



Belief Circles Game

Rationale: What are belief circles?

Belief Circles are an experimental strategy used to scaffold and structure conversation about personal beliefs among small groups of participants. The recommended maximum number of participants is eight although it is possible to play this game with smaller or larger groups. Circles have no top or bottom, no corners or beginning or end. Everyone is equal in a circle.

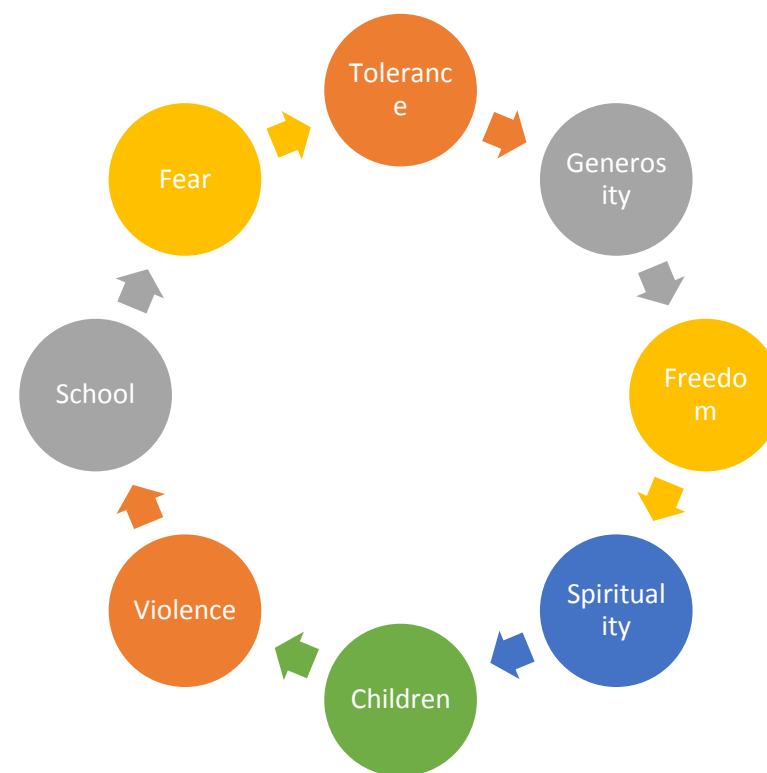
People often find it difficult to articulate what they believe. They may be inhibited or uncertain about talking about their beliefs. The word 'belief' may be confusing or alien to some participants. It might inhibit them from speaking. An alternative way of discussing beliefs is to say that the group is invited to chat about 'What really,

really matters to you?’ Participants are invited to explore what matters to them in thinking about a designated topic. This game is designed to foster conversation around personal beliefs in a secure, non-threatening environment that recognises the multiplicity of possible responses and perspectives in any group. It encourages participants to be confident in articulating their responses through informal conversation.

The circular formation is designed for intimacy, audibility, visual contact, and to encourage positive interaction with peers. Many children are familiar with Circle Time. Belief Circles foster inter-belief dialogue as a distinctive higher order pedagogy, with different levels of meaning, as well as affective, cognitive and relational dimensions that foster co-operation, communication and self-confidence.

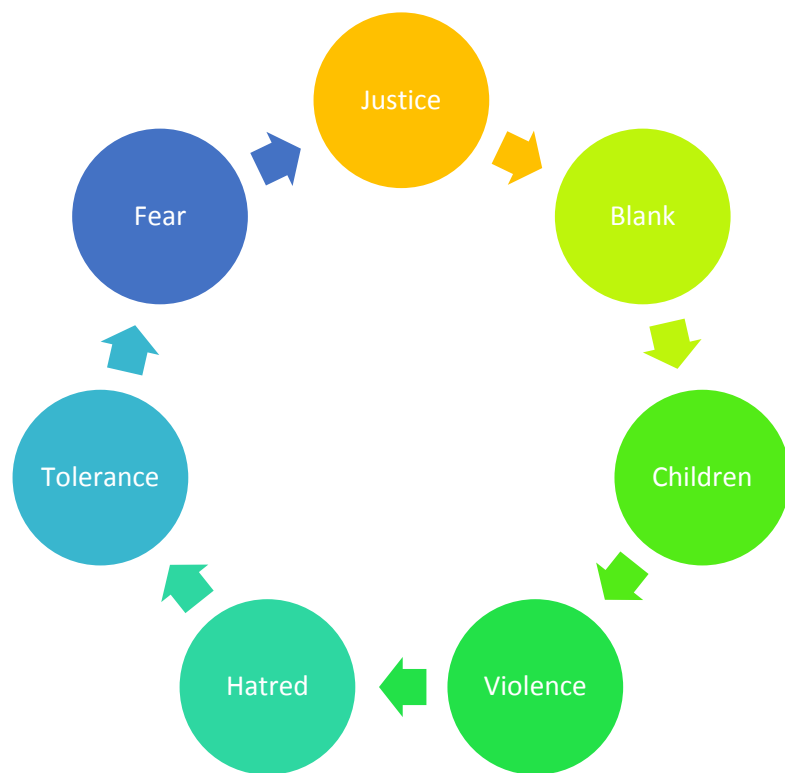
This game aims to:

- Provide a safe space to think about personal beliefs
- Foster participants’ confidence in expressing their beliefs
- Facilitate participants’ respectful engagement with a variety of belief perspectives
- Negotiate points of difference and commonality
- Acknowledge that there are potential moments of disagreement in any discussion about what matters and that participants can disagree without being disagreeable.



Pack G - Teenagers

Possible Belief Circle Topics



Pack F - Teenagers

Belief Circles Game

STEP 1

Guideline for playing the game:

- Everybody is invited to speak but nobody is forced to speak.
- Silence is a valuable form of participation and communication.
- Everyone speaks about their own views... "I think" or "I believe" or "I feel"....
- Everybody is invited to speak for an equal amount of time (e.g. 2 minutes – timer speaking object if desired)
- Everyone in the group gets a turn to talk (clockwise rotation with talking object)
- Everybody agrees to listen actively to the person who is talking and not to interrupt
- Nobody criticises or ridicules another person's beliefs (e.g. "you're wrong" ... "That's ridiculous" ...)
- Nobody tries to convert other people to their personal beliefs or to share with anyone outside the circle what somebody has said (confidentiality)
- One person volunteers to start the belief game by spinning the dial on the belief wheel to reveal the topic for discussion.

When participants have agreed to the rules of the game, a volunteer starts the discussion by spinning the dial on the belief wheel until it randomly lands on a topic for discussion.

Note some belief wheels may be blank for participants to negotiate and nominate topics they would like to discuss. A range of possible topics is given in this pack. Teachers might select topics that are most relevant for their participants learning needs. Teachers can contribute more topics. Newspapers can be used to select contemporary events and themes. Some topics can be very sensitive and evoke a deep personal response.

STEP 2

The group engage in the Belief circle Game. When everybody in the circle has a go at talking a volunteer hands out a blank piece of card and a pencil to each participant. The volunteer then reads the prompt questions and invites participants to jot down a response (can be visual or written etc.) to one of the questions below:

1. What do you notice about what matters to our group?
2. What did it feel like to agree with somebody's beliefs?
3. What did it feel like to disagree with somebody's beliefs?

Invite participants respond through text and image to one question above. After 5 minutes the cards are gathered, shuffled and placed blank side up on the floor. Participants are invited to pick up a card and going around the circle again they read out the response that is written on their random card.

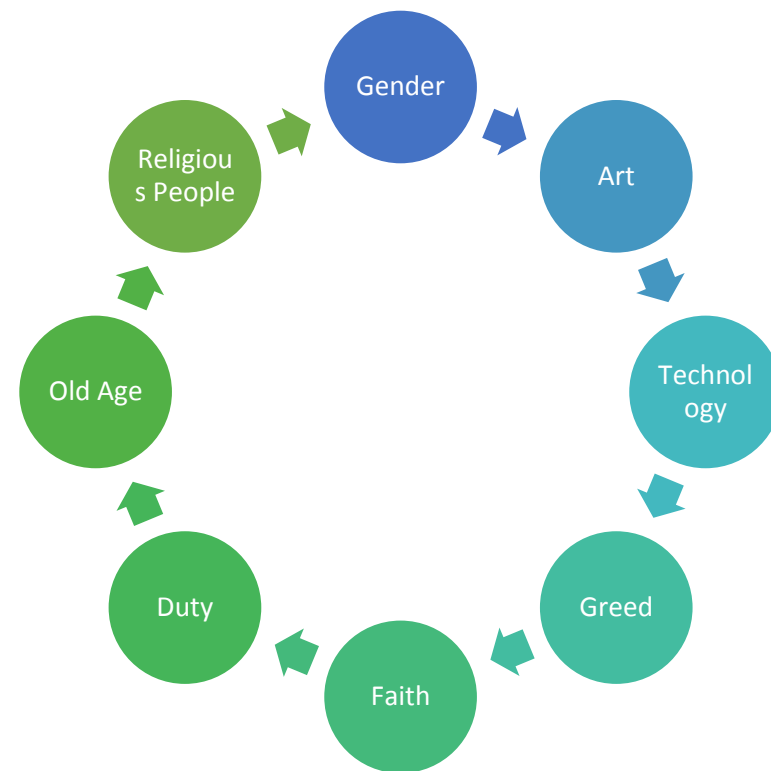
STEP 3

Before the game ends the participants are asked to give a very brief verbal response to the following questions:

- Can you say something you like about somebody else's belief?
- Can you say something you heard that made you think differently about your own belief?

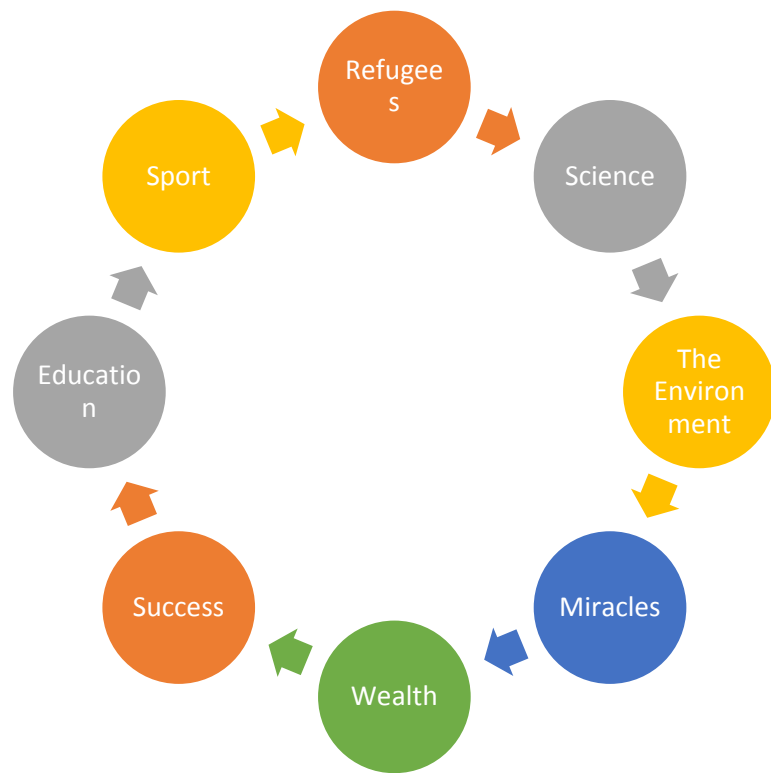
Remember you can disagree without being disagreeable.

Possible Belief Circle Topics



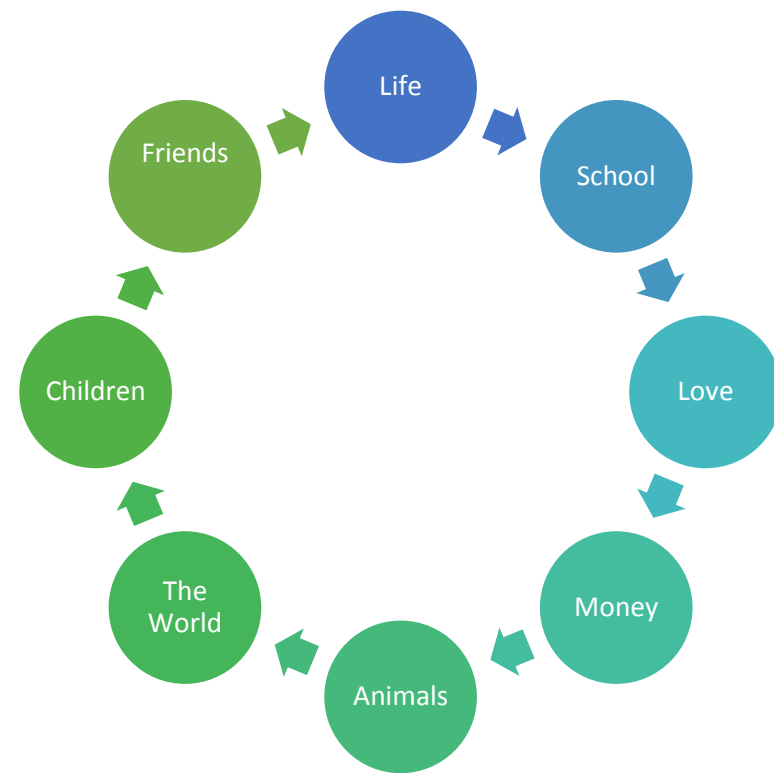
Pack E – Older Children

Possible Belief Circle Topics



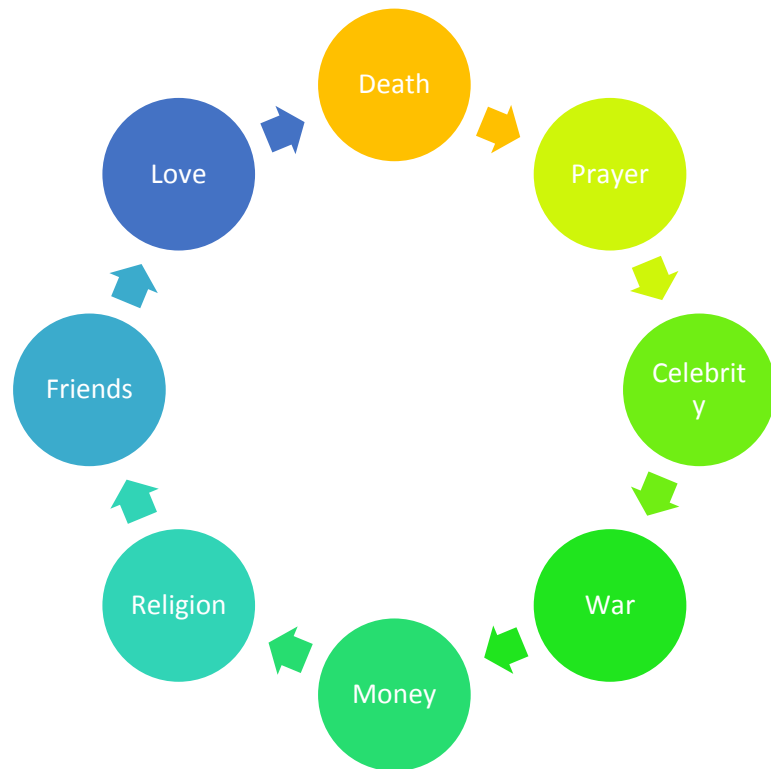
Pack D – Teenagers & Older Children

Possible Belief Circle Topics

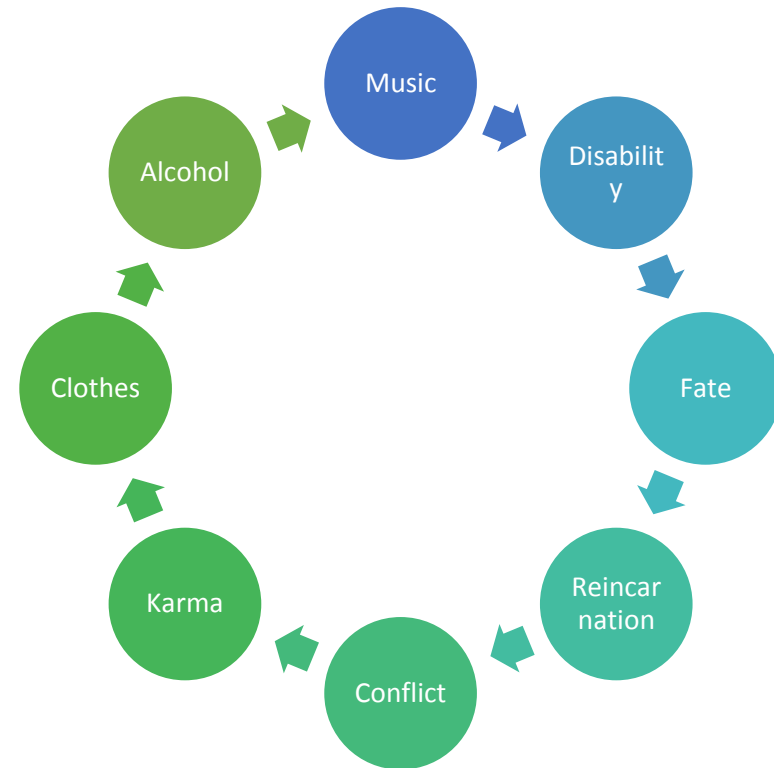


Pack A for Younger Children

Possible Belief Circle Topics



Pack B - Older Children



Pack C – Children & Teenagers