

FACING
Difference
CHALLENGE



Nigeria

Elementary School

STUDENTS REBUILD DISCUSSION GUIDE



students
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Note to teachers: Thank you for participating the Students Rebuild Challenge! Below are suggestions to help introduce *Mariya and Juliana's Story* as well as discussion questions you might use or adapt. As there may be some unfamiliar words or locations represented in this video, we recommend that you (a) Pre-watch the video or read the transcript below, noting any vocabulary that may be unfamiliar to your students, (b) review the unfamiliar vocabulary with your students before showing the video, (c) locate Nigeria on a map.



Framing

As we grow up, we are given information—from our families, our communities, the television and the internet—about people who are like us and about people who are different from us. Some of the ways we are alike and different are how we look, how we dress, what religion we are taught, what languages we speak, where we were born, and our families' culture(s), customs and traditions. Sometimes we have friends who are very similar to us and sometimes we have friends who are very different from us.

In *Mariya and Juliana's Story*, we learn about two friends from different religions. Both friends live in Jos, Nigeria, a country located in West Africa. Nigeria has about 188 million people; 58% are Christian, like Juliana, and 41% are Muslim, like Mariya. In Nigeria, Christians and Muslims have a long history of fighting each other.

Mariya and Juliana met at a camp where they became very good friends. They both believe that their differences should not get in the way of their friendship.



Discussion Questions

1. Based on the stories Mariya and Juliana share, how did Muslims and Christians get along before the conflict in 2008?
2. What did Mariya think about Christian people before and after the crisis? What did Juliana think about Muslim people and after the crisis?
3. What have you been taught about people from religious backgrounds that are different from your own? What do you think they have been taught about you?
4. Mariya and Juliana met at a camp where young people go to end fighting between different groups. How could a friendship between teens from two different religious backgrounds help end fighting?
5. After Juliana's mother's sewing machines were destroyed she says she thought, "These people are bad." Later, after going to camp with Mariya, she said she hopes to see her country, "where no Christian will see his fellow Muslim as bad." What helped her change her thinking?
6. Both teens make reference to the "crisis" in 2008 when they were young. How did living through that crisis affect both Juliana and Mariya?
7. What is courageous about building friendships across different religions? What is risky? What is rewarding?
8. What are the religious groups in your community? How do they relate to each other? Have religious groups in your community had any conflicts in the past or present?
9. How do you relate to people your age from other religious backgrounds? Do you have friends from other religions? What makes those friendships strong?
10. What does *Mariya and Juliana's Story* make you think about the power of friendships? How can friendships between people of different backgrounds help build peace and understanding?



Additional Activity Options

Venn diagram:

As a class, create a Venn diagram noting what Mariya and Juliana have in common and what are their differences. Students then pair with “the most different person from me in this room” and create a similar diagram.

Designing Peace Camp Activities:

In groups, students will design an activity for children their age in Peace Camp. Together, the whole class will organize a Day of Peace Camp activities. (Students can research activities from Search For Common Ground, CARE, Seeds of Peace, Peace First, or design their own).

Get more information on Nigeria:

Find more information on studentsrebuild.org



Transcript

TIME	SPEAKER	DIALOGUE
00:00:24	Mariya	My name is Mariya Shuab Sulemen. I am 17 years old and I am from Jos, Nigeria.
00:00:32	Mariya	My family are Muslim people. I have ten siblings. And I was the sixth born in the family.
00:00:42	Mariya	I finished my secondary school in 2016. And I'm still waiting for admission into University.
00:00:51	Mariya	I am hoping to go Bayero University Kano.
00:00:56	Mariya	I want to study mass comm so that I can become a broadcaster.
00:01:02	Mariya	In 2008 there was a crisis between Muslims and Christians here in Jos.
00:01:09	Mariya	Many local governments were affected. It's not only Jos. But Jos is the worst one. It lasted two years.
00:01:19	Mariya	I was 7 years old when the conflict started.
00:01:24	Mariya	I have never seen a dead body before. I was really traumatized.
00:01:33	Juliana	My name is Juliana Nya. I am 19 years old. I live in Jos, Nigeria.
00:01:38	Juliana	I belong to a family of five.
00:01:44	Juliana	We are a Christian family.
00:01:47	Juliana	I am planning to further my education. I would love to study medicine and surgery because I would love to save lives.
00:01:58	Juliana	My mom is a tailor, so I do assist her in the shop. Before the crisis, she was having about six apprentices who were Muslim. She was teaching them how to sew. But after the crisis, they entered my mom's shop and then destroyed one of her machines. So I was saying, "These people are bad."



Transcript (cont.)

TIME	SPEAKER	DIALOGUE
00:02:20	Mariya	Before the crisis we were living peacefully. Both the Muslims and Christians are one. There is no issues of segregation or discrimination or anything like that. But after the crisis, things have changed.
00:02:35	Mariya	We live in a Christian community. But during the crisis they set our house on fire. We lost everything. Everybody is affected.
00:02:53	Juliana	I met Mariya in the camp organized by Search for Common Ground. We had 11 Christian girls and 11 Muslim girls. Brought together under a single umbrella to learn about peace.
00:03:08	Mariya	Juliana was my roommate. I didn't know we would ever be friends. We shared experiences. We chat, we eat, we pray. We did a lot of things together.
00:03:20	Mariya	I seek advice from her. Sometimes she do seek at advice from me.
00:03:25	Mariya	Sometimes it's like, Juliana will ask you, "Why are you wearing this hijab?" I say it's because I'm a Muslim girl and I need to wear it. Then after that she will even lend the hijab from me and wear it.
00:03:44	Mariya	Initially, I thought to be friends with Christians is not going to be easy because there is a religion difference. I didn't think that these people should be friendly to me. But after then, I understand that it's actually easy to be friends with Christian children. Especially Juliana.
00:04:05	Juliana	I hope to see a changed Nigeria. Where there will be no discrimination. Where no Christian will see his fellow Muslim as bad. And where there will be peace. Where there will be love.
00:04:20	Juliana	When we are in peace there is unity and togetherness.



Take Action

Make a self-portrait:

Support your students in creating a self-portrait that reflects their identity and experiences. Each portrait sent to Students Rebuild generates a \$3 matching donation from the Bezos Family Foundation—up to \$600,000—to support peace building programs in Nigeria, Sri Lanka, and the South Caucasus region of Eastern Europe.

Join the conversation:

As part of the Facing Difference Challenge our partner Global Nomads Group will be hosting virtual town hall dialogues on topics around our differences ranging from religion, race, and immigration. These webcasts will feature a live conversation between youth involved in CARE and Search for Common Ground's peacebuilding programs as well as other Students Rebuild participants. These virtual town halls will be lived streamed; your team can send questions to on-air participants as well as participate in a facilitated chat room. All you need to join is an internet connection. Go to www.studentsrebuild.org to register.