the QR code on the session summary.

If you are showing the PowerPoint presentation...

You can scan the QR code on this slide.

I'm going to give us time to complete the survey before we go.

Pause 3 minutes while participants complete the post-session survey.

Email Sign-Up

Sign Up

Also, Peace Through Action requests your email addresses so that they can follow up with you after this session and explore how they can help you continue your interest. Providing contact information is voluntary, of course, but I hope you will consider it. You can unsubscribe from their email any time.

If you are passing out a print sign-up sheet...

I'm passing around a sign-up sheet.

Pass around the sign-up sheet.

If you are also directing/only directing participants to an online sign-up sheet...

You can scan the QR code on the session summary and sign up online.

If you are showing a PowerPoint presentation...

You can scan the QR code on the slide.

If a group or individual picture will be taken at the conclusion of the session...

Consent

Before we go, I'd like to take a picture of our group. The picture will be a resource for Peace Through Action to show off our action and for us to share with our friends and colleagues. Would that be okay?

If all or most participants consent...

Peace Through Action does request that each of us complete a media release so that they know your intentions with any pictures or videos taken today.

If you are passing out print media release forms...

Take a moment now to read and complete the media release form.

If you are also directing/only directing participants to an online media release form...

You can scan the QR code on the session summary and complete the media release form online.

If you are showing the PowerPoint presentation...

You can scan the QR code on the slide and complete the media release form online.

Pause while participants complete media release forms.

Some other things you can do with Peace Through Action, all of which are covered in the session summary, include connecting with them on social media, volunteering as an activity leader like I'm doing today, or giving a gift of money to support their mission work.

Closing (1 Minute)

Thank participants for attending the session.

I hope you have found this time together pleasant, useful, and meaningful. I can't thank you enough for making time to learn about what you can do, and

that we can do together, to increase peace in our relationships and communities. Thank you!