

# Introduction

We suggest that you start by breaking the ice. You should tell the participants about yourself, and then ask them to introduce themselves to the group and to say something about their personal objectives for attending the workshop.

Say why you believe this workshop is important. It is hard for many Christians today to talk about their faith, even to family and friends, and this means that our relationships are often incomplete. If you have faith then it is a big part of who you are, and not being able to share this can stop you from feeling good about yourself and your beliefs, or from feeling fully accepted by those you meet.

The first thing to consider is: why does our faith matter to us? Only if our lives are changed and improved by our faith can we possibly hope to articulate it well!

**What parts of your life are inspired or enriched by your faith?**

## Section One

In Video One, Nadim Nassar introduces the subject of the workshop, the impact of living in a secular society, and what our faith should mean to us.

PLAY VIDEO ONE

Why and how should we articulate our faith?

Why we should know our faith, and what influence can we have when we can articulate it?

*The Revd Canon Dr Dennis Stamps: The world has changed. Today in the West many have lost any genuine connection with, or understanding of, their faith. We have to accept that we live in a 'post-Christian' culture and society.*

*Rashid Ali Laher: We must value being able to express our faith, but we must realise that we have much to learn.*

We live in Europe in a uniquely secular society, where secularism has become increasingly atheistic and anti-religious.

*The Revd Smitha Prasadam: our secular society has an impact on how we engage with the world; we have become underconfident. The 'twin evils': cynicism and suspicion. Living as people of hope.*

*Rabbi Shaul Rosenblatt: Judaism is not a proselytising religion. We must reach out to those who have become secularised and separated from their faith. The apparent freedom to live however you like that is offered by secular life is very attractive - but it does not deliver on its promises.*

Another reason to articulate our faith

- Films and TV shows such as Star Wars, Twilight, Lord of the Rings, Harry Potter, etc., offer escapism and easy spiritual solutions.

*The Revd Michael Heaney: Celebrity culture has taken on almost a spiritual dimension; it is very attractive, especially to young people who lack real role models. Celebrity culture is essentially vacuous, and it sometimes distracts people from seeking genuine fulfilment in their own lives.*

Many influential spiritual cults have arisen, and we must protect ourselves by becoming confident in our own faith and articulate.

What is our faith NOT?

- Our faith is not merely an intellectual exercise.
- Our faith is not a private matter; it is part of our identity, and not something of which we should be ashamed.
- Our faith is not like a computer that we can switch on and off; nor is it like a shopping centre!

What is our faith?

- Our faith is a relationship - we must be open to God, and share ourselves with Him.

*The Revd Rana Khan: Faith is not just a set of dogmas. It is a relationship with God, and this relationship should colour all our other relationships.*

Faith is a relationship, and that means sharing.

- We can only share our faith if we understand it!
- We can talk about our best friend for hours because we are inspired by that relationship; our reaction should be similar when we are asked about our faith - if we cannot