

## Pluralism Podcast

### Episode 2 “Religion in Public Schools” Transcript

#### [Introductory Segment]

**Summary:** Your hosts, Rachel Foran and Usra Ghazi, introduce the second episode of the Pluralism Podcast, a production of [The Pluralism Project](#) at [Harvard University](#). This organization was founded by Harvard Professor [Diana Eck](#) over two decades ago to help Americans engage with the realities of religious diversity through research, outreach, and the active dissemination of resources. [On Common Ground: World Religions in America](#) (or OCG, which you can access at pluralism.org) is one such resource. OCG includes essays, interactive maps, and links to historical documents and current news articles.

This show, in three vignettes, presents a snapshot of the research and information you will find in [On Common Ground](#). These vignettes highlight America’s rich religious diversity, her changing religious landscape, and particular moments of encounter in the public sphere.

Today’s episode focuses on religious encounters in public schools.

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[Usra and Rachel discuss childhood experiences with singing Christmas carols as public school students] **Usra:** *I went to school in the Chicago Public School system and one of the things that might seem really odd now, that didn’t seem odd at all when I was younger -it was like 3rd grade- I tried out for the school choir and one of the things that the choir did every year was travel around the city and sing Christmas songs and carols.*

**Rachel:** *What kind of songs?*

**Usra:** *I don’t know, like Silent Night, really Christian-y songs.*

**Rachel:** *So not like frosty the snow man?*

**Usra:** *Um not really. We had Frosty the Snowman and Winter Wonderland at our Christmas assemblies that our school went to and our classroom participated in that, but definitely this choir was an official, very Christian-y choir. I had to wear a red Santa hat and Christmas themed colors and I felt really special being in this group and I never thought twice about it being Christian. The funniest thing is, I think I probably learned Christmas songs before I ever even learned any Muslim songs or Muslim nasheeds.*

**Rachel:** Hi everyone, its Rachel, Usra and I were just chatting about our experiences as kids singing Christmas carols for holiday assemblies and she told me something really interesting: growing up as a Muslim student in Chicago Public Schools, she was actually part of the school choir and sang Christmas songs across the city, and never really thought twice about the

Christian themes within the songs that she had been singing. To her, being in this choir, was a part of the American experience.

[Back to Rachel and Usra's conversation about childhood experiences] **Usra:** *Chicago public school, I'd say north side of the city, and a lot of the students who were in the choir were racially and religiously diverse. And so, it didn't appear as odd that I was a Pakistani Muslim girl singing in this predominantly white—but also ethnically diverse—choir of this Chicago public school. I still kind of wonder the legalities around it. And interestingly enough, my family never objected. My parents never said anything. I think it was fine to them because I don't think they were worried that all of a sudden I was going to become Christian. In my household there was definitely an us and them "other-izing" of American culture that sort of protected us as young Muslims growing up here. In our household the word 'American' was synonymous with the word white which was synonymous with the word Christian. And so I was just a part of this American white Christian experience and that's fine because it's a part of being in America.*

**Rachel:** *Yeah, that's really funny because my best friend growing up—also my next door neighbor—so she was at my house all of the time. She's technically half Christian and half Jewish, but she was raised Jewish. Because she spent so much time with me and with our other group of friends, most of us being Christian, she would always come with us to very Christian-focused camps. I mean, they were Christian camps and we sang songs about Jesus the entire time. And I think it was the same experience for her, with things being sort of weird, thinking "I just want to go to camp with my friends and this is what my friends do..."*

**Usra:** *It was normal for a Jewish person to be there?*

**Rachel:** *Yeah.*

**Usra:** *So there were other Jews?*

**Rachel:** *Well, I'm not really... you wouldn't know. No one asked. That was probably part of it. Everyone just kind of assumed. I do know Sarah, my friend, said that there were some points that were a little too much—having to go to church every single day and that being like "Oh this isn't as fun as the rock climbing." But it was still part of this overall childhood American experience.*

**Usra:** It's Usra here and I loved hearing that story from Rachel, because I can relate to Sarah's experience. I never went to Christian camp, but it's really interesting how the way that religion is engaged in the public school system can influence or even shape the religious identities of young people.

The encounters in today's episode of the Pluralism Podcast take place in our public schools—educational institutions steeped in controversy around issues of faith in public life.

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**Rachel:** This show, in three vignettes, presents a snapshot of the research and information you will find at [On Common Ground](#). These vignettes highlight America's rich religious diversity, her changing religious landscape, and particular moments of encounter in the public square.

Our first vignette specifically looks at two religious practices that you'll hear about in this program. The Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha and the Hindu practice of Bhakti, or devotion.

Our second vignette explores a significant point of contention: should major religious holidays recognized by American public schools at all and if so, which ones? What is the appropriate way to recognize these holidays—the more formal option of closing school or the less formal alternatives, such as in-class celebrations or educational activities?

Our third vignette focuses on a recent encounter between Muslim American students and the public school system; these students have started an online petition to close U.S. schools on the two Eid holidays, raising, again, questions about the rights of minority religious groups in American public schools.

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### [Vignette 1: Eid al-Fitr and Bhakti]

**Summary:** In the first vignette, Sarah Khan and Danish Zaidi, Research Associates at the [Pluralism Project](#), read portions of the [On Common Ground](#) audio essays "[Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr](#)" and "[Bhakti: The Way of Devotion](#)."

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**Sarah:** Many people associate the holiday of Eid with Eid al-Fitr, the holiday of the feast that comes after Muslims fast for 30 days during the month of Ramadan. The other major holiday of Islam is Eid al-Adha which is related to the hajj pilgrimage.

*Hajj* ceremonies take place during Dhu'l-Hijjah, the twelfth month of the Muslim calendar when Muslims take pilgrimage to the Ka'bah structure in Makkah, Saudi Arabia. The parts of the pilgrimage recall the faith of the Prophet Abraham, Hagar, his wife, and Ishmael, their son. The ceremonies involve circumambulating the Ka'bah seven times; running between the hills of al-Safa and al-Marwa, located just outside the Mosque; assembling at Mount Arafat on the ninth

day of the month for the afternoon prayer and the “standing” ceremony, which commemorates both Muhammad’s Farewell Sermon and the last revelation of the Qur’an; stoning the pillars representing Satan; and finally, offering sacrifices of sheep, goats and camels at Mina on the final day, observed throughout the world as Eid al-Adha, the Feast of Sacrifice.

Muslims around the world who are not on pilgrimage share Eid al-Adha, the Feast of the Sacrifice, with the pilgrims in Makkah. The night before Eid is commonly spent in prayer. Then all Muslims who have sufficient funds to do so sacrifice an animal, using some of the meat for their own family and distributing the rest to relatives and the poor. On Eid al-Adha, Muslim communities gather for prayer and hear a sermon, often on obedience and perfect trust in God, following the example of the Prophet Abraham, who was willing to sacrifice his son at God’s command. Eid al-Adha is a four-day celebration, involving the giving of presents and the celebration of special dinners with friends and relatives. In this way, all Muslims participate in the communal experience of the pilgrims in Makkah.

In Toledo, Ohio, American Muslims from over twenty different nationalities gather for Eid. At the Islamic Center of Greater Toledo, as many as one thousand people participate in the special Eid prayer, which is performed in the morning. Prayer is followed by a brunch, sponsored by the center’s kitchen committee, featuring foods from around the world. The rest of the day is full of activities, with special programs for the children, gatherings of family and friends, and visits to the local cemetery.

Many Islamic relief foundations in the United States provide community and charitable services in association with Eid al-Adha. For example, some Muslim organizations, such as Islamic Relief, run special Eid programs, which enable American Muslims to donate money to serve impoverished people around the world. Other programs, such as ICNA Relief organize drop-off points for affluent Muslims to donate *qurbani* (or sacrificed) meat for other Muslim families in the community who might be in need.

Later in the show, we’ll discuss the challenges young Muslims face to participate in these Eid al-Adha observances while attending public school.

**Danish:** In the next vignette, you’ll hear the story of a Wisconsin school that prohibited the singing of a Hindu *bhajan* during a holiday assembly. The singing of *bhajan* is just one type of devotional activity in Hinduism. *Bhakti* means devotion. Just as some people are inspired to seek wisdom, others are more naturally disposed to devotion as a spiritual path. The word *bhakti*, from a root meaning “to share,” conveys the sense of “sharing” inherent in the love of God. Not only does the devotee love God, but God, they say, loves the devotee. *Bhakti* is expressed in many ways—in songs and hymns, in temple worship, in dance and in plays.

The love of Krishna is sung in popular chants of the Lord’s name, such as “Hare Krishna!” “Praise to Krishna!” and in *bhajans* or popular hymns. In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna reveals that expensive fire altar rituals are not necessary to honor God. “I accept the offering, even of those who give me a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or some water with devotion,” says Krishna.

Every day in temples and homes throughout the world, Hindu devotees make such simple honor-offerings to Krishna and to other deities. They present fruit, flowers, water, and sweets, and they receive these gifts back again, as the blessing and grace, the *prashad*, of God.

Dance is also a form of devotion. Krishna devotees in India and in America will often dance as they sing *kirtan*. Indian classical dance also has a devotional context. Shiva as Nataraja is Lord of the Dance and is sometimes depicted in the energetic, balanced, and beautiful pose of a dancer. In his dances, he creates the universe and destroys it, absorbing the manifold creation back into himself. At the outset of an Indian dance performance, the dancer may honor one of the Gods with an invocation. The dancer may create through gesture and movement the very image of Krishna, so that the audience may experience the feeling of devotion. Or the dancer may become Krishna's beloved, so that the audience may taste the yearning she has for Krishna.

To learn more about the religions of [Islam](#) or [Hinduism](#) or one of the 17 other traditions profiled by the [Pluralism Project](#), visit [pluralism.org/ocg](http://pluralism.org/ocg) and click on [Religion](#).

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## [Vignette 2: School Encounters]

**Summary:** In the second vignette, Rachel and Usra read portions from the [On Common Ground](#) audio essays "[School Holiday's? Prayers?](#)" and "[Encounter in the Courts.](#)"

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**Usra:** Since the early 1960s, the United States Supreme Court has prohibited state-sponsored religious activities in public schools. The Court's decisions, however, have not eliminated disputes involving religion and education, especially as students generally have a right to express their religious beliefs in a non-disruptive manner. The increased religious diversity in the United States over the last half-century has made these issues even more complex.

The "December Dilemma" annually brings to light the issue of public schools and religious holidays as the massive force of American commercial culture mobilizes for Christmas and public schools face the question of whether their districts should acknowledge major religious holidays. If so, whose religious holidays? Even in December, there are many holidays—Hanukkah, the Jewish festival of lights, Bodhi Day or the Buddha's Enlightenment Day, and Kwanzaa, the African-American festival of lights and harvest. What should a school in multireligious America do? Can holidays be opportunities for education, yet not celebrated devotionally? Many remember a time, before the Supreme Court decisions of the 1960s, when a Christmas pageant and a nativity scene in the public school seemed as American as apple pie. Not so today.

Seasonal concerts have become a manifestation of the “December Dilemma” as objections to exclusively or even predominantly Christian music mount. A Jewish student at West High School in Salt Lake City, Utah, filed a prominent lawsuit in the late 1990s, objecting to the repeated pattern of concert programs containing nothing but devotional Christian songs. As the student explained:

**Danish:** *It made me feel like a second-class citizen in my own choir, because all we were singing was religious Christian music. It wasn't even pieces that were world-renowned like Handel's 'Messiah' or the 'Hallelujah Chorus.'* It made me sad that the teacher didn't really take into consideration that there were non-Christians in the choir. It made those of us who aren't of the majority feel left out.

Adding music from other religious traditions does not necessarily solve the problem either. In December 2011, three elementary schools in Greendale, Wisconsin, planned to include a Hindu song in their seasonal concerts. According to Tom Tolan of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, “the song, Raghupati Raghava Raja Ram, was a favorite of Mahatma Gandhi, sung on his famous Salt March to the sea.” After various parents complained, the school district ultimately removed the song (which made reference to Sita, Rama, God, and Allah), from the program. Fox News reported a similar incident in February 2012 when a high school student in Grand Junction, Colorado, refused to sing a Muslim song because the lyrics included the phrase “there is no truth except Allah.”

In explaining his decision to leave the school choir, the student said, “I don't want to come across as a bigot or a racist, but I really don't feel that it is appropriate for students in a public high school to be singing an Islamic worship song.” A spokesman for the district defended the song selection, arguing it was not chosen as an endorsement or promotion of a particular religion but rather “because its rhythms and other qualities would provide an opportunity to exhibit the musical talent and skills of the group in competition.”

Today, many schools recognize a wide variety of religious holidays throughout the year, extending the conversation well beyond December. In his *San Jose Mercury News* article, “Religious Holidays Making a Comeback in the Public Schools,” Dave O'Brian reported that the schools within the Berryessa Union School District recognize Christmas and Hanukkah, as well as Kwanzaa and Bodhi Day. Throughout the year, the school also acknowledges the holidays of students from Vietnam, Cambodia, India, Mexico, Iran and El Salvador. The superintendent said, “We feel we should operate from a premise of inclusion, rather than exclusion. It is important for our children to be exposed to all areas within our cultural diversity.”

As with seasonal concerts, simple recognition of multiple traditions does not always resolve the challenges of religious holidays in public schools. Although schools generally are required to permit students to observe religious holidays without penalty, missing class can have adverse academic consequences, especially for recent immigrants and second-language learners. For many schools, demographics dictate certain decisions, including when to close for a religious holiday. Without a critical mass of students and staff, holding school can be economically

impractical if not functionally impossible. Thus, in addition to Christmas, schools with a high percentage of Catholic students or staff might close on Good Friday, and schools with a high percentage of Jewish students or staff might close on Yom Kippur, Passover and Rosh Hashanah. As the representation of other religious groups has grown, some schools have closed on additional days such as Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha in districts with a high number of Muslim students. Dearborn, Michigan, where about half of the students in public schools are Muslim, is a prominent example.

**Rachel:** This approach, however, has its limits. In 2009, when the New York City Council proposed to close city schools for Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, Mayor Michael Bloomberg vetoed the plan. If schools closed on these holidays, where would the city draw the line?

Demographics, Bloomberg insisted, should dictate when schools close. Some school districts have begun to eliminate days off for all religious holidays altogether—except for Christmas, which some argue is semi-secular—reasoning that this is the most equitable response to increasing religious diversity.

Schools generally have to accommodate student religious expression that is not disruptive, but the degree of permissible accommodation is not always clear. Schools, for example, must allow individual students to pray silently, such as before a meal or test, but do they have to give students release time to pray? Various districts, for example, release observant Muslim students from class to pray or modify their daily schedule to accommodate prayers during lunch or other breaks. Some see such accommodations as the improper school-sponsorship of prayer, especially if the school designates a specific place for the students to pray rather than allowing them to simply use, for instance, an open classroom.

What about other ways in which schools are asked to accommodate religious belief? The cafeteria is one challenge, where vegetarian food is increasingly requested for Hindu and Jain students, among others. But there are other requests, too. In 1992, the Islamic Society of North America issued a brochure, “You Have a Muslim Child in Your School,” that spells out some of the basics of Islam for school teachers and administrators. It also details the range of expectations Muslim parents have, and hope that the school will respect. Muslim students should not be required to sit next to the opposite sex in the classroom, to participate in swimming or dancing classes, to participate in co-educational physical education classes, or to participate in any event or activity related to Christmas, Easter, Halloween, or Valentine’s Day. How should schools respond?

Fifty years have passed since the United States Supreme Court first ruled state-sponsored devotional activities in public schools unconstitutional; however, issues surrounding religious holidays and expression remain on the agenda of America’s schools. Despite—or perhaps in light of—continued conflict, multiple sources of guidance exist for students and parents, teachers and administrators, clergy, and legislators—all of whom have an interest and perspective in these issues.

You can read more of this [audio essay](#) and many others at [pluralism.org/ocg](http://pluralism.org/ocg). Click on "[Encounter](#)" to read essays on [Today's Challenges](#) and [Historical Perspectives](#).

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### **[Vignette 3: Discussing Religion in Public Schools with Brendan Randall]**

**Summary:** In the final vignette, Rachel and Usra speak with [Pluralism Project](#) Senior Research Associate and Doctoral Candidate at Harvard's Graduate School of Education Brendan Randall about contemporary issues of religious accommodation in the workplace.

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**Usra:** Our final vignette looks at an [online petition](#) that was started by a group of middle school Muslim students urging U.S. schools to close on the two Eid holidays--Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. The petition has sparked a spirited debate within the Muslim community with a range of opponents and supporters.

Many Muslims say such decisions should be left up to local school boards who set minimum percentages of students necessary to have a religious holiday declared as a day off, while school districts where Muslims or students of other religions don't have enough students to merit a day off should give those students excused absences.

This story raises questions as to the ways in which the religious holidays of diverse religious communities should be regarded by school districts that serve multireligious student populations.

I'm joined by Rachel and Brendan Randall, a Doctoral Candidate at Harvard's Graduate School of Education. Welcome to the show, Brendan!

**Brendan:** Thank you, it's exciting to be here.

**Usra:** So what do you make of this petition and can you tell us a little bit more about your background and thinking about the challenges of religion and pluralism in schools?

**Brendan:** Certainly. I think the petition is a great example of the challenges that we are beginning to see as America becomes a more religiously diverse society. I think the comments you made about the reactions from within the Muslim community really demonstrates the challenges that the answers aren't always obvious.

**My background:** I taught for several years in an independent school that had a large Muslim population and I really became interested in issues of religious diversity because it was a school in upstate New York and after 9/11 there were many tensions at our school. We had several students who actually had parents who worked in the World Trade Center, fortunately no one

lost any family members, but it really made us realize that there were a lot of conversations we weren't having. And in fact, one of the first things we did, was try and talk about ways for student to share their different traditions and perspectives and a group of Muslim students spontaneously said, well why don't we have an Eid al-Fitr celebration this year? And so working with the staff at the school, including the dining hall staff, they prepared a traditional meal and celebration and invited the entire campus to it—this was a boarding school—and it was a really fantastic opportunity. It illustrates the importance both of holidays to identity and the way in which sharing holidays can be an entry point to a conversation. But it also highlighted that it wasn't that all the tensions had evaporated because we had celebrated Eid al-Fitr, but it was, I think, a way to get students who maybe weren't having conversations with each other, to start having conversations.

So when I think about this petition, my first reaction often is: I think the question really often has to be about what are the needs of the particular community at this particular time? And different communities may have different needs. And as your comments show, some communities need to focus on the bottom line: do they have enough students in order to make running school functional? If they don't, then they should recognize the holiday as a practical matter. In other contexts, such as the Cambridge, Massachusetts school district that was faced with this issue and ultimately chose to recognize one Eid holiday a year, they realized that it was an important symbolic statement and they also wanted to be conscious of the fact that there were tensions and Muslim students had described themselves as feeling like outsiders.

And I think that is a really critical issue for me: to ask yourself, does the current dynamic make certain student feel like outsiders and certain students feel like insiders? And that is where the problem lies. And then the question becomes, if that is the case, how do we change the dynamic? In some cases, recognizing additional holidays may be an effective way of doing that. Other schools, particularly on the collegiate level, have actually gone in the other direction in that they have stopped recognizing any religious holidays, including what were commonly the Christian holidays, and that environment for some schools, that has been the means to achieve less of a sense of insider and outsider.

So I think it is not so much whether you recognize a holiday, but whether failure to recognize that holiday perpetuates a dual structure in the school. And sometimes the answer is not to recognize more holidays but to recognize fewer holidays.

I think a really important part of it too is about having a process. It's about including various stakeholders, whether they are parents, community members, teachers, students, and giving an opportunity for people to express concerns, to express what their fears are, and to address those fears and to attend to those fears as well. Also, what often happens with some of these dilemmas is our instinctive response is to find a universal answer when, in fact, the answer often may be whatever that community, through an appropriate and interactive process, develops as the right answer for that community. And I think its important that we not look at this as a one-size-fits-all question, but rather the process can be as important as the outcome.

**Rachel:** I think for a lot of issues when we talk about multiculturalism and diversity in education, its about trying to bring in more voices, the necessity of engaging with the community, and like you said, all the different stakeholders involved.

**Brendan:** And I think the holidays at schools is a great example of that. As I said I think a lot of universities have gone towards not recognizing holidays and that has worked for them, in part, because in those communities the students involved feel heard, they feel recognized, they feel this change is creating a more leveled playing field, so to speak. Whereas in the dynamic in the Cambridge Public Schools, it seemed like the more appropriate response to make people feel heard, welcomed, and treated equally was to expand the number of holidays, because they weren't facing the situation where they were opening a pandora's box so to speak. But, I think if you were at a school where you had students representing numerous faiths, and if you started closing school on every faith's major holiday days, that might be a very problematic situation that calls for a different approach.

But in either case, if it is an approach made from a top-down sort of perspective, its likely to leave a lot of people upset, no matter what you do. So I think the biggest takeaway for me, as an educator, from these situations, is a dialogue is really critical and people feeling heard makes a huge difference for the ability for them to live with whatever the outcome is.

I'm also a former lawyer, and—I should say that I like to joke that I am a recovering lawyer—and I think sometimes we think that the law can solve problems but in fact often what happens is that we are dealing with questions of human relations and the law does not necessarily provide the answers to those human, interpersonal relations. It gives us a way to manage expectations and know our rights, but just because we know our rights does not mean we know how to get along together. So I think, as an educator, we need to think beyond merely what should the law be? To what helps this community at this point become a more cohesive community and navigate the tensions that diversity can bring and take advantage of the enrichment that diversity can bring?

**Usra:** I have one final question. And that is: What is your ideal vision for the future? So if all schools engaging in the religious diversity of their respective communities are doing that engagement well, what does it look like?

**Brendan:** I think the first step, and there is a growing movement, is to get back to the idea of religious literacy. The first step is really to get educators and the educational system really on board with the idea that the academic study of religion is different than the devotional promotion of religion. While religion and education in the United States has historically been about devotional promotion, that does not mean that it is not appropriate to study it academically. So you have groups at Harvard Divinity School, the Religious Literacy Project with Diane Moore, which is doing amazing work in developing materials for teachers. You also have the American Academy of Religion, which just a few years ago published guidelines for K-12 educators on religion. What I really like in particular about these guidelines is that they are not really a laundry list of specific facts, but it is an approach to the question of religious literacy and difference. So

the idea is that we are not going to be able to make every teacher, every student, a religious studies expert. That is not the goal. We are trying though to, or the goal is to make every teacher and student aware to religious diversity, not only between traditions but within traditions. And to develop the skills of inquiry to acknowledge situations where they could learn more and take advantage of those situations.

For example, in my own work, I taught a comparative religions course where I tried to emphasize the varieties of religious experience, both by inviting students, if they were comfortable, to share their religious perspectives, but also requiring as a final project, that the students had to profile a religious community. And by profile I really wanted them to show not just that this is a Catholic congregation or this is a Hindu temple, but what was special and unique about that particular group of people, how did they form a particular community that might make them different than, lets say a Jewish community in the city, but different from other people of the same religious tradition in the community? This may be a Catholic church, what makes it different from the other Catholic churches in town. To try and really develop in the students this idea that you are developing a disposition and a set of skills and a certain amount of knowledge, rather than mastering an encyclopedic knowledge about a certain tradition or traditions.

It's the idea that we start to introduce the idea of religious identity across the curriculum. I am not an advocate, for example, that every student has to take a comparative religions class. Instead, I think it is the way we have addressed other forms of diversity in K-12 education, for example, race. And its to realize and acknowledge that religion, or non-religion, is a part of people's everyday identity and a part of everything that we do and so it comes up in every subject across the curriculum.

The second thing I think I would like to see is an environment where we really create the liminal space for students to be able to express their religious identities, but ask of them to do more than simply express; ask them to also listen to the expressions of their peers and to develop the civic skill to engage across that difference without feeling threatened by that difference. And I think that is, again, not something you do by saying here is the class that we look at how to engage across difference, I think it has to be something that becomes part of the ethos of the school and its philosophy. And it has to be reflected in the micromoments of the school and in the actions of its faculty and its students.

And it is not an easy thing to achieve but I think it is possible to achieve. I have seen it work in my own experience, I have seen classrooms in both, independent schools, private schools, and public schools, where students are able to express their identities and discuss them quite productively and openly and it doesn't sort of devolve into a contest into whose faith or worldview is superior or an attempt to try and convince to your faith or worldview. And so I think that, if we are going to have a diverse society, we are going to have to develop that civic skill to engage the diversity rather than ignore it.

**Usra:** Well thank you for joining us.

**Rachel:** Yeah, thank you very much!

**Brendan:** Thank you again for this opportunity, it is really fantastic. I wish you well with the podcasts and I am excited to hear this and the other podcasts.

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**Rachel:** Many thanks to Pluralism Project Research Associates Danish Zaidi and Sarah Khan, Senior Research Associate Brendan Randall and you, our listeners, for tuning in to this episode of the Pluralism Podcast. Check out our online resource [On Common Ground](#) for more at [pluralism.org](http://pluralism.org).