

# Teaching Tolerance

## Introduction

Why is “tolerance education” or “multicultural education” important? What are our responsibilities as citizens in a diverse society? Can education support “cultural pluralism” as we teach citizenship and character skills? Cultural pluralists believe that multicultural education should develop tolerance, or even more, an acceptance and appreciation of diverse customs and traditions. Cultural pluralism is not separatism, but includes sharing and mixing of all cultures, while supporting groups as they enjoy and preserve distinctive cultural characteristics. Diverse groups should not have to give up their identity or traditions to be accepted as Americans and to fully participate in American society.

Our goal with this curriculum is to encourage students in the Tulsa metro area to practice **TOLERANCE**, as we each become more aware of ourselves and others, noticing and even questioning our similarities and differences. We must work to eliminate discriminatory behavior. Tolerance is the first step in a larger process.

Next we will promote **ACCEPTANCE**, born of mutual respect and understanding. Acceptance includes the sharing of ourselves with others and fostering empathy.

Our goal is more than merely tolerance or acceptance. Our ultimate goal involves valuing people and their differences as unique contributions to our world. This is truly **APPRECIATION** of all, which shows itself in a feeling of community and mutual respect. This goal includes tolerance, acceptance, and appreciation of different races, different abilities, different religions, and newcomers. As opposed to put downs, mutual respect includes attentive listening, empathy, appreciation, and a healthy curiosity about people and the world. Mutual respect and understanding grow through carefully planned educational experiences and through more spontaneous personal interactions while working with others toward common goals in an atmosphere of community.

Should teachers attempt to create a “color-blind” environment, or is it better to acknowledge differences? Michelle Karns, author of *Ethnic Barriers and Biases*, talks about racial diversity specifically, but her message could be applied to any and all differences:



“Although race matters, it should not be a filter through which people are judged. Race, language, and culture contribute to the identity and persona of everybody, so they should always be viewed as integral and vital aspects of any individual...I would like to see respect for all differences and a willingness to embrace the cultures, languages, and traditions that make differences so enriching...Color defines reality; it should not be overlooked or minimized. We need to keep our own identities as well as to recognize those of others; but we also need to remember that we have a larger identity in common as Americans. Accepting our shared reality in spite of our racial and ethnic differences is the ‘racist’ challenge.”

An individual’s uniqueness affects that person’s perception of the world and is part of how the world perceives the individual. If we consciously open ourselves to others’ differences, we are more able to accept and appreciate them.

Concepts that can be developed by studying about the diversity of people:

- People of all groups have a contribution to make.
- People are more alike than they are different.
- Differences in customs and attitudes can be an asset to society.
- Prejudice and stereotyping is usually based on lack of information.
- Understanding others will enrich our own lives.

To become more tolerant, accepting, and appreciative:

- Keep an open mind.
- Work to eliminate stereotypes.
- Work to educate ourselves about the contributions of people and culture groups.
- Challenge bias views and remarks.
- Engage in thoughtful dialogue when conflict occurs.
- Demonstrate personal influence through service to others.

James Banks, a leading researcher in multicultural education, from the University of Washington, has listed four approaches to implementing multicultural education: contributory, additive, transformative, and social action approaches. In the contributory approach, the teacher recognizes and highlights the contributions of various “heroes and holidays” from diverse groups, to build awareness. With the additive approach, the teacher adds special multicultural units dealing with content, concepts, themes, and perspectives of

various groups, such as a unit on “Famous Americans with Disabilities.” The transformative approach is more inclusive and tends to foster genuine understanding and empathy. In this approach, curriculum is considered from the multiple perspectives of diverse groups. Students learn to see through the eyes of others. The social action approach engages students in thinking critically, making decisions and taking action on a variety of social issues.

## **Kids’ World Events and Tolerance Curriculum support the following Social Studies Standards and Benchmarks: (P.A.S.S.)**

**Kindergarten** - *Standard 3*: Understands that children in various communities and cultures are alike and different.

**First Grade** - *Standard 1*: Understands people, places, and environments

### **Second Grade –**

*Standard 1*: Understands people, places, environments 1.1 1.2 1.3 1.4

*Standard 2*: Understands governance, civic ideals, and practices 2.1 2.2 2.3

*Standard 3*: Understands time, continuity, and change 3.1

*Standard 4*: Understands production, distribution, and consumption 4.2

### **Third Grade –**

*Standard 1*: Understands people, places, and environments 1.1 1.2 1.3 1.4

*Standard 2*: Understands governance, civic ideals and practices 2.3 2.4

*Standard 3*: Understands time, continuity, and change 3.1 3.2

**Fourth Grade** - *Standard 1*: Understands people, places, environments 1.1 1.2

**Fifth Grade** - *Standard 1*: Understands people, places, environments 1.1 1.2

### **Sixth Grade –**

*Standard 1*: Understands selected cultures which have affected world history

*Standard 2*: Understands cultural factors which influence the lives of people today within world regions

*Standard 4*: Understands how to compare and contrast contemporary political and economic systems 4.3

*Standard 5*: Understands recurring multicultural issues, their historic development, and suggests plausible solutions 5.1

*Standard 6*: Understands information using a broad selection of resource materials, including maps, globes, pictures.... 6.1 6.2

## **Seventh Grade –**


*Standard 1:* Understands the use of maps and other geographic representations...1.2 1.4

*Standard 3:* Understands and uses appropriate maps to locate major cultural regions...

*Standard 5:* Understands world cultural & physical patterns & interactions 5.1 5.2 5.3

## **ACTIVITIES FOR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS**

1. “Jumping to Conclusions” is an activity that illustrates to students that you can’t tell enough to judge value by looking only on the outside of an object (or of people.) Collect three different sacks. A very pretty sack should be filled with rocks, another with something of nominal value, such as paper clips, and the third sack, which should be a wrinkled, brown paper sack, filled with candy or stickers that children would value. Encourage a volunteer to choose a sack to share with the class. Discuss how the student decided which sack to choose, emphasizing the decision between the outer appearance and what might be inside. Continue choosing sacks until the children do share the reward.
2. “Appreciation Chart” Students compile a list of things people say that makes them feel good. Discuss how unkind comments make them feel. Talk about how a person can generate compliments (by being helpful, doing a kind deed, being friendly). Make an informal challenge to “catch each other using appreciations,” affirmations, and compliments and add each saying to the Chart.
3. Discuss the old saying “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” Do students agree with the saying? Students might tell how words can hurt.
4. A different kind of “Musical Chairs” is played by setting out just the number of chairs for each child. While music plays, students walk around. The teacher should remove one chair each round. When the music stops, the students must figure out a way for everyone to be included on the chairs that are left. *Adapted from “Different and the Same,” from Family Communications, Inc.*

5. Ask students how people might communicate without talking. Play a game of simple “charades,” acting out simple actions or animals without talking. Discuss factors that make it easy or difficult to communicate without a common language. This would lead to a discussion of the possibilities of being friendly and communicating with newcomers, even when they do not speak English.
6. Display one common red apple. Have the students name the object, describe it, categorize it as a fruit. Ask if this one example tells us all there is to know about apples. (No, there are other colors, sizes, and flavors. All apples are not alike.) Knowing about one example does not mean that you know about all the possibilities. This is true of apples and of people. 
7. Make a Fruit Salad. Encourage the students to each bring one example of a fruit they like, so a salad can be made in the class. Even though I really like strawberries, would a bowl that was all strawberries be considered a salad? Encourage the students to consider that a salad is more interesting with variety. Share the salad as a class celebration.
8. Have a demonstration from an orchestra or examine a picture of an orchestra. Name various musical instruments and discuss their different sounds. Is the orchestra only one instrument? Stress that the music is more interesting with different instruments, each playing different sounds, but working together. Relate how this is similar to groups of diverse people in our class, our city.
9. Illustrate how things can be “equal but not the same” by listing number sentences for “7” such as  $6 + 1$ ,  $10 - 3$ , and  $1 + 1 + 5$ .
10. Have pairs of students draw and label a Venn diagram to illustrate their similarities and differences. The pairs of students need to discuss and list things they like, ways they are similar and ways they differ. Characteristics the students share would be listed in the overlapping middle section of the Venn diagram.
11. “Who am I?” Direct students to draw a self-portrait or provide them with a silhouette. Students complete the following on their artwork: I have \_\_\_\_\_hair, \_\_\_\_\_eyes, and my skin is \_\_\_\_\_. The teacher reads them one at a time and students guess who is being represented.

12. Create a “web” or a “mind map” of the word “friend.” Include descriptions of friendly actions and words the students associate with a friend. Does appearance, skin color, kinds of clothes, other external factors impact who the students choose as friends?

13. Out of construction paper, cut out two ice cream cones. One should resemble a chocolate cone and the other represents a chocolate chip cone. Have the students divide themselves into two groups, based on which ice cream cone they would prefer. Tell the students to imagine that they can only be friends with students who like the same flavor. Discuss the “advantages and limitations” of choosing friends this way.



*Adapted from “Different and the Same,” Family Communications, Inc.*

14. Have students look for and count instances of intolerance they see during one day on the playground, bus, in the cafeteria, and on TV. Make a class graph.

15. Generalizing: “All Third Graders Think Alike.” Tell student you are going on a make-believe trip to the store. You want to buy a treat for everyone in class. However, it would take too long to buy different treats for everyone. You will ask one student what they want and buy that for everyone. After all, aren’t all third graders alike anyway? Ask one child what they would like.

**Discuss:** Does anyone object to this method? Why isn’t it all right to get all of you the same treat? Emphasize that because someone belongs to a certain group, it does not mean he or she is just like all the other people in the group.

16. Make a chart with headings “Looks like... Sounds like... Feels like.” The first chart is for “Intolerance.” Have students suggest how intolerance in the school looks (behaviors), how it sounds (communication), and how it feels (affect). Make other charts for tolerance or other words such as appreciation, respect, friendship.

17. “R – E – S – P – E – C – T ...Find Out What it Means to Me...”  
(Quotes on “respect,” useful for discussion or as prompts for journal writing.)

- a. “The respect for human rights is one of the most significant advantages of a free and democratic nation in the peaceful struggle for influence, and we should use this good weapon as effectively as possible.” *President Jimmy Carter*
- b. “Respect for the rights of others leads you to peace.” *Benito Juarez*
- c. “Civilization is a way of living, an attitude of equal respect for all people.” *Jane Addams*
- d. “America is more like a quilt – many patches, many pieces, many colors, many sizes, all woven together and held by a common thread.” *Jesse Jackson*
- e. “Our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this planet. We all breathe the same air.” *President John F. Kennedy*
- f. “Respect yourself if you would have others respect you.”
- g. “Never bend your head. Always hold it high. Look the world straight in the eye.” *Helen Keller*
- h. “Treat all people alike. Give them all the same law. Give them all an even chance to live and grow...All people should have equal rights upon the earth.” *Chief Joseph*

18. “Defining RESPECT” Give learning groups three or more questions from the following list. They discuss and list their answers on chart paper, then share with the class. Questions: How do you define “respect?” Who and what deserves respect? What does respect look like? What does disrespect look like? Who does disrespect hurt? Tell about a person who shows the behaviors of respect... When talking with other people, I show respect by... My parents know I respect them when...

## **ACTIVITIES FOR OLDER ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL**

1. “Mapping Me” helps students identify how we are shaped by our relationships, affiliations, and experiences. Each student will need a large sheet of paper and markers. Each person will design a “map” of his or her life by creatively diagramming the separate parts. Some

categories to be mapped: personal facts, hobbies, family facts, favorite memory, wishes, toughest experience. Allow 30 minutes to draw and label the maps, then share in small groups or with the class. *From Ethnic Barriers and Biases, Michelle Karns*

2. “Outsides Versus Insides” or What does it mean to be different on the outside but same on the inside? This activity fosters an understanding of racial diversity as an external factor. Bring enough uncooked eggs for each student to have one. Students should carefully draw themselves on the egg shell with markers illustrating as much as possible how they are feeling at the moment as well as their hair color, eye color, and features. Mix the eggs. Ask students to select an egg and find the owner. When everyone has their own egg again, the teacher should crack the eggs into a bowl. Ask, “Can you find yourself now?” Process: Stereotypes, which are beliefs about people based on their group membership and external features, are widely held overgeneralizations resting on the assumption that all group members are the same. But as this exercise demonstrates, even though our outsides differ, our insides are very much the same. *From Ethnic Barriers and Biases, Michelle Karns*
3. Build an acrostic based on either the word “Tolerance” or “Acceptance” or “Appreciation.” Each crossing word must relate in some way to tolerant behavior.
4. “Spider Web” is an activity that illustrates unity in the group. Have all students stand in a circle. One at a time, the students are thrown a ball of yarn. When they hold the yarn, they tell their name and one way to show tolerance (or any other discussion topic). They hold onto one part of yarn while they throw the ball of yarn across the circle to another student who continues the process. Continue until all students are united by yarn, in a crazy spider web. 
5. “Egg Drop” demonstrates that we understand experiences based on our personal point of reference, point of view or perspective. Assign each student to play one of seven roles: the Grocer, the Egg, the Mother of the Egg, Another Egg, the Janitor, a person with only the one egg, a person with many eggs in the refrigerator. While all students watch, drop and break the egg (onto newspaper and paper towels.) Ask each student to describe what happened and how they felt based on the role

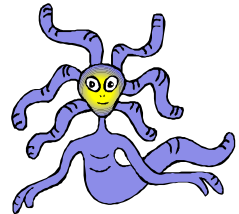
they were assigned. Emphasize the difference in emotions related to the egg drop based on individual perspective.

6. “Commonalities” allows students to discover that, in spite of whatever differences we have, we have something in common with every other person. Begin by having all students circulate around the classroom having conversations in pairs. Each pair must find something they have in common. This could be a favorite kind of music, a common hero, etc. As soon as they find a commonality and record that on paper, each participant moves on to a new conversation. Create a bulletin board with the results. Names of class members are written on the board in an oval pattern. They draw lines between themselves and names of other people. Then write each commonality on the appropriate line. *From Open Minds to Equality, Nancy Schniedewind and Ellen Davidson*
7. “Analyzing Stereotypes” involves five questions which can be written or oral:
  - a. Name your chosen stereotype. *Black men are good basketball players.*
  - b. Brainstorm your best guesses why people have this stereotype. *When you watch basketball on TV, most of the players are black males. When I walk to the park in my neighborhood, I see black men playing basketball.*
  - c. What pieces of this stereotype are true? *Professional basketball teams are 75% black.*
  - d. Why is that part true? What are some of the social, economic, historical, geographic, or other factors that have contributed to the partial truth of the stereotype? *Many black people in the US don't have much money. Basketball doesn't require expensive equipment.*
  - e. What are the exaggerations and inaccuracies in the stereotype? *Some black men are not athletic at all. Many women are fine basketball players.*
8. “Can I Get In?” is an activity which allows students to experience how it feels to be part of a dominant group or to be excluded. Form a circle of students holding hands. Ask for one volunteer to stand outside the circle. When everyone is ready, tell the volunteer to try to get in. Many things happen. Usually the circle forms a tight bond. Outsiders often try to squeeze in between people, or occasionally try to convince someone to let them in. Sometimes they try to force their way in. If anyone gets rough or too frustrated, call a halt. Questions for discussion:
  - a. Outsider, how did it feel to be on the outside?
  - b. What strategies did the Outsider use to try to get in?
  - c. Did the people in the circle talk to each other? About what?

- d. Did anyone in the circle feel bad for the Outsider? How did you act on those feelings? What did you tell yourself that convinced you to keep the Outsider out?

You may want to relate this exercise to society:

- a. What are some groups of people in society that are the more powerful groups? Which groups are on the “outside” or have less power?
- b. In society, the circle might represent power, privilege, jobs, money, and so on. How are some of the strategies the Outsider used like the way less powerful people use to try to get opportunities?
- c. How do people with power and privilege keep that power and privilege from others? What do they do? What justifications do they give?
- d. What other choices did you have in the activity for including the Outsider? What choices do people in powerful positions in society have for including those with less power?
9. “Creature Feature” helps students understand how important it is for class members to include and respect all in the group. Scenario: You have been asked to introduce to your group a new member whom you haven’t met yet. When the new student arrives, you realize that he/she is from another planet and is the strangest creature you have ever seen. But you also learn that this new student possesses some of the best leadership qualities ever, and would be an asset to your group if ever given the chance to prove him/herself. How would you convince the others in class that the new member would work well with your group? What do you think you would do to make the newcomer feel welcome? What would it feel like if YOU were the CREATURE?



10. Make a list of 15 occupations, such as doctor, pilot, cosmetologist, firefighter, nurse, etc. For each occupation, list the USUAL or COMMON race/nationality, gender, and age that fits. Discuss why we have these common ideas of these jobs. Does it have to be that way?
11. “Learning About Religion” allows students to learn something about other religions and to develop a respect for differing practices. Read Amendment One of the U. S. Constitution: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...” Ask students what the amendment means to them personally and to us as a country.

Role play: Four students are members of the 400 meter medley relay team at the local swim club. A meet against their biggest rival is scheduled for the following week. One of the members, crucial to the team effort, tells the others he will have to miss the event because of a religious holiday. How do the other team members feel about this? What do they say? How does the student who is observing the holiday respond?

Follow-up: Have students interview someone whose religion is different from their own. As a class write questions that will develop the skill of polite inquiry of another culture. Students might investigate the role religion has played in our history. Topics include the Puritans, Roger Williams, Jews in Colonial history, Abolitionists, election of John F. Kennedy to the Presidency, growth of Islam, and others. Discuss the various ways religion is a part of our civil life (“In God We Trust” on money, oaths of office, Pledge of Allegiance).

12. “Jawbreaker Jargon” allows students to experience having a communication/speaking challenge. The idea is for the “communicator/speech challenged” to say a sentence to another individual and have them understand what the speaker is saying. The “communicator/speech challenged” does the talking with a large jawbreaker in their mouth! The individual must keep the jawbreaker on their tongue, not lodged in their cheek. The listener writes down the sentence as they are able to understand the words. After the activity, both speaker and listener reflect on the feelings that they experienced in their roles: What emotions/feelings did you experience? What thoughts or questions come to mind regarding people that are communication/speech challenged? What can YOU do as a listener to make a situation more comfortable for an individual with speech challenges?

13. “Caucus” is an opportunity for groups to sensitize and educate others about issues that are important to them. The activity must be done with mutual respect in an atmosphere where trust and openness has been developed.

First, write on a chart and display: “What we never again want said, thought, or done to our group.” Lead a discussion with students about the value of group identity, valuing differences between groups, sensitizing others about what hurts us, openly discussion stereotypes we’ve heard, etc.

Second, have students list “groups” that are represented in the class, such as Hispanic students, athletes, honor roll students, Baptists, computer club members, and so on. Each student chooses a group to which he belongs, and with which he’d like to “caucus.”

Third, allow 15 minutes for each caucus group to meet and prepare a report based on your sentence: “What we never want said, thought, or done to our group.”

Finally, reminding everyone of attentive listening and mutual respect, have groups share their reports. Students from other groups can ask questions. Reflect with questions: What information was new to you? What was something that touched you? What are the common themes you heard in these reports?

14. Assign students to research how certain famous people overcame disabilities. Consider Beethoven, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Ray Charles, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Thomas Edison, Helen Keller, Louis Braille, Albert Einstein.
15. “Accessibility Survey” Students imagine that they are in a wheelchair and try to imagine what difficulties they would encounter in their school building. Questions: Are ramps and/or elevators available instead of stairs? Are there parking spaces marked with the access symbol? Are hallways at least 48 inches wide? Are doorways at least 32 inches wide? Are bathroom stalls wide enough for a wheelchair? Could someone in a wheelchair drink from the water fountain?
16. “Couch Potato: Gender Diversity in the Media” Encourage students to watch television for homework. Flip through channels, noticing commercials as well as programs. Provide a handout with questions such as: What types of things did you see women/men doing on TV programs? What types of things did you see women/men doing on commercials? What products were women/men promoting on commercials? What would you change about the way women/men are portrayed on TV? Do you think TV reflects life accurately?
17. “Where are the Women in History?” See if your textbook lists women who are: Military leaders? Prominent artists? An explorer? A celebrated athlete? A distinguished author? A political leader? A famous scientist?

## Book List for Younger Elementary Students:

*Black is Brown is Tan*, by Arnold Adoff  
*Amazing Grace*, by Mary Hoffman  
*All the Colors We Are*, by Katie Kissinger  
*The Rough-Faced Girl*, by Rafe Martin  
*Teammates*, by Peter Golenbock  
*Silent Lotus*, by Jeanne Lee  
*An Angel for Solomon Singer*, by Cynthia Rylant  
*Bicycle Man*, by Allen Say  
*Heroes*, by Ken Mochizuki  
*Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad in the Sky*, by Faith Ringgold  
*Diego*, by Jonah Winter  
*Over the Deep Blue Sea*, by Daisaku Ikeda  
*Pink and Say*, by Patricia Polacco  
*Dumpling Soup*, by Jama Kim Rattigan  
*Margaret and Margarita*, by Lynn Reiser  
*In My Mother's House*, by Ann Noland Clark  
*The Day of Ahmed's Secret*, by Florence Heide and Judith Gilliland  
*This is My Land*, by George Littlechild  
*All of a Kind Family*, by Sydney Taylor  
*Everybody Cooks Rice*, by Norah Dooley  
*The Castle on Hester Street*, by Linda Heller  
*How My Family Lives in America*, by Susan Kuklin  
*Angel Child, Dragon Child*, by Michele Maria Surat

## Book List for Older Students:

*Maniac Magee*, by Jerry Spinelli  
*Knots on a Counting Rope*, by Bill Martin, Jr.  
*Terrible Things: An Allegory of the Holocaust*, by Eve Bunting  
*Frederick Douglass: The Last Days of Slavery*, by William Miller  
*The Lion Who Had Asthma*, by Jonathan London  
*Helping Hands*, by Suzanne Haldane  
*It's Your Turn at Bat*, by Barbara Aiello  
*The Friendship*, by Mildred Taylor  
*People*, by Peter Spier  
*The Rag Coat*, by Lauren Mills  
*The Sneetches*, by Dr. Seuss  
*Tom*, by Tomie de Paola  
*Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, by Mildred Taylor  
*Mrs. Katz and Tush*, by Patricia Polacco  
*Ellis Island*, by Leonard Fisher  
*The Girl Without a Name*, by José Luis Garcia Sanchez  
*I Hate English!* By Ellen Levine  
*Journey of the Sparrows*, by Fran Buss  
*Be Good to Eddie Lee*, by Virginia Fleming  
*All I Am*, by Eileen Roe  
*The Black Snowman*, by Phil Mendez  
*The Three Astronauts*, by Umberto Eco  
*Mean Soup*, by Betsy Everitt  
*Number the Stars*, by Lois Lowry  
*How to Lose All Your Friends*, by Nancy Carlson

## Web Sites

Museum of Tolerance - <http://www.museumoftolerance.com/mot/index.cfm>

Tolerance.org For Kids - <http://www.tolerance.org/pt/index.html>

Southern Poverty Law Center - <http://www.splcenter.org>

Promoting Tolerance - <http://www.teachtolerance.org>

The Tolerance Project - <http://www.ccsf.org/Resources/Tolerance/911/index.html>

Promoting Cultural Understanding in the Classroom and Community –  
<http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu/library/tolerance.htm>

“Cause They Don’t Look Like You”: A Study of Intolerance in America –  
<http://coe.west.asu.edu/students/hlynch/ToleranceWebQuest/tolerancewebqst.htm>

A World at Peace - <http://www.pbs.org/americaresponds/worldatpeace.html>

TeachersFirst.com: Terrorism and Tolerance - <http://www.teachersfirst.com/lessons/terrorism.html>

Respect Diversity Foundation - <http://www.respectdiversity.org>

