

Guidelines: Respecting Religious Differences



RICE | BONIUK
INSTITUTE FOR RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

EDUCATE

Know your own perspective:

- * Understand and explain your views and what's important to you regarding topics in your traditions.
- * Determine how to respond to questions in ways that help others understand.

Examine & challenge your assumptions, and recognize stereotypes and biases:

- * Ask yourself: What do I *think* and what do I actually *know*?
- * Be aware of how family, community, media, and other things around us shape how people think about one another.

Study other traditions, religious and nonreligious alike:

- * Learn the basic beliefs and practices of different traditions and understand how people are influenced by the cultures, people, and places around them.
- * Recognize how human practices, beliefs, and communities change over time.
- * Understand how laws and principles give people the right to religious freedom in the U.S. through the First Amendment and globally through the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

RELATE

Practice skills of active listening:

- * Listen to understand, not to agree or disagree.
- * Avoid thinking of a response instead of paying attention to the person.

Use respectful language towards others:

- * Ask questions using respectful language to help you understand better what the other person is saying and what's important to them.
- * Do not make fun of or lie about other peoples' beliefs and practices.

Show true respect and curiosity in your conversation:

- * Assume that others are honest and respectful as well.
- * Understand that each person and each tradition is unique, and that differences strengthen our society.
- * Avoid stereotypes.
- * Learn to have conversations on tough subjects and put yourself in the other person's shoes.
- * Embrace differences among people

ENGAGE

Help other people show respect for religious differences:

- * Visit different houses of worship and philosophy to learn about what matters most to people from religious and nonreligious backgrounds.
- * Do a service project, like a park cleanup or toy collection for children in need, with people of different traditions. Reflect together on why each person participated and what helping others means to them to understand how different traditions have common values in action!

Challenge prejudice and discrimination in your own networks:

- * Follow the Platinum Rule: Treat others how *they* want to be treated.
- * Respect, support, and protect those who ask for your help or share something private with you. Keep private things private but if you think that someone will get hurt, then tell a teacher, parent, or another adult and ask them to help.

Find support and care in more places:

- * Learn where people of diverse beliefs and backgrounds go for help. Ask if you can go with them, or send other people to the same places for support.

Admit when you're wrong and apologize:

- * Everyone makes mistakes.
- * Recognize your mistakes, apologize, and learn from them so you don't repeat them.

Article 18: Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance. - Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Amendment I: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances. - United States Constitution