

RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

How do you remember meanings?

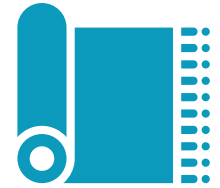
WHAT IS THE ISSUE HERE?

How can an object or a part of the body be an image for something else? Together we think about the meaning and the use of symbols.



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-  IN TOTAL 90 MINUTES
 -  THE EXERCISE CONSISTS OF FOUR PARTS
 -  THREE PERSONS OR MORE
 -  RECOLLECTION, ACTIVE REFLECTION
 -  DIVERSITY, TOLERANCE, SYMBOLS
-

Which object is especially important to you?



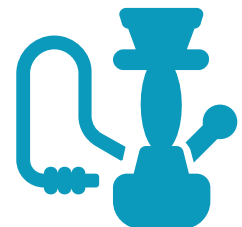
HOW IS IT DONE?

All participants are given Activity Sheet A and a pen. The exercise now is to describe or draw an object, which is especially important to them, in an individual piece of work.

In a second step the personal history of this can be noted down in keywords. Finally, you should give a short statement as to what exactly the special personal value of the object is.

After 15 minutes all participants will give a short presentation of their objects in the group circle. Together they can consider what aspects are shared by all of the objects and histories, for example that their memory value is greater than their material value. And that this “added value” is not necessarily visible to others since it is connected to an emotion.

Next read the text on the symbol and compare how your own history can be rediscovered in the development of symbols.



GOAL

- To find a personal entry point into the world of symbols
- To become aware that objects can have several meanings
- To recognise the difference between material and ideal (added) value

EVALUATION

It has been shown in your histories that objects can have an intrinsic value, respectively an added value. This added value can also be referred to as symbolic value.

This is our topic today: symbols and signs. When and how are they used and what makes them different from texts and images?



20-25 MINUTES



THREE PERSONS OR MORE



ACTIVITY SHEET A, PENS



What role do hands play in understanding meanings?



TO CONTINUE

We have just been dealing with personal symbols, whose “speech” is often only understood by insiders. There are, however, signs with symbolic value which can be understood by several people, because they refer to emotions known by everyone.

Many of these signs are derived from body language and gestures.

In the following we will therefore examine the symbolic added value of hand signals.



HOW IS IT DONE?

Depending on the size of the group, the group leader can give instructions to form smaller groups.

The instructions for the exercises of the working groups are on Activity Sheets B and C.

Depending on how much time is available, either one or both activities can be carried out.

GOAL

- To comprehend that the human hand is an important starting point for verbal imagery and symbols
- To recognise that the readability of symbols and signs provides opportunities as well as limits
- To understand that interpretations are dependent on cultural and social considerations



20–25 MINUTES



THREE PERSONS OR MORE



ACTIVITY SHEETS B AND C, PENS

Overview of the activities

ACTIVITY SHEET B HAND SYMBOLISM IN SPEECH

The participants write down linguistic expressions in which “hand” or “hands” stand for a certain meaning. These could be formulations that are made up of “hand” and another word (e.g. “hands down” (to be sincere)) or proverbs like “to know something like the back of your hand” (to know it very good). Following this, they consider where the origins for these hand images come from in the language.

ACTIVITY SHEET C FIND HAND SIGNALS WHICH EVERYONE UNDERSTANDS

The participants first consider on their own how they understand the hand signals depicted and then exchange their views among one another.

In a second step they can name hand signals themselves which are intelligible to all.

EVALUATION

“What have you noticed about the exercises?”

What do you think now about the role and meaning of the hand for understanding one another?

How obvious is communication by hands and gestures... what role do your emotions play here?”



What meaning does the hand have in religion?

TO CONTINUE

To begin with we concerned ourselves with objects which have a strong personal meaning and thereby a special symbolic value for you.

Following this we used our hands, hand signals and gestures to find meanings which are intelligible to all in exchange with one another.

In the last part it should now be about the role of the symbol “hand” in religion.

To this end, let us view together an object from the collection of the Museum for Islamic Art and see which of our previous considerations we can link to it.”



GOAL

- To understand how objects and symbols are used in religion: as a reminder of religious beliefs or a link to a personal experience
- To recognise that such religious and cultural objects are also signs of traditions handed down

HOW IS IT DONE?

The images of the hand amulet are placed clearly visible for everyone in the circle or hung on the wall. The group leader invites you to talk about the object by asking the following questions.

“What inscriptions, patterns or forms can you recognise?”

Can you identify where they come from?

What could the form and design stand for?

How and for what purpose could the object have been used?

Where have you ever seen anything similar?”

Additionally, you can read the Information Sheets Amulet A and B.



20-25 MINUTES



THREE PERSONS OR MORE



IMAGE OF THE HAND AMULET FROM THE FRONT AND THE BACK, BOARD OR WALL, ADHESIVE TAPE, INFORMATION SHEETS AMULET A AND B

How do you remember meanings?

HOW EVERYTHING FALLS INTO PLACE

“This exercise is about understanding and remembering with the aid of symbols. Therefore, it is appropriate to use the hand again as a symbol when we now have some personal feedback on your experiences of the past hour!”

HOW IS IT DONE?

The participants either use Activity Sheet D or place their respective hands with fingers splayed out on a blank sheet of paper and use a pen to draw around the outline of the back of the hand and all of the 5 fingers.

This drawing of the outline of one’s own hand will now be used to assign one’s own opinion in writing on the content and procedure of the last hour to a separate finger and its meaning as given below. The participants can write the corresponding answer in the finger of “their hand” and give the slips of paper to the group leader.

All of the “hands” can be hung up on the wall or placed in the circle clearly visible for the group and without further comments.



- 1 That was great!
- 2 We should pay more attention to this (in future)!
- 3 That wasn't so good!
- 4 I'll take that away with me!
- 5 That was dealt with too briefly!

GOAL

The group reflects on the entire procedure of the exercise unit individually, in terms of content and with the aid of a symbol

TIPS FOR FURTHER THINKING

How would you classify the object:

- as a symbol of personal remembrance?
- as a religious amulet?
- as a protective talisman?”

Hand amulets are also found in other religions:

- Compare Buddhism, Judaism and Christianity with one another!
- What symbolic language does Islam use? How are symbols used or interpreted in practising the religion?
- Document (photograph, note down, draw) symbols from your everyday life for the next meeting.
- Bring your findings to the next meeting so that we can exchange views about them.



10 MINUTES



THREE PERSONS OR MORE



PENS, PAPER OR ACTIVITY SHEET D