

2.5) SESSION 5 – RELIGION IN LEITH



Overview

This session was the first to explicitly begin to ask questions in relation to intra-Christian sectarianism in Leith. This was achieved through a combination of a power point presentation, which included a quiz on Churches and ex-Churches in Leith and discussion based activities.

The overall engagement of all participants in exploring the activities and questions they were asked was great to see in this session.

The quality of responses also provided a very rich picture of intra-Christian sectarianism in Leith, with lots of unplanned learning taking place.

For more detailed feedback of how this session was delivered please see section 1.9).

Session plan

Running time – 1hour 30mins (approx.)

- 1. Ground rules**
- 2. Reminiscence of Religion in Leith - *Church and places of worship quiz***
- 3. Religion in the past - *Discussion activity***
- 4. Political figures slides**
- 5. Religion and Politics go bad (*Protestant Action Society*) – *Discussion activity***
- 6. Summary and close**

Please check out section 2.6) of the physical handling box – for all resources and a PowerPoint presentation of how this activity was delivered.

1. Ground rules

- **Using a flipchart you should record comments from your group in regards to ground rules that you will aim to follow for the session.**
- **Remember to include some comments in relation to confidentiality and promoting a safe space. Exploring sectarianism can often be a sensitive topic; accordingly it's important to make your group feel as comfortable as possible.**

2. Reminiscence of Religion in Leith - Churches and places of worship – Quiz

- **With an increasingly secular society and ever decreasing church membership, many local communities in Scotland are now seeing their churches change to become new places of worship.**
- **For this activity, you should use photos of local churches in your community that have now become different places of worship. You can use Google to search for appropriate images or preferably you could also take your group out into the community to photograph local places of worship.**

- **Once you have collected and agreed on what images you will be using and what places of worship you will be aiming to discuss, you are ready to start your quiz!**
- **This quiz activity can either be done in teams by splitting your group and getting them to record their answers, or preferably you can get your group to shout out answers.**
- **You could also consider including your quiz as part of a PowerPoint presentation. Having answer sheets for your participants to record their answers can also be really useful.**
- **Examples of all of these resources can be found in section 2.3) of the physical handling box, to help you in planning your own churches and places of worship quiz.**
- **REMEMBER! The important part is to promote discussion on the changing nature of churches in Scotland.**

3. Religion in the past – Discussion activity

- **You should use the following questions to promote discussion with your group in regards to how they viewed religion in the past in their community.**
 - *What do you remember about religious observance when you were younger?*
 - *How did this affect you?*
 - *How have things changed?*
 - *Have your beliefs changed, and if so, why?*
 - *Did you know anyone involved?*
- **This activity works particularly well when used with an intergenerational group, as older members can share their experiences and knowledge with those younger.**
- **Record any comments you capture on to flip chart.**

4. Political figure slides

- **For this activity you should gather and use images of key political figures that you can use to further stimulate discussion politics in your local community.**

Example political figures could include for example, previously prime ministers.

- **In order to explore participants political ideas in your group you may also want to ask the following questions:**
 - ***Have you ever been involved in politics (local or national)***
 - ***How have your political views changed, and how were they shaped in the first place?***
 - ***What about trade union membership, or any other affiliations?***

5. Religion and Politics go bad (*Protestant Action Society*) - Discussion activity

- **The following activity draws on the topic of the Protestant Action Society (PAS), in order to explore a political party that can be used to explore the topic of sectarianism.**
- **The PAS was an anti-Catholic and anti-Irish immigration political party, active in Edinburgh in the 1930s. It was founded by John Cormack in 1933 and had elected nine members to the Edinburgh Council in 1936 with 31% of the vote. The PAS however emerged when similar movements were arising in Scotland, such as the Glasgow based - *Scottish Protestant League* and the *Scottish Democratic Fascist Party*.**
- **Feel free to use other groups as discussion points if you feel they are more relevant to your community.**

It is important to do some background research to your community. There may very well be a connection with a political party in the past that could help in exploring the topic of sectarianism with your group.

- **Once you have selected a political party to focus on, agree on questions in which you will ask your group to promote discussion. Use the following questions which were used in order to explore the PAS to get you started:**

For Cormack Slides and PA (see attached question sheets – selection of questions)

- ***Do you remember ‘Speakers Corner’, near here?***
- ***What were the topics of discussion and debate?***
- ***Who is this, and what do you know and remember about John Cormack and ‘Protestant Action?’***
- **Lastly, following discussing religious or political groups that may have existed in the past in your community you should ask your group the following question:**
 - ***Could the PAS happen again?***

With the rise of many far right political parties in recent times across Europe and in Britain, this may be a topic the group want to explore.

Make sure to highlight any similarities or differences that may exist from groups such as the PAS.

6. Summary and close

- **To close and finish up this session it is important that all your participants leave in a positive frame of mind.**

For this you should revert back to your ground rules that you covered at the start. Emphasis should be placed on confidentiality and also that your session has been a safe space to discuss the topics you have covered.