



# Interfaith Philadelphia

## SHARING MEANINGFUL OBJECTS

### 45 MINUTE ACTIVITY GUIDE

#### GOALS

1. Participants **stand tall** in their own religious identities.
2. Participants express **curiosity** in respectful ways.
3. Participants **understand and appreciate** commonalities amongst religious traditions, including the shared values of helping those in need, hospitality, and treating people with honor and dignity.
4. Participants **understand and respect the distinctiveness** of religious traditions.
5. Participants gain **communication skills** for articulating their identity, passions, and questions.

#### PREPERATION

- Prior to the session, invite each participant to bring an object that holds some significance in his/her religious tradition and is personally meaningful to him/her, and be prepared to share with the rest of the group.
- Write activity instructions on poster-paper.

#### MATERIALS

- Poster-Paper
- Pens/Pencils
- Index Cards

## INTRODUCTION | 5 MINUTES

1. Introduce the activity by sharing the goals for and an overview of the activity.
2. Emphasize that this is a safe space for learning, enjoying, and honoring each other's experience and knowledge. It is a space where participants may ask questions, speak for themselves, and agree to respect the opinions and beliefs of others in the group.
3. Create small groups of 5-6 people each. Each small group should contain representatives from at least two different religious traditions.

## SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY | 30 MINUTES

1. Ask participants to write on an index card:  
(1) a description of their object (2) why it is meaningful to him/her.
2. Taking turns, each participant shares his/her object and invites questions from the other people in their small group.
3. As time permits, ask participants to discuss the following questions in their small groups:
  - a. What did you find interesting about a particular object that was shared?
  - b. What is something new that you learned?
  - c. What is similar and unique among the objects shared?
  - d. What other questions do you have?
4. Ask everyone to display his/her object and index card on a table. Invite everyone to take a more careful look at the 'exhibit'. This is also a good photo opportunity!

## DEBRIEFING | 10 MINUTES

1. Gather everyone back into one large group.
2. Invite one person from each small group to share something he/she learned.
3. Ask the following types of questions:
  - a. What do you think makes objects meaningful? Sacred?
  - b. What are some of the similarities/unique aspects among what was shared?
4. Stress that throughout the interfaith journey, we will notice and learn about other symbols, and having the opportunity to ask many more questions. We will probably begin to notice more symbols.

## NOTES

1. An alternate way to meet content goals of this session is for 1-4 participants to share their objects to the whole group, at the beginning of each session.
2. If a participant forgets his/her object, he/she can draw it, describe it, or share a photo of it.
3. This is a great activity for all ages, including multigenerational audiences.