



DARE

Depolarisation Activism for
Resilient Europe

DARE to Care: Appreciation of Diversity and Dialogue in Multireligious Communities

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DARE to Care: Appreciation of Diversity and Dialogue in Multireligious Communities

Background (about the DARE project)

The 'DARE - Depolarization Activism for Resilient Europe' initiative was created to inspire a critical learning space and youth-led and action-oriented dialogue about various contemporary challenges such as polarisation, radicalisation, mental health, human rights violations. The DARE educational materials seek to strengthen active citizenship and European values and promote and amplify youth voices and civic engagement.

For more information, please visit the project website: www.depolarisation.eu

Lesson Themes

- DARE to Care Theme is an insight into a young person's motivation and commitment to volunteering for a particular cause and through doing so, serving one's community;
- Challenges and opportunities of living together in communities where people have different religious backgrounds;
- Attitudes and practices that can be implemented to foster appreciation for diversity and positive connections between young people of different religious backgrounds.

Context

Xenophobia and group-based hatred and violence have been on the rise in Europe. Differences in religion and culture have been a source of conflict and hate within many communities.

This DARE to Care short film follows a young activist who brings together young people from different religious backgrounds to foster dialogue among them. The relevance of this topic for students is to raise awareness about the nature of group-based hatred, to encourage students to reflect on their attitudes towards differences and to explore ways that build tolerance and acceptance towards others who are different from them.

Goals

- To raise awareness of the problem of intolerance and hatred based on religion and culture and their consequences;
- To discuss attitudes and practices that foster tolerance and acceptance of differences;
- To encourage curiosity towards learning about differences and to encourage building meaningful connections between people with different backgrounds.

Learning Outcomes

It is expected that as a result of the class, the students will be able to:

- Have a better understanding of the problem of group-based hatred and intolerance;
- Identify attitudes and practices that can be implemented to foster curiosity and tolerance towards people with different religious backgrounds.

Material and Equipment Needed

To play the video: laptop, beamer/ projector, speakers, internet/wi-fi

Duration

45 minutes (one standard lesson)

Overview of Lesson Activities (Process)

Introduction (10 minutes)

The lesson starts with the instructor announcing that today's class will focus on the topic of tolerance, in other words, how we can accept and live together with people who have different views, values and religion. The instructor continues by asking a few warm-up questions related to religion, for example:

- Which religions are present in our country?
- How important is religion for people? Why?
- How important is religion to you?
- Do you know others who have a different religion or culture from your own?

The instructor sums up the answers and introduces the video: "Today we are going to see a short video clip about Liam who brings together young people of different religions."

Short DARE to Care video clip viewing (5 minutes)

Play the video clip for the students: depolarisation.eu/diversity

Discussion about the video clip (20 minutes)

Useful exploratory and follow-up reflection questions:

- What does Liam do?

(Note: Liam organizes workshops and camps for young people of different religions to discuss identity, existential questions, faith, and religion and to get to know each other and each others' beliefs better. Youngsters who are non-religious also participate.)

- Why did he decide to do this kind of work? What is his personal story?
- Alternatively: Why did he become angry and hateful when he was young? What made him overcome his hatred?

(Note: Liam's grandparents were Jewish and they were deported to a concentration camp during the Holocaust where some of their family members were killed. When Liam and his sister learned about this when they were young, they developed hatred towards the Germans. When their grandmother learned about this, she sat them down and had an impactful discussion with them. She said that you cannot generalize hate to every German person and that if you hate others you will become similar to the perpetrators. Liam always looked up to his grandparents as role models and this has motivated him to work for creating understanding, curiosity and tolerance for each other - even if we have different beliefs.)

Discussion about the video clip continued:

- What does Liam identify as a problem in today's society?

(Note: He identifies the problem that people talk ABOUT each other instead of WITH each other. When people seem different, look different or have different views, values, religion, it is easier to talk ABOUT them and create dislike, fear, or hate towards them which can even lead to violence or war. The instructor may choose to ask students if they know about events that happened due to hatred of other groups, and may bring in relevant examples from their own context and facilitate a dialogue about that.)

- What does he think we should do?

(Note: He suggests that when we see people who are different from us...

- to talk WITH them as opposed to ABOUT them, to create a dialogue
- to have curiosity to learn about them, their personal story, their beliefs and customs and what it means to them, and
- to learn about their beliefs and practices that are different from ours.)

- Closing questions: What was interesting for you in this video? Was there anything that surprised you?

"How we can connect and learn about each others' culture and religion?" - Group Brainstorming Activity (10 minutes)

Liam works to bring young people who have very different values and religions together to learn from each other and to create a connection between them, instead of distance and distrust. What can we do to create this connection and to learn about each other's cultures and religions? Why is diversity in our societies something to be appreciated and embraced?

While students offer different ideas, the instructor offers feedback and follow-up clarification questions.

Note: Some ideas to learn about each others' culture and religion may include:

- Organizing an intercultural dinner where students bring their favourite dish and/or dessert and talk about them (e.g., what ingredients it is made of, when is it usually consumed, if it is related to a certain holiday, how is it eaten, who prepares it, etc.).
- Organizing a class or an event where everyone presents about their culture's most important holidays / OR: Students choose to research and present about a certain culture.
- Organizing a class or event where students can share about their religious customs and beliefs /OR: Students can choose to present about a religion by doing their own research or interviewing a representative of that religion.
- Students in small groups interview representatives of various religions and hold a presentation in class.
- Inviting representatives of different religions to class/ or to an afternoon event where students can ask questions about customs, beliefs, rituals, clothing, holidays and ask what personal meanings they have.

Sources

- DARE project, documentation and videos can be found on the project website: www.depolarisation.eu or www.resilienteurope.eu
- Together for Sweden, Interreligious dialogue with youths and young adults in Sweden: www.fryshuset.se/verksamhet/tillsammans-for-sverige/in-english

Activity Adaption for Online Implementation

This lesson easily transfers to online education, as much of it focuses on student reflection and conversation.

Assessment and Evaluation Options

The core of this lesson revolves around fostering curiosity, tolerance and acceptance of others with different values and religion which should not be subject to grading or other standard evaluation practices. If there is a knowledge-based follow-up assignment (e.g., a presentation about a chosen culture or religion) this could be the subject of evaluation. Teachers are encouraged to communicate clear evaluation criteria for the presentation.

Homework Ideas

Homework can be a follow-up to execute some of the students' ideas that were presented as a result of their group work or the instructor can also come up with a follow-up homework (please see the list of ideas above).